

Bicycle commuting as part of the sustainable mobility - a case study of City of Koprivnica

dr. Marko Mustapić*; Antun Plenković*; Mateja Plenković**

*Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences, Marulićev trg 19, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia

**Catholic University of Croatia, Ilica 242, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The purpose of our research is to gain insight into the determinants that favor the use of bicycles as means of commuting in Koprivnica (industrial city in north west Croatia). Being the bicycle friendly city, Koprivnica was selected as a case study because of its special status in terms of bicycle traffic - it has the most kilometers of bike infrastructure with regard to number of inhabitants in Croatia and it has one of the largest modal share of bicycle traffic in the total turnover, as stated in the Plan of Sustainable Urban Mobility of Koprivnica. The aforementioned determinants are the following: built environment (distance, infrastructure), natural environment (landscape, weather conditions), socio-economic factors (age, gender, income), socio-psychological factors (attitudes, habits) as well as cost, time, effort and safety. The research includes the implementation of eight focus groups, with the participation of people living and working in Koprivnica and whose experiences provide a deeper understanding of the determinants that favor the use of bicycles in commuting, and also determinants that favor the use of other means of transport in daily commuting.

PROJECT TEAM

Dr. Marko Mustapić (1977) has a PhD in sociology and is a researcher at the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences in Zagreb. His research interests include youth, sport, and political communication. Antun Plenković (1987) works as a research administrator at the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences in Zagreb, Croatia. He has M.A. (University of Zagreb). His research interests include sustainable mobility, travel behaviour, and impact of social sciences and humanities. Mateja Plenković (1988) has M.A. in sociology (2012) at the University of Zagreb. Since 2013 she is working at the Croatian Catholic University as a research assistant. Currently attending Ph.D. study in the field of information and communication sciences at the University of Zagreb.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

After conducting the interview with city officials, our research included the implementation of eight focus groups, with the participation of people living and working in Koprivnica and whose experiences provide a deeper understanding of the determinants that favor the use of bicycles in commuting, and also determinants that favor the use of other means of transport in daily commuting. Groups were divided regarding age (younger or older than 35 years), gender (man or women) and means of transport in daily commute: cyclists or non-cyclists. This research shall be a base for constructing a questionnaire regarding bicycle commute and the citizens of Koprivnica. We used the focus group method to gain a good insight for the upcoming questionnaire.

Cycling is a habit, it has nothing to do with the income.

