

Article

Quantifying Bicycle Network Connectivity in Lisbon using Open Data [†]

Lorena Abad *  and Lucas van der Meer

NOVA Information Management School (NOVA-IMS), Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Campus de Campolide, 1070-032, Lisbon, Portugal; lore.abad6@gmail.com (L.A.); luukvandermeer@live.nl (L.M.)

* Correspondence: lore.abad6@gmail.com

† This paper is an extended version of our [paper published presentation](#) in the workshop “Open Data for Open Cities V 2.0”, Lund, Sweden, 12 June 2018. [\[1\]](#)

Version November 11, 2018 submitted to Information

Abstract: Stimulating non-motorized transport has been a key point on sustainable mobility agendas for cities around the world. Lisbon is not the exception, as it is investing in the implementation of new bike infrastructure. Quantifying the connectivity of such a bicycle network can help evaluate its current state and point out specific challenges that should be faced. Therefore, the aim of this study is to develop an exploratory score that allows a quantification of the bicycle network connectivity in Lisbon based on open data. For each part of the city, a score was computed based on how many common destinations (e.g. schools, universities, supermarkets, hospitals) could be reached within an acceptable biking distance, by using only bicycle lanes and roads with low traffic stress for cyclists. Taking a weighted average of these scores resulted in an overall score for the city of Lisbon of only 8.6 out of 100 points. This shows, at a first glance, that the city has still a long way to go before achieving their objectives regarding bicycle use in the city.

Keywords: bicycle network analysis; levels of traffic stress; sustainable mobility; open data; bicycle network connectivity; BNA score

1. Introduction

Stimulating non-motorized transport has been one of the many strategies adopted by cities to tackle climate change [2] and boost their inhabitants’ living conditions.

Introducing sustainable mobility into an urban planning agenda has beneficial effects on public health, as it decreases air pollution and stimulates physical activity [3–7]. It is not only a way to improve our environment, by decreasing air pollution and energy consumption [8]; but also to ameliorate citizens’ health [4].

Additionally, it has proven to reduce traffic jams [8] and reactivate public spaces [9]. Therefore, investing in cycling and pedestrian infrastructure becomes a vital axis of transportation policies in metropolitan areas.

The city of Lisbon has undertaken this investment, by implementing new cycle ways and [public](#) bike-sharing stations, i.e. [Gira Bicicletas](#). The municipality hopes to turn the bicycle into a mean of transport that, along with public transportation, will enable save and efficient short distance journeys up to six kilometers, [as an alternative to private transport \[10,11\]](#). This is happening in a city where 89% of commuters use a private vehicle [12], with a car occupancy of 1.2 passengers per vehicle [13]. The municipality originally presented a plan in which 200 km of cycle ways (Fig. 1) would be implemented into the cities infrastructure by 2018 [14]. However, for early 2018, only 80 km of them had been built. Finalization of the complete network is now planned for 2020 [15].

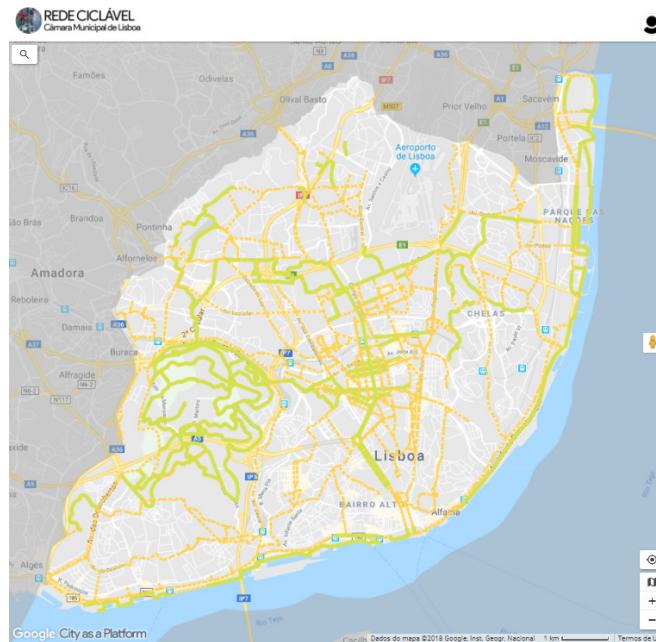


Figure 1. Existent (green) and proposed (dashed yellow) biking infrastructure for Lisbon Council.
Available in [City as a Platform](#).

29 In the meantime, Lisbon's cyclists increase in number [16], which emphasizes the need to invest in
 30 well-connected and safe infrastructure, not only for a continuous commuting trip, but also for reaching
 31 common destinations (e.g. schools, universities, supermarkets, hospitals). Quantifying its connectivity
 32 can help evaluate the current state of the bicycle network and point out specific challenges that should
 33 be faced. Using data sources open to the common public should be promoted for such inquiries, given
 34 their ease of access, constant updates, reproducibility, and knowledge sharing boost [17,18]. Therefore,
 35 the aim of this study is to develop an exploratory score that allows a quantification of the bicycle
 36 network connectivity in Lisbon based on open data, as a first attempt to apply such an index into a
 37 European city with a developing biking infrastructure.u

38 The remainder of this paper will be structured as follows:

39 Section 2 overviews the related work and the state of the art regarding bicycle network
 40 connectivity, whereas section 3 refers to a specific approach on which the current study is
 41 based.

42 Section 4 details the adapted methodology applied to address the particular case of Lisbon study area.
 43 Section 5 presents the main results, discusses them within the city context, and compares them to other
 44 cities' examples. Section 6 concludes the report and recapitulates its limitations and finally, section 7
 45 gives directions for future research and development.

46 2. Background

47 Bicycle network analyses have been undertaken from several angles, making use of GIS tools
 48 [19,20].

49 Connectivity analyses and measures have been developed and applied to understand how
 50 accessible a city's bike infrastructure really is (see Chapter 3 of [21] for an overview of these
 51 methods).

