

## HALM

EVERY  
1  
MINUTE

Hierarchy-Attenuating Legitimising Myths (HALM) contest dominance of one group over another (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999 p. 45). Interviews often included cycling advocates, who promoted a high number of HALM.

## Dangerisation

EVERY  
1  
MINUTE

Dangerisation plays a direct role in reinforcing fear of cycling, and an indirect role in supporting the delegitimisation of cyclists. Aldred (2016) showed the importance of narratives of personal experience in informing perceptions of cycling safety. Dangerisation predominantly originated from proponents of the cycling cause, who cited personal experience of near-misses as a means to motivate the necessity of the Minimum Passing Distance Law.

## Dehumanisation

EVERY  
1  
MINUTE

Dehumanisation occurs when an individual's humanity is denied, "the act of perceiving or treating people as if they are less than fully human" (Haslam and Stratemeyer, 2016 p 25). It is "a withdrawal or failure to extend recognition of the 'others' human qualities (in total) and all the rights and respects it elicits" (Byrd, 2013 p. 108).

## Cultural Violence

EVERY  
1  
MINUTE

Operating not as a direct cause of harm, but as breeding ground for harm, cultural violence is "those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence... that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence" (Galtung, 1990 p. 291). It "makes direct and structural violence look, even feel, right - or at least not wrong" (ibid, p. 294); it is a legitimiser of both.

## Driver as Victim

EVERY  
2  
MINUTES

While the drivers as victims phenomenon can be viewed as a HELM, it was deemed to justify separate treatment. This code was assigned when drivers were constructed as victims in the discussions taking place. This construction of the driver as victim was often accompanied by a simultaneous delegitimisation of cyclists, especially as contrast to emphasise or make a case for drivers being the real victims.

## Stereotyping

EVERY  
2  
MINUTES

Stereotyping is a form of generalisation in which characteristics are ascribed to individuals due to their perceived membership of a certain group. Such characteristics are not necessarily negative, but in the case of cyclists, they usually are. Cyclists are routinely portrayed as arrogant law-breakers, selfish and inconsiderate, and bullies to pedestrians.

# RADIO DISCOURSE AND CYCLING

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This study examines the **role of social dynamics** affecting cycling uptake, cyclist safety, and the **cycling experience** in Ireland through an analysis of media discourse. A proposed extension of the project will focus on the potential role of **Creative Media** in affecting these dynamics. The project will have three phases:

**Phase One** is an **analysis of media discourse** related to cycling in Ireland. It examines advertising, radio, print, and informal media. **This report** is on findings from the **analysis of radio broadcasts**.

**Phase Two** will be a study of **audience perception**.

**Phase Three** will be a study of the effect of a **Creative Media intervention**.



NUMBER OF BROADCASTS EXAMINED **17**

TOTAL MINUTES' DURATION **159**

### RTE Drivetime Report on Cyclist Protest for a Safer Cycling Environment

Presenter: "And a lot of people are talking to me about some **cyclists**, you know, getting out at nighttime with no, **not even a light, let alone a hi vis.**"

Female respondent: "You hear a lot of **bad press** for cyclists, but it's **not fair**. The majority of cyclists are easy to be seen, cycling safely, there's a..."

Presenter (**interrupts**): "What do you think of the [minimum passing distance law]?"

Notably, the presenter interrupts and talks over her response. A narrative competing with the presenter's **stereotyping** of cyclists as irresponsible, and to blame for their own peril, is not allowed.

### Newstalk Breakfast Segment Titled "How can we keep cyclists safe?"

Emergency Medical Specialist: "Pedestrians know they're vulnerable, motorcyclists know they're vulnerable, I'm **not sure that cyclists are as convinced of their vulnerability.**"

Presenter: "[Why are cyclist deaths increasing?]"

Cycling Trainer: "...**people are out on the bike and feel... they're invincible...**"

Cyclists are **dehumanised** by being described as lacking the basic human quality of a sense of self-preservation. This is also **cultural violence**.

Presenter: "If a **cyclist hit the mirror of my car**, then me and the cyclist are going to have a **serious crash**, and he won't have to worry about banging on my car a second time, let me tell you. **You have been warned.**"

Direct violence against cyclists is justified and normalised. This is **cultural violence**.

## CONCLUSION

**Cycling is frequently dangerised**, primarily by cycling advocates when relating personal experiences of near misses while arguing for better provision for cyclists. These advocates also broadcast a **high number of Hierarchy-Attenuating Legitimising Myths**.

**Dehumanisation is common**, with cyclists denied the human quality of being visible, denied the human instinct for self-preservation, and assigned behaviour that does not comply with societal norms and values. Their **existence in and of itself is presented as a transgression of rules**.

Broadcasts are **permeated with cultural violence**, normalising structural and direct violence against cyclists.

**Cyclists are widely stereotyped** as unregulated, reckless, knowingly engaging in a dangerous activity, responsible for their own deaths and injuries. **Drivers are represented as victims**, over-regulated, law-abiding, legitimate owners of the roads on whom distress and frustration are inflicted by cyclists.

## IMPLICATIONS

The broadcasts examined show characteristics one would expect to find if a **Social Dominance dynamic was in operation on the Irish roads network**.

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO TAKE ONE:

### RTE Today with Sean O'Rourke: MPDL

Cycling advocate: "**I was in a cycle lane, a defined cycle lane, and a bus passed very close to me, almost touching my elbow... I'm an experienced cyclist, I was able to cope with that, but it's a very, very frightening experience...I mean, motorists are driving... about a thousand kilos in weight, he's travelling about 80 - 100km/h. A cyclist is on his little bike, weighs about 10 kilos doing maybe 20km/h. In that battle, Sean, there's only going to be one loser. And what we're trying to...**"

Presenter: "Yeah and maybe the basic wisdom should be you **don't argue with a bus if you're on a bike.**"

The cyclist's description of a near miss **dangerises** cycling. Focus on cyclist vulnerability is a **HALM**, emphasising the responsibility of drivers. "Arguing with a bus" is not normative behaviour, therefore it is **dehumanisation**. It is also **stereotyping**: the cyclist must have done something to offend, therefore justifying experienced **violence**.

### RTE Drivetime: Summer Cyclists

Road Safety Authority spokesperson: "We're also encouraging everybody to wear helmets, we're urging everybody on a bike to **be safe, be seen**. Often people put on their hi vis vest and then put a rucksack over it and you can't see them... So we're urging everybody [out cycling] to... make themselves as visible as possible in front of **other motorists.**"

Being visible is a basic human quality. Controlling the sensory perceptions of others is not a human ability - "be seen" is an impossible command. Such statements are therefore marked **dehumanisation**.

Framing cyclist safety as solvable through helmet and hi vis use absolves drivers of responsibility, and frames cyclist deaths and injuries as a consequence of their own actions. It is **cultural violence**. The "Freudian slip" reveals a paradigm in the speaker's mind of roads being the territory of drivers, another example of cultural violence: the structural violence against cyclists is normalised as a consequence of their presence in a space where they shouldn't be.