

'Those Cyclists Causing Congestion!' How pro-car discourses have adapted to a changing context: lessons for active transport policy and planning.

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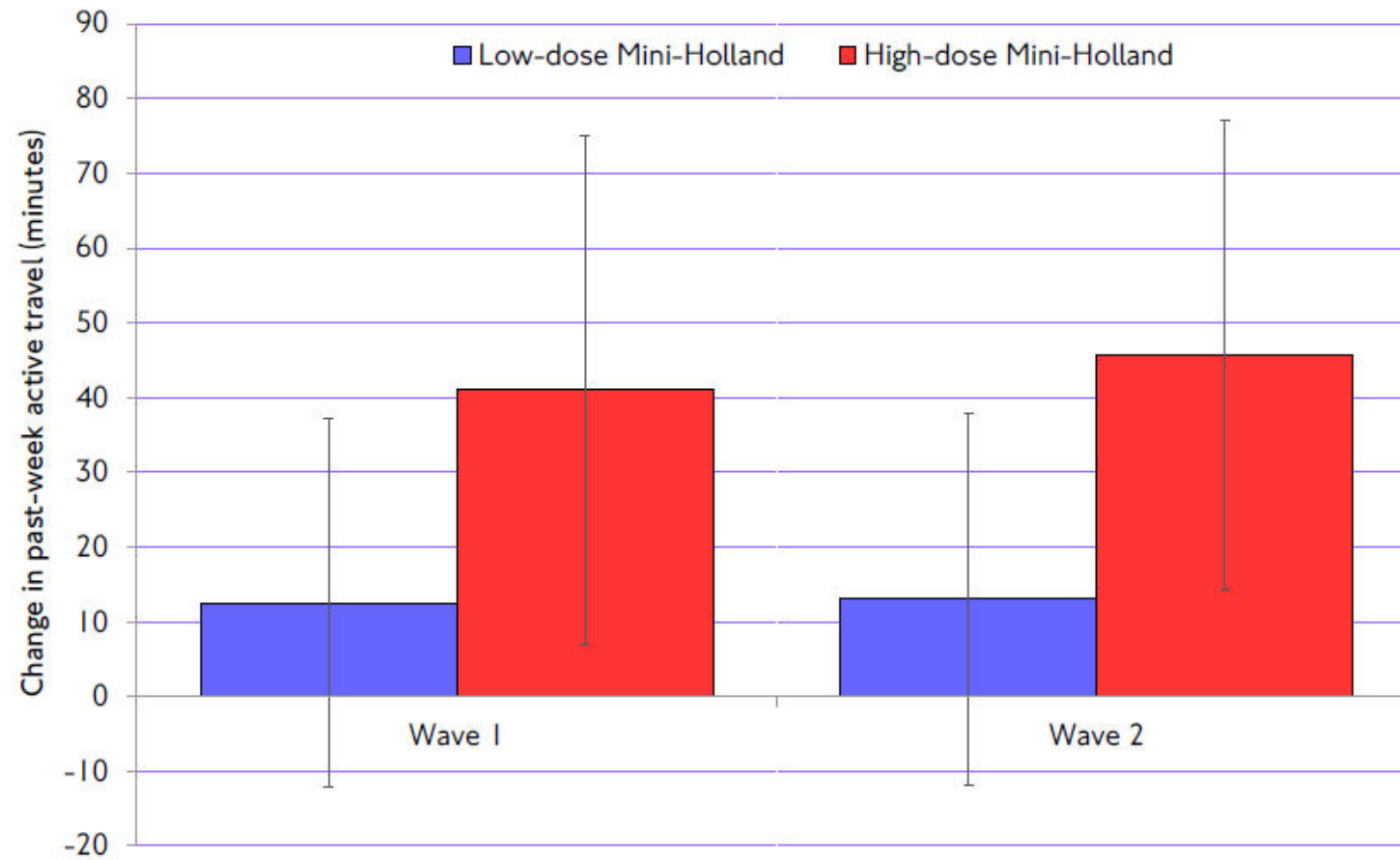
The People and Places Survey: the data source

Longitudinal, natural experiment approach examines whether and how proximity to active travel (“mini-Holland”) interventions is associated with changes in travel behaviour and attitudes, and change in attitudes to the local environment.

