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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Social Practice and Regulation of Cycling as "A Boy's Thing" in Irish Secondary Schools

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Despite low levels of cycling to secondary education across the adolescent population in Ireland, there is, in addition, a pronounced inequality in rates of ridership between teenage girls and boys, with nearly 10 times as many boys cycling to school compared to girls. In light of this disparity, the Green-Schools #andshecycles campaign was created to explore and address the cycling gender gap among second-level students. Emerging from this campaign, this paper details qualitative research exploring this gender gap, drawing on focus groups with teenage girls and boys across Ireland. Using grounded theory methodology, a theory of cycling as "A Boy's Thing" was generated. This theory makes sense of how cycling as a social practice may be continually enacted, reproduced, and regulated as a practice *of* and *for* boys among Irish adolescents, through related practices of *exemplifying masculinity*, *incompatible femininity* and processes of *gender regulation*. It has significant implications in considering the effects of gender as a configuration of social practice (Connell, 2005) or performance (Butler, 1990) on cycling, and how cycling may present as a uniquely gendered practice/performance in particular contexts. In terms of limitations, this theory was generated using only focus group data from second-level students in Ireland. Future development of the theory and its concepts could draw on historical data and involve more comprehensive engagement with gender theory and research investigating the practice and regulation of masculinities and femininities.

Keywords: cycling; gender; school; harassment; femininity; masculinity

Introduction

Ireland has relatively low levels of secondary school cycling compared to other European countries, with only 2.1% of students between 13 and 18 years of age cycling as a means of travel. Nevertheless, within this small percentage of students who cycle for travel, there lies a stark gender disparity in rates of ridership: compared to 3.7% of boys, only 0.4% of girls cycle to school (Central Statistics Office, 2016). Emerging from the Green-Schools Travel Programme, the #andshecycles campaign (Green-Schools, 2020) originated from a curiosity

with the cycling gender gap in Irish second-level schools. With a similar destination and travel environment, the question was posed: why do almost no teenage girls cycle to school when teenage boys in many parts of the country frequently do? In the context of Irish policy aiming to promote cycling as a mode of sustainable travel (Smarter Travel, 2009) and broader organisational research examining gender and mobility (e.g., Cahill et al., 2020), it is of vital importance to understand what prevents teenage girls from cycling to school so that targeted interventions that enable more inclusive cycling can be implemented. Indeed, this matter may be symptomatic of a wider problem of gender disparities in cycling ridership moving into adulthood; for example, in Ireland, only 0.7% of women's journeys are made cycling, compared to 2.6% of men's journeys (Central Statistics Office, 2019).

In this article, we present our analysis from the #andshecycles focus group research exploring the cycling gender gap in secondary schools that could inform policy and programmes to tackle this gender gap in Ireland. First, we provide an overview of significant and relevant existing research in the area of gender and cycling. Second, we describe the grounded theory methodology, focus group data collection approach and ethical protocols of the research. Third, we impart the main qualitative concepts – primarily the process by which cycling as a practice is continually performed and regulated as "A Boy's Thing". Fourth, we discuss the significance of the grounded theory generated in relation to relevant theory and empirical research, drawing particularly on literature to do with gender, masculinity, and femininity. Fifth and last, we comment on future areas of development for this theory.

Background: gender and cycling

In light of evidence that increasing cycling levels does not necessarily lead to increased diversification of users, there have been calls for policy measures that explicitly consider the needs and preferences for cycling among underrepresented groups such as women (Aldred, Woodcock and Goodman, 2016). One salient stream of inquiry examining the specific needs and preferences of women for cycling is quantitative research primarily investigating geographic and infrastructural variables (e.g., Aldred et al., 2017; Aldred and Dales, 2017; Carroll et al., 2020; Garrard, Rose and Lo, 2008). In this field, researchers have reported a pattern of distinct preferences among women for segregated cycle infrastructure (Aldred et al. 2017; Aldred and Dales 2017; Garrard, Rose and Lo, 2008). However, it has been pointed out that there may be a tipping point for increasing cycle ridership in women in relation to the safety of infrastructure (Aldred, Woodcock and Goodman, 2016; Carroll et al., 2020). Accordingly, any increase in segregated cycle infrastructure may not necessarily increase rates of female ridership but, rather, a threshold level of such infrastructure may need to be reached. In addition to cycle infrastructure, distance has been found to be a considerable influence on rates of female ridership, with longer distances appearing to deter cycling among women (Carroll et al., 2020; Garrard, Rose and Lo, 2008). However, whilst these studies examining female preferences and needs may help us to understand the associations between particular variables (such as infrastructure) and rates of female ridership, they do not necessarily help us to understand *why* there may be gendered patterns of preference and need in the first place.

In a systematic review of research investigating gender and transport with a focus on cycling, Ravensbergen, Buliung and Laliberté (2019) reported two primary hypotheses at play in explaining the cycling gender gap in contemporary work: women cycle less due to greater "risk aversion" relative to men and/or different trip characteristics involving "trip-chaining" (p5). In this paper, they draw attention to how the concept of gender is often used in such studies – in a relatively simplified manner that does not engage in any great depth with social theory around gender, that may simply document (binary) gender differences in

perceptions and behaviour. Similar to the claims of Shaw et al. (2020), Ravensbergen, Buliung and Laliberté (2019) argue that, in relation to cycling practices and perceptions, "male-female patterns are identified, but the underlying processes that may produce observed outcomes such as risk-aversion or trip-chain travel characteristics in the first place are not adequately or deeply considered" (p6). In this respect, they highlight the scarcity of social theory informed gender cycling gap research, and the need to examine potential social processes of which many quantitative studies document the effects. As Ravensbergen, Buliung and Laliberté (2019) put it: there is a need for research exploring "how mobility shapes gender" in light of a dominant focus on "how gender shapes mobility" (p6).

