

# Bicycle Justice and Urban Transformation

Biking for all?

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## 9 Rascuache cycling justice

*Alfredo Mirandé and Raymond L. Williams*

In *The Buried Mirror* (1992), Carlos Fuentes points out that the most modern of all vehicles, the bicycle, was omnipresent in Mexico City in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, so that in 1890 the bicycle was in great fashion in the Mexican capital. Fuentes evokes the figure of the cyclist as follows: “In a bold stroke of genius, Posada<sup>1</sup> resolved and united these contradictions in the figure of Death riding a bicycle, meshing the old and the new in the inevitability of death” (Fuentes, 1992, p. 295). Fuentes had several literary predecessors, for writers such as Mark Twain and H. G. Wells also wrote of their interest in the new fashion in the West that cycling was at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the image of death that marked late nineteenth-century Mexican art is still highly appropriate today, as hundreds of cyclists die in accidents with cars annually during the process of their commuter, recreational, or competitive cycling. The history of the bicycle and the automobile are inextricably bound since their respective rise and, as we will discuss, issues related to bicycle justice, are still tied to the intimate connection between the bicycle and the automobile. In addition to death in accidents with cars that are sometimes homicides, unarmed Mexican cyclists have been shot and killed by police in southern California (Valles and Kandel, 2013). These issues, as well as the matter of parking space for automobiles versus parking security for bicycles, are the main bicycle justice concerns addressed in this chapter.

### **The advent of the automobile, cycling, and bicycle security**

In the late nineteenth century, as Posada was doing his drawings of cyclists and the Mexican elite were showing off their two-wheeled objects of modernity, the American industries of cycling and of automobiles were engaged in parallel technological development that actively fed off each other. With both the United States and northern Europe at the height of the Industrial Revolution in the 1880s, the cycling industry was the driving force for several of the key technological innovations and inventions related to speeding up the production of much needed bicycles and making them lighter and more efficient. Two important technological innovations originally driven by the bicycle industry that became

critical for the emergent car industry and other industries in the twentieth century were the pneumatic tire and metal tubing.

In the late 1940s, with the ascent of the car as a predominant form of transportation far outnumbering the bicycle, city planners began to create a new commodity related to automobile transportation—parking. In the city of Los Angeles, for example, the first parking meters were installed on city streets in 1949, and American cities in the western United States followed suit quickly. Given the smaller number of cyclists, and the impracticality of using bicycles as a primary vehicle for shopping, there was never an economic incentive to provide a parallel service making bicycle parking/security a commodity in the same way. Thus, the amount of resources dedicated to parking cars has totally outnumbered the resources for bicycle security.

With no market value established for bicycle parking/security, the installation of a few bike racks has become a minimal compensatory, after-the-fact solution to requests by cyclists, and these racks provide no bicycle security at all. To the contrary, they often serve as a focal point for bike theft. In our South–North perspective, we note that in the relatively new and progressive metro system in the city of Medellín, Colombia, there are some secure bike cages for bike commuters and there are similarly secure although limited numbers of boxes for commuting cyclists for Metrolink commuters at several southern California stations. These systematic approaches are to bike security as the twenty-first-century response to those 1940s inventions of car parking as a commodity.

### **Bicycle justice: a bottom up, rascuache perspective**

In this chapter<sup>3</sup> we argue that attempts to regulate cycling by state and law enforcement are extensions of a general movement in society to regulate space by law and to marginalize the poor, students, and racial minorities from the urban landscape (see Duneier, 1999; Mitchell, 1997). The social-economic strata of cyclists in southern California begins with what we identify as rascuache<sup>4</sup> (Mesa-Bains, 2003), the typically unhelmeted and uniformless cyclists who most urgently rely on the bicycle for transportation. The experiences of these bikers are compared with the *Catrín*, or respectable, professional and elite cyclists who use bicycles for sport or recreation.

We begin by discussing the Mexican concept of rascuachismo and its application to the cycling scene. We then discuss the idea of the bicycle as an object that enables rascuache, youth, the poor, and subordinated persons to transcend geographical, psychological, social, economic, cultural, and spiritual borders. This is followed by an overview of the extant literature on legal attempts to regulate the urban landscape.

