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Automobility and The Social Construction of Longboarding in The District of North Vancouver

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By
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Abstract

Longboarding has become increasingly popular in recent years in Canada and its practice on public streets has lead to serious injuries, including fatalities and a highly contested debate about its legitimacy on public roads. Using a case study within a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, this paper analyzes a series of debates about longboarding that took place during city council meetings in a community in British Columbia, Canada. The critical study of automobility - our social and cultural predisposition to the car as mobility – is adopted to consider how it constructs longboarding within these public policy debates. The results indicate that longboarding as an activity on public roads challenges automobility and "common sense" perceptions of road use. Longbaorders are constructed as illegitimate road users who create a danger to others, especially drivers. The debates about longboarding highlight the pervasiveness of our 'car culture' and the difficulty of incorporating alternative forms of transportation into a system that prioritizes automobiles and drivers over other forms of mobility.

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1. Introduction

On July 9th 2010 professional longboarder Glenna Evans collided with a vehicle and died while riding her longboard on the street in The District of North Vancouver (DNV), British Columbia (Sherlock 2010). Evan's death and other collisions involving longboarders in the area have lead to an ongoing debate about whether longboarding should be allowed on public roads in DNV (see Shepherd 2012). While these debates have typically focused on longboarders 'right' to use the road, this paper examines how "automobility" – the extent to which our cultural disposition to mobility presupposes the car – constructs longboarding in these public policy debates (Urry 2004). Drawing on the city council meetings that followed Evans' death and a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, I consider how automobility contributes to the social construction of longboarding in a case study analysis of DNV.

Longboarding's popularity increase across Canada over the past decade has meant that the activity and the debate about whether or not it should be allowed on public streets is not specific to DNV (Dehaas 2010). In 2008, Lee Breen a longboarder from Fredericton, New Brunswick made national headlines and spent several days in jail by protesting his exclusion from public roadways citing the environmental and health benefits that traveling by longboard provides (www.cbc.ca/news 2008). In 2012 the death of longboarder Ralph Bissonnette in Toronto, Ontario lead to a second–degree murder charge of a cab driver and the continued debate about longboarding on public roads (Anderssen 2012). The pervasiveness of media attention surrounding longboarding and the steady increase of longboarding participation speak to the importance of analyzing the debates about longboarding and the issues that pertain to the activity on public roads in

Canada. Furthermore, as the trend toward alternative forms of transportation in Canada continues, research into automobility and longboarding can help increase awareness of the problems associated with incorporating alternative forms of transportation including longboarding into our current 'car-culture' which prioritizes "automobility" (cf. Conley and McLaren 2009, Furness 2010, Urry 2004, Miller 2001).

"Automobility" and the "system of automobility" are concepts used to describe the multifarious network of cultural, political and technological processes that presuppose the automobile as the dominant form of transportation (Shellers and Urry 2000). Longboarding's practice on public roads by young people challenges the 'system of automobility' and the entrenched perceptions of who has a 'right' to use the road and for what purpose. Traditionally public roads are understood as the legitimate space of car mobility (Urry 2004). The use of longboards by young people as transportation and for recreational purposes on public roads challenges the dominant cultural perceptions of road use that presupposes the automobile. CDA provides an analytical framework in which to ground the social, cultural and political implications of automobility and its effect on debates about longboarding by locating longboarding discourse within the broader sociocultural context in which it takes place.

In order to demonstrate the impact of automobility on longboarding discourse, this paper uses a case study analysis of DNV, the site of Glenna Evans death in 2010. As a case study DNV provides a large amount of data from which to draw because of the pervasiveness of the debates about longboarding in the area. Also, DNV's approach to governing longboarding, which has generally allowed the activity on public roads, provides an interesting site for social analysis because of the highly contested nature of

the decision to do so. In analyzing the city council meetings in DNV this paper highlights

the dominant role of automobility and its contribution to the social construction of

longboarding in these debates. By demonstrating the importance of automobility in

longboarding discourse in DNV this paper highlights the need for policy to consider how

automobility influences mobility and the incorporation of alterative forms of

transportation in Canadian communities.

2. Theoretical Framework

Critical Study of Automobility

The mass expansion of automobiles throughout the 20th century revolutionized

mobility, urban landscape, economic potential and independence (Conley and Tigar

McLaren 2009, Patterson 2007). Our current cultural disposition towards the automobile

prioritizes its benefits while routinely minimizing and even ignoring the significant

impact it has on our health, the environment and a variety of other social conditions that

impact all members of society whether they are drivers or not (Conley and McLaren

2009, Parusel and McLaren 2010, Patterson 2007). Recent work by Shellers and Urry

(2000), Patterson (2007), Furness (2010) and others (see Conley and McLaren 2009,

Miller 2001, Parusel and Tigar McLaren 2010) has sought to problematize the

automobile by considering the impact of "automobility" on a variety of social

phenomena.

