

Social Identity and Cycling among Women: The Case of Tel Aviv-Jaffa



Presentation Structure

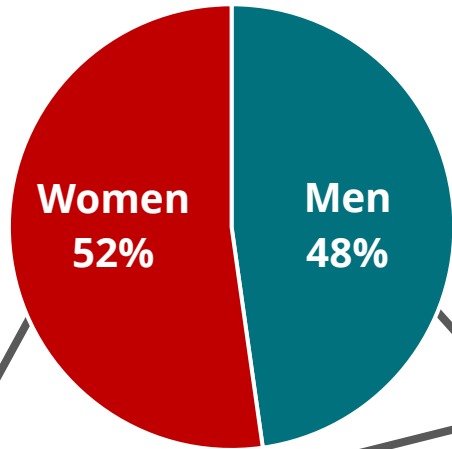
- Overview
- The lens through which I examined under-representation among cyclists
- Findings: Social identity and women representation among cyclists
- Conclusions and policy recommendations

Overview



Representation Ratio Index

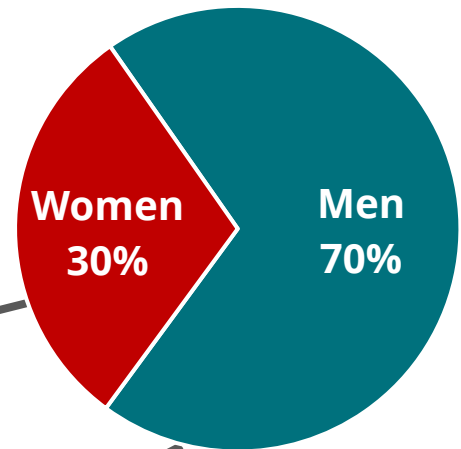
All Trips Distribution by Gender



$$\frac{30\% \text{ \% Women in } \underline{\text{Cycling Trips}}}{52\% \text{ \% Women in } \underline{\text{All Trips}}} = 0.6$$