- Led by Westminster University & funded by TfL
- >1500 people participated in all three waves, across Outer London
- Not a fully representative sample (more older people)

Found uplift in active travel (walking and cycling) associated with scheme implementation (see open access paper in TRA)

Figure 5.29 Change in minutes spent travelling by walk or cycle in Waves 1 and 2 compared to Baseline.

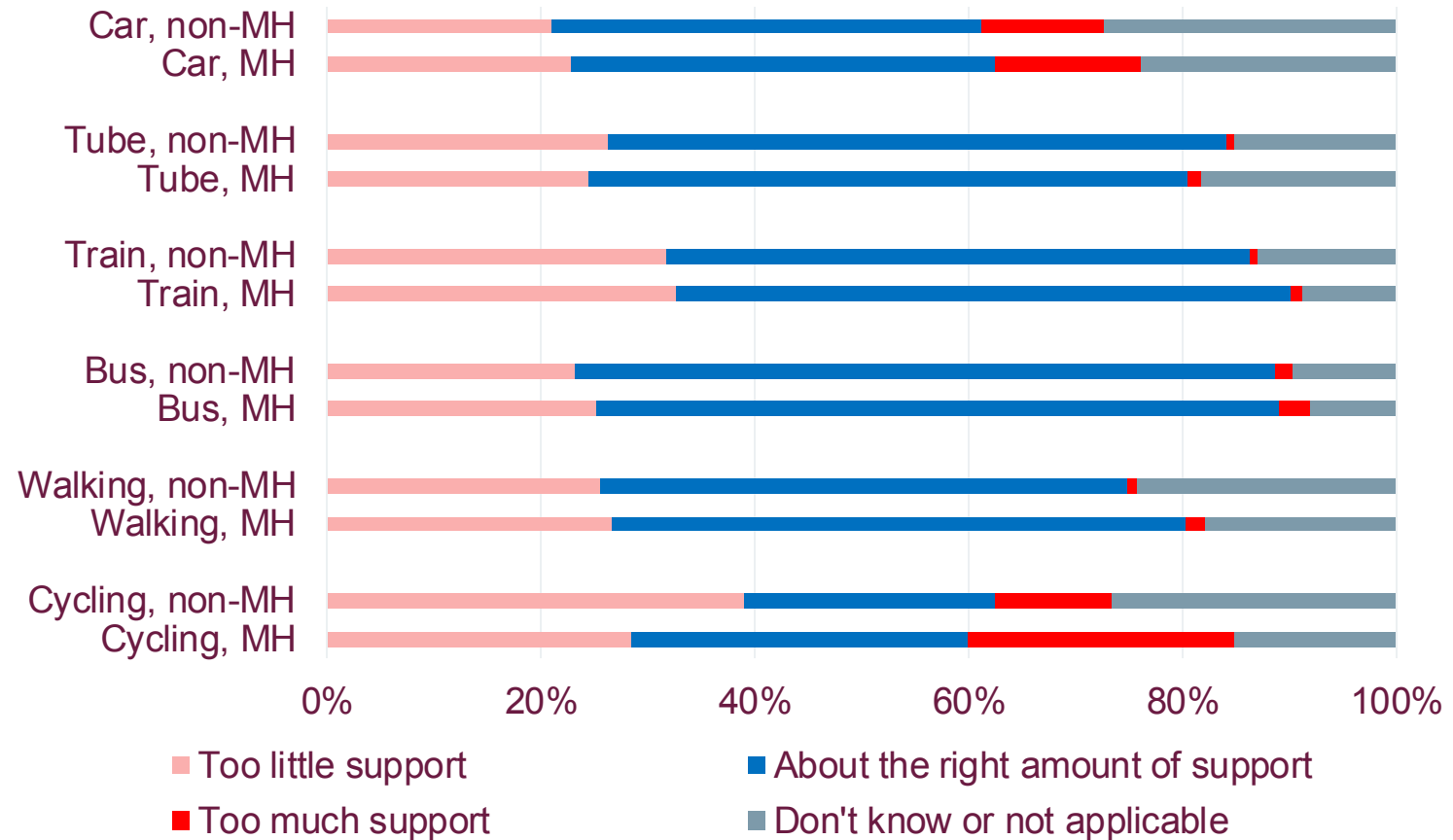


Source: TfL and University of Westminster results from Longitudinal survey, 2018.

