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Routine journeys, complex networks: media-centrism, the *dispositif* of road safety, and practices of commuting by car in everyday Ireland

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Contents

List of illustrations	2
Abstract	3
Acknowledgments.....	4
Introduction: The <i>dispositif</i> of road safety, media-centrism, and the context of the car.....	5
Chapter 1: Problematizing the car.....	20
Chapter 2: Networks of freedom.....	76
Chapter 3: Networks of emotions and affects	114
Chapter 4: Networks of resistance	153
Conclusion: Media-centrism and the complex networks of automobility	196
Appendices	208
Bibliography.....	218

List of illustrations

Figure 1: An Ekranoplan.....	51
Figure 2: <i>The Irish Times</i> front page, 12th July, 2010.....	82
Figure 3: <i>The Irish Times</i> front page, 13th July, 2010.....	83
Figure 4: <i>The Irish Times</i> page 3, 13th July, 2010.....	86
Figure 5: Page 3 of The RSA’s <i>Annual Report 2010</i>	121
Figure 6: <i>The Irish Times, Weekend Review</i> , Page 3, 16 th April, 2011.....	158
Figure 7: <i>The Irish Times</i> , Page 5, 13 th November, 2010.....	162
Figure 8: <i>The Irish Times</i> , Page 6, 27 th November, 2010.....	167
Figure 9: <i>Irish Independent</i> , Page 4, 29 th December, 2011.....	172
Figure 10: <i>boards.ie</i> , “Another speed camera van burned!!”, 9 th April, 2011.....	175
Figure 11: Mercedes-Benz’s F015 concept.....	200

Abstract

Road safety is regarded as one of the most significant public health issues in the world. In Ireland, strategies for the mitigation of the effects of road traffic accidents appear in policy documents such as the *Road Safety Strategy* which is then disseminated via various media outlets. Such an approach highlights the centrality of mediation in the social acceptance of policy initiatives, relying on an assumption of media-centricity – that the mainstream media are central to social formation. This thesis problematizes this assumption. Drawing together the disparate elements of a *dispositif* of road safety in the under-researched Irish setting, this study explores the complex range of actors implicated in the mediation of policy. It examines the mediated policy context of the worst road accident in Irish history, as well as the introduction of a network of speed cameras, to explore how policy initiatives output in print media reports, as well as online discussion. Through analysis of car-commuters' focus group interactions, it also examines the ways in which mediated policy understandings are immanent and circulate in how car-commuters talk about their commuting practices.

The study highlights how mediated policy actions attempt to curb the unfettered expression of car-based freedoms through the construction of individual responsibility as the ultimate expression of road safety. However, commuters' freedoms are also shaped and constrained by responsibilities in terms of work, study, and family, as well as by the types of social action automobility makes conceivable, facilitates, and disrupts. In addition, the research shows that while rational choices and rationality are a dominant framework within policy contexts, mediation about road safety is actually enmeshed in multiple rationalities that surface as circumstances require. Exploration of driving practices reveals how commuters are nodes in their own networks of rationalities around automobility that adhere and disjoin to varying degrees with the concerns of media representation. The study also highlights the mainstream media consensus constructed around speed cameras, even though forms of resistance to this consensus manifest, especially online. Commuters' car-based activities can often also be resistant to discourses of road safety. Yet commuters fight to defend the space and time spent on forms of work performed in the car that reinforce the exigencies of neoliberalism. Overall, the thesis finds that media are but one of the many sets of actors that constitute the complex networks of neoliberal automobility in Ireland.

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Introduction: The *dispositif* of road safety, media-centrism, and the context of the car

The car is ubiquitous in social, economic, and geographic landscapes, as well as in culture (Featherstone, 2005). Urry (2005, p. 25) argues that the car is more “systemic and awesome in its consequences than what are normally viewed as constitutive technologies of the global, such as the cinema, television and especially the computer”. More than one billion cars were produced in the 20th century (Urry, 2005). Global car production has increased from more than 61 million vehicles in 2009 to almost 90 million units in 2014, despite the effects of global recession (oica.net, 2015), and car sales are judged by news media as a bell-weather of national economic health (McAleer, 2015).

Benefits associated with the car are harmful because of the costs associated with what the automobile necessitates (Conley and McLaren, 2009, p. 3). The external costs of the car include congestion, ecological sustainability, oil dependency, and road traffic accidents – what Bohm, et al. (2006, pp. 9-10) characterise as the car’s antagonisms. Indeed, road safety is regarded as “one of the world’s largest public health and safety issues” (National Crime Council, 2015). Road traffic accidents claim the lives of 1.24 million people globally per annum (WHO, 2013) while 196 people died on the roads in Ireland in 2014 (The Irish Times, 2015a).

In Ireland, strategies for the mitigation of the car’s excesses appear in policy documents published by the Road Safety Authority (RSA) such as the *Road Safety Strategy 2007-2012* (RSA, 2007). The RSA was set up on 1st September 2006 (RSA, 2007, p. 16) as a “common response to an ‘urgent need’ at a particular historical moment” (Thiele, 1986, p. 255): that is the problem of road safety in Ireland. The functions of the RSA were transferred from the Department of Transport, the National Roads Authority (NRA), and the National Safety Council and it was organised into three directorates with responsibility for “driver testing and training”, “road safety, research and driver education”, and “standards and enforcement” (RSA, 2007, p. 16). The *Road Safety*

Strategy notes that “the print, broadcast and electronic media play a critical role in communicating road safety issues and maintaining road safety as a priority social issue in this country” (RSA 2007, p. 21). It also acknowledges that the success of the strategy relies on political commitment, supporting legislation, proper funding for safety initiatives and engineering measures, as well as public support (RSA, 2007, p. 21). In reality, the aspirations of policy are articulated and filtered through a potentially ambivalent news media, popular cultural texts, and the everyday experiences of the users of the car-system – who ostensibly can accept, alter, and reject such strategies – as well as through the operation of other actors, such as the enforcement actions of the Gardai for example.

Government strategies that highlight the media’s criticality to social acceptance of policy initiatives rely on an assumption of media-centricity: that mainstream media institutions are central to social formation (Couldry, 2004, 2012). But this assumption needs to be problematized. The articulations of strategy concerns through the media and experiences of the users of the car-system must be investigated in order to “make strange” this notion and to demonstrate the limits of government strategies and conceptualisations of how the car and the networks it necessitates are actually lived. The following study attempts to comprehend better the actual “assemblage” of car-drivers (Dant, 2005) and the system of the car considered as “automobility” (Sheller and Urry, 2000; Urry, 2005) to problematize a media-centred view of how these networks are constituted in Ireland. The concept of the assemblage considers cars and drivers together as social beings that produce a range of actions associated with the car that cannot be produced by the car or driver considered separately (Dant, 2005, p. 61). Automobility is defined as “‘a self-organizing autopoietic, nonlinear system’ which links together cars, car-drivers, roads, petroleum supplies and other ‘novel objects, technologies and signs’ in an expanding relatively stable system which generates unintended consequences”, and where the car is not a discrete object (Featherstone, 2005, p. 2 citing Urry, 2005, p. 27).

However, despite its extraordinary costs and consequences, the automobile has been the subject of comparative academic indifference for more than 125 years (Featherstone, 2005, p. 1; Urry, 2005). This lack has influenced many writers who have sought to account for the car within the context of their own academic milieu in disciplines such as sociology, cultural studies, and political theory, for example (including Sachs 1984;

Dant and Martin, 2001; Gilroy, 2001; Maxwell, 2001; Miller, 2001; Edensor, 2005; Featherstone, 2005; Urry, 2005; Rajan, 2006). Conley and McLaren (2009, p. 3) note that more recent academic interest in the car is borne in part from “the gnawing sense of the growing risks and troubles associated with automobile-dominated transportation”. The car is still both the “product and producer of modernity” (Rajan, 2006, p. 113) and the subject of the theoretical twinning of mobility and modernity in social science (Beckman, 2005, p. 82). For example, for Keohane, Kuhling, and Horgan (2002, p. 48), the Irish experience of modernity “is ongoing, uneven, and fed by many sources” and their discussion of road traffic accidents offers a conduit into social actions shaped by the car and also what these mean for the Irish experience of modern society.

The car and its practices may be “the most important modern development that could fulfil the unremitting liberal demand for individual autonomy” (Rajan, 2006, p. 113). But the meanings of the way in which lives are shaped around the car and how the car is shaped by society remain under-researched and under-explored in the social sciences and humanities, particularly in the Irish context. This general lack includes a neglect of the everyday lived experience of the car, as well as exploration of its mediated discourses that articulate the policy strategies which attempt to curb the car’s worst excesses. How life with the car seems shaped around people’s needs, how its contingent demands are perpetuated, and the ways in which the exigencies of strategies designed to mitigate its well-publicised antagonisms are accommodated may account for the car’s persistence in the face of its continued promulgation of social, economic, environmental, and public health costs (Conley and McLaren, 2009, p. 3). This study seeks to address the lack, to explore some of the meanings related to the car and what they have to say about the way lives are lived in contemporary Ireland.

The *dispositif* of road safety

The *Road Safety Strategy* document states that the RSA’s establishment represented:

the first time such an extensive and important range of road safety related functions has been vested in one statutory body. It enables the RSA to coordinate and implement a series of interdependent road safety initiatives in a way that has not been possible before now. (RSA, 2007, p. 16)

The first primary action of the *Road Safety Strategy* was to attempt a reduction in the number and severity of traffic accidents, but the second and third highlighted the implementation of mass-media campaigns about road safety and their integration “with the policing plans of An Garda Síochána and other enforcement agencies” to this end (RSA, 2007, p. 53). The enforcement actions of the strategy prioritised the publication of an annual Garda road safety plan and the roll-out of the Garda Traffic Corps and then listed a comprehensive range of specific targets aimed at increasing the compliance of drivers with speed limits. To enforce these targets, the action plan cites the implementation of a “Safety Camera Network in the region of 6,000 hours enforcement per month”, targeted to be completed by the second quarter of 2008 (RSA, 2007, p. 57).

The strategy notes that its own success depended “on the support of the community it serves and road users in particular” (RSA, 2007, p. 28). The first three education policy actions of the strategy underline the importance of the mainstream media in achieving the stated primary action – that is, ostensibly, saving lives. In relation to the safety cameras and other potentially controversial actions such as penalty points and mandatory alcohol testing, the strategy states that these actions require major public awareness campaigns “to make all road users aware of the role of the cameras in enhancing their safety” (RSA, 2007, p. 28). The risk in implementing these actions, according to the strategy, was that the support of the community and road users would be lost if they were not “experienced as reasonable and proportionate to the lives saved and the injuries avoided” (RSA, 2007, p. 28).

What is described here are the elements of a *dispositif* being formed in relation to road safety in Ireland – that is a “heterogeneous ensemble of discursive and non-discursive elements... manifested in laws, discourses, institutions, philosophical statements, architectural forms, and so forth” (Foucault, 1976; Thiele, 1986, p. 255; Rabinow and Rose, 2003, p. 9). The *dispositif* links together actors and objects in a sense of ideological coherence about a social problem. The co-ordination of elements in response to the problem of road safety that the *Road Safety Strategy* represents, such as legislation, funding, engineering, education, enforcement, and evaluation measures, as well as the media, is the culmination of the RSA and its “stakeholders” coming together to orchestrate an Irish “crusade” against road traffic accidents in the most systemic manner (RSA, 2007, p. 13; Packer, 2008, p. 31-32). The prioritisation of the

mainstream media's role for public awareness of road safety indicates its importance to the formation of the *dispositif* and justifies its investigation in this thesis.

However, even though it represents the melding of the goals of media and government and other actors, the RSA's strategy should not be considered in a vacuum, nor in isolation from its contexts and their practices. Mobilised within the *dispositif* of road safety are popular and news media representations of driving, cars, and road safety initiatives themselves. The *dispositif* does not begin or end in policy documentation then; neither can its discourses be discretely encompassed in Governmental publications. Therefore the investigation of the *dispositif* of road safety must also include the threads of discourses that connect government policy to its reporting and interpretation across media forms. Together, these and other actors shape the actual outputs that occur, rather than those that are "planned in advance" (Muntigl, 2002, p. 48) or are targeted by the strategy itself, which cannot simply enact themselves.

Packer's (2008) account of the "crusade for traffic safety" in the US outlined a similar starting point. Packer (2008, p. 28-29) introduces the 1954 crusade as the starting point of his analysis of the problematization of the automobile:

according to experts' evaluations of specific populations, and governmental and nongovernmental measures...created to address them specifically... It was, in effect, an attempt by the federal government to organize a concerted effort of media leaders to advocate and spread the gospel of traffic safety.

This crusade attempted to corral a diverse media (across newspapers, magazines, trade journals, radio and television, film, and advertising) in the cause of teaching "Americans everywhere to do things for themselves" with respect to road safety (Packer, 2008, p. 30). For Packer (2008, pp. 31-32) the act of reorganising public opinion produced "a new popular truth":

By this I mean that a phenomenon becomes recognized as a serious public problem through publicity that identifies it as such and suggests it be dealt with through expert explanation. In essence it becomes a popular truth insofar as it creates a sense that reality is adequately represented, that something is amiss and must be set right, and most generally, that this is some form of expertise that can sufficiently come to grips with the situation. Furthermore in this instance it was recognised that numerous institutions must work together to study the problem and orchestrate the crusade.

Packer (2008, p. 32) traces “many of the cultural manifestations of this popular truth about automobile safety” through a form of problematization: The crusade for road safety represented “a unification in form and focus of investments, practices, and goals between government and media regarding traffic safety” (Packer, 2008, p. 32). It was the culmination of existing discourses and was spoken by a wide range of experts; it imagined the media as necessary to its goals, set the stage for interventions tasked with the alteration of conduct, and presaged the increasingly neoliberal personal responsibility approach to road safety in which the lives of others were of secondary importance to one’s own (Packer, 2008). While neoliberalism is open to a range of interpretations and meanings, perhaps Fairclough (2003, p. 4) most succinctly defined it as “a political project for facilitating the re-structuring and re-scaling of social relations in accordance with the demands of an unrestrained global capitalism”. However, neoliberalism has many facets and is thinkable as a discursive formation, governmental programme, and ideology or technical assemblage, for example (Gilbert, 2013, p. 7). Significantly, neoliberalism extends the logic of the market as a conceptualisation of all social interaction and as a response to social problems.

The Irish *Road Safety Strategy* is also an attempt to unify practices and goals about road safety in the way Packer (2008) describes and is one of the critical components of the dispositif of road safety in an Irish context. The strategy brings together a diverse range of agencies and international “best practice” and it is provided with resources and “leadership” by the government (RSA, 2007, pp. 2-3). Its critical success factors necessitate accountable stakeholders and their collaboration, data sharing, monitoring, and evaluation, training and equipment, as well as “marketing, outreach and public information” (RSA, 2007, p. 20). Yet all of these factors are envisioned as inputs into the policy, as well as its on-going evaluation and improvement. In terms of the translation of policy outcomes into social action, the media’s role is taken for granted as one of transmission of policy actions into lived reality. But this is based on a communicative fallacy in which it is assumed that the frameworks of knowledge which encode meaning into the policy strategy will be decoded in the same way by the meaning structures and knowledge frameworks of the media – and also of the citizens at which the policy is directed (Hall, 1980, p. 136).

Media-centrism in the context of Irish road safety narratives and policy formation

The idea that social acceptance of the *Road Safety Strategy* might somehow be willed into existence by mainstream media is based on the assumption that media are inevitably central to the constitution of society (Couldry 2004, 2012). Media-centrism is “the automatic assumption that media are central to explaining the dynamics of contemporary life” (2004, p. 5). Noting that centres per se, never mind mediated ones, “are not a necessary feature of social organisation”, Couldry (2012, p. 22) argues that, “rather over time, things have been progressively organised so that...*everything goes on as if they are necessary*” (emphasis in original). Couldry sees the assumption of media-centrism as related to the functionalism that views society and culture as a series of complex parts that contribute to the operation of a self-sufficient whole. Such functionalism “lives on in media institutions’ discourses about themselves”, where it fulfils the purpose of self-justification (Couldry, 2004, p. 2). Further, the assumption of the mediated centre not only plays out in the central social role the media constructs for itself, it is also a feature of Media Studies as a discipline (Couldry, 2004). Couldry (2012, p. ix) notes the importance of avoiding the trap of following “Media institutions’ underlying interests in sustaining their position as a ‘central’ social infrastructure”, by remaining “close to what people...are doing with media”. For Couldry, this is how “we get a grip on media’s relations to society and world”.

Relating this to the context of Irish road safety narratives and policy formation, while the *Road Safety Strategy* shows awareness of how the RSA’s own power to effect its plans through the strategy as an instrument of government is contingent on the symbolic power of the media, it does not concern itself with whether and how the media can construct this, nor what the audiences of these texts, and drivers in action, do with these meanings. It is not that such discussion should appear in a policy strategy document. Rather, what is present is the implicit assumption that the media can simply produce social reality. In relation to mainstream media support, the strategy seems to posit the notion that if you build “it” – a public awareness campaign – “they” – the driving public – will simply come around to your point of view. In reality, “drivers and vehicles perform in, and are constituted through, complex networks of sociality and materiality” (Merriman, 2005, p. 158). They are not constituted wholly by symbolic meaning related to the car, policy imaginings, or the media alone, but by a diverse range of

actors, symbols, and practices that go to make up the lived reality of road safety. These other elements associated with driving practice must be considered to fully understand the dispositif of road safety in Ireland. What my work seeks to show is the complexity of how media operates in contemporary governance systems in the context of Irish road safety narratives and policy formation. Thus the problematization of media-centrism is a motivating force in the thesis as a whole, that attempts to make a nuanced intervention exploring these assumptions in this important arena of policy and media. From Couldry's (2004, 2012) analysis, discussions of media-centrism are largely theoretical and about Media' Studies presumptions of media power and influence within its own disciplinary imagination. The current research proposes to undercut tendencies towards "giving undue prominence to media" in the explanation of social phenomena (Couldry 2004, p. 8), by exploring some of the other factors involved in shaping social practices in addition to the media. My study therefore functions not only as an empirical study, but also a sustained engagement with media-centric assumptions associated with the context of Irish road safety narratives and policy formations.

The evidence presented in this thesis demonstrates how users of automobility messily implement – that is, accept, reject, or alter – processes that have been put in place to guide their conduct through policy contexts as part of their practices, challenging the mythical centrality the media accords its own authority (Foucault 1978a, p. 268). When such processes are altered by the users of automobility, it constitutes an implicit problematization of media-centrism. Users do not simply enact policy strategies, as evidenced by the existence of road accidents, the existence of strategies to counter these incidents, and as Conley and McLaren (2009, p. 3-4) note, the existence of public institutions such as the police and courts that are largely taken up with dealing with issues related to automobility. Therefore these user practices should also be accessed in terms of the dispositif of road safety, a facet of Packer's (2008) problematization of automobility not directly addressed by him. This study does not set-out to check if people "properly" understand road safety policy initiatives, however. Instead, it explores how policy understandings are immanent in the ways in which people talk about their practices, in lives that are organised around the car. I will argue that the materiality of these formations is best interrogated through the networks implied by insights from actor-network theory (ANT), the concepts of automobility (Sheller and Urry, 2000; Urry, 2005), the car-driver assemblage (Dant, 2005) and thinking about automobility in terms of the dispositif of road safety. While I have briefly defined the

other terms, ANT in addition conceives of a world filled with fluid networks of hybrid entities, such as the car-driver assemblage, the conception of which negates the need for their human and non-human components to be analysed separately (e.g. Latour, 2005). The relevance of ANT is explored further in Chapter 1.

The mediated policy context of the worst accident ever and commuting by car.

In order to explore the question of how policy strategy circulates in the system of automobility as a constituting element of both mediation and practice, a mediated policy context needs to be defined as a punctuating point of entry to primary analysis, rather than simply exploring government publications or confining investigation to the mainstream media alone. This means relevant instances or events where elements of the dispositif of road safety become visible and can be followed through the networks of automobility need to be examined. What needs to be identified and analysed are the places where the network congeals or intensifies and where nodes accumulate or disperse in media representations. But what also needs to be examined is where the dispositif becomes visible and intertwines, or not, in the concerns and practices of the users of system of automobility. It is all of these actors together who shape strategy outputs into the lived experience of the system, rather than how it is planned in advance (Muntigl, 2002).

The mediated policy context of a serious road safety incident that occurred in Donegal in July, 2010 – in fact, the worst ever car crash in Ireland for fatalities – provides such a point of entry. This is chosen as a starting point because strategies of road safety are thrown into sharp relief in the context of the failure of governmental initiatives to manage events in the system of automobility or keep them within socially acceptable limits. Eight people died in the accident, which occurred in the best year to that date for road traffic accidents (RSA, 2011), in an Ireland where almost every fatality makes the news. The study commences its primary data analysis then with the investigation of how road safety policy is articulated through the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident. This point of entry enables us to follow the networks of actors (that is the texts, media, objects and people) that emerge as constitutive of the dispositif of road safety in Ireland. Given the potentially infinite nature of these actors and the interrelationships that could be drawn between them however, it is necessary to draw

boundaries around what is chosen for analysis. My exploration thus begins with the representation of the Donegal accident in *The Irish Times*. This is because *The Irish Times* can still be considered the newspaper of record (Mulcahy, 1995; Conway, 2006; Fahy, Trench and Clancy, 2012; Mercille 2014, p. 291) and can be argued to be central to the constitution of the dispositif of road safety as a result. My analysis excludes TV and radio coverage and reports from other sources such as RTE who could equally be argued as central to the constitution of the dispositif, and these sources would be appropriate for a further study. This somewhat arbitrary boundary is required in order to mould a potentially infinite range of actors and interconnections between them into a research problem that is feasible to interrogate.

After reviewing coverage of the accident in Donegal, analysis begins on the day when most *Irish Times* reporting materialised in the paper. One of the most important actors that emerges from this coverage is the RSA. Its status as the key administrative body for road safety justifies the *Road Safety Strategy* text as an object of exploration, exposing the nature relations of power between actors that the RSA proposes, and leading to the RSA's *Annual Report 2010* – which considers a policy response to the Donegal accident. In analysis, key actors that emerge are followed between policy documents and the *Irish Times*, and policy, print and other mediated discussion are all considered as integral components of the networks that constitute the dispositif of road safety in Ireland. My work therefore identifies and follows key actors that mediate automobility, including *The Irish Times*, the RSA, the *Road Safety Strategy*, and Gay Byrne (then Chairman of the RSA).

However, none of these actors actually determine the constitution of the dispositif of road safety in Ireland: how it is lived in practice does not causally emanate from the implementation or mediation of *Road Safety Strategy* itself, as a media-centred approach might assume. Thus, the analysis of texts is considered in light of the lived experience of car-commuters. Car-commuters are chosen because as a solution to problems of transportation, among the most salient types of journeys taken with the car every day is the one to and from work or college. For the purposes of this thesis, commuting by car is the form of driving predominantly explored. Car-commuting has a particular salience in how it relates to everyday life in the Irish context. For example Keohane, Kuhling, and Horgan (2002, p. 50) make the connection between road traffic accidents and Irish society – one in which crashes can be understood in terms of

collisions of incompatible paces of life rather than speeds of cars. They argue that road accidents are symptomatic of a “crisis arising from processes of social transformation” in which tradition and modernity co-exist uneasily in social life (Keohane, Kuhling, and Horgan, 2002, p. 45). Noting that these processes are not new, they argue that in contemporary society such collisions are amplified and characterise Ireland (Keohane, Kuhling, and Horgan, 2002, p. 47). Irish society, they say, is:

transformed by processes of reflexive – or accelerated – modernisation and globalisation: technologies and markets of production, distribution and consumption generated by transnational corporations; administrative systems, governmental strategies and legal-rational principles developed by post-national and transnational institutions. (Keohane, Kuhling, and Horgan, 2002, p. 47)

For Keohane, Kuhling, and Horgan (2002, p. 50) one of these collisions is that between a commuting and agrarian driving culture. A rural driving culture prioritises customs over motoring laws, but commuting is instead characterised by a shared commitment to rationality as well as universal and formal rules, and thus exemplifies the drive towards “accelerated modernisation”. While it is easy to view car-commuting as a solution to the problem of connecting spatially divergent realms of home and work, it is not often constituted as a social problem per se in the way Keohane, Kuhling, Horgan (2002) and Maxwell (2001) allow for, which is how I want to investigate it. This necessitates a switch to methods that can interrogate the meaning-making of these commuters. Accordingly, I explore how the actors and concerns of mediated texts become filtered through the meanings car-commuters make of their commuting journeys – from their perspective, as assemblages of cars, drivers and occupants (Akrich, 1992; Tatnall and Burgess, 2002; Dant, 2005; Latour, 2005). Car-commuters also constitute the dispositif of road safety and the networks of automobility in this country. In order to understand their perspective as much as possible it is necessary to explore how the conditions they encounter on these daily journeys, and their own identities, are evaluated and interpreted (Harper, 1987; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 169). To achieve this, a number of focus groups met to discuss driving and car-commuting issues. The selection processes involved for the exploration of how the particular mediated texts and car-commuters were chosen is explained further in the methods section in Chapter 1.

My study explores the practices of car-commuters and mediated texts in order to problematize how the mediation of the dispositif of road safety is engaged with and ways in which this informs the constitution of the actual practices of the system of automobility in the context of everyday Irish life. By investigating different modes of mediation and the quotidian experience of the users of the system of automobility, a broader contextualisation of the dispositif of road safety as it is lived in Ireland can be established. The relationship between media and the social formations of automobility is also problematized, highlighting their hybridity, “system-ness”, and the materiality of the network. The associations with media in users’ thinking, as well as some of the sources that feed the Irish experience of modernity can be traced (Keohane, Kuhling, and Horgan, 2002). The interrogation of the articulation of policy strategies through the mediatisation of Donegal accident will thus begin the investigation of the sources of some of the more taken-for-granted relationships “that we have and hold around automobility” in everyday Ireland (Miller, 2001, p. 17).

Problematizing the car

Before primary data analysis can begin however, the ways in which the car has already been problematized in the social sciences and humanities needs to be contextualised. How considering automobility as a system – of car-drivers, user practices, policy, and the media for example – constitutes the most effective way to proceed also needs to be expanded upon. Chapter 1 – *Problematizing the car* – discusses existing literature related to the car and elaborates upon the methodological focus of the project. It explores how the ways in which the car has been written about in academia offer useful insights and resources, but do not adequately address the range of actors associated with automobility. The focus of many studies in a dominant genre of research about the car has in common the assumption of a deterministic force that inheres to the car’s ability to shape social formation. But what is required instead of such reductionist approaches is a sense of how sociality and the car are mutually constitutive, requiring a wide range of actors. Some writings about “externalities” (Miller, 2001), for example, begin the process of thinking about the car in terms of its systemic characteristics and costs. Ultimately, however, this framing does not connect the car’s aggregate effects to the more personal associations that are associated with it (Miller, 2001, p. 22). I argue that a much better exploratory framework for thinking about the car-system can be achieved through concepts such as automobility (Urry, 2005), the car-driver assemblage (Dant,

2004) and ANT. I expand the argument about considering automobility in terms of the dispositif of road safety in Ireland (Foucault, 1975) and I explain why the investigation of the lived experience of the users of the system is necessary as part of the investigation of the dispositif. I expand the argument that commuting journeys provide an apt focus for collecting data about lived experiences of automobility. This is because commuters are actors in the constitution of road safety in Ireland, the mediatisation of policy strategies, the constitution of the commuting sphere, and therefore automobility, but in ways that often are assumed but not interrogated. Because it draws attention to the complex range of actors involved in the constitution of the networks of automobility, my approach allows for the problematization of media-centrism. In this chapter I also describe the methods used and how the research proceeded.

Networks of freedom

What is clearly absent from the existing problematization of the car is a comprehensive interrogation of the apparent contradiction that exists in relation to the freedom the car is assumed to provide, in light of the constraints that are imposed on it and by it in automobility. Chapter 2 explores this paradox of freedom and constraint in automobility in Ireland. I interrogate how mediated policy actions in the Irish context attempt to curb the unfettered expression of car-based freedoms through the construction of individual responsibility as the “ne plus ultra” of road safety. I highlight how, in strategies of governmentality (Foucault, 1978b) articulated through the rituals of the mediatisation of the worst road traffic accident ever and predicated on the tenets of neoliberalism, freedom is a “mode of organising and regulation” dependent “on the capacities of free individuals” (Rose, 1999, pp. 64/145). Although people are given the freedom to drive, this is curtailed by the requirement for responsible behaviour in a variety of contexts. What the chapter shows is the attempted organisation of freedom through a range of intermediaries around the individual’s capacity for self-realisation. Analysis includes commuters’ reflections on their commuting journeys in relation to how they conceive of the freedom the car provides and how they negotiate strategies of responsabilization related to road safety.

Networks of emotions and affects

What is also absent from both the literature and policy contexts is analysis of the ways in which affective and emotional considerations constitute the networks of automobility in everyday life. That's why Chapter 3 interrogates the work done by the non-rational components of the dispositif of road safety that generate, or attempt to generate, specific affects within texts and in terms of social meaning structures. This is important because rational choices and rationality remain a dominant framework within policy contexts of automobility and shape which courses of action are proposed for citizens (Sheller, 2005). While policy debates and actors may valorise the formally rational or rational choice models in their output, they are also well attuned to deploy a hierarchy of emotional appeal when it is in their interests to do so (Ahmed, 2004 a, b). I argue that mediation about road safety is actually enmeshed in multiple rationalities that surface as circumstances require, despite the instrumental and formal logic they utilise in constructing solutions to the antagonisms of automobility (Maxwell, 2001; Keohane, Kuhling, and Horgan, 2002; Sheller, 2005; Bohm, et al., 2006). The connection between this realm of mediation and the emotional worlds that people create with their cars has been heretofore unremarked upon. In order to highlight how automobility is actually constituted in terms of these networks of feeling, I apply Ahmed's (2004a, pp. 120-121) theory that affect moves between bodies and objects that are sometimes invested with "stickiness". This makes them sites of affective intensity; where the subject is a nodal point rather than the origin or destination of feeling or "passion". Media representations are key sites for establishing chains of associations and generating these affective intensities in the dispositif of road safety. But exploring "feelings" surrounding the driving practices of commuters reveals how their interpersonal relations and affective needs mobilise emotional intensities that also circulate and become "stuck" to the car in a variety of circumstances or ways. I argue that commuter-citizens are nodes in their own networks of rationalities, logics, and meanings concerning automobility that adhere and disjoin to varying degrees with the concerns of media representation (Ahmed, 2004a). In this chapter, I describe how affective and non-affective rationalities are mobilised together in the messy sustenance of the social order of automobility.

Networks of resistance

If freedom is a key aspect of driving there must also be resistance. Accordingly, Chapter 4 interrogates how resistances to competing versions of “the programmers’ vision of government” (Weir, O’Malley, and Shearing, 1997, p. 510) manifest in relation to the networks of automobility. Matereke (2013, p. 41) outlines a form of resistance that Foucault called “counter-conducts”, defined as “struggles against processes put in place to guide the conduct of others” (Foucault 1976, p. 95). In this chapter, counter-conducts are identified as those struggles that may push or potentially reshape the boundaries of conduct or the programmers’ visions for automobility or society (Weir, O’Malley, and Shearing, 1997).

The chapter first briefly examines the disciplinary power of the network of speed cameras introduced in Ireland in 2010, before exploring mainstream media’s support for their introduction. Drawing on insights from ANT however, it is necessary to also follow other actors as they became central to this facet of the dispositif of road safety in order to develop the theme of resistance further. In this instance, this leads to internet forum discussions about driving that are disruptive of a consensus delineated through mainstream media reports of camera-burning incidents. This material is analysed for understanding of discourses that are not represented in the mainstream media consensus. The chapter then interrogates the practices of drivers in which counter-conducts are articulated or where accommodations to the suggestions of governance are made. While the media consensus about the introduction of the speed cameras is not immanent in the ways in which people talk about counter-conducts in terms of the organisation of their lives around the car, commuters’ car-based activities can often be resistant to discourses of road safety, for example. Yet commuters fight to defend the space and time spent on practices that constitute forms of “work” which reinforce the programmers’ vision for neoliberal society. I argue that commuters’ complex negotiations of the life necessitated by the car are constituted by sometimes messy sensibilities that are often little concerned with programmers’ visions for automobility.

Chapter 1: Problematizing the car

Introduction

Given the problematization of an assumption that the media are central to social organisation (Couldry, 2004; Couldry, 2012), the central question of this thesis concerns the relationship between how government policy and strategies are framed in the media on the one hand and how the practices of automobility are constituted on the other. But in order to understand the ways in which strategies of government actually constitute the car-system as it is lived in Ireland, my question first needs to be contextualised in relation to what others have already written about the automobile and how they have problematized the car. In this chapter, I first explore much of what Miller (2001, p. 12) defines as a dominant genre of literature about the car. This categorization includes histories of car production, design, and its current consequences, social histories of the car and accounts that emphasise the automobile as an allegory of modernity, as well as some studies of automobile subcultures. Next, I discuss research that explores the “externalities” of automobility, including transportation and road safety studies about the car. Research in this area can attempt to account for how, while we are willing to pay driving’s private costs, almost all of problems associated with the car derive from external costs we are not willing to pay. Research of this type is not confined to economic analysis however and “has become the basis for a much wider perspective” (Miller, 2001, p. 13). Externalities work has investigated meaning making in terms of the intention of individuals, but it is argued not to make enough of the connections between the macro entities of the market and the state, and the more personal associations the car has enabled and entailed (Miller, 2001), the exploration of which I assert is critical for exploring my research problem. Studies of the car’s “entailments” attempt to create some of these linkages between the automobile’s externalities and the more personal relationships that are associated with it (Miller, 2001, p. 17). But the investigation of further categorisations of research is still indicated, as I narrow my analysis towards the interrogation of studies that directly justify my own methodological approach. I argue that the socio-technical conceptualisation of the system of the car that is “automobility” (Sheller and Urry, 2000; Urry, 2005) needs to be investigated in order to explore the interconnections between the framings of policy strategies in the media and the practices of the car-system. I also argue that the way in

which ANT conceives of a world comprised of networks of hybrid human and technological entities also needs to be explored and I contend that the assemblage of the car-driver (Dant, 2005) is an appropriate conceptualisation of these hybrids for my research context. Foucault's (1975) concept of the *dispositif* is expanded upon to justify the interrogation of road safety as an ensemble of elements formed in response to this pressing social problem (Thiele, 1986). I connect-up these frameworks to the everyday lived experience of the car that is critical to the problematization of a media-centric view of the sociality of automobility. I argue that the world of commuting is a suitable focus for the investigation of everyday life in relation to the car because it is a taken-for-granted aspect of the quotidian that is seldom questioned, yet is constitutive of social actions in which road accidents occur in the Irish context and indeed elsewhere.

In this chapter, I make the case for expanding and complicating the ways in which the meaning of cars has been conceptualised. I suggest that despite the externalities model opening up a route into a more systemic conception of the car and its social and economic costs and entailments, only "automobility" delineates a full frame of reference for conceptualising the car as a system. The concept of the car-driver assemblage provides a theoretically coherent way to explore how this hybrid entity shapes the form and content of social action in particular contexts (Dant, 2005), such as in the Irish experience. The idea of the *dispositif* provides the general rationale and justification for interrogating road safety through the mediation of the Donegal accident and the introduction of a network of speed cameras, and the ways in which discourses of road safety circulate in the lived experience of commuting. Together, what these frameworks suggest is the exploration of the assemblages of cars and drivers circulating in the system of automobility in Ireland. Finally, I rationalise and explain the specific methods utilised in the study and describe the way in which the research was undertaken.

A dominant genre of literature about the car

Miller (2001) typifies a dominant genre of scholarship about the car as including histories of the production and design of the car, with an emphasis on personalities and events (e.g. Wolf, 1996; O'Connell, 1998). Such studies can often also include an account of the contemporaneous consequences of the car (e.g. Flink, 1975; Nadis and MacKenzie, 1993) or its social history (Gartman, 1994; McShane, 1994; Graves-Brown,

1997). Miller (2001) notes that this dominant genre features alternative histories of the car that foreground how the-car-as-we-know-it, with its internal combustion engine, was not a foregone conclusion, but could have developed as an electric vehicle for instance (see Schiffer, 1994). Also a factor in these types of studies are histories that show how a road network was already in place before the car arrived or how the car solved the problems of the horse by removing tons of manure from the streets (Flink, 1975). Some critical treatments in this genre also consider the car as a trope/synecdoche of modernity (Freund and Martin, 1993) and/or as Conley and McLaren (2009) note, a source of national pride. The genre contains studies of disenchantment around the car (Sachs 1984; Wolf 1996) that overlap with histories which emphasise class, race and gender divisions (Gartman, 1994; McShane, 1994; Norton, 2009; Sachs, 1984; Wolf, 1996), as well as subcultural studies of the car.

