

Bicycling as an everyday means of transport? Analysis of UK local newspaper reports

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Background

Rissel et al. (2010)

Sydney and Melbourne papers over 10 years

Increase in positive coverage

Negative stories tended to involve collisions

Bicycling was framed more positively than were bicyclists

UK Replication

Bristol: before, during and after the
Cycling City initiative (2005-2012).
Leeds as comparison city

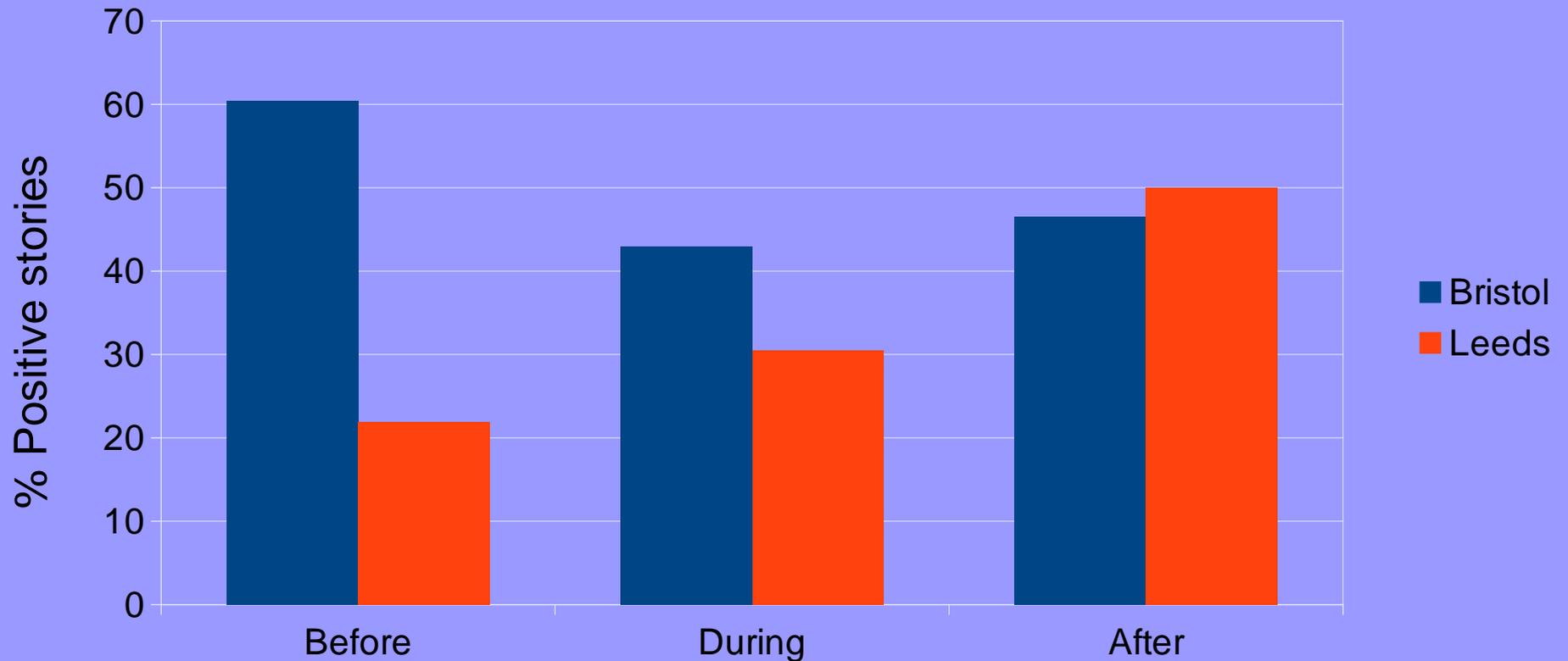
Added specific analyses of:

Are bicyclists presented as an ingroup
(‘we’) or outgroup (‘they’)?

