



BICYCLE

LANE



Precarious Entitlement to Public Space & Utility Cycling in Dublin

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Introduction

- How do we make sense of this?
- How do cyclists experience public space?
- How do they deal with potentially hazardous scenarios?
- What are their concerns?
- Where does anger and fear feature and why?
- Exploratory qualitative research

The Concept: Precarious Entitlement

- Cyclists bear unique and equal entitlements to public space relative to other road users (Road Safety Authority, 2018)
- Entitlement in theory that is precarious to exercise in practice
- Properties:
 - i. Insecure Space
 - ii. Spatial Disregard
 - iii. Police Neglect

i. Insecure Space

- Insecure material design
- Insecure legal design
- Insecure condition



“The surfaces and the markings on the cycle lane on the dual carriageway, which is a pretty...probably the benchmark quality corridor of Dublin, is *appalling*. It’s rutted, pitted, it kind of got a different colouring which is wearing away... I’ve noticed they *rarely* clear leaves off of it, so the *maintenance* of it is very poor. The leaves, you think “well, so what” but when that ices over or is very wet, it’s a very slippery surface for a cyclist. Plus, if there’s leaves right across, the visual distinction for a pedestrian or cyclist isn’t there.”



“...they’re *not* maintained very well, even on Stillorgan dual carriageway – which is probably one of the better maintained ones that there are – it’s in a bit of a state, you know what I mean, and small little divots – which would mean nothing on a main road to a car – can really knock a cyclist around, you know what I mean. They have to *swerve* to get out of it and through that it can destabilise them, you know.”



“As a cyclist, I would say my biggest issue is the lack of infrastructure and the road surface. Myself and my son came off the bike a few months ago – hit a pothole, lost control of the bike and two of us flipped out into the road and, luckily, the car behind us stopped. But that was pretty scary...and it was just the road surface was so bad on Dorset Street.”



ii. Spatial Disregard

- Disregard of cyclist spaces
- Disregard of cyclists *in* spaces



ii. Spatial Disregard

S: I was cycling to my friend in Dundrum and I was in Rathfarnham where there is a way where the cycling lane goes straight but then the road kind of...one goes straight and the other one veers to the left. So, I was on the *cycling lane* and the car behind me wanted to do a left turn...eh...and he *beeped* at me (surprised tone)! And, it *really* annoyed me because, you know, it's...*I'm on the cycling lane, I have the right-of-way* and he beeped at me and I remember I turned and I was like "*Fuck off*" you know, swore at him. But, his windows were closed so he couldn't see me, but, that was the only time I think I kind of *swore* at a driver because he annoyed me with the *beeping*. And I remember clearly turning and, yeah, just saying "Eff off."



R: And why was that annoying for you?

S: Because I'm just, you know, I'm doing (highly agitated tone)... *There was no need to beep*, first of all, I don't like the beeping thing. There's no need to beep and, also, *I was in the right, he was in the wrong, how dare he...beep at me*. So that's what annoyed me...but, anyway, sorry!



iii. Police Neglect

- Neglect in protection of entitlement
- Neglect in punishment of infringement



iii. Police Neglect

You have cycle lanes there but, a lot of the time, delivery trucks will just be parked *in* the cycle lane. So, near work, there is a bike lane on the road but generally there's just like *six* cars parked on double yellow lines in the cycle lane to get a cup of coffee in the morning. And in the year and a half that I've been cycling to that office, I've never once seen...the traffic corps or whatever *ticket* those people who park on it literally every day. Whereas, say, Dublin City Council clampers for parking enforcement: you pay three euros an hour for parking in that area – *every day*, religiously, they are there, on the AM to catch people...and they clamp. In any given day in the office facility there's cars clamped from not paying or going over their paid parking time; whereas, from a safety perspective, these people are parking on double yellow lines willy-nilly and there's *never* any enforcement of that.



So, I would say the infrastructure is *very* poor – it's just a white line, generally painted – but, then, the design is bad, but even *then* – when the infrastructure exists and there is a bike lane albeit just a lane painted – *half* the time, at key junctions, there's just cars parked in it *anyway* and it's never enforced. So, you're kind of like "Pffft (sighs)." You're just back it with the traffic anyway, like. So it's very frustrating in that regard, where, if they're serious about road safety, it would be very easy to start enforcing the laws that are there, but...Dublin City Council can enforce the parking but the guards or whatever can't enforce their own safety side of things!



The Implications

- Reveals 'structural' vulnerability (ten Have, 2016)
- Cyclists in Dublin experience 'Precarious Entitlement' to public space
- Raises issues of mobility, citizenship and justice and as well as safety
- Highlights need for intersectional action
- Realising 'Robust Entitlement'?

References

- Road Safety Authority (2018) *Rules of the Road*. Available at: [http://www.rulesoftheroad.ie/Rules of the road.pdf](http://www.rulesoftheroad.ie/Rules_of_the_road.pdf) (Accessed: February 2019).
- ten Have, H., (2016) *Vulnerability: challenging bioethics*. Routledge, London.