Miller (2001) is not alone identifying and exploring literature about the car in terms of this genre but others tend to limit their analysis of existing scholarship to this aspect of the field and thus are not as wide-ranging in their review as Miller. Dant (2005, pp. 61/75), for example, summarises how sociological research about the car is grouped into two main divisions – that in which the car is viewed as the exemplar of development of capitalist production (Chinoy, 1955; Goldthorpe, et al., 1968; Beynon, 1973; Flink, 1975, 1988; Altshuler, et al., 1984; Gartman, 1994) or that in which it is “a commodity that exemplifies the desired object that motivated consumers in late capitalism” (Lefebvre, 1971; Sachs, 1984; Liniado, 1996; O’Connell, 1998; Thoms, et al., 1998; Barthes, 2000). Similarly, Packer (2008, p. 2) divides the American aspects of Dant’s (2005) first division into pessimistic and optimistic halves. In the pessimistic version of its history, critics and historians (including Mowbray, 1969; Leavitt, 1970; Kelley, 1971; Ant Farm, 1976) argue that the car ripped apart pre-existing forms of sociality “as it fuelled individualism, conspicuous consumption, suburban sprawl, environmental destruction, highway carnage, and even oil-related military expansion” (Packer, 2008, p. 2). In its optimistic form, the car’s central role in American life is viewed as “the offspring of Americans’ restlessness and their desire for freedom and wide open spaces” (Packer 2008, p2). These more optimistic arguments are made by writers such as Stephens (1946), Stewart (1953), George (1957), Patton (1986), and Finch (1992). Packer (2008, p. 2) says the “desire” for freedom and open spaces is claimed in these arguments to be the progeny of the emerging hegemony of the USA and the unifying nature of the development of its “transport and communication

infrastructure” which “suffered a midlife crisis in a race to the moon, and survives in the quotidian commute”. Both Dant’s (2005) and Packer’s (2008) categorizations reinforce Miller’s (2001) articulation of a dominant genre of scholarship about the car, but it is a broad church that merits considerable unpacking to identify what resources can be retained from it in the context of my research problem. It is therefore instructive to explore some of this genre’s strengths and weaknesses in more detail, before considering the other categorizations of research in relation to the car and narrowing towards discussion of the methodological justifications identified above.

The metamorphic car

Miller (2001, p. 1) argues that in the 20th century, “the relationship of much of humanity to the world” became increasingly mediated by the car. However, this revolutionary – yet now taken for granted – transformation of society can seem a metamorphosis that simply dropped from the sky. Chant (2003, p. 200) notes that: “Technophiles and technophobes alike have tended to present the car as some kind of exogenous technological given...impacting upon society like a meteorite”. Barthes (2000) for instance describes the Citroen DS as a messenger of a world above nature, a perfect object with no apparent origin, while Brilliant (1989) traces how quickly normative behaviours and discourses grew up around the car. In her Marxist critical history, Wolf (1996) interrogates the apparently irresistible rise of the car by tracing the development of systems of transport since the dawn of the canal age. She points out that, by the 1930s, the spatial separation of the differing functions of “living, working, physical and mental recreation, and circulation” predicated on the car were already normalised by architects and planners internationally, expressed in the idea of the segregated city and enshrined in the Athens Charter of 1933 (Wolf, 1996, p. 155). This was driven by the triumph of the car in the US. The architectural models of urban space Le Corbusier constructed, for example, had in common “a motorway that crosses right through the whole city” (Wolf, 1996, p. 156). Le Corbusier propounded that stilts were the key to overcoming the difficulty of “circulation” in existing city structures:

stilts will be recognised as the indispensable foundation of town planning. The rule will appear in all its simple clarity: high blocks of dwellings, palaces, schools, houses, etc. will be orientated according to the sun and the best view; the ground level or undulating, will be furrowed by communications entirely independent of the buildings. (Wolf, 1996, p. 157)

By the 1950s one German architect wrote:

Houses can no longer get away from the car. Where there are houses, there will be traffic... Every apartment will be able to have a window that looks out on to the motorway. It will be exciting to watch the cars as they rush past and overtake each other, one travelling faster than the other. (Wolf, 1996, p. 157)

In the segregated city, the life-blood of the metropolis was reconstituted under the wheels of the car.

Wolf (1996) notes that it is easy to view these voices from history as naive, but in their proper context there was little opposition from traditional sources of criticism – the labour movement for example – to their vision. In addition, the motivation of architects was social, seeking improvements to the inhuman working conditions extant in the 1930s, while the pure conception of the architects' model was not necessarily transferred verbatim into reality (Wolf 1996, pp. 158-159). Wolf highlights how these factors in combination with the profit and property needs of the capitalist order determined the “unfriendly and inhuman urban structures” that were the epitome of modernity, where prosperity in society became conflated with the progress of the car:

The objective tendencies of the car society, tendencies that unfolded, as it were, behind the backs of these architects and planners, were partly the product of the specific property relations of these societies: it was private property and speculation in both land and real estate that determined development in modern urban centres. The importance of city centre for business meant land prices and rent rose at a phenomenal rate in these areas. It was the lower land prices outside the city centres that later attracted the shopping malls and cut price supermarkets to these locations. A similar pattern was to emerge in the family-house construction boom. In most of the industrialised Western Countries, this form of housing was publicly supported (with tax concessions) and was promoted as the ideal form of housing for the middle classes. The effect on traffic was inflationary as the city expanded into the greenbelt. (Wolf, 1996, p. 159)

From Wolf's (1996) analysis it can be extrapolated that although the car may now appear seamlessly integrated into people's lives, this has involved massive and sustained orientation around its exigencies that may seem the outcome of natural processes or states of affairs, but are actually a contingent social – or more accurately socio-technical – construction.

The car and identity politics

Some of the social effects of the automobile are addressed in studies that focus on relationship between the car and different forms of identity politics. Sachs (1984) for example reveals much about the massive transformation effected by the onset of the automobile system and the inequities and class restrictions that lie within it. His prescient attempt at an “eulogy to the history of the excitement caused by the automobile” (Sachs, 1984, p. viii) notes the “sharp perceptual contrast” between the automobile age and the era of the horse drawn carriage, and between the individual mobility of the car and the collective constriction of rail: “The horse and carriage, the traditional insignia of privilege, had declined in rank over the course of the nineteenth century, to the point that whenever a train overtook a coach, the rail passengers would laugh sneeringly out of the windows” (Sachs, 1984, p. 7). Yet the wealthy bemoaned the railroad’s relative ignorance of social status and the tyranny of its timetable (Sachs, 1984, p. 8):

Freedom has been sacrificed to speed. The train ticket is purchased not only with money, but also with the forfeiture of one’s right to self-determination for a certain while. Whosoever goes traveling in a railway coach forgoes, for a time, his freedom. (Sachs, 1984, p. 7)

Other writers (McShane, 1994; Norton, 2009) reveal similar class tensions in a U.S. context. Wolf (1996, p. 48) also expands that the designed-in collectivism and freedom from class distinctions provided by the train was countered by the owners of the railways who “did everything they could to counteract the egalitarian tendencies. Class society was to be reproduced on the railway”. Even so, as an inherently individual form of transport, the car was much better at expressing class distinction than the railcar, in a way that recalled the heyday of the horse-drawn carriage but in a “much improved” manner (Wolf, 1996, p. 48). The car established a primacy to individualised motion over other collective forms and connected this individuality to ideas of leisure and romanticism (Urry, 1990). Such individuation did not apply evenly but was based on privilege, wealth, and social status.

Gartman (2005) explores class tensions in relation to the car, describing three eras or “ages” in the way that evolving notions of class have underpinned the “cultural logic” of the car’s progress. Adapting Bourdieu’s (1984) idea of distinction to the early era of the car in America, where freedom has “always” been conflated with geographic

movement, Gartman (2005, p. 171) says the automobile gave its wealthy owners a freedom from the constraints of the train timetable. The car was not used for practical transport but instead as a vehicle of leisure and “public ostentation”. In the US, while rural dwellers resented the new freedom of wealthy urbanites to intrude in poorer rural communities:

Urban workers... resented bourgeois automobilists on city streets, where they disrupted street life and symbolized this class's arrogant disregard for workers' lives and livelihoods. At the same time, workers envied this possession of the rich. (Gartman, 2005, p. 171)

This provides an ultimately class-based context for Scharff's (1995, p. 959) earlier assertion that “[a]verage Americans had to learn to see their streets not as places to socialise or as open areas permitting light and air in otherwise choked cities...They had to learn to identify mobility with progress and with their own interests”. This insight is reinforced by Volti (2004, p. 111) who notes how for those who sat on their front porch, social interaction with passers-by was a feature of life before the car.

From the above snapshots, it can begin to be seen how a social history of the car is shot through with issues of class and urban geography, but it is not reducible to these issues. The same argument could be made apply in terms of issues of race. Those who analyse this issue in the context of the car underline how it is always the less powerful members of society who suffer the most from “progress”. The wholesale demolition of black neighbourhoods in Detroit, for example, illustrates how African-American communities could be decimated by the car:

Huge swaths of city were demolished to make way for expressways, and as was the case with so many urban redevelopment projects, black working-class neighborhoods were most heavily impacted. The Chrysler Freeway blasted through the heart of ...black Detroit's main shopping and entertainment districts. The...freeways cut through the city's most established black west-side neighborhoods. (Sugrue, 2004)

By the 1960s, with car factories relocated to the suburbs, the extent of the spatial mismatch between African-Americans and the location of job opportunities was clear.

The reality of life organised around the car is nuanced, yet many of those so far discussed credit the automobile or other social structures with a determining agency in the transformations that the car has entailed. Wolf (1996), for example, does not engage with the meanings users make from lives ordered around the car. Citing a newspaper article entitled “Only fear on the streets”, which investigated how women experienced Cologne, Germany, Wolf (1996, p. 206) notes that many respondents were concerned with violence in car-based urban settings. This particular insight is drawn from the uncritical incorporation of the results of a newspaper survey however, which is at odds with the scholarship applied by Wolf (1996) to the rest of her analysis. It seems simplistic to encapsulate the car’s impact in terms of alienation alone when, for example, it is women who are often faced with daily struggles in which the car can become an expression of concern and care for loved ones (Miller, 2001, pp. 28-29). Research into how the lives of these respondents were organised around the car would have made for a more granular picture of the role the car plays in their routine existence. This picture is actually required if the relationships between the mediation of government policy and the practices of automobility are to be problematized and a much richer picture of the social relationships related to the car than so far explored is to be painted. As Sachs (1984, p. 92) notes, “technology does not simply fall from the sky: the aspirations of a society or a class combine with technical possibility to inject a bit of culture into the design like a genetic code”. An altered perspective from what has so far been discussed is evident in his words; one that suggests a move away from more deterministic discourses of the car. Before exploring these perspectives however, the gendered aspects of the identity politics associated with the car merit further discussion.

Although obviously derogatory stereotypes of women drivers have faded somewhat from representations of the car, assumptions about the role of both women and men in society are still inscribed in the meanings of the automobile and they exist on the surface of advertising and popular culture’s discourses about the car. Scholarship that emphasises how the car reinforces gender inequality underlines this point, but lived meanings in relation to the car remain underexplored in these studies. Additionally, research that focuses on (often male) subcultures can fail to connect that experience to more general everyday experiences of the car, whose meanings can often be taken for granted.

The fears outlined in Wolf's (1996) account of a newspaper survey as described above constitute a loud echo of earlier work on the subject of gender and the car. Scharff's (1987, 1988, 1992) explorations of the early history of the intersection of the car and the role of women in the US highlights that while transit companies openly and legally discriminated against African-Americans in the early 20th century, gender distinctions instead played out at the ideological level. For Scharff (1987, 1988, 1992) as for Wolf (1996) preceding eras of transportation – canals and railways for Wolf and urban tramways of America in Scharff's case – provide context for the car's subsequent spread. Tram services in American cities were represented by media and rights groups as dirty and dangerous, particularly for women. According to Scharff (1992, p. 7), politicians in Chicago and Los Angeles found expediency in the idea they were protecting female virtue “imperiled by inadequate transport services” when what they really faced were funding issues in relation to public transport:

Beneath the welter of political conflicts, there lurked the idea that the very character of mass transit set it on a collision course with bourgeois ladyhood. The trolley was simply too public a vehicle for the female personification of privacy. How then might a woman preserve her temper, her reputation, her constitution, and her gown, and still manage to get around town?

While a partial answer to that question might be “by car”, it is interesting to note the variety of ways the car perpetuated women's exclusion from society. Indeed, the development of urban and sub-urban spaces around the car can be argued to be the spatial manifestation of such exclusion. Scharff (1988, p. 38) notes that by 1920 in America, the car, particularly as popularized by Ford's Model T (from 1908), was seen as a progressive solution to the problems of urbanisation. However this was in a context “identifying women with private domestic spaces and men with public, productive, places...American cityscapes had come more and more to resemble maps of the ideology of separate spheres for men and women” .

In a sense, gender roles were becoming “baked into” (Ormrod, 1994) or inscribed onto the physical environment by the development of infrastructure deemed necessary for the car's ostensibly inevitable progress. In this context the woman who dared drive in the America of the 1920s was a danger to society, despite the temporary suspension of this idea during WW1 when women had served as mechanics and drivers. The trope of the female driver became reproduced in the ideology of jokes and folklore about women's

alleged inability to drive, some of which remains with us today. According to Scharff (1987), women drivers were presented as the subject of ridicule because it could help defuse the inherent threat a woman's independence represented to the dominant male order. Scharff's account highlights the early realisation that (gendered) meanings attaching to the car were important and went way beyond its constitution as a tool for transportation. Writing about the 1920s, Scharff (1987, pp. 218-219) notes:

writers..... remained inclined to dichotomize men's and women's reasons for buying what they did. [*Motor* columnist John C] Long contrasted simple masculine practicality with complicated female subjectivity. "To father," Long wrote, "the automobile means transportation. It will take him around on his business trips and it will get him out in the air in the evenings. Similarly, he regards his house as a place for keeping the heat in and the rain out". If men dispassionately regarded cars and houses as tools, women, Long believed, expected both the auto and the home to serve as vehicles for domestic cultural missions: "Mother sees the car, like the home, as a means for holding the family together, for raising the standard of living, for providing recreation and social advantages for the children".

Much later, Barthes (1963) delineates a central, gendered binary where the car can be categorised as either "sporty" or "homely" ("sportif"/ "domestique"; cited in Inglis, 2005, p. 211). The way in which the automobile exemplifies the liberty to cut loose on the open road or to break away from the "pack" (Barthes 1963 cited in Inglis, 2005, p. 211) is a meaning attached to the car that goes beyond "simple masculine practicality" (Scharff, 1987, p. 219) however, and can be viewed as expressing the autonomy attributed to the masculine subject. The threat of women partaking in and exploiting such masculine liberties is problematized in movies such as *Thelma and Louise* (1991). The film tells the story of an ultimately failed attempt by two women to appropriate this liberal and masculine trait.

It could be argued that clear-cut gender distinctions have become increasingly irrelevant and outdated in contemporary automobility, as evidenced in the myriad of car models that appeal to an ever-more finely delineated spectrum of market sectors and life-styles that cross gender boundaries. However, that mixture is still built upon taken-for-granted notions about what masculine and feminine characteristics in a car and its drivers mean, one that Barthes as well as *Thelma and Louise* might find very familiar. A recent advert for "its4women.ie" (2014) insurance, for example, relies on sedimented knowledge of the presumed inferiority of women drivers. In the ad, a selection of

female “talking heads”, including Irish Olympian Katie Taylor, assert the obsolescence of such clichéd assumptions. “We’ve all heard the jokes about parallel parking... but we’re saying, cheerio to cliché, so long to stereotype” the women explain, before adding: “We know we drive more safely than guys, sometimes in some pretty challenging footwear. We’re not afraid to ask for directions and so what if I want to give my car a name?” (its4women.ie, 2014). The inference, borne of knowing glances and smug looks, is that this ad represents a crusading challenge against such sensibilities. However, the irony is that in ostensibly exploding one set of clichés about women and cars the ad simply asserts a different programme of (bio-essentialised) assumptions about gender and femininity, based more on consumption habits than perceived and erroneous driving deficiencies, grounding the common-sense of the issue (Fowler, 1991, p. 41). In the world of the ad, women have overcome their earlier subjugation “almost precisely to the extent that...[they]...have been able to participate in and facilitate the wider project of neoliberalisation” (Gilbert, 2013, p. 17) by becoming more efficient consuming subjects. In such an environment, the message is that insurance products tailored for female drivers (whatever that can actually mean in practice¹) are the synecdoche of liberation against the tyranny of men.

Masculine associations with the car are just as problematic however. Redshaw (2008) notes how displays of masculinity are encouraged, not least by car manufacturers, despite the danger associated with the automobile. Young males make up a disproportionate number of accident victims (RSA, 2007, p. 9), for example. In advertising, masculine, individual, and competitive themes are drawn-on and connections can be made between these constructions, their interpretation, and extant road behaviour (Redshaw, 2008). Redshaw (2008, pp. 19-20) notes that “masculine desires” have actually dominated the car’s ubiquitous presence, and while the male perspective is important, so too are the voices of women, the elderly and the young, in the context of the exploration of driving practices. The voices of these actors though tend to be absent from histories of the car progress. Indeed, studies that have looked at the car’s meanings for contemporary youth cultures (Carrabine and Longhurst, 2002),

¹ Gender can no longer be used to rate risk, so women drivers do not routinely get cheaper premiums compared to the days before risk equalisation (RTE, 2012).

Its4women.com (2015) does offer “handbag cover” for women in Northern Ireland however, for example.

its misuse including car accidents and joy riding (Campbell, 1993; Walker, 1998, Walker, Butland and Connell, 2000), or the particular sub-cultural significances of motorbikes (McRobbie and Garber 1976; Willis 1978; Hebdige 1979) tend to focus on male subcultures and moreover examine the exceptional nature of meanings about cars or motorbikes to particular social groupings. This in effect cauterises the connectedness of that experience to society in general. An agreed-upon set of shared societal meanings for automobility is assumed or envisioned, from which the subcultural practices explored in the study diverge, but such everyday meanings have not been directly generated in these studies from the exploration of quotidian practices such as commuting, for example. As Miller (2001, p. 9) puts it, in such work “there is the obvious problem in extrapolating...to the more general and mundane contemporary relationships with cars which remains woefully unexplored”.

The above exploration of a dominant genre of scholarship and literature about the car shows that while the story of the metamorphic car is infused with questions of class, race and gender that play-out still, such arguments suffer from a form of reductionism. Though highlighting much of value, it has been shown that these studies can imbue institutions or the car itself with a deterministic agency that obscures the perspective of those whose lives were transformed by it or obscure the everyday lived experience of life with the car. Miller (2001, pp. 8-9) underlines these deficiencies, arguing that, with some exceptions (e.g. Sachs, 1984; Brilliant, 1989), the dominant genre neglects an empathetic account of car culture; one that would focus on the feelings, thoughts, and attitudes that circulate daily in relation to car consumption, as opposed to merely emphasising the car’s consequences.

Indeed, Miller (2001, pp. 2-3) is keen to emphasise the car’s “humanity”, though he agrees this “is not something that is easily accepted”. The car’s humanity lies in the degree to which the car is taken for granted “so that we think our world through a sense of the self in which driving, roads, and traffic are simply integral to who we are and what we presume to do each day” (Miller, 2001, p. 3). The dominant genre neglects such human components; how the car evokes the agency that mobilises it, “and the networks of relationships that...driving permit[s]” (Miller, 2001, p. 3). Therefore, if the relationships between how policy and strategies are framed in the media and how the practices of automobility are constituted are to be explored, it cannot be assumed that the car and social institutions are totalising deterministic forces or that the quotidian

experience of living with the car simply doesn't matter. The car's "humanity" and the networks of relationships that Miller (2001) evokes need to be explored and the negative features of the car need to be reconciled with the private benefits it confers. In the next section, a further range of research is discussed that attempts to account for a much wider conceptualisation of the car's consequences. Yet important gaps will remain that need to be bridged in order to properly explore the relationship between the framing of government policy and the constitution of the practices of automobility.

Externalities

The study of the car's external costs or "externalities" starts from the position that the benefits of car use such as status, mobility, and pleasure, accrue to individuals while the full costs of the car are borne by society at large and often in variable ways by different groups in society (Conley and McLaren 2009, p. 4). Although drivers pay for ownership, fuel, insurance, and maintenance, the car generates costs in terms of "economic, social, health, environmental, and institutional externalities", which are not always visible (Porter, 1999; Miller, 2001; Conley and McLaren 2009, p. 4).

Externalities work can highlight the external costs of road traffic accidents and the large investment in infrastructure that is required to maintain the system of automobility, for example (Freund and Martin, 1993). Miller (2001, p. 140) notes a critical strand in the genre that sees the denial of externalities "as the legacy of a powerful car lobby that has sought to prevent the car being burdened with its own consequences". In that strand, Davison (2004) for example, outlines the particular political machinations that produce the car as an essential component of the urban landscape. He highlights the role of motorists' lobbies and the relative power of private transport government departments over public transport ones in the contingent proliferation of the car and in the proliferation of associated costs. Conley and McLaren (2009 pp. 3-4) highlight how public institutions are oriented towards the needs of automobility, and even while these are funded by taxpayers, the costs are often hidden.

Externalities work has become prevalent over the last 20 years or so (Miller, 2001), but much earlier research such as Kain's (1968, pp. 175-176) investigated unacknowledged external costs associated with the car. In this case, the link was made between segregation in the housing markets of Detroit and Chicago and the distribution and level of African-American employment in these cities. For the first time, statistical

connections between these two factors were found. Kain (1968, p. 179) found that the distance and difficulty in reaching certain jobs from ghetto areas imposed costs high enough to discourage African-Americans from looking for employment in these relatively distant neighbourhoods. In effect, residents in these low income areas were forced to choose between buying a car and spending a disproportionate amount of their income on transportation, embarking upon a circuitous commute via public transport if available, or ignoring the opportunity: "More often than not, they will not even seek out the job in the first instance because of the difficulties in reaching it from possible residence locations" (1968, p. 181). Despite processes of African-American suburbanisation, these divisions persist in US society. Kain (1968, pp. 180-1) showed that the costs for transportation between ghetto neighbourhoods inhabited by African-Americans and many workplaces were seriously underestimated "because of the indirectness or complete absence of public transit services from ghetto residential areas to outlying or suburban districts". In Kain's (1968) analysis, the benefits of car ownership accrue only to those who can afford cars, yet those who can't are still subject to its external costs.

As far back as Keats (1958), critics had been arguing for a more systemic conception of road safety, exemplified in Ralph Nader's (1972) celebrated case that outlined manufacturers' responsibilities for designing safety features into cars. From the 1960s in the US, according to Wetmore's (2009) analysis of the development of the airbag, the road safety debate encompassed two ideological camps: those who considered it was incumbent on road users to change their behaviour in order to improve safety, and those who believed that technical solutions should be found to mitigate the effects of accidents. Wetmore's (2009) research shows how the consideration of technical and social factors together brought about the pervasive implementation of this revolutionary safety device. He highlights the benefits to all when a much greater distribution of responsibilities is achieved across all sectors of society in such a debate (the state, industry, and road users for example).

Yet research which attempts to mitigate some of the car's externalities, such as the consequences of road traffic accidents (Irwin 1985; Lundin 2008 for example), still defines road safety as a matter of individual behaviour, albeit with public interventions (see McAndrews, 2013, p. 756). According to Redshaw (2008, p. 11), for example, social psychological research can highlight how feelings of control and invulnerability

contribute to road accidents (Parker, et al., 1995) and how personal characteristics can be associated with risky behaviour (Parker, Manstead and Stradling, 1995). Indeed, there is a large body of psychological research about the car that Redshaw (2008, pp. 4-5) notes focuses on individual psychology, rather than “the social and cultural factors through which individuals develop and cars are articulated or inscribed with meaning and made part of daily practice”. This also extends to SUV research attributing “higher aggressivity” to drivers of SUVs (Wenzel and Ross, 2005). Redshaw (2008, p. 7) argues that psychological studies of road safety (for example Freund and Martin, 1993; Dahlen, et al., 2005) tend not to confront mobility as a system, where normative behaviours would connect back to “manufacturers and motoring organisations, governments and cultural values”. Miller (2001, p. 10) suggests psychological literature also contains crude assumptions about the nature of speed and its relationship to the brain’s ability to process data, which leads to rushed conclusions about the actual nature of contemporary mobility. Transport studies has also investigated meaning-making in relation to the car (Steg, 2004; Anable and Gatersleben, 2005) but as Miller (2001, p. 13) argues, these studies are concerned with “the consequences of the car for the provision of infrastructure”, rather than the general culture of the car. Such scholarship, for example, does not place much weight on themes of cultural studies of car advertising such as “power, control, individuality and freedom” (Redhaw, 2008, p. 11). Limited to the intentions of individuals, these studies are less concerned with how norms of driving culture (implicit approval of speeding for example) are developed and contribute to these behaviours.

What seems common from these types of analysis is the neutrality of the car; that is, the way in which it shapes social action is overlooked (Dant, 2005). However, Featherstone (2005, p. 4) presages more recent writing in the area of road safety by highlighting the World Health Organisation’s 2004 bid to reclassify road traffic accidents as a public health issue, thereby “shifting away responsibility from the individual to the system”. McAndrews’ (2013) describes how thinking about road safety is evolving to collapse structural and individual considerations into a more systemic way of conceptualising the car and its impact on society. McAndrews’ (2013, p. 749) account of the Vision Zero strategy in Sweden, which seeks to entirely eliminate injuries from road accidents, outlines how that programme requires road safety experts “to have causal responsibility for injuries”. Road safety experts in this analysis comprise experts in behaviour and enforcement, vehicle safety, infrastructure design

and transportation, as well as transportation experts from research institutes, industry, and policy sources (McAndrews, 2013 pp. 753-754). In this approach, ownership of the public issue of road safety remains firmly planted in the transportation sector, however (McAndrews, 2013, p. 769).

Other research in the externalities space highlights costs associated with the SUV (Sports Utility Vehicle) in relation to their comparative inefficiency, increased risk of rollover, and the detrimental impact of their size in collisions with other road users and pedestrians (Bradsher, 2002; IIHS, 2005; Redshaw, 2008; Conley and McLaren, 2009). McLean (2009) wonders how the motor industry might respond to increased concerns about SUVs' contribution to the costs of climate change (Conley and McLaren, 2009). She notes that people who dislike SUVs can buy smaller four-wheel drive vehicles – crossovers – instead, “believing that they are doing less harm to the environment, which is precisely how advertisers portray them” (Gunster, 2004; McLean 2009, p. 70). Indeed, crossovers have proliferated recently, supplanting the traditional SUV for those buyers attracted to their perceived benefits (commanding driving position, protection, comfort, flexible space, image) but repelled by the SUVs traditional drawbacks (fuel, economy, safety, pollution, awkward handling). However, by using the same parameters of how this harm is measured (Co₂ and fuel efficiency [McLean, 2009, p. 72]), crossovers have evolved to almost entirely close the gap in terms of environmental and safety concerns between SUVs and other types of cars, while retaining the perceived benefits of the SUV². The shift to crossovers exemplifies how critique in relation to the automobile that focuses on the reconciliation of particular externalities, such as the environmental or safety consequences of SUV use, can be undermined by rapid adjustments in technology or markets that address the particular externality but leave the system of the car undisturbed.

² An examination of typical variants of the Ford Focus (a medium sized hatchback) and Nissan Qashqai (a crossover alternative) shows, for example, that both models have similar Co₂ emissions (Ford Focus 1.6tdci Edge 5d 109g/km; Nissan Qashqai 1.5dci Visia 99g/km) and combined fuel economy (Ford 3.5/100km, Nissan 3.2l/100km) and that both are “5 star” cars for safety, for example (honestjohn.co.uk, 2015a, b; EURONCAP, 2015 a, b).

Overall, externalities research does not address the issue of the car's systemic embeddedness in everyday life, where automobile use, for example, expresses love and care for significant others as much as it does a rational solution to transport problems and needs (Maxwell, 2001). In providing a potential solution to the perceived profligacy of the SUV, crossovers can simply reinforce the system of the automobile itself and arguably make it stronger. Conley and McLaren (2009, p. 13) underline this point by noting that individual acts of stopping car use or switching to other forms of transport, for example, also have the effect of enabling other car users to reach their destinations "so the cumulative impact may be less than hoped-for unless there are changes in urban design that give priority to non-car modes of transportation" (also Newman and Kenworthy, 1999). But this is not just a question of ethical car choice or remembering to include urban design in the mix of externalities to be accounted for. The idea of the individual "accepting the responsibility or the moral implications of the consequences" of car use (McLean, 2009, p. 71) through consumer choice alone unravels when these moral implications extend to the social consequences of non-use in a car-centred world. Without a systemic awareness of the everyday meanings of car use, a message of individual responsibility is easily assimilated into product-based and market-led solutions to cars' consequences that never question their source nor connect them to wider questions about what the car entails.

For Miller (2001, p. 15) the concept of externalities goes a long way towards developing critical understanding of car culture and its future, because it moves away from reasoning that emphasises the car as simply a force, such as in the reductionist arguments typical of the dominant genre. Instead it drives more nuanced consideration of the car's implications and costs for society as a whole. Externalities rejects the assumption that the car and the systems around it are immutable, opening them up to strategic interventions by a range of other determining actors. While Bohm, et al. (2006) condense externalities into the antagonisms of the car – carnage, congestion, oil dependence, and environmental catastrophe – this does not sufficiently encompass how the car is both a product of particular cultural contexts as well as a force that shapes, rather than determines, social action. Consider, for example, the ways in which the car can be perceived positively in a world that is already organised around its exigencies. For Miller (2001, p. 17) the presumption that we know what the car is, implicit in assessments of the car that have so far been explored, must be set aside if the car is to be understood as the product of particular cultural contexts. Despite research into

externalities being critical to future considerations of the car (Miller, 2001, p. 15), the biggest issue of this field is that it “conspicuously fails”...“to find a new way of connecting the larger aggregate effects of the car and the involvement of wider forces such as the state and the market with the more personalised and intimate relationship between cars and their users” (Miller, 2001, p. 22). Exploring these relationships is about the systemic nature of the car and driving, and tracing the macro and micro interconnections that make visible more of what the car entails. This tracing is also essential if the assumption that the media are central to “the dynamics of contemporary life” is to be problematized (Couldry, 2004, p. 5) and the relationship between automobility’s practices and how its policies and strategies are framed in the media is to be explored. The investigation of a much more synthetic conception of who and what can be considered as actors in the constitution of automobility is warranted then, if the questions this project raises are to be properly investigated.

Entailments

Studies of externalities assume the car is a known quantity “and that the problem is only to acknowledge all those consequences that have become disconnected from the car as their point of origin” (Miller, 2001, p. 17). Studies of the car’s entailments, by way of contrast attempt to create some of the necessary linkages between the car’s externalities and the more personal relationships associated with the automobile (Miller, 2001, p. 22). Entailments work can start from both particular and personal aspects of car use – such as its sound systems (Bull, 2001) – or from a much larger aggregate effect, such as gender (Garvey, 2001). What these studies have in common is that they work “back towards some new sense of what the car seems to be when viewed from that perspective” (Miller, 2001, p. 17). On the subject of the car’s direct associations with race, for example, Gilroy (2001, p. 82) asserts that the history of slavery and repression has made the freedom the car provides “uniquely intense” for African-Americans. The tacit acknowledgement of this past may reinforce the “sometimes ostentatious and even excessive” patterns that are characteristic of African-American automobile consumption (Gilroy 2001, p. 83). Gilroy (2001, p. 87) explores these patterns, highlighting in the case of what he calls “transgressive” car use how desegregation coupled with the car to create the possibility for young African-Americans to date white people in other, previously inaccessible, parts of their communities. He illustrates “excessive”

manifestations of car use, for example, by quoting from a magazine interview with an African-American pop-star on the subject of car-audio equipment:

“Let’s just say I spent a nice piece”, says Usher of his CR210 car stereo with removable face plate and six bass box speakers all by Becker/Porsche, and his two 250 watt Rockford Fosgate Punch amps...Usher...says he’s hitting about a block and a half on the Ghetto-meter. (The Source 1988 cited in Gilroy, 2001, p. 97)

Gilroy (2001, p. 84) says that African-Americans’ “distinctive history of propertylessness and material deprivation has inclined them towards a disproportionate investment in particular forms of property that are publicly visible and the status that corresponds to them”. From this angle, freedom becomes merely “the opportunity to shop on the same terms as other more privileged citizens”, so that the effects of subordination can be reversed or mitigated through consumption of objects such as cars (Gilroy, 2001, p. 86). On the one hand, “status purchasing” of cars by African-Americans can be transgressive, according to Gilroy (2001, p. 84), because it suggests that “official scripts of respectable domesticity and deferred gratification” can be surpassed. He says: “here the ‘official’ value given to these prizes by a world of work and wages is supposedly altered or at least ironically commented upon in a counter-axiology which may become quite elaborate”. On the other hand, African-American car use is “defined most obviously by the mood of anxious individuals who want to answer the impact of racism on their lives by buying in rather than dropping out [and who accept] these objects as a means to seem wealthier, prouder and thus more respectable” (Gilroy, 2001, pp. 86-87). In either case, for Gilroy (2001, p. 87) these effects represent the “victory of car culture” and must be considered as “secondary to our grasp of the destructive and corrosive consequences of automotivity and motorization”.

As Miller (2001, p. 22) argues, what Gilroy illustrates is the repression hidden behind what can seem like an expressive relationship, exposing understandings “that fail to comprehend the implications of consumption for core alignments and misalignments as here between race and class”. By exploring how the car can be understood as the product of this particular cultural context, Gilroy (2001) creates a much more nuanced and far-reaching argument about the question of what the car means or how it acts and generates social action, even though its status as a destructive force is never in doubt. These explorations go much deeper than the concerns of externalities work, for

example, by focusing on what else the car has entailed aside from questions about safety, congestion, and environmental harm – no matter how crucial these may be. Studies of entailments also go much further than the dominant genre of research into the car, because, despite its special force, the car is not a totally determining actor. Far more than a mere product, an inert commodity, or a neutral piece of technology, the automobile is an “index of hegemony”, becoming “a social and political actor that shapes the industrial and de-industrialising worlds through which it moves even as it damages both them and us” (Gilroy, 2001, p. 86).

Jain (2004, p. 61) highlights the inequity of a world where pedestrians cannot hold car-manufacturers responsible for design deficiencies that can cause them serious injury or even death. Jain (2004) makes contingent taken-for-granted legal and social assumption that manufacturers are not generally liable for vehicle design deficiencies. She argues that subject positions such as the “bad mother”, “the clumsy child”, or “negligent driver” that feature in the legal framework of automobility in the US:

undergird the criminalization and hyperregulation enabling the cultural and economic hegemony of the car in their serving as explanatory models for death and injury. The illocutionary adjectives of bad mother or clumsy child make the process of subject formation as invisible as the injurious results of unregulated automobile design. (Jain, 2004, p. 82)

Her research highlights that one who buys a Volvo or SUV for the safety of their own children, “may just as soon kill the child in the driveway” (Jain 2004, p. 85). Unlike externalities work, this particular type of “making strange” in relation to the car sheds light upon sources of some of the taken-for-granted personal and shared values and relationships that are held about automobility (Miller, 2001, p. 17), while at the same time situating the car in its wider politico-economic context.

The question of how these relationships are directly experienced from the everyday point of view of those who experience them remains open in these cases however. Gilroy (2001) illustrates his points with reference to song lyrics, for example. However, Wiese’s (2004) history of 20th century suburbanization actually provides some ethnographic perspectives on the effects of this (suburbanization) process and is written from the point of view of African-Americans who were affected. According to Wiese (2004, pp. 40-41/43) the car not only cut a swathe through African-American neighbourhoods, creating socially dispersed yet spatially segregated spaces in the

process, it also worked to continually enforce and renew the segregation that had already been a feature of discriminatory trends in public policy, public space, land use planning, banking, and real estate. Wiese (2004, p. 7) alludes to the contingency of social identity which “gives life to persistent racial and class identities through time” and traces the coextensive emergence of the African-American middle class and black suburbanization. His analysis is enriched by the inclusion of in-depth interviews with African-Americans who had been affected or displaced by suburbanization, which lends this crucial sense of how transformative change affects the lives of actual individuals touched by it – or “humanity”, as Miller (2001) would describe it. However, Wiese’s (2004) analysis is primarily concerned with housing and does not really provide a perspective on how the car itself was implicated in this process.

