

## **Where can cycling lift the common good? Regional political culture and fossil capitalism play a role**

### **Abstract:**

This article contributes to the study of critical vélomobilities by exploring an understudied aspect of cycling justice, namely the political and cultural contexts that support cycling as a common good. The common good refers to the advancement of collective rather than individual interests. I analyze whether or not Canadians support cycling as a common good, drawing on a survey conducted by Angus Reid in 2018. My analysis focuses on whether such moral support for cycling varies by region in Canada and the possible role played by the country's deeply regionalized political cultures. These cultures, rooted in diverging histories, competing ideologies and conflicting relations with fossil fuels, may shape this moral support alongside other factors which I control for and explore, such as gender and social class. The article concludes that, beyond the effects of these other factors, divisions between eastern and western political cultures in Canada form a salient context for cycling justice and the assembly of cycling as a common good.

### **1. Introduction**

The growth of cycling in the twenty-first century has reconfigured cycling into an object of prolific social science, much of which emphasizes the social determinants of cycling behaviour from the perspectives of public health, engineering, psychology and marketing (Savan et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2010; Teschke et al., 2012; Spotswood et al., 2015). Such scholarship has done much to explain where and why people cycle and estimate cycling's accessibility (Houde et al., 2018), but it often reinforces a sense that cycling consists of individual, utilitarian decisions about getting from point A to point B, overlooking how cycling is culturally and politically assembled and invested with moral value in concert with wider norms and collective practices. Critical vélomobilities offers an alternative style of sociologically-informed research that illuminates cycling, not so much as a marketable behaviour or healthful choice as an historically and geographically situated social practice (Horton et al., 2007; Watson, 2013). For critical vélomobilities, cycling figures as both a product and producer of unequal power relations and "mobility justice" (Sheller, 2018). This article develops critical vélomobilities by advancing the analysis of cycling justice (Golub et al., 2016). I explore an understudied aspect of this concept, namely the political and cultural contexts which help bring about cycling justice in the first place by supporting cycling as a common good (Freudendal-Pedersen, 2015; Scott, 2020). To this end, I examine moral support for cycling through the lens of regional political culture (Wiseman, 2007).

To explore how regional political culture may shape moral support for cycling as a common good, I examine regional differences on the question of whether or not Canadians believe bike lanes in general make a community a better place to live (Angus Reid 2018). This question refers to a form of morality that relates the goodness of cycling to the common good, the betterment of "community" rather than the individual. It is only one way to measure moral support for cycling, but of an important kind that has not been modelled before. Because of the deeply regionalized nature of political culture in Canada and its distinctive provincial identities (Lipset, 1972[1950]; Wiseman 2007), regional differences in support for cycling as a common good are likely to reflect the impact of political culture. Historically and institutionally rooted in provinces and larger (multi-province) east-west divides, regional political cultures in Canada convey divergent histories, competing ideologies and conflicting relationships with resources, especially oil and gas (Adkin, 2016). Recognizing that regional political culture may influence moral support for cycling

in tandem with other factors, I control for and explore the effects of gender, social class and other variables relevant for cycling participation and equity. The article concludes that, over and above the effects of these controls, regional differences help determine moral support for bike lanes, suggesting that regional political culture may act as an important context for cycling justice.

## 2. Engaging cycling justice with political culture

Critical v elomobilities draws attention to the nature of cycling justice, which helps animate, and form a particular kind of, mobility justice (Sheller, 2018). For example Sheller (2018: 20), while defining mobility justice as “a process of emergent relationships in which the interplay of diverse (im)mobilities forms a foundational part,” cites the Slow Roll Chicago Bicycle Movement which argues: “bicycle equity requires the elimination of unfair privilege that has been gained via historical oppression and at the disadvantaged position of others” (Sheller, 2018: 28). Social equity figures centrally within cycling justice. In their book, *Bicycle Justice and Urban Transformation*, Golub et al. (2016) link justice for cycling with contesting the racialized production of bike lanes as “white lanes” that deepen social class divides by promoting cycling gentrification and excluding women, who cycle less than men in low-cycling nations like the U.S., U.K. and Canada (Pucher et al., 2011; Winters et al., 2007). Gender inequities in cycling reflect broader inequalities in domestic labour and childcare (including chauffeuring and escorting children), a lack of representation of women in positions of power over planning and a lack of dedicated bike lanes separated from cars which women and children prefer and perceive as safer for cycling (Prati et al., 2019; Prati, 2018; Garrard et al., 2012; Aldred et al., 2016).