52 A recurrent approach within the literature is

the level of traffic stress (LTS). Mekuria, Furth & Nixon proposed a scheme to classify the road segments in four LTS, ranging from LTS 1, the level suitable for children to 4—the level tolerated by the strong and fearless cyclists. The quantification of the amount of traffic stress that cyclists perceive [22,23]. Mekuria, Furth & Nixon [24] proposed a scheme to classify road segments into four levels of traffic stress (LTS), ranging from LTS 1, the level suitable for children; to LTS 4, the level tolerated by the “strong and fearless” cyclists [25]. Their approach includes an analysis of the network connectivity with a thorough review of every segment and crossing, allowing an integral characterization of the bike network and assigning each section a stress level. A case study in San Diego, California, in which every street and crossing was classified by LTS. In later work, Furth, Mekuria & Nixon [26] developed a measure for the connectivity of low stress cycling networks, using origin-destination data of home-to-work trips. Applying their methodology once again in San Diego, California, they concluded that the road network is divided into islands of low-stress segments, with no connection between each other. Investments in new bicycle infrastructure between such islands could drastically improve the connectivity of the low-stress network.

Building on the findings of [24], Lowry et al. [27] created a tool for transportation planners to rank more than 750 bicycle improvement projects from the Seattle, Washington’s Bicycle Master Plan, based on their ability to connect homes and important destinations by a low-stress network. The same master plan was evaluated in [28], by comparing the bicycle network connectivity for different types of cyclists and different neighborhoods in Seattle, at both the existing and proposed situation. The results showed that the measured connectivity differs between neighborhoods and types of cyclists, and emphasized the importance of policies and programs that increase the confidence of cyclists. Both [27] and [28] focused solely on utilitarian travel, and did not distinct between the level of importance of the accessible destinations.

Boettge et al. [29] validated the LTS concept in a qualitative way, gathering information from individual cyclists by surveys. Their findings in St. Louis, Missouri, confirmed a positive correlation between cyclists levels of stress on roads and speed limit, number of lanes and functional classes. A relationship between specific bicycle facilities and LTS was not found.

49

50 3. PeopleForBikes “Bike Network Analysis score” approach

51 Yet another example of the use of LTS to quantify bicycle network connectivity comes from
he [PeopleForBikes](#) (PfB) organization. They developed a scoring system, named *Bike Network
Analysis score* (BNA score), based on slightly modified LTS, as from the methodology described
by [24].

52

53 The modifications basically refer to additional bicycle facility types that were not considered on
the initial LTS approach. Besides this, the approach is the same, classifying the four original LTS
levels into Low Stress (LTS 1 and LTS 2) and High Stress (LTS 3 and LTS 4).

54

55 The BNA score determines how people in a city can get to
common destinations on a comfortable and connected bike network.

56 The destinations are picked in a similar way as Lowry et al. define their so called *basket of
destination types*, as “it is possible that some bicyclists would not need certain destinations in the
basket, and it is also possible that different bicyclists would have unique preferences for particular
destination types, e.g. preference for a particular restaurant. Nevertheless, (...) the concept of a
basket provides a means to calculate a meaningful metric with objectivity” [27, p.130].

57

58 The score is computed by counting the total number of common destination points accessible within
10 minutes on a low-stress bike network from an origin census block. A scoring scale between 0 and

58 100 is assigned to each destination type, on a stepped manner. Finally, the scores for all census blocks
59 are aggregated in a weighted averaged fashion, to get to one score for the whole city [30].

60 PeopleForBikes targets USA cities and towns, basing their analysis mainly on OpenStreetMap
61 and US Census data. The particularity of the PfB analysis, targeting USA cities and towns, is that
62 the methodology is based on OpenStreetMap (OSM), a crowd-sourced project to create a free and
63 editable map of the entire world. The use of OSM, complemented with open governmental data
64 coming from the US Census of 2011, makes the tool easier to implement in other areas where
65 street network and point of interests information might not be available to the public.

66 Therefore, this paper will be guided on the PeopleForBikes' [open source](#) methodology to develop
67 a BNA score for the city of Lisbon.

68 4. Data and methods

69 4.1. Data acquisition and pre-processing

70 The computation of the BNA score for Lisbon in this paper is based solely on open data. The main
71 sources used were OpenStreetMap (OSM), Lisbon Municipal Council's Spatial Open Data and Open
72 Data Portal, and the National Statistics Institute.

73 The OSM data was downloaded in February 2018 through the built-in QGIS tool and uploaded
74 into a PostgreSQL database using two formats: the *osm2pgsql* bicycle map configuration .XML file
75 to generate edges/segments and nodes/intersections tables, and the *osm2pgsql* adjusted to the .STYLE
76 file from PeopleForBikes to generate points, lines, and polygon base data.

77 The [CML data](#) consisted of the Lisbon's Council outline, the Parishes corresponding to the Council,
78 and the currently existing cycleways. The Parishes data were combined with their corresponding
79 population obtained from the [2011 Census](#).

80 The PeopleForBikes methodology includes census blocks as units of analysis.

81 As this information was not available for the study area, a hexagonal grid overlying Lisbon
82 Council was generated to perform the network analysis on a smaller scale, allowing a local
83 evaluation of the resulting stress network. However, information at this administrative level was
84 not available for the study area. Therefore, a hexagonal grid was laid over the Lisbon Council to
85 perform the analysis at a higher spatial resolution, and evaluate the results locally. A hexagonal
86 shape was selected over a rectangular grid as it reduces the bias of the edge-effect generating a
87 more symmetrical neighborhood and thus being more convenient for connectivity analyses [31].

88 Each hexagon in the grid had a x-spacing of 200 m. This value was arbitrarily chosen, but based on
89 the underlying idea that all destinations in a single cell should be on a reasonable walking distance
90 from each other. The population fraction corresponding to each cell was calculated from the parishes
91 population, by simply dividing the total population of a parish by the number of grid cells that belong
predominantly to that parish.

92 For the pre-processing, all the data were projected to ETRS89 / Portugal TM06 and clipped to the
93 study area outline. Next, the point and polygon data were organized to create one homogeneous layer
94 with common destination points. The centroids of the polygon data were calculated to be appended
95 to the point data. For polygons that comprehended large areas (nature reserves and parks), a spatial
96 join with the hexagonal grid was performed to assign a destination to each cell centroid that intersects
these polygons.

