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Media Release

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● From Boris to Wang Yang: The Cultures of Cycle Hire Schemes Across the World



Dubliners do it in their lunch break. Spaniards fit it in around mid-afternoon siestas and late-evening dining, while Parisians have the early morning bug and Brazilians enjoy it by the beach. These are a few of the differences in how public bike hire schemes – akin to “Boris Bikes” - are across the world.

The research by the UCL Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis, which will be presented at the annual international conference of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) in Edinburgh today (Thursday 5 July 2012), maps cycling habits and attitudes of bike hire schemes which are running across over 50 cities worldwide.

Commenting on their findings, UCL researcher Oliver O'Brien, said:

“The habits of cycle scheme users across the world differ in many surprising ways. In Europe the Parisians on average leave for work earlier and cycle home later than both Londoners and Brussels-dwellers, while in Changshu in China, commuter pedalling peaks even appear at weekends.

“Bike sharing is appearing in unexpected places such as Rio de Janeiro where beach-side bike shares alongside Copacabana beach make it one of the most active public schemes in the world.”

Alongside Rio de Janeiro, Dublin, London and Paris are the most heavily used schemes across the globe for their size. In China, there has been an increase in cyclists using schemes as the bikes are often better maintained than their own. While in Washington DC and Boston, cyclists share very similar traits to the commuting patterns of Europeans, in other North American cities such as Minneapolis and Denver they are more likely to cycle for leisure on weekends.

There are now more than 450 public bike schemes across the world, with 44 schemes set to go live over the next 12 months in the United States alone. The research concludes that the most successful schemes to date have been found where there is the highest density of docking stations in the city centre.

Oliver said: “With this research and mapping tool, the data can be used in the future to classify cities and predict how successful a bike scheme would be looking at the geography, structure and the size of the city.”

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Notes to editors



1. For further information, and any bids to speak to the presenter of the research, please contact the Media Office: on (020) 7591 3019 (Alex Jackson: Communications Officer) ; (020) 7591 3008 (Steven Toole: Policy and Public Affairs Manager); or 07719 712 978; or email press@rgs.org or contact John Williams in Edinburgh on 07712 584749

2. The UCL Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis presentation **Mining bicycle sharing flows for insights into sustainable transport systems** is taking place **on Thursday 05 July 2012** as part of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)'s annual international conference in Edinburgh. Mapping tool available here: <http://bikes.oobrien.com/london/>

3. Please note from the headline: Boris Johnson is the Mayor of London and Wang Yang is the Mayor of Changshu in China.

4. The RGS-IBG conference is the largest gathering of academic geographers in Europe, with more than 300 sessions, featuring more than 1,000 speakers. It is taking place in Edinburgh from Tuesday 3 to Thursday 5 July 2012. Full details on the RGS-IBG annual International Conference 2012 can be found at www.rgs.org/AC2012

5. The Royal Geographical Society (with The Institute of British Geographers) is the learned society and professional body for geography. Formed in 1830, our Royal Charter of 1859 is for 'the advancement of geographical science'. Today, we deliver this objective by developing, supporting and promoting geography through research, expeditions and fieldwork, education, and public engagement, while also providing geographical input to policy. We aim to foster an understanding and informed enjoyment of our world. We hold the world's largest private geographical collection and provide public access to it. We have a thriving Fellowship and membership and offer the professional accreditation 'Chartered Geographer' www.rgs.org