While cycling justice scholarship identifies axes and infrastructures of cycling inequity, it offers less insight into the moral construction of cycling as something good for humanity (and other living beings, too)(Freudendal-Pedersen, 2015; Scott, 2020). The general or ‘common good’ describes a form of morality (i.e. evaluation of goodness or badness) that transcends narrow self-interests or judgements that fail to account for, or exclude, the flourishing of some others. The survey (Angus Reid, 2018) from which I draw the question of whether “In general, bike lanes make a community a better place to live” includes other questions on moral judgements that do not appeal to the common good, asking for example whether drivers or cyclists deserve more blame for conflict on the road. The distinguishing feature of moral judgements based on a common good—which, in reality, people define in a plurality of contradictory ways, depending on the situation (e.g. technical efficiency, profitability, environmental sustainability, social equity)—rests upon the idea of a common humanity wherein *all* persons can flourish (Boltanski and Th evenot, 2006[1991]; Scott, 2020). It is possible respondents will conflate their own self interest with the collective interest. However, because the question in which I am interested focuses on making “a community a better place to live” and prods respondents to qualify their judgement of bike lanes “in general” rather than personal terms, it is reasonable to assume that responses to some degree transcend narrow self-interest. In short, this question offers an opportunity to analyze support for cycling as something good in general, over and above personal goods but also the plurality of specific, contradictory ways in which people define the common good.

Political cultures at the regional level in Canada between provinces and groups of provinces may enable and constrain moral support for cycling as a common good. Scholarship on Canadian political culture (Lipset, 1972[1950]; Wiseman, 2007) shows how its regionalized character took shape since colonization through formative experiences, resource economies and waves of immigration that impressed distinctive ideological orientations upon different provinces. In his

paradigmatic book *In Search of Canadian Political Culture* (2007), Wiseman, for example, follows Québec's shift in the 1960s during its Quiet Revolution away from traditional Catholicism towards socialism, and traces Alberta's long embrace of classical and neo-liberal individualism through the influx of Americans (who comprised a quarter of Alberta's population in 1911) and the transformation of its political economy through oil and gas. Wiseman shows how social practices, attitudes and resources, not just institutions and constitutional powers, create political culture (see Montesquieu, [1748]2001; Almond and Verba, 1968), and his model provides context as to why western and eastern Canadian political cultures might show different levels of moral support for cycling as a common good. Western regions, particularly Alberta, a first world petro-state (Adkin, 2016) with a political culture fundamentally bound up with a neoliberal form of "fossil capitalism" (Altvater, 2007), may attribute less moral worth to cycling, a potent symbol of environmentalism (Horton 2006), than more collectivist, eastern regions, particularly Québec, that are more open to progressive urban and environmental policy and not dependent on the production of oil and gas. Cycling's connection to the common good, in sum, may be more tenuous in regions whose histories, ideologies and political economies are more deeply invested in the production of built and political spaces that are anathema to the social practice and environmental symbolism of cycling.

