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

**Interview Questions**

**#7, Park Slope, recruited 9-2-2018, Park Slope, interviewed 9-8-2018.**

**T0104E03.mp3**

*Background Questions:*

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

**52**

1. What is your race or ethnicity?

**White**

1. What is your gender?

**Male**

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

**Bachelor’s degree**

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

**I’ve been riding bikes since I was about six probably – but not continuously.**

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

**So probably about 12 years fairly consistently.**

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

**I’m a little bit more careful.**

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

**No.**

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 to work, going to activities with the kids, going shopping, I guess those are the main answers. Everything except for recreation.**

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

**On average, I would say – let’s say 6 out of 7 days.**

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

**On average, probably around 30 to 40 minutes.**

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

**I would say it’s about 95%.**

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

**Probably only about 5 to 10%.**

*Primary study questions:*

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

**I would say it’s moderately safe – you know – I don’t know if It’s considerably less safe than, say, walking or driving in a car – so it’s kind of, you know – it feels to me around there, you know, not necessarily more dangerous than other activities.**

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

**I would say that the most – it seems to – it seems to me that the most dangerous things are unexpected things, and so that would include pedestrians, other cyclists, and cars, because those are all moving and they’re most likely to do something unpredictable, because everybody does unpredictable things.**

Are there particular things you do while riding to avoid these hazards?

**I mean, obviously, trying to look out and to anticipate what people are doing, and – you know, I guess -- you know – driving -- defensive driving, like, so a similar kind of strategy. And I also obey a lot of the traffic rules, like stopping at lights and, you know -– signaling, and -- you know, like, hand signaling, I do that – and also calling – you know, I have a bell: I ring, and actually will yell, you know, to alert people or cars of my presence, so that kind of thing, so those kinds of activities, I guess, to increase safety.**

[f/u Q: You mentioned defensive driving – are you able to break that out in any more detail as to what you feel that entails?]

**Well, paying attention to what the people around you are doing and trying to anticipate what you need to do. So that means, like, if you -- that you see somebody in front of you, you kind of give them room, you know, like, whether it’s a cyclist or a car, or -- and there’s also knowing – you know, there’s – certain parts of town are going to be more, you know, troublesome in terms of safety than others, so you have to take, you know – so you have to be aware of the time and place, so that something, you know, like, so – say, for instance, like, if you’re riding along the Park in the, you know -- on a Saturday morning, you’re more likely to encounter pedestrians or other cyclists than you would on a Monday morning, you know, so you have to be kind of -- so that’s what I mean by defensive—by kind of being aware of the situation, and, you know -- But also, like, trying to kind of give other people way, like, allow people to go ahead – you know, if you see a person about to cross the street, you slow down, you know, because, maybe they’re going to, you know-- whether they’re going to stop when they reach the curb or not is unclear so – that kind of thing.**

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

**I think, yeah, a pedestrian suddenly entering the street is very hard to predict, because you can’t always -- you can’t always see, you know, if the go between cars and stuff. But also cars will make sudden movements that are pretty hard to predict. And also, you know, they – people opening doors is a big one, of course, that you have to watch out for, you know, so I ride, you know, like – try to ride on the passenger side of parked cars – less likely -- But then there’s also another big hazard – it’s cars turning, so you have to – so that can be a little unpredictable – you have to pay attention to which way the turn is going to be. You know -- so I guess it’s, yeah, unpredictable behavior by other cyclists, pedestrians, and cars, because, like I said before, it seems like everybody does their own thing at some point, so you have to kind of -- so those are all hazards.**

[In addition to things you have already said] Are there particular things you do while riding to avoid these hazards?

**I can’t think of anything in addition, you know, except for kind of watching out and stuff. You know, like I said, I do, though, like, stop at lights almost all the time. There are occasions when I don’t, but for the most part, I feel like, by observing those kind of general rules that it makes it easy to convince people that it’s more predictable for other people, and it makes it more predictable for you, you know?**

[f/u Q: do you care to describe situations where you might not stop and wait at a red light?]

