**Safety-oriented On-road Practices of Adult Bicycle Riders in Brooklyn, New York USA**

**Interview Questions**

**#11, recruited September 23, interviewed September 24, 2018.**

**TO108E01.mp3**

*Background Questions:*

1. What is your age? (Were you born prior to this month and day in the year 2000?)

**26**

1. What is your race or ethnicity?

**Armenian**

1. What is your gender?

**Female**

1. What is the highest level of education that you completed?

**Master’s Degree**

1. How long (in months or years) have you been riding bicycles?

**2 years**

1. How long (in months or years) have you been riding bicycles in Brooklyn?

**1 year**

1. Compared to most other bicycle riders you have observed, are you more careful, less careful, or about the same?

**More careful**

1. Have you been in any bicycle crashes that involved other vehicles or pedestrians?

**Yes.** [Care to share what happened?] **I ran into a pedestrian in the bike lane.**

During the past 12 months…..

1. What have been the main reasons or purposes for going bicycle riding? (Commute? Errands? Transportation to other locations? Exercise? Recreation? Part of your job? Other?)

**Commuting**

1. On average, how frequently have you ridden your bicycle?

**When the weather is good, around 2-3 times a week.**

1. On average, how long (in minutes) did you ride each time you go bicycling?

**About an hour.**

1. How much of your bicycle riding took place when there was a lot of motor vehicle traffic?

**About 70%**

1. How much of your bicycle riding took place in darkness or low light conditions such as dusk?

**Probably 20%**

*Primary study questions:*

1. From the perspective of safety, what is it like to go bicycle riding in the streets of Brooklyn?

**Very unsafe.** [f/u Q: Can you tell me more about what makes it so?] **Cars making left turns and not looking, pedestrians walking into the bike lane and not looking. What else? Sometimes there are no bike lanes and you have to share the lane with the cars – that could be dangerous if they don’t see you, or if there’s a bus – bus drivers are usually very careful, but it still makes you feel unsafe because they’re so large. Yeah.**

1. For a bicycle rider in Brooklyn, what are the most common dangers or hazards that confront a bicycle rider?

**Particularly in Brooklyn? I would say the cars, mostly.** [f/u Q: Can you be a little bit more specific about how -- in what way cars present dangers to bicycle riders?] **Maybe they’re going over the speed limit and they fly, like, right by you, inches away from you, or they don’t look when they make turns, or they come into the bike lane, or there’s, like, like, arked cars in the bike lane and you have to go around them and therefore you’re entering the car lane. Sometimes the streets are closed and you have to go on the sidewalk. And I think the biggest problem is when there are no bike lanes at all.**

In view of those particular problems, are there particular things you do while riding to avoid them?

**I mean -- I follow the regular rules of, like, signal – like, hand signals when you’re turning, or I -- if I have to go around the car, I stick my arm out to make sure other cars see me and they don’t – they, like, stop and I can go around. Yeah.**

1. Are there dangers or hazards that are difficult or impossible for a bicycle rider to see and react to?

**Yes. For example, pedestrians could be very unpredictable, so if you’re going at a high speed, like, downhill, and, like, a pedestrian just walks into the bike lane, there’s no way you can stop on time. And same thing with cars –like, cars can be unpredictable – like, if they’re trying to go around another car, like, they come into the bike lane at the last second and -- yeah. Or when they’re making left turns, you don’t know if they’re going to go or not and -- yeah.**

Are there particular things you do while riding to avoid these problems – these things that are difficult to see and react to?