We contend that the experience of undocumented immigrants and unlicensed commuter cyclists in urban environments in southern California can be understood as an example of what in Mexico and among Chicanos<sup>5</sup> has been identified as rascuachismo, a vernacular term with uniquely Mexican origins and connotations. According to Ilan Stavans, rascuache is a Mexican colloquialism used

“to describe a cultural item of inferior quality and proletarian origin” (Stavans, 2000, p. 193) such as the 1940s Los Angeles Pachuco fashion style and Cantinflas’ uniquely Mexican working-class humor, style, and dress. However, like other terms, which traditionally had negative connotations such as the word Chicano itself, *rascuache* has been turned on its head. For example “Chicano art that is *rasquache* usually expresses an underdog, have-not sensibility that is also resourceful and adaptable and makes use of simple materials . . .” (Ybarra-Frausto, 1991, p. 155, cited in Hispanic Research Center, 2001).

*Rascuachismo* is linked to Chicano structures of thinking, feeling, and aesthetic choices, as a sensibility that is not serious and elitist but playful and basic and projects an alternative aesthetic, what some would consider as “a sort of good taste of bad taste” (Ybarra-Frausto, 1991, p. 155). A listing of *Rascuachismos* would include the Mexican comedian Cantinflas, Chicano poet and artist José Montoya’s fictional Royal Chicano Air Force with its adobe planes, velvet paintings, the early actors of *El Teatro Campesino* (Diaz, 2013; Roybal, 2013), comedians Cheech and Chong, and most relevant here, the *calavera* (skull) images of José Guadalupe Posada (Ybarra-Frausto, 1991, p. 155). It could also include recent immigrants riding low-end Costco bikes on paved bike paths in Orange County.

*Rascuachismo* is an underdog aesthetic that presupposes the perspective and world view of the have-nots but it is also a quality found in objects and places such as a *rasquache* car, bicycle or restaurant, and in social comportment, as in a person who acts *rascuache* (Ybarra-Frausto, 1991, p. 156). Responding to a material level of subsistence and existence instills an attitude of survival and inventiveness. But *rascuachismo* also intensely embodies the bicultural political subjectivity of Chicanas/os as border subjects and the “queer space of the border” (Roybal, 2013, p. 75). Thus, to be *rascuache* is to be witty, irreverent, and to subvert and turn ruling paradigms upside down (Ybarra-Frausto, 1991, p. 155).

### “Sal si puedes”: the bike as a vehicle for transcending borders

The recently deceased writer from Tijuana, Federico Campbell (1941–2014), portrays a classic *rascuache* character who describes his losses as an adolescent growing up on the border in the 1950s and early 1960s (Campbell, 1995, p. 7). From the dominant U.S. perspective, Tijuana, with its velvet paintings, oversized Mexican sombreros, striped ceramic donkeys, cheap curios, and bawdy bars represents the ultimate Mexican *rascuache* (Castillo, 1995, p. 7).

Throughout the novella “Everything About Seals” (Campbell, 1995), which appears in English in the volume *Tijuana: Stories from the Border*, the narrator-protagonist vacillates between being “down and out” and what Ybarra-Frausto calls “down but not out,” and the latter is the character’s condition in the end. Of particular interest for this chapter is the presence of the all-important bicycle belonging to the narrator-protagonist.

At the outset of the story, the bicycle provides the only means in the entire story for the protagonist’s “happiness.” His bicycle trip near the airport is described as “a fascinating spectacle that took me outside myself and made me forget the

passage of time” (Campbell, 1995, pp. 29–30). In another key passage, at age 14, he writes that “. . . the bicycle was the only means I had to defend myself against the homey world of women and the gangs that terrorized the neighborhood” (ibid., pp. 58–59). At this point in the text, the narrator-protagonist has established the seminal importance of the bicycle not only as a means of transportation, but as something central to his very existence and identity: it is his happiness, his refuge from his dysfunctional family and from the gangs in his tough Tijuana neighborhood.

This story underlines not only the special kind of importance bicycles have for marginalized owners, but the bicycle as an extension of the self. In the end, unlike most other objects we possess, the bicycle, for many riders, becomes an extension of the rider’s body and, consequently, an intimate part of oneself. Just as a cane or a wheelchair provides assistance for the elderly and disabled, the bicycle is a form of assistance to movement for humans in a variety of less advantaged economic and physical states.