97 Finally, the segment data were built upon attributes like maximum speed, number of lanes, road
98 type, taken from OSM tags. To assure that the official cycleways in the CML data were comprised
99 within the OSM segments, an intersection between them was performed. An additional variable
100 concerning the mean slope was added for this analysis, given the challenging conditions of the study

area. It was calculated for each segment from the Digital Terrain Model raster (49 m resolution), obtained from the [Open Data Portal](#).

4.2. Biking Network Stress Levels classification

The segment data were categorized into two possible classes: low and high stress. This classification follows the PeopleForBikes simplification of the LTS mentioned in section 3. The conditions to determine if a segment is of high or low stress are based on five variables: maximum speed, whether or not it is a residential area, the number of lanes, the slope, and a bicycle tag existing among the OSM information. With these variables, the type of segments, identified by the OSM tag are classified. The criteria followed can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Classification criteria for stress level segment labeling.

Type of segment	Maximum speed	Residential area	Number of lanes	Slope	Bicycle tag	Stress Level
Municipality designated cycleway	—	—	—	—	—	Low
OSM tagged cycleway	—	—	—	—	—	Low
Shared lanes	≤35 km/h	Yes	—	—	—	Low
	≤35 km/h	No	1	<10%	—	Low
	>35 km/h	No	—	—	—	High
Motorized road network (road, primary, secondary and tertiary segments and links)	≥50 km/h	No	>1	—	—	High
	≥50 km/h <60 km/h	No	1	<10%	—	Low
	≥50 km/h <60 km/h	No	1	>10%	—	High
	≤30 km/h	No	1	<10%	—	Low
Residential roads (unclassified, residential, living street)	>40 km/h	—	—	—	—	High
	≤40 km/h	—	—	<10%	—	Low
Pedestrian segments and foot ways	—	—	—	—	—	High
Roundabouts segments without bike path	—	—	—	—	—	High
Service lanes (public transport)	≤30 km/h	—	—	<10%	—	Low
	>30 km/h	—	—	—	—	High
Paths	—	—	—	—	—	Low
Tracks	—	—	—	—	—	High
Remaining unclassified segments	—	—	—	>10%	—	High
	—	—	—	—	Yes Designated Destination	Low
	—	—	—	—	No Dismount	High

101 *4.3. Bike Network Analysis (BNA)*

102 A network analysis was performed to count, for each cell separately, the number of destinations
 103 reachable within a biking distance of six kilometers on the low stress network. First, the hexagonal
 104 grid and destinations were spatially joined, so that the number of destinations per type was known for
 105 each cell. A spatial join was also performed between the grid and the nodes of the low-stress network,
 106 to select only those cells that are reachable with the low-stress network. For each of these, the centroid
 107 was computed, after which the nearest node to each centroid was found (Figure 2). By doing this, each
 108 reachable cell was now represented by one single node.

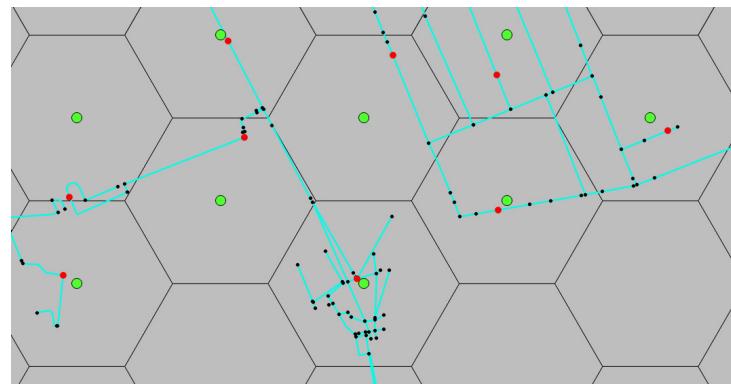


Figure 2. Nearest node selection. The low-stress network consists of the blue lines (edges) and black dots (nodes). The green dots represent the cell centroids. The nearest nodes to each of the cell centroids are colored red.

109 Shortest paths were computed between all the nearest nodes, using the Dijkstra algorithm. Only
 110 those that were shorter than six kilometers were kept. Knowing that each node uniquely represents a
 111 grid cell, for each cell it was now known which other cells were reachable by the low-stress network
 112 within the six kilometers buffer. Combining this information with the destination counts, the number
 113 of reachable destinations of each type for each cell could be determined. These data were used as input
 114 for the calculation of the BNA scores.

115 *4.4. BNA scoring*

116 Each cell on the hexagonal grid was evaluated according to its capacity to reach the destinations
 117 within the study area, being able to get a maximum score of 100 points. These destinations were not
 118 equally weighted, given that, their number and importance differ from one another. For example,
 119 universities are not as common as parks, therefore the ability of the network to reach one park would
 120 be rewarded with 30 points whereas reaching a university campus or building would award the cell 70
 121 points. Hence, different scoring processes were established for each type of destination, which can be
 122 observed in Table 2.

123 The scores for each type of destination, following the scoring process described in Table 2, are
 124 then categorized into three distinct groups: Opportunity for those destinations related to education,
 125 Core Services for health, consumer goods, and social services, and Recreation including parks and
 126 nature reserves. Within each of these categories, the scores for the different types of destinations are
 127 given a weight (Table 3) that will allow the calculation of a weighted average per category. Finally,
 128 these averaged scores are once again aggregated given the weights assigned to the categories, and the
 129 BNA score per cell is obtained. To calculate the overall score for the whole study area, a final weighted
 130 average is performed. This average consists on the addition of all the cells within the grid, weighted
 131 by the fraction of the population they would comprehend, assuming that the population is equally
 132 distributed along each parish.

Table 2. Methodology for scoring destinations.