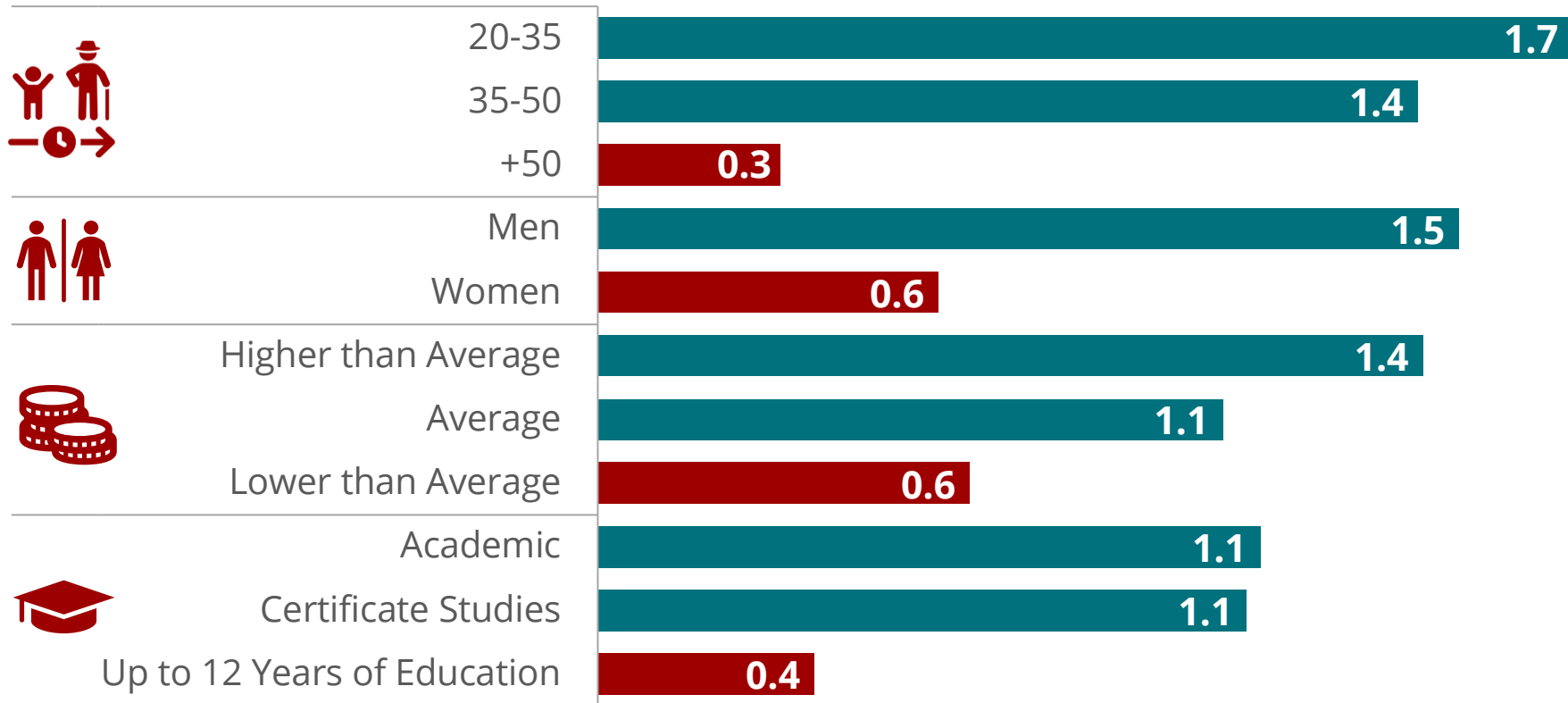
Cycling Trips Distribution by Gender



$$\frac{70\% \text{ \% Men in } \underline{\text{Cycling Trips}}}{48\% \text{ \% Men in } \underline{\text{All Trips}}} = 1.5$$