A factor complicating this simple east-west way of thinking about regional political culture and its connection to cycling is Canada's advanced level of urbanization, something Wiseman disregards. Important moral fault lines may not just exist between regions, but between suburbs and central cities. For example, echoing and feeding into the pro-fossil fuel, anti-environmentalist populism long bubbling in Alberta is a more recent pro-car populism spreading in suburban cities around Toronto and Vancouver that contests new bike lanes as a wasteful threat posed by downtown liberal elites to a way of life built around auto-suburbs. For example, former Toronto mayor Rob Ford thought 'bike-riding pinkos' should be kept at bay in the central city (Walks, 2015) while his brother Doug became premier of Canada's largest province by waging a populist, suburb-focussed campaign to make gasoline (and beer) cheap again. Cultural fissures between increasingly unaffordable city cores and the more populous auto-suburbs that dictate Canada's popular elections have also fomented pro-car, populist revolts on behalf of the 'taxpayer' in Vancouver (Ibbitson, 2018; Wilmott, 2017). In other words, while region may be the most salient signifier of Canadian political culture, the sprawling city may also play a role. Ultimately, regardless of scale, political culture helps define how people view, and what things they associate with, the common good (Wiseman 2007). Whether cycling is so associated may vary according to Canada's political and cultural diversity.

### **3. Methodology**

My data come from an online survey conducted between March 6-15, 2018, for a nationally representative sample of 5,423 Canadian adults by the Angus Reid Institute (a national, not-for-profit public opinion research foundation). These respondents were randomly selected online from the Angus Reid Forum (see <http://angusreid.org/how-we-poll-ari/>). Unlike other surveys on attitudes about cycling and bike lanes as more or less pleasant, healthful and risky (Prati et al., 2019), Angus Reid related cycling to the common good, asking Canadians: "In general, bike lanes make a community a better place to live?" (Yes, No, or Can't say/Unsure). This question also stands apart from other queries on moral attitudes about cycling asked earlier in the same survey (see <http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Bike-lanes-questionnaire.pdf>) that focus on

narrow judgments below the level of the community. Respondents may have interpreted community betterment differently; people, especially in liberal democracies, define the common good in a plurality of contradictory ways (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006[1991]; Freudendal-Pedersen, 2015; Scott, 2020). The advantage of this question is that it offers a glimpse into whether Canadians see cycling as part of an (indisputably plural) common good. My analysis includes a secondary dependent variable based on a question that asks if “Separated bike lanes are a GOOD thing” or “a BAD thing” (or “Can’t say/Unsure”) after a preamble that defines such lanes and why they are safer. This question does not focus respondents’ attention on the good of community. But separated bike lanes have become political flash points over cycling equity (Golub et al. 2016) and may inspire judgements that reach beyond narrow self-interest.

I operationalize regional political culture, my focal independent variable, as a series of dummy variables denoting residence in British Columbia (B.C.), Alberta, Manitoba/Saskatchewan, Ontario, Québec and Atlantic Canada (Atlantic Canada comprises the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador). These regions capture the major Canadian political cultures highlighted by Wiseman (2007). I hypothesize **(1)** that regional differences in moral support for bike lanes show an east-west regional bias, with western regions showing less moral support than eastern ones. I also examine moral support through the finer-grained lens of cities, using dummy variables denoting residence in Canada’s largest metropolitan areas: Halifax, Québec City, Montréal, Ottawa/Hull, Toronto, Winnipeg, Saskatoon/Regina, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. Because the vast majority of Canadians live in these metropolitan areas, I model them separately and hypothesize **(2)** that they, too, show an east-west regional bias, and **(3)** that metropolitan Calgary, as the capital of Canada’s oil and gas industry and hotbed of pro-fossil fuel populism and anti-environmentalism, shows significantly less moral support for cycling than other metropolitan areas.

Given data constraints, I cannot model differences in moral attitudes within metropolitan areas (i.e. between central cities and suburbs)—at least directly. However, I explore urban/rural differences (a dichotomous measure) in these attitudes. One might expect attitudes about cycling to divide cities and rural areas if such attitudes reflected levels of cycling use (Prati et al., 2019), because cycling use concentrates in cities. If urban/rural differences (i.e. differences between the city as a whole and the countryside) are negligible, this would indirectly suggest that differences within metropolitan areas and between different metropolitan areas are more important.