Scoring process	Criteria	General methodology
A	First low stress destination = 30 points Second low stress destination = 20 points Third low stress destination = 20 points	The maximum amount of points is 100. The points are given in a cumulative form, considering the number of destinations that the low stress network allows to reach within a biking distance of 6 km.
B	First low stress destination = 40 points Second low stress destination = 20 points Third low stress destination = 10 points	If all the destinations can be reached, then 100 points are granted. If more destinations can be reached than defined in the criteria on the left, extra points are given based on a ratio:
C	First low stress destination = 70 points	No. of extra destinations that can be reached by the low stress network / total number of extra destinations within a distance of 6 km, represented by a circular buffer around the concerned node.
D	First low stress destination = 60 points Second low stress destination = 20 points	

The complete scoring process can best be summarized using a short example. Assume in a radius of 6 km around a cell there are 5 parks and 2 nature reserves. With the low stress network, one can reach 4 of these parks and 1 nature reserve. Both parks and nature reserves have scoring process A, so for the first park and the nature reserve, the cell will get 30 points. The fact that a second and third park can be reached, will account for two times 20 points more. Hence, for three reachable parks the cell has now got 70 points. There are two more parks in the radius, of which one can be reached. That is, of the remaining 30 points (100-70), the cell will get half, i.e. 15 points. The 85 points for the four reachable parks and the 30 points for the nature reserve both count for 50% in the Recreation category, so the cell will have a score of:

$$85 * 0.5 + 30 * 0.5 = 57.5 \quad (1)$$

¹³³ This score counts for 20% in the computation for the final BNA score of the cell. How much weight is assigned to this particular final score when the overall is computed for the whole city, depends on the fraction of the total population of Lisbon assigned to the cell.

Table 3. Weights for destinations and categories.

Category	W	Type of destination	W	Scoring process
Opportunity	40	School	30	A
		College	30	C
		University	25	C
		Library	15	B
Core services	40	Doctors + Clinics	20	B
		Dentist	10	B
		Hospital	20	C
		Pharmacies	15	B
		Supermarket	25	D
		Social facilities	10	C
Recreation	20	Nature reserve	50	A
		Park	50	A

¹³⁶ **5. Results and discussion**

¹³⁷ *5.1. Low-stress biking network*

¹³⁸ A low-stress set of segments was identified from the bike network classification, as can be observed
¹³⁹ in *cyan* color in Figure 3. The resulting low-stress network is very limited according to the classification
¹⁴⁰ criteria. Only 9% out of the **42,294** analyzed segments are classified as low-stress. These are
¹⁴¹ comprised in their majority by the existing biking facilities, with only few additions of some roads
¹⁴² considered suitable for commuting cycling.

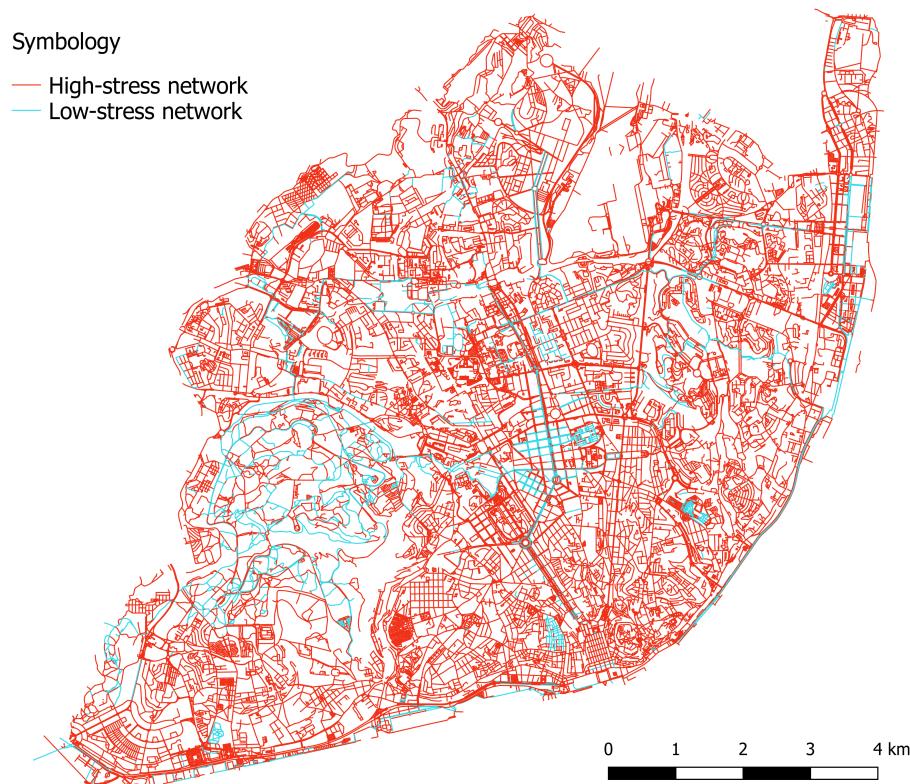


Figure 3. Stress network for study area.

¹⁴³ Even if the results are tightly linked to the quality of the OSM data, certain factors might explain
¹⁴⁴ the limited low-stress network within the city context. The first one is the maximum speed allowed
¹⁴⁵ on the segments, closely attached to the number of lanes and residential areas. At least 75% of those
¹⁴⁶ allow a maximum speed equal or higher than 50 km/h, being 105 km/h the highest maximum speed.
¹⁴⁷ Even if these are not the official values that the municipality handles, as they were generated by
¹⁴⁸ the *osm2pgRouting* tool, they give an idea of how the actual street network in the city is structured.
¹⁴⁹ According to a sociological study on the pedestrian and cycling practices in Portugal [32, p. 298], “the
¹⁵⁰ automobiles’ excessive speed is referred **to** [as an obstacle] specially by the (...) people who commute
¹⁵¹ in Lisbon”, hence classified as high-stress.

¹⁵² Another decisive variable, especially within Lisbon’s context, is the slope. Twenty five percent of
¹⁵³ the segments have a slope higher than 9% in the analyzed network, with a mean slope of 6.6% and a
¹⁵⁴ maximum reaching 49%. It is known in commuting cycling that given the decision between a steep and
¹⁵⁵ shorter route, and a flat and longer one, a person would choose the second option [33], as “the slope
¹⁵⁶ increases the amount of effort that cyclists need to make” [34, p.67].