Riding bicycles is, in effect, assisted walking.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, when owners lose their bicycles to theft, especially rascuache cyclists, they sometimes perceive it not simply as the economic loss of a neutral object but as the loss of a physical self. For the student commuter or working-class cycling commuter, for example, the loss of a bicycle can mean that, the next day, one cannot attend class or get to work.

Campbell uses objects such as bicycles and cameras to write about the period of the protagonist’s biggest loss—his girlfriend, who dies. Thus, this is a story of loss that connects this chapter to how deeply significant bike security can be for many of the working-class and rascuache individuals who depend on their bicycles not only for transportation but for survival. In the world of trauma, all loss is repeated loss.

Bicycles are also an important object in several works of acclaimed Chicano poets, as well as writer Gary Soto’s short stories about the lives of Chicana working-class children growing up in California. In “The Bike,” Soto describes his experiences with his first bicycle as a five-year-old who defies his mother’s orders not to leave the confines of his yard and stay off the forbidden Sarah Street (Soto, 1995, p. 234). As in Campbell’s story, the bicycle provides a tool for rebellion and liberation. Although Soto felt pretty cool riding down the block in his brother’s hand-me-down shirt, he was scared of taking the first curve out of sight of his mom onto the forbidden street (ibid., p. 234). “Mom said hungry dogs lived on that street, and red anger lived in their eyes. Their throats were hard with extra bones from biting kids on bikes” (ibid., p. 235). As he defiantly took the corner and turned onto Sarah Street, he returned immediately, but incredibly nothing happened. In fact, the foreboding street looked just like his street with parked cars, tall trees, a sprinkler hissing, and an old woman in her yard but no mad dogs (ibid., p. 235).

In another of Soto’s short stories, “Broken Chain,” the protagonist is convinced that looking grown-up or more handsome than average is not as important—or as attractive to a seventh-grade girl—as behaving in a grown-up

way (Soto, 1990, pp. 1–12). As the plot unfolds, Alfonso rescues a little boy caught on the barbed-wire fence at his old elementary school. He is delighted when the boy's sister, Sandra, agrees to go biking with him. He asks to borrow his brother's bike but is refused. After school on Monday, as Alfonso is cleaning his bike, the chain breaks, and he now needs two bikes to go riding with Sandra. Ernie again refuses to lend his bike, then agrees, but the bike is dirty. At the climax of the story, Alfonso, riding with Sandra perched on the handlebars, comes to the realization that outward appearances are not that important after all and that Sandra likes him just as he is. Clearly, this experience of growing up is closely associated with a bicycle.

For Chicano youth, victimized by segregation, the bicycle often offers a modicum of escape from one's immediate surroundings. In *Summer on Wheels*, Soto (1995) describes the wacky adventure of Hector and Mando, ten-year-old best friends, in an action-filled tale of a six-day bike trip from East Los Angeles to Santa Monica.

Hector and Mando's adventures include starring in a commercial and being in a paintball battle (*ibid.*, p. 88). Among the places Hector and Mando visit is a wax museum, a ramshackle studio with mattresses against the wall where one uncle works as a recording engineer, and a palatial mansion where another uncle works as a chauffeur. On the trip, they also learn important lessons about the importance of family. Some intense scenes are included when their bikes are almost stolen (*ibid.*, p. 110) but even that incident works out and they end up winners at a local bingo night. In summary, an understanding of bicycle justice can begin with an appreciation of the idea that bicycles, unlike many other transportation vehicles, are often very personalized extensions of the human body, memory, and access to work of education and freedom. Bicycle policy, as many writers often suggest, is about more than urban commuting.

### **Rascuache bike users and cycling justice and security**

The bicycles that Campbell's and Soto's characters rode offered them priceless experiences of freedom and exploration beyond their immediate environs. Like many other rascuache bike owners, they typically purchase heavy steel two-wheelers ranging in value from \$50 to \$300 and these owners fall into three groups: undocumented, working immigrants, and economically marginal college-level students. What these groups have in common is their economic exclusion from owning automobiles, although additional factors besides the strictly economic sometimes intervene. Among the most frequent is the inability to secure a driver's license because of age, undocumented status, and cost, lack of insurance, or legal constraints.