There has been a considerable proliferation of research using qualitative methods to explore cycling in a way that engages with how mobility might shape gender. Steinbach et al. (2011) revealed how women in their study of cycling in the UK were conflicted about how they should dress as a woman when cycling (e.g., dressing in a more "masculine" or "feminine" fashion) and indeed showed how counter-femininities can be performed through cycling, such as through the practice of exertion and sweating. Ravensbergen (2020) reported how some female participants would describe the experience of shame and disgust through sweating when engaging in the act of cycling, which challenged "conceptions of bodies as having secure boundaries" (p8) and, more broadly, how "cycling is viewed as an activity at odds with performing femininity because of its associations with the public realm, mobility, and physical activity: binary terms connected to masculinity" (p9). Street harassment was raised as a specific issue by participants in this study and practices of "covering their bodies" (p11) was enacted, something considered all but impossible if wearing a skirt or dress when cycling. In a study of women cyclists in Chicago, Heim LaFrombois (2019) described how "many research participants shared experiences that were rooted in a masculinist understanding of public space and how they felt they needed to perform masculinities in those public spaces" (p671), particularly through having to "demand space" as a cyclist; something which many of the female participants felt they were not socialised to do as women along with the fear of being endangered and harassed if engaging in such practices. Lastly, the historical work of Jungnickel (2015) suggests that women in 19th-century England who practiced cycling were frequently harassed and potentially even subject to violence for engaging in the masculinised practice of cycling and for wearing "rational dress" (i.e., bloomers) rather than skirts while doing so, thereby defying dominant gender norms of femininity during this period.

However, there has also been inquiry into the experiences and practices of adolescent girls and young women in the cycling literature, albeit to a lesser extent. Frater and Kingham (2020), for example, explored the experiences and perceptions of cycling amongst teenage girls living in New Zealand compared to participants living in the Netherlands. Although a psychological – as opposed to a feminist or gender theory informed – model was used in the analysis of focus groups, this study yielded interesting insights, such as how, for participants from the Hague, skirts were not considered a problem for cycling, unlike this aspect of one's uniform being considered a deterrent for participants based in Christchurch. This finding was similar to the New Zealand study of Hopkins and Mandic (2017) in which skirt wearing was considered incompatible with cycling amongst female students. Indeed, Frater and Kingham (2020) argued that participants from the Hague considered cycling normal and unremarkable, whereas cycling as a teenage girl in Christchurch was considered embarrassing, with helmet-use considered an exacerbating factor. Drawing on the call of Ravensbergen, Buliung and Laliberté (2019) to explore the social processes that produce gender differences in mobility, one could argue that exploring the experiences and practices of adolescence in particular contexts is a key area of inquiry if one wishes to understand adult mobility patterns and perceptions. Indeed, as Hopkins and Mandic (2017) point out: "Adolescents are an under

researched but a vitally important research group. The mobility experiences and expectations adopted at this age are likely to continue through to adulthood" (p351).

Nevertheless, the work of Frater and Kingham (2020) and Hopkins and Mandic (2017) do not engage with feminist or gender theory in their study design or analysis, despite the relevance of their findings for understanding how social processes may lead to different rates of female cycle ridership in adolescence (e.g., gendered uniform regulations for schools in low-cycling contexts). The work of Bonham and Wilson (2012) and Russell et al. (2021), on the other hand, through adopting life-course approaches, speak to questions of "how mobility shapes gender" and the social processes that lead to different mobility patterns between adolescent girls and boys in particular contexts. Drawing on retrospective life-course interviews with women from Adelaide, Australia, Bonham and Wilson (2012) describe how many participants recalled how their engagement with cycling changed upon beginning adolescence and entering secondary school. While cycling as a child was common amongst these women, including as a mode of school travel, many described how they increasingly used public transport to travel to school for a number of reasons, in part due to conforming with how their peers would travel to school. Indeed, the school journey was seen as means of developing and maintaining friendships; therefore, the transition to public transport was seen as a means of maintaining this solidarity. In this respect, cycling could arguably be seen as a solitary and antisocial (Frater and Kingham 2020) pursuit during this period of life for these women. Explicitly employing a feminist intersectional approach, Russel et al. (2021) carried out focus with a range of women of different ages from New Zealand, including final year secondary school students. One particularly significant issue raised by the teenage participants was the physical nature of cycling, which was described as "extremely challenging" and "embarrassing", particularly in relation to the fear of arriving to school sweaty and the inconvenience of cycling in a long school skirt, which participants were concerned might blow up due to the wind. In this respect, similar concerns were raised in this study regarding sweat and physical exposure from cycling as those delineated in the study of Ravensbergen (2020).

As Aldred and Jungknickel (2014, p86) argue, if we want to promote cycling among different groups, the practice of cycling must be compatible with the other practices of everyday life. The qualitative work investigating the experiences of women at different stages of the life-course in different contexts shows how there comes a period when cycling no longer fits with practices required for everyday life as a young woman (e.g., Bonham and Wilson, 2012; Russell et al., 2021). In this study, we contribute to an understanding of how the social practice of cycling may distinctly become a social practice of masculinity in early adolescence and the social practice of (hegemonic) femininity becomes something that may be fundamentally incompatible with the practice of cycling to secondary school in the social context of Ireland. In keeping with the call of Ravensbergen, Buliung and Laliberté (2019), this research is influenced by – although not underpinned by – social theory in the area of gender, most notably the work of Connell (2005) and Butler (1990), and it can contribute to a greater understanding of how both mobility shapes gender and gender shapes mobility in an Irish context.

Methodology

In this study, we used classical grounded theory methodology and employed semi-structured focus groups as the primary mode of data collection (N: 17). Grounded theory is a method for generating theory that is grounded in empirical data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Due to its open-ended, exploratory nature, grounded theory is an exceptionally useful and systematic method for generating theoretical explanations/descriptions of social phenomena that have not been well explored. These theories can then be used to practical effect to inform interventions and policies relating to the area of interest. As this research involved teenage

girls and boys exploring a potentially sensitive topic, focus groups were selected as an ideal method for data collection, since they not only allow for peer support and solidarity or "safety in numbers" (Barbour, 2007, p42) on sensitive topics but also enable participants feed off and add to one another's recollection of experiences for a group that may otherwise be reluctant to speak (Barbour, 2007; Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, 2014). Furthermore, focus groups can provide a bridge between the social world and the personal lives of participants and can contribute to personal experience being reinterpreted and politicised, thereby enabling the production of voice (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, 2014).