Many of the studies that fall into the category of “entailments” actually include accounts of lived experience (e.g. Bull, 2001; Garvey, 2001; Maxwell, 2001; O’Dell, 2001; Stotz, 2001; Verrips and Meyer, 2001, and Young, 2001)³. Yet nearly all focus on exceptional or sub-cultural experiences (O’Dell, 2001; Garvey, 2001), the lived experiences of minorities contextualised in opposition to dominant social groupings (Stotz, 2001; Young, 2001), or contexts that are vastly different to the concerns of this project (Verrips and Meyer, 2001). However, Maxwell’s (2001, p. 203) study of the experiences of Cambridge commuters is exemplary for including everyday lived perspectives, demonstrating how “deep public concerns for both social and environmental consequences of increasing levels of car use” coexist with positive meanings “embedded in social relations which are only articulated in extremely fragmented form”. Presenting an analysis of in-depth focus group discussion, Maxwell (2001) pivots the study of Cambridge commuters around the anxiety and guilt many of them feel towards their car usage, which manifests in strategies where commuters struggle to make sense of car use in light of their emotions. The themes of commuter

³ Two essays in *Car Cultures* more fully acknowledge the significance of technology to the constitution of social life and Miller (2001) categorises them as studies of the car’s entailments. However, both of these are concerned with a specific sub-set of practices associated with the everyday – audio-system usage (Bull, 2001) and road rage (Michael, 2001) – and do not investigate the connections between media framing of policy and the range of practices of the system. Nevertheless, Michael (2001) is discussed below in the context of ANT and hybridity.

strategies include a lack of choice in relation to car use, a lack of acknowledgement of their own agency in contributing to the consequences of car use, a delegation of responsibility to the government and others, as well as the mitigation of anxiety through the actual reduction of car use and dependence.

While “entailments” research provide new horizons for what the automobile means, only Maxwell (2001) explores a range of quotidian practices associated with the car, particularly ones that are shared and not just individual. These everyday practices are critical to the exploration of my problematic. However, it cannot simply be assumed that the UK perspectives of commuters are identical to the Irish experience, and in addition Maxwell (2001) also does not directly investigate how policy and strategies about automobility are framed in the media. But in order to properly interrogate the interconnections between this framing and the practices of the system, the socio-technical characteristics of the automobile first need to be explored in more detail, before the justification of my investigation of car-commuting practices in the Irish context is opened-out.

Towards methodological considerations

The existing research already explored has been argued to suffer from a number of issues. These variously include the lack of a socio-political or economic contextualisation of the car, a tendency towards technological determinism where a limited range of actors involved in the constitution of automobility are conceptualised, or the need to draw more effectively on the lived experience of driving. However, much better scaffolding for thinking about my research problem can be achieved by building on frameworks that fully emphasise the systemic nature of the car and driving and the socio-technical constitution of this system. Analysis of these frameworks begins in this section with the concept of “automobility” (Sheller and Urry, 2000; Urry, 2005), before exploring the car-driver assemblage (Dant, 2005), ANT (e.g. Callon, 1986; Law and Hassard, 1999), and linking these to the argument for thinking about automobility in terms of the *dispositif* of road safety in Ireland (Foucault, 1975). Each of these concepts augments the previous one and provides the scaffolding from within which the current research is designed. First, the concept of automobility highlights the full extent of the systemic nature of the car as a socio-technical system. Next, Dant’s (2005) car-driver assemblage is offered as a theoretically coherent way to interrogate

the car-driver or passenger as a socio-technical hybrid circulating within the system. The concept of the dispositif is then elaborated upon to provide a rationale for the investigation of the road safety aspects of the system that have been researched for this project. I argue in this section how these methodological considerations offer a framework to disrupt media-centric assumptions about the constitution of the networks of automobility in Ireland, because they point to the complex and diverse materiality of the system instead.

Automobility and the socio-technical constitution of the car

While some of the interconnections between cars, people, culture, and society have already been highlighted, it is Sheller and Urry (2000) and Urry (2005) who most fully address the potential breath of these relationships, considered in terms of “automobility”. This concept is arguably the most comprehensive attempt to consider the car in a fully systemic way. As a “viral” system that emanated from America at the end of the 19th century, automobility “locked-in” economies to the infrastructure, products, and services of the petroleum-steel motorcar, and societies to an individualised conception of mobility that “is neither socially necessary nor inevitable but has seemed impossible to break from” (Urry, 2005, p. 27). Urry’s (2005, p. 26) map of the broad dimensions under which automobility can be addressed encompasses apparently discrete issues of political and economic theory, social history, culture, and consumption but connects them together as part of the same socio-technical system. For Urry (2005, pp. 25-26), automobility is made up of six components that together constitute its “specific character of domination”. These comprise the automobile as the quintessential manufactured object of the 20th century, where sociological concepts such as Fordism and Post-Fordism derive; “the major item of individual consumption after housing” which telegraphs values such as “speed, security, safety, sexual desire, career success, freedom, family”, and masculinity; a powerful technical and social complex constituted through its linkages with industry; “the predominant form of ‘quasi-private’ mobility that subordinates other mobilities...and recognizes how people negotiate the opportunities for, and constrains upon, work, family life, childhood, leisure and pleasure”; “the dominant culture that sustains major discourses of what constitutes the good life”, and “the single most important cause of environmental resource use”. Because of its systemic nature, research into automobility requires interdisciplinarity

and is challenging. However, according to Conley and McLaren (2009, p. 17), “[w]orking across disciplines allows for greater insight into how automobility is entangled with material and social life globally and in specific cultural contexts”.

The socio-technical nature of automobility – that is how the technology “and its culture are embodied in... economic organisations and social institutions” (Constant, 1989, p. 229) – and the complex actor-networks of human-object assemblages it engenders, are some of its differentiating features compared to the other approaches that have already been explored. The evocation of the technical or socio-technical does not necessarily imply a focus on complex computerised systems, however. Instead, the term “socio-technical” draws attention to ways in which social functions are performed or shaped by technology conceived as meaning both simpler and more complex systems (Cooper, 2008, p. 13). Although a complex system, the car has been around for approximately 125 years, so how it shapes social action is not just expressed by the way it has integrated more recent telecommunication technologies. It is also described in how the car continually shapes social relations and has done for more than a century, in ways that are impossible without the peculiar coming together of technical and social elements and human and non-human entities. Urry (2005, p. 28) illustrates some of this capability here:

Automobility is a source of freedom, the “freedom of the road”. Its flexibility enables the car-driver to travel at any time in any direction along the complex road systems of western societies that link together most houses, workplaces and leisure sites (and are publicly paid for). Cars extend where people can go to and hence what they are literally able to do. Much “social life” could not be undertaken without the flexibilities of the car and its 24-hour availability. It is possible to leave late by car, to miss connections, to travel in a relatively time-less fashion.

The utility of the model of automobility can be seen in its application to and extension within various empirical studies. For example, Edensor (2005, p. 101) considers everyday mundane settings which generate a sense of nationhood. Emphasising the fluid patterning of automobility, while also underlining how it is always contextually based, Edensor explores how the matrix of nationhood intersects with that of automobility. Edensor (2005, pp. 108/112) combines analysis of diverse representations of iconic cars in Britain and detail of the specific nature of “national motorscapes” in Britain, India, and America, with an observational account of driving “performances” in India. The inclusion of “motorscapes” and “performances” highlights the contextual

specificity of national manifestations of automobility. Edensor (2005, p. 118) finds that certain models of cars have symbolic meaning in national contexts which coincide with lived everyday experience. While he argues that globalizing processes redistribute national identity, he finds little evidence that “post-national identities are emerging out of globalizing processes” (Edensor, 2005, p. 118). Instead, the matrix of nationhood expands to incorporate extraordinary (e.g. Rolls-Royce) and everyday objects (e.g. the Mini⁴) that reproduce the sense of national identity. Edensor (2005) brings together analysis of representations of cars in England with an account of driving in India, in a coherent examination that illuminates the global and contextual nature of automobility and emphasises nationhood as an actor within local constitutions of automobility. Such a juxtaposition might otherwise seem disjointed were it not for the structuring logic of the automobility framework.

Kosher (2005, p. 123) also interrogates conceptions of nationhood and the car to find an historical “exchange and synthesis across national borders... out of which both relatively stable and transient definitions and representations of the car’s national belongingness emerge”. He argues that the way in which cars are constituted as national possessions is conditioned by meanings that are transnational and permeate the car to include car parts (such as fins) which also constitute national identity: “Such part-whole relations reflected how transient auto-meaning could be, shifting abruptly from certain parts of cars to the whole, then to national or even international levels” (Kosher, 2005, pp. 132-133). Kosher’s (2005) analysis of car magazines’ discussions of the Anglo-German facets of the car not only traces ways in which their characteristics have been represented as nationally specific, it also problematizes the notion of the car as a stable object, because the car as a thing-in-itself appears as just one level of meaning-making around national identity in specific contexts of automobility, reemphasising its networked and complex nature.

⁴ The original Mini perhaps fits the description of the everyday car, but its “classless” characteristics have always been appropriated by celebrity and the wealthy. The reinterpreted, 21st century BMW Mini foregrounds the more aspirational characteristic, arguably at the expense of its everyday credentials.

Like Edensor (2005), Merriman (2005) positions mobility not as movement across space but as the performance of place. Merriman (2005, p. 146) critiques a view of place considered as “meaningful, lived, rooted, organic and symbolic sites with which individuals develop fairly long-standing attachments”. Writers such as Augé (1995), for example, conceive of motorways and airports as “non-places” lacking sociality because they are merely “spaces of circulation, communication and consumption” rather than occupation (Augé, 1996, p. 178). But for Merriman (2005, p. 146), places are actually ordered together “through the folding ... of different materials, atmospheres, spaces and times”. This allows Merriman (2005) to consider the meaning of spaces as subject to change through time and context. For example, he traces the topology of the M1 motorway in England that emerges through its plans, maps, construction materials, and objections to the road, to find historically specific constructions of the motorway and its services as exciting and much-visited public areas, rather than the boring places they subsequently became. Merriman (2005, p. 151) criticises Augé for failing to recognise that while “sociality and solitariness are seen as functions of unmediated human interaction”, this overlooks the way in which human interaction is mediated in non-places by ever increasing “texts, screens and images”. Thus, rather than asocial non-places, “social networks are bound up with the production of...environments” such as motorway service areas. As Latour (1993) has done before, Merriman (2005) argues that Augé ignores the socio-technical nature of human relationships and how virtual relations can “construct a familiar sociality” (Frow, 1997, p. 77). While motorway services or airport terminals may indeed engender boredom and solitariness, this is not an essential characteristic, nor indeed is boredom limited to places such as these. Instead such characteristics are relational and/or historically specific, partial, and incomplete. As already highlighted, Merriman (2005, p. 158) shows how “drivers and vehicles perform in, and are constituted through, complex networks of sociality and materiality”. This draws attention to the ways in which the traceable characteristics of these entities will also always be contextually specific, as well as to the full extent of the actors and practices involved in the constitution of the system.

Studies of automobility show how ostensibly eclectic sites and methods of research can be weaved together and that it is actually necessary to do this in order to trace and make coherent the constitution of the complex networks of the car-system. The insights of these studies also inform us that automobility is constituted in a contingent socio-historical present where concepts such as nationhood, place, car, and driver are not

merely defined by borders, geography, or location, but by material manifestations of systemic arrangements of cars, humans, culture, environments, and technologies. These arrangements reflect social and cultural conventions and power relations that are in themselves complex networks of contingent entities, which vary for their conceptual stability, persistence, and globalised characteristics. All of these insights highlight how automobility in Ireland should be considered in similarly complex networks that are unique to the Irish context, but which at the same time are contingent and subject to change.

Hybrid entities, the car-driver assemblage and ANT

One feature that is implied in terms of the socio-technical constitution of the car in automobility is the notion of hybridity. For Urry (2005, p. 26) “the car-driver is a hybrid assemblage of specific human activities, machines, roads, buildings, signs and cultures of mobility”. But the ways in which this hybrid can be conceptualised varies, so it merits further discussion. I argue for the adaption of Dant’s (2005) concept of the car-driver assemblage, as opposed to conceptualising this human-machine entity as a hybrid or cyborg for example, and explore the incorporation of ANT into the conceptualisation of this assemblage and into the concept of automobility itself.

Dant (2005, p. 61) notes the absence of research into the car’s ability to shape “the form and content of social action” in the way automobilities particularly enables. His purpose is to explore the ways in which “the assemblage of the driver-car”, a social being that produces a range of social actions associated with the car, co-constitutes automobility (Dant, 2005, p. 61). These social actions include “driving, transporting, consuming, polluting, killing, communicating and so on” (Dant, 2005, pp. 61-62). Dant’s (2005, p. 62) aim “is to begin to develop a theoretical understanding of the way in which this assemblage [of car-driver] is formed”. He wants to find out how collaborations between people and machines together contribute to societal formation and also “give them particular characteristics and features” (Dant, 2005, pp. 62-63).

Dant (2005) is dissatisfied with the nature of the subject-object that emerges from some socio-technical theorisation, arguing against the car-driver considered as a cyborg or hybrid. As a cyborg, the car-driver becomes reified and fixed or permanent, whereas

the car “is a temporary assemblage within which the human remains complete in his or her self” (Dant, 2005, p. 62). He argues that neither the car nor the driver acting separately can bring about the type of actions that they can when combined. For Dant (2005, p. 62), it is that forms of social action associated with the car-driver have become “routine and habitual”, rather than fixed. As a temporary assemblage the car-driver is de-essentialised and the forms of social action that constitute this assemblage become visible for analysis.

Dant’s (2005) criticisms of ideas of hybridity and cyborgs in favour of the idea of the assemblage emphasises the particularity and contingency of the combination of driver and car that the implied permanence of these alternative entities does not address. For example, writers such as Thrift (2005) also explore the more theoretical nature of the socio-technical complex of automobility. Thrift (2005) emphasises the hybridisation of the car with other technical rather than human systems, although these can of course be viewed as socio-technical in themselves. In Thrift’s discussion of hybridity, facets of the car’s operation normally undertaken by humans become delegated to other technological networks such as active cruise control systems or autonomous braking, for example. These technical systems work within fixed software-written parameters (scripts), despite their ability “to sense (their) environment, make judgements and act accordingly” (Featherstone, 2005, p. 10). Although these systems can typically be switched in and out, to the extent that they are in operation they can be viewed as permanent combinations of similar object types, i.e. hybrids (Dant, 2005, p. 62 after Latour, 1996, p. 150). Dant’s car-driver assemblages on the other hand “can be endlessly re-formed and re-assembled” (Dant, 2005, p. 61).

According to Dant (2005), applying ANT to the routine of driving works is useful because it draws attention to the expanse and sociality of the connections and networks that make up the assemblage of driver-car. The concept of the actor-network recognises “that actors build networks combining technical and social elements of these networks and that the elements of these networks...are, at the same time, both constituted and shaped within those networks” (Stanforth, 2007, p. 38). Technologies, such as the car, are conditioned “by the interplay of a range of heterogeneous forces” within these networks (Stanforth, 2007, p. 38). In other words, technology does not follow “a predetermined course with a logic of its own” (Dusek, 2006, p. 4). It could be argued that the concept of automobility itself draws enough attention to the connections that

constitute it. However, ANT more explicitly accounts for how actors are transformed when they come together. Other concepts such as the “affordance” (Gibson, 1982; Dant, 2005) also attempt to grasp how objects and people relate to their material environment. Yet Dant (2005) criticises affordance as overemphasising human agency and ignoring the complexity of social processes and intentions that create new kinds of agency in drivers and cars together that ANT makes visible.

As already noted, ANT conceives of a world filled with fluid networks of temporary hybrid entities, such as the car-driver assemblage, the conception of which negates the need for their human and non-human components to be analysed separately. Callon (1986, p. 196) proposes the equal treatment of hybrids in an idea he calls “agnosticism”, privileging neither the technical nor the social, the human or the non-human. Indeed, ANT posits the abandonment of distinctions between the different worlds of the social, technical, or natural (Callon, 1986). ANT says that it is possible “to consider a path of an innovation in which all the actors co-evolve” (Latour, 1991, p. 117). It is not that there are no divisions (true/false, big small, agency/structure, human/non-human, power/knowledge and so on), rather they are all understood as effects or outcomes (Law and Hassard, 1999, p. 3). Instead of questioning whether an entity is “social” or “technical” then, ANT asks “is this association stronger or weaker than that one?” (Latour, 1988, p. 27). Essentialist distinctions and divisions between the technological and the social are abandoned and “thrown on the bonfire of the dualisms” (Law and Hassard, 1999, p. 3).

Citing Latour’s (1999) famous example of how neither the gun nor citizen act alone, killing only when they are combined, Dant (2005, p. 70) says that the citizen-gun acts

towards a quite different goal than either could have achieved independently. It is in this sense that the assemblage of the driver-car brings about a form of social being and set of social actions that is different from other forms of beings and action.

Going-on to point to the limits of ANT, however, Dant (2005) argues that while objects are lifeless they are made by people with intentions and these intentions are designed into objects. As a result, all non-human actors are suffused with the intentionality of humans. Despite how people’s actions are shaped and limited by institutions, this does not make humans and non-humans equivalent in terms of their agency (Dant, 2005, p.

71). Dant (2005, p. 69) also notes ANT's tendency towards "textual gloss", that is, the diminution of all social actions by the theorist to communicative ones, as well as "the general absence of any attempt to explore how the human and non-human actors interact". As a result, as in the case of Latour's (1996) study of the failed *Aramis* transport system, ANT "leaves much unsaid about the routine, everyday, lived, embodied relationships between human beings and material objects around them", relationships that – as has already been argued – are critical to the exploration of my problematic (Dant, 2005, p. 71).

The applicability of ANT can be seen in Michael's (2001, p. 80) essay, for example, that focuses on the particular problem of road rage and how emotions become structured by "the complex but mundane technology" that is the car. Michael (2001) traces how the car "as a material and semiotic object...contributes to emotional conventions in their ambiguity". For Michael (2001) this ambiguity reflects contradictory "scripts" that are encoded in the technology of the car. These include invocations to be good, careful, forgiving; or, fast, efficient, and aggressive (Michael, 2001, p. 80). Sometimes these roles are in unison and sometimes they conflict. In the case of cars, culturally embedded rules are convoluted, inconsistent, both semiotic and material, and "serve in the reproduction of complex, even antithetical" and "subversive modes of behaviour". But Michael (2001) does not include insights from drivers themselves, focusing instead on specific discourses about road rage, and one particular set of practices, rather than the range of practices associated with the quotidian world of automobility that I am interested in.

Dant (2005, p. 75) invokes Merleau-Ponty's (1962) *Phenomenology of Perception* to surmount the issues he perceives with ANT and give proper credence to "the embodied and intentional nature of human relationships with objects". Possibilities of action are produced by the driver-car assemblage that become ordinary tangible forms of social action. People become oriented to a social world that is partially constituted by the forms of action the car-driver assemblage makes possible:

Social institutions – legal systems, the conventions of driving, traffic management – develop to embed the co-ordinated habits of driver-cars within the social fabric. The use of cars is not simply functional, a matter of convenience, nor is reducible to individual, conscious decision. (Dant, 2005, p. 74)

Dant's (2005) contribution is to elaborate on automobility's insights, revealing an assemblage of the driver-car that acknowledges the intentions of people, the intentions baked into objects (Ormrod, 1994) and the embodied or material (rather than merely textual) nature of the relationships they together produce (see also Merriman 2005). This implies the inclusion of these experiences in the consideration of how the car shapes social action.

My project draws on insights into the range of both human and non-human actors, including the temporary assemblages of car-drivers, that constitute the networks of automobility. But while ANT urges us to follow and accumulate actors as they become important to the constitution of the network (Latour, 2005, p. 29) and draws attention to the salient question of which associations of actors are stronger or weaker in a network (Latour, 1988, p. 27), it does not provide guidance on which aspects of the associations to focus on in the first place. Dant (2005, pp. 61-62, as quoted above) elaborates some of the forms of actions the car-driver assemblage makes possible. But the range of potential actions and associations are immense and complex, so these insights need to be properly applied to the context of my research.

Automobility and the dispositif of road safety

Mapping the concept of the dispositif (Foucault, 1975) on to the issue of road safety in Ireland provides a rationale for an exploration of the system of automobility that can address the central question of my research. A dispositif or apparatus is a successful formation of power/knowledge relations (Thiele, 1986). The idea of power/knowledge relations conceives of power not as a commodity or possession of an institution or person (Townley, 1993, p. 520). Instead, power/knowledge emphasises how power is associated "with practices, techniques, and procedures...employed at all levels and through many dimensions" and is thus relational (Townley, 1993, p. 520). Rather than viewing the site of research (for example an institution) as a discrete entity, Foucault "cut reality in a different way" (Rabinow and Rose, 2003, p. xv). As has already been introduced, a dispositif or apparatus is a "heterogeneous ensemble of discursive and non-discursive elements" that

are linked together by their common response to an “urgent need” at a particular historical moment. They all address, or rather figure in, the attempted resolution of a particular problem (which may stem from political, economic, demographic, or other factors). Unified into general strategies, these relations of power-knowledge lend each other the common support necessary for their victory, which in turn is expressed in their formation and in the maintenance of an apparatus. (Thiele, 1986, p. 255)

The particular relations that comprise a dispositif “condition, shape, and constrain our everyday actuality” (Hamann, 2009, p. 43). The dispositif that is produced as a solution to problems in society is characteristic of the society that gives rise to it and exists among other possible solutions that could be proffered, but have failed (Thiele, 1986, p. 255). The car, for example, is a successful solution to the problems of transportation, a given answer to the question of how to extend the distance and speed that can be travelled by horse. But it is only one answer, others of which have manifested in the train, the bus, the plane, and the Ekranoplan (figure. 1). Most cars are also still fossil-fuelled, rather than electric. In turn, the form of sociality and the self, and the underlying apparatus the car generates or is generated around it, are distinctive to the histories and societies developing them. As Wolf (1996, p. 111) points out, the car did ideological work for both capitalism and communism (see also Rajan [2006] for example). This reemphasises the insight that while the car is a global phenomenon and can have generic features, how it manifests as practices and shapes subjectivities in particular contexts is shaped by the needs, norms, and culture of that society. These also shape the particular ways solutions to the problems the car solves manifest, for example in the Irish context.



Figure 1: An Ekranoplan.

As well as being the solution to a problem, the apparatus of the car also contains within it sets of solutions to other problems it has itself created (Foucault 2001). Virilio (1999) for instance notes that every technology is accompanied by an integral accident. The road traffic accident is arguably the most immediate and personal antagonism of car-use from the perspective of its users in that it contains within it the very real possibility of imminent death (Bohm, et al., 2006). The car crash is an answer to the question: “what is the consequence of the limitations of control strategies whose urgent need is to prevent road traffic accidents or mitigate their outcomes to within socially acceptable limits?” As such, the “solution” of the road traffic accident is a telos of a range of interventions, practices and experiences promulgated as failures of strategies of control. In the example of the road traffic accident, in order to explore my problematic, the task becomes the investigation of the dispositif of road safety that addresses this particular problem and sometimes outputs in the car-crash. The dispositif is often articulated in policy documents which are in turn mediated by the news media and popular cultural texts and in the everyday practices of drivers. The dispositif is what links together the range of actors and objects into a temporarily coherent system that addresses this urgent need within automobility – one that expresses a more or less coherent ideological framework. In the current research, the dispositif of road safety therefore represents a way-in to better investigate the sources of some of the taken-for-granted relationships

“that we have and hold around automobility” (Miller, 2001, p. 17). The mediated policy context of the Donegal accident and the introduction of a speed camera network in Ireland enable us to explore the dispositif of road safety in order to begin to problematize a media-centric view of the relationships between how policy is framed and the practices of the system of automobility and highlight the complexity of their material and social forms instead.

Lived experience and the everyday: denaturalising car-commuting in Ireland

It is important to emphasise though that the investigation of the problematic of the current research also requires exploring driving practice from the point of view of the users of automobility. That ANT studies have been argued to omit the direct investigation quotidian relationships between humans and objects (Dant, 2005, pp. 70-71), such as those between the car-driver and the system of automobility itself, underlines the importance of this aspect of the research. Indeed, Foucault was concerned “to develop an analytic that could make visible the vectors that shape our relation to ourselves” (Rabinow and Rose, 2003, p. 14) and considered the human subject “the site of a multiplicity of practices or labors” (Rabinow and Rose, 2003, p. 15). Exploration of these vectors and practices is less complete without the inclusion of lived experience in that equation. Both Miller (2001) and Redshaw (2008, p. 10) emphasise the need to consider the car and driver at the same time, “rather than simply viewing each separately and emphasising one at the expense of the other”. Thrift (2005), Dant (2005), and de Certeau (1984) all emphasise the consideration of “the embodied practices of driving and being a passenger, produced by the system of automobility” (Redshaw, 2008, p. 15). It is preferable, as Redshaw (2008, p. 15) notes, to focus on both the car and “the lived experiences of people engaged with cars, traffic and systems of automobility” if one wants to more directly consider these practices together.

Researchers who have included qualitative insights from the lived experience of automobility and attempt to relate the car to a wider everyday context include Maxwell (2001), Laurier (2005), and Laurier, et al. (2008). Laurier’s (2005, p. 265) empirical work which included “observations of and reports from drivers” was produced in the UK and does not emphasise the mediated nature of automobility, nor the role of

mediated articulations of road safety. Nevertheless, Laurier's valuable insights are explored in Chapter 4, as they are generated with specific reference to automobility's implications for work-life, which that chapter explores. As noted previously, in his interviews with Cambridge drivers Maxwell (2001, p. 215) found that anxiety around an increasing awareness of the social and environmental consequences of the car clash with positive associations about its use: "Car use can often be an expression of help, care or love" when journeys are taken with family members, he notes. Maxwell (2001) argues convincingly that such positive characteristics should be included by transportation policymakers – who instead concentrate on increasing choices by improving public transport alternatives – and by academic studies which (also) can assume a model of behaviour which is too individualistic. By exploring practices around car-commuting, what can be highlighted are the vectors of understanding that emerge within the dispositif of road safety and the ways such engagements go toward the constitution of actually existing social practices in automobility. With the inclusion of this lived experience, a clearer picture of the extent to which mediated policies of road safety figure in people's practices – or not – can be drawn, problematizing a media-centric assumption about the constitution of social life (Couldry, 2004).

However, Latour (1999, p. 23) argues that the durability of a network results "when actors feel no need to spend time opening and looking inside black-boxes, but just accept these as given". Accepted as "given" is exactly how commuting by car has come to be viewed. Commuting is often a sphere of back-grounded, unthought-of, or autonomic activities "which take up so many hours of our lives but are rarely the source of cultural anxiety or contestation" (Moran, 2005, p. 28). As Moran (2005, p. 16) notes, media stories about everyday life such as commuting, "involve the construction of normalcy without obvious signifiers of otherness". Moran (2005, p. 59) argues the ordinary representation of the commute in media and political discourse is "a ritual of democratic belonging...essentially apolitical, ignoring more problematic issues about transport, work, and public space". For Moran (2005, p. 27), the "apparent inertia of daily routine" also hides "historical and political contexts that are never acknowledged as such". To make commuting strange then, to explore its problematic contexts and issues, the factors that make it lose its familiarity and certainty or which provoke "a certain number of difficulties around it" need to be highlighted (Rabinow and Rose, 2003, p. 13). The road traffic accident allows us to prize open the "black-box" that the car-driver represents when conceived as a simplified node in the commuting network

(Latour, 1999). It helps us view the assemblage of car-driver, not as “a ‘point object’, but an association of heterogeneous elements themselves constituting a network” as part of automobility (Tatnall and Gilding, 2002, p. 959; Law, 1992). Commuting has its own imperatives which in actuality are also a loose “ensemble of practices, imaginings, logos, knowledges and artifacts” (Mackenzie, 2006, p. 95), of which the dispositif of road safety plays a part.

Maxwell (2001) explores how debates about the car emerge and clash with the concerns of commuters, and as noted, he does so without explicitly analysing the back-drop of media debate about the car in which the apparatus of the road safety is an important visible factor. But it cannot be simply taken for granted how road safety policy and its mediation shapes commuters into “a thinkable and manageable form” (Rabinow and Rose, 2003, p. 15). This needs to be investigated. Road safety policy and its mediation offers a route into analysing commuting as a social problem. Road traffic accidents can result from commuting journeys, so road safety is an arena in which commuting becomes uncertain, unfamiliar, and potentially fraught with difficulties (Foucault, 1984a, p. 23). The dispositif of road safety is an actor in how the social practices of commuting are experienced and understood. To explore commuting practices is to problematize the media’s centrality to these practices.

The dispositif of road safety is not the only route available to the investigation of automobility in Ireland however. Issues of congestion could also open up the realm of commuting, as would issues of environmental harm for example, in line with a consideration of automobility’s antagonisms (Bohm, et al., 2006). Arguably, neither of these areas are as obviously and graphically mediated and emotive in the everyday context. Congestion and environmental concerns have articulations in government policies such as those around electric cars and in the everyday experience of traffic jams that find their mediated articulation most obviously in drive-time radio reports of commuting congestion. But instances from these contexts would arguably not evince as much insight into how automobility shapes the form and content of social action (Dant, 2005) in the way the dispositif of road safety and the lived experience of commuting can together. Research could also be conducted about other types of car journeys such as those taken for enjoyment and pleasure, those taken by enthusiasts, and those taken by professional drivers (for example taxi drivers - Verrips and Meyer [2001]). However, in these cases the connection to the generic experience of the quotidian use of

the car would be lost or insights would be restricted to times that constitute exceptional experience. While some such insights become included in the experiences of driving practices explored here, the focus on everyday commuting experience more appropriately contextualises any exceptional insights as parts of a whole, rather than the nexus of research itself.

Methods

Having rationalised my focus on the dispositif of road safety and the lived experience of commuting, in this section I will describe the methods used in the study and how the research proceeded. As already introduced, in order to examine how strategies of road safety policy circulate in automobility constituting the dispositif of road safety in relation to both mediation and practice, a punctuating point is needed. This is required because of the impossibility of analysing all of the dispositif given the potentially infinite nature of its networks. The mediated policy context of the worst accident ever provides one such a point of rupture; a place to start that enables us to follow networks of actors and the relationships between them as a transient network of meaning-making objects that constitute the dispositif of road safety in Ireland. As argued, the Donegal accident is where the failure of government initiatives to manage road safety to within socially acceptable limits is thrown into sharp relief. Analysis of this context brings into view the actors – textual and non-textual – that mediate automobility. Included here are *The Irish Times*, bodies like the RSA, and policy documents such as the *Road Safety Strategy*. However, where indicated, actors are followed to online discussion fora as these become important sites where the dispositif of road safety is further mediated and contested. In addition, it is necessary to explore practices of car-commuting in order to understand how people engage with the mediation of the dispositif of road safety and how such engagements go toward the constitution of actually existing social practices in automobility. This necessity is underscored by Dant's (2005) notion of the car-driver assemblage which indicates that actors are transformed when they come together and that the assemblage can shape social actions in particular contexts that are lived. How the assemblage works in these ways cannot be understood without investigating these lived contexts.

Print media, policy and online texts

Within the point of rupture of the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident, it is further necessary to create artificial, yet properly justified barriers around the selection of texts in order to facilitate and focus the analysis. As already noted, my exploration of the Donegal accident begins with its representation in *The Irish Times*. This is because *The Irish Times* is still considered the newspaper of record both by writers and academics (Mulcahy, 1995; Conway, 2006; Fahy, Trench and Clancy, 2012; Mercille 2014, p. 291), despite its self-stated movement “from being a newspaper of record to a newspaper of reference” (O’Sullivan, 2014). Resolutely middle-class, white and urban (Conway, 2006; De Brún, et al., 2012), *The Irish Times* presents an authoritative stance and represents a readership not identifiable as part of a political party, but rather as secular and liberal (Conway, 2006). *The Irish Times* can be argued to be central and influential to the constitution of the dispositif of road safety and its coverage of the Donegal accident is likely to reflect and refract key dimensions of the apparatus. Following a review of its coverage of the Donegal accident, analysis of *Irish Times* articles focused on the day in which most of its coverage appeared in the paper (13th July 2010). The articles included in the analysis are listed below and were chosen because of their prominence (in the case of the front page article, for example) and because they encompass the range of actors and entities that appear in *Irish Times* coverage of the crash.

One of the most important of these actors is the RSA, as already introduced. Even a cursory examination of *The Irish Times* reportage about the Donegal accident indicates the RSA should be followed as the key quasi-autonomous administrative body involved in the constitution of the dispositif of road safety in Ireland. The RSA is an official statutory body and was established in 2006 to be Ireland’s primary road safety organisation (RSA, 2015a). According to MacCartaigh and Turpin (2011), the set-up of the RSA was finally precipitated by a number of events. These included a government report about the shortcomings within the existing driver testing system, the success of the Driving Standards Authority in Britain, and the government’s 2003 decentralisation plans. However MacCartaigh and Turpin (2001) also detail the 2005 Kentstown bus crash in which five school children were killed, and another crash in county Offaly, as leading “to considerable political pressure for greater regulation of drivers and road vehicles” and providing impetus for the establishment of the authority. The authors

state that “road safety came to particular prominence in 2005 with public and media attention focusing on the high level of road deaths in Ireland... This public attention has had a direct causal influence of the creation of the RSA” (MacCartaigh and Turpin, 2011). As already argued, the establishment of the RSA can be viewed as an attempt to reorganise public opinion and produce popular truth about road safety (Packer, 2008, p. 31) and make the RSA indispensable to other interested agents, actors, and stakeholders for the provision of solutions to the problems road safety presents (Callon, 1986). The RSA seeks to secure other actors in particular positions with respect to the formation of power/knowledge relations in the dispositif of road safety. It does this by interposing the *Road Safety Strategy* into these relations to (re)define the nature of linkages between actors and the roles of different actors in the network (Callon, 1986). In simple terms, the *Road Safety Strategy* is a key document through which the policy aspirations of the RSA are articulated. The RSA’s status rationalises the exploration of the strategy document in order to explore the proposed nature of the linkages and power relations between actors in the network and this is why it has been chosen for analysis.

Every year the RSA produces an annual report. The punctuating moment of the Donegal accident leads us to the *Annual Report 2010*, where the RSA outline a response to the worst accident in Irish history, rationalising the exploration of that report as part of the analysis. Both the *Road Safety Strategy* document and this report draw attention to the launch of a network of speed cameras and highlight the importance that is placed on this initiative and its mediation for the RSA’s goals of improving road safety. As already noted, the *Road Safety Strategy* states that the camera initiative required a major public awareness campaign to make road users aware of cameras’ role in enhancing road safety (RSA, 2007, p. 28). The risk in implementing the cameras was that public support would be lost if they were not “experienced as reasonable and proportionate to the lives saved and the injuries avoided” (RSA, 2007, p. 28). In my analysis, actors including Gay Byrne (the then Chairperson of the RSA), Noel Brett (then CEO of the RSA), and Noel Dempsey (then Minister for Transport) are followed from these policy documents back to *Irish Times* coverage of the camera network’s launch. The particular articles analysed are also listed below and were chosen after a review of *Irish Times* coverage of issues associated with the launch. The significance of the articles chosen also relates to their prominence and to how they encompass the range of actors and entities implicated in mediating public support for the cameras. In the language of ANT, the RSA and its policy strategies try to borrow the force of other agents such as

The Irish Times to turn these “into their representatives or spokespeople” – a process called mobilization (Callon, 1986; Stanforth, 2007, p. 41).

Mapping coverage of the cameras network’s launch in *The Irish Times* indicates other actors for whom the cameras do not appear as legitimate at all, however. If, as *The Irish Times* indicates (Lally and McAleer, 2011), resistance to the launch of the camera network appears on online discussion forums, then *boards.ie* is likely to reflect how forms of resistance to the cameras manifest online. This is because *boards.ie* is Ireland’s largest online community (*boards.ie*, 2015) and it is an important site for the mediation of policy, including policy related to automobility on its *Motors* forum. With over 1.9 million posts across more than 110,000 threads, the *Motors* forum is popular with a very wide audience within the context of *boards.ie*, which in total has 630,000 members and generates 17,000 posts per day (*boards.ie*, 2015). Although some contributors to this forum are car enthusiasts, posting pictures of unusual cars they have spotted that day for example, many other posters are looking for advice on buying their next car, advice on how to import a car from the UK, or want to discuss policy initiatives from the RSA. After a review of threads on *boards.ie* about the launch of the network of speed cameras and camera-burnings in particular, one thread (“Another speed camera van burned!!” [*boards.ie*, 2011a]) stands-out. This thread expresses the nature and range of actors’ resistances that can appear in a more fragmented form in other threads that vary in terms of their relationship to the topic of road safety and policy around this issue, and it speaks to *The Irish Times* assertion (Lally and McAleer, 2011) that resistance to the cameras appears online. However, the review of forum threads also identifies another thread in which a key actor, Gay Byrne, is highlighted as articulating resistance to how road safety may be undermined by cuts in resources for traffic enforcement. This thread (*boards.ie*, 2011b) refers to the *Irish Independent* article in which Byrne’s comments appear. The analysis follows this actor as he illustrates how the dispositif of road safety can be constituted by contestation (McKee, 2009, p. 474) that can emanate from official sources as well as internet forum posts.

Policy and print media coverage as well as internet forum discussion of the events under analysis are considered as part of the same textual mesh which constitutes the dispositif of road safety in Ireland. Weir, O’Malley, and Shearing (1997, p. 511) write of the tendency in Foucauldian work to restrict research to “serious statements”, rather than to include “everyday discourses that are casual and transient”. Both the policy documents

and newspaper articles I analyse can be deemed “serious statements” in this context. Weir, O’Malley, and Shearing (1997, p. 512) also argue that “[t]he serious statements of governance are never able to insulate themselves from reconstitution by agency...that may take the form of simple social variation or...social antagonism”. The authors assert that “a broader range of social institutions and actors needs to be accepted as sources” (Weir, O’Malley, and Shearing 1997, p. 512). Indeed, Foucault saw the boundary between serious and casual statements as unclear. This provides the justification for including and following internet forum actors on *boards.ie* in the same way as policy and print media actors in order to illustrate user-generated content’s relationship to the ways in which RSA policy is represented in print media – and show the extent to which this may be exposed to “reconstitution by agency”.