According to Urry (2004) the dominance of the automobile is the result of what

he calls the "system of automobility"[1] which describes the network of practices that

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[1] "Automobility" and the "system of automobility" are used interchangeably in this paper
however it should be noted that some authors have objected to Urry's (2004 for example)
conceptualization of automobility as a "system" (see Furness 2010 on this point).

3

construct, reproduce and presuppose automobiles and their alleged inevitability

including: individuals as drivers, public infrastructure such as roads, urban planning and

our reliance on fossil fuels etc. (see also Conley and Tigar McLaren 2009, Furness 2010,

Sheller and Urry 2000). As Furness (2010: 6) explains: "automobility refers less to a

form of transportation than an ideologically and symbolically loaded cultural

phenomenon" that has significant political and social implications.

Academic literature on automobility has problematized the car and the system of

automobility from a variety of perspectives and academic disciplines (cf. Conley and

McLaren 2009, Miller 2001). For example, recent work by Furness (2010) has examined

the role of automobility in shaping the cultural perceptions and historical significance of

bicycles in the United States. Furness (2010) argues that the marginalization of bicycles

as transportation is the result of an automobilized culture that consistently emphasizes the

benefits of automobility and perpetuates the negative stereotypes of cycling. In a study of

school traffic zones, Parusel and McLaren (2010) found that automobility prioritized *cars*

before kids by problematizing the behaviour of children and their parents while ignoring

the role that drivers and vehicles play in the risks associated with school traffic zones.

To date there has not been any academic literature that incorporates the concept of

automobility into a study of longboarding or skateboarding. While there has been some

academic consideration given skateboards as transportation, this area of skateboarding

research has been limited and deserves more attention (for an exception see Stratford and

Harwood 2001). Similarly, even within the ever-growing body of academic literature that

focuses on skateboarding specifically and "lifestyle sports" more generally (cf. Wheaton

2010) there has not been any academic inquiry into longboarding as an activity that is

separate from skateboarding. While longboarding and skateboarding share important characteristics (e.g. general design, can be used for similar purposes i.e., transportation) the need for longboarding specific policy in DNV would seem to indicate a need for longboarding specific academic research. By incorporating the concept of automobility into an analysis of longboarding as an activity on public roads in Canada this paper aims to address the gaps in the literature discussed above as well as highlight the possibility for future research in the areas of automobility and longboarding.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Incorporating automobility into an analysis of longboarding within the field of public policy requires an interdisciplinary approach to theory and methodology that is able to locate the policy debates about longboarding within the broader social and cultural context. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which incorporates cultural studies approaches from Bourdieu (1991 cited in Fairclough 2003) and others with a systematic study of linguistics is well suited to this goal (Ainsworth and Hardy 2004, Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, Jorgenson and Philips 2002, Philips and Hardy 2002). CDA is an approach to discourse analysis that is used to describe an array of methodological and theoretical orientations that represent similar and contrasting ways of analyzing discourse (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). Generally speaking CDA approaches emphasize the role of discourse as a social practice in the construction of the social world, however, it does not reduce all social phenomena to discourse (Jorgensen and Philips 2002). Within CDA, discourse is in a "dialectical relationship" with other social processes thus different social phenomena incorporate more or less discursive and non-discursive elements (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, Fairclough 1992). For example in this paper the focus is on policy

texts which are primarily discursive – as in language plays a vital role in the processes of policy debates and legislation – however, in other social processes such as building a bridge, although discourse is present it occupies a secondary role (Fairclough 1992). It follows that the primarily discursive nature of policy texts suggests that it is well suited to CDA.

3. Methodology

Fairclough's 'Three-Dimensional Framework for CDA

In an application of CDA to the policy debates about longboarding in DNV, this paper draws on the "three-dimensional" CDA framework developed by Norman Fairclough (2003, 1995, 1989, see also Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). According to Fairclough (1993:135) the purpose of CDA is to:

> Systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices events and texts and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and text arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony.

Consistent with these goals, Fairclough's three-dimensional model systematically analyzes the three features that are present in a "communicative event" (Fairclough 1995 cited in Jorgensen and Philips 2000: 67): 1) *Text*, the linguistic features of a text such as grammar and vocabulary; 2) *Discursive practice,* how competing and contrasting discourses (used in the sense of as a way categorizing a specific perspective such as neo-liberal or welfare discourse) are incorporated into texts; and 3) *Social Practice*, how discourse is located within the broader social context. In focusing on these three analytically separable but interconnected levels of analysis, Fairclough's CDA framework combines micro and macro levels of discourse analysis. This is done in order

to demonstrate how specific textual features, such as a participants' use of grammar (micro), is given meaning through discursive practices and in turn is linked to the broader social practice (macro) (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, Fairclough 1995, Fairclough 1992).