Focus groups lasted on average one hour and were conducted both in person (N: 13) in a private classroom, and, later in the study, online (N: 4). Accordingly, there were 17 focus groups in total. Participants were selected based on responses to a recruitment advertisement primarily shared with second-level Green-Schools participating in the "Travel" theme. Later in the study, recruitment was opened to any secondary school in Ireland. Informed consent forms were sent to potential volunteers to ensure informed consent from both their parents/guardians and themselves. At the beginning of the study – the open coding phase (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) – initial focus groups were carried out by Green-Schools Travel staff, employing a flexible but semi-structured focus group agenda that was rigorously developed. During the selective coding phase, only the first author carried out focus groups in order to engage in more targeted data collection known as theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). In both phases, various ethics considerations were integrated into the conduct of focus groups. Moderators reiterated the purpose of the focus group to participants; described how data gathered would be used, managed, deleted, and anonymised; requested respect for group confidentiality following participation; and affirmed the right for participants to withdraw at any time without negative consequence. Consistent with methodological recommendations (Barbour, 2007), focus groups involved seven participants on average; however, the number of participants involved across the focus groups ranged from 3–12 people. In nearly all focus groups there was a mix of year groups anywhere between first year through sixth year and, therefore, there was a range of ages (13–18 years) involved in most of the focus groups. Focus groups involved students from a variety of schools across the Republic of Ireland, including students attending school from the provinces of Leinster, Munster, and Connacht. The vast majority of focus groups involved female participants only and this reflected the early aim to explore the experiences and perceptions of cycling to school among teenage girls in Ireland. However, as analysis progressed, two focus groups were carried out with boys only to theoretically explore and develop the concept of "Exemplifying Masculinity". The study concluded with 17 focus groups as the first author was satisfied that a point of theoretical saturation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) had been reached.

Cycling as "A Boy's Thing"

i. "A Boy's Thing"

The core category of this grounded theory is centred on the social practice, construction, and regulation of cycling as "A Boy's Thing". Based on data collected and analysed in the development of this grounded theory, cycling amongst Irish adolescents – particularly cycling to secondary school – is widely considered to be a social practice that is normal for boys to engage in and socially deviant for girls. In a variety of contexts across Ireland, the visible, everyday practitioners of cycling among adolescents are boys. However, it is not only, as Central Statistics Office (2016) data shows, a social practice that is primarily performed by boys. It is also a gender norm *for* boys to cycle. In this way, cycling is "A Boy's Thing": a practice both *of* and *for* boys.

For many participants, akin to the findings of Bonham and Wilson (2012), cycling in primary school was not considered so rigidly gendered a practice. Instead, it was – as some participants described – "*natural*" for girls and boys to engage in cycling. Participants described a marked shift in their cycling engagement in the transition between primary and secondary school, specifically referring to a gendering process in which those who are identified as male are orientated (or coerced) toward certain masculine practices such as sports, and, likewise, those who are identified as female are "pushed" toward particular – and different(iating) – feminine practices, such as doing one's hair and make-up in the morning. Cycling itself is one of these gendered practices, a practice that is primarily carried out by groups of boys and is considered, as one participant described, as "just their nature". Being a teenage girl, then, is defined in a negative relation to being a teenage boy; namely, whereas boys are defined by what they do (cycle), girls are defined by what they don't do relative to boys:

> I think it's like a *thing* for boys to cycle, like. Like, I think it's just a thing for girls *not to* and for boys *to*.

Alongside this reification of cycling as a boy's thing, participants alluded to the ongoing social construction process that maintains cycling as "A Boy's Thing", demonstrating how its naturalness in second-level education is actively produced:

> Everyone's always saying it's for boys.

It is part of adolescent boyhood in Ireland, then, to engage in – and indeed hang out and meet up through – cycling, particularly with (male) friends. Cycling as a girl, on the other hand, constitutes a transgression of the gender norm that cycling is "A Boy's Thing"; as a result, cycling as a girl is a deviant social practice that comes with negative social consequences for the practitioner (i.e., gender regulation) and a sense that they are transgressing the norm. As one participant described, as a girl, one feels social pressure to *not* cycle and to walk instead. As a boy, on the other hand, "They all, like, do it together. Like, you always see boys cycling in groups." Indeed, female participants who did engage in cycling to school felt the need to account for and excuse their deviance. Furthermore, since cycling as a means of travelling to secondary school is primarily practiced by teenage boys, and much of this cycling may be amongst other boys cycling, cycling as a girl constitutes a particularly high-visibility form of deviance since one would likely, similar to the findings of Frater and Kingham (2018; 2020), travel solo rather than as part of a group, often within view of other individual and groups of students travelling to school (perhaps in gender *normal* ways, such as by walking).

In this theoretical interpretation of the cycling gender gap amongst Irish second-level students, we argue that cycling as "A Boy's Thing" – a social practice *of* boys and a social practice *for* boys – is socially constructed, regulated and reproduced through prevailing social configurations of practice relating to (adolescent forms of) masculinity and femininity – or gender – in Ireland and through social processes of gender regulation. As the core category of this grounded theory, the subsequent categories we will present and illustrate with reference to focus groups with female and male secondary school students relate to how cycling is continually reproduced as "A Boy's Thing".

ii. Exemplifying Masculinity

With "A Boy's Thing", we show how cycling among adolescents in Ireland is socially interpreted and coded as a practice that is normal for adolescent boys and deviant for adolescent girls in Ireland. With the category of *exemplifying masculinity*, we seek to impart how various

idealised masculine characteristics for adolescents in Ireland – namely, *athleticism, audacity,* and *indifference* – are exemplified through cycling itself, but particularly by cycling in a particular style. These performances of masculinity through cycling socially reproduce cycling as "A Boy's Thing". However, although primarily practiced by teenage boys, they can be practiced by others aspiring toward and identifying with masculinity as a social configuration of practice, including teenage girls.

First, through cycling – at all, or in a particularly physically demanding way – teenage boys (and in some cases teenage girls) exemplify an idealised masculine characteristic of *athleticism*: the quality of having athletic ability and physical fitness. This pattern builds on existing work evidencing how cycling may be associated with "physical prowess" amongst men (Steinbach et al., 2011, p1127). In focus groups, cycling was widely perceived by girls in particular as something requiring athleticism to engage in, rather than being a relatively modest form of physical activity. Although many of the male participants did not engage in cycling as a sport or as a form of physical conditioning per se, there was no shame – and perhaps even some pride – for those who used it as a public means for cultivating athleticism. For teenage girls to engage in cycling, however, judgement may ensue, perhaps in part due to exemplifying the masculine trait of athleticism for a practice that is socially coded as "A Boy's Thing". One male participant described how teenage girls are consistently subject to judgement for their behaviour to a greater degree than teenage boys and may be subject to "body-shaming" if engaging in cycling. In particular, he points out that girls may be perceived to be cycling as a means of losing weight, which may incur social stigma. However, interestingly, he also mentioned how a girl cycling can come across as a girl trying to "show up a guy". This indicates that stigma may not only occur due to body-shaming but also because a teenage girl cycling can be perceived by boys as a threat to their masculinity – a practice that emasculates them and undermines cycling as "A Boy's Thing":

> Guys might go on a cycle to get fit but when a girl goes on a cycle, people will tend to associate that with the girls trying to lose weight. So, the girl is trying to, like, show up a guy and…that's not r…(participant cuts off mid-word).