Actors that constitute the networks of the dispositif of road safety could continue to be followed *ad infinitum*. However, Gay Byrne’s intervention forms a barrier around my selection of texts because the constitutive entities and concerns of the dispositif of road safety connected to the Donegal accident and the launch of the network of speed cameras are well represented at this point.

The principle texts and documents analysed are the following:

Policy documents:

Road Safety Strategy 2007-2012 (RSA, 2007)

Annual Report 2010 (RSA, 2011)

Newspaper articles:

The Irish Times, 13th July, 2010: Front Page

“Community in Inishowen Mourns loss of eight men” (Duncan and Jackson, 2010).

The Irish Times, 13th July, 2010: Page 3

“RSA says families shattered in “split second” (Kelly, 2010).

“Taoiseach extends his sympathies to families of crash victims from NY” (Minihan, 2010).

“Latest crash brings back painful memories” (Duncan, 2010).

“Council was working on a new safety plan” (Edwards, 2010).

The Irish Times, 13th November, 2010: Page 5

“Privatised speed check vans go live on Monday” (Carroll, 2010).

The Irish Times, 27th November, 2010: Page 6

“Attack on new speed survey vehicle condemned by Garda Commissioner” (O’Brien and Lally, 2010).

“DUP conference told republican paramilitaries a ‘severe’ threat” (Moriarty, 2010).

The Irish Times, 16th April, 2011: Page 3

“No clear pattern to the burning of speed vans” (Lally and McAleer, 2011).

Irish Independent, 29th December, 2011 Page 4

“Gay Byrne’s warning on road safety is ‘crude’ – garda chief” (Kelpie, 2011).

Internet Forum:

boards.ie, 9th April, 2011

“Another speed camera van burned!!” (*boards.ie*, 2011a) (81 posts)

boards.ie, 29th December, 2011

“Gaybo does it again. Is there no stopping this dinosaur windbag?” (*boards.ie*, 2011b) (125 posts)

Discourse Analysis

Foucault saw the elements of a *dispositif* “as joined and disjoined by a strategic logic and a tactical economy of domination operating against a background of discursive formations” (Rabinow and Rose, 2003, p. xvi). Consequently, the key method used in the analysis of the actors that constitute the *dispositif* of road safety is discourse analysis. Gee (2001, p. 1) argues that while language fulfils many functions its primary role is not simply the communication of information. Instead language scaffolds both “the performance of social activities (whether play or work or both) and...human affiliation within cultures and social groups and institutions” in a way that connects both together in a mutually constitutive fashion (Gee, 2001, p. 1). In other words, social activities cannot occur without a social grouping or institutional setting; similarly, social groups or institutions do not exist without the (re)production of social activities.

Approaching linguistic analysis from the point of view of the inseparability of language and social context is characteristic of a media studies approach to linguistic analysis and distinguishes it from the traditional study of languages (Deacon, 2007, p. 151). From this standpoint, language-in-use or “discourse” is inextricably linked to its social situatedness and to “discourses”. Situatedness refers to the reflexive properties of discourse and how it both reflects social reality and constructs it in a certain way (Gee, 2001, pp. 80-82). Discourses are powerful and ingrained ways of understanding society that “deeply permeate what is allowed as legitimate knowledge in particular domains of social life, and rigidly exclude other possibilities and other perspectives on those domains” (Deacon, et al., 2007, p. 152). Discourses express “values, attitudes, beliefs and emotions” that “enact specific identities and activities” or ways of seeing and being in the world (Gee, 2001, p. 7). Foucault attempted the identification of the regulative underpinnings, as well as the properties and roles, of dominant discourses that condition how people act and think (Woofitt, 2009, pp. 448-449). For Foucault, discourses, as systems of statements help shape participation in society “because they furnish subject positions, roles or parts with expectations about...behaviour” (Woofitt, 2008, p. 449). Discourses have a regulatory function because they “make available subject positions and construct objects or processes” (Woofitt, 2008, p. 449). As such “discourses facilitate and limit, enable and constrain what can be said (by whom, where, when)” (Parker, 1992, p. xiii) and their analysis enables us to investigate the particular constitution of the dispositif of road safety and networks of automobility in Ireland.

Gee (2001, p. 4) defines discourse analysis “as the analysis of language as it is used to enact activities, perspectives and identities”. While there are many different varieties of discourse analysis, what unites them is the concern with language use in social life and the relationship between this usage and social structures (Deacon, et al., 2007, p. 151). I have drawn on a number of different models and tools for discourse and textual analysis such as Fowler (2001), Gee (2001), Richardson (2007), and Carvalho (2008). In practice, discourse analysis is an iterative rather than stage-by-stage process that requires a fluid movement through aspects of applicable stages and texts to confirm and develop emerging insights. However, I draw particularly on Deacon, et al. (2007) who outline a model of analysis that I have appropriated and adapted for my own purposes as is now described.

Analysis of newspaper articles begins with a focus on the “position, composition and immediate intertextual relations” of an individual story (Deacon, et al., 2007, pp. 181). This emphasises its formal staging and how it is assigned a role within a broader structure, for example, of that day’s paper and is what Carvalho (2008, p. 167) calls layout and structural organisation. Analysis involves the examination of the story’s position and prominence in the publication, and its composition – that is, the way in which it is arranged on the page – in terms of how the nucleus of the story (main headline, secondary headline if present, and initial summary paragraph [Deacon, et al., 2007 p. 182]) is presented. In addition, the way in which any photograph connects or anchors the narrative of the piece is considered (Deacon, et al., 2007 p. 182). The intertextuality of the story, that is, the relationship the story has to others appearing in the paper, is examined, and links to themes on the same page or in other parts of the publications are also established (Deacon, et al., 2007, p. 182).

The focus then moves to the text’s thematic structure and discourse schema (Deacon, et al., 2007, p. 183). Analysis of thematic structures involves establishing the underlying propositions and central thread of what the text is actually about. This is not just the way in which themes refer to certain events or realities, but focuses on these themes as constitutive of those realities – what Carvalho (2008, p. 167) calls “objects”. Analysis of discourse or textual schema involves making sense of the narrative constitution of the piece, in terms of the work that particular parts of the text do in narrative development as the story roughly follows the pyramid structure⁵ of news text. According to Deacon, et al. (2007, p. 183) discourse schema are the “narrative conventions for combining, ordering and hierarchically assigning the different category units of the text into a structured whole”.

In practical terms, thematic structure and discourse schema are analysed together. Journalists assemble their material in “an implicit order of accreditation and

⁵ Deacon, et al. (2007, p. 175) note that news follows a pyramidal structure that starts with an initiating statement of who did it, followed by events, circumstances, outcome, and comment, with each succeeding part “providing amplification and support for this initiating statement”. The point is that this structure is particular to news and differs to crime fiction (for example), revealing the way in which news is a construction, rather than simply unproblematic and objective communication of an event.

importance” (Deacon, et al., 2007, p. 184). This order can be interrogated through coding data in terms of the underlying propositions contained in the text. For example, in relation to coverage of the Donegal accident in *The Irish Times* it is possible to identify themes of mourning, speculations of blame and suppositions of cause and effect in relation to how the accident occurred. The articulation of fear about accidents and their apparent randomness commonly features, as well as recurring associations of certain themes with particular actors. It is possible to recognise the strategic positioning of expert authority and how national experts are represented, for example, as enunciating solutions to the problems of road safety in ways that other actors are not allowed to engage in (Carvalho, 2008, p. 168). Such associations can be followed between newspaper and the RSA texts.

The relative prominence of government or RSA sources in relation to local community members in newspaper texts is also significant, and the relative importance of their comments for the narrative of the article can be probed: Does the story support the underlying stance and values advanced by official representatives in the piece and the *Road Safety Strategy* or do other sources create a countervailing view point that might challenge an official narrative? Deacon, et al. (2007, p. 184) also set out a line of questioning here: “How do the attributed sources and discourses vary in terms of degree of certitude, qualification, authority and emphasis of phrasing and tone, and how are these qualities evident in register, vocabulary and figures of speech?” While this is very useful, it is in practice not always possible to comprehensively analyse a given text for each and every point this question raises. What is important at this stage is establishing the extent to which particular points of view are favoured over others; what these are, who is allowed to enunciate them; how they vary between *Irish Times* articles and RSA policy texts, and in what ways.

When a number of texts have been analysed in this fashion it is possible to identify discourse formations that become familiar between the thematic structures and textual schema across both strategy documentation and the range of newspaper texts under analysis. This involves comparing thematic and schematic elements as one follows actors across different editions of, for example, *The Irish Times*, as well as between publications (the *Road Safety Strategy* document, the *Annual Report 2010*, and *The Irish Times*), and across different events. Although the Donegal accident and the launch of the speed cameras are discrete in terms of when they occurred, similar framings of

the issues of road safety can be found in the construction of these events by *The Irish Times*, and commonality can be drawn between these constructions and how the issue of road safety is framed in the *Road Safety Strategy* document (and in the *Irish Independent*). For example, the way in which road safety is framed as an issue of individual responsibility is common across these events and publications and structures what is said and by whom in relation to road safety, as well as the nature of appropriate responses to the issue (Deacon, et al., 2007, p. 161). Individual responsibility is therefore an important constitutive element of how discourses of road safety are formed and framed.

In the process of analysis, lexical choices and grammatical markers are also considered for how they support the thematic structure of individual texts (Deacon, et al., 2007, p. 185). Both Fowler (1991) and Richardson (2007) outline how the choice and meaning of words and linguistic concepts can help in analysis by showing the ideological implications of words, for example. Naming and reference can affect how actors are viewed: Calling interested parties in road safety “stakeholders” in the *Road Safety Strategy* links to discourses of economics and finance, where a stake is a financial consideration, for example. This not only projects a certain kind of value onto these actors, it suggests the nature of the relations between these actors is one predicated on monetary, rather than social or political considerations (Richardson, 2007, p. 50). Sentence construction and syntax are factors in this type of analysis. “Transitivity” describes relationships between actors and the roles they play in a text, and the way in which actions are represented can vary with respect to “who (or what) does what to whom” (Richardson, 2007, p. 50). For example, the process of deleting agents – where events are represented as occurring through natural processes rather than the agency of actors – allows responsibility for the events in question to become muddled (Van Leeuwen, 2009, p. 156-7). Additionally, the use of cliché has an ideological function for Fowler (1991, p. 41), who connects its comfortable familiarity to the grounding of common-sense view-points on an issue. As Van Dijk (2001; 2003) notes, there are thousands of relevant dimensions of language and structure that could be analysed, so an exhaustive discourse analysis is out of the question. Consequently, a variety of linguistic analysis tools are deployed and lexical choices considered where they become instructive to understanding the texts under analysis and their relationships to other texts.

The thematic structures and discourse schema of internet forum material can be analysed in a similar fashion to newspaper articles and strategy documentation. However, a forum thread has a much more fluid or organic construction than the pyramid structure of a newspaper article. In practical terms, this means analysis of the forum material involved noting the concerns of the posters as they react to the posts of others, noting the progress of themes that emerge from the discussion and which of these become more frequently referred to. Lexical and grammatical markers are also assessed. It is instructive, for example, to note the degree to which posters are committed to the claims they are making (Richardson, 2007, p. 59). Posters' attitudes can be much more strongly presented than in newspaper articles, with people who don't agree with particular points of view being described as "fools" for example. The relative anonymity of internet forum posts can mean people can be censorious in their viewpoints compared to other contexts. The phenomenon of the "keyboard warrior" (Zhang, 2015, p. 15) also means one must be wary not to over-emphasise throwaway remarks that communicate emotion and place them in the context of the wider emerging themes of the material under analysis.

Commuter data

The justification and method outlined above provides a secure framework for analysing how the dispositif of road safety is constituted from "the actions of a chain of agents, each of whom translates or shapes it according to their own objectives" (Stanforth, 2007, p. 40). Neither the RSA, the *Road Safety Strategy*, *The Irish Times* nor *boards.ie* determines the constitution of the dispositif of road safety though. As such, although the RSA could be argued to be entrepreneurs who attempt to engineer the dispositif, how it is lived "is a contingent outcome that is determined... by the result of contested interests and actors linked together in complex networks" (Stanforth, 2007, p. 51). It is not simply the causal outcome of the implementation of the "technology" of the RSA or the *Road Safety Strategy* itself, for example, nor indeed of its expression in officially sanctioned forms as suggested by media-centric policy approaches. Therefore, as already argued, the analysis of the dispositif of road safety as it manifests across various textual media must be set against the lived experience of drivers. This is why the experiences of car-commuters are interrogated and it requires a shift in focus from the discursive analysis of mediated texts to methods that access the meanings being made by commuters.

Discourse analysis cannot confine itself to mediated texts alone because these cannot describe the lived experience from which meanings are made by commuters themselves (Schram, 1993; Chen, 2001). Consequently, I also focus on the ways in which the concerns of mediated texts circulate with and as meanings-in-use, from the point-of-view of the assemblage of car-drivers and occupants (Akrich, 1992; Dant, 2005; Tatnall and Burgess, 2002; Latour, 2005) that also constitute the dispositif road safety and the networks of automobility in Ireland. This calls for an ethnographically-informed approach, a central assumption of which is that in order to understand what people are doing and why, one needs to understand meaning; that is, how people themselves interpret and evaluate the situations they face and their own identities (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 169). My research is an interpretation of the views of car-commuters and the goal is to share their perspective in so far as is possible (Harper, 1987). To that end, a series of focus groups were convened to address issues of commuting by car and driving.

Focus group interviews are chosen both for their inherent methodological strengths and for pragmatic reasons. They can be viewed as a useful means for accessing meaning-making behaviour because they are social contexts in themselves. Bryman (2008, p. 476) argues that, in one sense, focus groups are more naturalistic than individual interviews, because processes of understanding of social phenomena are not undertaken in isolation but are “something that occurs in interaction and discussion with others”. Deacon, et al. (2007, p. 57 citing Richardson and Corner, 1986) also note that the focus group setting can “mimic the way that everyday media interpretations tend to be ‘collectively constructed’ by people in social, familial and professional networks”.

Bryman (2008, p. 474) explains that focus groups contain elements of two methods – the group interview and the focused interview. The focused interview selects participants on the basis of their involvement in a particular situation and they are asked about their experiences of this topic. To this method, the focus group adds the interactive component of the group interview, but is more targeted around a specific topic than the group interview can be, although sometimes the two terms are used interchangeably (Bryman 2008, p. 473). Focus groups facilitate the development of understanding about “why people feel the way they do”, allowing individuals to be probed by other group members. They allow for the challenge and modification of initially proposed subject positions and discussion of positions on topics that group

members may not have thought about or been aware of beforehand. According to Bryman (2008, p. 474), “these possibilities mean that focus groups may also be very helpful in the elicitation of a wide variety of different views in relation to a particular issue”. Thus, focus groups have the potential to provide the greatest in-depth analysis involving multiple participants in a variety of settings.

Focus groups have become very popular in media and cultural studies research around audience reception studies, after Morley’s (1980) *The Nationwide Audience* for example. Significant studies in this general area include McGuigan (1992), Livingstone and Lunt (1994), and Fenton, Bryman, and Deacon (1998). Morley’s key insights were about how different categorisations of people can interpret texts differently, thus confirming how meaning is not only situated in texts (Bryman, 2008) which is a critical insight for my research. However, Maxwell (2001, p. 205), acknowledges some of the limitations of focus groups, pointing out that the views expounded by his commuters express “discursive repertoires” which, by their nature, are “institutionally, situationally specific, culturally familiar, public ways of talking”. There is always the risk with this type of research that participants will say what they think the researcher wants to hear rather than what they actually think. This is mitigated by good focus group design and judicious probing, and questioning that can also penetrate the group dynamic that constructs an apparent consensus from the strongly held views of one or a few participants.

Sampling

Because the research focuses on transient assemblages of actors that constitute the dispositif of automobility, a generalizable data set that covers the demographic spectrum is not required. The concern of the study is to explore social processes (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) involved in driving and commuting practices, not test predetermined hypotheses, nor extrapolate to a whole population (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981, p. 145). Thus probability sampling (Bryman, 2008, p. 697) is unnecessary and a combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling has been used to select participants. Bryman (2008, p. 183) notes that: “A convenience sample is one that is simply available to the research by virtue of its accessibility”. Thus, a pilot study of family members of the researcher was initially convened to discuss everyday issues of commuting and driving.

Snowball sampling involves initiating contact with a small group relevant to the topic being researched and then using these contacts to make contact with other potential participants who are also relevant to the research (Bryman, 2008, p. 699). An initial connection was made through representatives of the mature students' society in Maynooth University, who agreed to publicise the study on their *Facebook* page and by way of posters in the mature student's room at the university. Connections were further made with "gatekeepers" (Rudestam and Newton, 2014) in a large local multi-national computer company, a city-centre banking organisation, and Ballyfermot College of Further Education (BCFE) where three focus groups were held. The strength of snowball sampling in terms of producing referral chains (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981) was important in generating potential participants in these organisations. Most, though not all, of the groupings are natural in that frequently participants are known to each other (Bryman, 2008, p. 482). This is valuable in generating and sustaining a comfortable naturalistic setting for data gathering (Coleman, 1958). The desire was to draw commuters from beyond the confines of Maynooth University, while also including the university in the research. This is because, as Lunt and Livingstone (1996, p. 15) argue, "groups might be better conducted when composed of diverse rather than consistent membership" and the research is about the dispositif of road safety in Ireland, not Maynooth per se.

As sampling continued, an increasing variety of demographic indicators were nevertheless drawn into the research with respect to gender, age and social class, for example⁶ (Barbour, 2007, p. 61). The impact of these demographic differences on the meaning-making of individuals is beyond the scope of this thesis, however exploring these dynamics within the dispositif of road safety provides avenues for further investigation. Nevertheless, the sampling method generated "a full array of multiple perspectives" in so far as is practically possible (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 40). Sampling for this type of research is supposed to proceed until no new relevant data emerges and the categories of analysis are well developed (Rudestam and Newton, 2014, p. 125). However, in practice, as Josselson and Lieblich (2003) point out, true saturation is not achievable because each participant has something to add and it is usually saturation of the researcher that occurs. Therefore, the key was to ensure the

⁶ For a more detailed breakdown of the participants demographic characteristics, please see Appendix A.

fullest possible development of emergent thematic categories and sampling continued until “sufficient data to represent the breadth and depth of the phenomenon” was collected (Rudestam and Newton, 2014, p. 125), thereby meeting the criteria of adequacy (Morse, 1994). In addition, Bryman (2008, p. 478) shows published research projects which have had as few as eight sessions; given the resources available for this project and the quantity of data generated, the number of groups held was deemed sufficient at nine in total.

The nine focus groups of commuters were convened as follows:

Focus group 1 (f1): five participants – pilot group of extended family members.

Focus group 2 (f2): four participants – friends of the researcher.

Focus group 3 (f3): three participants – mature students of Maynooth University.

Focus group 4 (f4): three participants – employees of a large local multi-national computer company.

Focus group 5 (f5): four participants – students of Maynooth University.

Focus group 6 (f6): six participants – employees of a Dublin city-centre multi-national banking organisation.

Focus group 7 (f7): two participants – students of BCFE.

Focus group 8 (f8): four participants – students of BCFE.

Focus group 9 (f9): two participants – students of BCFE.

Of the three focus groups held at BCFE, two had only two participants each due to “no-shows” on the day, despite over-recruiting for these sessions. Although not ideal focus group conditions, it was nevertheless decided to continue with these sessions involving two people. Both Bryman (2009, p. 478) and Barbour (2007, p. 60) suggest three as the minimum number of participants to make a focus group meaningful. However, Bryman

(2008, pp. 479-480) indicates different sizes of groups have their inherent advantages and disadvantages. In analysis, data from these two sessions was useful both in confirming the commonality of themes emerging throughout the data set of focus groups and in providing a conclusion to the data gathering process as the breadth of issues were well represented at that stage.

A topic guide/ interview schedule⁷ was developed around everyday issues of commuting and driving with session discussions proceeding in a relatively unstructured manner, after each group viewed stimulus material. The prior analysis of mediated texts and a pilot focus group also suggested themes and yielded insights that were then used to develop and hone the interview schedule as the focus groups continued. In general terms, insights generated from the analysis of the media texts informed exploration of the extent to which commuters reproduce the subjectivities, modes of action, and representations suggested by such texts in their everyday commuting practices. However, the group dynamic took discussion into territory that connects mediation to commuter practices in ways that could not be foreseen prior to research. The sessions were led by me as an unobtrusive yet subtly guiding facilitator throughout (Karger, 1987). Data collection for focus groups took place over a six month period. All sessions were audio-recorded and systematically transcribed and all contributors were anonymised. The Ethics Committee of Maynooth University evaluated the proposal for research with human participants and ethical approval was granted.

Analysis of commuter data

Livingstone and Lunt (1994, p. 184) note that qualitative data coding is always problematic, for example it is difficult to delineate practical boundaries in the identification of the units to be coded. Barbour (2007, p. 117) cautions against using the topic guide to generate themes or code data into categories because this can work against the incorporation of themes which emerge from group participants. In practical terms, codes were assigned to ostensibly minor themes in the data before agglomerating these into much broader themes (Barbour, 2007, p. 117). Analysis of the commuter data is not so different from the method of analysis of newspaper and policy data – after

⁷ See the Appendix B for sample participant information sheet and consent form used during the research and Appendix C for interview schedule/topic guide.

all, what is analysed in both cases are forms of text. For example, I interrogated the thematic structure and discourse schema of my transcripts (Deacon, et al., 2007, p. 183), analysing underlying propositions and attempting to make sense of the conventions participants use in ordering the narrative of commuting and driving issues.

More specifically, emergent themes from this analysis included descriptions of the routine of commuting; what car-commuting facilitates in terms of relationships and responsibilities; references to media representations; the rationale for taking the car over other transport; using driving time to complete other tasks; attitudes to the impact of the car on the environment; the state of the roads, and road behaviour. Ultimately, some themes were dropped as they fell out of the scope of the analysis, were wrapped up into other broader themes, or were not picked-up on by other participants across the sessions. Themes also overlapped. But from this iterative and recursive process, in which actors were followed as they become important to the constitution of the dispositif of road safety and the networks of automobility, broader themes emerged organically from the material. These are not simply the points of view of the *Road Safety Strategy* transposed against the views of commuters alone however. It is the recursive process of going back and forth between the projections of policy strategies, their representations, and the practices of actual users of system that allows access to the “crucial relationships” that constitute the system (Akrich, 1992, p. 209). The thematic frames of Chapter 2 (freedom), Chapter 3 (emotion) and Chapter 4 (forms of resistance) are those that emerged from this interrogation of key concerns in both commuter focus groups and the various other texts explored in this study.

The analysis builds upon the diversity and commonality of concerns circulating among commuters’ discussions as well as mediated texts. Constructions made from commuters’ data as presented “are empirically grounded in those of the participants who are the focus of the study” (Flick, 2009 cited in Rudestam and Newton, 2014, p. 132). Although the research involves relatively small numbers of commuters in specific settings, focus groups “generate rich believable data” (Lunt and Livingstone, 1996, p. 15) that explores the meaning-making assemblages which go towards the constitution of the dispositif of road safety and networks of automobility in Ireland.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the questioning of the assumed relationship between mediated policy strategies and the practices of automobility has prompted the targeted investigation of existing problematizations and scholarship in relation to the car. In the dominant genre of such research, via explorations of the metamorphic car, the assumption of the automobile as a deterministic force, reconstituting the social and physical world as it inexorably spread across the landscape, was traced. Although infused with studies of class, race and gender, I argued the genre suffered from a form of reductionism, imbuing institutions or the car itself with a determining agency. I argued that studies of car subcultures share a neglect of the quotidian experience of car users with studies that emphasise the car's metamorphic qualities, as both are predicated upon the assumption of common social meanings about the car in the everyday world. But these everyday meanings cannot be assumed and in fact are crucial to problematizing a media-centric view of the interconnections between policy and practice that is the principle concern of my research.

I have suggested that studies into the externalities of the car and driving offer a more nuanced and wider accounting for the car's social effects. But where such studies have investigated meaning-making in relation to the car, for example, they emphasise individual intentions and ignore the way in which the car shapes social action (Redshaw, 2008). Externalities research uncovered more of the environmental and safety consequences and costs of the car, highlighting shared responsibility around road safety for example, and was argued to be critical to the consideration of the car's future (Miller, 2001). But it was also argued that such research can simply reinforce rather than question the system of the car itself and take for granted that we know what the car is. While externalities studies open the door to a fuller problematization of the car's consequences, it does not go far enough to connect the larger effects of the car, in terms of the globalised forces of the market and the state, to the more personal relations associated with and expressed about it every day (Miller, 2001). To do this is to present a much richer picture of what the car entails, but it is only through the exploration of the car as a socio-technical system of relations, rather than a singular object, that these interconnections can be fully countenanced.

Consequently, I argued for building upon the insights provided by conceptualising the car-system in terms of “automobility” (Sheller and Urry, 2000; Urry 2005).

Automobility shows how an array of forms and sites of inquiry can be interconnected in the ways necessary to investigate the particular and peculiar constitution of the networks of sociality and materiality of the car in the Irish context in all their complexity (Merriman, 2005, p. 158). Automobilities approaches conceptualise the car not as a discrete essence but as a hybrid entity made up of networks of cars, drivers, policy, infrastructure, and media texts, for example. Underscored by insights from ANT, I argued for the adoption of Dant’s (2005) concept of the car-driver assemblage to express the transformation that occurs when actors come together and the contingent ways this assemblage can shape social actions in particular lived contexts.

Foucault’s notion of the *dispositif* or apparatus has indicated that the system-ness of automobility can be thought of in terms of how aspects of it constitute a heterogeneous network of power-knowledge relations, formed as a response to an urgent social need (Thiele, 1986). The Irish *dispositif* of road safety has been chosen as such a response, the ensemble of elements of which is frequently articulated through government policy around automobility and its mediation. This is to be explored through the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident and the introduction of a network of speed cameras. I have argued that commuting journeys – not often conceptualised as a social problem, yet constituting embedded forms of social action in which road accidents occur – can provide suitable and adequate practices from which the problematic of research can be investigated in relation to the lived experience of the system of automobility. In order to build a map of the types of social actions associated with the *dispositif* of road safety as it became visible through the investigation of these contexts, I have justified and described the methods used in the project.

The punctuating point of the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident and the launch of the network of speed cameras allow for the exploration of both the *dispositif* of road safety and the constitution of the networks of automobility. This exploration is not confined to pre-conceived categorisations of actors such as *The Irish Times* or even to what being an actor means, however. My approach enables deeper nuanced insight to develop about how mediation and practices interact, overlap, and become embedded together – or do not as the case may be. This approach is justified because the project demanded a broad yet deep focus, in which actors are followed as they become

important to the constitution of the dispositif, but where initiating moments are also required to facilitate analysis of the apparatus given its potentially infinite nature. The exploration of the themes that emerges from these various methods follows, beginning with the centrality of freedom in the mediated contexts of road safety in Ireland.

Chapter 2: Networks of freedom

Introduction

It is said that the car exemplifies freedom and confers the status of “free” on its user (Urry, 2005). For Rajan (2006, p. 113) contemporary western society – late modernity – describes qualities of cars and the experience of driving, such as “the quiet pleasures of the open road, speed, power and personal control”, as being the most salient features of automobility. These characteristics complement “the functionality of covering distance, managing time and maintaining certain forms of individuation” that the car also provides (Rajan, 2006, p. 113). Together with the promise that one can freely decide where and how to live and work, and when and how far one wants to travel, the ontology and teleology of the car reinforce each other establishing “characteristically that which is modern and by definition permanently desirable” (Rajan, 2006, pp. 113-4).

However, policy actions in the Irish context attempt to curb the consequences of the unfettered expression of car-based freedoms, for example through the construction of individual responsibility as the “ne plus ultra” of road safety. This sets up a binary of freedom and constraint in terms of automobility in Ireland which seems to exemplify contemporary western government. According to Rose (1999, p. 62), “[t]he politics of our present, to the extent that it is defined and delimited by the values of liberalism, is structured by the opposition between freedom and government”. Liberalism “is commonly understood as a political doctrine or ideology concerned with the maximisation of individual liberty, and, in particular, with the defence of that liberty against the state” (Hindess, 1996, p. 65). However, for Rose (1999, p. 68):

The importance of Liberalism is not that it first recognised, defined or defended freedom as a right of all citizens. Rather its significance is that for the first time the arts of government were systematically linked to the practice of freedom... Individuals... must come to recognise and act upon themselves as both free and responsible, both beings of liberty and members of society, if liberal government is to be possible.

By this logic if the way in which automobility is actually lived in Ireland is to be investigated and understood the binary of freedom and constraint needs to be seen as false.

Instead, policy initiatives and their articulation through the media, for example, should be considered strategies of governmentality (Foucault, 1978b), a form of power relations that “not only refer to political structures or to the management of state; ...it [also] designates the way in which the conduct of individuals or groups might be directed” (Dean, 1999, p. 47). Governmentality emphasises a definition of government as establishing parameters for “the conduct of conduct” (Foucault, 1982, p. 138; Foucault, 1994, p. 237; Dean, 1999, p. 11; Miller and Rose, 2008; McNay, 2009, p. 60), which focuses attention on the examination of the regulation of human activity, rather than the search for the origin of power and identification of those who possess it. Governmentality does not position freedom as an abstracted ideal or pre-existing realm of individuality, autonomy, and choice to be evaluated and defended in terms of the constraints placed upon it (Rose, 1999). Rather, this chapter draws on the idea that liberal freedom has always been “a mode of organising and regulation...a certain way of administering a population that depends upon the capacities of free individuals” (Rose, 1999, p. 64). Freedom, therefore, is “material, technical, practical, [and] governmental” (Rose, 1999, p. 63).

In this chapter, I explore the articulation of the *dispositif* of road safety through the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident. I argue that what is attempted in the rituals of mediatisation of Ireland’s worst traffic accident is the organisation of freedom – through a diffuse range of intermediaries – in terms of the individual’s capacity for self-realisation and self-regulation (Ouellette and Hay, 2008, p. 473). I first elaborate upon the opposition between freedom and constraint extant in car advertising and some academic literature about the car in order to elaborate upon the prevalence of this binary. Then, I use a discourse analytical framework that closely analyses *The Irish Times*’ representation of the Donegal accident on the day (13/07/2010) that it was first covered in the paper. I connect this coverage to the concerns of the *Road Safety Strategy* (RSA, 2007). Circulating within policy documents of road safety and between these and coverage of the Donegal accident, I find responsabilization strategies that promote particular subjectivities and suggest particular relationships between institutions and the self constituting the *dispositif* of road safety. A key point is that these interventions are based on the tenets of an evolved version of liberalism called neo or advanced liberalism:

Put simply, neoliberalism, from the moment of its inception, advocates a programme of deliberate intervention by government in order to encourage particular types of entrepreneurial, competitive and commercial behaviour in its citizens, ultimately arguing for the management of populations with the aim of cultivating the type of individualistic, competitive, acquisitive and entrepreneurial behaviour which the liberal tradition has historically assumed to be the natural condition of civilised humanity, undistorted by government intervention. (Gilbert, 2013, p. 9)

Obviously, it is not possible to explore every facet of neoliberalism. So in this chapter I concentrate on aspects of responsabilization, media ritual, and the threat of discipline in discursive constructions around the Donegal accident to exemplify the constitution of neoliberal freedom in terms of the dispositif of road safety and contemporary governmentality. I go on to examine how assemblages of car-drivers negotiate and interpret strategies of responsabilization by analysing car-commuters' experiences of how they conceive of the freedom the car provides. This is an exploration of how neoliberal freedom constitutes the practices of the dispositif of road safety and the system of automobility in Ireland. I find responsabilization strategies resonate to varying degrees in commuter experiences of commuting practices and road safety issues. The analysis explores the ways in which subjects messily construct and enact the conditions of their own freedom in practice (Rose 1999, p. 72), albeit not always in the ways intended by authorities, highlighting the ubiquitous and dispersed nature of power relations (governmentality).

The binary of freedom and constraint

Popular culture references and academic research around the car often contain similar assumptions about what the freedom of the automobile means. In popular culture, these assumptions play out in advertising whose mechanisms draw “upon images of individualized freedom, flight and speed to sell the latest auto models” (Inglis, 2005, p. 209). Such depictions rely on a conception of freedom in which an autonomous subject is set against an object of power – the binary of freedom and constraint (Rose 1999; Lemke, 2002). For example, in BMW's “Joy” advert broadcast on Irish television, a three second segment shows an engine rev-counter rapidly rising, the grabbing of another gear, and the silently expressed “yeah!” on the face of the driver, as he takes flight in his car to escape (LienderNick, 2009). Illustrations like this express Rajan's (2006, pp. 113 -114) argument that the pleasures of the open road, power and control

are automobility's most salient features, complementing the desirability of the car's functionality and the individuation it enables.

However, the limitations of the unfettered expression of this freedom as well as the constraints it necessitates are never far behind their discursive expression. For example, with road safety in mind, the International Chamber of Commerce's code on advertising motor vehicles – that all European advertising standards authorities apply – cautions the avoidance of “messages based on speed, performance and acceleration” (Easa-alliance.org, 2013). The BMW ad, in connoting rather than denoting speed, can be read as the ritual negotiation of these rules. Sometimes manufacturers fall foul of the provisions, however. A recently banned Jaguar campaign, also broadcast in Ireland, contained the slogan “Jaguar. How alive are you?” It depicted a car speeding on an empty mountain road at night (*The Daily Telegraph*, 2014). Indeed, the empty road is a common trope and conceit of car advertising. But the UK advertising standards authority banned the Jaguar campaign because “we considered that speed was the main message of the ads and the ads portrayed the cars being driven in a dangerous manner” (*The Daily Telegraph*, 2014). It concluded the ads were irresponsible and condoned dangerous driving (*The Daily Telegraph*, 2014). Jaguar's unsuccessful appeal against the ban was based on including a disclaimer stating the ads were filmed on closed sections of road, in the process calling attention to the illusory nature of the car's provision of freedom and escape in practice (Beckman, 2005). At the same time, the disclaimer underlines that the car is a sign-vehicle for such meanings. The story of the ads' censorship exemplifies the way in which the speeding car can structure an opposition between freedom and government, where the car is ritually implicated in the “maximisation of individual liberty” or, indeed, the negative consequences of this (Hindess, 1996, p. 65; Lemke, 2002; Rose, 1999).

The academic literature can also conceptualise the car in the same binary of freedom versus constraint. For example, Gartman's (2005) analysis merits further exploration here for its treatment of the freedom the car provides. Gartman (2005, p. 169) argues the culture of consumerism charges the car with meanings that stretch beyond its immediate utility (Urry, 2005, p. 26; Rajan, 2006), such as the freedoms depicted in the above advertisements. Gartman's (2005) three ages of the automobile pit the car's freedoms against the constraints it necessitates. This is summarized succinctly by MacGregor (2009, p. 96): “each auto age is motivated by a dialectical process in which contradictions growing within it are at once preserved and resolved in the succeeding

age, which in turn, carries the seeds of its own eventual destruction and overthrow”. In the first age, the car confirms the freedom of the wealthy from the constraints of necessity; in the second age the car offers “false” freedoms that fail to compensate for the freedoms denied by the factory floor (Gartman, 2005). In the third age, the car addresses that same need: “compensatory individuality in a society that deprives people of economic autonomy”, but in a more intensified and fragmented fashion (Gartman, 2005, p. 191). This need is driven both by the fragmentation of class and cultural identities and manufacturing innovations that produce cars targeted at increasingly specialised “lifestyle” market niches. Even though his analysis is articulated in the context of automobilities literature, Gartman (2005, p. 193) encapsulates his approach in terms of a search for a single underlying dynamic that he uses to explain the ages of the automobile: “the confrontation of potentially autonomous human beings with an economic market system that thwarts their self-determination with an alien logic all its own”. Here, once again, is a binary of freedom and constraint, one in which individuals’ agency is ultimately subordinated to the determining forces of class and production, the car and capitalism.

MacGregor’s (2009) analysis extends Gartman’s (2005) work. MacGregor (2009) explores “the safety race” that constitutes, for him, a fourth age of the automobile. In this, he conceptualises road safety as an issue that implicates a wide array of social actors responsible for ensuring safety on the roads, including the role of human agency and the critical position of the state. However, MacGregor (2009) ultimately defers to the potentially autonomous subject set against power in his linking of the interconnections between government and society: He repeats Gartman’s (2005) argument that “mobility concerns the ultimate goal of freedom: transcendence of space and time in the rapid and secure fulfilment of multiple social connections” (MacGregor, 2009, p. 96). MacGregor articulates Gartman’s (2005, p. 170) point that the underlying influence of three ages of the automobile is “the search for individual identity within a capitalist society that holds out the promise of autonomy but simultaneously denies it in the heteronomy of the economy”.

