

# VELO-CITY FALCO LECTURE PRIZE WINNING PAPERS 2000

*‘Does the amount and quality of cycle parking facilities have any influence on the amount of cycle use? If so, to what extent? How particularly might the parking facilities at the start, intermediate stops en route, and final destination influence the choice to cycle?’*

## FIRST PRIZE

Jaana Salo, Finland

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## SECOND PRIZE

Michael Groll, UK

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## THIRD PRIZE

Annie-Claude Sebban, France

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Third prize winning paper  
by  
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France

The popularity of cycling has increased very considerably in France during the past five years. This rise is due to many different factors: the Paris public transport strike (1995), the Air Law (1996) relating to quality, Urban Transport Masterplans (PDU). More generally, it also relates to several urban, socio-psychological and economic trends such as; heightened respect for the environment, unemployment and financial problems, the changing image of the bicycle, air pollution, traffic congestion, noise and city planning problems. Furthermore, cycling facilities were built, including the construction of bike paths, the opening of bus lanes to cyclists, greenways, and cycle parking.

In general, it is difficult to assess the impact of such facilities on the growth of cycling. To understand how bicycle facilities are used is very important information for any local authority wanting to promote the use of bicycles. Not only it does prove that bikes are a worthwhile investment for them, but well-used bike parking facilities can also justify further resources being spent on a bike policy for a local authority.

Therefore, the following questions can be asked about cycle parking: what does a good quality cycle parking facility offer? What criteria should be chosen to judge them? Moreover, can it be said that having good quality cycle parking facilities will generate growth in the use of bicycles? Moreover, what methodological tools could be created to measure this potential influence on cycling?

To answer these questions, I have chosen to use a multi-methodological approach. In the first part of this discussion, I will define very precisely what is a good quality cycle parking facility. Secondly, I will focus on different methodological possibilities in order to evaluate in specific locations, the growth over a period of time in bicycle usage generated by cycle parking facilities.

In order to define precisely what a good quality cycle parking facility should offer, I have based my approach on several French surveys.<sup>1</sup> These surveys were made by both public and private companies, and looked at different types of cycle parking locations: educational establishments, public buildings and stations. A complementary survey was also made which asked people to define the important criteria they used to define good quality cycle parking facilities.<sup>2</sup> From these findings, I can propose the following criteria, ranging from the most to the least important in descending order :

## Criteria to define good quality cycle parking facilities

| N° | Criteria   | Definitions   | Examples   |
|----|--|---|--|
| 1  | Cycle parking should be <i>located where there is public surveillance</i> , be it active or passive. | In, or close to busy places. Where people are walking, cycling or driving, close to the cycle park, in front of shops, offices, public buildings.   | Pedestrian street, public spaces, college, university, or company reception areas. |
| 2  | Cycle parking should be <i>located very close to the cyclists' destination</i> .                     | A few metres away from the cyclists' destination in order to avoid losing time, or having to look further away for a non-authorized parking space.  | In front of a library, a shop, a cinema.   |
| 3  | Cycle parking should have a <i>specific type of security system</i> .                                | The cycle parking should enable the front wheel and frame to be secured together, the back wheel should also be able to be locked to a bar.   |  |
| 4  | Cycle parking should have <i>good lighting</i> .   | Situated above or at the side, the lighting should be as close as possible to the cycle park (10 metres distance maximum).  | Taxi, train station entrance.  |
| 5  | Cycle parking should <i>be covered</i> .   | The roof protects the bikes from rain, snow and the strong rays of the sun.   | In metal sheet, wood, plexiglass, or concrete or cement                            |
| 6  | Cycle parking should include <i>aesthetic concerns</i> .   | Good design, choice of colour and cleanliness make cycle parking more attractive for cyclists.  | Cycle parking policy of the RATP public transport system (Paris, France).          |
| 7  | Cycle parking should be <i>well indicated by street directions</i> .                                 | The more that cycle parking is well indicated in a city, the more that access to it is facilitated. It also helps to ensure the facility is well used.  |  |
| 8  | Cycle parking should be <i>well coordinated within a local bicycle network</i> .                     | A city with a complete bike network should have a good cycling practice. Cycle parking should be situated on this network, at specific locations, chosen according to a cycle parking masterplan. | French examples of bicycle masterplan: Montpellier, Lille.                         |
| 9  | Cycle parking should be planned, in line with a <i>cycle parking masterplan</i> .                    | Cycle parking should be on offer everywhere in a city: stations, hospitals, post and unemployment offices,  | French examples of cycle parking masterplan: Paris, Chambéry, Strasbourg.          |

## Criteria to define good quality cycle parking facilities (continued)

| N° | Criteria   | Definitions  | Examples                              |
|----|--|--|---------------------------------------|
|    |  | town-halls, police stations, gyms, stadiums, swimming pools, libraries, theatres, cinemas, conference halls, show and exhibition venue places, tourist offices, museums, shopping centres, supermarkets, market places, pedestrian and commercial streets, pubs, cafés and tobacco kiosks, educational establishments. |                                       |
| 10 | A <i>map</i> of the cycle parking facilities should exist.               | To locate efficiently the cycle parking that one can use for one's next stop.  | Example of French city map: Grenoble. |
| 11 | A cycle parking should offer an <i>optimum amount of security ties</i> . | Cycle parking should offer from three to dozens of parking places, having taken into consideration the number of bikes parked illegally, the number of cyclists, the habits of cyclists, and the evolution of the bicycle masterplan.  |                                       |

All these quality criteria have one theme in common: the fact that they all relate to the risk of the bike being stolen, which together with a cyclist's risk of having an accident, is a major socio-psychological curb on the use of the bicycle in France. In fact, optimising these cycle parking quality criteria means not only providing a good quality bike parking facility, but also an efficient way of avoiding the risk of bike theft.

