

Making sense of LTNs. Understanding residents' views on road reallocation schemes.

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NIHR 135020 LTNs in London

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Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs)

- Modal filters on residential streets
- Cameras, planters, bollards
- Reduce through traffic
- Improve conditions for active travel – walking, wheeling, cycling
- Rapidly installed during Covid-19
- Highly controversial



Automobility, discourses and morality

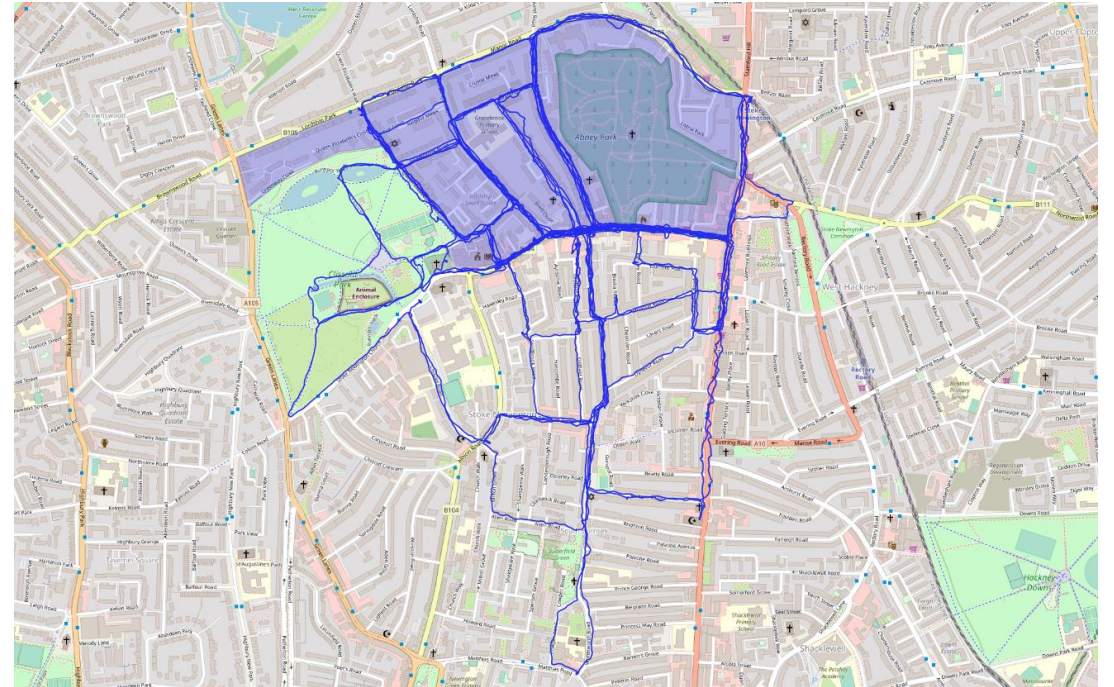
- Prioritising vehicles in transport planning & policy
- Discourses & morality central to Automobility production & reproduction, especially in acceptability & normalisation
 - Pedestrians & cyclists hit by 'vehicles', not by drivers driving vehicles
 - Ascription of agency only to pedestrians and cyclists (Fevyer & Aldred, 2022)
- Intertwined with identity formation, social meaning & (im)proper behaviour
 - Conflicts between driver & cyclist identities
 - Opposing transport identities shape and are shaped by controversies around road space

Ethnomethodology & MCA

- Approach used to understand morality & controversy between different road users
- Membership category analysis
 - The making of social norms around a practice/event
 - Most useful when 'norms' disrupted and social order comes to the fore
Consider how categories (people, objects, etc) are created and mobilised to explain a phenomenon
 - How normative 'us' and deviant 'them' are mobilised and used to create social categories (Eglin & Hester, 2003)
 - Often constructed using relational pairs (Fitzgerald & Housley, 2015).