Indeed, one female participant who cycles to secondary school daily described how she used to cycle to primary school and engage in physical competition with boys. Unlike her present cycling experiences where she is subject to negative backlash, cycling then was normal and even a matter of pride. In this instance, athleticism as a quality and practice does not yet appear to be reified as a signifier for masculinity and one can see this participant actively "showing up" her male classmates:

> I'd *race* them – (puts hand on heart) […] we'd race them to the end of the primary school – it would only be, like, 15 metres. And, um…I mean, most of the time I'd win because, you know, they're slow coaches thinking they look great (fellow participant gives amused nod) on their really super-duper bikes.

In contrast, another female participant cycles to secondary school daily and appeared to be concerned with failing to live up to the masculine ideal of athleticism amongst others cycling – especially teenage boys – by being embarrassed if she fails to "keep pace" with others. Engaging in cycling as a girl, then, may involve a pressure to compensate for not being a boy by matching the speed of any boy cycling and therefore show how one can meet the criteria of masculine athleticism for engaging in "A Boy's Thing". Indeed, many female participants commented on the speed that some boys may travel when cycling to school referring to boys

"flying up" the road and "going really fast". In a sense, one may feel as a teenage girl the need to prove one is worthy to engage in "A Boy's Thing" by doing it in the same manner as boys; in this case, by matching the physical speed of other teenagers cycling:

> I don't know if this is just me because I'm a very competitive person, especially since we're right beside a boy's school, I'm cycling up alongside other students and I'm (smiles).... it's probably just me but I always feel like if I'm going too slow, I feel really embarrassed, so I, like, try to *keep pace* with other people which ends up, like, pushing myself too far.

Second, cycling is used by adolescent boys (and, less frequently, girls) as means of exemplifying the masculine characteristic of *audacity*: the willingness to take bold risks. This pattern is suggested in Steinbach et al. (2011) amongst adult male participants in relation to the "thrill" and "risk" of cycling in London, but also by accounts of the bold assertiveness required for cycling in similar contexts by Egan (2021), Green, Steinbach and Datta (2020), and Larsen (2014). For some boys in this study, being a teenage boy was synonymous with engaging in acts of audacity/risk-taking and a requirement for social acceptance, and means of building social status, amongst boy-centric groups:

> I think guys need to be more risk-taking to fit in. A group of guys might take risks just to look good to each other. And that might be a thing with cycling. If it's on a busy road, more guys might do it because it's taking a risk, if it's very, very busy. Like, it's not a huge risk, it's the tiniest risk possible, but it is *a* risk. And then not using a helmet – the exact same. But, I think risk-taking in guys is just...(shakes head) like...it just almost *has* to be done.

From this perspective, audacity is a mandatory performance of masculinity. It is a means of proving one's masculinity, or, as one participant describes, a means of competition and "one-upping" other boys, rather than being an unsanctioned voluntary matter. Cycling in a way that is safety-conscious, then, would render one open to social stigma as a boy cycling.

Overall, the most conspicuous demonstrations of audacity involve performing wheelies, travelling at high speed, and cycling without holding the handlebars. These acts can be interpreted as a highly publicised performance of the masculine characteristic of audacity; a form of social peacocking that demonstrates one's masculinity to one's peers within a social group and outside of it. During one focus group, multiple female participants discussed the public performance of audacity and how they are often timed by boys to impress girls:

> Participant 1: Do you ever see, like, when boys do it like when a girl's walking down the road?
>
> Participant 2: *Yeah*!
>
> Participant 1: They *always* just do a wheeley in front of a girl.
>
> Participant 3: To *show off*.
>
> Participant 1: Just to show off, yeah.
>
> Participant 3: Thinking they're mad.

In the majority of cases, audacity appears to be a *collective* rather than individual practice of masculinity involving groups of teenage boys. Some participants described such groups engaging in practices and displays of audacity – particularly ignoring the rules of the road – as "Hell's Angels", drawing an analogy with the practices of the macho motorcycling club, widely viewed as

an embodiment of masculinity. More broadly, the phenomena of audacity as a collective practice of masculinity through cycling has also arguably been indicated by media in relation to daring youth cycling cultures in London (King, 2017), which details thrill-seeking practices such as playing "chicken" with motorists and pulling wheelies between vehicles in traffic. Additionally, the work of Fincham (2006) with cycle messengers in the UK depicts the audacity practiced by fellow messengers. Fincham details one incident in which a fellow messenger he was accompanying travelled at high speed through the city centre to the office, without slowing down or stopping for lights. Fincham was compelled to leave this messenger to proceed ahead, such was the speed and perceived risk-taking involved. However, he wondered whether this was an incident of the messenger "showing off" their "risky" riding style or just the way this rider engaged in cycling as a messenger. Simultaneously, Fincham felt somewhat embarrassed that he failed to emulate such a riding style – something which resonates with earlier account from one participant in this study regarding the social pressure to be audacious as an adolescent boy.

Third, whereas audacity refers to the practice of active risk-taking, indifference is another masculine social practice which reifies cycling as "A Boy's Thing". This involves the active practice of "not caring" or not showing concern, particularly in relation to matters of danger and toward any indicators of a (socially and officially prescribed) safety-conscious or responsible form of cycling; a pattern that also emerged in the study of Balkmar (2018), who imparted the "careless" behaviour of racing male cyclists in Sweden. There are various ways in which indifference is exemplified in the practice of cycling, one of which is the non-wearing of helmets, illustrated by the frequent sight reported by many girls in the focus groups of boys cycling to school with their helmets appended to the cycle handlebars. As one male participant described, "I've just never really been the type to wear a helmet." On the other hand, other male participants who did (or, rather, were forced to) wear helmets were acutely aware of how wearing a helmet was a transgression of the masculine ideal of indifference to danger, with some describing their intuitive knowledge of this deviance presenting as embarrassment and a sense of being the "odd one out".