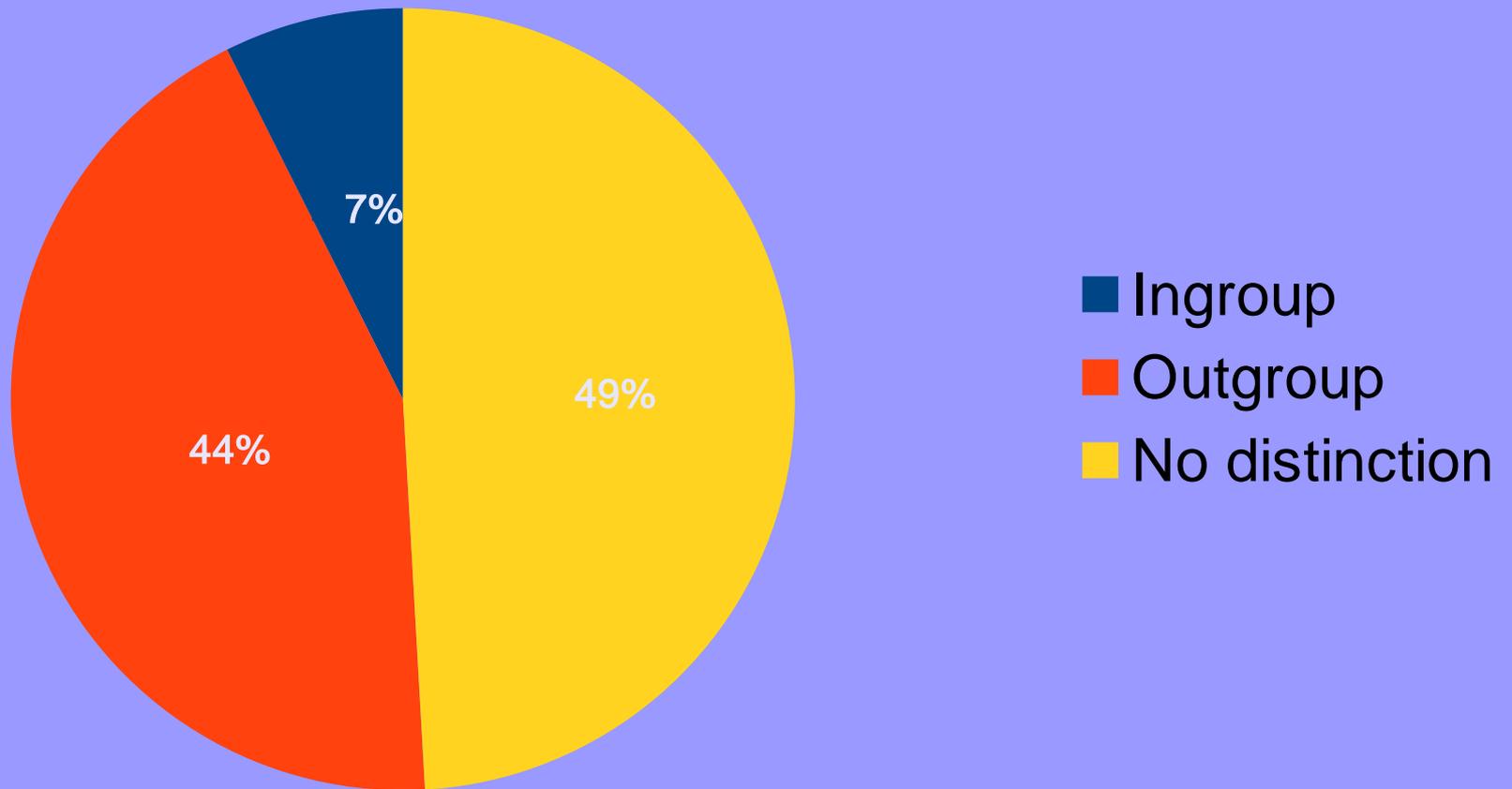
Is bicycling construed as a normal activity
for normal people?