Many rascuache bicycle owners are commuters who travel in the most direct line they know to work and school, sometimes ignoring or simply unaware of bicycle routes. For example, some undocumented or unlicensed commuters in Riverside, California, ride on the dirt Gage Canal, safe from car traffic but on a route not used by other cyclists or necessarily intended by city planners to be a

bicycle route. These commuters can be seen on similarly unorthodox but safe routes in Orange, San Diego, and Los Angeles counties.

Homeless camping cyclists similarly construct makeshift, rascuache “bike shops” with haphazard sets of extra wheels, parts, and tools for maintaining their bikes. Maintenance of these vehicles at regular bike shops is, for the most part, economically infeasible for rascuache cyclists. In the case of the low-income student commuters, many college students deal with the high cost of maintenance by creating de facto student cooperative bike shops; UC-Davis and UC-Santa Barbara are both pioneers and models in this area.

Both the criminal justice and transportation systems in many urban areas, particularly in automobile-dominated southern California, are not highly receptive to rascuache cyclists. This fact is underscored by the massive infrastructural investment in elaborate systems for parking for cars, a pioneer of which was the shopping mall, which allowed white middle-class suburbanites to avoid driving to the inner cities populated largely by communities of Color and vying for limited parking space on urban streets.

The construction of shopping centers highlighted the issue of parking space for cars by providing abundant parking for these motorized vehicles at the same time that the typical shopping center does not provide a secure place for cyclists to actually use these shopping centers and malls. In competing with downtown shoppers, shopping mall developers do offer a free commodity to car drivers—parking—in order to compete for the same basic group of potential shoppers, rather than expanding their markets for potential bicycling shoppers.

University campuses and athletic facilities designed and/or expanded since the 1950s have often followed the development model of the shopping mall. Nevertheless, the shopping-mall design of these three campuses makes current efforts to create bicycle-friendly campuses a challenge in terms of bicycle security, access to campus in and around it, and a bike-friendly climate. On these campuses, cars rule, bicyclists face challenges typical of other kinds of minority groups, and there is little practice of bicycle justice. The loss of bicycles by theft is treated by university officials as insignificant, even though many cyclists—and writers such as Federico Campbell—attempt to argue that bicycle theft can be hugely significant in their lives.<sup>7</sup>

### **The quasi criminalization of rascuache bicycle commuters**

The quasi criminalization of rascuache commuters is often related to their wearing helmets. Rather than dealing efficiently with bike loss with improved security, policies are passed in promoting items such as bike helmets. On the state level, a proposed bicycle helmet law, SB192, was presented to the California State Legislature in 2015 by state Senator Carol Liu, D-La Cañada Flintridge (Los Angeles County). It would require adult cyclists to wear helmets or pay a \$25 fine. Although the proposed legislation is facially neutral, it would have an adverse impact on rascuache cyclists. California would become the first state to require helmets for riders over the age of 18. The bill also requires cyclists riding



at night to wear reflective clothing for greater visibility, although they are already mandated to have front and rear lights on their bicycles. A number of cycling advocates argue that counter to its avowed purpose, such a mandatory helmet law will discourage people from abandoning their cars and becoming regular bikers. The California Bicycle Coalition, the state's largest bicycle lobbying group, maintains that a mandatory helmet statute would lead to fewer bikers and make roads less safe by discouraging bicycling. In a press release, the group said, "we know that having more bicyclists and pedestrians on the streets makes them safer for everyone" (O'Connor, 2015).

We argue that the proposed mandatory helmet law was directed specifically at rascuache cyclists, as this is the only group that typically does not wear helmets, primarily for economic reasons. A high quality helmet might cost as much, or more, than their inexpensive bikes. Moreover, by creating this law, the California legislature set up a scenario to further criminalize, harass, and control economically disadvantaged cyclists.

California's "Three Foot" law went into effect in September 2014, requiring drivers to stay at least three feet away from cyclists while passing (Nelson and Stevens, 2014). If driving conditions make a three-foot buffer impossible, drivers must slow to a "reasonable and prudent speed and wait to pass until the cyclist is safe. A driver who gets too close to a bike would be fined \$35, or \$220 if there is a crash that injures a cyclist" (ibid.). Although the proposed law is ostensibly intended to protect all cyclists, it is unlikely that the law will do much to protect cyclists, especially rascuache types who do not typically travel major highways or thoroughfares.