Studies [33–36] do not talk about a threshold for the maximum percentage that an average commuter-cyclist would consider as too physically demanding. Therefore, the 10% chosen for this study was based on the authors' experience, considering that even this slope could be challenging for some people but that a lower threshold would imply an even more limited network. It should be noted in this context that the influence of slope on cyclists' stress level could become of far less importance, as the share of electric bikes is rising sharply in Northern Europe, opening up sustainable mobility to new markets that did not exist before [37]. As of 2017, Lisbon has a public bike sharing program consisting mainly of electric bikes. Eventually, this system should be expanded to 1410 bikes, of which two-third will be electrical [38]. Such initiatives, in combination with e-bike friendly infrastructure, lower the barrier of slope and could potentially increase the extent of the low-stress network.

Intersections were not evaluated as part of the network. The main reason to omit them was the lack of sufficient information incoming from the OSM data for all the nodes generated during the topology creation. Further work requires complementary open data and further assumptions regarding the road network to successfully include the information for intersections, given their importance when evaluating the status of a biking network, especially a high-traffic one, as the presence of stop signs and traffic signals increase perceived safety [33]. PeopleForBikes approach do take them into consideration, therefore, their strategy will be closely followed to integrate the intersections within the network analysis to be performed in future analyses.

Behavior of fellow road users forms another factor that could be of influence on the amount of stress that cyclists perceive. Particularly in Lisbon, it is still hard to create a culture where the motorized vehicle drivers acknowledge the right of way of cyclists. The main reason for this behavior is that only in 2013 the road traffic regulations migrated from a motorized-centered perspective to one that includes the cyclists' rights as well [32]. Since this change is so recent, it still fails to be embraced by the daily commuters. Besides motorized traffic, also pedestrian behaviors, can turn the already low-stress network into a highly stressful experience. One of the most noticeable example of these behaviors is the usage of cycleways as foot ways. This adds up to the fact that the pedestrians do not appear to have a cycling-city culture, and therefore, become unpredictable when reacting upon the sudden meeting of a cyclist in their way. These limitations raise the question of whether the resulting low-stress network for Lisbon can really be considered as such. However, at the same time these cultural factors are hardly accountable for in a quantitative index based on open data.

5.2. Lisbon's BNA score

The connectivity of the low-stress network can be quantified by the scoring mechanism, awarding the city of Lisbon with a score of **8.6 out of 100 possible points**. Each of the grid cells was punctuated in order to obtain this overall score, which can be visualized in Figure 4. At a first glance, the figure shows how the cells with high scores spatially correlate with those areas where the municipality's bike infrastructure is located, however this is not always true. It can be observed how, in fact, the cells correspondent to the central and northwestern axes are highly scored, whereas the cells along the riverside show lower scores even if an acceptable bike infrastructure can be already found there.

This is mainly because the number of destinations accessible within the analysis are clustering predominately around the central areas and not the riversides (Fig. A1 in the Appendix).

As [39] indicate on their analysis, the current cycling network in Lisbon does not satisfy the commuters' needs for daily commuting, as it was projected as a network for leisure trips, providing infrastructure for parks, gardens, and touristic areas. Furthermore, as also mentioned in section 5.1, the hilly areas in the city limit the extent of the low-stress network, thus scoring the steep cells low (Fig. A2 in the Appendix).

The resulting score does show an extremely low performance of the bike network, which does not really come as a surprise given the factors already discussed in section 5.1. Of course, it is true that obtaining a score of 100 points is difficult in a city where the biking culture and policies are not

201 completely established yet, and where the mind shifting is still an ongoing process; however, it is
 202 important to know that there is big room for improvements, and that this starting process can follow
 203 the steps of cities where commuting-biking is a daily way of life.

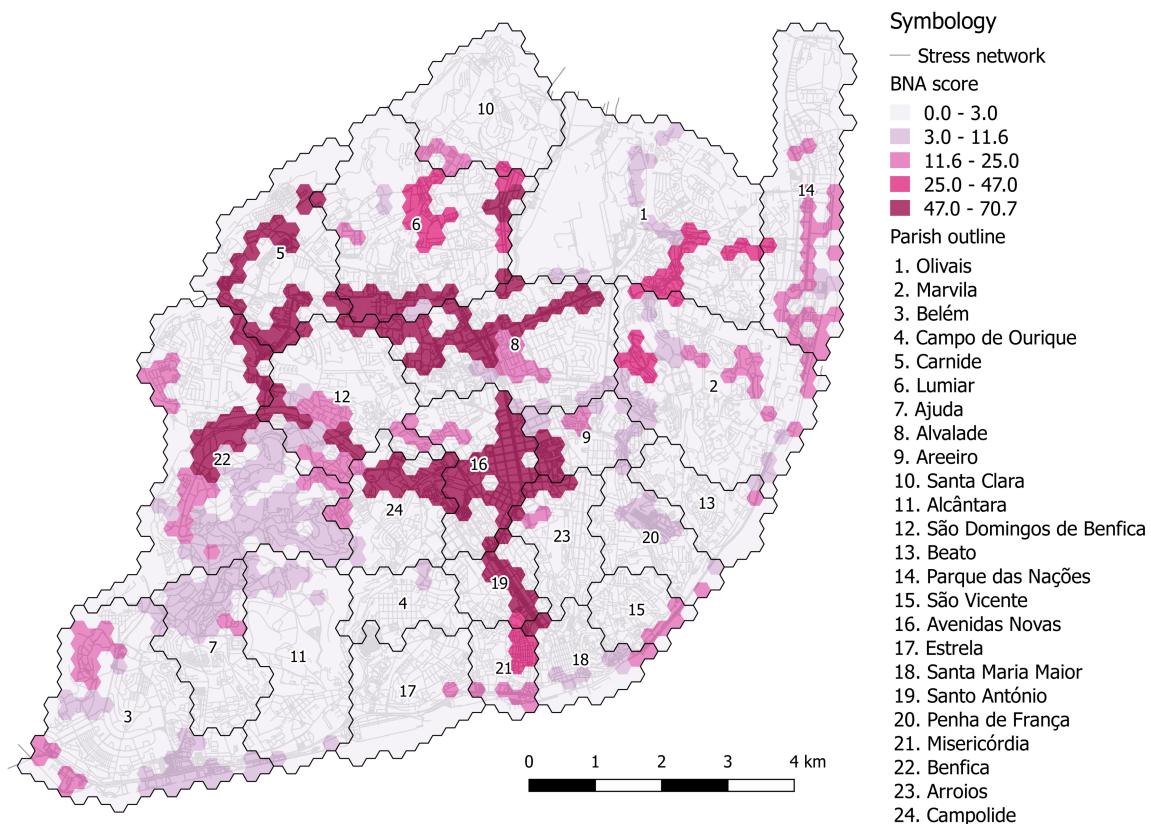


Figure 4. BNA score results for the city of Lisbon.