Beyond non-use of helmets, indifference toward complying with the rules of the road – and the perceived risks that non-compliance may entail – appeared to be a noticeable pattern across the focus group participant accounts. The most notable form of this practice of indifference involved cycling as part of a boy-centric or all-boy group in a horizontal, as opposed to single-file or two-abreast, formation on the road or indeed on the pavement. One female participant complained about the indifference demonstrated by such "clans of boys" for other public space users by "taking up the whole road or taking up the whole footpath". Indeed, it was clear in discussion with male participants that the rules of the road and matters of safety were not necessarily a performance of indifference but were, in many cases, a matter of indifference. As this male participant demonstrates, the rules of the road and cycling in a mainstream, responsible fashion is not a foremost concern or consideration for him when cycling:

> It wouldn't be something you'd just…nobody would sort of bring it up – mostly because you don't *think about it*. You don't think about it that way because you're not…it's not really the focus of the conversation you have or something like that.

This stands in sharp relief with one female participant's expression of concern for compliant and knowledgeable cycling:

> I think you need to be *really* well informed and know exactly what to do if you're going to have the confidence to cycle on the road. Like I would wanna know exactly what to do in every situation before I…cycled on the road, just to be…sure.

Importantly, our framing of the non-use helmets and breaking the rules of the road as practices of indifference is not a claim that such practices are in fact dangerous or contrary to cycling safety (indeed, breaking the rules can be a means of self-preservation – see Aldred, 2016 and Egan, 2022). Rather, in the data analysed for this study, incidents of indifference often involved a resistance to the enactment of what appear to be socially constructed as the practices of safe or responsible cycling in an Irish context.

iii. Incompatible femininity

Incompatible femininity refers to the social practices required to achieve successful performances of femininity that are experienced as incompatible with the social practice of cycling in Ireland. These practices – *modesty*, *beauty, continence*, and *caution* – revolve around idealised feminine characteristics that render cycling in its present form incompatible with the achievement of such practices. In many respects, these phenomena of femininity can be contrasted with the highly compatible aspects of masculinity that can be exemplified through one's style of cycling and, indeed, simply through the practice of cycling itself in an Irish context. Importantly, many of the female participants in this study described how, in transgressing these ideals of femininity in practice, they became acutely uncomfortable, "awkward", "self-conscious", and/or embarrassed. In contrast, when conforming or achieving these ideals in practice, they felt relatively comfortable. Their degree of comfort, self-consciousness, and embarrassment, then, seemed to be dictated to a great degree by the extent to which they conformed with, and played out, these components of femininity in everyday life. As a result, these gender phenomena, much like those of masculinity, can be critically understood as regulatory gender norms that affect control in one's experience of public embodiment.

First, participants struggled to engage in cycling whilst simultaneously practicing *modesty*: the practice of covering up or concealing one's sexualised physical features as a teenage girl; a concern and pattern also raised in the studies of Russell et al. (2021) and Ravensbergen (2020). In particular, practicing modesty was made exceedingly difficult for many participants if cycling on the basis of many girls' school uniform – a skirt. When wearing a skirt cycling there was a perceived risk of the skirt blowing up, particularly during windy conditions but also in motion cycling, thereby revealing one's exposed lower body to public passers-by, and maybe even fellow students or peers on the way to school. One female participant, who wears tights or cycling shorts to cover her lower body all year round, described her experience of regularly cycling to school in a skirt:

> …you're always kind of thinking – especially when there's a lot of wind – like, you don't want your skirt to go up, if you know what I mean, like…especially like going up a hill (uncomfortable laugh) when you have to, like, stand up kind of when you're cycling as well. It's the most *awkward* thing ever, you feel like everyone is just staring at you, you know…

As one participant described: "it's physically impossible to cycle in one of these skirts without like showing…d'ya know", or, as another confided, when cycling in a skirt "You never know what someone can see". Nevertheless, a concern with the practice of modesty was not necessarily specific to the use of skirts. Indeed, participants also mentioned concerns about immodestly exposing oneself to others through the use of alternative clothing when cycling into school – "the cars passing would be looking at you in leggings" – or even trousers if these were an option in the school – "they're a bit low waisted…so they kinda fall down a lot (laughs)". Furthermore, when mounting a bike with a high crossbar, one participant referred to the exposure required to manoeuvre her leg over the crossbar to mount the bike, which

exposes one's lower limbs and body in public, leading to self-consciousness. Irrespective of clothing, the practice of modesty for some was challenged simply by the position in which one cycles, for example, having to stand up when cycling up a hill.

Second, participants described how *beauty* – the practice of cultivating and maintaining a particularly feminine physical appearance or, as many referred to, "looking good" as a teenage girl – was largely incompatible with cycling. This is in accord with existing studies indicating that maintaining a feminine image was a barrier to cycling (Frater and Kingham, 2018; Steinbach et al., 2011), including through wearing a skirt as part of the school uniform (Frater and Kingham, 2020; Hopkins and Mandic, 2017). One particularly salient pattern among female participants in this respect was the difficulty of maintaining "presentable" hair and appearance during and following cycling. For example, many participants were made by their parents to wear helmets when cycling and, as a result, would often end up with unkempt and self-described messy "helmet hair" due to the pressure of the helmet, the difficulty of fitting one's hair into the helmet but also potentially the proliferation of sweat the helmet can induce. Indeed, wearing a helmet itself was seen as major transgression of acceptable feminine appearance (as well as a transgression of performing the masculine trait of indifference and audacity) with many participants, similar to the findings of Russell et al. (2021), describing how they would feel "ugly" if using one whilst cycling. As one participant commented: "when you wear the helmet it just doesn't look good at all [...] when you take it off it's even worse." Others would cycle to school without a helmet but, because of wind and/or rain, their originally styled, generally long hair would become un-styled and "wild"; as one participant described:

> I straighten my hair (points). If it rains, my hair's gonna go *mad*, like. It's not a *glamorous* way to school but you're not in school to look good either.