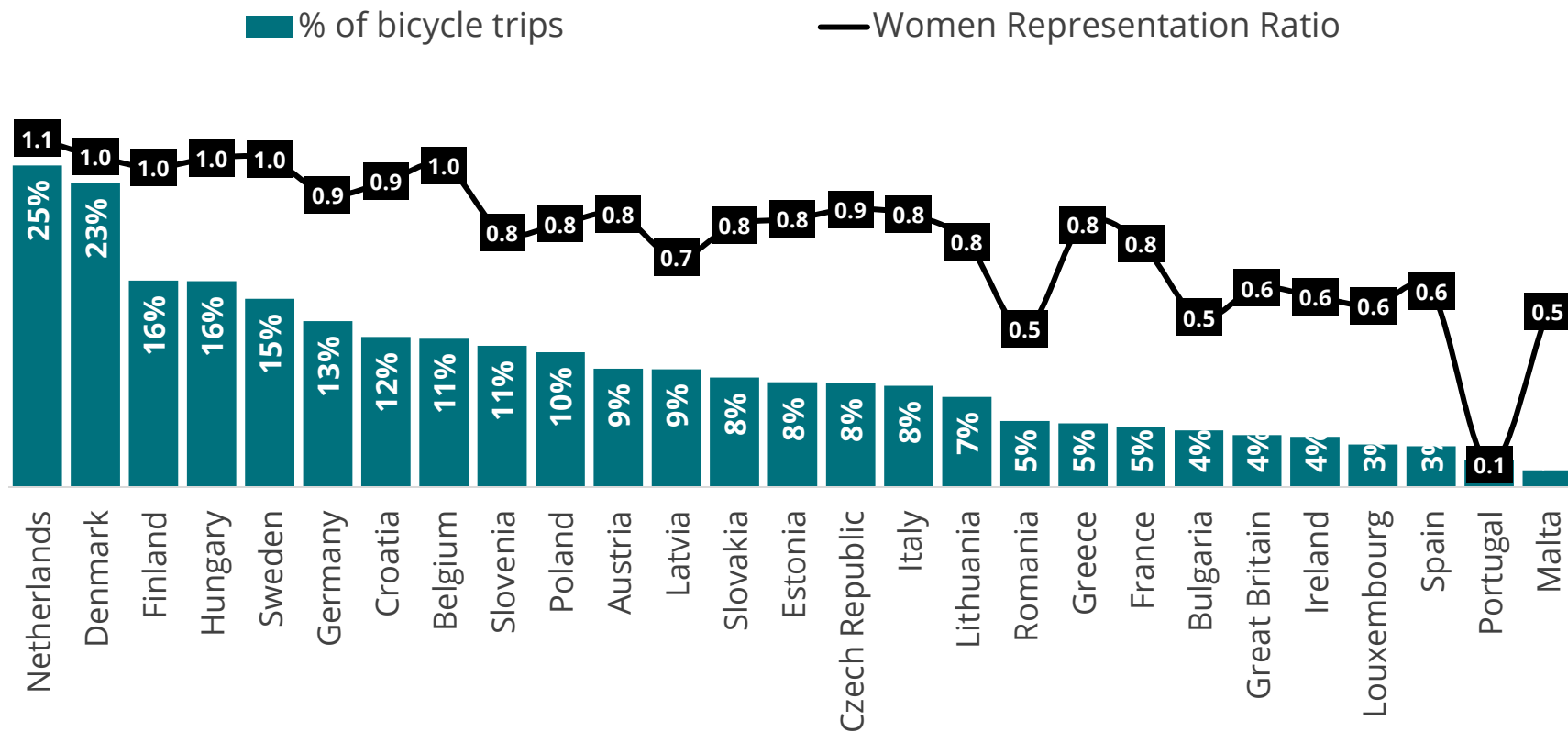


Over- and under- representation among cyclists in Tel Aviv-Jaffa

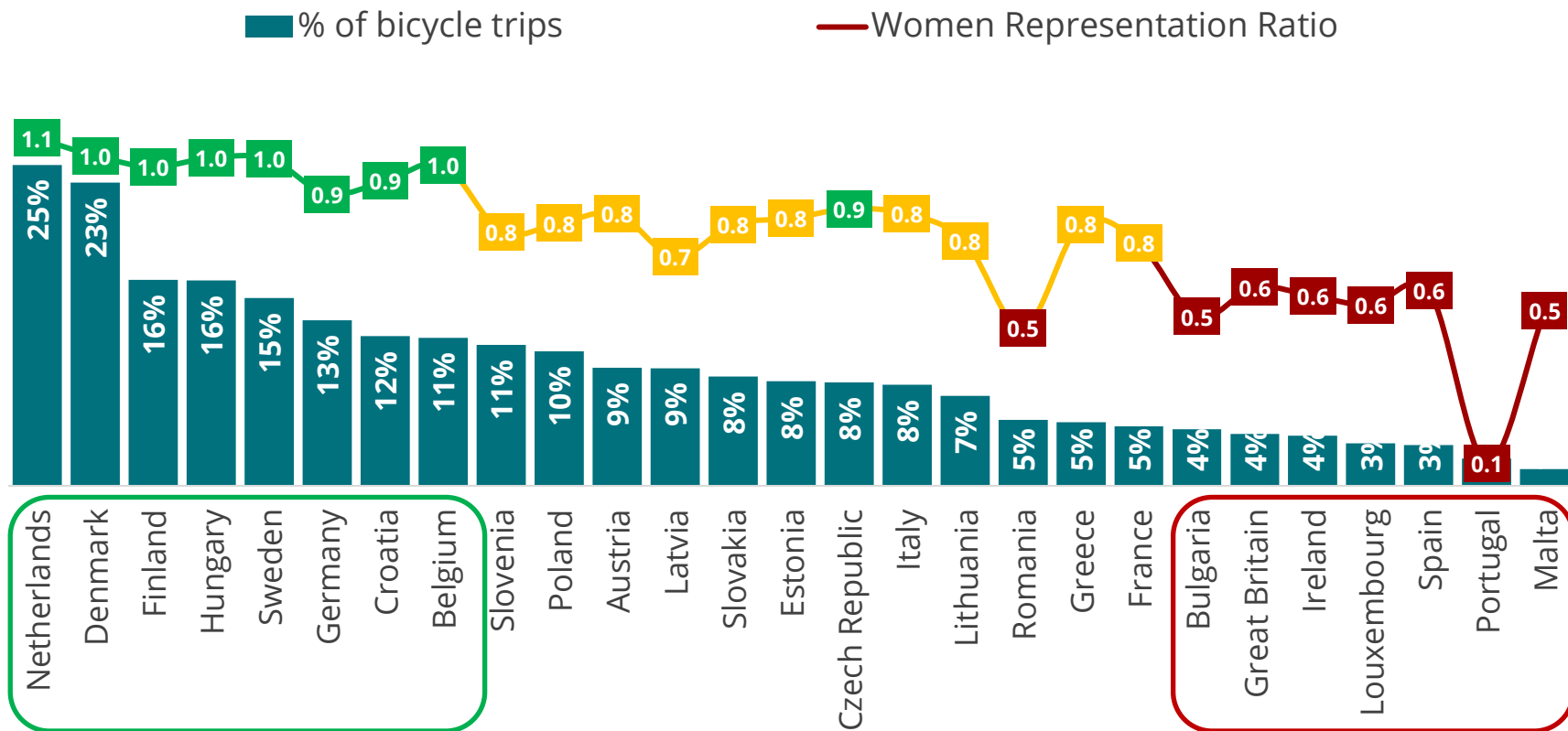


Source: self-analysis Tel Aviv-Jaffa modal split and cycling survey, 2018

In countries with a low-cycling mode share women are more severely under-represented among cyclists