At each level of analysis, Fairclough (cf. 2003, 1989) has developed a variety of concepts and tools for analyzing discourse. Inevitably because of the number of concepts available, researchers must be selective in their application of these concepts, which is dependent upon their specific research goals (Fairclough 2003, 1989). In this study of automobility and longboarding, *transivity* and *nominalizations* are used to analyze the linguistic character of the texts, *interdiscursivity/intertextuality* are applied to the discursive practice and finally *ideology* and *hegemony* are considered within the social practice of automobility. Each of these concepts and their relation to an understanding of longboarder identity and automobility are discussed below.

Text producers' use of grammar and vocabulary contributes to how social identities are constructed and represented in language (Fairclough 2003). By analyzing these micro-level features of texts, CDA provides insight into how specific texts construct social reality, social identities and contribute to "meaning-making" in the use language (Fairclough 2003:9). An important consideration for micro level linguistic analysis is identifying how social actors are represented as active agents, the one performing the action, or passive agents, the one affected by the action (Fairclough 2003, Fairclough 1989 Fowler *et al* 1979). *Transivity* and *nominalization* are two linguistic features of texts, which can provide insight into the way discourses and social practice, construct the identity of the longboarder and how agency is attributed to social actors in

discourses about longboarding (Fairclough 1992, Fowler et al. 1979, Jorgensen and Philips 2002).

Analyzing transivity of a text considers how social processes are related or not related to social actors (Fowler *et al.* 1979, Jorgensen and Philips 2000). For example in the phrase 'a longboarder hit a pedestrian' the longboarder is represented as responsible for the action and the pedestrian as a passive agent who was a victim of the longboarder's actions. Similarly, nominalization describes linguistic processes whereby nouns replace social actors or actions such as in the case of 'a car hit a pedestrian' uses a noun "car" to describe a collision between someone driving a car and a pedestrian although the driver is excluded. The importance of transivity and nominalization as linguistic features of texts are the result of the "ideological consequences" that are associated with different textual features (Jorgensen and Philips 2000). The way in which social phenomena are enacted linguistically can be linked to the broader social practice; however, this requires consideration for the second level of analysis in Fairclough's framework.

The second level of analysis referred to as *Discursive Practice* builds upon the textual analysis mentioned above and mediates the link between micro and macro text production by analyzing how discourses are produced and consumed (Fairclough 1992). In CDA it is believed that all texts are part of a 'chain of texts' that involve the incorporation of past texts into new ones (Ainsworth and Hardy 2004). How previous texts and what discourses they draw on are included, articulated, and even excluded contributes to how texts construct social identities and social phenomena (Fairclough 2003, Fairclough 1992). *Intertextuality* and *Interdiscursivity* can be used to study the discourse practice of text production by analyzing which discourses are integrated into a

text and whether these discourses are used in traditional or innovative ways (Fairclough 2003: 17). The intertextuality of a text considers how other author's voices are included in texts in the form of direct speech, such as by the use of quotations where what is said is directly attributed to the author; indirect speech, for example "she said…" where what was said is not necessarily represented verbatim or in a more abstract sense where other voices are present but not specifically acknowledged (cf. Fairclough 2003:49). Interdiscursivity which is a form of intertextuality considers how texts integrate a variety discourses, styles and genres (Fairclough 2003, Jorgensen and Philips 2002). Intertextual and interdiscursive analysis provides information about how different texts and discourses are incorporated in the construction of the longboarder identity. The discursive practice of constructing the longboarder identity can then be incorporated in the macro level of CDA, which situates the discursive practice within the *Social Practice.*

The final level of Fairclough's analysis concerns the broader social context in which the discourse practices are located, known as *Social Practice*. In this macro level of analysis, the social context in which text production takes place is analyzed to consider the 'effect' of the texts and their meaning. In this part of Fairclough's framework the concepts of ideology, hegemony and power are important considerations for CDA (Fairclough 1992, Jorgensen and Philips 2002). Fairclough (2003: 9) defines ideologies as: "representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation." From this perspective ideology is understood as a representation that can vary across individuals and groups thus the ability to enact one ideology over another is related to the role of power in discourse practice (Fairclough 2003). Drawing on the

work of Gramsci (1991 cited in Jorgensen and Philips 2002) Fairclough incorporates the concept of hegemony into an understanding of how different ideologies can be enacted through "negotiations of meaning". In other words, debates about longboarding enact automobility as an ideology, which contributes to the construction of longboarding through a discursive struggle to prioritize one constructed identity over another. Analyzing whether text challenge or reproduce the dominant ideology is an important part of CDA (Fairclough 2003, 1989).

Longboarding in the District of North Vancouver

DNV is a community in British Columbia Canada located just outside of Vancouver. Its mountainous terrain and steep winding roads make it a prime location for the emerging activity of longboarding (Geddes 2012a, January 30 2012). Longboarding as a sport and as a form of transportation in DNV generally takes place on public roads because of the lack of sidewalks in the area, the unsuitability of longboarding within skateparks and the need for smooth paved surfaces to ride on (Geddes 2012a). Longboarders use of public roads in DNV puts them in close proximity with automobile traffic, which has lead to collisions between longboarders and vehicles including the death of Glenna Evans in 2010.

