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

**Interview Questions**

**#17, Bushwick, recruited October 7, interviewed October 8, 2018.**

**TO122E03.mp3**

*Background Questions:*

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

**29**

1. What is your race or ethnicity?

**Filipino**

1. What is your gender?

**Female**

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

**BFA**

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

**Since I was, like, 2 or something, like, with a tricycle.**

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

**Since 2010 or 2011.**

**I live in Queens now, but I work in Brooklyn.**

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

**I feel like I’m probably more careful, but it also depends on, like, if I’m in a rush or not, because if I am in a rush, like, I’ll tend to, like, stop less.**

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

**Yes. I’ve been doored once – I think it was, like, last year – by a passenger who wouldn’t -- just, like, wasn’t looking. But I feel like I was probably – I didn’t realize, like, how close I was to the side. And then there was one with a couple pedestrians – it was raining, and there were all these ca-- parked cars – well, not parked cars, but the traffic was just, like, really slow in the street, so these kids decided to just, like, run through the cars while they were stopped. And I saw them, and I was braking, but because it was raining my bike was just, like, slidding, and, like, yeah, I, like, knocked a girl on her butt. She was okay. Yeah. Like oh God, I’m, like, trying. But yeah – those -- those were the main two.**

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?)

**I mostly commute and, like, sometimes to do errands that are, like, in the neighborhood. And, yeah, sometimes it’s more for, like -- like, going to Fort Tilden or something like that. Or, like, sometimes I’ll go to the West Side Highway to bike. But not as – not as frequently.**

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

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**I don’t really ride in the winter when it’s too cold, but I’d say, like, every other day – yeah, or – I don’t know, it depends – but, like, some days, there’s like – all the -- all day during the weekdays, I take my bike for commuting, but, like, not as much on the weekends.**

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

**I’d say it’s, like -- My commute is about 30 minutes, both ways – well, if you combine both ways – so it’s, like, 15 each way. And if I’m going to go, like, a little bit farther, to Williamsburg, it’s like 30 or so minutes.** [Each way?] **Yeah, but that’s if I’m going to go to, like, have dinner or something, so that’s, like, a little less frequent – or go to, like, Bed-Stuy, where my boyfriend is, so it’s, like, 20 minutes.**

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

**I guess, like, half of it. In the morning, there’s, like, a lot more cars, but I usually leave the studio a little later and, like, the roads are a bit empty.**

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

**I would say, like, it’s probably, like, half and half.**

*Primary study questions:*

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

**I feel like, it – it depends on what street you’re on. Like, the lanes with – sorry – the roads with the bike lanes, they definitely feel a little bit safer, especially the ones that are, like, painted in. The -- like, yeah, roads that, like, are more of the, like, main streets that are super-wide, like maybe 6-car wide streets, like, I feel like those aren’t very safe – like, Broadway is terrible, Myrtle is terrible. Flushing’s okay. Knickerbocker sucks. Like, am I supposed to rate how safe it is?**

[No – I just wanted to get a general sense of how safe you feel riding in the streets of Brooklyn.]

**I feel like – I don’t feel that safe, but I’m, like, trying to be aware of what I’m doing to keep myself safe. And it’s pretty frustrating to have to trust all these motorists to, like, be concerned about your welfare. Because, like, there’s only so much you can do – like, I can have my helmet, my lights, and, like, follow all the rules, but there’s, like, still some cars that, like, won’t give you enough space -- they, like, won’t let you, you know, go around the bike lane if someone’s parked there – they won’t, like, give you the space to just pass in front of them – I think -- yeah, I think it’s, like, people in a hurry that’s definitely the most frustrating part.**

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

**Cars that don’t signal when they’re turning left. Yeah. People who don’t really notice when they’re opening their door, like, they open it too quickly. Like, young kids running into the streets, because there have been other instances of kids, like, just trying to run, and then not being able to, like -- and then trying to like swerve them and there’s, like, another car coming and something like that.**

Are there particular things you do while you’re riding to try to avoid these situations?

**Right now, I’m just trying not to bike so fast. Yeah, and just, like, really making sure I look before I do any turn or, like, cross the street, like – yeah, just, like, trying to be more aware.**

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

**Yeah, I guess I mentioned being doored, it’s kind of impossible. Or -- yeah, like, when there’s just not enough space to move around. I mean, I guess you could stop, but, like, it’s also – it’s also tricky.**

With regard to dooring, are there particular things you do while riding to try to avoid that?

**I try not to stay close, like, I try to stay, like, a decent distance away from the cars on the left side. I try to see if, like, there’s a blinker on, or maybe if there’s, like, a car – or there’s, like, a passenger in the car. Yeah, that’s about it.**

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

**I guess, like, zigzagging through traffic. I feel like, maybe I’m just not comfortable enough to do that – or just like going through an intersection, you know, like, while there’s cars going through it. Yeah, some people just go really fast, but, I mean, maybe they, like, bike way more than I do. I think that’s all I can think of.**

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 to try to be as visible as you can, like definitely get a pair of lights if you’re going to bike at night. Like, be more of a defensive driver, like, don’t really think that you have some kind of right on the road, because people, like, are most likely not really going to give you the space. Yeah, just be careful, like, make sure you’re, you know, like, very aware of what’s happening, like, don’t space out, like, don’t listen to music, wear a helmet.**

[f/u Q: You mentioned being more defensive. What would you say specifically how one can be more defensive?]

