

The Cycling System: Let's Make its Invisible Parts Visible!

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International discourse and exchange of experience show, that the most effective success factors for cycle use are often invisible ones:

- behind closed doors: at stations, in residential areas, in companies;
- immaterial: service, intersectoral co-operation, exchange of knowledge, tax system, legal framework;
- links: intermodality, responsibilities, financing;
- not directly related to cycling: land use, housing, health, school policy etc.

Also with greatest alertness, a person interested in another country's cycling system, will neither see anything of the employers' activities to stimulate cycling to work, nor will he/she come to know anything about the tax system, which can stimulate cycling to work - or just not. Does a sudden break-down of the bicycle cause a bigger problem for a daily cyclist? Is safe parking one's bicycle at home a major problem? Are policy makers and all officials dealing with cycling policy well prepared for their job? My repeated experience of dealing intensively with Dutch cycling is, that some elements of the cycling system are self-evident in The Netherlands, while they are completely unknown elsewhere (e.g. supervised cycle parking facilities at stations). Is different socialisation of cyclists and policy makers in different countries the reason, why these 'invisible elements' do not become topic of the agenda of (international) conferences? Does everybody keep it for granted, that the situation is the same as in his own country?

Focussing on the Dutch experience, this debate intends to give an input to the discussion of elements that should be part of cycling policies. It is an initiative for a systematic and active collection, international exchange of and debate of experience with these invisible measures. It intends to accelerate the debate of determining factors for success or failure of cycling policies.