**Like a T-crossing, like for instance, I think it’s Kent Avenue on the waterfront, where the Brooklyn Navy Yard is, there’s a couple of crossings where, for a – you know -- if you are on the right side of the road, there’s really no -- nothing that you’re going to hit, so I’ll occasionally go through those.**

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

**I think a lot of cyclists do ride through every red light, and I think that can be dangerous, because – I mean, in, you know -- years ago, when you were the only one on the road, it’s kind of, like – it’s not so, you know, noticeable, but when you have a number of cyclists all doing something unpredictable, it’s -- it can be -- it’s dangerous for everybody – so that, I think, is a little bit of a problem for – for, you know -- for the individual who’s doing it, because I’m sure they think they’re – they’re very aware, but I, you know -- that’s, you know, the reason you have those kind of systems is just because you may not always be aware, and so I do think that’s a little dangerous. I think also, I observe cyclists kind of going too quickly and trying to pass -- overtake other cyclists in dangerous situations, which I think is dangerous – and the same -- you know -- the same problem as you have with cars where, if you don’t allow enough space in between each person, you, you know -- you run the risk of crashing. In other words, like, on a crowded morning, when there’s ten cyclists in a line and nobody’s giving any space, I consider that a dangerous situation, you know. And also, a big one too is that a lot of people ride the wrong way on a one-way street – or even, like, I mean, I see people, like on Fifth Avenue in Brooklyn, which is a two-way street, riding the wrong way in the lane, because it’s a bicycle lane, you know – and, you know, obviously, you know -- with the Citibike thing, you have a lot more people on the road casually, who aren’t really thinking about this as – you know, so they just feel like, well, I’m just doing this for the moment kind of thing, but it kind of adds up, so -- yeah, riding the wrong way is definitely a danger to yourself and everybody else.**

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 think that I would – So, the big ones for me would be to talk about traffic lights and how to deal with that – I mean, I think that there should be some kind of consensus about – I mean, so the question you are asking me is a little difficult because I feel like there’s not a consensus about what the rules are, so it’s hard -- it would be hard to say what are the top rules, when there’s no agreement about what the rules are. You know what I mean, I would have to consider -- There doesn’t seem to be a great deal of consensus, say, about, you know, whether you should stop at a light or not stop at a light. Personally, I think that we should come up with a – with a plan, you know, what that is, you know, so, like, there’s -- so that we have a thing to say: to say, well, bicyclists should do X, you know. But at this point it seems like we don’t, so I mean -- so I observe the rules because I think that it’s helpful to particularly pedestrians, but it’s also, you know, it’s -- it gives me a break and it’s a kind of reset time …. (unintelligible), so I think that that’s -- I would encourage people to do that, and think about: well, how much time are you really saving by going through, and is it really – you know, how great of a privilege is that? Is it really worth it? -- You know -- And then, signaling, I think, is -- both verbally and audibly with a bell, and with your hands, are also things that I think people should be encouraged to do, because when you’re passing somebody and they’re not aware of you, you should make that clear – or something – you know -- Like, if you’re approaching a pedestrian who’s clearly not paying attention, you need to, you know, make them aware. So I think that another – so communication is, like, maybe another big one. And then, of course, not riding the wrong way. Probably another -- Those are probably the top three that I would encourage, at least, discussion around. You know – I mean, I also think that, you know, there should be a sort of – I think that, you know, what people -- the reason that people obey laws are usually – are mainly cultural reasons, because we don’t have a policeman on every block, so, you know, too, so it would be sort of trying to instill a certain culture rather than to make people aware of the rules, I guess. So I think that that – I mean, that’s a non-tangible and difficult-to-define thing. But I think that – in other words -- Just telling people: these are the rules, now you have to obey them -- would not be sufficient. And -- So – I don’t know how – so that cultural shift, I guess, would be the general heading, but I would consider that a major thing to try to put in place for any kind of – you know – whatever -- to answer the question, I guess -- that would be a top one, for all the other things to work.**

[f/u Q: You started out stating that you found it difficult to answer the question because there was not agreement on what the rules are, if I understood you correctly. Given that situation in your view, where people don’t have an understanding about what the rules are, are there suggestions you would give to bicyclists because of that, as to how to stay safe?]