Note: The chart shows 95 per cent confidence intervals. The chart controls for demographic differences between areas which might affect changes in active travel.

Behind the headline quantitative findings...

Views on institutional support for different transport modes



Analysis of attitudes to driving and cycling

2,128 individuals (62.0% of all respondents) provided comments at baseline and/or Wave 1 in response to one or more of the following questions:

- Is there anything you would like to add about travel in your local area?
- Is there anything you would like to add about your area?
- Is there anything you would like to add about the cycling the child or children may do? (respondents with children in the household)
- Is there anything you would like to add about how travel or your local area has changed since May 2016 (Wave 1 only)

Analysis conducted using NVivo to identify and code themes related to driving and/or cycling
Paper published in *Travel Behaviour & Society* (access-controlled but free version on my website www.rachelaldred.org)

References to cycling and/or driving mostly fitted within ‘pro’ and/or ‘anti’ categories

Pro- and anti- discourses: examples

‘Travelling by car is too highly restricted and penalised.’ (pro-car)

‘Too much attention to cycling to the detriment of motor vehicles, e.g. they have no insurance, no road tax no wing mirrors but have their own roadway which they do not contribute to.’ (anti-cycling, pro-car)

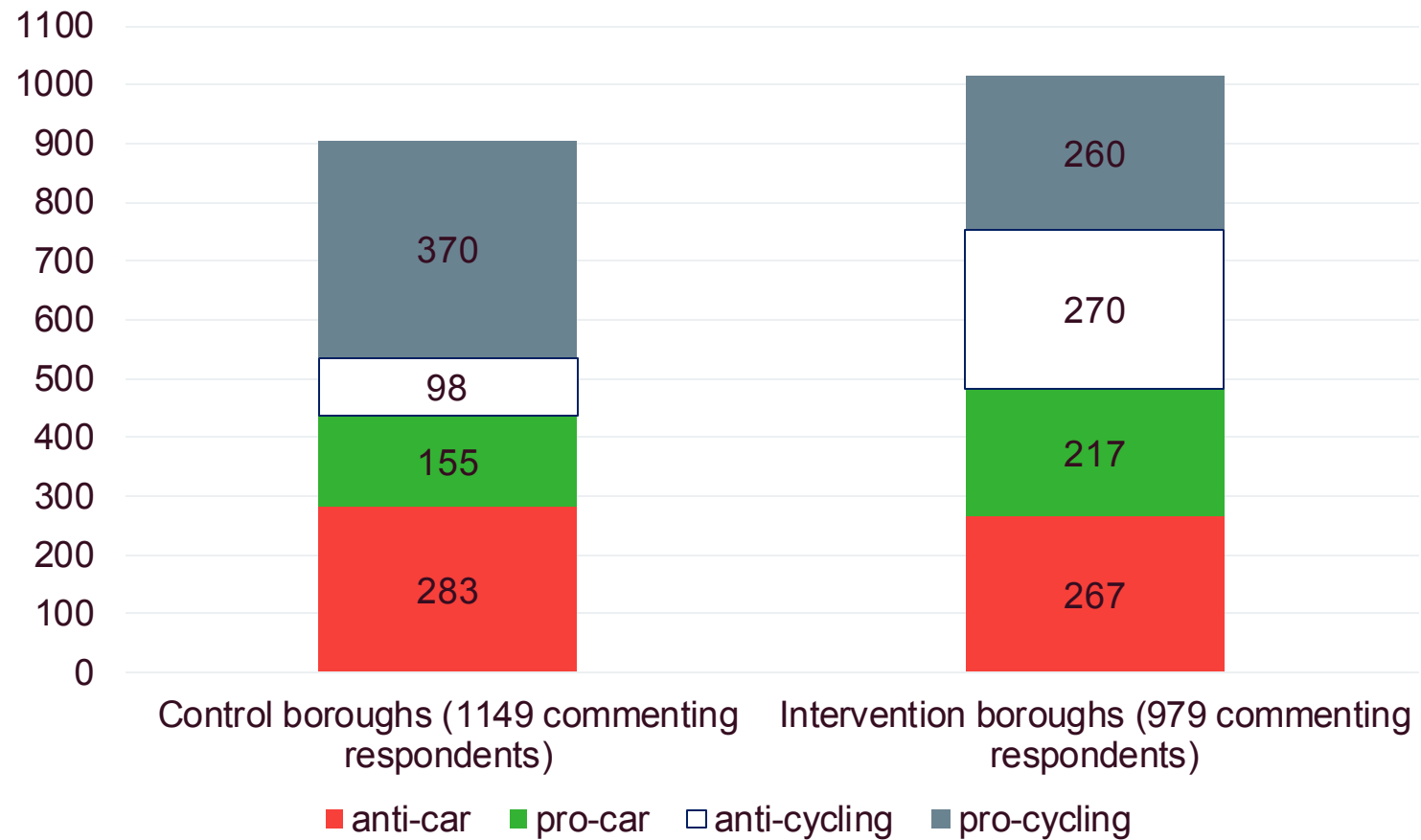
‘There are no cycle routes along the main routes in our area, instead the speed of car travel is increased further despite a problem with speeding.’ (anti-car, pro-cycling)