204 This does not necessarily mean that there are cities around the world with a perfect BNA score. For
 205 example, Groningen in The Netherlands is one of the world leading cities regarding bike infrastructure,
 206 and yet, when the PeopleForBikes organization applied their methodology to compute a BNA score
 207 for Groningen, it was awarded 75 points [40]. If we look for the highest rated cities in the USA, where
 208 the original tool was implemented, we see that some places reach scores as high as 88 (Crested Butte,
 209 CO) and 85 (Provincetown, MA)¹, but it is important to notice that these are small cities with less than
 210 3 thousand inhabitants.

211 Comparing the obtained value for Lisbon with what the PeopleForBikes BNA score has done for
 212 the US cities is not completely accurate, as the methodology differs. One of the biggest challenges of
 213 applying such methodology outside of the USA is that the open data available is not the same as in
 214 Europe. As already mentioned, the PeopleForBikes BNA approach includes census blocks information
 215 with exact population counts, which was not easily and openly available for the Lisbon case, as far as
 216 the authors were aware. Additionally, their approach included **workplace employment** data, which
 217 is also an important factor to consider, but not possible to obtain as open data in the European data
 218 portal or similar local portals for Lisbon. Nevertheless, to see how other cities score, and analyze
 219 the strengths and weaknesses of their biking policies can guide Lisbon on its way to become a more
 220 sustainable city.

¹ Values taken from PeopleForBikes [BNA score visualizer](#).

221 6. Conclusions and Limitations**222 6.1. Conclusions**

223 The BNA score of Lisbon is 8.6 out of 100 points. The exploratory
224 tool developed has shown how the use of open data, even with its
225 limitations, can provide a quantification index of sustainable mobility for a city.

226 For the Lisbon study case, the score per cell can be used by urban planners to thoroughly analyze
the existing biking network, identifying specific areas where low-stress infrastructure should
either be introduced or better connected. Additionally, the methodology can be used to evaluate
proposals for new cycling infrastructure, and guarantee the introduction of a well-connected
low-stress network for bicycle commuters.

227 The current overall score can be considered an extremely low performance and shows that there
228 is still a long way to go until the bicycle can be considered a fully-fledged mean of transport, able to
229 compete with the car, as the municipality aims for. Of course, making radical changes like this is a
230 slow process and it takes a lot of time for both the inhabitants and policy makers to adapt to them, but,
231 with a clear vision and a strong belief, significant improvements can be expected in the coming years.

232 6.2. Limitations

233 The major limitation of the BNA approach is the level of completeness and accuracy of the
OpenStreetMap data for the study area. PfB is constantly encouraging current and potential users
of their tool to also contribute in the mapping of their OSM area so that the score becomes more
reliable.

Another issue is the weighted influence that destinations have on the overall score, as different
weights can impact highly on the obtained score. It is therefore important to always keep the
same criteria for scores calculations when comparisons want to be performed among different
study areas.

Finally, as seen on the background section, validation schemes have been proposed for this type
of connectivity measures. However, the lack of open data and the labor intensity of qualitative
methods, could become a problem for some cities to successfully validate the computed index.
Therefore, validation approaches that are automatized, affordable and accessible should be
explored to expand this tool to a broader audience. Also, a good validation procedure should
include an evaluation of the destination weights to ensure that their value matches the actual
importance given to them by commuters.

234

7. Future research

235 Future research will focus on analyzing thoroughly the set up of street networks to include
236 segments and intersections altogether, as the PeopleForBikes approach considers, in an effort to
237 translate the score for any city in Europe, considering the data limitations and possible replacements
238 or, even further, modifications to the way the BNA score is calculated, given the available data.

239 A validation procedure is also within the future research scope, in a way that the score is not only
240 consider as an exploratory index, but as a trustful tool for urban planners to optimize the current bike
241 network connectivity in cities, by including scenarios of potential low-stress segments locations within
242 the bike network, and observing the enhancement of the BNA score as new bike infrastructure is being
243 planned.

244 **Funding:** This research received no external funding.

245 **Acknowledgments:** This study was developed as part of the Erasmus Mundus Programme, M.Sc. in Geospatial
246 Technologies, from which L.A. has been granted an Erasmus Mundus Category A scholarship funded by the

247 European Commission, Framework No. 2016-2054/001-001-EMJMD. The authors would like to acknowledge
248 the AGILE Council for the shared grant awarded to both of them to attend the AGILE 2018 conference and
249 the pre-conference workshop "OPEN DATA FOR OPEN CITIES V 2.0", where the research was first presented.
250 Furthermore, the authors would like to thank Joel Silva, from NOVA Information Management School, for his
251 guidance during the early stages of this study, Fernando Benitez from Universitat Jaume I, for his encouragement
252 and guidance during the publication process, Rebecca Harris from PeopleForBikes for her feedback and input on
253 the future research scope, and the reviewers for enhancing the quality of the paper with their suggestions.

254 **Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, Lorena Abad and Lucas van der Meer; Formal analysis, Lorena Abad
255 and Lucas van der Meer; Methodology, Lorena Abad and Lucas van der Meer; Project administration, Lorena
256 Abad; Writing - original draft, Lorena Abad; Writing - review & editing, Lorena Abad and Lucas van der Meer.