Additionally, I control for and explore the effects of gender (dichotomous), household income (<50K, 50-99K, 100K+), education (years), cycling use (days/month), age (years) and whether respondents have children (dichotomous). Little, if any, research has examined the relationship between gender and moral support for cycling. Research on cycling and gender emphasizes greater concern for safety and trip-chaining among women (Garrard et al., 2012), typically without problematizing gender itself as an embodied process shaped by (among other mobilities) cycling and its performances of masculinity (Ravensbergen et al. 2019). I hypothesize **(4)** that women more than men say separated lanes are good because women may prefer such lanes and see them as safer (Aldred et al., 2016), acknowledging that a binary gender measure is too simple and the context behind such preferences are contested and problematic. Having children might also increase support for dedicated lanes because they can enable children’s cycling, while reinforcing uneven concerns for safety and distributions of childcare. Regarding social class, I hypothesize **(5)** that the highest income group (100K+) shows lower moral support for bike lanes. Gentrification may be advancing cycling for wealthy urbanites, but cars, trucks and SUVs in Canada are still pervasively associated with the ‘high life’ and social prestige (Conley and Tigar-

McLaren, 2009). The effect of education, a component of social class, may echo that of income, or contradict it if education cultivates an interest in, and skills for, relinquishing fossil fuels and automobiles. As for age, I hypothesize (6) that older Canadians, given the generationally ingrained nature of automobility, show lower moral support. Finally, I hypothesize (7) that higher cycling use relates to moral support for bike lanes, because social practices shape what people perceive to be good (Freudental-Pedersen, 2015; Scott, 2020).

I conducted my analyses using SPSS v.24. I analyze how region affects moral support for bike lanes with and without my controls using binary logistic regression. For my dependent variables, I exclude the category “Can’t say/Unsure” to focus on people with a defined attitude. The Angus Reid survey over-sampled some provinces; I weight my results to show a representative cross-section of Canadians. In addition to odds ratios, I provide standardized coefficients ( $\beta$ s) (Menard 2004) to show the relative importance of predictors. The overarching context for my analysis is Canada; my results may not apply elsewhere. Canada, however, offers a “critical case study” (Flyvbjerg, 2006) of a low-cycling nation wherein cycling is most likely to encounter formidable challenges: 86% of Canadian commuters rely on motor vehicles, and the auto-suburbs that dictate Canada’s elections are growing much faster than cycling-friendly central cities like Vancouver (Ibbitson, 2018; Statistics Canada, 2017). Such a critical, ‘most likely’ case study offers a qualitative mode of generalizability: if cycling can become good in Canada, it can find moral worth in other contexts with less formidable obstacles.

#### 4. Results

Table 1 displays the results of my logistic regression analysis of whether Canadians say bike lanes make a community a better place to live. I chose Canada’s easternmost region, the Atlantic, as the reference category. All regions west of the Atlantic with the exception of Québec have significantly lower odds of moral support without controls. Alberta and B.C. show the largest differences. These relationships remain after introducing controls. In the full model, Alberta and B.C.’s odds are, respectively, 74% and 72% lower than Atlantic Canada’s. Ontario and Manitoba/Saskatchewan show smaller differences with the Atlantic than Alberta and B.C. Among my controls, cycling frequency and education have significant positive effects; age and driving frequency show significant negative effects. Gender, children and urban/rural status are insignificant.

**Table 1**

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Binary logistic regression results: do bike lanes make a community a better place to live?