‘Surface’ and ‘hidden’ connotations of
bicycling-related stories

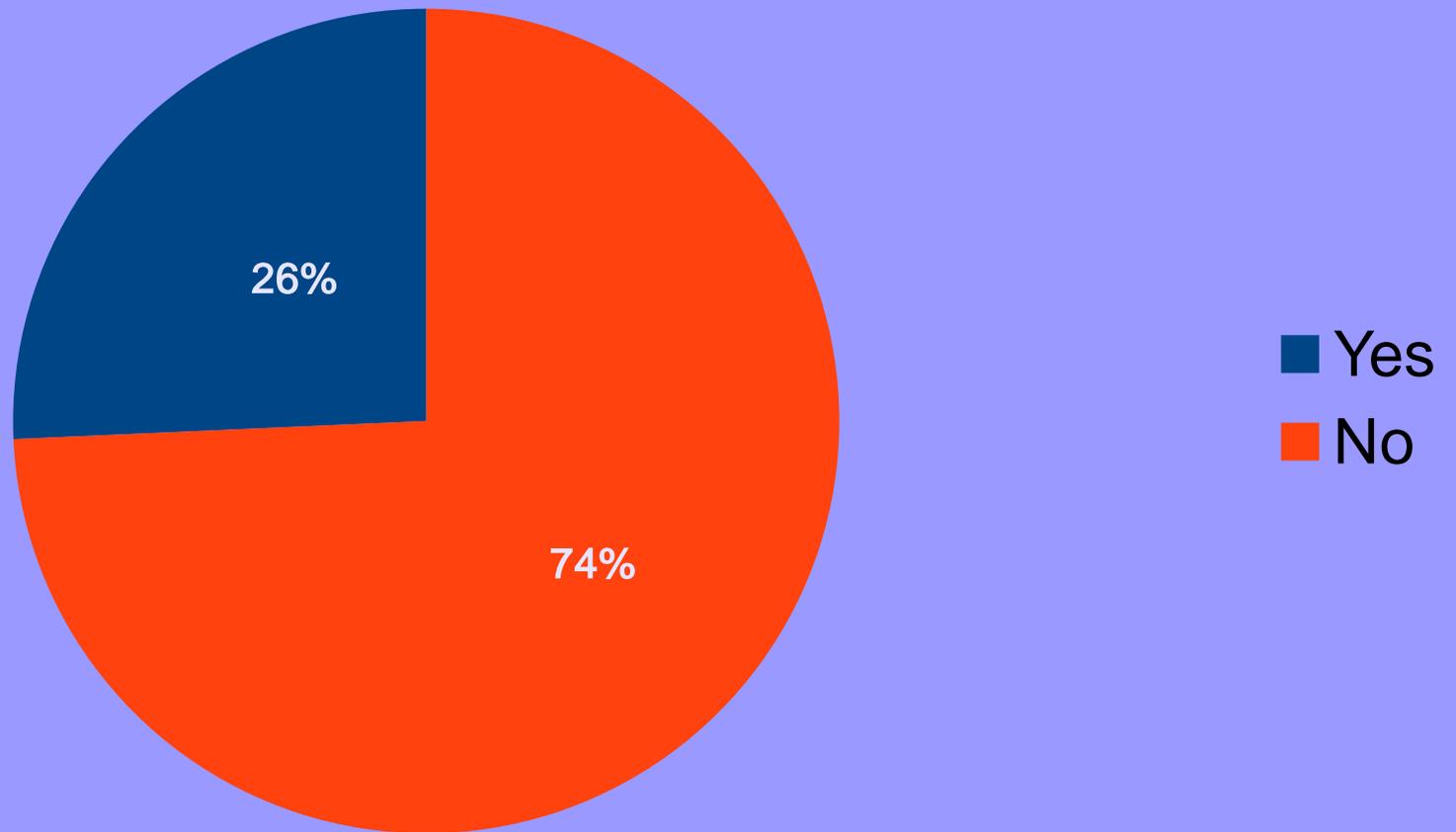
Bicycling stories over the Cycling City project



Ingroup v outgroup representation



Bicycling as an everyday activity?



Evaluative frames

Bicycling

30.9% positive

Health benefits, deserves more support, fun

13.1% negative

Difficult, risky

Bicycling is healthy, but difficult and dangerous

Evaluative frames

Bicyclists

6.3% positive

Keen, healthy

28.1% negative

Irresponsible/lawbreakers, misbehaving,
danger to others

Bicyclists are irresponsible and
dangerous, but keen

'Surface' and 'hidden' story connotations

Superficially, only 8% of Bristol articles were negative (v 49.4% positive)

But content analysis classed 50.2% as 'hidden' negative and 39.6% as 'hidden' positive

Main reasons for 'hidden negative' coding was coverage of high-level sport (TdF, Giro) and, particularly, bicycling as fundraiser

Fundraising rides and -thons

“Cycling shouldn’t be seen as a painful ordeal; cycling is *fun*! Could you imagine a ‘Cine-thon’ where participants asked for pledges based on how many movies they watched? How about an ‘Ice-Cream-a-thon’, in which people would give contributions based on how many ice

Summary

Local media coverage presents an ambiguous picture of bicycling and bicyclists

The activity is healthy but dangerous

The people who do it are a separate issue. They are other people who are irresponsible and dangerous, but keen

Local media superficially laud bicycling whilst routinely implying it is an ordeal, not suitable for everyday transport