257 **Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

258 **Appendix**

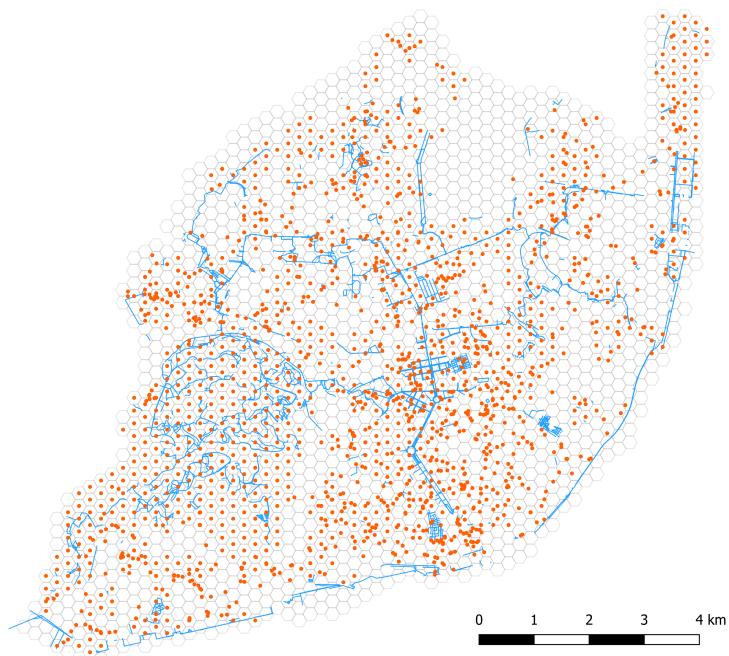


Figure A1. Destinations, hexagonal grid, and low stress network.

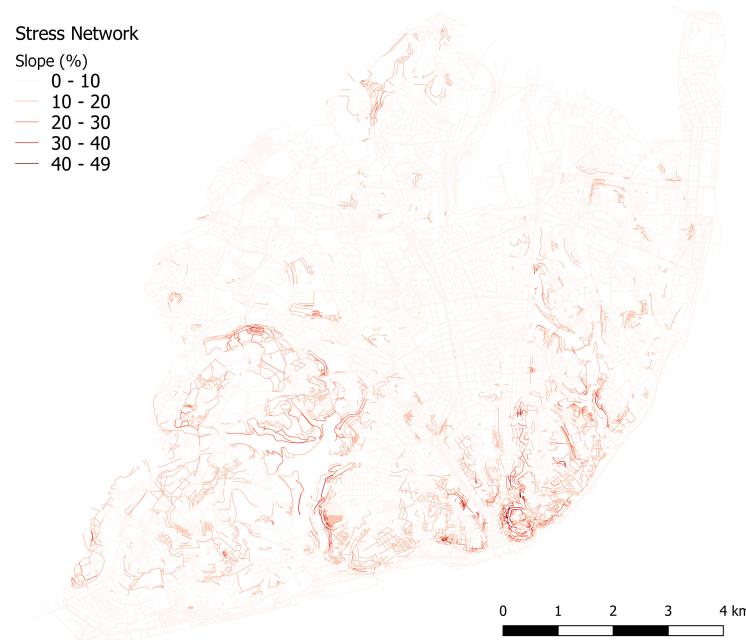


Figure A2. Slope percentage for the stress network in Lisbon.

259 Abbreviations

- 260 The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:
- 261
- 262 BNA: Bike Network Analysis
- 263 GIS: Geographic Information Systems
- 264 PfB: PeopleForBikes LTS: Level of Traffic Stress
- 265 OSM: OpenStreetMap
- 266 CML: Camara Municipal de Lisboa
- 267 ETRS89: European Terrestrial Reference System 1989
- 268 DTM: Digital Terrain Model

269 References

- 270 1. Abad, L.; Van der Meer, L. Bike Network Analysis Lisbon. OpenData4OpenCities; Benitez, F.; Akande, A.,
271 Eds.; OpenData4OpenCities-GitHub: Lund, Sweden, 2018; p. 36.
- 272 2. Banister, D. Cities, mobility and climate change. *Journal of Transport Geography* **2011**, *19*, 1538–1546.
273 doi:10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2011.03.009.
- 274 3. Fraser, S.D.; Lock, K. Cycling for transport and public health: A systematic review of the
275 effect of the environment on cycling. *European Journal of Public Health* **2011**, *21*, 738–743.
276 doi:10.1093/eurpub/ckq145.
- 277 4. Hartog, J.J.d.; Boogaard, H.; Nijland, H.; Hoek, G.; de Hartog, J.J.; Boogaard, H.; Nijland, H.; Hoek, G. Do
278 the health benefits of cycling outweigh the risks? *Environmental Health Perspectives* **2010**, *118*, 1109–1116.
279 doi:10.1289/ehp.0901747.
- 280 5. Torres, P.; Ferreira, J.; Monteiro, A.; Costa, S.; Pereira, M.C.; Madureira, J.; Mendes, A.; Teixeira, J.P. Air
281 pollution: A public health approach for Portugal. *Science of The Total Environment* **2018**, *643*, 1041–1053.
282 doi:10.1016/J.SCITOTENV.2018.06.281.
- 283 6. Carley, M.; Christie, I.; Christie, I. *Managing Sustainable Development*; Routledge, 2017.
284 doi:10.4324/9781315091525.