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Variable	Coef.	OR	OR 95%		Variable	Coef.	OR	OR 95%		$\beta$
Constant	2.003				Constant	2.783				
Atlantic	ref.				Atlantic	ref.				
Québec	-.006	.994	.694	1.425	Québec	-.345	.708	.473	1.060	-.050
Ontario	-.519**	.595	.425	.835	Ontario	-.840***	.432	.292	.637	-.135
Man/Sask	-.626**	.535	.351	.814	Man/Sask	-.652**	.521	.324	.837	-.054
Alberta	-1.293***	.274	.190	.397	Alberta	-1.362***	.256	.168	.390	-.138
BC	-.982***	.375	.260	.539	BC	-1.275***	.279	.185	.422	-.141
N	4759				Cycling frequency	.096***	1.100	1.065	1.137	.142
Cox/Snell R <sup>2</sup>	.027				Driving frequency	-.021***	.979	.970	.990	-.062

Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.043	Age	-.011***	.989	.983	.995	-.062
		Education	.041*	1.042	.998	1.088	.031
		Income <50K	ref.				
		Income 50–99K	-.303**	.738	.607	.898	-.050
		Income 100K+	-.356**	.701	.551	.891	-.050
		Children	-.031	.970	.806	1.166	-.005
		Gender	.101	1.106	.930	1.315	.017
		Urban/rural	-.125	.882	.706	1.103	-.016
		N	4027				
		Cox/Snell R <sup>2</sup>	.056				

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Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> .091

OR = odds ratio. CIs = Credible Intervals, 95% Wald confidence limits. \*p<.05 \*\*p<.01 \*\*\*p<.001

A stark east-west regional divide characterizes attitudes on whether bike lanes make communities better. Switching reference categories in the full model (not shown) to other regions shows that Québec has significantly higher odds of moral support than Ontario, Alberta and B.C., and is indistinguishable from Manitoba/Saskatchewan. Alberta and B.C.'s odds are significantly lower than all other regions'. In short, Atlantic Canada and Québec form an eastern bastion of support while Alberta and B.C. form a western bastion of rejection. Ontario and Manitoba/Saskatchewan lie in a murkier middle: Ontario's odds are significantly lower than the east's but higher than Alberta and B.C.'s.; Manitoba/Saskatchewan's odds are significantly lower than the Atlantic's, indistinguishable from Québec's and higher than the west's. In other words, Ontario and Manitoba/Saskatchewan are the fulcrum around which greater regional differences revolve. In short, these regression results corroborate differences that can be seen in descriptive statistics, which show that 88% of those in Québec and 88% off those in Atlantic Canada agree that bike lanes make a community a better place to live compared to 73% in B.C. and 66% in Alberta. Standardized coefficients show that Ontario, Alberta and B.C. compared to the Atlantic constitute the strongest effects in the model along with cycling frequency. As for model fit, the pseudo R-squares indicates the model with regions alone accounts for between 3 and 4% of variation while the full model accounts for between 5 and 9%—a weak to moderate model fit.

Table 2 displays the results of my logistic regression analysis of whether Canadians say separated bike lanes are a good thing. Echoing the first model, moral support shows significant east-west regional variation, with Ontario, Manitoba/Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C. showing significantly lower odds of saying separated lanes are good compared to Québec and the Atlantic. The west shows the largest differences. These differences remain after introducing the controls. Again, cycling frequency and education show significant positive effects while age and driving frequency have significant negative effects; having kids and urban/rural status are insignificant. Gender, unlike the first model, displays a significant difference: women's odds of saying separated lanes are good are 40% higher than men's.

**Table 2**

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Binary logistic regression results: are separated bike lanes a good thing?