- Older man cyclist

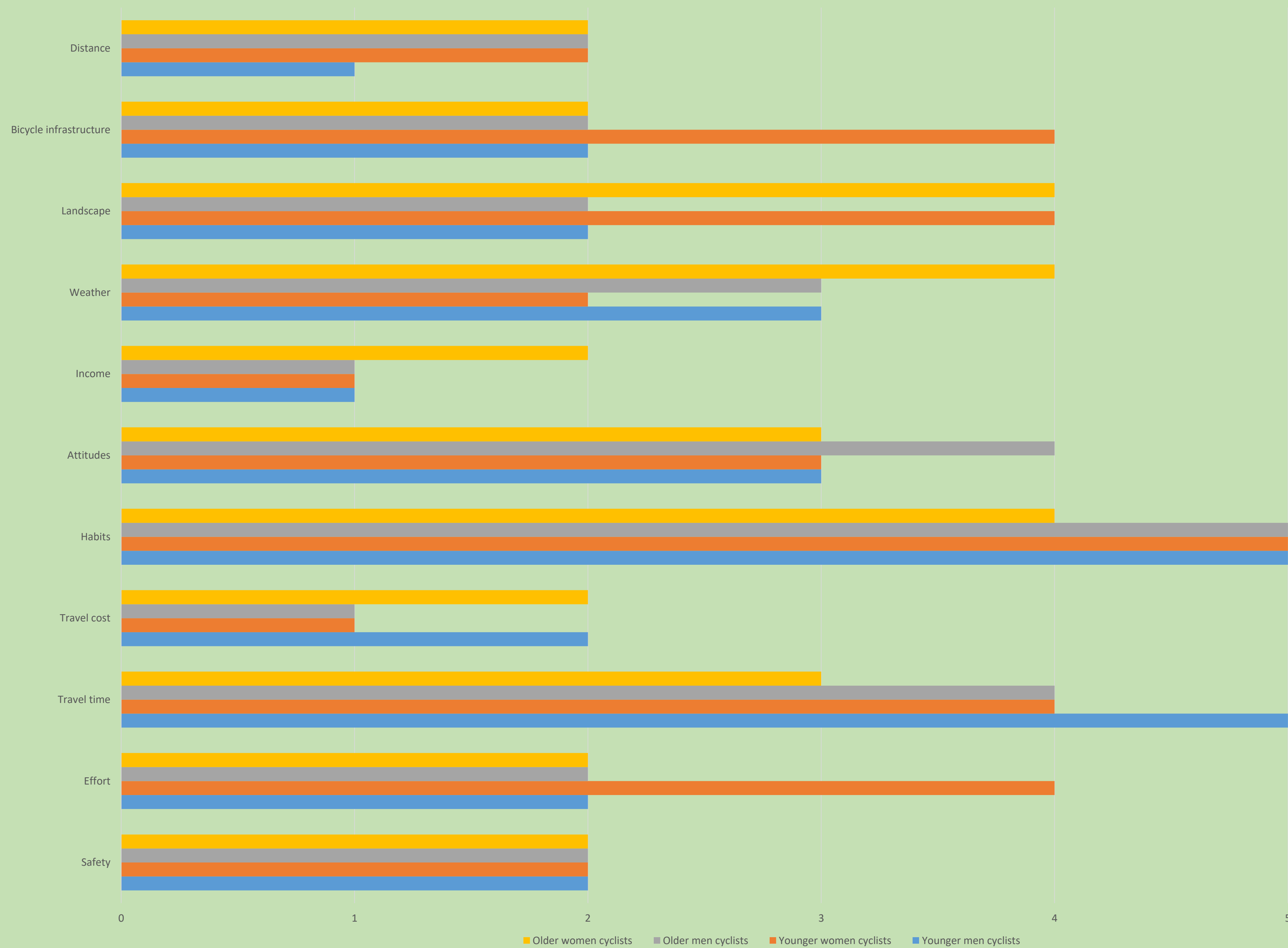
The car is a necessity and not a luxury.