**I try to slow down every time there’s a car in the middle of the street, and I always look back, like, turn my head all the way around to look – but I don’t -- I don’t think there’s much that a biker could do, and I just try to go slower and maybe just stop if there’s, like, too chaotic intersection – sometimes I even have to go on the sidewalk, just to – like, for my own safety. Yeah.**

1. Please describe things you have seen other bicycle riders do that you consider to be dangerous.

**I think rolling through a red light is dangerous. I mean -- Even though sometimes I do it myself, but – like, if there are no cars coming at all, then I will roll the red, but I see bikers just going around cars as they’re coming the opposite direction, that’s dangerous to them. Or I see bikers, instead of biking on the bike lane, they’re on the other side of the street. Or, like, when they come backwards on the, like -- on a one-way street.** [f/u Q: meaning, the opposite direction?]  **The opposite direction, yeah.** [f/u Q: Anything else?] **I think that’s it, yeah.**

1. If it were your job to teach other adult bicyclists how to stay safe while riding in the streets of Brooklyn, what particular instructions would you give them?

**I’d say: be sure to wear a helmet every time you go on a bike ride, even if you’re on, like, a greenway. Definitely watch out for – if you’re -- even if you’re in a bike lane, like, watch out for parked cars, who might open their doors on you, and also, on your other side, make sure that cars aren’t coming into your lane. Always just, like, look around you. Don’t run a red. And if you’re turning -- for example, left turns are really hard, so I would say, just like – treat -- treat it as, like, a pedestrian cross, so I just, like, bike to the side, and then I bike on the pedestrian crosswalk, and then I (*unintelligible*). Also signal when you’re turning. Make sure you have lights, that’s really important. Try to avoid going the opposite direction on streets, and if you feel unsafe, and there’s, like, too many cars blocking the street, like, too much traffic, go on the sidewalk – and just be slow and, like, be respectful of pedestrians, because your safety is more important than, like, risking being on the roadway. Yeah, and don’t go too fast. And watch out for pedestrians, because they never look.**

1. Imagine for a moment that, right now, you are riding on a Brooklyn street along with other traffic. Tell me all the different things you are doing to keep yourself safe and avoid a crash or collision as you ride.

**Okay. So, if I’m riding and there’s a bike lane, I try to stay kind of in the middle of the bike lane, to avoid being doored and also avoid being – having cars come into the lane, so I’m just always on edge and, like, aware of what -- who’s going to come into my lane so that I could curve or dodge them at the last second. Always eyeing where pedestrians are going -- if they’re going to cross the street or if they’re even close to the bike lane, I’ll ring my bell to keep myself safe and the pedestrian safe. If there’s, like, cars turning, I’ll ring my bell just so that they know I’m coming, or even if they’re about to make a left turn, I’ll go around them, just because – yeah -- you can never trust that they’ll go or not. Oh, what else? I try to stop at the red lights, and if I’m 100% sure that there’s no cars coming, then I will go. And – yeah, just crossing the bridge -- and then -- there’s usually, like, trash pick-up, I’ll go around them. Or -- if there’s a detour – yeah, oh, another thing is, sometimes, like, there’s, like, NYPD officers who control traffic at intersections, like, during rush hour, and – sometimes they are trying to give directions to cars only, and so they’ll, like, stop a car, and then, like, tell a car to come even though it’s red for them, and that interferes with the bikes – yeah -- so watch out for that. And, like, stop at a red light if major intersection.**

[f/u Q: If there’s a garbage truck, tell me what you do around them?]

**So yeah, I usually have to go around them, and then I have to look all the way back to make sure that there are no cars coming, and if there is, like, I’ll stick my hand out to make sure that they don’t come too close to me as I pass the truck.**

1. Now I would like to throw out a few words or phrases and ask you if they trigger any additional thoughts about how to ride safely:

* Intersections

**So -- again, the biggest problem with this is usually left turns, because the drivers don’t see you, especially if it’s, like, a protected bike lane – they don’t look all the way, they only look for pedestrians, so the only way you can make sure you’re safe is stop if there are pedestrians in the crossing – otherwise you have to ring your bell and hope that they hear you, or go around them on the right side. Yeah.**

* Traffic signs and signals

**Traffic signs – so, stop when there’s a red light. Yeah. And oh -- don’t trust that people will actually stop at red – so make sure that you’re looking. Yeah. Just be very distrustful of traffic.**