Aside from helmet use and exposing one's hair to the elements, wearing a skirt was widely practiced as an element of achieving a threshold standard of femininity that presented difficulties for cycling. The skirt – already detailed in relation to its challenges in practicing modesty when cycling – could be imposed as a mandatory standard of feminine dress in some schools in the form of an institutional rule that "All girls must wear skirts" most or all of the time. However, there were many participants who attended schools where trousers were an option alongside the skirt. Despite the availability of this option, many felt uncomfortable or "awkward" wearing trousers, as trousers were associated with boys and a "masculine look", compounded by the fact that, in many schools, not many girls would take up the trouser option. One participant bluntly described the social equivalent of wearing trousers as a girl: "It's like a boy wearing a skirt". Another participant in the same focus group detailed how, despite having the option to wear trousers, skirts were more conforming with an ideal form of dress for girls in the school.

In addition to the fear of exposure when cycling in a skirt and the practice of modesty, participants raised two particular issues: first, cycling in a skirt could be experienced as dangerous due to the perceived risk of the skirt getting caught in the chain or wheel of a bicycle or being in the way of the pedals; second, in trying to practice the feminine ideal of beauty by wearing the skirt in school irrespective of uniform policy, female students had the extra burden relative to some teenage boys of having to carry a change of clothes – and having to change clothes – as part of their cycling journey. As a result, some participants concluded: "it's probably too much hassle to come in not wearing a skirt, because you'd have to change".

Third, alongside regulating the exposure of one's sexualised body parts to others and regulating one's appearance to ensure it conforms with threshold standards of femininity, cycling

was largely imparted as a practice that was incompatible with *continence*: the practice of regulating one's natural bodily processes – in this case, the excretion of sweat and the accompanying body odour produced when undertaking physical activity. Put simply, based on this focus group research, perspiring as a teenage girl is taboo; it is a violation of the gender practice of continence – regulating the excretion of one's body. Many female participants claimed that wearing heavy school bags, having to travel long distances, and encountering hills on a cycle deterred them from cycling to school. At first glance, this could be interpreted, for example, as a lack of perceived physical fitness amongst female participants relative to males. However, when interrogated, it became clear that many teenage girls were deeply concerned with exerting themselves to a degree that would stimulate perspiration. Descriptions of even the notion of cycling to school and sweating evoked widespread disgust, with some participants describing the idea of coming into school sweaty as "horrible", "rank", "disgusting", and "unclean", thereby echoing the perspectives of women in the study Ravensbergen (2020) and Russell et al. (2021) in relation to sweating when cycling. As a result, if cycling required a level of physical intensity as an activity by itself or due to exacerbating factors such as weight, distance, incline, or other factors that would contribute to a process of perspiration, this would mean that the teenage girl in question would be transgressing the gender practice and norm of continence through sweating. One participant, who regularly cycles to school, describes the challenge and experience of cycling and sweating as a teenage girl, in particular how it feels to transgress a feminine norm of continence irrespective of other's judgement:

> I know for myself, I'm only ever conscious of how I look when I'm cycling if I do wind up working up a sweat and I kind of, like, *just don't look your best coming off the bike* [...] it's not even that other people will say anything...you're just embarrassed because you yourself don't feel that you look your best coming off the bike.

However, it is clear there is a perception that one will be judged, unlike a boy, for perspiring as a girl. In this instance, one participant describes how exerting oneself as a girl transgresses the feminine ideal of continence, as well as beauty, and – unlike boys – how conforming with this norm is policed by other people:

> there's an expectation – there *is* an expectation – for girls to 'look good' all the time, be "presentable" and, like, boys can kind of rock up to school and be smelly and sweaty and whatever and, you know, they're being boys, they cycle to school, they have fun with their friends. Like, if you smell as a girl..."*BO* (tuts), like, you better...you'd want to take care of that (shakes head)". There's not the same standard held for both of us.

Although it did not emerge over the course of data collection, Ravensbergen (2020) points out how menstruation is also a concern for women cycling; in this respect, avoiding "leaking" (p11) while cycling or avoiding cycling altogether while menstruating could be an additional component of the practice of continence as a teenage girl that may be challenging to achieve in the practice of cycling.

Fourth, the last practice of an incompatible femininity in relation to cycling for girls is one that starkly contrasts with the masculine ideals of audacity and indifference: the practice of *caution*. Much like *modesty, beauty,* and *continence* – practices that one could describe broadly as practices of self-regulation – caution is characterised by a highly constrained approach to engaging with potentially dangerous activities and could be seen in part as a constraint on practices itself, unlike the predominantly positive and relatively *unconstrained* practices of masculinity. Whereas boys enacting masculinity take and ignore risks, girls enacting

femininity appear to avoid and mitigate them. This practice of femininity has indeed been discussed at length in the cycling literature in relation to the notion of risk-aversion (e.g., Ravensbergen, Buliung and Laliberté, 2019). Minor concerns regarding the practice of caution related to fears of bike theft and lack of spaces to park one's bicycle safely. Additionally, numerous female participants voiced a concern with losing balance and falling off one's bike, particularly when wearing a heavy school bag that could destabilise them. It could be argued, additionally, that teenage girls who wear skirts and have long hair face greater risks of falling or crashing when cycling due to the impediments these materials of femininity present (e.g., blocked vision, keeping one's skirt from blowing up or getting caught in pedals). Nevertheless, it was clear from focus groups that teenage girls were nearly unanimously concerned with the dangers of cycling on the road when sharing space with drivers. Cycling on the pavement, on other the hand, was in many cases not considered an option due to the scarcity of space, the danger one may pose to walkers and backlash from pedestrians who may tell a cyclist to "get on the road". One participant described the scenario of where to cycle on the basis of practicing caution:

> when you're on a bike you don't want to be cycling on the road cos, like, there's like cars an all…but then when you're on a path you don't wanna, like, cycle into anyone, because that could hurt, like, both of yis.

In particular, female participants were fearful of cycling on the road without a robust working knowledge of the rules of the road: a matter of indifference for most of the teenage boys involved in this study. In this way, the practice of cycling on the road to school was, for many female participants, an unrealistic option since they perceived the need for training to cycle in the "proper" or "right" way on the road in order to engage in cycling in a safe and confident manner. As one participant put it: "*if you put me out…onto that road…on a bicycle…*I'm telling you I'd be dead in ten minutes. I don't know to cycle on a road!". Various aspects of cycling on roads in the "right" manner were cited, such as correctly using yellow box junctions, engaging with roundabouts, using hand signals, and knowing "where to go on the road".