MacGregor’s (2009) analysis also mirrors Gartman’s (2005) in insisting that each age progresses in a dialectical fashion, where contradictions are “preserved and resolved in the succeeding age” (MacGregor, 2009 p. 96). However, unlike Gartman (2005), whose cultural eras are based on class and production, for MacGregor (2009, pp. 95-96) each

era is focused on the dialectic of motion within them. These dialectics consist “of the complex interrelationships of government and civil society with respect to safety and speed (that) helps to explain why safety consciousness has become an integral aspect of automobility”. Indeed, there are further differences between these two writers.

MacGregor (2009, p. 96) sees a future based on the emancipatory potential of technology to ultimately overcome the constraints on freedom that the risk of road traffic accidents implies for the “secure fulfilment of social connections”. Meanwhile, Gartman (2005) suggests the continued domination of the car in the absence of some form of revolution. Yet these explanations of the car, as well as the advertising frameworks that have been explored, ultimately contain the same assumption about freedom: it is a sphere of identifiable and albeit debatable rights that can be subordinated or enhanced by removing constrictions on a potentially autonomous subject.

But in arguing instead that freedom is negotiated through the capacities of people who are constituted as free in very specific ways (Rose, 1999, p. 87), I assert that a much more complex analysis is possible, one that emphasises the way in which the constitution of freedom is immediately and systematically linked to forms of (self) government (Rose, 1999, p. 58). Exploring the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident and the practices of commuters in this context opens the “black-box” of the almost imperceptible ways the car shapes the form and content of possible social action (Latour, 1999; Dant, 2005; Rajan, 2006) and allows for a nuanced examination of the media’s role as an intermediate agent and actor of responsabilization (Ouellette and Hay, 2008, p. 474) in the dispositif of road safety and networks of automobility.

Ireland and road traffic accidents: the worst crash ever

On the evening of Sunday July 11th 2010, Spain beat the Netherlands in the World Cup final after an extra-time goal from mid-fielder Andres Iniesta put the team 1:0 ahead in the 116th minute of the game (FIFA, 2010). One hour later, at approximately 10.40pm, eight young men who had been watching the match, left the North Pole pub near Buncrana in county Donegal (Duncan and Jackson, 2010). On the road between Clonmany and Buncrana, their black Northern Ireland registered Volkswagen Passat clipped the driver’s side of a white Renault Megane, before continuing 200m further down the road and crashing into a Toyota Corolla (Duncan and Jackson, 2010; *The*

Belfast Telegraph, 2010). Both the Passat and the Corolla left the road as a result of the impact and landed “in a ditch” (Duncan and Jackson, 2010). Eight people, including the older driver of the Corolla and seven passengers in the Passat were killed. The driver of the Megane was unhurt and the driver of the Passat survived. Despite the fact that 2010 had been the best year to date for road fatalities and although there were other multiple fatalities that year, the Donegal crash was the worst single road traffic accident in Ireland’s history (RSA, 2011, p. 3). The seven dead who were travelling in the Passat were all under the age of 24 (Duncan and Jackson, 2010).

The accident came too late for the next morning’s *The Irish Times* print edition, although the paper was able to include extensive coverage of Spain’s win at the World Cup, despite the marginal difference in the timing of both events. The 12th of July edition of *The Irish Times* led with coverage of a report published by the Health Service Executive (HSE) advising the closure of institutions for people with intellectual disabilities (O’Brien, 2010a). The front page (figure 2) also covered a \$500m bid to make Ireland the “innovation hub” of Europe as part of the Government’s “smart economy” framework, the plan for which was due to be launched in New York that day by then Taoiseach Brian Cowen (McGee and Marlowe, 2010). World Cup coverage included an article and picture on the front page of the paper (Humphries, 2010), additional articles about the World Cup within the main body of the paper, as well as comprehensive coverage of the tournament fallout in an included sports supplement.

It is Tuesday 13th July 2010’s edition of *The Irish Times* that contains coverage of the accident. It is not accorded lead-story status on the front page (see figure 3), which instead continues the theme of criticism of the HSE (O’Brien, 2010b). This is almost certainly because the crash was no longer breaking news more than 36 hours after the event and given coverage on more immediate media outlets before *The Irish Times* went to press (for examples of this coverage see Jackson [2010] or *breakingnews.ie* [2010]). The crash is granted the “off-lead” or second most prominent story position in an article headlined “Community in Inishowen mourns the loss of eight men” (Duncan and Jackson, 2010) underneath pictures of the seven young men who died in the crash. The story’s off-lead status is reinforced by the headline which does not reference the manner in which the men died, and the first line of the story itself, which begins “the car crash in which eight men died in Co. Donegal on Sunday night...” (as opposed to, say: “A car crash killed eight men in Co. Donegal on Sunday night”). These constructions

presuppose the prior common knowledge of the accident amongst the readership of the paper (Richardson, 2007). The time elapsed affords a detailed account of the event itself, as well as quotes from national and local community actors (a representative from the RSA and two local priests), report of comments from a related Garda press conference, as well as the Taoiseach who was still in New York. The article ends with the modest signpost “Reports: page 3”. The third page of *The Irish Times* that day (figure 4) is taken up almost entirely with articles about the accident, with the exception of a short side-bar on a different accident in Co. Limerick in which a woman was killed (Hayes, 2010).



WORLD CUP 2010
 Carl O'Brien soaks up the festival. Gig reviews by Jim Carroll and team. Pages 12&13
 News: page 5; Report: Sports Monday

NewsDigest

Accountability for EU negotiations

New rules making the Government accountable to the Dáil for the handling of EU negotiations are expected to be recommended in an important report to be published tomorrow by a Dáil committee subcommittee. **page 5**

Hospitals record €112m deficit for first five months

Deficits of €112 million recorded by hospitals across the State in the first five months of the year, according to new figures compiled by the HSE, are likely to lead to further cuts. **page 6**

HomeNews

Dublin's waste: All of Dublin's "grey bin" household waste will be sent outside the capital for dumping at landfill sites in surrounding counties from next year under contracts worth up to €60 million **page 3**

FitzPatrick bankruptcy: Former Anglo Irish bank chairman Seán FitzPatrick will ask the High Court today to declare him bankrupt after he failed to agree a settlement deal with creditors. Mr. FitzPatrick has liabilities of almost €150 million. **page 18**

Disident bomb: The FRSI said a bomb that exploded in south Armagh on Saturday was part of a disident republican plot to kill police officers. **page 4**

BusinessNews

Fingolenz inquiry: Irish nationwide plan to hire law firm McKernan Fitzgerald and accountants Ernst & Young to investigate the banking practices followed by former chief Michael Fingolenz. **page 18**

Airport car park: Dublin Airport Authority has begun the construction of a €14 million short-term car park beside the new Terminal 2 building. **page 18**

WorldNews

Warning shot: Japan's voters have fired a warning shot across the bow of prime minister Naoto Kan's coalition government by electing a potentially fatal political blow just a month after he took office. **page 19**

Most controversy: Relatives of Ravi Kant, the suspected killer who died in Northumbria, have demanded a second post-mortem, unhappy with the police's version of his final moments. **page 8**

Ann Marie Hourihane: page 16

The Twelfth of July never did get much respect south of the border, and now it seems to have slipped from our national consciousness altogether.

SportsMonday

Both Italian Eduardo Molaeri claimed his first European tour title when he won the Scottish Open yesterday, finishing ahead of Darren Clarke who managed to claim a place in the British Open. **page 9**

Weather

Generally cloudy with scattered showers, some heavy in places. Winds will be brisk at 8-15 kph. Temperatures will be 17-23 degrees. **page 23**

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Institutions for disabled should be closed down, says report

HSE group finds basic rights of residents being breached

batting, smoking and dental hygiene. People are still being changed or children or people with severe disability with one accessible shower and two wash basins. People wait their turn to be washed and cleaned".

The report proposes a new model of supported or assisted living in the community which would allow people with disabilities make their own life choices. Residents should also have access to specialised services based on individual assessments, as well as access to mainstream health and social services.

The cost of running community-based services would be similar to existing institutions that cost €450 million in 2003, or 40 per cent of the entire disability budget.

The report suggests establishing five to seven "demonstration sites" to explore efficient and sustainable ways of delivering this new model. While community-based care is long-term, community-based services are no more expensive to run than institutional care. Disability budgets have been cut by 8 per cent between 2008 and 2010, resulting in less flexibility within budgets to fund further investment to the community. Moves from the state of existing institutions would help fund the move towards community-based care.

It emphasises that the process of closing down institutions will not simply be a case of replacing one set of buildings for another. Successful services will need to be carefully planned and supported - such as advocacy, person-centred planning, support for community inclusion, further education support - will be vital.

The report recommends that new community-based care should be built and that existing institutions should close immediately.

It proposes a senior HSE official should be charged with driving and implementing a seven-year programme to close down inappropriate settings, while a "congregated settings fund" should be established to help the transition to a new model.

More political will needed in move to special disability care: **page 8**

Golden moment: Spain lifts World Cup after late goal secures victory



Olé, olé, olé all the way as World Cup reign begins for Spain

Spain lifted the World Cup trophy in Johannesburg last night. Photograph: Michael Cooper/Reuters

FIFA president Sepp Blatter and South African president Jacob Zuma hand the World Cup trophy to Spain's captain Iker Casillas during the award ceremony at Soccer City stadium in Johannesburg last night.

Spain's victory over the Netherlands in the final was a dramatic one, with the Spanish team scoring a late goal in the 116th minute to secure a 1-0 victory. The match was held at Soccer City stadium in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Spain's triumph marks their first World Cup victory since 1950, when they won the tournament in Brazil. The Spanish team, coached by Vicente Fox, had reached the final after defeating Germany in the semi-finals.

The victory was celebrated by millions of fans across Spain, with many taking to the streets in jubilation. The Spanish national anthem, 'Marcha Real', was played during the trophy presentation ceremony.

IT'S HERE!

DAIRY MILK

The Cadbury Apprentice winning wrapper is in stores now

THE APPRENTICE

Spain acquires €100m from US on health of economy: **page 7**

Cowen launches €500m plan for Ireland as innovation hub

HARRY MCGEE and LARA MARLOWE in New York

TAOISEACH BRIAN Cowen will this morning launch an ambitious €500 million plan to make Ireland a global innovation hub for the best European entrepreneurs.

Speaking on RTÉ's *The Week in Politics*, Mr. Cowen said he wanted to create a vibrant, innovative spirit to attract investment in Irish companies but also to locate themselves here. He suggested the venture capital culture of the US, particularly California and Boston, could be replicated in Ireland.

The fund will be overseen by an advisory board chaired by Dan Clavin of Intel Capital. It will make the first public call for "start-ups of interest" in early September, through Enterprise Ireland.

Ireland is the model for the plan cited most often, though Britain, Canada and Finland have tried similar strategies. By matching venture capital, the Irish government has created more start-ups than any other country in the world and there are more companies from Ireland listed on Nasdaq than from the EU, India, Japan, China, Singapore and Korea combined.

Mr. Cowen will remain in the US until Wednesday. He is to meet Mayor of New York Michael Bloomberg and governor of Georgia Sonny Perdue. He will also announce the opening of the first Irish Consulate in the southern US, in Atlanta.

Mr. Cowen said he had the State's investment, €125 million, would be leveraged from the National Pension Reserve Fund, with the other €125 million coming from Enterprise Ireland's Innovation Fund. The total cost of €250 million is expected to come from venture capitalists.

For the last year, since he became leader and Taoiseach, Mr. Cowen has been working on getting the state to invest in the start-up sector. Mr. Cowen said last night he was excited by the prospect of Ireland becoming a global hub for start-ups. He said he was confident that Ireland could become a global hub for start-ups, despite the economic challenges it is facing.

Figure 2: The Irish Times front page, 12th July, 2010.

Taking responsibility

A key motif from this coverage is the idea of responsibility. On page 3 of *The Irish Times* on the 13th July 2010, an article begins: “The Road Safety Authority has urged all drivers to take responsibility for their actions following the multiple fatality in Donegal” (Kelly, 2010). The then chief executive of the RSA, Noel Brett says: “A split second...has absolutely shattered the lives of eight families and an entire community”. He is then reported as explaining it was important “that no-one jumped to conclusions” about the cause of the accident, but that it was “equally important that lessons were learned”. He goes on: “When we have a tragedy like this...we have to try to take something positive from it and we would ask people to take personal responsibility for their actions on the roads”. Despite the cause of the crash not having been established, Brett here sets out the idea that responsibility for it and other accidents lies with individuals.

Lemke (2002, p. 12) explains that, for governmentality, government is “a continuum which extends from political government right through to forms of self-regulation, namely ‘technologies of the self’”. Lemke (2002, p. 12) notes that in neoliberalism:

The strategy of rendering individual subjects “responsible” (and also collectives, such as families, associations, etc...) entails shifting the responsibility for social risks such as illness, poverty etc. and for life in society into the domain for which the individual is responsible and transforming it into a problem of “self-care”.

Brett’s words reflect such an approach, with “responsibilization” describing the strategy of transferring the responsibility for road safety, traffic accidents, and other social risks to individuals, forcing them into “free” decision-making in these fields of action (Lemke, 2002, p. 5). The strategy of responsibilization exemplifies not only government as a form of self-regulation, but by implicating other actors including the state and intermediaries such as the media and the RSA, it also emphasises the continuum of government in the process of responsibilization.

Brett’s comments alternate between rational exhortations that attempt to responsibilize drivers, an emotive encapsulation of the impact of the crash on those involved, and a return via mixed metaphor and cliché (to “jump to conclusions”, to “learn lessons”, and

“to take something positive”) to the neoliberal rationality of responsabilization (Kelly, 2010). Fowler (1991, p. 41) notes that cliché vouches “for a robust honesty”; if the “mode of discourse” is “familiar and comfortable” to readers “they may also regard the ideology which it structures embody as ‘common sense’”. Harvey (2005 p. 39) argues that “‘common sense’ ...typically grounds consent”. This assumption of a common sense consensus is also created, for example, in Brett and other national actors’ use of the collective “we”. Fowler (1991, p. 16) notes that this “we” – as well as appeals for people to “pull together” in editorialising comments such as Brett’s – indicate how “‘we’ are supposed to behave”. Common sense narratives are problematic (Fowler, 1991; Harvey, 2005)⁸, not least because they have the power to deflect criticism and create the impression of consensus about contentious issues by assuming consensus already exists. To highlight the particularity and contingency of this example of common sense discourses, consider another framing possibility: the reporter may have been antagonistic towards the RSA chief, interrogating him as to why strategies of road safety have failed to prevent this accident or querying structural causes such as road quality or limited policing in these areas. Although failure is implied in Brett’s words, his attempts to account for the accident are deflective and this deflection is allowed to stick because the reporter does not challenge it. Brett is one of the authoritative national actors who constitute the discourses of the Donegal accident, speaking directly and in an editorialising way towards road users in his capacity as RSA chief. Indeed, there is little explicit critique of the RSA or government in the reportage discussed here, which may be expected given the framework of objectivity in journalism is ostensibly just that – not to offer judgement.

⁸ Fowler (1991, p. 16) notes that “although consensus sounds like a liberal, humane and generous theory of social action and attitudes, in practice it breeds divisive and alienating attitudes, a dichotomous version of ‘us’ and ‘them’”. Harvey (2005, p. 39) argues that common sense can “be profoundly misleading, obfuscating or disguising real problems under cultural prejudices”, because it is “constructed out of long-standing practice of cultural socialization often rooted in regional or national traditions”.

FINTAN O'TOOLE
Opinion, page 14



The Government was letting it be known that there would be no property tax in the lifetime of this Dáil because nothing has been done to prepare for it

Home News

Latest crash brings back painful memories



PAMELA DUNCAN
in Bunclrana

Close-knit community devastated by deaths of eight men

AS THE rain clouds rolled across the rugged Inishowen Peninsula yesterday, locals were struggling to come to terms with the fact that eight men had died in a crash the previous night near the rocky outcrop known locally as the King and Queen of the Murrageas.

Locals were visibly shaken as they grappled with the news that the crash with the highest number of fatalities of any crash on Irish roads since records began nearly 50 years ago had occurred on their doorstep.

At 5.30pm a hearse, led by a Garda escort, made its way through Clonmany. Relatives and friends with cars behind in a cortege - a sight that will be long remembered in the area in the days to come at the requiem and funeral of those killed.

Chaece Duffy from Bunclrana described the atmosphere locally as "sore", her eyes watering as she described the huge impact on the local community.

"The amount of people from the parish, the whole way down here cars are stopped on the road... chattering to neighbours.

"Even if you meet a car driving away, the car might be a half-mile from you but they're pulling

in. Everyone's so nervous.

Kenneth McLaughlin from Ballylinn said nobody in the village had wanted to go to work yesterday as people came to terms with the loss.

"It just seems to affect people a lot. You'd nearly think you are one of the family, it's that kind of feeling. Everyone's the same. It's just devastating."

Dermot McGeenagh from Carradonagh said, "It was my friend's brother that got killed. You don't know how to take it."

Mayor of Bunclrana and deputy mayor of Donegal, Pádraig MacLochlainn described as "mind numbing devastation" the tragedy that had again visited this, an incredibly tight knit community.

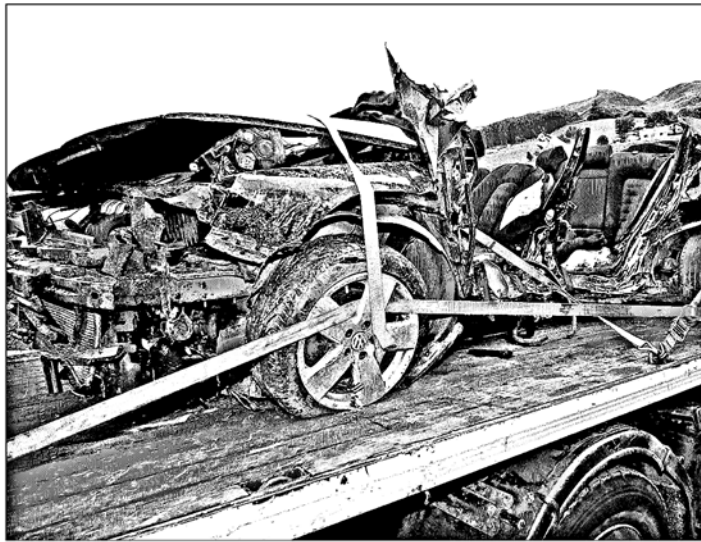
"You're three parishes affected, Clonmany, Bunclrana and Fintona and there weren't be anybody in the Inishowen Peninsula who won't know the victims - that's the nature of the devastation. Because of the spread of the families it would be nearly impossible not to know somebody."

For the people of the area this latest crash brings back painful memories. Fr Eddie McGuinness, curate of Coddhill parish said the following day would be the tragedy day for everyone, including local clergy.

"We have had multiple accidents in which more than a few people have died and it brings back memories for them. That's how it is with these tragedies, that it's reworking the memories for all those people who lost their sons and daughters all in the same geographic area."

His colleague, Fr John Walsh, the parish priest of Bunclrana, spent much of Sunday night with the families who he said are naturally devastated by the sudden loss.

"It is a really cruel blow to this particular community," he said, adding that the tragedy would also affect family members and girlfriends who have lost other people



The Renault Megane, which was the first car struck by the Passat, is removed from the scene of the crash on the Inishowen Peninsula in Co Donegal, yesterday evening; below, the Renault Megane which was the first car struck by the Passat. Photograph: PAUL FAYNFA

DONEGAL CRASH HELPLINE

The HSE has set up an information support telephone service for members of the community affected by the Donegal crash. It can be accessed at 087 2798412.



RSA says families shattered in 'split second'

OLIVIA KELLY

THE ROAD Safety Authority has urged all drivers to take responsibility for their actions following the multiple fatalities in Donegal. RSA chief executive Noel Brett said it took only a moment for many lives to be ruined. "A split second... has absolutely shattered the lives of eight families and an entire community."

It was important, Mr Brett said, that no one jumped to conclusions about the cause of the crash, but it was equally important that lessons were learned. "When we have a tragedy like this... we have to try to take something positive from it and we would ask people to take personal responsibility for their actions on the roads."

He said the road safety message was not being lost on young people. Some 425 young men between 17 and 24 were killed in crashes from 1998 to 2009, but this was a reduction of 24 per cent over the period.

"We are making huge progress and it is important to say that most young people are very mature in their attitude to road use, but I appeal at this time for younger road users to be extra vigilant on the roads."

Expressing his condolences for the bereaved, Minister for Transport Noel Dempsey urged road users to "redouble their efforts" to improve road safety.

"This past weekend has seen terrible tragedy on our roads. Ten lives were lost in a single weekend, and that is truly shocking.

"I am saddened to hear this news and that families across the country are suffering needlessly. I wish to extend my condolences to the families and communities of all those who lost their lives in Donegal, Galway and Tipperary last weekend. I also wish to praise An Garda Síochána and the emergency services who responded to these incidents."

Mr Dempsey added: "Just over two months ago I accepted an EU award marking Ireland's progress to improve our road safety record. Today we are vividly reminded that we can never, ever become complacent about road safety."

Taoiseach extends his sympathies to families of crash victims from NY

MARY HINNIN

TAOISEACH BRIAN Cowen has extended his sympathies to the families of the eight men who died in a two-car crash in Co Donegal on Sunday night.

Speaking in New York, Mr Cowen said his thoughts and prayers were with the relatives of the deceased.

"I am deeply saddened to learn of these deaths and to learn of the grief and sorrow of the bereaved, who lost loved ones. Each death on our roads is tragic and brings untold suffering to families, friends and the entire community. Our road deaths have been on the rise over the past decade but

that is of no consolation to the bereaved. We must continue to work with all agencies to improve road safety and everyone needs to be vigilant on our roads. Today, my deepest sympathies to the families involved. The people of Inishowen are waking up to another night of grief and sorrow. The people of Inishowen, Mr McHugh said, were walking an extremely "sorely knit" community, and said almost everyone would have some connection to at least one of the victims.

"This is a terrible day for Donegal, and I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to the families involved. The people of Inishowen are waking up to another night of grief and sorrow. The people of Inishowen, Mr McHugh said, were walking an extremely "sorely knit" community, and said almost everyone would have some connection to at least one of the victims.

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Council was working on new safety plan

ELAINE EDWARDS

DONEGAL COUNTY Council had been preparing a new road safety plan in advance of Sunday's multiple-fatality following a spate of other road deaths in the county.

The council said it hoped to publish the new plan "early in the summer". Donegal has seen several crashes involving multiple fatalities in recent years. Among the incidents were:

On January 20th this year, a father and son were killed in a two-car collision on the main Letterkenny to Derry road. They were John Gallagher (55) and his son Seán (24), Keshigoan, Co Donegal.

On November 22nd, 2009, two 19-year-olds were killed in a head-on collision on the N15 north of Stranorlar near Killybeggs.

On May 3rd, 2009, Gary McLaughlin (21) and Darren Downey (20), both first-year students in a single-vehicle crash on the main N12, Derry to Letterkenny road in Newrycombsham.

On November 9th, 2008, father-of-six and mayor of Ballyshannon PJ Branley (58) who was driving a van, was killed, as was his 40-year-old passenger, Deshae McNulty from Ballintra, and the driver of a car, 17-year-old Michael O'Sullivan, from Ballyshannon.

On June 16th, 2007, Terry Ann Meenan (46) and her three-year-

old daughter Nicola were killed instantly when their car hit an oncoming four-wheel drive vehicle towing a trailer full of sheep on the main Letterkenny to Derry road. They were John McLaughlin (54) and her 18-year-old daughter, Louise, from Tannagh, Co Antrim, were killed. They were walking an extremely "sorely knit" community, and said almost everyone would have some connection to at least one of the victims.

"This is a terrible day for Donegal, and I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to the families involved. The people of Inishowen are waking up to another night of grief and sorrow. The people of Inishowen, Mr McHugh said, were walking an extremely "sorely knit" community, and said almost everyone would have some connection to at least one of the victims.

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ROAD CRASH VICTIM GIRL (16) DIES

KATHRYN HAYES

A 16-year-old girl became the latest road crash victim when she lost her battle for life yesterday.

Amy St. John from Woodfield, Newcastlewest, Co Limerick, was critically injured in a two-car collision in Co Limerick on Saturday night.

The teenager was travelling in a car with three other people when it collided with another vehicle in which a couple in their 40s were travelling.

The crash took place at about 10pm near Fochucahin Co Limerick. None of the other people were seriously injured.

Four miles to the east Limerick fire service from Newcastlewest and Rathnure arrived at the scene from 9.30pm until almost 6am on Sunday.

The road between Brannock Bridge and Rathnure was closed until Sunday afternoon to allow for a technical examination.

Amy St. John is survived by her father Thomas, mother Germaine and brother Stefan. Her father is very well known in the sporting circles and manages the senior team at Newcastlewest. Soccer coach.

Local Fintona Fall councillor Michael Collins said the death of the 16-year-old was a tragedy for the entire west Limerick town.

Michael Collins said the death of the 16-year-old was a tragedy for the entire west Limerick town.



Brendan Henderson: jailed over multiple-fatality crash in 2005

Damian Quigg (49), from Duncannon, Derry, his wife Teresa, and Nora McNeil (74) from Letterkenny all died in the crash at Ballynacree.

In May, 2008, Louise Canwell (24), from Carrigrohane, Carrigrohane, was found guilty of dangerous driving causing the deaths of her friends, Alice Mulligan and Kelly Deberry, both 20, at Ballynacree, Carrigrohane, on March 10th, 2006.

In July 2004, three teenagers were killed when the Vauxhall Astra in which they were travelling plunged 106m into a field near Ballynacree between the hills and Buncrana. They were Shane O'Leary (18), Craige View, Buncrana, Owen Deberry (18), Carrigrohane Park, Buncrana, and Aine O'Leary (16), Scharlie Hill, Towarriagh, Scharlie Hill, Towarriagh, Scharlie Hill, Towarriagh.

In June 2004, three Limerick men died in a crash at Granville Gap near Burnislow. They were Brian Searc (18), James Riggs (21) and Maria Valle (22).

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Figure 4: The Irish Times page 3, 13th July, 2010.

The deference of the article's writer towards Brett's authority suggests Brett's stance is or should be uncontested and that his comments should be accepted as common sense. That is ideology masquerading as objectivity, where selection and artifice have been subsumed (Davies, 2009, p. 111). It reveals that the rationalities in play are not themselves to be subject to examination and so personal responsibility becomes a condition of this consensus, "or the prerequisites of acceptance" of the reality of this accident (Lemke, 2002, p. 4).

The implication from the article is that drivers are not taking responsibility. The subtext is that individual actions – whatever they might entail – actually ensure road safety, somehow, by themselves. If the Donegal crash is encompassed, as Brett says, by a "split second" (Kelly, 2010, p. 3), there would appear to be no events outside of that timeframe or no other social actors upon whom to apportion blame. Despite signalling that its cause is unclear⁹, Brett essentially blames the victims of the accident for its occurrence (Ryan, 1976). By encompassing the accident in the fragment of time he describes, he asserts the neoliberal rationality that "the consequences of action are borne by the subject alone, who is also solely responsible for them" (Lemke, 2002, p. 12). This rationality sees actions and choices as "the expression of free will on the basis of a self-determined decision" (Lemke, 2002, p. 12). The RSA or the Gardaí or politicians or local councils are not included in Brett's articulation of this sphere of truth and falsity, of violence and consensus (Lemke, 2002), even though as the RSA (2007) and MacGregor (2009) describe, agencies such as these are included as some of the potential range of actors involved in road safety. This individualisation of responsibility is a key discourse formation of this coverage and a hallmark of neoliberal governmentality.

In their evocation of freedom and free will, strategies of responsabilization rely on claims about freedom that exemplify how neoliberalism is "a political project that endeavours to create a social reality that it suggests already exists" (Lemke, 2002, p. 13). Both liberal and neoliberal programmes of governance operate "with a conception of the subject which sees individuals as prior to society, bearers of natural rights, and either utility maximising agents or rational subjects" (Mouffe, 2000, p. 95). Within his

⁹ This would subsequently be established by process of law: The driver of the VW Passat involved in the accident was sentenced to four years in prison, with two years suspended, in December, 2014 (Harkin, 2014).

conceptualisation of this binary of freedom and constraint, Berlin (1969) identified opposing poles which he termed positive and negative liberty. Positive liberty means making people free, coercing them “in the name of justice, rationality or public health to become wiser, healthier, more virtuous than they were, in order to enable them to realize what their freedom was and to exercise it” (Rose, 1999, p. 67-68). Negative liberty means leaving individuals or groups alone to do what they desire (Rose, 1999, p. 67). The idea that it is necessary to sacrifice some freedom in order to guarantee some liberties or enjoy the state’s protection has a long history however and can be found in Hobbes (1981) and Rousseau (2003) for example (see also Gray, 2000). But for Berlin, positive liberty could easily lead to totalitarianism, such as was the case in the USSR. As a result he favoured negative liberty, which is also emphasised in neoliberal ideology such as in the writings of Hayek (1944), and more recently Berlin’s analysis of freedom has been taken up by US writers in the liberal tradition such as Rawls (1993). This model of liberty is particularly relevant to the concerns of this study. Rajan (2006, p. 118) says that the dominant position suggests this negative liberty has largely been achieved “in the late modern West”, with the car as one of its most “conspicuous expressions”. As Rajan (2006, pp. 113-114) argues:

automobility is not only well attuned to the demands of late modernity, it is also perhaps the most important modern development that could fulfil the unremitting liberal demand for individual autonomy. The single consistent theme running through liberal political theory is the ideal of a free person whose actions are her own. Automobility, on its part, has become the (literally) concrete articulation of liberal society’s promise to its citizens that they can freely exercise certain everyday choices: where they want to live and toil, when they wish to travel and how far they want to go.

But in a neoliberal context, the maintenance of this freedom actually requires constant reinforcement and “reform” of government and social institutions (Rose, 1993); it requires positive liberty. The contention of governmentality is that it is this very maintenance – through “technologies of government” including “technologies of the self” such as the taking of individual responsibility – that constitutes the subject as free in specific and contingent ways (Rose, 1989; Lemke 2002, p. 12). As a result, rather than being opposed to government, it can be seen that freedom is the product of government. In Brett’s words, and the insistence on individual responsabilization, people are ostensibly extended the freedom to drive as they wish but it is a freedom constrained by the insistence on responsible action across various social contexts and

particularly in relation to driving. Both negative and positive strategies of governance are mobilised in this discussion. Brett articulates how liberalism produces freedom, “but this very act entails the establishment of limitations, controls, forms of coercion, and obligations relying on threats, etcetera” (Foucault, 2008, pp. 63-64).

The strategy of responsabilization is echoed by state actors represented in the article. Noel Dempsey, then Minister for Transport, concludes the report by explaining how, within the previous two weeks, he had ironically accepted an EU award for progress made by Ireland in reducing road accidents (Kelly, 2010): “Today we are vividly reminded that we can never ever become complacent about road safety”, he says. Dempsey’s is the voice of state government, another powerful actor in the constitution of discourses of the dispositif of road safety and his words – “that we can never become complacent” – also utilises the common sense “we” so that it includes all right thinking citizens, as well as the RSA, in the net of responsibility for road safety. As Dempsey notes in the introduction to the *Road Safety Strategy* (RSA, 2007, p. 2): “I expect full and timely delivery from each of the agencies responsible for action and I have every confidence that each agency will take its leadership role seriously”. However, he goes on to add: “As politicians and legislators, it is our job to create the context and awareness to allow Ireland to become one of the safest countries in the world. When every citizen takes responsibility, that objective will become more than an aspiration”. So while including state or official agencies, Dempsey ultimately defers to the agency of the citizen in the cause of road safety. To paraphrase Dean (1999, p. 72), Dempsey’s words exemplify the meaning of governance through freedom: the creation of conditions in which subjects enact responsibilities that constitute their liberty. Although Dempsey invokes the autonomous free citizen, it can again be seen that responsibility is the effect of government which requires and constitutes the subject as free to make responsible choices and only in relation to the particular context the government creates (Rose, 1989). Both Brett’s and Dempsey’s construction of the accident cohere. Their words can be viewed as a salutary lesson for “everyone” on the consequences of bad choices, where the assumption is these choices are self-determined and the responsibility of the subject alone, who is constituted within a common sense rationality of neoliberalism (Lemke, 2002, p. 12).

Media ritual, deflection and the redistribution of social responsibility

When authorities such as Brett and Dempsey speak of causes and responsibilities (and their implications) in the way they do here, it represents the dominant framing of the articulation of strategies of road safety. This is a familiar enough framework to be deemed a “media ritual”, implicated, in this case, in the constitution and reinforcement of personal responsibility in road safety as a value that inheres to “our” world (Couldry, 2003). To create the fiction of the responsabilized self, however, also requires deflection and distancing of the subject from “the state” in a way that traces more of the dimensions of the rationality of neoliberalism. In the *Road Safety Strategy* (2007, p. 2) expert authority is redistributed among a range of agencies and “stakeholders” who exist at degrees of remove from the state (“...full and timely delivery from each of the agencies responsible”) in relations predicated on monetary considerations (Richardson, 2007, p. 50). However, responsibility ultimately defers to the citizen (“When every citizen takes responsibility”) as the key site of government intervention. Concomitant with the ritual constitution of autonomous, personally responsible subjects then is the detachment of “the substantive authority of expertise from the apparatuses of political rule” (Rose, 1993, p. 285). The ritualised mediated articulation of this detachment acts to further reinforce personal responsibility and the responsabilized citizen as common sense: as “our” values (Fowler, 1991). The distancing is exemplified by Dempsey’s stating of the ritual mantra of neoliberal government, already signalled: the job of politicians and legislators is to create “awareness” and “context”, rather than actually taking-on direct responsibility for, in this case, road safety.

This deflection of responsibility is the presumption of an institutional authority (the neoliberal state) that sees its job as the redistribution of social responsibility and the reassembly instead of a sovereign responsabilized citizenry (Gilbert, 2013). The contrast between this strategy and the way other liberal ethics are organised can be traced. In neoliberalism or what Rose (1993; 1999) calls advanced liberalism, the strategy of government “does not seek to govern through society, but through the regulated choices of individual citizens” (Rose 1993, p. 285). In the formulation of government under the welfare state, however, the state itself had become transformed “into a centre that could programme – shape, guide, channel, direct, control – events and persons distant from it”. Thus authority and expertise inhered to it rather than to “a

market governed by the rationalities of competition, accountability and consumer demand” (Rose, 1993, p. 285).

In the context of neoliberalism, a taxonomy of authorities and experts in relation to the distribution of responsibilities around the Donegal accident or the dispositif of road safety in general would include the words of other actors such as TDs in their capacities as local representatives, as well as local priests, or the local council for example¹⁰. Indeed, local representatives such as TDs and priests ritually appear in Irish public discourse to speak on behalf of responsabilized citizens and this functions to create distance from official state authority. As will be shown in Chapter 3, local representatives are authorised as experts in the reporting of the emotions of the local community, where ordinary citizens despite their responsabilization become the cyphers of government. Because of their exclusion from the rational discourses of policy solutions to issues of road safety however (Sheller, 2005), the roles of these local representatives can differ substantially from that of other authorities. These include the diffuse agencies and experts that act on a national level, from whom the minister expects “full and timely delivery” of the strategy’s initiatives (RSA, 2007, p. 2). Indeed, it is worth examining the role of the then Chairperson of the RSA, Gay Byrne, in relation to the taxonomy of authorities, because it is exemplary of how national actors are ritually accorded the facility to articulate rational solutions to the problem of road safety. Specifically, in the context of this chapter’s concerns, Byrne has an important

¹⁰ Donegal County Council is given scant coverage in these reports about the accident, however. It is described, ironically, as already working “on a new road safety plan in advance of Sunday’s multiple fatality following a spate of other road deaths in the county” (Edwards, 2010). An un-named spokesperson is briefly quoted as saying the council hoped to publish this plan “early in the summer”, in an article that is substantially concerned with listing multiple fatality road traffic accidents that had occurred in Donegal since 2004 (Edwards, 2010). However, as some of the agencies from which the minister expects results (RSA, 2007, p. 91), local councils are clearly implicated in the distribution of social responsibility around road safety, predicated on market governance and instrumental rationalities. Yet they are not given a similarly authoritative voice to articulate rational solutions to road safety, as national actors are in this context, and simply reinforce the official consensus.

role in endorsing the deflection of expert authority from the state to the regulated choices of individuals (Rose, 1993). Couldry (2012, p. 81) notes that celebrity matters “because it condenses a call to attention towards something common and shared that ‘we’ need to follow”. Byrne’s status as a broadcaster and entertainer on its own confers scant qualification for the role of Chairperson of an authority concerned with the constitution of the dispositif of road safety. But his celebrity not only works to authorise and legitimate the *Road Safety Strategy* as something common and shared and worthy of attention, its media locus telegraphs the assumed centrality of the mainstream media to the organisation of society in the manner envisioned by the strategy (Couldry, 2012). Byrne’s authority differs from the technical authority of Brett or the political authority of Dempsey because it is predicated upon the ritual attachment of media celebrity to the cause of road safety. Byrne authorises and legitimates the strategy by mimicking the instrumentally rational language of Brett and Dempsey. In the introduction to the *Road Safety Strategy*, for example, Byrne sets out how the authority advises the Minister for Transport who then develops policy for road safety, before ritually deferring to the responsibility of the citizen:

We must all take personal responsibility for the way in which we behave; this strategy seeks to engender a sense of public and personal pride about our behaviours on the road and our performance as a nation...