Variable	Coef.	OR	OR 95%		Variable	Coef.	OR	OR 95%		$\beta$
Constant	2.074				Constant	1.594				
Atlantic	ref.				Atlantic	ref.				
Québec	.733***	2.081	1.361	3.182	Québec	.628**	1.873	1.163	3.016	.078
Ontario	-.829***	.437	.304	.628	Ontario	-1.054***	.349	.231	.527	-.146
Man/Sask	-.652**	.521	.329	.827	Man/Sask	-.590*	.554	.330	.931	-.042
Alberta	-1.638***	.194	.131	.289	Alberta	-1.630***	.196	.125	.307	-.142
BC	-1.327***	.265	.180	.391	BC	-1.543***	.214	.138	.331	-.147
N	4178				Cycling frequency	.109***	1.115	1.076	1.156	.140
Cox/Snell R <sup>2</sup>	.075				Driving frequency	-.024***	.976	.965	.987	-.063
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.120				Age	-.006*	.994	.988	1.000	-.030
					Education	.115***	1.122	1.071	1.175	.073
					Income <50K	ref.				
					Income 50–99K	-.392***	.676	.544	.839	-.055
					Income 100K+	-.594***	.552	.427	.714	-.069
					Children	-.027	.974	.800	1.185	-.003
					Gender	.336***	1.399	1.159	1.689	.048
					Urban/rural	-.183	.833	.651	1.066	-.020
					N	3546				
					Cox/Snell R <sup>2</sup>	.120				

Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> .192

OR = odds ratio. CIs = Credible Intervals, 95% Wald confidence limits. \*p<.05 \*\*p<.01 \*\*\*p<.001

The same eastern bastion of support (Atlantic Canada, Québec), western bastion of rejection (Alberta, B.C.) and murkier middle (Ontario and Manitoba/Saskatchewan) in the first model apply to the second, with a couple differences. In contrast to the first model, despite high odds of Atlantic support for separated lanes Québec clearly shows the highest odds of moral support for dedicated lanes. Furthermore, unlike the first model, Ontario has significantly lower odds than Manitoba/Saskatchewan—the only departure from an east-west divide. Nevertheless, a regional fulcrum of moral attitudes toward cycling in Canada remains in the geographical centre of the country. The standardized coefficients in Table 2 show that Ontario joins Alberta and B.C. to negatively contrast Canada's eastern bastion in the strongest effects of the model alongside cycling frequency. The standardized coefficient for education shows it has a more notable effect on moral support for separated lanes. Pseudo R-squares indicate the second model has moderate fit. Regions alone account for between 8 and 12% of variation in Canadians' attitudes on separated lanes while the full model accounts for between 12 and 19%.

Re-running models 1 and 2 with metropolitan areas (not shown) instead of regions shows very similar results. Eastern metropolitan areas (especially Québec City) show significant differences with central Canadian ones while western metropolitan areas (including Vancouver) show the lowest odds of saying either bike lanes make a community a better place to live or separated lanes are a good thing, even with controls. The controls have nearly identical effects. Women are again more likely than men to support separated lanes on which education also has a stronger impact. Model fits are nearly the same. Québec City shows significantly higher odds of saying bike lanes make a community a better place to live than every other city except Halifax; Edmonton shows significantly lower odds than every other city save Calgary and Vancouver. Two urban Canadas emerge: Halifax, Québec City, Montréal, Ottawa/Hull and Winnipeg show support

(the majority of their contrasts are positive); Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver show rejection (the majority of theirs are negative); Saskatoon/Regina sit in the middle. The fulcrum around which greater metropolitan differences revolve, as with regions, lies in Ontario, Manitoba/Saskatchewan, between Toronto and Winnipeg.

Metropolitan comparisons after controls for moral attitudes on separated lanes (not shown) reveals further nuances, particularly in Ontario, that elaborate the divergences between models 1 and 2. Québec City separates itself from every other metropolis. In the west, Calgary joins Edmonton with the lowest odds of moral support, forming with Vancouver a western bastion of rejection. In Ontario, Ottawa and Toronto's effects flip: Toronto moves to a majority of positive contrasts with other major cities, while Ottawa joins the western bloc, showing significantly lower odds of supporting separated lanes than Halifax, Québec City, Montréal, Toronto and Winnipeg. The primary pivot around which attitudes on separated lanes revolve stretches between Winnipeg and Ottawa. Lastly, metropolitan comparisons both have a catch-all "non-metropolitan" category for people who do not live in any major metropolitan area. In model 3, the non-metropolitan group is very similar to Winnipeg. In model 4, the non-metropolitan group is more akin to Toronto and Halifax.