A number of observers have commented on the prevalence of racial profiling by law enforcement and the problem of driving, walking, or riding while Black or Brown. One of the most notorious cases related to the criminalization of the rascuache cyclist took place in Gardena, California, on June 2, 2013. A Mexican cyclist rode a bike to a CVS store in Gardena in search of a stolen bike that a family member had just lost. A video showed the police shooting and killing the unarmed cyclist who raised and lowered his arms several times before he was shot. Because the loss of the bicycle had the potential of becoming a major loss for the family, it made sense for a member of the family to attempt to recover the stolen bike.

The case came to light and gained national attention recently when a Federal District Judge rejected the Gardena and police department's privacy claims in seeking to block release of the taped shooting (Winton and Smith, 2015). While police did not say what caused officers to fire their weapons, the incident apparently stemmed from a report of a bike theft at a CVS pharmacy (Valles and Kandel, 2013).

There is a third hybrid group, lowrider cyclists, who neither use cycling as a form of transportation nor for sport and leisure but as an alternative rascuache aesthetic or art form that is a reflection of their ethnic and political identity (McQuilkin, 2009; Miller, 2014). Lowrider bicycles first made their appearance in the 1960s with the introduction of the 1963 Schwinn Sting-Ray bicycle,

which continues to be extremely popular among Chicano urban youth but the low-slung Latino lowrider bicycle was the antithesis of the Sting-Ray's chopper design (Penland, 2003). Like lowrider car enthusiasts, lowbikes were embraced by younger members of car clubs. "Mirroring their motorized counterparts, lowbike artists lowered, elongated, and customized the Schwinn frame to the degree that many of their creations can no longer be ridden, and they exist wholly as aesthetics objects" (McQuilkin, 2009, p. 1).

### **Catrín cyclists**

Having discussed the rascuache cyclists who use bikes as a mode of transportation, rather than for sport, leisure, or pleasure, we now turn to a discussion of Catrín cyclists. The image of the Catrín cyclist is drawn from Posada's famous painting of La Catrina or "La Catrina Calavera," which shows an image of a female skeleton dressed in a hat characteristic of the upper class outfit of a European of the early twentieth century. She is presented as a satirical portrait of those Mexican natives who, Posada felt, were aspiring to adopt European aristocratic traditions in the pre-revolutionary era. La Catrina has become an icon of the Mexican Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead.

We use "catrín/catrina" to characterize "respectable," rich, upper-middle class recreational and commuting cyclists. Their bicycles and clothing vary, but many used by fully employed commuters range from \$400 to \$4,000. For the most part, they wear helmets, most do not wear clothes made by the cycling industry, but they often wear reflective material to improve their visibility and efficiency, in addition to distinguishing themselves from rascuache cyclists, who are the most frequently harassed by police and motorists. The helmet law and the new three-foot law in California invite police agencies to focus not on the cyclist as criminal but on the illegal aggression of the dominant car citizenry against rascuache and, to a lesser extent, Catrín cyclists.

Rascuache and most Catrín commuters have the economic ability to use Metrolink trains and other public transportation systems, and a relatively small but regular group of cycling commuters use their bicycles to connect between Metrolink stations and their homes and places of employment. But space is limited and sometimes cyclists perceived as rascuache are asked to de-board if any given car exceeds the limit of four bicycles.<sup>8</sup> Since 2012, a small number of rush hour Metrolink trains have designated bike-specific cars for bike commuters, and these cars increase the probability that all cyclists will be able to board. In a system truly committed to bicycle justice, this token insertion of bicycle-specific cars would become the norm on all Metrolink trains. Up to this point we have contrasted both groups of cyclists, noting that while the rascuache are often subjected to police harassment and abuse, the latter, commuter, recreational, or sporting cyclists are viewed as respectable and are generally afforded the equal protection of the law. Rascuache cyclists generally turn to cycling out of economic necessity and use cycling as a way to commute from one place to another because they cannot afford an automobile or otherwise lack access to public transportation. Catrín cyclists, on

the other hand, use cycling for recreation and/or sport. For *Catrín* cyclists, the bicycle is not always an alternative mode of transportation.