Qualitative component – LTNs in London

- Go along interview with 20 residents 2022 & 2023
- Recruited through flyering all homes
- ‘Walking through’ lived experience
- Foregrounds how participants engage with environment (Carroll et al, 2020)
- How social interactions co-produce social order (Kusenbach, 2003)
- Focus on the driver/cyclist relational pair
- How framing of this pair creates coherent narratives of what the LTN does





Story #1: The good driver & the irresponsible cyclist

Deployed by residents who oppose the LTN

The good driver

- Good driver as someone with priority on the road
- Drivers legitimate as regulated through licensing and traffic regulations *
- Strong moral framing around rights and responsibility and the right to be free to pursue one's life without interference (Haidt 2013)
- Driving 'sensible' amounts *
- Driving through LTNs as environmentally friendly
- Driving to care for family and the community
- Driving as beneficial for public safety – so long as it's safe

"Cyclists drive very close to cars. Now, if we did that to the cyclists we'll get a ticket, we can get into trouble."

"They make it literally impossible for me and people like me to do anything with the car that we have bought, in circumstances, we're entitled to buy it. We use it sensibly."

The irresponsible cyclist

- Necessary counterpart to the good
- Fairness vs cheating moral framing (Haidt 2013) – cyclists not regulated like drivers and violate the rules of public space
- Conjure child cycling & irresponsibility of parents – emphasising seriousness of cycling requiring sp
- Irresponsibility even serves to ‘res

“But what they really need to do is teach them how to [cycle] properly, because some of them, the parents support them, and they've got no common sense.”

"There was a cyclist doing what he shouldn't have been doing. He was weaving, killed right in front of me." *

Characters appearing on cue

- Cyclist also used as a 'character appearing on cue' to legitimise opposition
- The cyclist-driver supporting character *
- Better cyclist because of being a driver
- Legitimises construction of irresponsible cyclist as they know better as a cyclist-driver

"So being that much trained in knowledge of being on the road, it helps to be a cyclist, because I'm aware of what's around me and the dangers around me."

LTN infrastructure disrupting the good driver

- 'Forces' the good driver to adopt unlawful behaviour
- More circuitous journeys makes it more difficult to perform typical good driver behaviour
- Maintaining vehicles
- Caring for others
- Polluting more*

"It's a lot less nice for the environment when I do it because I have to do it for a lot longer, because I have to go all the way around and pollute those poor people over there rather than just going through, you know."



Story #2: The vulnerable cyclist & the aggressive driver

Deployed by residents who support the LTN

The vulnerable cyclist

- Care vs harm moral framing (
- Vulnerability of cyclists category presence of vehicles (rather than
- Bringing up ideas around danger, fear, aggression
- Examples of experiences when they have felt 'squeezed out' or 'intimidated' because of the presence of vehicles*

"I was frightened of cycling up and down this road [before the LTN was implemented]. Why? Because there are cars parked or were all the way along. [...] And so I felt squeezed out as a cyclist. I felt I was in danger actually, and I got knocked over"

The aggressive driver

- Necessary counterpart to the vulnerable
- Expectation of road order constantly 'mad' or 'irresponsible' drivers *
- Resonating with 'rogue driver' identity (Fevyer and Aldred, 2022)
- Lack of care
- Vulnerability remains even when taking

"He suddenly went mad and he went, he was going on the correct side, and then he suddenly moved into the wrong side of the road and came straight towards me and knocked me over"

"But people still swipe past me when I want to turn. I'm like, you know, come on. When I cycle, I wear all the hi-viz, I'm like a f%&^*g highlighter. You can't not see me."

LTNs saving the vulnerable cyclist

- Removed risk (somewhat) and improved safety
- Or resulted in uptake of cycling *
- Reduction in other forms of vulnerability too – air pollution for example, ‘the air feels a bit cleaner’
- LTN enables the ‘child cyclist’ to pop up

"I definitely feel safer on my bike [with the LTN] just because I feel like if you're on your bike, like the number one thing that's going to be a danger is cars and so like the less of them better."

"It just seems like since they put it in place, a lot more people cycle. Especially families, people that have kids [...] which I have never seen in west London. [...] which is really nice"

Conclusion

- LTNs disrupt automobility, remaking public space & social order
- Participants create moral order by invoking membership categories - Good driver/irresponsible cyclist and vulnerable cyclist/aggressive driver
- Mobilised around responsibility, legality, morality, righteousness, safety
- Membership categories help reframe and convey fears, perceptions and experiences
- Controversy around LTNs produced through discursive creation of a new moral order around what the LTN is doing
- Processes of othering vs open dialogue on the future of neighbourhoods

Thank you!

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<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/groups-and-centres/transport-and-mobilities-research-group/projects/low-traffic-neighbourhoods-in-london-research-study>



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