However, many participants were not necessarily only fearful of endangering themselves through non-compliance with the rules of the road. In fact, multiple participants cited disregarding and endangering driver behaviour toward cyclists as a unique concern they would have if they engaged in cycling due to a widespread perception among drivers that cyclists are a "nuisance". "Knowing how" to cycle, then, extended beyond knowing and complying with the rules of the road. Additionally, it related to knowing how to deal with disregarding and endangering driver behaviour as a cyclist:

> If I was on a bike lane, I would feel so much more…like, I'd feel more comfortable…but, it's like…I don't know *how* to cycle on the road. Like, I wouldn't know how to deal with it if…some car came too close to me […] Like, I don't know if I'd just freak out.

iv. Gender regulation

Having discussed the gender norms and practices with respect to the social practice of cycling, with the final category of this theory – *gender regulation* – we refer to a process by which conformity with these gender norms and practices of masculinity and femininity are regulated. This regulation of gender involves informal and formal disciplinary sanctions that regulate gendered bodies to comply with gender norms. We will illustrate three main patterns of gender regulation that maintain and reproduce cycling as "A Boy's Thing": *cycling as a girl*, *"responsible" cycling*, and *dressing like a boy*.

First, female participants involved in this study overwhelmingly provided personal examples of being subject to gender regulation for cycling as a girl. Indeed, when talking about cycling as a girl, some were even subject to regulation in the focus group situation with other female participants engaging in laughter and mild ridicule. For the most part, female participants recounted experiences and fears of being "looked" and "stared at", being the subject of socially stigmatising gossip ("talked about"), being ridiculed ("laughed at"), and being "heckled" and intimidated primarily by groups of teenage boys for engaging in "A Boy's Thing". Such a pattern of disciplining teenage girls and women for engaging in cycling fits with those imparted by Ravensbergen (2020) and Russell et al. (2021); for example, Ravensbergen (2020, p13) reported how "some girls may avoid the bike out of fear they will be called a 'tom boy'". Although regulation was often subtle, frequently involving "odd looks" for engaging in cycling as a girl, more conspicuously humiliating practices were common.

Some comments made by groups of teenage boys for girls engaging in cycling had a particularly gendered and sexualised nature. For example, one participant was maliciously labelled as a homosexual – "a dyke on a bike" – for engaging in the practice of cycling. In the school that this participant attended, fellow participants revealed that this was a common slur used by groups of boys for sanctioning girls who engage in cycling. This instance clearly indicates a form of gender regulation that is distinctly heteronormative (i.e., based on a dominant framework of normatively heterosexual gender relations) with cycling being a form of deviance among girls. Likewise, another female participant who cycled in the presence of her boyfriend was labelled a "man" for being able to cycle – another common slur in this context. Accordingly, this instance once again indicates that cycling as a girl may be a transgression of heterosexual gender relations and heteronormative gender performances in which girls conform with gender norms of femininity and boys conform with gender norms of masculinity. Evidently, both incidents indicate what one cannot successfully be if one engages in cycling: a heterosexual "girl". As one participant eloquently described cycling as a practice in this context: "it's more for like…leaving to the boys than…a girl."

Goading was another pattern of gender regulation for cycling as a girl. For example, some female participants recalled groups of teenagers prompting them to engage in fast cycling – and perhaps exemplify masculinity – while on the bike such as "Go on ninety!" Indeed, in one instance, a participant was literally challenged to a race having overtaken a group of boys. Nevertheless, much intimidation and ridicule by groups of boys for cycling as a girl was more about the production of any noise at all rather than saying something in particular. One female participant recalled a particularly sinister instance of intimidation that involved being chased out of public space accompanied by indiscriminate shouts when cycling home from school by a group of older teenage boys cycling. Having cycled home as quickly as possible to escape from the harassers, this participant was traumatised and confused by the experience. The remnant of the experience was an exacerbated sense of vulnerability when cycling:

> I just broke down and I started crying and I was telling my parents and I just didn't know what to do about it and […] yeah, I didn't really feel *safe* afterwards.

Indeed, some female participants were even forbidden from cycling on the basis of the possibility of being socially sanctioned, albeit in a less severe way, by being "made fun of" for cycling as a girl:

> My mom…she's, like, really honest…and she said…she actually told me that people would make fun of me if they (on the cusp of laughing)…if they saw me cycling!

While cycling was a deviant practice for a teenage girl, cycling – for both those who identified as boys and as girls in this project – was regulated as "A Boy's Thing" and in line with the performance of masculinity beyond simply *who* cycles; namely, *how* one cycles was also regulated as a means of exemplifying masculinity. In this respect, any attempt to cycle in a way that displayed "responsibility" or "caution" was subject to severe regulation for transgressing cycling as a performance of masculine indifference and audacity. Many male and female participants recounted incidents of being sanctioned for wearing a helmet in particular. As one male participant recounted "I used to unhook my helmet and put it on the handlebars" as he approached the school in order not to be "seen in the helmet". Another male participant was asked about what happens when he wears a helmet and described how he would be subject to "slagging", "looking" but also "slapping" from his male and female peers that he would cycle with. Indeed, many of the female participants were acutely aware that cycling in a helmet, irrespective of sex, was a transgression of how one should cycle:

> Like, if someone…even if a fella was, like….*seen* wearing a helmet, they'd be made a show of, like. People would be like "Why are they wearing a helmet?" and all that and, like, "helmets are, like, stupid" and all, like…

However, for girls, helmets present a double burden: they conflict with the feminine practice of beauty and continence but are subject to gender regulation on the basis of transgressing cycling in the "proper" masculine way. In this way, one may feel "ugly" wearing a helmet as a girl, while also being "mocked for being safe".

Lastly, gender regulation took place in relation to the practice of wearing trousers. For a sizeable proportion of female participants, skirts are a mandatory component of their school uniform. In this respect, girls are formally regulated to dress in a way that is designated as feminine whereas for all male participants, trousers were mandatory. A clear distinction is made, then, between being a girl and being a boy and this is reflected in the formal regulations of what one wears to school. However, many female participants were in fact permitted to wear trousers to and in school as their uniform. Nevertheless, in these circumstances, informal gender regulations made wearing trousers a "costly" option. In one respect, wearing trousers would constitute "dressing like a boy" because boys wore trousers. Consequently, many female participants described how they would be "stared at" particularly by boys if they opted for this uniform choice since it would constitute deviance from dressing like a girl – namely, in a skirt. In another respect, whilst formally an option, some participants revealed that there could be subtle regulations and penalties for wearing a skirt in their school. First, they would have to purchase two uniforms; second, they could only wear trousers at certain times of the year; and third, the principal could express subtle disapproval for a student opting for trousers despite it being a formal option in the school. As one participant described in relation to the principal's preference for girls wearing the skirt rather than trousers: "She mightn't say it, but…we all know she does!!"

