

My Post

Whenever we do an outdoor ride, the real world and all of its problems rides along with us. Like many of you, I have been called names, been flicked off, have had things thrown at me and so on.

For riders like me, there is another layer of complexity due to our complexion. Here are a few recent examples of what I mean.

- In 2017, I planned my first solo bike ride to Montreal. My father was telling my aunt about my plans and the first words out of her mouth were “You are letting him go?!?” Her worry was not about mechanical breakdowns, crashing, or running into bears. As with many black families, her fear stemmed from me getting in the crosshairs of people like those who killed [Ahmaud Arbery](#).
- In 2018, not long after a [police officer](#) made news for a potentially racially motivated shooting, I rolled up to a blocked road. I asked the police officer if I could dismount and walk through the construction zone using the sidewalk. He said “Sure, no problem.” When I got to the other side, the other police officer yelled at me asking me if I could read the sign or not. Thank goodness the officer who let me through came over and told him that he authorized me to go through.
- Last year, I cycled a route which had the following description in my club’s route guide: “Passes two gates on a road marked PRIVATE. Cyclists have been going under this gate without hassle for many years.” I did the route, but the time between the two gates was incredibly nerve-wracking for me because again I worried about running into the wrong people.

The cumulative effect of a lifetime of events like those of the past month for people like me is less engagement.

Am I paranoid? Maybe, however a google search on [cycling diversity](#) says otherwise.

Article Link	Selective Quotes / Factoids
Cycling Magazine (Canadian)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In one study, 100 per cent of African American participants expressed a fear that drivers would be hostile to them while they were cycling.2. While minority children are more likely to bike to school due to lack of transit options, the sport of cycling and many other outdoor sports maintain a high barrier to entry.3. In an article for <i>The Conversation</i>, Julian Agyeman, professor of urban and environmental policy and planning at Tufts University breaks down the concept of “invisible cyclists:” minorities who are not accounted for in urban planning data and therefore don’t benefit from the changes to city infrastructure made for cyclists.4. Commuters who ride bikes because they have no other means of transit are often discounted by the wider cycling community. This group is largely composed of immigrants and minorities.5. Beyond the fear of literally being murdered while exercising, minority groups don’t see themselves reflected in the outdoor industry and media.
The Conversation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Over in the US, the issue of race and cycling has led to claims of institutional police racism. In Chicago in particular, it seems black cyclists have been targeted by the police for unfair treatment.2. The Chicago Tribune newspaper reviewed police statistics on the number of biking tickets issued by the police in the city. And the review showed that more than twice as many tickets are being written in African-American communities than in white or Latino areas.3. And many in the city now believe that the bike stops are just another pretext for racially motivated searches – described as the new “stop and frisk.”

[Citylab](#)

1. Between 2001 and 2009, the fastest growth rate in bicycling was among the Hispanic, African American, and Asian American populations. Combined, those three groups went from making 16 percent of the nation's bike trips to 23 percent.
2. There's a real gap in the construction of bicycling infrastructure in poorer communities and communities of color.

From this research, I think the club should consider some questions like:

1. Is the club website images reflective of the club membership?
2. Given the cycling population growth with minorities, why is that our club has not reflected this growth?
3. What can this club can do to decrease the barrier to entry?
4. How can the club promote bicycling infrastructure in poorer communities?
5. How can we increase our advocacy to reduce "invisible cyclists"?
6. What is the cumulative effect of using tools like Strava for urban planning when not everyone can afford it?
7. Does the club consider monitoring bike and police interactions as part of our charter? Why or why not?

In closing, consider the second clause from the [CRW's constitution](#):

The purpose of the CRW is the **advancement and enjoyment of cycling** and of other healthful sports, through sponsorship of rides and other events, through cooperative activities with other organizations, through **encouragement of favorable actions by government and private industry**, through publicity of the benefits of cycling, through education of the cycling community and the general public about the health and fitness benefits of cycling and safe cycling practices, and through other suitable means. The CRW shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

I bolded areas that I believe that this posts hits. I have been a long-term member and cyclist since 1997. This is my attempt to put a human face to something that is easily be so theoretical.

I think it is healthy for our cycling community to ask ourselves if we can do more. I don't have all of the answers but I do think that talking about it is a healthy first step.

Respectfully,

Randolph