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Barriers to cycling among women in the literature

- Women perceive traffic risks as greater than men (Emond et al., 2009; Heesch et al., 2012; Aldred et al., 2017)
- Concerns of bicycle maintenance and theft poses greater barrier for women (Deakin et al., 2018)
- Childcare and shopping increase the complexity of trips (Bonham & Wilson, 2012; Dickinson et al., 2003)



Barriers to cycling among women in the literature

- Higher cycling levels in the UK were not related to an increase in women's representation (Aldred et al., 2016; Green et al., 2010)
- Women are less likely to cycle to work than men (van Bekkum et al., 2011; Garrard et al., 2012; Damant-Sirois & El-Geneidy, 2015)
- Women hold more negative perceptions towards cycling barriers (van Bekkum et al., 2011)



The symbolic meaning of cycling affects cycling mode choice

- In low-cycling rich countries cycling is as a symbol of resistance against the dominant car culture and of 'green' lifestyle (Furness, 2005; Horton, 2006; Pelzer, 2010; Aldred, 2013)
- The bicycle is often perceived as a threat on low-income and ethnic minorities' identity (Steinbach et al., 2011)
- For higher-income cycling often supports their sense of 'who they wish to be' (Anantharaman, 2017; Steinbach et al., 2011)

The symbolic meaning of cycling affects cycling mode choice

- Socio-cultural determinants are more powerful in low-cycling countries (Aldred & Jungnickel, 2014; Pelzer, 2010)
- In high-cycling contexts cycling is culturally 'invisible' and (almost) all social groups are evenly represented among cyclists (Oosterhuis, 2016; Furness, 2005; Horton, 2006; Pelzer, 2010; Aldred, 2013)
- Incorporating SIA into the TPB assist in capturing motivational factors relevant to cycle commuting (Lois et al., 2015)

The lens through which I examined under-representation among cyclists



To increase cycling levels, understanding of infrastructure and individuals' perceptions are required



These aspects received much attention in research

However, behavior is also influenced by social aspects, such as social identity



When people are categorized as group members, they internalize it as a part of their self-concept and form a shared group identity

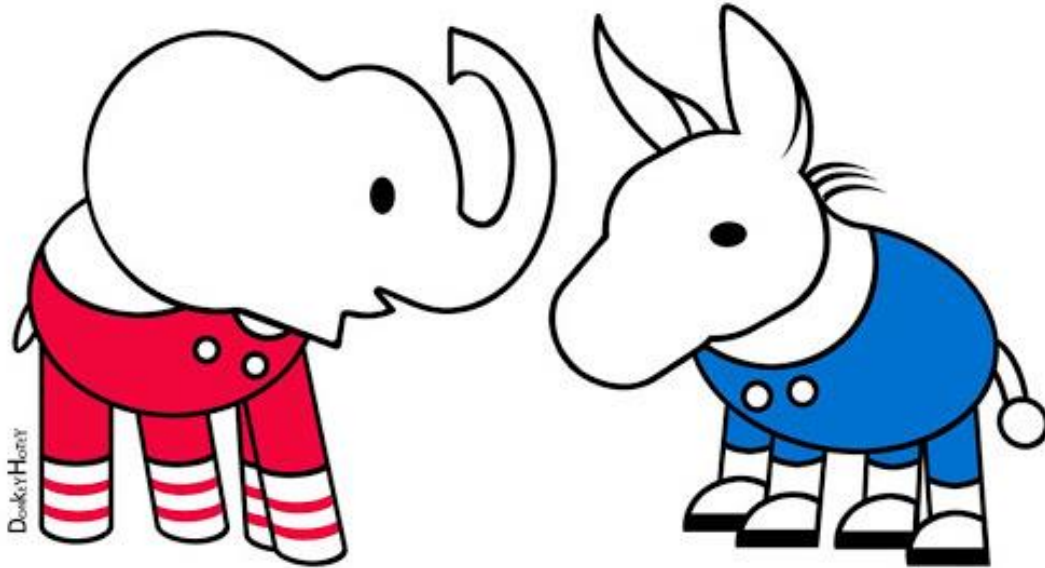
(Tajfel, 1974; Turner et al., 1987, 1991; Reynolds, Subašić, & Tindall, 2015)