Discussion

This grounded theory postulates how cycling among Irish adolescents is socially practiced and regulated as "A Boy's Thing" and indeed how regulated social practices of masculinity and femininity may reproduce cycling as "A Boy's Thing" in Ireland. Substantively, this work contributes to a growing body of literature exploring the relations between cycling and gender in which gender is generally conceived of in binary terms (e.g., Hopkins and Mandic, 2012; Ravensbergen, Buliung and Laliberté, 2019; Ravensbergen, 2020; Steinbach et al., 2011). Throughout the theoretical section of the article, we have shown how the theory provides

novel conceptualisations of patterns indicated in existing literature relating the incompatibility of cycling with practices of femininity, such as how the avoidance of sweating as a girl (Ravensbergen, 2020; Russell et al., 2021) can be viewed as a practice of femininity in the form of continence. Furthermore, we have shown how cycling as a means of exemplifying masculinity through various sub-practices relates to existing literature in the field of mobility that evidence the masculine nature of cycling practices in different contexts (e.g., Balkmar, 2018; Green, Steinbach and Datta, 2012; Larsen, 2014; Steinbach et al., 2011).

In relation to gender theory, we adopt a critical point of view in our interpretation of the body of practices outlined in the concepts of incompatible femininity and exemplifying masculinity, and in the wider process of gender regulation. In keeping with Connell (2005, p71), who describes gender as "a way in which social practice is ordered", we wholly accept that there are masculinities and femininities rather than *a* masculinity or femininity and that these configurations of social practice are hierarchically arranged, context-specific and must be understood with reference to a broader structure of gender relations or "gender order". In particular, Connell (2005) argues that one can consider masculinities in relation and posits the concept of "hegemonic" masculinity: the configuration of social practice that acts as the "the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (p77), which operates not through direct displays of power and dominance, but through ideological means.

However, we also accept the framework of Schippers (2007), who modifies the work of Connell (2005) on hegemonic masculinity to more positively conceptualise femininities in the consideration of gender relations with the concept of "hegemonic femininity". This concept provides a useful way to understand how femininities can reinforce hegemonic gender relations. This hegemonic form of femininity, Schipper's (2007) argues "*consists of the characteristics defined as womanly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to hegemonic masculinity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women*" (p94). According to Schippers (2007), hegemonic femininity ensures that female bodies are regulated to enact gender difference and, more importantly, to "ensure swift and severe social sanction for women who take on or enact hegemonic masculinity" (p95) so that "manly" characteristics can only be exercised and displayed by men.

With these theoretical considerations in mind, the practices of masculinity delineated in exemplifying masculinity can be seen broadly as practices of an (adolescent) hegemonic masculinity, in that they are practices that can be seen to legitimise the domination of teenage boys over girls in everyday life through displaying physical superiority (athleticism), an ability to take risks (audacity) and an indifference to danger, all of which are arguably required to enact the social practice of cycling in Ireland as it is currently constituted (see Egan, 2021; Egan and Philbin, 2021). Relating to Schipper's (2007) model, the practices of femininity imparted in the category of incompatible femininity may be viewed as practices of hegemonic femininity, in that they – much like those of exemplifying masculinity – may reinforce and legitimate relations of domination and subordination between teenage boys and girls. In this respect, gender regulation may be seen to show how non-conformity with these Irish hegemonic forms of adolescent masculinity and femininity are subject to social sanctions, particularly when cycling as a girl is seen as not only engaging in a "A Boy's Thing" but also practicing and displaying aspects of hegemonic masculinity. Cycling as a teenage girl, then, could be seen to threaten men's exclusive possession of hegemonic masculine characteristics, and most importantly, constitute a refusal to embody the *relationship between masculinity and femininity* demanded by gender hegemony and, as a result, may be subject to gender

regulation in the form of stigma and other forms of informal and formal policing. In summary, our grounded theory suggests that gendered patterns of cycling in Ireland during adolescence may be seen as a product of a gender regime within the institutions of Irish secondary schools but also an effect of a wider gender order in Irish society (Connell 2012) in which gender difference is performed by gendered bodies and regulated both formally and informally.

In terms of limitations, this theory was generated using only focus group data from second-level students in Ireland. At the same time, the theory shows promise as a useful and grounded framework in relation to existing studies in the field of cycling and gender exploring different contexts and drawing on different data, as indicated throughout the theory section. Amidst a predominant focus in this paper with the cycling and gender literature, future development of the theory and its concepts could draw more on historical studies within this field (e.g., Jungnickel, 2015; Longhurst, 2015) – perhaps exploring how cycling may be more broadly constructed (and perhaps marketed) as "A Boy's Thing" in adolescence. Furthermore, future development could involve more comprehensive engagement with gender theory and research investigating the practice and regulation of masculinities and femininities beyond the field of cycling studies. Indeed, this theory does not fully account for how a gender regime and gender order (Connell, 2012) in Irish society may produce and reproduce cycling as "A Boy's Thing": a limitation in terms of its generality of scope (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) – one that could be addressed in future research and has important implications for considering the adolescent cycling gender gap in Ireland and potentially beyond.

Lastly, our theory does not account for concerns regarding the intersectionality of gender and cycling practices. However, participants involved in this study did vary widely in terms of socio-economic class and there was diversity (but to a lesser extent) in terms of the ethnic identity of participants. Importantly, we interpreted qualitatively similar patterns and concerns across the class and ethnic membership of participants, but this does not mean that structured differences and variations do not exist and could not be investigated in greater depth, as is cogently highlighted in cycling studies employing an intersectional approach (e.g., Russell et al., 2021). At the same time, we believe this analysis – with its emphasis on gender – provides a powerful, although context-specific, interpretation of the intersection between gender and cycling practices that provides some insight into the adolescent cycling gender gap in Ireland that could help inform efforts to tackle disproportionately low levels of ridership amongst teenage girls and, consequently, the social reproduction of cycling as "A Boy's Thing".

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