The RSA will report on implementation of this policy and on progress against the targets set out. In addition the strategy document is a handbook for those with responsibility for making road safety happen.

On behalf of the RSA Board I commend this strategy to you and assure you that we will do all that is humanly possible to ensure it is delivered in full so that you and those close to you do not become a tragic statistic...

But I hope the comprehensiveness of this strategy does not detract from one central truth – Road safety comes down to individual behaviour. (RSA, 2007, p. 3)

The way in which the operation of the policy is set out by Byrne – the focus on targets, handbooks, progress, statistics, performance, and the ultimate foregrounding of the individual – indicates how the authority of expertise becomes detached from the state and instrumentalised in the form of particular actions and the organisations of people and things diffused throughout the social infrastructure. Byrne describes not only how responsibility is deferred to the individual, but also the conditions under which the

competitive market in road safety can operate: In talk of generating targets and performance he speaks of competition and enterprise; in referring to reporting and progress he speaks of accountability, and in bracketing the same equation in relation to personal responsibility, Byrne speaks of the ethic of good neoliberal citizenship (Gilbert, 2013; Lemke, 2002; Ouellette and Hay, 2008, p. 474). This ethic constitutes the morality of how subjects are “obliged to be free”, through “choice, autonomy, self-responsibility as well as the obligation to maximise one’s life as a kind of enterprise” (Rose 1999, p. 87; Rose; O’Malley, and Valverde, 2006, p. 91).

Indeed, responsabilization constructs subjects “whose moral quality is based on the fact that they rationally assess the costs and benefits of a certain act as opposed to alternative acts” (Lemke, 2002, p. 12). Dean (2010, p. 19) argues that government is therefore an “intensely moral activity” where government presumes knowledge in relation to what constitutes responsible conduct – right and wrong – and articulates this knowledge towards individuals in these entrepreneurial terms. In his capacity as Chairperson of the RSA, Byrnes words implicitly emphasise the continuum of government, because he is the totem of an agency constituted at a remove from the organs of the state tasked with implementing processes of responsabilization around road safety. In setting out the conditions under which the market operates, Byrne’s words become exemplary of how neoliberal rationalities can be ritually applied to define understanding of any social problem and how these act outside of purely economic calculations to become “a new regime of truth” that encompasses morality and ethics (Foucault, 1975; Read, 2009, p. 28). The communicative frame evident in these documents – of responsabilization of individuals on one side of the coin and the deflection of responsibility (for expert authority, for example) on its obverse – constructs the detachment of responsibility from the state as part of a natural centre of “our” way of life. This in turn is predicated upon an assumption that the media’s natural stake in this process is to reflect this “fact” (Couldry, 2003; Couldry, 2008a, p. 96). The need for the state is to find a way to account for the indeterminate nature of human action. Government needs something that reinforces but simultaneously deflects attention from the contingent “forms of knowledge, strategies of power and technologies of the self” immanent within neoliberalism (Lemke, 2012, p. 7) while redistributing the state’s own responsibilities along the continuum of government, ultimately to individual citizens. Strategies of governmentality address this need admirably. The mediated policy context of the Donegal accident is not just about the moral constitution of assemblages of car and

drivers or the dispositif of road safety then, it is illustrative of the constitution of society as it “ought” to be.

Governmentality and the discipline of vigilance

As well as encouraging responsabilization and the creation of distance between authority and the state, strategies of governmentality work in another way: by pitching the threat of the removal of freedom as the price of freedom itself. On page 3 of *The Irish Times* on the 13th of July, the Taoiseach ritually offers his condolences to those affected by the accident: “I am deeply saddened to learn of these deaths and I want to extend my sincere sympathies to everyone who lost loved ones. Each death is tragic and brings untold suffering to families, friends and the entire community” (Minihan, 2010). However, the Taoiseach also takes the opportunity to note that road deaths have halved in past decade and adds: “that is no consolation to the loved ones of those who have died this weekend. We must continue with our efforts to improve road safety and everyone needs to be vigilant on our roads”. The repeating concept of vigilance is most significant here (It also appears in the story by Kelly [2010] for example). The word exists as the obverse of freedom. Contained within its foregrounding is an implicit threat – if the price of freedom is eternal vigilance, a failure to maintain vigilance becomes tantamount to the removal of freedom. The call to vigilance is another example of the way in which the binary of freedom and constraint is invoked in discourses of road safety where liberty is to be defended against the power of the state (Hindess, 1996, p. 65) – ironic here, given this is enunciated by the most powerful of state actors. However, in terms of governmentality the irony disappears and the Taoiseach’s words actually represent the recasting of disciplinary power as a technology or instrument of government.

In the Taoiseach’s equation, freedom pertains to those who keep the “vigil” on the roads, with freedom, life even, taken away from those who do not. “Vigilance” signifies a rational heed of real danger, although at first it is not especially clear how this is actually achieved. However, when one considers that threats to freedom emerge not only from the possibility of accident, but also from potential censure by an enhanced set of disciplinary instruments and measures mooted as part of the *Road Safety Strategy*, the attempted constitution of a subject who lives her freedom by avoiding these threats

becomes much clearer. The *Road Safety Strategy* includes 24 separate enforcement “action numbers” for example. These include:

the rollout of Garda Traffic Corps across all Divisions to planned manning level and with all necessary equipment, technology and administrative support... Achieve a target level of compliance with speed limits for cars and motor cycles... Implement a Safety Camera Network in the region of 6,000 hours enforcement per month...determine the incidence of drink driving in Ireland and achieve a target level of compliance with drink driving law... Expand the range of road safety related offences covered by way of penalty points and administrative fines... Develop and ensure effective sanctions for all vehicles and drivers on Irish roads. (RSA, 2007, p. 56-59)

That there is never certainty about when one becomes subject to the gaze of these new disciplinary instruments, as perhaps most clearly illustrated in the case of the introduction of speed cameras, is a given. Consequently, vigilance is required to mitigate the threat not only of accident but also of detection and punishment of transgression. This illustrates how “discipline” is also implicated in the construction of the “subjectivity which is necessary to the successful operation of a particular regime of power/knowledge” (Stewart, 2001, p. 18). Subjects are made free, empowered in a sense by the threat of discipline that constitutes some of the terrain upon which responsabilized citizens can “freely” work on themselves, in a manner congruent with a neoliberal rationality (Lemke, 2002, p. 12). Therefore the constitution of freedom on the road is dependent upon the forbearance of the powerful through technologies of discipline and the threat of domination that inheres to these, as well as upon responsabilized vigilance as a form of self-regulation. As a continuum, government does not abandon strategies of discipline nor the potential for domination. These co-exist as instruments of governance along with technologies of the self (Lemke, 2002)¹¹.

The risk to life and limb that exists in unforeseen events such as road traffic accidents, as well as the risk of punishment, is mitigated through vigilance (O’Malley, 1992), but these risks are not expunged. This is explicitly recognised in the *Road Safety Strategy*: “The RSA accepts that to strive for 100 per cent compliance is desirable but recognises that it can never be achieved” (RSA, 2007, p. 56). This illustrates the limitation of strategies of responsabilization: while framing the accident in terms of such strategies

¹¹ The ways in which the cameras operate as a disciplinary power is more specifically discussed in Chapter 4.

might endeavour “to create a social reality that it suggests already exists” (Lemke, 2002, p. 13), this reality cannot simply be enacted through utterance or media reports. However, this is not so much because of the failure of programs of government or the media in the face of reality. It is because of the operation of “different realities and heterogeneous strategies” (Lemke, 2002, p. 9) of the actors that constitute the assemblages of car-drivers, the dispositif of road safety, and the networks of automobility in all their complexity. This draws attention attention to how actual drivers conceptualise their freedom and responsibility on the road.

Responsibilization and the practices of freedom

The neoliberal paradox is that the responsabilized subject can be made to materialise through strategies of intervention, but is also the assumed entity at whom strategies are aimed. Questions remain as to the extent to which this free subject actually emerges in practice however; that is, how the agency of the users of the system of automobility not only cohere with and diverge from exhortations to be responsible, but also how heterogeneous strategies circulate within and mesh with lived experience. Discourse analysis of media representations alone cannot describe the experience of car use from which meanings are made by users themselves (Schram, 1993; Chen, 2001). Commuting, with its collective commitment to “rational, universalistic, legal and formal rules of the road”, as described by Keohane, Kuhling, and Horgan (2002, p. 50), expresses well the dominant mentality of automobility in action. By analysing the experiences of commuters about their driving practices some the processes of meaning-making involved in these practices can be explored. Specifically, the ways in which policy contexts of responsabilization and freedom are lived outside of the analysis of media representation (Flick, 2002; Kirby 2002) can be analysed, and the extent to which responsabilized subjects materialise in the lived reality of the dispositif of road safety and networks of automobility can be discussed.

Escape potential: “The dream of how we’d like our lives to be”

In the following account from Barry (f1), it can start to be shown how concepts of both freedom and constraint already explored are lived in responsabilized commuting practice:

I remember when (my uncle) left his job commuting from Greystones to Donnybrook. And he had counted – what was driving him mad – he had counted the number of traffic lights he had to go through every day. And eventually that was breaking point. He left the job and he went down to county Kerry to set up a restaurant. Something completely different. But often that was in the back of my head you know? Because that's the kind of commute that I have. I don't even want to know how many traffic lights I go through. So em, No. I wouldn't be thinking. Radio on in the background. I have a few calls – work related mostly.

Barry's words contain a lament: a cauterised desire to break free from the daily grind, the chance of a better life tantalisingly offered yet also taken away by the exigencies of work and the environmental requirement to drive. Barry's autonomy and freedom is here set against the demands of work, but he still expresses faith in the inherent potential for escape the car is said to provide.

While Barry's comments represent the desire for a break from the "tyranny" of the daily commute, other commuters describe how the car can enable minor rebellions in the face of quotidian needs, as well as facilitating its toil. What is indicated is that commuters conceptualise their autonomy in a complex freedom / constraint binary in which neither absolutely negates the other. The car is both constraining and liberating. Indeed, notions of escape associated with the car, set against implicit constraints, really resonate with commuters:

Evelyn: I often get into the car and just drive around. I'm a Sunday driver!

Gerard: It's the potential.

Dermot: It's the potential – you could do it like. (Evelyn, Gerard, Dermot f5)

Susan noted that she made fewer of these journeys than before:

They're slightly fewer and further between at the moment because everything is revolving around college – But yeah even just in the evening time driving out the coast road and going to Howth and that area and just looking out over the city it's absolutely beautiful. (Susan, f8)

David, a car enthusiast, also lamented his own associations with the freedom the car is said to provide:

...I keep going back: I think the 25 year old David just loved cars and it's funny how cars I bought for a couple of grand back when I was 25, I probably enjoyed my driving experience more then than I do now.

Facilitator: Why is that?

David: I think maybe it's because maybe everything was new to you – I think every spin down to the shop, every spin to work was just great craic. And you're younger. I was picking up <my wife>, dating <my wife>.

Michelle: There was an independence to it.

David: There was an independence to it as alright. And it was all great fun.
(David and Michelle, f4)

Evelyn delineated her own notion of self-determination associated with the car, saying: “I liked the freedom, you're not relying on anyone – I suppose it's independence isn't it”? (Evelyn, f5). “Autonomy”, Gerard added (Gerard, f5). Una differentiated between driving in the city and the country in terms of the freedom they offer: “I like the strangeness of it, because I'm city driving every day – it's great to get a blast out of the car”, she said (Una, f6). Caroline noted that on her days off, her own experiences of escape centred on the freedom from having a set destination, as well as freedom from the interference of others:

I'm a great one for disappearing. I get up in the morning and I'm gone – People are ringing me going “Where are you”? “I'm gone for the day”...Leave me alone stop ringing me!”...I take the car and I'm deciding where I'm going as I'm going. So if I hit a bit of traffic or this road is driving me mad – I'll just go off on another road and it doesn't matter...then it becomes much more relaxing – then it's just out for a spin – freedom.
(Caroline, f7)

Similarly, Susan related her love of driving to “that sense of complete freedom to go wherever I wanted” experienced on her first long distance journey as a driver (Susan, f8).

But even while elaborating on what the freedom of the car meant to him, Barry (f1) encapsulates the ambiguity attached to all these experiences:

Just the flexibility – freedom to – flexibility – free will – I want to go to Galway this evening – just go.

Facilitator: Do you ever do that?

Brid: It's individual – it's individual freedom

Barry: What? The odd time when I, eh.

Facilitator: When was the last time you said – “feck it I’m going to Galway?”!

Barry: Or yeah – okay – that’s a bad example! (General laughter)

(Barry and Brid, f1)

While Barry’s and others’ reflections rely on dualist conceptions of freedom and constraint, they actually describe how the conditions of freedom and autonomy are constituted and lived in practice as technologies of the self (Rose, 1999, p. 72; Lemke, 2002, p. 12) and how the ideal of freedom is materially instantiated and sacrificed to the exigencies of work and life. For commuters, for example, freedom was “freer” in the past, but the responsibilities of work and college increasingly denied and encroached upon the potential autonomy provided by the car. Alternately, freedom could only be experienced at certain times of the day or week or outside of work. This delineates some of these commuters’ self-described obligation to be free (Rose, 1999, p. 87) in that they are required to self-regulate their car-based freedoms around the exigent demands of their work and study lives. In other words, commuters maintain a level of freedom by negotiating constraints on it through their responsabilized choices – to continue working, to not break free, to see the potential to “escape” as one that would disappear if the choice were taken too often. So these choices are managed and freedoms are taken parsimoniously, at weekends and at odd times that constitute the specificity of their obligation to be free, and thus constitute how their freedom is lived. In commuters’ reflections on their driving, technologies of the self, specifically in the form of the self-regulation of their choices, emphasise the broader conception of government considered as a continuum (Lemke, 2002).

That some construed the diminution of their opportunities to experience car-based freedom as a lament is predicated on the idea that the freedom the car provides is also true, “permanently desirable” (Rajan, 2006, pp. 113-4), and a common sense of life that requires little consideration or exploration. As was the case in the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident, the freedom to drive is immediately constrained by required responsible conduct across social contexts – and for these commuters this manifests in practices related to work, study, and the need to support families and make a living.

The potential of the car to be a substitute for freedom is validated by commuters, whether or not it is actually provided. Commuters recognise the car as a sign-vehicle for dominant, yet highly contingent, meanings about freedom such as those articulated in car advertising. But rather than finding the disjuncture between the car's potential for freedom and its reality alienating, they see it as aspirational and desirable. Fiona (f1) encapsulates this point in the context of advertising, in a way that reinforces my earlier analysis of how car advertising structures the opposition between freedom and constraint: "They're selling a driver experience there without a doubt. Your commute is probably not your 'driving experience' ...They're selling you a little dream and we all want buy in to that...Our dream of how we'd like our lives to be".

Overall, while commuters' articulation of the desirability of breaking free aligns with the neoliberal emphasis on the desirability of, in Berlin's (1969) terms, negative freedom similar to that explored in the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident, the maintenance of freedom requires constant reinforcement and negotiation. Commuters' freedom, as they practice it, is a product of these negotiations and their self-government.

Dimensions of the responsabilized subject: economically moral actors and the ubiquity of the car

The foregrounding of the importance of work and study has revealed important factors that condition freedom within discourses of responsabilization such as those explored in the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident. The discussion has thus identified some of the terrain upon which responsabilized citizens work on themselves through forms of self-regulation in this context. A responsabilized subject negotiating the conflicting demands of life and the freedom provided by the car quickly materialises. There are more dimensions involved in the conditioning of this car-driver subject however and the economically moral actor that will now be explored is another important facet of how freedom is constituted through the networks of automobility in Ireland.

Brendan (f6) complained that the pleasure of driving in Dublin city had disappeared because of the extent of congestion and added that the high cost of cars actually increased traffic because it made sense for people to use them as much as possible:

You're not going to leave that major investment sitting in your driveway rusting and getting on to relatively poor public transport...I know a lot of people who would absolutely say ... I've spent so much money on buying this car – there's no way I'm going to leave it for...five days a week and...get public transport in.
(Brendan, f6)

Brendan's words connect with those of Gay Byrne, as quoted above, where Byrne relocates expertise to within a market governed by neoliberal rationalities and ultimately deferred to the responsabilized self (Rose, 1993, p. 285). This is because Brendan shows the same equation between morality and a cost-benefit analysis that Byrne does (Lemke, 2002, p. 12; Gilbert, 2013). This ethic of good neoliberal citizenship (Ouellette and Hay, 2008, p. 474) can be deployed in practice to rationalise any social problem where citizens look to themselves as responsabilized actors, not only concerning solutions to these problems, but also regarding their cause. Here moral economic behaviour has been articulated by Brendan, making congestion its effect. By mobilizing the neoliberal rationality that consequences are borne by subjects alone (Lemke, 2002, p. 12), Brendan also philosophically aligns with the assumption in Noel Brett's analysis that a "split second" encompassed the accident in Donegal. The context is different, but what is highlighted is the assumption of the autonomous subject further articulated in relation to the practices of the networks of automobility. The point is that the conceptualisations, ethics and morals assumed by Brendan correspond with those of Byrne and Brett.

Focus group two was asked how they managed the freedoms associated with the car in relation to its potential risks, such as the danger of traffic accidents. This led to discussion of accidents in which these commuters had been involved. The conversation took place late in the session, long after focus group participants had been eased into discussion, when they seemed comfortable with the exploration of what is a potentially sensitive topic (Barbour, 2007, p. 83). Brian (f2) offered his own experiences:

I hit a cyclist one night in Dublin – I was going through a green light and out of nowhere this cyclist was in front of me and suddenly he was over the bonnet...I was very lucky – because the car coming up from the other side was a cop car...But he was thrown and he was sprawled out across the other side of the road. And of course, I was petrified because I thought this is the end of me I will never drive again because I'm going to be loaded to the hilt...Turned out that cops took charges against him, for driving without a light on his bike and going through a red light. So I mean there are risks and there are things that you could not imagine happening. (Brian f2)

Like Brendan, Brian understands the incident he describes economically and rationalises his morality “according to a particular calculation of cost for benefit” (Read, 2009, p. 28). His foregrounding of anxiety around risk minimisation makes it seem as if Brian is more concerned with his insurance premiums than the fate of the cyclist. As Rose (1999, p. 160) notes: “This prudent person is no longer mutualised but autonomized. Thrift is recast as investment in a future lifestyle of freedom”. Brian is made a locus of action, but is also atomised, made to consider only his own future rather than the welfare of others in the fragmentation of the social space (Rose, 1999, p. 160) that his market-mentality represents. His future freedom relates to his future insurability to drive. Brian’s expression of this “new prudentialism” occurs in a scenario where morality or ethics, as has already been shown in Brendan’s case, becomes synonymous with economic calculation (Rose, 1999, p. 159; Browne, 2003, pp. 13/15). The economically moral actor is, therefore, not only constituted in the discourse formations of the mediatisation of the Donegal accident. These examples indicate that, in practice, a moral economy defined by individualised self-care is a dimension of the technologies of the self of responsabilized neoliberal citizens.

The articulation of the unknowability of others’ conduct in relation to the equation of morality to economic behaviour occurs in further scenarios, continuing the practice of the ritual application of market rationality to delineate all social forms (Maddison, 2013, p. 106). Chris and Geraldine (f2) had recently been involved in a road traffic accident and they explained how it changed their driving practices. Geraldine noted that at the junction the accident occurred, she now drove in the other lane, a risk management strategy. Chris directly reflected on the consequences of the accident:

It worries me more that it wasn't your fault. That's made me more aware that despite what I do, something bad can happen to me – the one thing I do feel uncomfortable about is stopping at a traffic light and knowing that somebody could potentially ram into the back of me and paralyse me and there's nothing I can do about that. So that's one thing I took from that – like we were lucky, but I would say that how it affects you is mostly determined by how damaged you are – we weren't really that damaged. (Chris, f2)

Discussions in focus group two continued around the idea that one cannot eliminate all risk associated with travel by car. Geraldine noted that if the risks were at the forefront of your thinking all the time “you would never drive” (Geraldine, f2), while Beth said “I try and dull those voices down because that would really freak you out” (Beth, f2). Chris argued that even when confronted with an actual accident on the road, people had very short memories: “within a kilometre, everyone is back to whizzing, flying changing lanes, no signalling”, he said (Chris, f2). Caroline (f7) also expressed similar sentiments when she was asked about the risks associated with driving:

It's the behaviour of other people – because even if I did something and it caused an accident – I'd say right, it's my own fault – I did this or I did that. But if somebody else causes it – that would bother me substantially more because then it's like: “this has happened to me because you're a gobshite” – and then that's just a whole other ball-game. (Caroline, f7)

It is interesting to note the driving imperative in commuters' reflections on their commuting practices. For many commuters, the concept of not driving at all or the idea of life without the car does not come into discussion. That imperative, at least in part, comes down to a culture of the car and the faith commuters express in its dubious capacity for escape and flexibility, as well as associations with the car's ability to provide “the good life” (Urry, 2005, p. 26). This culture is a powerful actor; an important part of the context of commuting that constitutes how freedom in automobility is lived in practice.

In addition, for political theorists concerned with the maximisation of the liberty of the individual, the ethical negotiations of commuters might be considered as expressing a freedom that “consists in controlling one's behaviour by one's unforced choice while having knowledge of relevant circumstance” (Gewirth, 1990, p. 216). But it can be seen that the choices of commuters are not unforced at all. They are enabled and constrained not only by the requirement for responsible action across social contexts, but also by the types of social action (Dant, 2005) the culture of the car and the networks of

automobility in their ubiquity facilitate and impede. Freedom, as commuters live it, is a product of choices that exist within the context of automobility's "particular form of social and material life", its routines of false necessity that make it "nearly imperceptible as a social fact" (Rajan 2006 pp. 114/117). This reminds us of Miller's (2001, p. 3) point "that we think our world through a sense of the self in which driving, roads, and traffic are simply integral to who we are and what we presume to do each day". The car's ubiquity and the economically moral actor together reinforce each other and are important dimensions of the constitution of automobility and its freedoms.

Given a research focus on car-commuting, it could be argued that a finding emphasizing the importance of the economic and work is unsurprising. However, the connection between commuting, the economically moral responsabilized subject and the ethics of good citizenship is by no means a given (Ouellette and Hay, 2008, p. 471) so that it appears in this context is, therefore, illustrative of the permeation of such discourses. As already explored, commuting is usually backgrounded and is rarely portrayed as a source of contestation; it is emblematic of collective thought that is taken for granted and not usually open to question (Dean, 1999, p. 16; Moran 2005, p. 28). It is commuting's unexamined particularity that allows it to serve as an effective technology producing neoliberal mentalities and moralities in automobility. Its very un-remarkableness is actually remarkable; its unexamined particularity is what places it at the heart, if such a thing existed, of the government of (and by) automobility.

Limits of the responsabilized subject: deflection and the interpretation of road safety messages

So far it has been explored how the binary of freedom and constraint plays out in the practice of automobility, including how the exigencies of work, morality, and the ubiquity of automobility act in the constitution of freedom in the system. But how strategy interventions in the dispositif of road safety are actually managed by commuters has not yet been discussed. It has already been explored how commuters' practices are contrived to make individual responsibility for risk minimisation "a feature of the choices that are made by individuals, households and communities as consumers, clients and users of services" (Rose, 1999, p. 159). Yet a conditioning agent in the meshing of mediated discourses of road safety and that of commuters is deflection, but it operates in different ways to how deflection of authority is mediated in the material

that has already been explored. The articulation of policy strategy through the mediatisation of the Donegal accident urges drivers towards responsabilization and deflects responsibility away from state and national actors. But commuters can also deflect blame away from themselves and towards the “system” and especially towards other road users, making safety more a matter of the personal provisions of others rather than themselves. This mode of deflection was a feature Maxwell (2001) also found in his study of Cambridge commuters, but the particularity of its operation is different in the Irish research context and deflection is not a feature of every commuter’s experience of their driving practices.

In discussion of road behaviour for example, my commuters cite instances of ways in which others act in an “incorrect” or “unsafe” manner but go on to describe their responses to these actions in ways that can also be considered questionable in terms of the rules of the road and road safety strategies of responsabilization. While quite humorous, this indicates the negotiated interpretation and lived nature of the responsabilization espoused in media articulation of policy strategies. Thus the limits of the responsabilized subject, and how heterogeneous strategies operate to limit the media’s symbolic and ritual power to constitute that subject (Couldry, 2003; Lemke, 2002), can begin to be seen.

Caitriona pointed out that people should generally keep left while on the motorway, unless overtaking, so should never “hog” the middle lane. However, her remedy for dealing with middle-lane hogs is overtaking on the left¹²:

¹² S.I. No. 294/1964 - Road Traffic General Bye-Laws (Irish Statute Book 1964) states that:

(3) A driver shall overtake on the right and shall not move in towards the left until it is safe to do so.

(4) Notwithstanding paragraph (3) of this bye-law, a driver may overtake on the left—

(a) where the driver of the vehicle about to be overtaken has signalled his intention to turn to the right and the driver of the overtaking vehicle intends, after having overtaken, to go straight ahead or to turn to the left,

(b) where the driver of the overtaking vehicle intends, after having overtaken, to turn left at a road junction and has signalled this intention,

Well I lived in the UK for 19 years. So I learned how to use the motorway – three lanes right? Irish people tend to sit...in the middle lane...instead of being on the inside lane. They don't seem to get that. So I'm on the inside and I pass them on the inside doing the speed limit – I don't speed – and they're sitting there doing like 90 (Km/h). (Caitriona, f3)

Here, Caitriona foregrounds speed as a bigger offence compared to “undertaking” (“I pass them on the inside doing the speed limit”). Caitriona’s actions are a negotiation of road safety messages that foreground the problematic subject position of the speeding driver. This frame is often the target of disciplinary measures (and it is said that “Speed Kills” [Keohane, Kuhling, and Horgan, 2002, p. 50]) that have little to say about the consequences resulting from commuters’ heeding of speed-limits in-lieu of other rules of the road. In her actions, Caitriona is governing her vigilance on the road but in transgressive ways. The likelihood of detection of punishable behaviours related to undertaking seems much less than speeding, whether or not she sees her actions related to overtaking on the left as questionable (she clearly doesn’t).

In a similar fashion, Anne recalled a road safety ad related to drink-driving in which a speeder loses control of his car, hits a kerb and violently over-turns several times, crashing through a wall and killing a child. As a result of this ad, her mother now drives in the middle of the road. As she explained:

She’s actually driving out at the white line and I’m telling her – don’t be out! It’s because the kerb made the car flip (in the ad) – for her now she won’t align the car over at the left – and I keep telling her it’s more dangerous to be over at the white line if someone comes. (Anne, f8)

(c) in slow-moving traffic, when vehicles in the traffic lane on the driver's right are moving more slowly than the overtaking vehicle.

(4)(c) is the important statutory instrument for interpreting Caitriona’s actions as questionable. The Garda National Traffic Bureau (2015) clarify that overtaking on the left is only acceptable in the context of traffic congestion in this case, which does not apply to the scenario Caitriona describes.

A recent road safety advertisement about texting and driving, in which someone walking while texting continually bumps into other people was also cited by Michelle (f4). The ad points out that it is difficult to walk and text, never mind drive and text at the same time, but Michelle had a slightly different take on this. She noted that it was more about personal accountability compared to other ads about crashing:

It goes to show you the impact you have on other people. Whereas the crash ads you always assume that's somebody else who crashed into me...Because there's only him – he's the only one...So you just assume well that's...his accountability. He's bumping in to other people who are minding their own business and he's the one not focused, the one not paying attention.

(Michelle, f4)

This ad resonates with Michelle because it disallows the possibility of passing-off responsibility for road safety to others. This shows commuters can see responsabilization as desirable and proper and thus they do not always wish to deflect responsibility to others. David (f4) goes on to mention another road safety ad in which the perpetrator and the victim turn out to be the same person, which has a similar personal responsibility message-effect for him. Further examples of negotiated readings of safety messages included the topic of the proper use of roundabouts and yellow box junctions, in which commuters also translated the meaning of the ads into their own “lifeworld” of driving¹³ (Husserl, 1970).

A number of points are suggested by these exchanges. Anne, Michelle, and Caitriona's comments highlight the way texts are decoded within frameworks of meaning that include the reinterpretation and renegotiation of existing practices of driving (Hall, 1980). The silence of road safety strategies around such negotiated meanings can be read by commuters as tacit authorization of such actions. Road safety ads which emphasise personal responsibility can be interpreted by some commuters as being about

¹³ Discussion of ads in Michelle's group emerged out of conversations around bad habits, such as the use of mobile phones while driving. During that discussion, commuters did not view the ad about texting and driving mentioned above during the session. I did refer to it as the recent ad about texting and driving but did not describe it in any detail, nor show it. My brief reference was enough to prompt knowledgeable discussion by all participants about this ad and on road safety ads in general, however.

the culpability of others. This is because the narrative of the ad is set up in viewer's minds as involving people that these viewers don't identify with – typically young men and women, rather than middle-aged women such as Michelle (f4). Commuters' interpretation of road safety advertising involves the rationalisation of adverts' messages in light of their renegotiation of their own (driving) practices. While they were very familiar with the genre of road safety ads, commuters' interpretation were varied and messy, signalling that a dimension of the responsabilized subject is that the material management of responsabilization involves elements of interpretation that can change or subvert the goals of the strategy in practice.

These points have implications. While commuters enact responsibilities that constitute their liberty and the conditions for this are created by governance through freedom (Dean, 1999, p. 72), this is not to say that commuter actions can be free from unintended consequences. This is the case even when their intention was to transpose responsabilization strategies directly into action. Given commuters' interpretation and responsabilized management of road safety messages, the suggestion is that there are plenty of opportunities for policy strategies to exempt the “selves” they are trying to responsabilize from the messages they espouse. This is not so much about the failure of strategy per se, but rather exemplifies how rationalities are “part of a reality characterised by the permanent ‘failure’ of programs” (Lemke, 2002, p. 9). As already suggested, the “difference between the envisioned aims of a program and its actual effects does not refer to the purity of the program and impurity of reality, but to the different and heterogeneous realities and strategies” (Lemke, 2002, p. 9).

This underlines the ultimate unknowability of the results of shaping the self into the manageable forms that governmentality and responsabilization suggest (Rabinow and Rose, 2003, p. xx). What is shown here is how the responsabilization strategies such as those articulated through the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident, while influential, do not simply determine commuters' practices. As with the other dimensions that have been identified, these strategies are part of the networks of actors that constitute the freedom the car provides in practice in automobility. Commuters' self-government is often an attempt to manage the reality of the ultimate unknowability or unpredictability of others actions. This is in accordance with Dean's (1999, p. 13) account of governmentality. Commuters' negotiations do not represent the wholesale rejection of road safety strategies, with consequential actions that are unrecognisable

with respect to mainstream discourses extant in the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident, for example. Commuter conduct instead “plays” with the meaning of strategies, but the political effect of their deviation from the suggested responsabilization seems weak.

Conclusion

Through the examination of the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident, the lived reality of positive and negative liberty as immanent to the production of freedom has been investigated. That freedom in governmentality is actually produced in very specific ways through forms of government stretching from political government to technologies of the self (Lemke, 2002) has been explored. This constitutes a radical reconceptualization of the binary of freedom versus constraint commonly articulated in popular cultural and the academic representations of the car explored in this chapter, because it systematically links freedom to (self) government, rather than conceptualising freedom as being in opposition to government.

By analysing the common sense construction of individual responsibility as an ultimate expression of road safety in neoliberal governmentality, one of the most important ways in which the production of freedom is discursively attempted in the dispositif of road safety has been explored. To sustain the fiction of the responsabilized self also requires the distancing of this subject from the institutions of state government, however. And it has been shown how this is attempted through the detachment of expert authority from the state and the fabrication of a competitive market for road safety, in which the remaining role of state actors centres on the creation of “context” and “awareness”. Meanwhile, in the equation of morality with economic analysis, the ethic of neoliberal citizenship delineated more of the ways in which subjects are obliged to be free (Rose 1999, p. 87; Rose; O’Malley, and Valverde, 2006, p. 91). It was also pointed out how this obligation exists under the threat of discipline, emphasising both the continuum of government in processes of governmentality and the acknowledged limitations of strategies of responsabilization by themselves. Such limitations are explicitly recognised in the *Road Safety Strategy* (RSA, 2007, p. 56), as already noted, when it states total compliance with policy objectives is not an achievable goal.

In this chapter the ways in which commuters variably “buy into” the problematic idea of the freedom of the car and conceive of their own liberty in terms of a complex binary of

freedom and constraint has also been explored. Their practices of freedom show how apparently free choices are immediately constrained by responsibilities regarding work, study, and family, as well as by the types of social action automobility makes conceivable, facilitates, and disrupts. This means commuters' freedom as they practice it is a product of negotiations between different forms of "government" including their self-regulation and responsabilization, as well as the threat of discipline.

Commuters underline how technologies of the self constitute the dispositif of road safety in practice in messy ways that also signal the limits of specific responsabilization strategies, in relation to their ability to create the outcomes they envision. In Brian's (f2) reflection on the accident in which he hit a cyclist, he shows tacit awareness of such limits, in that he realises that no matter how he behaves, unknowable events may occur anyway. In these contexts, probabilistic and entrepreneurial techniques of risk management are engaged in through the maximisation of vigilance, as suggested in mediated discourses, and by pondering the effects of such incidents on motor insurance premiums, for example, rather than on concern for the welfare of others (Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde, 2006, p. 95). The fear of road traffic accidents becomes articulated economically, in a way that characterises the constitution of the neoliberal subject both in the dispositif of road safety and in the practices of the networks of automobility.

Commuters express anxieties that flow from the atomisation and individuation of society that neoliberalism necessitates. So an outcome of the economic thinking articulated by Brian (f2) and Brendan (f6), for example, is social anxiety and alienation expressed in the fear of being unable to manage others. Responsibilization strategies only go so far in helping us protect ourselves, not only when their interpretation and practice can differ from person to person, but also when consequences cannot be managed or measured in their totality. But there was little sense from commuters that there could be further roles for political actors, for example, in trying to alter the apparently immutable dangers of a responsabilized world, or that the neoliberal economic subject channelled by these commuters is a contingent one. What commuter reflections on driving lack then is a reflexive or self-conscious sense of the way that this assemblage of freedom has been constituted or how the car's integration into our sense of self and what we do each day is conditional (Miller, 2001). Commuters' reflections on their driving practices show their experiences of freedom as it is lived as an

instrument of government, involving a myriad of actors beyond our “selves”. But it is a freedom expressed as a never-ending struggle between an autonomous subject and an, albeit complex, binary of freedom and constraint. In this sense, strategies of responsabilization seem to work well to embed neoliberal rationalities that valorise a self-determination in which “the consequences of actions are borne by the subject alone”, as Lemke (2002, p. 10) suggests. This shows how market logic works to depoliticise individual autonomy (Maddison, 2013, p. 106).

So far, though, the exploration of the range of actors implicated in the constitution of the dispositif of road safety and the system of automobility has only scratched the surface of these networks. A sense of the complex networks of materiality and sociality that constitute assemblages of car-drivers (Dant, 2005; Merriman, 2005, p. 158) as free has quickly emerged, however. These actors include popular cultural and academic references to the car, articulations of strategies of road safety, and the exigencies of work and commuting that have been explored here. But these are not the only constituting entities. The ways that the automobile facilitates relationships for commuters has already been touched upon, and this draws attention to how the car can be used to express what are often emotional needs. At the same time, the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident also routinely deploys emotional forms of mediation in attempting to account for the negative consequences of the car’s circulation. These emotional facets of automobility cannot be ignored. Therefore identifying the role of some of these affective actors is the next task in the exploration of the relationships between the mediation of the dispositif of road safety and the everyday practices of drivers.

Chapter 3: Networks of emotions and affects

Introduction

In the previous chapter's analysis of the attempted construction of the citizen governed through their freedom, the striking articulation of emotional and affective modes of communication was an issue that remained in the background. However, this aspect of the dispositif of road safety needs to be foregrounded for cars and driving carry meaningful affective resonance. Indeed, Sheller (2005, p. 221) argues that automobility "is implicated in a deep context of affective and embodied relations between people, machines and spaces of mobility and dwelling, in which emotions and the senses play a key part". Given their significance, the role of these emotional and affective modes of communication to the constitution of the social order cannot simply be dismissed. In keeping with the concerns of my research and the framework of governmentality, the question to explore is the work that emotions and affects do within the dispositif of road safety and the practices of commuters. In this chapter, I analyse the emotional and affective components of the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident and commuters' reflections on their commuting practices. I explore how "feelings" function to generate or attempt to generate specific effects within texts and in social meaning structures (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 19) in the networks of automobility in Ireland.