At the time of Glenna Evan's death longboarding was gaining in popularity, however, its association with skateboarding meant that longboarders were subject to "skateboarding" bylaws. The skateboarding bylaws failed to address the unique characteristics of longboarding on the street which included: faster speeds, a propensity for riders to use public roads instead of skateparks, a higher number of riders using public roads on a regular basis etc. In late 2011, as participation in longboarding was continually

increasing, DNV city council determined that they would draft legislation specific to longboarding. After talking to longboarders, residents, bylaw staff and RCMP, DNV city council held a special council workshop on January 30, 2012 that presented the "proposed longboarding strategy" that was developed by DNV city staff to regulate longboarding on DNV streets (Geddes 2012, January 18).

The proposed strategy sought to accommodate longboarders on the road provided they adhered to traffic laws and specific safety requirements including wearing a helmet, riding with "due care and attention", staying to the right side of the road and not riding between sunset and sunrise etc. (see Geddes 2012, January 18). The District's approach contrasted significantly with other neighboring communities including West Vancouver and The City of North Vancouver who had implemented complete bans of longboarding on streets throughout their respective jurisdictions[2] (Coyne 2012, Geddes 2012a). DNV's entrenchment of specific longboarding bylaws and the acceptance of the activity legitimized longboarding on the road and contributed to a "moment of crisis" (Fairclough 1992: 230). A moment of crisis occurs when naturalized practices are highlighted and exposed by discourses, which challenge dominant perceptions of social life (Fairclough 1992). In other words, when DNV city council decided not to ban longboarding from DNV roads, the naturalized social practices of automobility became more visible through the ensuing conflict in the form of public debates in DNV city council about longboarding.

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[2] It is worth noting that The City of North Vancouver does allow skateboarding/longboarding on the sidewalks but not on the street whereas The District of North Vancouver is the exact opposite.

For example in July of 2012 following a petition and several complaints by residents in the Skyline-Glenview Wavertree area of DNV, city councilor Doug Mackay-Dunn proposed a motion during a regular city council meeting that sought to ban longboarding in the Skyline-Glenview Wavertree area[3] which city staff reports alleged was the site of a significant amount of 'riskier' longboarding activity in DNV (July 9, 2012a, Mackay-Dunn 2012, June 20). The motion passed by a margin of 4-3 and resulted in a ban of longboarding in the specified area (www.dnv.org/article). According to Fairclough (1992 cited in Marston 2000) these moments of crises define the parameters for data sample selection in CDA, thus this case study analysis focuses on the city council debates that resulted from this 'moment of crisis'.

Several factors influenced the selection of DNV as the focus of this case study. First, DNV's willingness to engage in public discussions about longboarding has lead to a significant amount of data from which to draw from and analyze, which is always an important consideration for discourse analysis (Philips and Hardy 2002, Wood and Kroger 2000). Second, under provincial legislation, longboarders are defined as "pedestrians" meaning the role of legislating and controlling longboarding is the responsibility of municipalities such as DNV (as opposed to vehicles and bicycles which are legislated provincially in *BC Motor Vehicle Act*), thus research into public policy discourse about longboarding needs to focus on the sites where this discourse takes place, at the municipal level. And finally, the case study method provides important analytical

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[3] Skyline, Skyline Drive and the Skyline-Glenview-Wavertree area are different terms that refer to the same area and are used interchangeably in this paper and during the city council meetings in DNV. See www.dnv.org/article for a map of the specific area in question.

contributions to automobility and longboarding in Canada in the form of generalizations that can be applied to different contexts for future research (Stake 2000).

Developing the Corpus

The corpus for this paper was developed from two sources of texts that were generated from the public policy discussions about longboarding in DNV. The first set of texts are video recordings of four separate city council discussions about longboarding that occurred over the span of seventeen months from January 2012 to May 2013. The second source of texts was the written reports authored by city bylaw staff and in one case DNV city councilor Doug Mackay-Dunn. The reports included information gathered by city staff concerning 'longboarding activity' in DNV including: the number of patrols done by bylaw and RCMP officers, the number of tickets handed out, information gathered through surveys of residents, longboarders etc., as well as general summaries of what was observed occurring on the street with respect to 'longboarding activity'. Both the video recordings of each meeting and their respective reports were accessed online through DNV's website (http://www.dnv.org/article.asp?c=83).