Summary of pro- and anti- comments

Pro and anti comments: summary

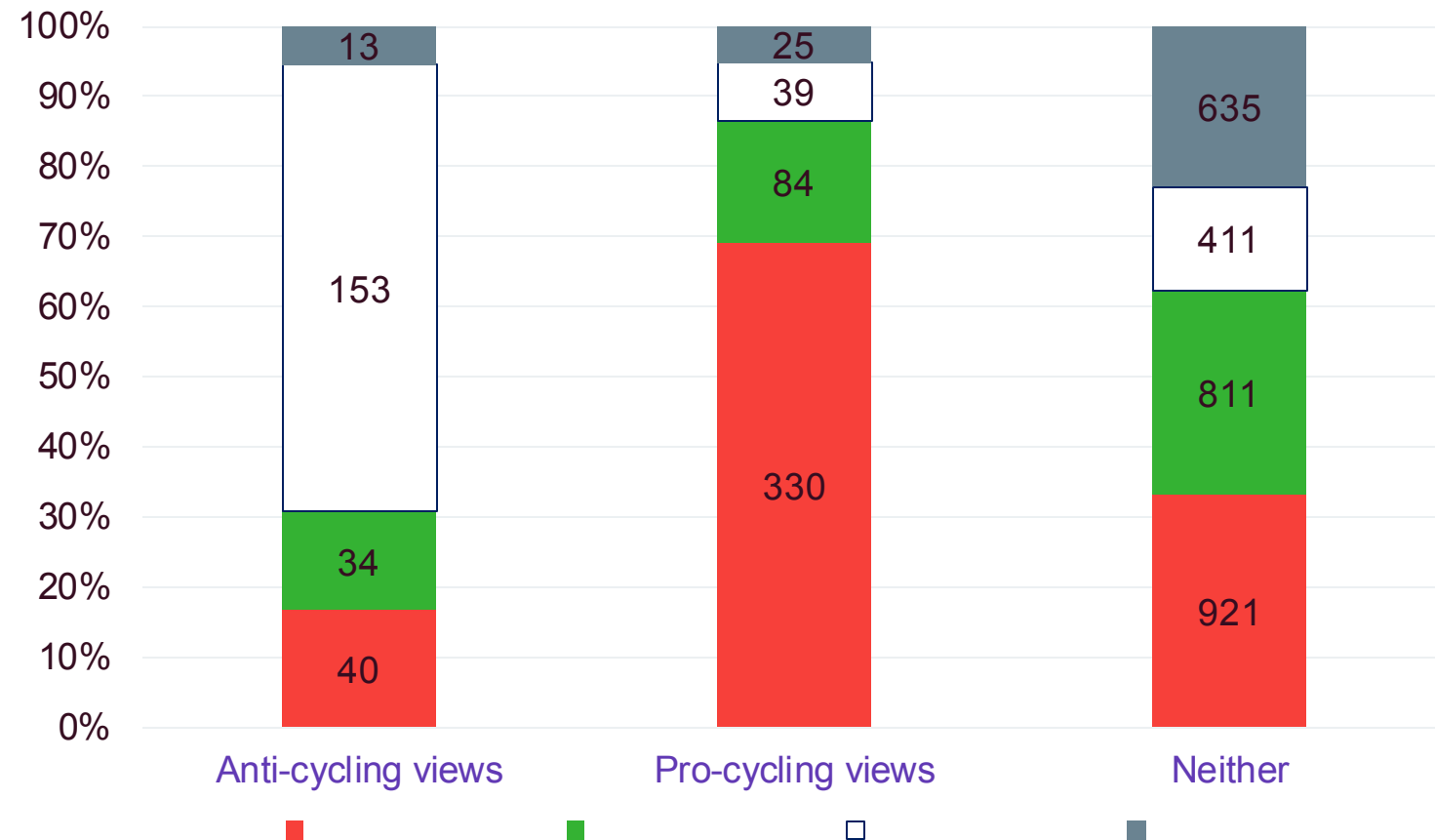
	Pro-car	Anti-car	Pro-cycling	Anti-cycling
Number of comments	484	747	934	503
Number of people commenting	368	550	630	368
% of all people commenting	17%	26%	30%	17%