* Right-of-way

**Yeah, so if it’s, like, a stop sign or a two-way stop sign, make sure you have the right-of-way, and even if it is your right-of-way, like, you still have to double-check, because people won’t stop for you – everyone’s always in a rush or trying to make a turn, or maybe there’s a pedestrian coming -- yeah.**

* Pedestrians

**Yeah, pedestrians, super-unpredictable – someone one time ran into my shared lane – (*corrected herself:)* or bike lane and I (*unintelligible*) one time (*unintelligible)*, and so, they can be avoided at the last second unless if you’re going really fast and they just run in – so always just try to make sure -- look at your surroundings and see where the pedestrians are, and just try to predict what the next move is. Yeah.**

* Speed

**Well, again, don’t go too fast. If there’s a downhill, just make sure you’re braking a little bit, just so you have a little more control. And – yeah.**

* Respect

**Yeah, respect, I would say – I think that no one respects bikers, and they get a bad rap. So -- You know, it’s – but, of course, be respectful of pedestrians at their crossings – and if you have to go on the sidewalk for any reason, they come fir--- pedestrians come first, so try to go at a very slow speed, or you can get off your bike. And you can’t ring your bell at them on the sidewalk** [I’m sorry, what was that?] **Don’t ring your bell at pedestrians on the sidewalk, and -- But you can ring your bell at them at any other time, so that they see you – especially if they’re tourists, and they’re not used to looking out for bikes.**

* Trucks, buses

**Yeah, these are really dangerous. Sometimes bikers will go in bus lanes, and trucks are sometimes parked in bike lanes and you have to go around them, which is, like, a huge inconvenience and very unsafe – yeah, I see them double-parked all the time.**

[f/u Q: Are there things you can do to be safer around trucks and buses?]

**I can’t really think of anything, but going around them usually means you go into the car lane, but you have to be really really careful every time you do that. But bus drivers in my experience have been really respectful of bikers.**

* Parked cars

**Yeah, I see parked – parked cars – like, double-parked in the bike lanes -- again, it forces you to go into the car lane, and what’s frustrating is, sometimes they’re parked, and then you’re trying to go around them and then they’ll start moving forward and out -- defeats the purpose, so – like, I see this all the time in Brooklyn. Yeah.**

* “Taking the lane”

**I think it’s fine, because your safety is a priority when there’s no bike lane at all then – it’s actually safer if the biker takes the lane. I never really do that unless it’s just a really narrow lane, which I don’t really think happens in Brooklyn, but sometimes yes, it does – yeah -- I’ll do that, and -- yeah. Sometimes cars will honk at you and get impatient if you do that, but yeah.**

* Pet peeves

**Oh, there’s a lot. I guess -- Cars that are double-parked. The most dangerous things is when pedestrians just come into the bike lane – that’s definitely number one pet peeve. And then when cars come into your lane. When cars are making a left turn and they don’t look. Yeah, and where there’s no bike lane. Yeah.**

[f/u Q: So, dealing with the pet peeves, what things do you do to stay safe?]

**I go slow and, like, try to predict what’s going to happen. Sometimes I’ll even come to a stop when there’s a truck in front of me, or I’ll ring my bell to warn people that I’m here. Yeah -- Or, I will try to stick with other bikers – like, to kind of travel in packs. Yeah.**

1. Please feel free to offer any other thoughts about the topics we have discussed today.

**I think this overall -- cars are the biggest problem, because – I mean, you know, with Vision Zero, there’s a high rate of collisions, and there needs to be better infrastructure for bikers to be safe. I think – I mean, I know DOT is working on that, but I think there needs to be more progress on those and -- yeah. And giving bikers more priority, so -- even like just completely – oh, what’s called? -- blocking off streets, and, like, turning an entire street into just a pedestrian and bike lane – like, I would be totally for that and just prioritizing bikers, which is what DOT says they’re doing, but, you know, it’s not what we see.**

Thank you very much for participating in this research study and especially for taking the time and effort to complete this interview with me.