- 285 7. Bopp, M.; Sims, D.; Piatkowski, D.P. Bicycling for Transportation - An Evidence-Base for Communities,
286 first ed.; Elsevier, 2018.
- 287 8. Kosha, T.; Rudolph, F. The Role of Walking and Cycling in Reducing Congestion: A Portfolio of Measures.
288 Technical report, FLOW Project, Brussels, 2016.
- 289 9. de Manuel Jerez, E.; Gonzalez Arriero, C.; Donadei, M. Las redes de Movilidad Urbana Sostenible
290 y la reactivación del Espacio Público: Alcosa. Habitat y Sociedad 2016, noviembre, 97–131.
291 doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.12795/HabitatySociedad.2016.i9.06>.
- 292 10. Camara Municipal de Lisboa. Mobilidade Ciclavel.
- 293 11. Marrana, J.; Serdoura, F. Cycling Policies and Strategies: The Case of Lisbon. International Journal of
294 Research in Chemical, Metallurgical and Civil Engineering 2018, 4. doi:10.15242/IJRCMCE.U0917311.
- 295 12. Camara Municipal de Lisboa. Mobilidade sustentável e prioridade da cidade, 2016.
- 296 13. Silva, M.M.d. Mobilidade (In)Sustentável em Lisboa, 2017.
- 297 14. Susete, F. Lisboa vai ter 200 km para pedalar e quer ir de Oeiras a Vila Franca, 2016.
- 298 15. André, M.R. O plano semi-escondido da Camara para tornar Lisboa ciclavel ate 2020, 2018.
- 299 16. Baratto, R. Lisboa planeja ampliar sua rede de ciclovias devido ao aumento de ciclistas, 2016.
- 300 17. Dietrich, D.; Gray, J.; McNamara, T.; Poikola, A.; Pollock, R.; Tait, J.; Zijlstra, T. The Open Data Handbook.
301 Technical report, Open Knowledge Foundation, 2018.
- 302 18. European Data Portal. Benefits of Open Data, 2018.
- 303 19. Manum, B.; Nordström, T. Integrating Bicycle Network Analysis in Urban Design: Improving bikeability
304 in Trondheim by combining space syntax and GIS-methods using the place syntax tool. International
305 Space Syntax Symposium 2013, p. 14.
- 306 20. Cooper, C.H. Using spatial network analysis to model pedal cycle flows, risk and mode choice. Journal of
307 Transport Geography 2017, 58, 157–165. doi:10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2016.12.003.
- 308 21. Twadell, H.; Rose, E.; Broach, J.; Dill, J.; Clifton, K.; Lust, C.; Voros, K.; Louch, H.; David, E. Guidebook
309 for Measuring Multimodal Network Connectivity. Technical Report February, Federal Highway
310 Administration, Portland, 2018.
- 311 22. Sorton, A.; Walsh, T. Bicycle Stress Level as a Tool To Evaluate Urban and Suburban Bicycle Compatibility.
312 Transportation Research Record 1994, 3, 17–24.
- 313 23. Geller, R. Four types of cyclists. Technical report, Portland Office of Transportation, Portland, 2006.
- 314 24. Mekuria, M.C.; Furth, P.G.; Nixon, H. Low-Stress Bicycling and Network Connectivity Low-Stress Bicycling
315 and Network Connectivity. Technical report, Mineta Transportation Institute, San Jose, CA, 2012.
- 316 25. Dill, J.; McNeil, N. Revisiting the Four Types of Cyclists. Transportation Research Record: Journal of the
317 Transportation Research Board 2016, 2587, 90–99. doi:10.3141/2587-11.
- 318 26. Furth, P.G.; Mekuria, M.C.; Nixon, H. Network Connectivity for Low-Stress Bicycling. Transportation
319 Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board 2016, 2587, 41–49. doi:10.3141/2587-06.
- 320 27. Lowry, M.B.; Furth, P.; Hadden-Loh, T. Prioritizing new bicycle facilities to improve low-stress
321 network connectivity. Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice 2016, 86, 124–140.
322 doi:10.1016/j.tra.2016.02.003.
- 323 28. Lowry, M.; Hadden, T. Quantifying bicycle network connectivity. Preventive Medicine 2017, 95, S134–S140.
324 doi:10.1016/j.ypmed.2016.12.007.
- 325 29. Boettge, B.; Hall, D.; Crawford, T.; Boettge, B.; Hall, D.M.; Crawford, T. Assessing the Bicycle Network in
326 St. Louis: A PlaceBased User-Centered Approach. Sustainability 2017, 9, 241. doi:10.3390/su9020241.
- 327 30. PeopleForBikes. Methodology, 2014.
- 328 31. Birch, C.P.D.; Oom, S.P.; Beecham, J.A. Rectangular and hexagonal grids used for observation, experiment
329 and simulation in ecology. Ecological Modelling 2007, 206, 347–359. doi:10.1016/j.ecolmodel.2007.03.041.
- 330 32. Mantas, A.I.J.S. (I)mobilidades em Espaço Urbano: Representações e Práticas em torno da Deslocação
331 Pedonal e Velocípedica em Portugal. PhD thesis, Universidade de Coimbra, 2015.
- 332 33. Broach, J.; Dill, J.; Gliebe, J. Where do cyclists ride? A route choice model developed with revealed
333 preference GPS data. Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice 2012, 46, 1730–1740.
334 doi:10.1016/j.tra.2012.07.005.
- 335 34. Heinen, E.; van Wee, B.; Maat, K. Commuting by bicycle: An overview of the literature. Transport Reviews
336 2010, 30, 59–96. doi:10.1080/01441640903187001.

- 337 35. Vandenbulcke, G.; Dujardin, C.; Thomas, I.; Geus, B.d.; Degraeuwe, B.; Meeusen, R.; Panis, L.I. Cycle
338 commuting in Belgium: Spatial determinants and 're-cycling' strategies. Transportation Research Part A:
339 Policy and Practice **2011**, 45, 118–137. doi:10.1016/j.tra.2010.11.004.
- 340 36. Jestic, B.; Nelson, T.; Winters, M. Mapping ridership using crowdsourced cycling data. Journal of
341 Transport Geography **2016**, 52, 90–97. doi:10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2016.03.006.
- 342 37. Pucher, J.; Buehler, R. Cycling towards a more sustainable transport future. Transport Reviews **2017**,
343 37, 689–694. doi:10.1080/01441647.2017.1340234.
- 344 38. European Commission. Indicator 3: Sustainable Urban Mobility. Application form for the European Green
345 Capital Award 2016. Technical report, European Green Capital Award, 2016.
- 346 39. Moura, F.; Da Silva, J.M.; Picado Santos, L. Growing from incipient to potentially large cycle networks:
347 Screening the road network of the consolidated urban area of Lisbon. European Journal of Transport and
348 Infrastructure Research **2017**, 17, 170–190.
- 349 40. Boldry, J.; Anderson, M.; Roskowski, M. Defining Connected Bike Networks. Technical Report May,
350 Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, Chapel Hill, 2017.

351 © 2018 by the authors. Submitted to Information for possible open access publication
352 under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license
353 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).