## **5. Discussion**

My first hypothesis pertaining to regional differences in moral support for bike lanes is clearly supported, with western regions showing significantly less moral support than eastern ones. The degree to which these differences reveal the impact of regional political culture is open to interpretation and something these data cannot directly address. However, that moral support for bike lanes (for both dependent variables) so closely traces the east-wide divides described by Canada's historically regionalized political cultures (Wiseman 2007) in precisely the ways we would expect given these cultures' content provides evidence of their impact. Importantly, political culture does not directly adjudicate cycling's moral worth so much as create social and material contexts wherein many factors combine to shape people's views of cycling's value. Wiseman (2007) identifies many of these factors. Historical experiences and ideological constellations, such as Québec's Quiet Revolution towards European-style socialism and Alberta's colonization by American-inflected libertarian populism, help explain why many Québécois view cycling as something to which everyone should have access, for example by extending dedicated lanes, while many Albertans view bike lanes as government overreach into individuals' desires for free (auto)mobility, especially dedicated lanes that remove cheap car (and truck) parking. Manitoba and Saskatchewan's immigration patterns and related histories of collectivism (Lipset, 1972[1950]) help account for why the central prairies depart from the west and why Winnipeg marks a western outpost of moral support for cycling. In concert with history and ideology, resource economies also play a role—particularly fossil fuels and their growing political and cultural toxicity.

The fossil capitalism that pervades western Canadian political culture—via oil and gas in Alberta, oil in Saskatchewan and gas in northeastern B.C. (opposed to, in particular, Québec, which produces none of either)—may help explain lower western support for cycling as a common good. Surprisingly, given Alberta's image as a place of ranching and livestock, agriculture counts for less than two percent of its GDP. Oil and gas dominate Alberta's economy, making up a quarter of its GDP (Adkin, 2016)—by contrast Texas, Alberta's "geopolitical brother from another mother," has a far more diversified economy (Fawcett, 2019). Unlike some other first-world petro-

states, like Norway, Alberta negotiated poor deals with multinational oil companies and saved little of its royalties, opting for a low-tax, low-royalty approach inspired by Margaret Thatcher so Alberta can remain competitive in an oil-powered global economy. As in many American states, most of Alberta's populace and its political leaders view fossil fuel exploitation as inseparable from the national interest. So what does this have to do with cycling? In short, Alberta's neoliberal fossil capitalism foments populist hostility towards practices that symbolize environmentalism and challenge oil and its downstream products, like the iconic Ford F-Series pickup trucks that dictate traffic on the province's roads. Alberta premier Jason Kenney is using lawsuits, campaign-style tactics and a \$30 million "energy war room" to intimidate critics of the oil sands and fight the federal government's carbon tax (Weber, 2019), while members of his political party have denigrated provincial energy regulators as unfit for their job because they ride a bicycle (Riley, 2019). That B.C. and to a lesser extent Manitoba/Saskatchewan (Saskatchewan has lately started extracting its own oil sands) also show relatively lower moral support for bike lanes strengthens evidence of the political and cultural role played by fossil capitalism.

My second and third hypotheses on metropolitan areas' attitudes toward bike lanes are also supported. Metropolitan differences reveal an east-west bias that dovetails the regional divides, and Calgary shows significantly less moral support for bike lanes than most other cities in Canada. Metropolitan differences refine rather than revolutionize regional differences between eastern and western Canada. They show that Québec City, not Montréal, leads moral support in the east; Calgary but also Edmonton and Vancouver form the bastion of moral rejection; and urban Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan are deeply conflicted. It surprised me that Vancouver joined Edmonton and Calgary. But the City of Vancouver is but a small, central part of Vancouver's metropolitan area, an area whose outer cities prize automobility and rights for 'the taxpayer' (Willmott 2017). Focusing on the City of Vancouver misses its "culture wars" (Ibbitson 2019) over cars, bikes and gasoline with surrounding auto-suburbs. Indirectly addressing these tensions, an insignificant relation between urban/rural status and moral support for bike lanes suggests that differences within metropolitan areas and between different metropolitan areas matter more than differences between the city and the countryside. That "non-metropolitan" Canadians sit in the (murky) middle regarding their moral support compared to people in major cities strengthens this interpretation. Ottawa's flip with Toronto on support for separated lanes also surprised me, given Ottawa's national leadership (and Toronto's less impressive record) when it comes to building good cycling infrastructure. This result, along with Vancouver's lack of support (not to mention Halifax's notably positive attitudes) suggest that moral support for separated bike lanes is not necessarily tied to their physical presence; in some cases it may be tied to their absence. It also suggests that their construction may provoke discontent among the car-driving majority.