After generating the corpus, I performed a preliminary overview of the data in order to get a sense of what was transpiring during the discussions about longboarding. It became apparent that an analysis consistent with Fairclough's (2003, 1995, 1992) approach to CDA, which focuses on "detailed analysis of a small number of discourse samples" would not be possible given the large amount of data that had been collected (Fairclough 1992a: 230). Instead, I conducted a detailed analysis on a sample of the data set that is consistent with the "moments of crisis" discussed above (Fairclough 1992).

The sample of the corpus used for analysis consists of the city council meeting

that took place on July 9, 2012 and the respective city council reports for that meeting

(see Mackay-Dunn 2012 and Walker 2012). This meeting was chosen because it was the

first meeting to discuss and the only one to implement a complete ban of longboarding in

any area of DNV, which is consistent with Fairclough's position that CDA should focus

on "disruptions" in text production instead of generalizing about large bodies of text

(cited in Marston 2000: 354). Similarly, the city council meeting on July 9, 2012 was the

first to follow the enactment of longboarding legislation On March 5, 2012 that

legitimized longboarding on the road through legislation, thus provoking a petition and

conflict that highlight entrenched and normalized social practices that may not be as

easily observed without the ensuing debates about longboarding in DNV (Fairclough

1992).

4. Analysis

In this analysis the CDA framework and concepts discussed above are applied to

the DNV city council meeting that took place on July 9th, 2012. The CDA framework and

related concepts uncover how the ideology of automobility contributes to the social

construction of the longboarder identity at micro and macro levels of discourse

production.

Transivity and Nominalization in Longboarding Discourse

In debates about longboarding in DNV, longboarders are most often represented

as active agents, whereas other road users are represented as passive agents, the ones

affected by the actions of "longboarders". The construction of longboarders as active

agents is first realized in the subject of Mackay-Dunn's report to council: The enhanced

control of "Longboarding" through prohibition, where an acute risk to community safety

exists as it does in the area specified" (Mackay-Dunn June 20, 2012:1). The focus on

control through prohibition indicates that longboarding and consequently longboarders

are causing "an acute risk to community safety" thus justifying prohibition.

Throughout the public policy debates about longboarding, both abstract and

concrete events were used to construct longboard as actively causing harm and posing a

risk to others. For example, DNV city councilor Nixon commenting on the risks that

longboarding on Skyline poses states:

> It's just an area that is waiting for tragedy to occur in my view. Um…
>
> whether it is ah… an innocent mother and her children who wants to walk
>
> down the street uh (.5) getting hit by longboarders who we all know are
>
> traveling at significant speeds [1]. Whether it is ahh(.) somebody ah: (.) a
>
> longboarder who gets into an accident with a vehicle [2]. (DNV City
>
> Councilor Allan Nixon July 9, 2012a).

In this short example, longboarders are constructed as responsible social agents in a

hypothetical situation who hit an "innocent mother and her children" as well as being

involved in an "accident" with a vehicle. In [1] the responsibility of the longboarder is

emphasized by the adjective "innocent" ensuring that the text consumer understands the

longboarder is responsible. In [2] the only social actor represented is the longboarder

who is constructed as actively involved (gets into) in an "accident" with a "vehicle", a

noun.

The use of nouns to represent social processes and social actors (as in [2] above)

refers to what is known as "nominalization" (Fairclough 2003: 12). In the current

example, the role of drivers was routinely nominalized in discourse about longboarding by attributing the actions of drivers to cars/vehicles. This was evident in Stephanie Halls' comments on longboarding on Skyline Drive:

> Most of us are tired of encountering longboarders on the road where we are driving. Skyline has blind corners, construction and cars parked on both sides of the street, all contribute to cars unable to see what is coming up in particularly uphill [1]. The longboarders don't stick to their side of the road and are doing donuts in front of our house in addition to boarding back and forth across the road [2]. I have seen longboarders lose control and the board go flying riderless across the street into people and dogs [3]. Many dogs are scared of the boards and others hate them and would like to pursue them as prey [4]. The district chose not to put in sidewalks so the only place that people can walk is on the road, which we are already sharing with the cars [5]. The last meeting I attended, a reference was made to snowboarding not being popular in the beginning I am not quite sure why nobody seems to realize snowboarding is one way and doesn't encounter a boarder coming uphill [6]. Longboarding is one way but the cars all 2000lbs of them plus in some cases go both up and down [7] (Skyline Drive Resident Stephanie Halls July 9, 2012b).

In the first sentence, the reference to "us" and "where we are driving" clearly indicates Stephanie's orientation to this matter as a driver, although it is unclear who "us" and "we" includes. Shortly thereafter in her discussion about the various factors that contribute to visibility issues on Skyline Drive [1], the driver is removed from the process

and "cars" a noun, now assumes the role of not being able to "see what is coming up". Similarly, in [5] Stephanie now as a pedestrian is concerned with sharing the road with "cars" and in [7] longboarding on the road is problematized because of "cars" traveling up and down the road.