But to what extent could one conclude that having introduced numerous, and good quality cycle parking facilities that the numbers of people cycling begin to be influenced? I will now, in the second part, focus on this specific point to decide, whether or not, the amount and quality of cycle parking facilities which are provided has any influence on the figures of cycle use?

A series of methodological tools will be created to measure this potential influence on cycling, because the usual approach (with national statistics, household surveys . . .) is inadequate.

## But what exactly does the expression to "influence the choice to cycle" mean?

First of all, I will define it as an *increase of the desire to cycle by people*. And the action of choosing is determined because people are choosing bicycle from many different modes of transport. So I consider that they are also choosing whether they will contribute to pollute

can imagine strongly, thanks to other similar methods that we have already tested (as a researcher and a consultant), that it would give enough figures and socio-psychological information about the impact of a bicycle parking facility.

It is generally difficult to evaluate the impact of a bicycle parking facility on the growth of cycle use. But this evaluation is always necessary, and sometimes strategic, for any local authority wanting to promote the use of bicycles in its area. This is because it needs to prove that bikes are a worthwhile investment, and also to justify, thanks to figures and socio-psychological approaches, that bicycle parking facilities are appreciated by cyclists. To define good quality cycle parking facilities, many criteria must be respected such as; a good location, public surveillance, a specific kind of security system, good lighting, a cover, consideration of aesthetic concerns, directions provided, coordination with a local bicycle network, a cycle parking masterplan, a map of the locations, and an optimum number of parking points.

After having respected all these criteria, a local authority can hope to influence the choice to cycle. It means that, sooner or later, these bicycle parking facilities will increase the cycling practice, but this influence must be proved.

Simple theoretical quantitative and qualitative surveys, in a multi-methodological approach, can be used to evaluate any eventual increasing of the cycle usage: counting the number of bicycles in everyday city traffic before and after the installation of the bicycle parking facility, calculating the parking occupancy rate and the bike turn-round rate, and questioning cyclists.

With figures and socio-psychological information about the impact of a bicycle parking facility, a local authority will be able to prove whether bicycle parking facilities were a worthwhile investment or not. But they should be patient, because a bicycle facility's impact can take months to be seen, and sometimes, unfortunately, this cycling impact will never come . . .

To sum up, if they want to be really sure that their work has any positive influence on the choice to cycle, what can a local authority do? Is planning and installing bicycle parking facilities, and then seeking to assess its influence on cycling enough? Certainly not. Cycle parking must be systematically linked to the creation of other bicycle facilities such as; bicycle paths, bus lanes which can be used by cyclists, or traffic-calmed neighbourhoods (e.g. the French 30 km/h zones). Anyway, one can certainly say that a bicycle parking facility is always a good way to begin a bicycle policy.

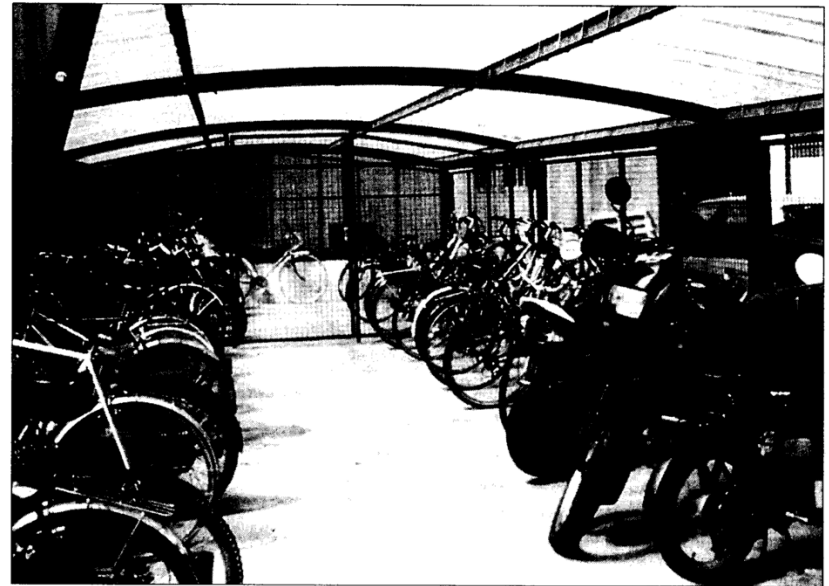
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<sup>1</sup> Altermodal Bike Consulting. 1998-1999, Bike parking surveys in : Isère (38), Hérault (34), Yvelines (78). Chambéry, France. SNCF. 1999, National bike parking survey in 80 main train stations, IGP – AM, Pôle Environnement, Paris, France.

<sup>2</sup> Sebban, A-C. 1999, A quick survey on bike parking quality (on 37 people), Paris, France.



Nantes station (France), 1999. An SNCF locked and covered bicycle parking facility: as soon as the bike safety is provided, cyclists use bicycle parking.



Massy station (France), 1999. The typical bicycle parking of RATP (the Parisian public transport company). It is done systematically with research on colour and form. The RATP is planning to create 1000 bicycle racks of this kind in Paris suburban's regional train stations.