- Older man non-cyclist

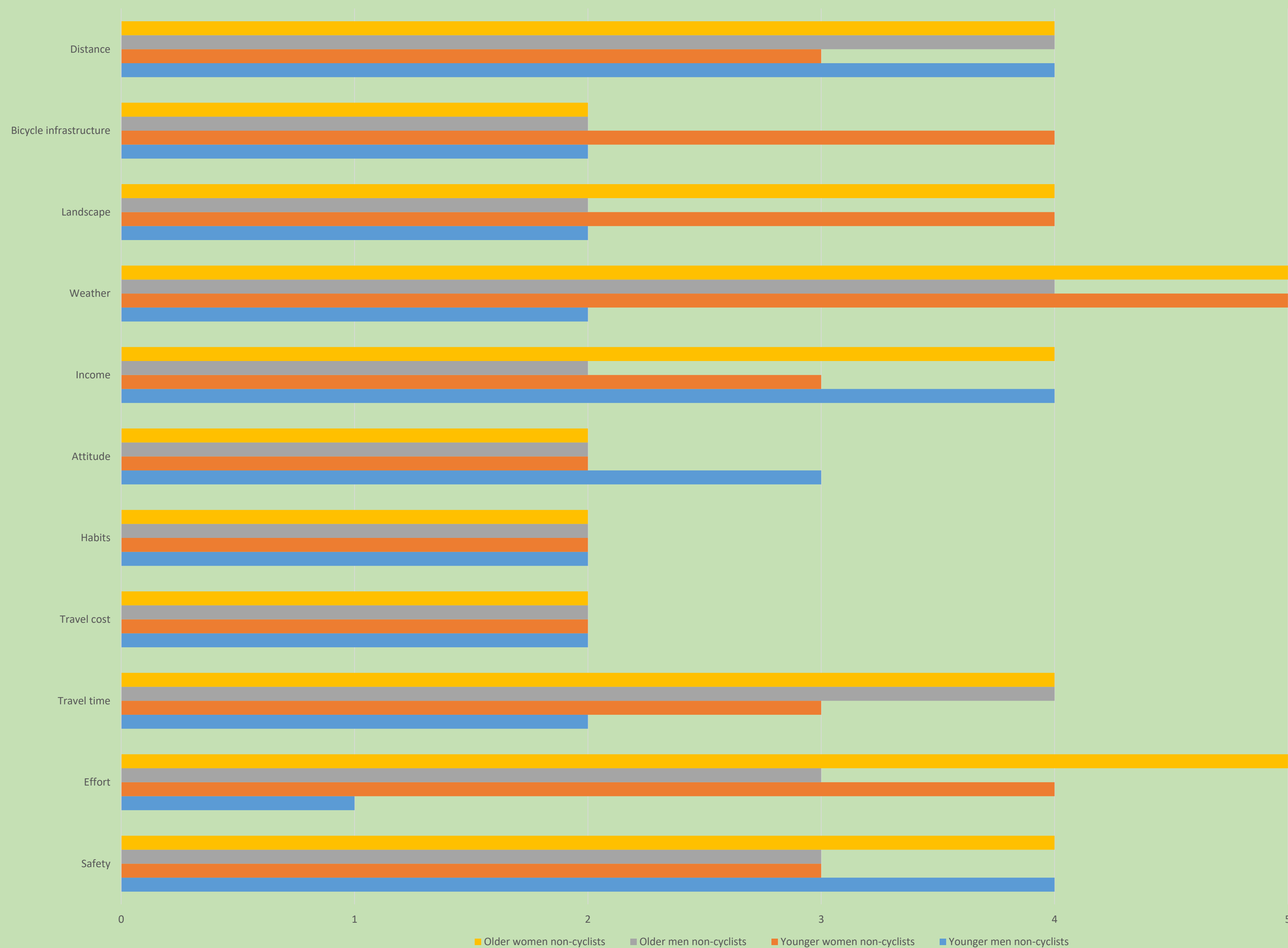
The focus group is a qualitative technique for gathering information about participant's perceptions and attitudes concerning specific topic. As such, they are by nature exploratory. It would be inappropriate to consider information thus gathered as representative of nonparticipating populations. The information gathered in this research shall be used for a bigger survey (construction of questionnaire). The city's administrative area has a population of app. 30.000 people. In our groups we had 48 participants (8 x 6). Their responses (as a group) were rated on a scale from 1 to 5 regarding the importance of a specific determinant.

The main difference between cyclist and non-cyclist commuters can be seen when talking about the perception of distance between house and work, the size of family income, the effort put in travel, habits (sport or recreational use of bicycle), attitudes (ecology, social norms, and health) and the safety on the road. The importance of natural environment (weather conditions and landscape) is generally higher with women (cyclists and non-cyclists). Weather and travel time is a bit more important determinant for non-cyclists. Importance of bicycle infrastructure is the same for cyclists and non-cyclist (very low) – meaning that quality of bicycle roads and parking spaces are not important when considering the mean of transport in daily commute (it certainly helps, but it is rarely decisive). Age and gender is completely irrelevant as a determinant for bicycle commute for all participants.

Importance of determinants for commuting by bicycle (cyclists)



Importance of determinants for commuting by bicycle (non-cyclists)



BACKGROUND AND THE RESULTS