Emotion, or affect, is difficult to analyse and define. For Terada (2001, p. 4) emotional and affective modes together comprise feeling, encompassing both the former as "at least minimally interpretive...psychological states" and the latter as its "physiological aspect". Massumi (2002) considers affect to be bodily and autonomic in character, while emotion is the semantic and semiotic recognition of affect. Therefore emotion becomes socio-linguistic or discursive. However, Gorton (2007, p. 334) notes that "the nature and degree of difference between emotion and affect" form a contested terrain. Ngai (2005, p. 27) for example argues that emotion and affect in psychoanalysis differentiate first from third person feeling "and, by extension, feeling that is contained by an identity from feeling that is not". Ngai (2005) uses the terms interchangeably,

presumably as a form of critique of a psychoanalytic definition that relies on differentiation between subjects and objects (Gorton, 2007). Gorton (2007, p. 334) notes that feminist authors variously emphasise emotions or affects but “this rarely means only one or the other is explored”. Instead, what is underlined by these authors is the importance placed “on the way in which feeling is negotiated in the public sphere and experienced through the body” (Gorton, 2007, p. 334).

In this chapter the emphasis on feelings as emotions and/or affects is retained. I will not engage with definitional debates but instead will use ideas from Ahmed (2004 a, b) to explore the work being done in the circulation of feelings. The circulation of feelings is explored in a way that includes the media, but does not assume the centrality of mediated forms to social constitution. This is in keeping with the approach of this thesis that emphasises the complexity of the constitution of automobility and the car-driver subject and how “drivers and vehicles perform in, and are constituted through, complex networks of sociality and materiality” (Merriman, 2005, p. 158). Ahmed (2004b, p. 6) uses the term “impression”, for example, as a way of avoiding making distinctions between sensation (affect) and emotion, because they are not “‘experienced’ as distinct realms of human ‘experience’”. She introduces the analysis of “affective economies, where feelings do not reside in subjects or objects, but are produced as effects of circulation...(that)...allows us to think about the ‘sociality’ of emotion” (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 8). In highlighting sociality, attention is drawn to the question of the function of emotional or affective discourses in the networks of automobility and as a result, the chapter explores the different ways in which feelings go towards the constitution and sustenance of a social order of neoliberalism.

In order to properly examine this question, the place of rationality in policy contexts of automobility in Ireland first needs to be considered. An initial impression from the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident is that feelings play little part in the dispositif of road safety as policy debates and actors valorise the formally rational or rational choice models in their output (Sheller, 2005). However these debates and actors are well attuned to deploying emotional appeal when it is in their interests to do so. In fact, the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident is enmeshed in multiple rationalities that surface as circumstances require, despite the instrumental and formally logical discourses of road safety utilised in the construction of solutions to the antagonisms of automobility (Maxwell, 2001; Sheller, 2005; Bohm, et al., 2006).

Consequently, the chapter begins with further exploration of this ostensibly rationalist context, specifically the RSA's policy response to the accident that killed eight in Donegal (RSA, 2011). It explores the framework of multiple rationalities and briefly considers how the coverage attempts to construct an affective public in which feelings are implicated in the constitution of political consensus (Moorti, 2002, p. 150; Berlant, 2005, p. 47).

Next, mainstream media contexts in relation to the accident are examined as complex sites for the deployment of multiple rationalities which operate as an "affective economy" to reinforce existing status-quo power and social relations (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 121). This discussion differs from the analysis in the previous chapter in that my focus has narrowed to specific dimensions of the discourses of responsabilization; that is, the role of feelings in the framework of multiple rationalities. This part of the chapter includes exploration of how these discourses work to connect emotions to passivity in relation to meaningful social or political activity (Spelman, 1992; Jaggar, 1992; Ahmed, 2004 a, b).

However, the connection between these realms of mediation and the emotional worlds that people create with their cars has been heretofore unremarked upon. As regards "the lived experience of dwelling with cars in all its complexity, ambiguity and contradiction" (Sheller, 2005, p. 222), commuter reflections on their driving become very much implicated in the formulation of multiple rationalities that constitute complex assemblages of car-drivers, the dispositif of road safety, and the networks of automobility. These are explored in the second half of the chapter. Commuter-citizens are found constructing their own networks of multiple rationalities (logics and meanings) around automobility in Ireland that adhere and disjoin by varying degrees to some of the concerns of the mediated policy context (Ahmed, 2004a). By utilizing Ahmed's (2004 a, b) theory of emotional economies, the articulation of feelings can be theorized seamlessly across both media representation and commuter experiences of their driving practices with respect to how they function to constitute the networks of automobility in Ireland.

The public sphere and multiple rationalities

While, as Maxwell (2001) notes, affective modes of communication are enmeshed in the multiple rationalities of automobility, discourses about car use are dominated by a limited number of issues that legitimate car ownership and provide technical and economic solutions to the problems the car creates. As has already been discussed, these issues are aggregated by Bohm, et al. (2006) into the antagonisms of carnage, congestion, environmental catastrophe, and oil dependence. Sheller (2005, p. 222) argues that the “individualistic ‘rational choice’ model” in transportation policy debates is “so influential as to be taken for granted”. Moran (2005, p. 72) notes that rational choice theory assumes “that positive collective goals can be achieved through the pursuit of individual self-interest”. This links the rational choice model to the responsabilization strategies explored in the previous chapter, where “rational, technical and economically guided systems of enumeration and assessment...mirror, enhance and extend neoliberal arrangements and sensibilities” (Walsh, 2010, p. 861). Indeed, rational choices and rationality remain a dominant framework within mediated policy contexts of automobility through which courses of action are proposed for citizens about, for example, road safety (MacGregor, 2009; McAndrews, 2013).

One way to problematize the place of rationalities in mediated representation is in relation to Habermas’ (1989) public sphere (see also Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox, 1974), a concept for which Media Studies has had an enduring fascination (Lunt and Livingstone, 2103, p. 87). For Habermas, the ideal of the public sphere of rational critical debate is “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed” and where access is guaranteed to all citizens (Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox, 1974, p. 49). The public sphere’s historical emergence is co-extensive with the rise of liberal modes of governance (Beeson and Firth, 1998, p. 2), as well as the market economy, in which the territorial rule of a sovereign who settled claims “by parcelling out lordly rights” was no longer possible (Habermas, 1989, p. 28). Nation states – such as France, The United Kingdom and America – also emerged during this time with their administrative apparatus, bureaucracy, and standing armies, constituting a new “public authority” (Habermas, 1974, p. 51). This new type of authority “consolidated into a concrete opposition for those who were merely subject to it” (Habermas, 1974, p. 51). The bourgeois public sphere “became a forum in which...people...readied themselves to compel public authority to legitimate itself

before public opinion” (Habermas, 1989, pp. 25-6). The medium of this confrontation was peculiar and without precedent: “people’s public use of their reason” (Habermas, 1989, p. 27). This sphere of rational critical public debate and deliberation¹⁴ manifested in what were previously officially-regulated newspapers, becoming the nascent forms of what is called “the media” today. It was in these media that “private individuals assembled into a public body...debated that public authority on the general rules of social intercourse in their fundamentally privatised yet publically relevant sphere of labor and commodity exchange” (Habermas, 1974, p. 52).

The subsequent rise of constitutional liberalism guaranteed society as a sphere of private autonomy in which public authority became restricted to few functions (Habermas, 1974, pp. 52-53). Liberal constitutions copper-fastened the existence of a public sphere “to transmit the needs of bourgeois society to the state” and to transform political authority into a legitimate authority in which the “general interest” became the measure of rationality, predicated on the needs of capitalism (Habermas, 1974, p. 53). Released from the constraints of their convictions regarding the promotion of public opinion and freedom, newspapers were free “to take advantage of the earning possibilities of a commercial undertaking”: The public sphere “was transformed by the influx of private interests, which received special prominence in the mass media” (Habermas, 1974, p. 53).

For Habermas (1989) the ideal of the rational-critical public sphere is undermined in a contemporary context where the media (as the actually existing public sphere) merely provide a distraction from political action, rather than avenues for deliberative debate. Indeed, by the second half of the twentieth century the media’s political role had been debased by the interweaving influence of both state and commercial actors:

This leads to a kind of “refeudalization” of the public sphere. Large organizations strive for political compromises with the state and with each other, excluding the public sphere whenever possible. But at the same time the large organizations must assure themselves of at least plebiscitary support from the mass of the population through an apparent display of openness. (Habermas, 1974, p. 54)

¹⁴ Deliberation is defined as “decision making by discussion among free and equal citizens” (Elster, 1998, p. 1).

In Habermas' view, the ideal of a rational critical public sphere is possible, but it remained only a theoretical possibility in the context of his suspicion of established institutions and power structures.

Of the many critiques levelled at the concept of the public sphere, it is feminist criticism that is the most relevant for my discussion of emotional and affective modes of communication¹⁵. This is because feminist critiques draw attention to the inseparability of rational and affective forms of communication and to the formation of multiple public spheres rather than a single monolithic one, criticisms that Habermas himself acknowledges. Fraser (1990, p. 60; see also 1992) argues that “[The public sphere] was the arena, the training ground and eventually the power base of a stratum of bourgeois men who were coming to see themselves as a ‘universal class’ and preparing to assert their fitness to govern”. Fraser (1992), as well as other feminist writers such as Benhabib (1992) and Flax (1992), are also dubious about Habermas's original conceptualisation of the ideal of purely rational communication from which feeling has been expunged (Barker, Hulme, and Iversen, 1991, p. 16). For Fraser (1992) the question is whether a public sphere should be modified to include those excluded from it or whether instead it should be reconceptualised in terms of conflicts between public spheres which are dominant or subordinate (Barker, Hulme, and Iversen, 1991, pp. 17-18). Benhabib (1992, pp. 89-90) argues that the particular construction of the public sphere “served to confine women and typically female spheres of activity like housework; reproduction; nurture and care for the young sick and elderly to the private domain”. In the “shadowy interior of the household” such notions were treated “as natural and immutable aspects of human relations” (Benhabib, 1992, p. 90).

¹⁵ Other critiques of Habermas' theorisation emphasise weaknesses in his account of history and the assumed alignment of the public sphere with the idea of the state in societies that are becoming increasingly complex, such as in the context of globalised media markets, convergence of media industries and technologies, and the fragmentation of mass-media audiences brought about in part by digitisation and the internet: “media, polity and culture are no longer neatly aligned (if they ever had been) with the nation state” (Lunt and Livingstone, 2013, p. 89).

For Flax (1992) the bourgeois public sphere and its ideal of reason was irredeemably an instrument of domination for women. Rational autonomy, she argues, is structured by a gender hierarchy in which reason can only be achieved by breaking away from a feminised domestic sphere (Barker, Hulme, and Iversen, 1991, p. 17). In this, she denies that pure rationality is possible:

the inner world is heterogeneous and conflictual; reason cannot be split off entirely from desire...modernisation is predicated upon a masculine subjectivity which defends against repressed aspects of the psyche by locating them in women and then by distancing itself from them. No expansion or multiplication of the public sphere could undo the prime exclusion which constitutes it: it is limited to a particular form of rational discourse. (Barker, Hulme, and Iversen, 1991, pp. 17-18)

Routing through these strands of debate, Moorti (2002, p. 150) posits that there are “multiple, overlapping, and competing public spheres, counter-public spheres (that) account for the processes through which individuals participate in society”. These include affective public spheres where “discussion of issues pertaining to the body and emotions become central to democratic community formation” (Moorti, 2002, p. 150). Thus, emotions and affects – rather than being expunged from rational deliberation – can actually be critical to the constitution of public spheres. Dahlberg (2005, p. 115) argues however that even though the idea of the rational-critical public sphere cannot exclude affective modes of communication, it might suppress them “by devaluing them” in the interests of the powerful.

As noted, Habermas’ (1984; 1987) own thinking continually evolved to address these and other critiques faced by public sphere theorisation. For example, Habermas (1984) recognised the dispersed and plural nature of public spheres that can materialise whenever forms of communication take place, which acknowledges the complexity of liberal society. He embraces the diversity of identity and thus the legitimacy of multiple ways of deliberating while retaining the special significance of the political, because “only politics has the capacity to draw threads of common understanding out of the diversity of worldviews and values” (Lunt and Livingstone, 2013, p. 92). Habermas (1987) also acknowledges the inseparability of (ideally) rational-critical modes of

communication from aesthetic-affective ones¹⁶ and he rethinks his previous scepticism towards institutions, accepting Foucault's account of governmentality as a better way of conceptualising power.

Multiple rationalities and the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident

What it is most important to take from these frameworks is that to talk of rationality in connection with the public sphere is to acknowledge multiple rationalities. As put succinctly by Dahlberg (2005, p. 115), “the unconscious-bodily-affective aspects of communication cannot be removed to reveal purely rational processes and true meaning”. That multiple rationalities co-exist in multiple expressions of public spheres can also be acknowledged. In fact, the inseparability of rationalities is clear in the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident.

A year after the crash, Noel Brett, then Chief Executive of the RSA, introduced its annual report (RSA, 2011, p. 3; figure 5). His statement provides a neat, if artificial, conclusion to the circulation of accounts of the worst accident ever and how these both mediate policy and are mediated by it. Brett states:

Ireland recorded the lowest number of deaths on our roads since records began in 1959...A significant achievement, yet 212 people died needlessly on our roads...deaths that simply did not need to happen. The summer of 2010 will also be remembered for the series of crashes that involved young people. During one fateful weekend in the middle of July, ten lives were lost on Irish roads; eight alone in a single horrific incident in Donegal. It was the worst road accident in the history of the state. Tragically, two months later, four teenagers aged between 15 and 19 years old were killed in a car crash. (RSA, 2011, p. 3)

¹⁶ In his theory of communicative action, for example, Habermas (1984) splits Weber's earlier concept of formal rationality (“logical, rule-based, codified” and involving “quantitative calculation” [Chilundo and Aanestad, 2004, p. 5]) into instrumental and strategic rationality. Instrumental rationality is “performed according to technical rules and...is judged in terms of the effectiveness of intervention in a physical world”; this is related to strategic rationality, that is, how “actors achieve their ends by influencing others” (Chilundo and Aanestad, 2004, p. 5). But as Chilundo and Aanestad (2004, p. 6) note, rationally oriented actions can produce non-rational or detrimental effects; for Weber too, rationality included the non-rational or irrational as well as the rational.

There is palpable frustration here, that in what was the best year ever for fatalities on Irish roads, the worst traffic accident ever could still happen. Brett immediately prefaces the rational policy actions that are ostensibly designed to combat specific incidents such as these in which young drivers are involved: “Young drivers are vulnerable road users due to their inexperience. That’s why, in September 2010, the RSA announced its plans to enhance the way in which drivers are trained, tested and licenced in Ireland” (RSA, 2011, p. 3). These policy actions included mandatory initial basic training for motorcyclists and essential driver training for new drivers; the lowering of the drink drive limit for new drivers, an increase in penalty points for specified offences for new drivers, and the introduction of restrictions for drivers in the first two years of their full driving licence (RSA, 2011, p. 3).

Chief Executive's Statement

2010 was a challenging, busy and fruitful year for the RSA.

Ireland recorded the lowest number of deaths on our roads since records began in 1959. This is a very significant milestone in the national effort to eliminate road deaths and injuries. A significant achievement, yet 212 people died needlessly on our roads.



There was a cause for each collision - road user behaviour, road factors, vehicle defects, impairment or some combination of these factors. Tackling the causal factors is paying dividends but at the end of 2010, there was still 212 deaths that simply did not need to happen.

The summer of 2010 will also be remembered for the series of crashes that involved groups of young people. During one fateful weekend in the middle of July, ten lives were lost on Irish roads, eight alone in a single horrific incident in Donegal. It was the worst road crash in the history of the state.

Tragically, two months later, four teenagers aged between 15 and 19 years old were killed in a car crash outside Killarney, Co Kerry.

Young drivers are vulnerable road users due to their inexperience. That's why, in September 2010, the RSA announced its plans to enhance the way in which drivers are trained, tested and licenced in Ireland.

On the 6th December, the first of these measures, the requirement for motorcyclists to undertake mandatory Initial Basic Training (IBT) with an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI), came into effect. A programme for those learning to drive a car - Essential Driver Training (EDT) - will come into effect on 4th April 2011.

Other measures will include lowering the drink drive limit for novice drivers and those in their first two years of a full driving licence to 20mg/100ml. This legislation has been passed by the Oireachtas and will come into effect in the Autumn of 2011. Penalty points for specified offences will be increased for learner and novice drivers. A standard Hazard Perception Test will be developed and carried out during the novice driver phase. Newly qualified drivers will be required to display an 'R' (restricted) plate during the first two years of their full driving licence.

Not only are these measures necessary to ensure that the drivers of tomorrow get off to the right start, they are long overdue.

The implementation of these remaining measures will be a top priority for the RSA.

Without doubt, one of the main road safety stories to dominate the headlines in 2010 was the severe winter conditions that gripped the country towards the end of the year. During the crisis the RSA reported to the National Emergency Response Committee which had been established to manage the crisis. We received tremendous assistance from both Broadcast and Print Media nationally and locally for which we were indebted.

Special thanks must also go to the road-using public. Despite the dreadful arctic conditions, road deaths dropped dramatically during the cold snap. Whether it was because you took greater care or took the sensible option and decided to postpone your journey, it made a difference, so well done.

On a positive note, for the fifth consecutive year, Ireland managed to reduce the number of people being killed on the roads and for the third year in a row, to reduce the death toll to record levels. Another highlight was the awarding of the "2010 Road Safety PIN Award" to Ireland by the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) in Brussels in recognition of our rapid improvement in road safety. Ireland is now 6th out of 27 EU Member States for its road safety record.

But as I said, despite these successes we continue to pay far too high a price on our roads.

The roll-out of the Safety Camera Network in November 2010 has to be one of the most significant developments in road safety since the introduction of Mandatory Alcohol Testing.

Figure 5: Page 3 of The RSA's Annual Report 2010.

Brett creates the impression the policy actions he outlines are occurring because of the Donegal accident, as well as others that occurred in in 2010. He does this by connecting the 10 deaths that one “fateful” weekend to “vulnerable” young drivers and creating an equation between these road deaths, young drivers, and the proposed actions (“*That’s why...*”, he says [RSA, 2011, p. 3 emphasis added]). Brett’s words articulate how a mythic, causal relationship between the goals of policy and its proposed actions is mobilised in media representation. The impression created is that fatalities will fall *because of* the efficacious governmental actions the RSA will now take and the penalties imposed on citizens as a result. Here, responses to road safety issues are encompassed within the rationality of policy activity. It is through quantifiable, instrumental, bulleted, actions that road safety will be achieved. But many of Brett’s actions were actually already contained within the *Road Safety Strategy*, so are not derived from a response to incidents such as the Donegal accident at all. For example, the strategy states: “SPECIFIC TARGET: 100% of all new provisional licence holders in the motorcycle category should undertake the compulsory basic training by the end of 2008 and that this is maintained thereafter” (RSA, 2007, p. 46). Brett acknowledges this, admitting that all of the actions he now proposed were “long overdue” and that the implementation of remaining initiatives where a date was not cited was now a “top priority” for the authority (RSA, 2011, p. 3). He does not point out their specific inclusion in the *Road Safety Strategy* (RSA, 2007) however.

In revealing ineffectiveness for not carrying the actions proposed earlier, Brett allows the reader to see through the myth of policy rationality that he has just elaborated. Barthes (2000, p. 130) argued that an example such as this:

conspicuously shows that myth essentially aims at causing an immediate impression – it does not matter if one is later allowed to see through the myth, its action is assumed to be stronger than the rational explanations which may later belie it.

In other words, the impression that the proposed actions will prevent accidents such as the one in Donegal still stands, despite their rather tenuous relation to the accident itself (e.g. motorbikes were not involved in the crash), the unexplored question of whether there is any evidential basis to support the assumption of their effectiveness, and the RSA’s self-stated inaction on them in the past.

The mobilization of the myth of policy rationality is a key media ritual by which policy enters the public realm. Its instrumentally rational form echoes that of the entire 2007–2012 strategy, which rationalises 126 separate measures, actions, or instruments that together will “create” road safety (RSA, 2007, p. 70). However, it is obvious that emotional language is simultaneously deployed within this ostensibly rationalist policy context, illustrating the framework of multiple rationalities. In the first passage by Brett quoted above, a few emotive words (“fateful”, “tragically”, “horrific”) signal the deployment of affective rationalities. The use of the word “horror” and the evocation of tragedy are obviously emotive. The positioning of a weekend as “fateful” suggests inevitability – that the crashes could not have been prevented or were preordained by a higher agency or supernatural authority. These lexical choices combine with a strategy of de-agentalization, in which events are “represented as brought about in ways that are impermeable to human agency – through natural forces, unconscious processes and so on” (Van Leeuwen, 2009, pp. 156-7). Examples of this de-agentalization include: “Ireland recorded”; “The summer of 2010 will be remembered”; “one fateful weekend”. A sense of responsibility for the accidents’ occurrence is obfuscated or conjured away by these rhetorical moves (Fowler 1991, p. 80; Richardson, 2007, p. 54), both from the accidents victims and national actors such as Brett. However, Brett’s policy response comprises education and enforcement actions rather than, for example, engineering/infrastructure changes to help prevent accidents like this in future, underlining the continuing responsabilization framework explored in the previous chapter.

These few lines and phrases illustrate the work of affective rationalities. Their deployment reinforces the incoherence of the instrumentally rational actions set out by Brett to prevent accidents like these in the future, for example. After all, if events are constructed as outside the realms of human agency, then instrumental measures would have no effect in preventing their subsequent occurrence. Brett’s implicit frustration – a feeling or emotion – becomes ironically generative of the instrumentally rational policy actions he proposes. This illustrates how affective or emotional rationalities are actually tangled up in what are ostensibly rationalist discourses (Sheller, 2005) and demonstrates how multiple rationalities are simultaneously mobilized in mediated communication within the dispositif of road safety.

The types of rhetorical moves deployed by Brett are echoed in coverage of the Donegal accident on the day the crash was covered in *The Irish Times*. For example, the article from page 3 of *The Irish Times* on 13th July 2010 (“RSA says families shattered in ‘split second’” [Kelly, 2010]) centres on Brett and the Minister for Transport, and its thematic structure alternates between the strategic deployment of parallel affective rationalities (articulated in lexical choices such as “shattered”, “tragedy”, “condolence”) and much more instrumental discourses centring on vague advice and actions the public might take in light of the accident. In this article, Brett is paraphrased as saying that the road safety message was not lost on young people and that, while 455 young men had died in car crashes between 1998 and 2009, this represented a 34% reduction over the period. This comment is actually ambiguous in meaning. It is unclear as to which comparative period is Brett referring. It could be the 12 years up to 1998 or the reduction over the years from 1998 to 2009 for example. If the latter figure, 455 could not represent that drop, as it is the number of fatalities, rather than the reduction in fatalities.

What is important is not so much the ambiguity of Brett’s words but the underlining of how the strategic deployment of instrumental, quantifiable, and temporal rationalities seen in the introduction to the RSA’s annual review (RSA, 2011, p. 3) was reported in a similarly incoherent and mythical manner in the media coverage surrounding the Donegal accident itself. The same emphasis on the quantifiable and the instrumentally rational is visible in the introduction in Brett’s lexical choices when he speaks of policy-related matters and action (“2010”, “20mg/mol”, “212”, “tackling the causal factors is paying dividends” [RSA, 2011, p. 3]). This contrasts with the affective rationalities deployed in relation to the car in the description of the accident. In other words, multiple rationalities are strategically deployed and circulate among policy documents and newspaper articles around road safety issues and the Donegal crash in very similar ways (Kelly, 2010) and are integral to the mobilisation of the myth of the RSA’s efficiency. This simultaneous and apparently paradoxical deployment of feeling and rationality is part of the same media ritual by which policy enters the public realm.

The work of emotion: an affective public?

The mediated policy context of the Donegal accident indicates that feelings are mobilised in a way that attempts to constitute a public sphere in which emotion and affect are key components (Moorti, 2002). Berlant (2005) traces this idea in a US context where the orchestration of public feeling becomes the core practice of democracy and the way in which the political is contextualised in media representations (Berlant, 2005, p. 47). For Berlant (2005), expressions of “public feelings” aim “to recruit the public to see political attachments as an amalgam of reflexive opinion and visceral or ‘gut’ feeling”. This sentiment finds something of a parallel in Brett’s statement and the above coverage from the Donegal accident, especially as Berlant (2005, pp. 47-48) notes her argument is not particular to the US.

As her point of departure, Berlant (2005) detects a structuring binary in the articulation of mediated political discourse in which emotional language, as opposed to reason, becomes attached to claims about justice, truth and morality. For the purposes of her analysis, Berlant (2005, p. 47) constructs this opposition between emotion and reason, but its articulation actually traces “the folding of thought into feeling modes” of expression or the inseparability of multiple rationalities in practice. Berlant (2005, p. 47) notes that the orchestration of public feeling is not about the decline of society or democracy per se: “Feelings are not the opposite of thought: each is an embodied rhetorical register associated with specific practices, times, and spaces of appropriateness”. In this, she points to multiple public spheres and to the contextual specificity of the appropriateness of expressions of feeling. Keohane, Kuhling, and Horgan (2002, p. 57 citing Geertz, 1973) had already elaborated similar ideas, noting that: “there are multiple forms of rationality, which, from the point of view of actors, are valid and meaningful within the historically situated web of social significance in which they are suspended, and which they themselves have woven”.

Berlant (2005) describes how political discourses have attempted to construct an affective public. What her theorisation does is articulate the potential significance of an affective public to the constitution of actually existing complex social formations. Ahmed (2004 a, b) complements and extends this analysis of the multiple rationalities of the public sphere, because she gives us the tools to theorise affective modes of communication across media representation and the lived experience that Berlant (2005)

does not investigate¹⁷. This is required if the media is to be problematized as just one set of the multiple networks of actors involved in the sustenance of social authority. It is by considering affective modes of communication in the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident together with their deployment in the reflections of commuters that allows us to explore the work that these modes of communication do in constituting the dispositif of road safety and the networks of automobility as they are lived in Ireland.

The circulation of feelings and “sticky bodies”

Ahmed (2004b, p. 3) traces the ways in which different feelings can circulate and stick to the same signs, objects, and people and how the same feelings can be associated with different figures and materials depending on the context. Ahmed (2004 a, b) first argues that emotion has typically been viewed as beneath reason: “To be emotional is to have one’s judgement affected: it is to be reactive rather than active, dependent rather than autonomous” (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 3). A connection between emotion and passivity is made, as Ahmed (2004b, p. 3) notes, from how the Latin root of the words passive and passion both connect to the word suffering. She argues that “to be passive is to be enacted upon, as a negation that is already felt in suffering”. A fear of passivity is connected to a fear of emotionality “in which weakness is defined in terms of a tendency to be shaped by others” (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 3). Here, it can be seen how passivity and passion connect emotion to a lack of agency: how to be emotional is to relinquish autonomy. Next, Ahmed (2004b, p. 3) argues that a simple binary between emotion and reason is displaced into an emotional hierarchy, where not only reason, but also the ability to display appropriate emotions, as well as to control them is valorised

¹⁷ Public sphere theorisation and research has directly explored how audiences interpret the content of the media but this seems encapsulated within a framework of media reception studies. For example, Lunt and Livingstone (2013, p. 90) point to how their 1994 work about audience reception revealed “moments of genuine public access, deliberation and engagement among audiences”. This shows how the development of public sphere theory around multiple public spheres allowed writers like Moorti (2002, p. 150) to consider ways in which day-time talk shows make an affective-public sphere possible, for example.

(Elias, 1978). Ahmed (2004b, p. 3) notes that emotions can even be considered better than reason: “If good emotions are cultivated, and are worked on and towards, then they remain defined against uncultivated or unruly emotions, which frustrate the formation of the competent self”. As a result, Ahmed (2004b, p. 4) argues, “it is not difficult to see how emotions are bound up with the securing of social hierarchy” and thus as an effect of power on subject formation.

Ahmed (2004a, p. 117) challenges the assumption that emotions are a private matter, residing in the self or moving out towards others from within. Instead, she suggests that “emotions circulate between bodies and signs... (to)...create the very effect of the surfaces or boundaries of bodies and worlds” (Ahmed, 2004a, pp. 117-118/124). For Ahmed (2004a, p. 119) emotions do things: rather than being only psychological they “work by sticking figures together (adherence), a sticking that creates the very effect of a collective (coherence)”. As such, “emotions become a form of capital: affect does not reside positively in the sign or commodity, but is produced only as an effect of its circulation” (Ahmed 2004a, p. 120). She says: “Some signs...increase in affective value as an effect of the movement between signs: the more they circulate, the more affective they become, and the more they appear to ‘contain’ affect” (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 120).

For Ahmed (2004a, pp. 120-121) passion is accumulated over time. The subject becomes a nodal point rather than an origin or destination and affective value accumulates there to shape the surface of “bodies and worlds”. This accumulation happens in various temporally proximate media representations for example, where sticky words and language are repeatedly attached to people, objects, or concepts, creating associations and alignments between these categories and emotional feelings as effects of their repetition (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 12). Ahmed (2004b, p. 12) shows how words such as “flood and swamped” stick to the category of the asylum seeker in mainstream media reports, creating associations between that category and loss of control. This shows how media representations are key sites for establishing chains of associations and generating affective intensities. The effect of these chains of associations, according to Ahmed (2004b, p. 12), is to mobilize fear, in this case around asylum seekers. Ahmed (2004a, p. 124) argues such alignments “work through the movement between figures”. She notes that such movement becomes stuck in the attachment of signs to bodies (or objects), albeit only temporarily or provisionally

(Ahmed 2004a, p. 127). Stickiness (containment) and movement depend on associative histories that have already been created. While many different signs or emotions can stick to bodies and objects and are accreted over time and through repetition, they can vary depending on the context (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 127).

By characterising emotion as only residing provisionally in bodies (or indeed objects), Ahmed's (2004a, p. 127) conceptualization problematizes the paradoxical discourses of desires and sign-values that are said to inhere to, reside in, or be embodied by the car; by the human subject's feeling for the car, or in affective relationships enabled by the car. It does this by showing how the car can be attached provisionally to a variety of such emotional signs, for example independence, speed, comfort, innovation, and leisure or pleasure, but also carnage, fear, congestion, or environmental harm depending on the context (Sachs, 1984; Sheller, 2005; Urry, 2005; Bohm, et al., 2006). As various cultural studies of the signification of vehicles and driving suggest (Hebdige, 1979; Barthes, 2000; Miller, 2001; Garvey, 2001; Gilroy, 2001 for example), emotions "stickily" attach to the automobile both in mediated representations and in practices, gaining or losing salience as the car moves among and between aspects of these discourses.

According to Ahmed (2004b, p. 22), studies of the emotional aspects of cultural objects/practices should "think more about what the materials [assembled for research] are 'doing'; how they work through emotions to generate effects"¹⁸. For the purposes

¹⁸ Studies have also been done in relation to fear advertising, mass media campaigns on public health issues in general, and road traffic accidents in particular (for example Wilde, 1993; Wallack and DeJong, 1995; Donovan, Jalleh, and Henley, 1999; Laflamme and Didreichson, 2000; O'Neill, 2001; Tay, 2001; Grayling, Hallam, and Graham, 2002; Girasek and Gielen, 2003; Breen, 2004; Elder, et al., 2004; Room, 2004; Schlundt, Warren, and Miller, 2004; Roberts, 2005; Roberts, Wentz, and Edwards, 2006; Lewis, Watson, and Tay, 2007, and Woodcock and Aldred, 2008). These variously attempt to problematize the real purpose of such campaigns or whether they can alter behaviour; or call for advocacy in relation to the issues involved, for example. Some of these studies can be categorised as externalities or psychological research and as such they tend not to be concerned with connecting macro effects of cars to more personal relationships between cars and car users (Miller, 2001, p. 22). Ahmed's theory could be applied to the work emotions do in these contexts, connecting personal

of my study, this means adapting the theory to explore the connections and disconnections around the articulation of feeling both in media representations and driving practices. Not all of these connections are mediated, but some are, and with Ahmed's (2004 a, b) theory they can be considered as part of the same collectivity that emerges from the networks of feeling in automobility in Ireland.

Applying this theory to the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident, the emotional words Brett (RSA, 2011, p. 3) and other actors use in the extracts already quoted ("shattered", "condolence", "fateful", "horrific", "tragically", "vulnerable") can be said to create the impression of and intensify the feelings and pain that result from the crash (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 124). These emotional words create a reality – the accident as a horror and also as a state of affairs that cannot now be changed. This ontology can then be captured and ordered differently by the application of more instrumental actions from the "busy and fruitful" RSA. So the reality constructed in these documents extends beyond rational responses to the accident to incorporate emotion and this binds Brett's bureaucratic and instrumental logics in human feelings. A chain of affective intensity is set-up by these emotional words that sticks these terms to the concept of the road traffic accident involving the car (Ahmed, 2004 a, b). These terms and ones like them become natural components of discourse formations associated with road traffic accidents in wider mainstream media contexts.

There are many instances of such "stickiness", in which the work of emotion (as an implement of power) is to attempt to secure social hierarchy in the dispositif of road safety. For example, in *The Irish Times* article ("Latest crash brings back painful memories" [Duncan, 2010; figure 4]) a large picture shows the twisted shell of a Volkswagen, recognition of which is reduced to a badge on the wheel hub. This car is horribly mangled and the wheel's prominence in terms of the composition of the article suggests a grim irony. It is a go-faster alloy addendum for which someone paid extra, signalling an ultimately non-existent capacity for superior control or speed and by extension an enhanced freedom. But that meaning is recontextualised here and becomes ironic. Now the wheel reinforces the desperate, emotional horror of the crash. The intertextual associations between the picture and the surrounding headlines secure these

relationships expressed through and with the car to the emotional effects associated with road traffic accidents and campaigns about their prevention, for example.

provisional connections. Words such as “painful”, “shattered”, “victims” as well as “sympathies” stick to the car in this context, continuing the “process of intensification” that aligns this article’s impressions of road traffic accidents with those feelings expressed in policy (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 121).

This is not an old car, some cheap banger, or escaped NCT failure. Instead it is the consumer product of a rational response to modern driving and commuting needs and desires. Neither should it be a death trap, scoring the maximum 5 stars on EURONCAP’s new car rating system (EURONCAP, 2015c). The accident confounds the success of the instrumentally rational approach that the *Road Safety Strategy* ostensibly embodies, as well as the car’s functional expression of rational consumer needs. But the wheel, the car, and its representation in a destroyed state illustrate the multiplicity of rationalities that actually swirl around this picture and those that provisionally “stick” to the car in the context of this accident. This sticking of figures together – parts of the crashed car, accident victims, words that express feeling – creates the effect of a collective, a unified emotional response to the accident as expressed through these mediated representations and these figures (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 120). The repetition of these types of images and expressions of feeling cohere with other expressions that are familiar from reports of other car accidents over time. They accumulate and intensify through the media the affective values that shape what the sign or commodity (the car or the road traffic accident for example) mean in this context and the surfaces of bodies and worlds that emerge from these circulations (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 121). Affective resonance also accumulates from these representations onto those the accident’s victims leave behind, and onto the meaning of the place of the accident, as segments of the chains of association established and intensified through media coverage such as this. This illustrates the particularity of affective expression in the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident and the work that such expression does in meaning-making in this instance.

Mediated rituals of emotion and affect

Other narratives from the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident rely even more overtly on affective logics to produce particular ideological and discursive effects. In these instances, affective rationalities are not deployed in the consideration and formulation of actions for citizens that are designed to mitigate events like the Donegal

accident in the future. Instead they are deployed in a ritualistic fashion to connect state actors to the reported words of local people directly affected by the aftermath of incidents like these and to community representatives, for example, reinforcing the deflection of authority from the state and the security of the social hierarchy (2004b, p. 4).

After two paragraphs of description in the article on the front page (Duncan and Jackson, 2010), a spokesperson from the NRA first asserts his experience in relation to these types of accidents before temporarily adopting the more personal and affective language associated with newspaper accounts of ordinary local people: “I have never come across such a multiple road fatality scene and I am finding it very difficult to take in”. Here, the spokesman identifies with the community by adopting the emotional rationalities that are attributed to them in this context. Following several further paragraphs of description, a local priest comments on the scenes of “immense and intense grief” at the hospital in Buncrana: “There were about 60 relatives at the hospital last night...it was terrible to witness”. Individual citizens are portrayed as “visibly shaken as they grappled with the news” of the crash. In an article on page 3, friends and relatives “with tear stained faces follow in cars behind in a cortege” and a local person’s eyes water as she describes the crash’s impact and the nervousness of the community (Duncan, 2010). Another individual describes how nobody from the village had wanted to go to work the next day: “It just seems to affect people a lot. You’d nearly think you are one of the family; it’s that kind of feeling. Everybody’s the same. I’m just devastated”. Yet another says “you don’t know how to take it”. In these extracts, there is the sense of the overwhelming intensity of feeling that stops people in their tracks. The accident is rendered outside of language or knowledge, thereby placing it in the realm of the affective and the embodied response.