The representation of the car and the nominalization of the driver was a consistent theme throughout the debates about longboarding. Nevertheless there were a few instances such as in a narrative by Skyline resident Terry Quelch where drivers were represented as agents when discussing a collision that had already occurred on Skyline:

> And if you know Skyline, it's got blind turns, it's dangerous folks and there are people walking their children they often walk on the wrong side of the road and no they haven't been hit but it could happen. One gentleman was hit, I think he had about $1300.00 worth on the front of his truck (Skyline Drive Resident Terry Quelch July 9, 2012b).

In this narrative, it originally sounds like a pedestrian (one gentlemen) was hit by a longboarder because of the lack of a differentiation between the theoretical proposition of hitting pedestrians and the inclusion "one gentleman was hit". However, the final clause explains that the gentleman was driving a truck at the time indicating that the longboarder "hit" a truck not an individual. Consistent with the nominalization of the driver discussed earlier, even in cases where the driver is included linguistically, the responsibility for the collision is attributed to the longboarder, absolving the driver of even the potential for contributing to the collision.

In the examples above a pattern emerges whereby longboarders are routinely constructed as responsible for the harm caused to others in both hypothetical and factual representations. In analyzing the textual features of transivity and nominalization, CDA highlights subtle characteristics of text that are routinely overlooked by non-linguistic forms of analysis yet deserve significant attention for the ways in which patterns emerge. In this case, textual analysis demonstrates how longboarders are routinely represented as responsible agents for harm to others(Fairclough 2003, Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999).

Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity: Constructing the "Thrill Seeker"

As alluded to above, the initial longboarding strategy prepared by DNV attempted to balance the needs of riders by accommodating them on the roads provided they adhered to legislation. The reasoning for this was based on an understanding that longboarding and longboarders represented a diverse group of individuals who used longboarding for different purposes including a 'green' form of transportation (Geddes 2012a). In the discussions about banning longboarding in the Skyline area on July 9, 2012, the distinctions between riders were eliminated and gave way to a more homogeneous construction of longboarders as "thrill seekers. By analyzing the intertextuality and interdiscursivity of the texts CDA provides insight into how the social identity of the longboarder was constructed through discourse practice.

In his proposal to ban longboarding, DNV city councilor Doug Mackay-Dunn draws on a city staff report prepared by Chief Bylaw Officer Carol Walker in order to construct longboarders as "thrill seekers."

On June 6th, 2010, Ms. Carol Walker, the Chief Bylaw Officer for the District

of North Vancouver submitted a "Longboarding" Update for April 27 to June

5, 2012 which is appended to this report (see …) [1]. In this report she

expressed concern regarding "***thrill seekers who…want to go fast and***

challenge themselves" on their longboards" an activity which creates a risk

to public safety by either interfering with vehicles or residents or endangering

themselves or others [2]. She continues with her concerns and classifies this

risky behaviour as "**unsettling**" **with the potential for a mishap**" [3]. The

report, also, identifies the longer stretch (of road) along Skyline-Wavertree-

Glenview-Fairmount route as the scene for the majority of this activity, which

Ms Walker quite properly describes as "risky" (Mackay-Dunn 2012, June 22:

1) emphasis in original, numbered sentences are my addition) [4].

　　In Mackay-Dunn's report there is a high degree of intertextuality that incorporates

direct speech from Carol Walker's report signified by the use of quotations [2] [3]. His

use of quotations implies that the subject is being brought into the report from someone

other than himself in this case Carol Walker, however, the omissions represented by "…"

in his version collapses the original text and removes an important distinction made by

Ms. Walker in her original report. The original sentence that was being quoted read: "

Concern occurs when the "thrill seekers" *who are there for the sport* and want to go fast

and challenge themselves" (Geddes 2012, June 6:3 emphasis mine) provides a distinction

between longboarders who participate in the activity as a sport from those that use it for

transportation, etc. By eliminating the distinction between different types of longboarding

and focusing solely on the extreme cases that involve "thrill seeking", councilor Mackay-

Dunn is able to justify the exclusion of longboarders from this specific area while avoiding the distinctions that had been important in establishing legitimacy for longboarding on the road (e.g., the use of longboards as transportation).

Coincidently, the environmental and transportation discourses that were prevalent in the earlier city council meetings were marginalized in favour of a risk discourse and sport discourse that emphasizes the "extreme" nature of longboarding activity. In his opening comments during the city council meeting on July 7, 2012, councilor Mackay-Dunn uses the "thrill seeking" metaphor and also incorporates a "race" metaphor stating:

> I would argue that there is a significant risk that the topography of Skyline
>
> drive and I have been up there a couple three times does not *lend itself* to a
>
> track for thrill seekers (DNV city councilor Doug Mackay-Dunn July 9,
>
> 2012a)

The risk and sport discourses that were prevalent in Mackay-Dunn's comments were also evident in resident's comments concerning longboarding on Skyline Drive, however, they also incorporated a youth discourse that emphasized the age of longboarders that were on the road. Tiffany Hazisa, a resident of Skyline explains that:

> When I am driving, when I am walking I am in constant fear of hitting one of
>
> these kids [1]. I live right where they get the most speed and they are
>
> exceeding cars, I kid you not. My other fear is having to make that phone call
>
> to 911 [2]. It's a matter of time I have seen a child hang on to a bumper and
>
> get sucked under and thank goodness that car was stopped [3]. It's a matter of
>
> time before somebody is killed and I would hate to know that we have gone
>
> through all of these meetings and talking to these children and something like

that happened and it usually takes that [4]. I want to see this be the difference,

I don't want this situation to get to that point [5]. Like I said these are

awesome young kids, I have spoken to several of them I've got nothing

against them it's just this sport and this street [6]. (Skyline Drive resident

Tiffany Hazisa July 9, 2012b).

Tiffany's statement incorporates both the sport discourse (it's just this *sport* and

this street) [6] and the risk discourse (longboarders are exceeding cars), however, what is

most prevalent in her statements is the emphasis on a youth discourse, referring to

longboarders as "kids" [1] [6] and children/child [3] [4]. What is also interesting in

Tiffany's comments is that the combination of youth and risk discourses seem to

necessitate a "welfare state" discourse that enables city council to legislate the ban of

longboarding on the basis of protecting the "children" In contrast, in councilor Mackay-

Dunn's comments the emphasis on protecting "the public" was the primary goal and the

health and safety of longboarders was secondary.

Longboarding and the Social Practice of Automobility

At a fundamental level longboarding challenges many 'common sense' notions of

what is acceptable within the ideological framework of automobility. The problem with

longboarding is not inherent to the activity itself, but instead in what it represents and the

space it occupies. As DNV city councilor Hicks explains:

I think that this is the essential issue with longboarding is sharing the courses

that they use with buses trucks buses[sic] cars and trucks on roads designed

for such traffic" (DNV city councilor Robin Hicks July 9, 2012a).

The ideology of automobility, including the use of public roads, presupposes specific

social relationships and behaviours, which are enacted in the production and consumption

of longboarding discourse.

    Discourses that problematize youth longboarding on Skyline (see Tiffany

Hazisa's comments above) are consistent with how youth have traditionally been

governed in 'automobilized spaces' (Collins et al. 2009, Parusel and Tigar McLaren

2010). A significant amount of time and resources have gone into programs which

attempt to prevent injuries to young people on the road, by insisting that they are

removed from these public spaces (Parusel and Tigar McLaren 2010). Longboarders, and

specifically young longboarders, who participate in longboarding activities on public

roads act in defiance of these 'common sense' notions of road safety which privilege

drivers and cars over other forms of transportation and non-drivers (often young people)

(Furness 2010, Parusel and Tigar McLaren 2009). Consistent with comments made by

DNV city councilor Muri who states:

> Instinctively I know that um a child on a longboard going down a curvy
>
> vertical road at high speeds when cars are driving up is not a good thing. I
>
> don't ever want my kids to do that I will just tell you that right now I do not
>
> (DNV city councilor Lisa Muri, July 9, 2012a).

Young people longboarding on the road with cars is constructed as "unnatural", indicated

by the modal statement that categorically asserts "Instinctively I know" that "it is not a

good thing." Longboarding on public roads contradicts entrenched cultural traditions that

reinforce automobilized norms and an ideology that public roads cannot be understood as

places of recreation, especially for groups of young people (Collins et al. 2009, Parusel and Tigar McLaren 2010).

According to Fairclough (2003) and Wood and Kroger (2000) what is not articulated in discourse may seemingly be as important or more important than what is present. In this case, that automobility is rarely questioned or even acknowledged may be evidence of its ideological position and dominance within our current social system. Throughout the discussions about longboarding, what was consistently missing was how drivers and driving behaviour contribute to the risks associated with road use. The nominalization of drivers (see above) excludes all types of drivers and driving thus removing any sense of agency that can be attributed to their actions on the road. While the first two city council reports did state that part of the "longboarding strategy" included "educating drivers" this position was limited and even excluded the majority of the time from discussions about longboarding during council meetings and discussions of policies to implement this strategy (see Geddes 2012a: 3). When drivers were included as social agents, they were usually incorporated into discourse as passive agents that were empathized with for the "risks" that they face driving on the road with longboarders. The concern for driver's "psychological risks" is echoed in a statement by DNV city councilor Muri who states:

> So I don't know truly what it's like every single day to go around a corner and imagine a longboarder coming down in front of me while I am driving my car and hopefully driving my car and paying total attention not turned around and saying stop fighting in the back seat to my kids so that's another thing right (DNV city councilor Lisa Muri, July 9, 2012).