**The stronger the identification with the group,
the stronger the group's influence on behavior**



"us" vs. "them"



Who "we" are and who "they" are guide us which behaviours are considered normative and accepted

Through the lens of the "Social Identity Approach" I explore:
**How does a person's social identity shape their
perception of cycling as a mode of transport?**



Comparative approach to understand impact of social identity on cycling uptake

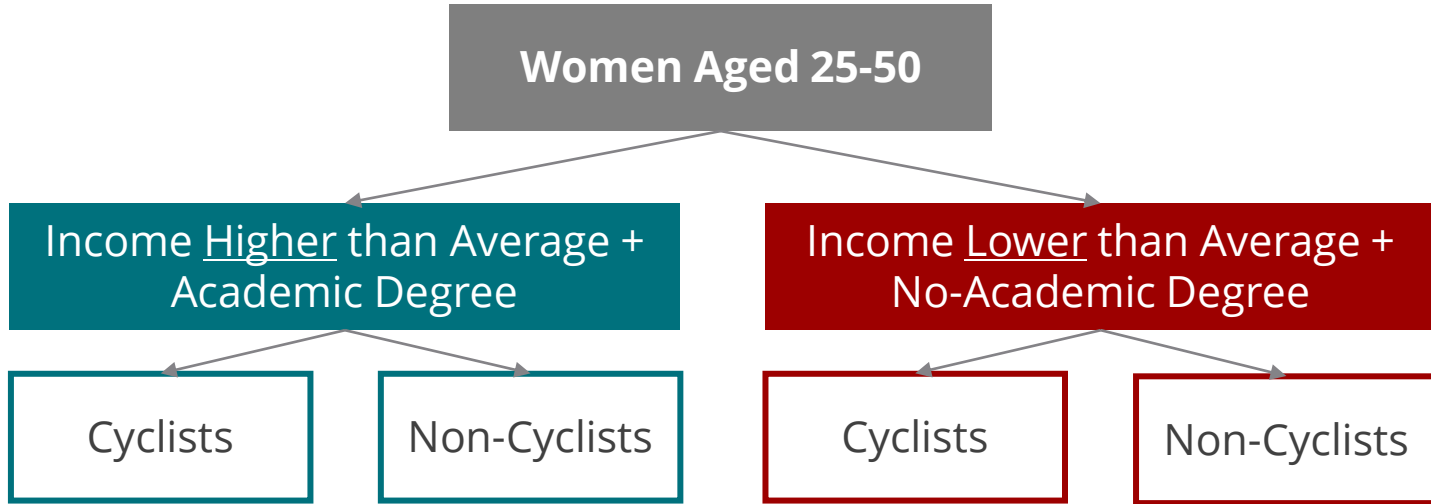


Image of cyclists

Who can see herself as a cyclist and of which kind?



I asked the interviewees to characterize the image of the woman who cycles the various types of 'bicycles' common in Tel Aviv-Jaffa

Regular Bicycle



E-Scooter



E-Bike



Age	Young / Young mother
Income & Education	Mid or mid-high income Academic degree / an artist
Spatial Identification	‘Tel-Avivian’ Lives in the city center
Lifestyle	Lives an active and healthy lifestyle
Style	Cool; Hipster “When she cycles it looks 'natural'“
Political agenda	Environmentally & socially aware Acknowledges the damage of private cars to the city and the environment



Regular cycling is associated with 'Tel Avivians' – a distinct social category that some perceive as threatening – and not as something that 'everyone does'

Age	Younger (16-25 years old) “Fearless youth”
Income & Education	-
Spatial Identification	Lives in the outskirts Mainly in the northern outskirts
Lifestyle	-
Style	Contemporary style
Political agenda	-



The e-scooter user's image is perceived as more inclusive, possibly due to its main use as a service which is strengthening its functional image