**I think it’s, like, trying to see, like, what kind of a driver the other per– you know, the person is – like, I’m thinking especially when, like, the bike lane is blocked and you have to go around it, like, are they going to be the type of car that, like, wants to zoom past you because you’re not going fast enough? Or, like, are they going to, you know, give you a bit of room? Yeah, I’m, like, trying – like, being a defensive driver, it means to be, like, you know, protecting yourself -- not, like, being aggressive.**

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.

**I’d be on the left-hand side, like, kind of looking – looking forward in a way, like, to see (*unintelligible word* -- any *maybe*) potholes, but also forward enough to see, like, what’s happening on the road, like, are there pedestrians going to cross, are they stopping, like, what’s the light, like, what’s the car ahead of me, are there any obstacles -- kind of, like, also staying in a, like, predictable place on the road, so, you know, I’m not, like, you know, wobbling back and forth, so people know, like, where I’m going and, like, this is my path. But it’s awful hard, like, when there’s so many potholes – like, you really can’t -- I’ve tried it, you know -- like, avoid them, but, like, you really can’t, like, bike in a straight line with all the potholes. Yeah, like, slowing down for the – I mean, I stop at, like, most intersections, because I guess I was, like, really afraid, like, after getting doored, I was, like, so terrified to bike again. I was, like, no -- I was going to do it, but I think it definitely made me, like, a lot safer – like, at an intersection, I will stop and, like – but if there is no car, after stopping I’ll go, you know? Like, (*unintelligible word*) Illegal, maybe -- yeah, that’s all I can think of right now.**

[f/u Q: You mentioned that you ride on the left. Should I assume that’s when it’s a one-way street, or do you always ride on the left?]

**Yeah, when it’s a one-way street, I’ll be on the left. But yeah, if it’s a two-way, then I’ll be on the right. Yeah, I know there are some roads that, like, have the lane marker, like, in the middle, but it just doesn’t make sense to, like, ride in the middle of the road (*unintelligible*).**

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

**Stop. Look both ways. Like, let the people pass.**

* Traffic signs and signals

**Follow them? Follow them, like, within reason, you know? Like, if there’s no one there – I guess that’s not super-safe, but – okay, maybe I won’t say that as my advice. Don’t follow them. Yeah, like, follow them to the best of your ability. Like, they only – they only work if, like, everyone follows them. Even if it’s, like, a kind of lame thing to do as a biker, because, like, yeah, I see most people, they don’t really follow the stoplights or anything, but, like, it only works, kind of, as a system, and, like, that includes, you know, bikers, motorists, and pedestrians. Like, if everyone’s just doing what they want, then, like, it doesn’t – like, it can’t function.**

* Right-of-way

**Seriously, I’m, like, I don’t really think I -- I think that bikers should have the right-of-way, but realistically, it kind of depends on who’s driving and who’s going to give you the passage. Yeah, I feel like people who are, like, more vulnerable like pedestrians and bikers should have the right, but, like, it’s not always the case, so I would say it’s, like, don’t always assume. Yeah.**

* Pedestrians

**Slow down for them, like, stop for them, like, give them – give them the right-of-way – and, like – like, watch out because, like, New Yorkers they’re just going to cross any -- anytime that they want, really – like, you can kind of predict it, but also, like, I’ve had, like, moments where I’m looking at the pedestrians and they’re just -- it looks like, okay they’re just not going to move, and then – and then there’s, like, some other distraction and then, like, next thing I know they’re walking. Yeah.**

* Speed

**I mean, I guess you can go fast if, like, there’s not that many people around, but, like, in busier streets, like, go slower. Like -- I think that’s (*unintelligible 1-2 words*).**

* Respect

**I wish people had more. It also sucks being, like, a female bike rider and being, like, cat-called and followed while you’re on your bike. Like, that’s happened to me lots of times, and, like, I don’t know, they just, like -- there was one time, like, this car followed me, like, it kept on following me every intersection, and then he said, like, these nasty things to me, and I’m, like, fuck it, I’m just going to go into the intersection so this car won’t follow me any more. Yeah, I feel like it’s a whole other level of, like, disrespect to be, like, put in such a position of vulnerability where, like, someone’s, you know, saying these things to you and also in a car, and if you, like, say anything back, they could, like, run you over. So, respect, I hope people have more of it.**

* Trucks, buses

**Stay as far as you can from trucks and buses.**

* Parked cars

**I’d say, watch out for people exiting – like, you don’t really know – and, yeah, if there is space or, like, it’s not a busy street, try to stay as far away as you can.**

* “Taking the lane”

**I feel like, in some ways, like, I do kind of agree that, like, the more space you take up and the more visible you are, like, you’re kind of asking for their respect in a way -- so – I don’t know, I mean, I don’t really take the lane. I kind of stay more on the side, but, like, also, like, giving myself enough space so that I’m away enough from a parked car. But I will take a – take the lane, like, if the traffic is slow, or they’re kind of mostly parked and, like, I can’t go around on the side, you know, they’re, like, too close together.**

* Pet peeves

**I get annoyed at cars that are trying to parallel-park that, like, don’t really signal what they’re doing, so they end up, like, going in front of me in the la-- in the bike lane and, like, I’m, like, are you? -- just go, go forward, but they’re trying to back up into the space. I think – I don’t know – that’s very confusing. Yeah, I think that’s it.**

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

**(Commented about Dutch Reach) I mean, I don’t think -- I feel like bike safety isn’t just about what bikers can do, but it’s also informing motorists about, like, what’s safe for a biker. Cause, there -- yeah, there really is only so much you can do, and – I don’t know, I’d love to try biking in, like, Amsterdam or Copenhagen, and see what the difference is (comments about how things are different over there) Yeah, I think those are all my bike thoughts.**

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