Balance of comments by area

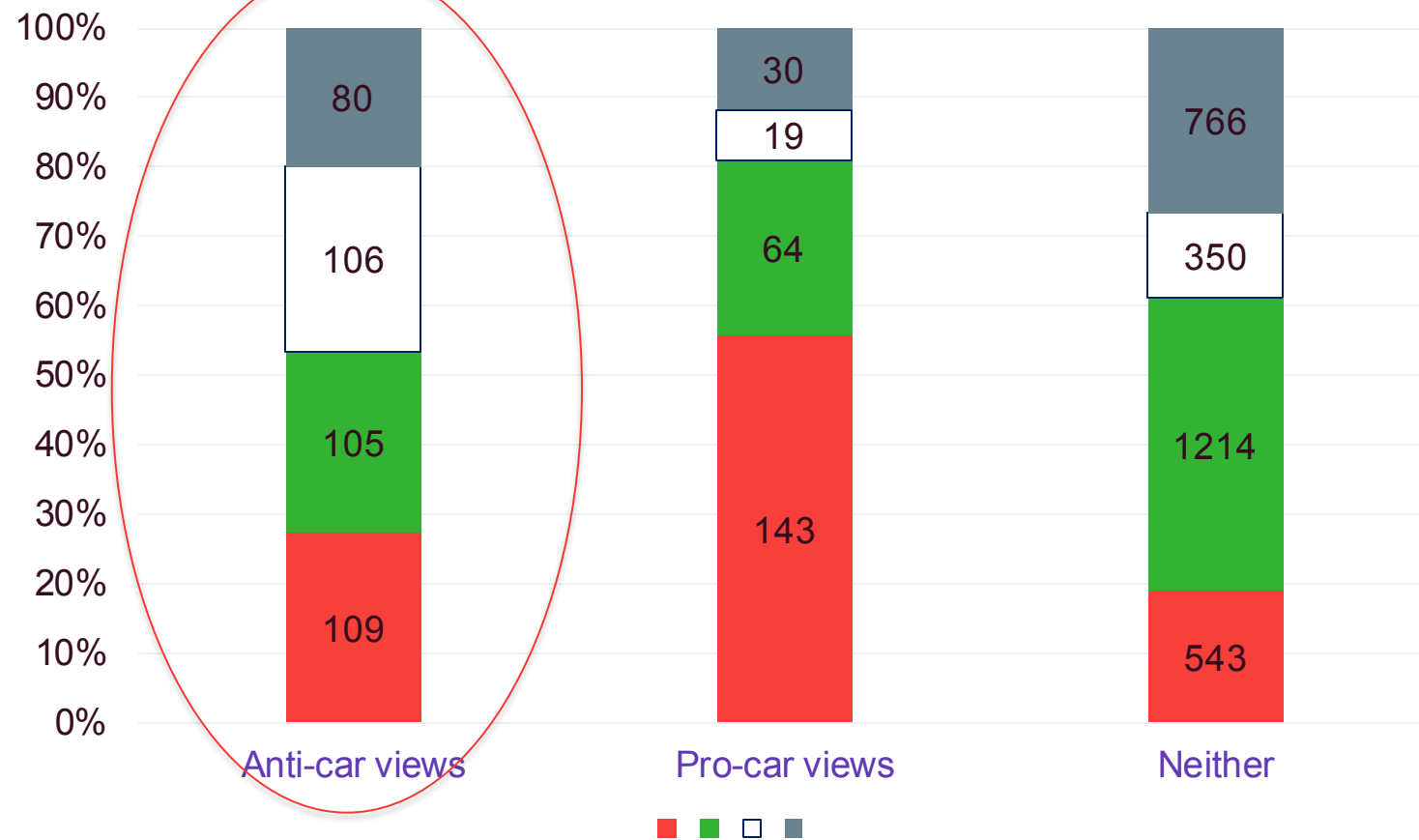


Do people with pro- or anti-views also support or oppose investment in the mode in question?