Age	Young man
Income & Education	Low-income / Arab / refugee or high-income (not in the middle)
Spatial Identification	Lives in the outskirts
Lifestyle	Lazy lifestyle
Style	“Douchebag” / tough ‘ars’
Political agenda	Thoughtless / egoistic



E-bikes are identified with men and as a tough and highly-dangerous practice that women from all groups often tend to avoid

In high-cycling contexts cycling is culturally 'invisible' and (almost) all social groups are evenly represented among cyclists

(Oosterhuis, 2016; Furness, 2005; Horton, 2006; Pelzer, 2010; Aldred, 2013)



In Tel Aviv-Jaffa cycling is a part of someone's identity

Lower income often do not see cycling as a considerable mode of transport

We are spoiled people! we have the car

“The bicycle is not for me! I don't do any sports except of chasing the children at home. My children also hardly cycle. Maybe on Yom Kippur. [...] We are spoiled people, you know?! We have the car that takes us where we need and when we need.”

(Meirav, 45, mid-low income)

Me cycling?! I'm not the type!

“Me?! cycling?! I'm not the type'. I have such a stigma that cyclists are nerds... I don't understand it – If you have parking at work and at home, why would you commute by bicycle?! [...] I think it's... I won't say stupid, but... unnecessary. Yes, I think it's unnecessary.”

(Moran, 35, mid-low income)

On the contrary, regular cycling is considered "natural" for "Tel Avivians", but some avoid it as they perceive it as dangers and tough



For cyclists, cycling regular bicycles is "natural" for them to do

"When I just started cycling, it seemed very natural to everyone that this what I do"

(Goni, 28)

"[The women who cycle regular bicycle] would probably look like me... Tel Avivian, hipster kind of style... but let's move forward to next question – I'm not comfortable with describing myself"
(Avishag, 33)



Non-cyclists see it the same, but also as tough experience

"[My association of 'cycling' is that] I really want to be one of those women who cycles, but it scares me too much" (Orit, 31)

"First of all, I love her (laughs) [...] she is hipster, young [...], looks Tel Avivian – born and raised or fitted in nicely (laughs) [...] but cycling in Tel Aviv require consciousness of 'owning the space' - to have your fists ready for battle." (Abigail, 30)

Sense of Confidence and Women's Representation among Cyclists



Most of the cyclist interviewees trust themselves in movement in public space

"I trust myself a lot in cycling! In driving I also have very high sense of confidence. Too much even (laughs)." (Neta, 48, mid-low income)

"I really like cycling! When I cycle, I feel like a Superwomen. It is really easy for me because I'm really good in maneuvering." (Ofir, 31, mid-high-income)

"I am athletic, sharp and I know how to maneuver... and these are qualities that give me a significant advantage for cycling." (Sivan, 49, mid-low income)



"I'm like my mother – we have no fear, and our independence is above all! My mom raised me to be an independent woman! To trust myself!"
(Yael, 30, mid-high income)

Accordingly, most of the non-cyclist interviewees do not feel confident enough to cycle under the current conditions

"It's not for me all this maneuvering around people and cars... It requires a high-level of alertness and sharpness that I don't possess" (Moriah, 31, low-income)

"I don't trust myself with this kind of things. I'm a bit of a dozy person and I feel that **cycling in Tel-Aviv requires a high level of sharpness and concentration**" (Orit, 31, mid-income)



"The world signals to women that they cannot trust themselves; that they're vulnerable and weak; and that may be part of the reason why **women cycle less than men**" (Na'ama, 34, mid-high-income)

Some women perceive cycling in Tel Aviv as involved with “struggle over space” that some are not willing to take part in

"Cycling in Tel Aviv requires a mindset of owning the space, to have your fists ready for battle, [...] and gender-wise, men are still more ready to do so. [...] It's a constant struggle over space and for me it's a very difficult experience" (Abigail, 30, mid-high income)



"Cycling in Tel Aviv is like a jungle! It is a tough masculine experience!" (Calanit, 37, mid-high income)

Policy Recommendations



To allow cycling of under-represented groups in general and of women in particular...

1

As cycling is often perceived as "not meant" for some, proper infra alone is probably insufficient, at least in the short- to mid- term



2

Act to normalize cycling as a 'socially neutral' practice that 'everybody does' by Initiating dedicated communication campaigns



3

Use marketing tools to encourage the use of e-bikes by people with unique needs while emphasizing its functional benefits



Thank you!