### **Sustainable biking justice**

While economic, legal, and aesthetic concerns govern the use and modification of bicycles for transportation or exhibition, a larger concern is their use for environmental purposes and sustainability. Numerous sources confirm that the major source of carbon emissions created by humans is by driving cars (gasoline use). The average American household carbon footprint is 50 tons CO<sub>2</sub> per year (Jones and Kammen, 2013). Nevertheless, bike-commuters are sometimes treated as less desirable passengers on Metrolink, particularly on weekends when lower rates allow cyclists with lower socioeconomic levels, the *rascuache*, to use them.<sup>9</sup> Bike security is a critical issue throughout southern California, where bike theft is a major challenge for cyclists in both groups. Cyclists simply are not accorded the same kind of security accorded to cars. Parking services typically use the word “parking” for spaces assigned to bicycles, as if they were cars, and thus avoids the real issue, which is not “parking” but bike security.

Biking for all? Not really. The cyclists of privilege in southern California are generally white and middle-to-upper-middle class, consisting mostly of professional commuters on the Metrolink and members of recreational cycling clubs. An exception is *Adobo Vélo*, a relatively large (over 300) Filipino cycling club and a few other ethnic minority clubs. Upper-middle-class professionals on the Metrolink, easily identifiable by their distinctive cycling clothes and expensive (\$2,000–\$12,000) bicycles, are a small group of commuting cyclists. They are typically well treated by Metrolink employees, who are often aggressive with *rascuache* weekend riders. In public domain streets, *Catrín* riders increase their safety through their numbers, sometimes taking over entire lanes of streets by riding *en masse*, and in doing so, reaffirm their right to public space in ways that *rascuache* cyclists cannot.

Many of southern California’s transportation systems built since WWII were constructed with the unsustainable assumption that the automobile would be the primary and permanent mode of transportation for commuting and recreation. As city managers and urban planners radically change this assumption in cities such as Portland, Minneapolis, Long Beach, and Claremont, where sustainable means of transportation have official priority over cars on many streets, urban spaces in Latin America are also beginning to provide a planning and policy model for the mostly non-sustainable urban space of southern California. In Guadalajara, Mexico, for example, the installation of *Vía RecreACtiva Metropolitanas* (walking, cycling, community building) on Sundays has connected two formerly disjointed neighborhoods, transforming the urban space in positive ways. In Bogotá and Medellín, Colombia, long sections of the most trafficked streets are closed to bicycle and pedestrian traffic. This *CicloVía* has become the role model for several cities, including Los Angeles, California, which has celebrated several *CicLAvia* Sundays in the downtown

area. Appropriately enough, in recent years, Bogotá has also been ranked highly among the most sustainable cities in the world, and Medellín has received international recognition for its progressive transportation and ecological policy. In the latter, bicycle paths and routes are available to all the major college campuses in the city, as well as to many of the metro stations. Cities such as Guadalajara, Bogotá, Medellín, Mexico City, and Curitiba, Brazil, all offer worthwhile models from the South for our cities in the North.

One of the noteworthy features of the Colombian concept of *ciclovía* is its democratization effects in the central sections of cities such as Los Angeles, Medellín, and Bogotá.<sup>10</sup> To a large degree, pedestrians, commuter cyclists, and recreational cyclists from all three socioeconomic groups can be found in the *ciclovía*. In opposition to freeway and suburban space, which isolates humans from contact with others of different socioeconomic status, the *ciclovía* provides a space for equal access to all who chose not to use motorized vehicles, safe from car traffic. *Ciclovía* is a temporary and specific space not only for biking justice, but also a space in which bicycles are ridden as pieces of art, such as the *rascuache* art of the specially constructed lowrider bicycle.

Regardless of the lofty goals of *ciclovía* and other reform efforts, social class and socioeconomic disparities remain significant impediments to the implementation of a just and sustainable cycling policy on both sides of the border. Cycling policy in the United States clearly favors Catrín, middle and upper-class recreational cyclists over the *rascuache* riders who use bicycles not for speed, sport, or recreation but out of economic necessity. Despite the liberatory potential of *ciclovía* to provide a space for equal access to all who chose not to use motorized vehicles, safe from car traffic, on a recent trip to Colombia one of the authors was dismayed to learn from first-hand experience that there is much red-tape and bureaucratic paperwork associated with registering for *ciclovía*. The result, unfortunately, is that it is an option available largely only to upper middle-class, relatively affluent persons.

In a recent ethnographic study of the implementation of cycling policy in Mexico City, Rodrigo Meneses-Reyes (2015) similarly found that despite the City's avowed commitment to an alternative and more sustainable biking policy, the everyday implementation of these policies by police practices "intersect in a variety of ways to reinforce the use of automobiles at the expense of other forms of mobility, such as cycling."