Associations between attitudes to cycling and opinions on institutional support for cycling



Associations between attitudes to driving and opinions on institutional support for driving



**It seems that attitudes to
problems related to car
use/driver behaviour are
contradictory...**

Problems related to car use/driver behaviour are well known, but often attributed to other causes

‘I am fed up with everything being centred around cyclists. Some people have to use their car and all the blocked off roads, cycle lanes etc cause traffic jams and therefore more pollution.’

‘I want speed bumps removed. They cause revving and increase pollution.’

‘Lack of commuter parking at tube and train stations or prohibitively high prices result in parking in local roads with cars going backwards and forwards searching for rare spaces and creating unnecessary traffic and pollution in residential areas.’

‘20 mph zones waste of time and dangerous. Have seen several examples of dangerous over-taking manoeuvres where the driver [in front] has been sticking to the 20 mph limit.’

A (small) minority expresses a strongly voiced pro-car narrative, often also explicitly anti-cycling

‘Public highways are there for the carriage of goods and people not to be blocked off so that they **cannot be used !!!!**’

‘We are a major capital and need taxis, vans, buses, overground and underground services to maintain the movement of our people in this city. With the best will in the world the above 4 modes of transport are vital for the capital to function. **Bikes do nothing for this** but seem to be given lots of supports.’

‘The local council seems to see drivers as a **cash cow** which it **milks with draconian parking restrictions and fixed penalties** for driving offences.’

Beyond a minority, implicitly anti-cyclist narratives are more widespread, as shown by comparing talk about bad driving & bad cycling.

Bad driving tended to be normalised, with the car rather than the driver (or person more broadly described) usually narrated as the subject...

For problematic parking: 103 references to cars, 47 to people, and only 7 to drivers.

Examples:

- ‘So little space left on the road to park that cars park in drive ways’
- ‘Parking is an issue, even though almost 0.7 mile from station, commuters still park’
- ‘Some drivers actually park on the pavement, so you have to walk in the road’

This was even the case for speeding, where unlike parking, a person is necessarily present...

For speeding, the balance was closer, although the most common attribution was still to a vehicle (79) rather than a driver (40) or person (28):

Examples:

- **Cars drive too fast**
- ‘My street is one way which means people drive down it at very high speed’
- ‘If the road is free, certain types of car drivers will go fast.’

For bad cycling, narratives overwhelmingly blamed the ‘cyclist’, not the vehicle or person...

For footway cycling 78 attributions were to ‘cyclists’, 8 to people, and 4 to bikes.

Examples:

‘CYCLES SHOULD HAVE SOME SORT OF TAX OR REGISTRATION, THEY RIDE ALL OVER THE PAVEMENTS AS WELL AS THE ROADS’

‘There are an increasing number of adults who, by ignorance or selfishness, seem to think they are also entitled to cycle on the pavement.’

‘There are many cycle paths in our area but they are seldom used and most of the cyclists ride either in the road, obstructing traffic, or on the pavements, causing danger to pedestrians. They are probably the most inconsiderate and dangerous of all road users.’

While bad driving was mostly attributed **to the vehicle** itself, bad cycling was attributed **to 'cyclists'** (not e.g. 'commuters', either)

Conclusions #1

The mismatch between awareness of the negative impacts of motor vehicles, and views about policy support for driving is of concern. The data suggests that **while many people are aware of the impacts motor vehicles can have on the local environment, this does not necessarily feed through into support for (perceived) restrictions on motor vehicle use** (which includes many pro-sustainable transport policies, where these reallocate space from driving to public transport, walking, and cycling)...

Conclusions #2

The mismatch or paradox is maintained by a belief that change in travel patterns is not possible, hence restricting motor traffic or reallocating space to other modes is pointless and counter-productive.

Policy-makers need to strengthen narratives supporting the need and potential for radical change in policy and behaviour, and to challenge cycling stigma.

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