Councilor Muri's empathy, which was shared by other city councilors and residents (see for example Skyline Drive Resident Terry Quelch's comments July 9, 2012b), for drivers who may be "confronted" by a longboarder resonates with what Ben Fincham (2006 cited in Furness 2010: 128) referred to as the "car driver as victim sentiments" that he found to be prominent in discourses about bicycle messengers and urban cyclists in Britain. Similar to the "thrill seeking" metaphor used in constructing longboarders, cyclists in Britain were routinely regarded as a danger to other road users even being referred to as "Lycra Nazis" by one journalist who insisted that cars were not a danger to anyone as long as everyone stayed out of their way (Fincham 2006).

The greatest threat to pedestrian and even driver safety in DNV and every other place where cars, cyclists, longboarders, skateboarders and pedestrians etc. interact is the automobile (Parusel and Tigar McLaren 2010, Patterson 2007). In what can only be described as ironic, discourses about longboarding routinely construct it as a danger to others, however, the examples that are used to support these claims involve longboarders being injured by automobiles, not longboarders injuring others (For example Glenna Evans' death). While it is certainly conceivable that someone on a longboard could hit and injure a pedestrian, comparing the threat that a pedestrian faces from a longboarder even traveling at very high speeds with the threat they and other non-motorists, including longboarders, face from a two ton (or more) vehicle is bordering on lunacy. The inability to even incorporate the driver into public policy discussions about road use further emphasizes Patterson's (2007) argument that the contribution of the automobile to death and injury every year is such an accepted part of automobility that is not even questioned (see also Furness 2010 on the (in)ability of public discourse to include drivers).

5. Discussion and Conclusions

In my evaluation of longboarding discourse in DNV I have incorporated concepts from CDA with a critical understanding of automobility in public policy debates in DNV at both the micro and macro level of discourse analysis. One of the important questions that CDA attempts to consider is do discourse practices transform or maintain the dominant social position (Fairclough 1992a, Jorgensen and Philips 2002)? In other words, does longboarding discourse in DNV transform or reproduce automobility? In some respects longboarding and DNV city council's willingness to allow longboarding may seem to represent at least a small resistance to automobility. Even though longboarding was banned on Skyline Drive, a subsequent motion to extend the ban to other roads in May 2013 was defeated before it could even be considered for debate indicating that longboarders have been adopted (at least to some degree) as legitimate users of DNV roads (May 6, 2013).

Longboarding as a resistance to automobility is tempered by the contradictions that are inherent in the current culture of auto-mobility and automobility (Conley and Tigar McLaren 2009). While traveling by longboard or skateboard is considerably "greener" than traveling by automobile, longboards and skateboards as transportation inevitably require the same network of roads that sustain and perpetuate automobility. Similarly, while longboarder's use of the roads in DNV for recreation may be superficially understood as a challenge to what Patterson calls "autohegemony", Gramsci's (1971 in Fairclough 2003) development of Hegemony Theory indicates that political hegemony enacts power through coercion and assimilation instead of brute force. Thus, the requirements of longboarders to follow traffic laws as well as adhere to

other guidelines (e.g., wearing a helmet) indicate assimilation into "autohegemony" not a challenge to it.

Discourse analysis is predicated on reflexive analysis that requires researchers to consider their contribution to the discourse they are analyzing (Philips and Hardy 2002). As a result discourse analysts impact their research sites through producing new discourse. Coincidently, discourse analysis is never meant to provide a complete or all encompassing understanding of social phenomena (Wood and Kroger 2000). Within Fairclough's perspective CDA can never offer complete understandings of social phenomena since not all social practices can be reduced to discourse (Fairclough 2003, 1992, 1989, Jorgensen and Philips 2002). As a result, this paper demonstrates how automobility influences the social construction of longboarding in discourse; however, it cannot draw conclusions about the non-discursive properties of longboarding.

Consistent with other studies of automobility, this paper found that longboarding discourse was structured and constrained by ideologies that problematized longboarding while ignoring a multitude of other factors including cars and drivers that contribute to the risks of automobility (cf. Furness 2010, Parusel and Tigar McLaren 2010). In analyzing automobility and the social construction of longboarding I have attempted to highlight the need for future policy debate to consider how automobility influences constructions of policy actors in public discussions about alternative forms of transportation including longboarding.

The current trend in longboarding and the lack of literature that specifically considers longboarding creates a broad spectrum of possibilities for future research that can incorporate a variety of perspectives. Future research should consider how other

methodologies involving interaction with longboarders politicians and other road users (ethnography, interviews, etc.) would contribute to a better understanding of longboarding discourse. Previous research on the "subculture" of skateboarding (cf. Beal 1995) could also be incorporated into studies, which compare "longboarders" with "skateboarders" on a variety of levels. For example several references were made during DNV city council meetings about the "safety culture" of longboarding compared to skateboarding. In either case, this paper has attempted to add to the growing literature on skateboarding and automobility while spurring these areas of interest to incorporate each other and longboarding in future analyses.

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