Finally, my hypotheses regarding the control variables were supported and in some cases elaborated. Gender was not a factor for whether Canadians say bike lanes make a community a better place to live. But women were significantly more likely than men to say separated bike lanes are a good thing, supporting the idea that women may perceive dedicated lanes, which create safer roads, as better or more desirable. It further suggests that cycling may help construct problematic gender roles whereby women are socially pressured to perform safe cycling while men are less subjected to this pressure and socialized to engage in riskier cycling. Having children did not relate to moral support. As hypothesized, the highest income group (100K+) shows significantly lower support than the lowest (<50K) income group. But so too does the middle (50-99K) income group, reinforcing the lower class social status of cycling relative to automobility. Older Canadians show lower moral support, indicating that not only western political culture and wealth but also age and

perhaps generational differences may work against cycling expansion. Education, however, has the opposite effect, especially for separated bike lanes, pointing more hopefully to a way of cultivating interest in, and skills for, challenging traditional, fossil fuelled automobilities. Finally, higher cycling use increases the odds of moral support for bike lanes while higher driving frequency decreases these odds, suggesting that people's practices shape their conceptions of what is good. Therefore, rising cycling rates across Canada, along with generational change, bode well for the future of cycling as a common good.

## **6. Conclusion**

This article shows the significant impact of region on whether Canadians believe bike lanes in general make a community a better place to live and whether separated bike lanes are a good thing. The stark east-west pattern that emerged suggests that regional political culture, and the divergent histories, ideologies and political economies that define it, may play a role in enabling and constraining moral support for cycling. Further research exploring other ways of measuring moral support for cycling as a common good and regional political culture is needed before any strong conclusions can be made about their linkages. But these findings grapple with an important dimension of cycling justice that has not been modelled before, shedding some light on the larger social and material conditions that help connect cycling to the common good. They carry important implications for understanding how cycling is politically and culturally produced in ways that exceed the cities where most cycling takes place. Even though cycling is socially constructed in Canada as a local issue for municipalities to deal with, scarcely penetrating the attention of provincial and federal governments whose constitutional powers anachronistically dwarf those of the cities where most Canadians now live, the political and cultural forces that dis/assemble cycling as a common good operate at multiples scales. The space in which cycling is socially constructed exceeds the place where it is physically performed.

My analysis has various limitations. It did not examine the specific reasons why Canadians think bike lanes make a community a better place to live (or not) or why separated lanes are a good (or bad) thing. Regions and metropolitan areas, moreover, may capture spatial differences unrelated to political culture. Regarding the survey's design, ethnicity was not included and its cross-sectional nature only affords a snapshot of attitudes in 2018. Fruitful terrain for future research include the reasons behind moral support for cycling, the explanatory power of different geographies (including central cities and auto-suburbs) as markers of political culture, the effects of ethnicity, longitudinal analysis and an exploration of gender that goes beyond an oversimplistic binary. Ultimately, this article shows that the expansion of cycling for all requires policymakers, advocates and activists willing to contest not only hegemonic automobility but also western Canadian political culture and fossil capitalism.

## **Acknowledgement**

I wish to thank the Angus Reid Institute for sharing their data.

## **Disclosure statement**

I report no potential conflict of interest or source of funding.

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