The City of Los Angeles is an exceptionally interesting case in the context of this entire discussion, for few other U.S. cities have been as impacted by the growing Latino population or as extensively planned by car-oriented planners and policy makers. As Gerardo Sandoval has discussed in his study of Latino immigration and the growth of MacArthur Park, the Mexican population in Los Angeles has had a significant impact in changes in Los Angeles (Sandoval, 2010). As follow-up to the Colombian invention of *ciclovía* imported into Los Angeles, in August of 2015 the City of Los Angeles launched a major policy shift in urban transportation by announcing plans to make the entire city more bicycle friendly. Using European and Latin American models,

Los Angeles is slowing down car traffic and providing more space on the streets for cyclists.

In conclusion, today's urban planners, legislators, and policy makers at state and city levels, as well as at numerous private and public institutions, struggle to deal with the contradictions and conflicts that arise when car-planned urban spaces attempt to adapt to a post-car twenty-first-century world. Today's car commuters have grown up in a world of commoditized and comfortable use of space for cars, from driving with comfortable space at high speeds to parking them. As Federico Campbell's story reminds us, however, cyclists known to be committed to sustainability are also often intimately connected to their bicycles as extensions of themselves. Sustainable forms of transportation, such as bicycles, invariably come into conflict with both car users and car-oriented planners and policy makers.

As these issues are negotiated, the Posada image of death and lack of bicycle justice hovers over the diverse southern California cycling communities even more often than it did in the Mexican artist's nineteenth century Mexico City. Seen from South–North and from the bottom-up, the greening of U.S. urban space in its cities as well as on its college campuses will find natural allies with both the growing Latino population as well as its growing cycling communities, that include rascuache, lowriders, and the entire gamut of two-wheeled California commuters.

## Notes

- 1 José Guadalupe Posada (1852–1913) was a late nineteenth century Mexican artist, printmaker, and political cartoonist, renowned for his satirical depictions of death.
- 2 Mark Twain has written: “Get a bicycle . . . You will not regret it, if you live.” (Angier, 2015). H. G. Wells is widely known for his statement “When I see an adult on a bicycle, I have hope for the human race” (Bravo, 2014, p. 21).
- 3 The methodology used in this chapter is an eclectic combination of standard practices in the humanities and social sciences. We employ mixed methods from our respective disciplines to compensate for the lack of available data in some spheres of this chapter. One author, Raymond L. Williams, is a humanist in Hispanic literary studies with 22 years of experience as a cycling commuter, published cycling activist, and bicycle club member of over a dozen clubs. Alfredo Mirandé, is sociologist and lawyer with published identities as an observer of urban issues and “Rascuache” scholar. In this chapter, both authors cite from literary texts, urban transportation studies, urban sociology, and notes and observations recorded in field journals.
- 4 Also spelled *rasquache*.
- 5 The term Chicano (Xicano) refers to persons of Mexican origin residing in the United States on a relatively permanent basis, regardless of one's place of birth or immigration status. It is also used as a nickname for mexicano.
- 6 There is a rich and emergent literature on prosthetic embodiment. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's work on habitus, Mauss (2006) focused on how everyday uses of the body shape our world views. Bicycle scholars like Vivanco (2013), in turn, have extended the concept of “sociotechnical assemblage” to explain how bicycling can become an integral part of the rider's experience of a particular street or place, as was the case for

- Campbell and his magic realists bike rides on the outskirts of the Tijuana Airport. See, also Langan, (2001), Nelson (2001), and Patton (2005).
- 7 At UC-Riverside, for example, thefts are reported by e-mail to the campus community, but bicycle theft is systematically minimized or ignored.
  - 8 Williams' field journal notes.
  - 9 Williams' field journal notes.
  - 10 Observations about the city of Medellín are thanks to the good will of Chancellor Juan Luis Mejía of the Universidad EAFIT and Professor Leonardo García Jaramillo, who invited Raymond L. Williams to Medellín in July, 2015. Williams became familiar with the ciclovía in Medellín. Also thanks to BoConcepts, that lent him a bicycle to ride in the El Poblado neighborhood for a democratizing cycling event on Sundays. BoConcepts does not sell or rent them but, rather, lends them to non-bicycle owners.

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