**I guess it would be the same that I said, like, you know, to signal to each other – so, communication – the same rules, so, Like – I would say, you know, communicate is one of the chief ones, because that way, even though there aren’t rules, at least you are communicating what is happening. So that, kind of, you know – so, in other words – you know -- Cars don’t need to communicate when they reach a red light because everybody’s agreed they’ve reached a red light. But if you don’t have that agreement, you need to communicate. So I think that would be a top one. And then, you know, not going the wrong way, and observing some of the rules of the road that the cars do, like, you know, stopping at lights would be a good idea. I mean, I guess -- Not going the wrong way is also a rule that cars obey. I mean, some people in the past have said, Oh, you know, we should -- maybe bicycles should just be considered cars – you know – and, like, even bicyclists should just tell the cars around them, “I’m also a car.” But I don’t – I don’t think that’s quite the way that I would go, you know, -- I think, you know -- especially now that there’s a lot more bike lanes, and there are -- clearly it’s just a little different. So I wouldn’t advocate for that approach. But, like I said, yeah, communication, you know, be aware of the rules of the road – I mean, at least as cars observe them, because you’re sharing the road with cars.**

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’m looking behind me as well as in front of me. I’m keeping to – like I said -- to a side of the road, either, like – I’m in the bike lane, or I’m choosing a side that I -- is going to be less dangerous. I’m, you know, giving space to cars and other cyclists, and I’m trying to anticipate, meaning that I’m looking in the, you know, forw-- looking ahead of me some distance to try to anticipate what’s happening – whether that cars are moving, or people are moving, as pedestrians or cyclists.**

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

**I think, stop and look, and, you know, proceed with caution.**

* Traffic signs and signals

**I think you should stop, for the most part, at this point.**

* Right-of-way

**I think that that’s – I don’t know – I mean, it’s hard to know – I mean, with a car it’s a big thing, so that’s a little different, I think. Right-of-way is part of the -- I would – fall more under the communication heading of, like being aware of who’s around you, and, like, if somebody’s in front of you, not, you know, trying to overtake them if it’s an awkward situation, but -- so I don’t – yeah, I don’t -- I guess I don’t know how to answer that.**

* Pedestrians

**I guess, you know *--* Be aware of pedestrians, I think, because -- and give them also some, you know, courtesy and respect.**

* Speed

**I think you should – yeah -- pay attention to speed, because speeding on a bicycle is just as dangerous as speeding in a car. Speeding is – going too -- There is a *too fast*, I think – depending on the situation… (couldn’t hear last few words)**

* Respect

**I think, yeah, respect for all the other participants that are sharing the road.**

* Trucks, buses

**Yeah, possibly more of a danger because they probably don’t see as well. And I would – Yeah, I mean, I always will let them go and I am less likely to pass with a bus and a truck. Yeah.**

* Parked cars

**Be observant, because anybody can get out at any time. Or they can move – you know.**

* “Taking the lane”

[had to explain] **Oh, yeah -- I don’t know – I mean, sometimes that’s necessary and effective, and I – you know -- I’ll do that on occasion, but I kind of generally think that, you know – it’s – it’s not -- I wouldn’t advocate that as the best, you know, consistent approach, you know, because you -- cars do go faster – even if you meet them at the light every time, they go -- they’ll speed up and slow down, in other words, it’s a different pace, so I do think that’s kind of a problem as a general rule. Yeah.**

* Pet peeves

**I don’t know – I mean, I think that -- I guess – All of the participants have a sense of entitlement, which is a little crazy, like, but, you know -- cyclists as well as car drivers and pedestrians, and so everybody thinks that they should be the one who gets to do what they want. But, you know – yeah, I don’t -- I don’t know -- I mean, if you -- You could have a long list of (unintelligible) because it can be frustrating at times, but – so are other things, you know – in the City, because it’s -- we’re all, you know -- so it’s like everything else in the City where you have a lot of people and you have to negotiate – it’s challenging – yeah.**

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

**No, that’s it. That’s about it – that’s all I’ve observed.**

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