Here, local citizens’ incomprehensibility shows them to be beyond or beneath the formally rational. Their representation shows how to be emotional is to relinquish autonomy and be shaped by others as Ahmed (2004b, p. 3) describes. Local citizens’ words find empathetic resonance in the quoted comments of official actors, community representatives, and the Taoiseach. For example, the Taoiseach says that “his thoughts and prayers are with the relatives of the deceased” (Duncan and Jackson, 2010). His sentiments are repeated in a quote on page 3. The mayor of Buncrana characterises the effect of the accident as “mind-numbing devastation” (Duncan, 2010). But unlike local

community members, the mayor goes on to articulate the extent of this devastation in a more generalizable fashion:

You've three parishes affected...and there won't be anyone in the Inishowen Peninsula who won't know the victims – that's the extent of the devastation. Because of the spread of the families it would be nearly impossible not to know somebody. (Duncan, 2010)

A local priest is given space to explain how the days after the crash “would be hugely difficult for everyone, including local clergy”:

We have had multiple accidents in which more than a few people have died and it brings back memories for them. That's really one of the tragedies, that it's reinvoking the memories for all those people who lost their sons and daughters all in the same age group. (Duncan, 2010)

A different priest adds, “It's a really cruel blow to this particular community”, before agreeing with his colleague that girlfriends and family members of those lost in other previous tragedies would also be affected by it: “Young people must realise how fragile life is and be careful and cautious and play by the rules all the time”, he said.

In these extracts, local and official representatives actively state implications, provide context and background for events, and reinforce the myth of the rationality of policy activity. They present a more certain modality (i.e. commitment to the claims they are making [Richardson, 2007, p. 59]) and specificity in their statements of the effect of the accident. On the other hand, friends, relatives, and individual members of the local community are uncertain, passive, affected, emotional, feminised, and inward-looking. What is shown is the repeated attachment and intensification of passivity connected to ordinary community members' displays of emotion (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 3). But this is actually the displacement of the binary between reason and emotion into a hierarchy between emotions (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 3). Feelings in these reports are not simply devalued as Dahlberg (2005) suggests, they are actually valued when they represent the ability of a particular type of actor to express the “correct” emotions under the “correct” circumstances. In this context, the expression of appropriate feelings becomes better than reason (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 3). These are not “unruly emotions” (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 3) that might, for example, “rage against the dying of the light” of the accident's victims, seeking retribution against authorities or perpetrators. In fact ordinary

community members, local representatives, and national actors are represented as expressing very similar feelings. Only national actors and local representatives maintain the capacity to evoke generalised perspectives that are not accorded to ordinary local citizens, however. And importantly, only national actors are accorded the authority to go beyond these feelings and enunciate instrumental rationality in relation to solutions or appropriate policy responses to the accident, in a way that ordinary community members, and local representatives who merely reinforce the consensus, are not. Ordinary local citizens can only suffer and they are acted upon by official actors. The representation of feelings coupled with the discursive denial of instrumental rationality represents the relinquishment of ordinary individual citizens' autonomy (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 3). In this instance though, that emotionality and relinquished autonomy (passivity) is valorised as appropriate to the circumstances. The types of organisation and formalisation of behaviours explored in these articles work to encode and naturalise categories of thought in relation to different groups of actors and they represent a common media ritual (Couldry, 2008b, p. 168).

Another important aspect of this ritual organisation and formalisation of appropriate behaviours for different groups of actors is the mystification of place – of Inishowen and Buncrana – in the media coverage. The attribution of mystical characteristics secures the sense of the accident occurring somewhere else, continuing the ideological work of passivizing local citizens, and locating different agencies in particular local and national actors. The main article on page 3 begins with a reference to the weather:

As the rain clouds rolled across the rugged Inishowen Peninsula yesterday, locals were struggling to come to terms with the fact that eight men had died in a crash the previous night near the rocky out-crop known locally as the King and Queen of the Mintiaghs. (Duncan, 2010)

By sandwiching the emotions of the community between references to the weather and a parochial reference to a townland near to where the accident occurred, the writer creates the absurd impression that “the elements” have aligned themselves with the emotions of local people. This magical and mystical rhetoric signals human-interest content and intent rather than serious analysis and illustrates the particular way in which feeling is deployed in the article. The rolling clouds of rain and the rockiness of the outcrop are unconnected to the accident. That road conditions and the weather were

immaterial has already been pointed out (Duncan and Jackson, 2010). These references literally and figuratively mystify the area in which the crash occurred by creating a chain of affective associations (“rain clouds rolled”, “rugged”, “rocky-outcrop”, “local”, “King and Queen of the Mintiaghs”) that circulate between these bodies and signs and stick to the discursive representation of Inishowen and its people (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 117). The mystical language associated with Inishowen reifies its residents as “an incredibly tight-knit community” (Duncan, 2010) therefore distinct from the alienations of contemporary urban life and its “others” both the place of Inishowen and its citizens. The sense of fate being involved in the accident or its aftermath, in terms of the alignment of the elements to the emotions of the local citizens of Inishowen, connects these emotions to a lack of control of these events or, in other words, to passivity (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 12). This construction reinforces how only national actors are allowed to be associated with the articulation of the rationality of policy activity in this context, yet as already seen this does not mean they take responsibility for policy failures of the dispositif of road safety.

Inishowen and its residents are discursively constructed as separate from national newspaper journalists and their readers, who become part of an “administrative minority” (Williams, 1988, p. 226 cited in Moran, 2005, p. 17). The general flow of late modernity is interrupted within the constructed space and time of Inishowen which, reassuringly for the proportionally urban (74%) and middle class (82% ABC1) *The Irish Times* readers, creates the impression that the location of the accident is “elsewhere” or “outside” (*The Irish Times*, 2015b). Indeed mystical rhetoric frames this article and is active in the last paragraph, where local MEP Pat “the Cope” Gallagher is given the last word, quoted as saying the crash had cast “a dark cloud” over the area of Inishowen again (Duncan, 2010).

In this article “sticky words” work to retrench existing authority (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 122). They distance both the author and the reader from the events of the crash by encapsulating the accident inside a discrete, mystical frame. Within this frame, affective logics can be given free rein. A local describes the town’s atmosphere and the strangeness of events: “cars are stopped on the road [with people] chatting to neighbours”. She goes on: “Even if you meet a car driving down, the car might be a half-mile away from you but they’re pulling in. Everyone’s so nervous” (Duncan, 2010). The priests’ and politicians’ “thoughts and prayers” speak of this transcendence

of normal phenomena, as does the magical rhetoric of the weather paralleling the mood of the people. In newspaper accounts Inishowen is a place apart and the crash creates a time beyond usual experience within that space that underlines its separation. The journalist seems to be reporting from a foreign country, rather than within her own shores. It may actually be Inishowen, but it sounds and feels more like Narnia than Donegal. This implies not only that *The Irish Times* has authority to “correctly” frame the opinions and feelings of this community, but is also able, through the alignment of the weather with the mood of the locals, to confer agency upon and decode the motivations of Mother Nature herself.

The othering of the location for the “worst accident in Irish history” reinforces the hierarchy of rationalities prevalent in this mediated policy context of the Donegal accident. Experts or official actors are granted the capability to evoke multiple rationalities of feeling and instrumentality as required, and along with local representatives make framing generalisations of effects of the accident on the community. In empathising with and adopting the emotional language associated with those affected by the crash, official actors’ comments can be considered strategies of condescension in Bourdieu’s (1991, p. 68) terms, in which the powerful adopt the language of affected groups in order to ostensibly negate the inherent inequality between them, but nevertheless they leave the social order intact while apparently transcending it. Ordinary local citizens’ capacity “to be shaped by others” (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 3) or to be responsabilized by official and institutional policy contexts is reinforced. A displaced hierarchy of emotions (Ahmed, 2004 a, b) validates the “correct” emotional rationalities that call for reflective and traditional rituals (such as the preparation of funerals) which are corralled as passive in the context of political action and associated with a retrenchment to family and a closing-off rather than opening-up to the world-at-large. In these ways, feelings are put to work in the cause of the security of the social hierarchy (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 4).

Multiple rationalities and the work of emotion in commuter reflections on their driving practices

While the above analysis has illustrated the variety of “sticky words” and feelings that circulate and adhere to the car in relation to the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident (Ahmed, 2004 a, b), it has told us nothing about how these feelings circulate in relation to the “heterogeneous strategies” of the practices of automobility in which the dispositif of road safety is lived in practice (Lemke, 2002, p. 9). As part of the political rationality of neoliberal governmentality (Beeson and Firth, 1998), the attempted orchestration of public feeling and the multiple rationalities of mediation must be considered in light of the operation of strategies of the self that may mesh with or operate without reference to the mediated discourses to varying degrees. As argued, the public sphere’s encapsulation within the media and mediated deliberation requires extension or expansion in order to apply it to a scenario in which the social order is sustained by multiple networks of actors of which the media comprises merely one set. This is not to say media is not important, but rather it is to explore the extent to which it is important without assuming it is central, by employing Ahmed’s (2004 a, b) theorisation in the analysis.

While one might immediately consider the affected local population as the locus of governmental action, the discursive framing of Inishowen as “other” makes it clear that the cautionary tale of the Donegal accident has lessons that are to apply to “all” road users. As stated in one of *The Irish Times* articles:

The Road Safety Authority has urged all drivers to take responsibility for their actions following the multiple fatality in Donegal...Minister for Transport Noel Dempsey urged road users to “redouble their efforts” to improve road safety... “Today we are reminded that we can never, ever become complacent about road safety”. (Kelly, 2010)

The quotidian commuters of automobility best represent this ostensible universality. Commuting’s “collective commitment” to rationality coexists uneasily and collides with the multiple rationalities of the Irish experience of modernisation and modernity (Keohane, Kuhling, and Horgan, 2002, pp. 46). What is now discussed is the “mind-share” of feelings-based rationalities in the experiences of commuters. This is an exploration of the circumstances in which commuters valorise similar or different

hierarchies of emotions and reason as articulated in the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident, and the “sticky words” that they attach to the car, as well as the forms of sociality that emerge from commuters’ own frameworks of multiple rationalities (Ahmed, 2004a, pp. 122/128).

Focus group participants were prompted to describe their commute at the start of sessions and almost all explained how the most efficacious way of achieving the end of commuting to and from work had been rationalised. Don travels from a south Dublin suburb to rural County Kildare and back, a round trip of some 120 kilometres each working day: “There’s no public transport where I’m going. Unless I drive to Heuston station which takes an hour, take the train which only goes twice a day...there’s no trains, so” (Don, f1). Brid, Don’s wife, agreed: “It’s the quickest – unfortunately” (Brid, f1). Brid went on to explain that, as she visits people during her working day, she needs the car. Pauline summarises the types of rationalities articulated by these commuters in this part of discussion: “So it’s easy, quick and convenient” (Pauline, f1). Brid’s choice of the word “unfortunately” alludes to knowledge that car use is something to feel guilty about, but she is unable to rationalise an alternative, making the car the inevitable choice for her circumstances (Watson, 1995, p. 82; Maxwell, 2001). Beth (f2) echoed similar reasoning, but noted that she did sometimes take public transport. She explained that the possibility of a lift to the DART determined her decision to drive. Brian (f2) noted that he nearly always drove to work despite moves by his company to better facilitate those using the train: “There’s actually a bus that picks you up that meets the train and brings you to practically to your desk!” he said. Geraldine and Chris (f2), a couple, rationalised their own use of the car for commuting, stating that it made sense as they were always heading against the “crazy” traffic. Geraldine also explained that she had no choice but to take the car to work given her public transport options, while Chris noted that Geraldine probably wouldn’t have taken the job that she was offered in Naas if she didn’t have the car. The unbidden justification of the car as the most efficient choice of commuter transport above others becomes a consistent theme of discussion for these commuters.

After describing his 40 minute commute, Gary (f3) stated that the proximity of Newbridge to Maynooth University was a major factor in his choice of college course. Dermot (f5), from Athlone, also said that Maynooth’s location was “probably the main factor” in his choice of college. These rationalities illustrate the practical importance of

commuting distances and times for decision making in relation to significant life choices that are far more important than the mundane details of the daily commute. What is being highlighted here is how the car shapes “the form and content of social action” (Dant, 2005, p. 61). In Gary (f3) and Dermot’s (f5) cases, social actions and outcomes would inevitably have differed had the car not afforded the bridging of the spatial and temporal gap between these particular jobs or colleges and the location of their homes. Kevin (f6), who travels from Edenderry Co. Offaly to Dublin city centre, noted it would take “two and a half hours door-to-door” on the bus, so he takes the car. Una (f6) defended her own commuting choices the same way, while Margaret (f6) similarly explained that she alternates between two different modes of transport and a number of routes for her journey into work. In these and other extracts, chains of association are set up by commuters (“an hour”, “twice”, “quickest”, “later”, “half-seven”, “20 minutes”, “five o’clock”, “19 years”, “heading”, “choosing”, “factors”, “closer”) that stick to the car in the context of commuting, creating the impression of a community of rational commuters, foregrounding and valorising instrumental rationalities over affective ones.

But these conversations are also phatic in nature, performing social cohesion rather than providing meaningful information. According to Young (2002, p. 60), phatic gestures such as greetings “do not offer information or further arguments directly by giving reasons or criticisms”. Although the introductions here do also convey information, the commonality of description and narrative ordering acknowledges a shared circumstance in which participants find themselves both as commuters and participants in the focus group. Young (2002, p. 59) notes that, “gestures of greeting function to acknowledge relations of discursive equality and mutual respect among the parties to discussion, as well as to establish trust and forge connection based on the previous relationships among the parties”. Where there are no previous relationships among participants, such introductions function to create shared awareness of an already existing connection in commuting. As greetings, they can be considered imbued with feeling, underlining the framework of multiple rationalities as being as much a part of commuters’ understandings of their driving as in mediated representations about the Donegal accident.

While not necessarily “calm and dispassionate” (Young, 2002, p. 65) the language use of commuters in my focus groups initially valorises rational and quantitative, calculating actions over affective ones. As such, it represents active strategizing that discursively aligns with the instrumental rationalities that surround government policy actions associated with the Donegal accident, but not accorded individual citizens of the local community in that case. Commuters valorise and share their rational choices and self-interested decision making abilities with other participants, even when deploying humour. However, the deployment of humour and the affective nature of these statements as forms of greeting shows that even when instrumental actions are foregrounded multiple rationalities are at work. Affective rationalities are not associated here with passivity or suffering as they are in the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident (Ahmed 2004 a, b) and in fact reinforce commuters’ instrumentality.

By their nature, phatic discussions come at the start of focus groups sessions. It is a feature of focus group discussion that these conversations can presage subsequent deeper and more obviously affective topics of concern. Like the others, Michelle begins by constructing the narrative of her own commute:

I used to come down the M50 – off the M3 at Blanchardstown and come in the back roads through Clonee to here. But in the winter it got really rough and I did a big skid on ice one day on <a country> lane and I thought that’s it – I’m not doing that again. [Laughs]. So I actually come the full motorway in now. So while you’re probably travelling the same distance, you’re paying the toll bridge to come in. But it’s an easier commute because you’re doing it on motorway – so at least you don’t have to worry about the conditions of the back roads on wet mornings and that kind of stuff...And I know there’s probably wear and tear on the car from doing back roads, plus sometimes it’s nice not to be on busy traffic all the time. It’s kind of country coming ... Clonee into here...so I changed because that makes it easier. (Michelle, f4)

Michelle quickly goes from simple description to describe more deeply held feelings. While she brushes off her skid with a nervous laugh, the incident is serious enough to permanently change her commuting habits. She balances the elements in coming to her decision to use the motorway and rationalises that economics and traffic congestion are outweighed by her own safety concerns.

Her consideration of safety issues in such a way marks a departure from the rationalities that have been shown deployed in the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident. In RSA policy texts and mainstream mediation there is the sense of the effort expended among a large range of actors to prevent crashes, as well as how this is constructed in relation to strategies of responsabilization for citizens about road safety. But in everyday practice these initiatives circulate with considerations about the cost of a toll bridge, vague concerns for wear-and-tear on a car, and how one feels about scenery along a route for example, all of which together have a role in shaping the actual practices of commuting and thus how the dispositif of road safety is lived. Michelle articulates multiple rationalities in coming to her decision, at times valorising the neoliberal ethic identified in Chapter 2, by articulating concerns for her own safety in economic terms. Once again however, the deployment of feeling is an active component of the narrative of the commute. In her descriptions of her practices, Michelle does not assume the passivity ascribed to ordinary citizens that is an important feature of the mediated deployment of affect that has already been explored.

Michelle's nervous laugh seems to underline how prosaic commuting choices have the potential to intensify or mitigate potentially life-altering or catastrophic consequences. Such decisions are predicated on a variety of logics and rationalities, many of which gain scant purchase in the media representations explored already. Michelle's story is emblematic of how fear about crashing, that the reporting of the Donegal accident works to intensify, also manifests because of personal experience and becomes rationalised in individual action which must take other considerations into account. Like Dermot (f5) and Gary (f3), whose commuting decisions have potentially huge effects on the particularity of both their day-to-day lives and their career paths, Michelle finds an accommodation with the car and rationalises her life around the antagonisms and benefits it forces us to accept as part of day-to-day existence. A variety of feelings, sometimes contradictory ones, are simultaneously apparent in Michelle's account. Her story underlines the range of actors and emotions involved in producing "stickiness" in relation to the practices of commuting or the assemblage of car-drivers and describes the dispositif of road safety and the networks of automobility as they are lived in practice.

As noted, commuters – who were not asked to justify their use of the car – often did so anyway, usually based on the premise that there was something unusual or unique about their particular commute that, regrettably, required the use of the car. Don (f1), for instance, has no public transport choice so he must use the car. Brid (f1) needs the car during the day and it's the quickest choice for her. Beth (f2) justifies her use of the car because it gets her into work early, while for Brian (f2), the car is just "very handy". Geraldine (f2) could not take the job offered her without the car. Other expressions of this defensiveness come from Brian and Graham: "Well you could cycle I suppose – there's always a way right? Nothing is impossible" (f4). For Kevin and Una, (f6), the alternative bus journey is too long (Kevin: "the lifestyle benefit outweighed the cost benefit"; Una: "So it would actually take me longer than if I was driving, on a normal day. Plus the inclement weather doesn't entice you up the hill" [f6]). For Brid as for Brian and others, it seems unacceptable or unfashionable to suggest the car as an attractive or positive proposition. For Brid, this results in a somewhat tied-up-in-knots situation as she tries to justify her own use of the car: "Well if I cycled to work, I'd probably feel like I'd have a shower or something" (Brid f1). When asked why she didn't feel the same need to shower when she used to cycle to work while she lived in Holland however, her husband jumped to her defence: "It's flat, it's flat!" he said. The unbidden nature of the justifications commuters proffer serves to underline the dominance of the car and how automobility subordinates other mobilities (Urry, 2005, p. 26). Alternative modes of transport are rationalised out of contention through both instrumental and affective logics, making the car the inevitable or natural choice for commuters. Indeed, a seemingly well-rehearsed *apologia* for car use is implicit in some group member's words, an acknowledgement that it must be problematic somehow, something requiring a justifiable defence against our sometimes slightly shame-faced use of it.

Maxwell (2001, p. 205) notes that: "The way in which participants 'make sense' of car use in the face of...social and environmental consequences of their individual and collective action is deeply intertwined with a desire to reduce anxiety and guilt". The assumptions underlying such feelings of guilt explicitly surface in various studies. For example, Denis and Urry (2009) discuss the future of the automobile where "by necessity the present car system will have been replaced". In *Car Cultures*, Miller (2001, p. 9) argues that debates about the ethics and futures of the car "are so vocal and disseminated so widely in the media, they become the backdrop to the reflexivity of the

drivers themselves”. For Miller (2001, p. 9), Maxwell’s commuters spent “at least as much time trying to reconcile themselves to the critical discourse on the car and the guilt they are expected to feel from their use of the car as they are to driving the car”. This attempted reconciliation seems also behind commuters’ *apologia* in the current research, but the situation here is perhaps more complex here than Maxwell (2001) and Miller (2001) allow for. While guilt about car use is present it is filtered through commuter needs, requirements, and desires that the car facilitates and shapes, which have a much deeper resonance for these commuters compared to environmental or any potentially negative social consequences around car use. In light of the exigencies of work and commuting by car, while commuters feel the need to attempt the reconciliation of their car use with its philosophical dubiousness (Rajan, 2006), their articulation of such concerns in terms of guilt sometimes seems more a reflection of what they think they ought to think, rather than how they actually think.

Meeting affective needs

The breadth of affective logics deployed by commuters connected to the car underlines the particularities of the circumstances in which these rationalities are employed in the mediated representations already explored. Indeed, commuters’ need to rationally justify the car is backgrounded in the following section, as they elaborate how the car becomes an active agent in the creation of affective intensities in their everyday lives. This data offers an even richer picture of the complexity of multiple rationalities that Keohane, Kuhling, and Horgan (2002) argue is characteristic of social action.

After outlining her rationale for driving, Fiona then goes on to foreground affective rationalities in explaining her choice of the car over other forms of transport:

I hop in the car with Barry three times a week. It would take me twenty minutes to get there on the train but I actually go in the car which takes 35 minutes...it’s more fun just sitting in the car. And we get the chance to catch up, which is really nice. (Fiona, f1)

Some of Beth’s (f2) reasoning for commuting by car displayed similar traits: “It’s peaceful, I listen to *Morning Ireland* and there’s no kids. There’s no one shouting at me. It’s just – I love it. It’s like chill out time”. Explaining that her commute was the only time she could relax without children in the car, Michelle (f4) argued that her long journey made her a better mother: “[when] you leave here you are so stuck in [work]

mode. But by the time you get home you're ready to get excited about – 'look what I've been finger painting' ...So it's a nice time ...because when you arrive home you're in a different mind-set", she said.

Evelyn (f5) articulates the affective facets of her journey: "I enjoy the warmth when it's cold! ... I know it's a long journey – but...I like the chance to think...And sometimes I eat my breakfast on the way in". Geraldine expressed a love for driving and stated she was unable to imagine her life without a car. Kevin also expressed a generalised enjoyment of commuting by car, while Declan (f6) noted that his own satisfaction varied by time of year. Una (f6) agreed: "It's heaven driving to work during the summer", she said. Lisa also expressed an affinity for driving. For her, driving was an expression of autonomy, and like Tony and Caroline, she stated she did not like public transport at all. Tony found driving a privilege because he did not always get the chance to drive. Anne (f8) noted that she did not like driving at first, but experience subsequently changed her mind – not least because of the scenery she encounters on her way to college: "I drive the back roads so I quite like my commute – I go through Strawberry Beds", she said.

These types of rationalisations position the car as meeting affective needs and make a virtue out of the inflexible aspects of working lives of which commuting is an integral aspect. The words used by commuters create associations of feeling between the car and commuting (Ahmed, 2004 a, b): "fun", "catch up", "peaceful", "chill-out", "lucky", "free time", "freak you out", "finger painting", "nice", "different mind-set", "warmth", "chance to think". These "accumulations of affective value" contrast sharply with those attaching to the car in relation to the emotional horror of the Donegal accident in ways that underline the contextual specificity of feelings that stick to the car (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 121). Commuting and automobility are attached to heightened affective states, and while many of these are pleasurable, it has been shown how this is often not the case at all.

Commuters' rationalisations for driving further represent a society that emerges from the forms of social action automobility necessitates and shapes (Dant, 2005). Fiona explains how, in her area, residents had been crying-out for a local shuttle bus to the train station, but didn't use the service once it was provided. Here, she provides an allegory for the emotional power of automobility:

The shuttle was stopped after about 6 months...And every time I hopped on that bus the driver was giving out about the mummies coming out to collect their student children in the train station. And people liked their little car experience and for years had been doing this and continued even when there was a shuttle. (Fiona, f1)

Fiona concluded that children getting off the train didn't want to wait ten minutes for the shuttle-bus when they were used to being collected by their parents. But inchoate social anxieties (Cohen 2002, p. xxv) surfaced when the group articulated how this could reflect safety and security concerns parents felt about leaving their children alone waiting for the bus:

Barry: Oh yeah, a bit of that.

Fiona: Not hugely because it's a very safe area. I wouldn't have thought...

Barry: Ah no Fiona – The odd...the back of your mind, ah no, you've... I'd say.

Fiona: Maybe? Late at night?

Barry: Yes. Later on – the dark...Dark morning, dark evening and people like, you know, parents *like* collecting their kids as well, believe it or not!

Facilitator: For safety?

Barry: Even just to personalise collection. You know, something nice about it yeah. (Barry and Fiona, f1)

Separately, Graham touched on how his family deal with related social anxieties and fears. Noting that their media usage in the car had changed now that his young children could understand the news, he explained:

<My son> is telling me that somebody was murdered or somebody was shot. So we started turning off the radio. So because the two of them are in (the car)...usually we're driving down the road ...spotting their friends – so the car has become...nearly like a place of fun, it's like you know I spy or it's like – “I see my friends”. (Graham, f4)

The sense here is that, in the society which emerges from life organised around it, the car has the potential to both aggravate as well as alleviate social anxieties, to create positive and negative associations of feelings in complex ways, often simultaneously. This is not only because media reports may generally be heard by all passengers –

potentially reinforcing such anxieties for a captive audience. It is also, as Maxwell (2001) notes, an outflow of the spatial dispersion the car enables that necessitates a car journey to get to the train station. The multiplicity of such journeys contributes to the creeping alienation, isolation and lack of social cohesion that reinforces the fear for personal safety that is a common feature of daily life and is mirrored in the experiences of these commuters. But as well as creating these problems the car provides their solution, in that it offers an affectively rich, “safe” space by separating our vulnerable selves from a world perceived to be dangerous or inhospitable, and creating what feels like a mobile privatised space in which one can travel without the “danger” of interaction with strangers (Henderson, 2008).

Auto-mobile therapy and relationships enabled by the car

Relationships enabled and maintained by the car are some of the most important affective dimensions of the automobile for the commuters in my study. The expression of these relationships illustrates the needs met by cars that underline why people can't simply reject them on account of their antagonisms. Commuters here foreground multiple affective rationalities that again contrast with the media's deployment and construction of such rationalities in response to car crashes.

An example of this is the way in which the car becomes associated with the expression of personal feelings, a sometimes cathartic environment where people can discuss anxieties or concerns in perceived privacy. As Gerard (f5) notes: “all of the iconic conversations I've had in my life have been in cars”. Caroline (f7) illustrated how the car can be a therapeutic space: “If I wanted to talk to somebody – I'd take them off in the car. Get out into a different atmosphere. It's hard to explain it but...when you hear in my family “let's go for a spin” – something's going down”. Tony agreed with this sentiment, while Susan (f8) said she thought that late night driving was particularly good for philosophical conversations: “It's the lights and it's really dark there's no one around and it's that kind of magical hour in the evening when minds turn to higher things”. Colm said he would have different conversations in the car compared to home, while Claire (f9) noted: “If there was something annoying you – you might say it then – because, well, they can't go anywhere! And because – it comes to an end – you know?” Sara (F9) noted that her car was the first among her friends' to become a mobile confessional environment:

It's a good area for DMCs— deep and meaningful conversations. My friend... wouldn't say anything to anyone about anything she's going through. [But] because I was the first one of my friends to drive and I've been driving them for years, in the 15 minutes from home she'd only start throwing little nuggets at you and then... you spend an hour at the gate of the house – In the car in the dark! And she'd be telling you her life story and then when she leaves the car, for her that's it.

Affective value sticks to and intensifies around the car here, carving it out as a therapeutic space. This space is constituted by words and phrases that circulate between bodies and signs, creating the effect of a temporal and spatial boundary between the car and the outside world (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 117): “different atmosphere”, “really dark”, “magical”, “deep and meaningful”, “when she leaves the car that's it”, for example. The use of the car as an aid to the expression and maintenance of relationships in this way illustrates the forms of shared social action and experiences that emerge from and are shaped by feelings about car use and that are enabled by it. The use of mystical allusions creates separation in this context just as it did in *The Irish Times* construction of Inishowen as a place apart (Duncan, 2010), although it is a different kind of separation. It is different because separation in this case can be actively sought to provide a space of sanctuary for commuters, rather than being imposed from outside to demarcate the otherness or difference of a place.

Maxwell (2001, p. 215) argues car journeys can constitute (enjoyable) shared social experiences in themselves and that individual meanings of the car do “not adequately represent the social relations in which car use is embedded”. As already noted, Maxwell (2001, p. 215) says that “[c]ar use can often be an expression of help, care or love” when journeys are taken with family members. Such expressions occur when escorting children to activities, visiting to elderly relatives, and when elderly people themselves used cars in a way that sustained otherwise unsustainable social networks, for example (Maxwell, 2001, pp. 215-216). These expressions include the enjoyment of the act of driving itself (Maxwell, 2001, p. 216). While my commuters associate the car with enhancing relationships, as a therapeutic space, and the expression of concern and affection for others, they take these facets for granted and had not reflected on them before.

Michelle (f4), for example, notes that she used her car to connect with relatives who didn't live in her immediate area and explained that her own car in particular – a “people carrier” with a raised entry point – had become essential for her mother, who suffers from reduced mobility. Graham (f4) explains that for him the car was also essential for visiting parents and that without it he wouldn't see them half as often as he does. Graham often brought his elderly aunts and uncles to weddings or football matches too, because they were physically incapable of taking public transport: “It's a very simple thing to drive them some place. They know you don't mind driving, they know you'll like it and you'll do it right...It's something you can give people – It's time – but beyond that it's a nice thing to be able to do, you know?”, he says. Tony (f7), who had only recently begun driving, explains that he sometimes drove his mother to work, picked up shopping for the family, and collected his brother from school. He occasionally brings his parents into town on nights-out and says he enjoys chats with them on the way in:

[Driving the car] makes me feel more grown up anyway – more mature. They gave me a sense of responsibility – you can drive the car now – like they wouldn't pass that to my little brother or sister. So I definitely feel like I'm up the pecking order in the family.

Colm (f8), who has also not been driving long, brings his father to the pub too, while Claire (f9), who also brings her parents to their leisure activities noted: “It makes you feel good about yourself that you're needed to bring them”. In Tony's family, the car and the right to drive has become a rite of passage conferring the status of “grown-up” on the children. For Tony, Colm, and Claire the car provides status through the sign value of “family” (Urry, 2005, p. 24) that sticks to the car through repeatedly intensified associations of feeling – parental love, emotional growth, and trust (Ahmed, 2004 a, b). Such emotional milestones also embed the car in the lives of the next generation of its users and illustrate ways in which automobility is continually reproduced (Urry, 2005).

Evelyn (f5), Gerard (f5), Declan (f6), Una (f6), Colm (f8), Susan (f8) and Sara (f9) further explored how relationships with children and friends were also enabled by the car. But the car enables works of charity too, as Graham (f4) noted:

It's very interesting how cars can bring you together...my mother works for the Irish Cancer Society where...sponsors or partners – [pick up patients] who don't

have a car and bring them to hospital. They get their cancer treatment and bring them home. So it's two things – you have a car so you have a means to bring the person ... to hospital and then you have someone to talk to and without a car she couldn't do that.

Michelle: And it's kind of supportive because you know the person coming for you cares enough to get out there and do it.

Graham: Exactly because they're not paying for it, they're not getting anything for it. It's interesting – I never thought about cars like that before but there you go.

It can be seen in these exchanges that the car is providing the facility – particularly in the sense of ease – in which meaningful manifestations of feelings, indeed love and care, are intensified and can better circulate around different relationships. These facilitations (e.g. “you don't mind driving”; “it's a nice thing”; “it's a simple task”; “for want of a better relationship”; “I had the car to make my son's life easier”) are associations that do work sticking figures together (e.g. different people; the car; feelings) (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 119). As noted, it is novel for commuters to contemplate their car in this particular way and these rationalities are not foregrounded or even acknowledged in the media representation about the Donegal accident that has been examined, despite them featuring in academic studies (Maxwell, 2001; Miller, 2001; Urry, 2005 for example).

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the work of emotions and affects in the constitution of the dispositif of road safety and networks of neoliberal automobility, from both their mediated articulations and how they are lived. Habermas's (1989; Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox, 1974) concept of the public sphere, and in particular various feminist critiques, helped articulate how affective rationalities are inseparable from rational deliberation. The mediated policy context of the Donegal accident was shown to be enmeshed in multiple rationalities, despite the ubiquity of the rational choice model in the formulations of solutions to the problems the car creates (Sheller, 2005). This analysis is extended by Ahmed's (2004 a, b) theorisation that enabled us to explore the work of emotion between both media representations and lived experience. The extension of public sphere theory was necessary because the mediated orchestration of public opinion needs to be considered in a context where the social order is sustained by

myriad networks of actors. The ritualised and repeated deployment of “sticky words” to bodies associated with the car (e.g. local, official actors, the media, commuters) has been examined, in which affective value is accumulated, shaping the surface of bodies and worlds in media reports of the Donegal accident, policy around road safety, as well as the practices of commuting (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 121). The deployment of feelings has been found to be characterised by complexity and contradiction.

The mediated policy context of the Donegal accident articulates and valorises an instrumental policy rationality, while at the same time contradicting that instrumentality with its mobilisation through the intensification of feeling. This mediated context others and passivizes the place and local people of Inishowen where the accident occurred. Media rituals such as this create or reflect both the myth of policy rationality and a sense of collective belonging around ritual conventions associated with those most affected by the crash, while at the same time excluding these citizens from fully autonomous citizenship. A hierarchy of emotions becomes apparent where, for example, rationalities associated with traditional rituals such as funerals are assigned to local citizens and only certain officially sanctioned actors are allowed to deploy both affective and instrumental rationalities to construct general framings about the accident and propose solutions to the problems that tragic events like this cause.

Commuters’ descriptions of their journeys can mirror the instrumental logics associated with official actors, but their actual behaviours are also shaped by a range of factors that manifest as a complex framework of multiple rationalities. Commuters share and valorise their rational choices and self-interested decision-making abilities when initially describing their commuting journeys within this framework. But commuters’ active deployment of feelings differs from the passive associations attributed to citizens of Inishowen and reflects differential hierarchies of emotions and sticky words that can simultaneously attach to the car and circulate around it (Ahmed, 2004a, pp. 122/128). This was shown in the case of Michelle (f4), for example, who at turns valorises the neoliberal ethic, but she also shows how affective rationalities can have as much say in the practices that result. Commuters’ use of mystical allusions that turn the car into a slightly mysterious therapeutic space also correlates with language usage that marks Inishowen out as other. Again, the difference is that in media representation about the Donegal accident this creates the effect of passivity that inheres to ordinary local citizens, while in commuter reflections on their driving practices, as in the

representation of official actors, affective language is articulated to mobilize instrumental rationality.

The car becomes implicated in social formation in quite a profound way. Consideration of how the car shapes decision making – regarding choice of university for example (Dermot, f5; Gary, f3) – underlines this, showing that choices are made in light of range of factors that entangle multiple rationalities. Automobility's power to shape social action is also highlighted by the way in which commuters feel guilt about car use yet still rationalise other forms of transport out of contention for their commuting needs. It is reinforced by the way in which the car solves problems it itself creates and how it can both magnify and mitigate resulting social anxieties in complex ways that involve multiple rationalities. Different contexts of fear or pleasure that stick to the car also overlap, highlighting the range of contradictory feelings that are simultaneously involved in the constitution of automobility. In this chapter, how the car has seeped into rituals of coming of age, shared expressions of love, and the performance of affective relationships with loved ones has also been explored. This has demonstrated how cars are “deeply embedded in ways of life, networks of friendship and sociality, and moral commitments to family and care for others” (Sheller, 2005, p. 236).

All these insights together challenge media-centric assumptions about what the car and policy to do with cars means to people because they highlight the networks of actors and rationalities involved in the constitution of the dispositif of road safety and system of automobility as it is lived. Commuting becomes emblematic of the skilled negotiations of competing, multiple rationalities and responsibilities that are both facilitated and made compulsory by the car (Urry, 2005). The clash of discursive and practical social actions that emerge from the rationalities explored in this chapter form the final structuring theme that emerges from the research data: the exploration of the networks of resistance that Foucault (1976) defined as “counter-conducts”.

Chapter 4: Networks of resistance

Introduction

I can well imagine societies in which the control of the conduct of others is so well regulated in advance that, in a sense, the game is already over. (Foucault, 1984b, p. 300)

The fierce spatio-temporalities of contemporary daily life – driven by technologies that emphasize speed and rapid reductions in the frictions of distance and of turnover times – preclude times to imagine or construct alternatives other than those forced unthinkingly upon us as we rush to perform our respective professional roles in the name of technological progress and endless capital accumulation. (Harvey, 2001, p. 201)

Our discussions so far outline a vision of driving extant in mediated policy contexts of road safety and another one in the conceptions and actions of drivers, and these appear to be in tension. This chapter explores this tension by conceptualising it as a particular type of resistance. Matereke (2013, p. 41) outlines what Foucault (1978a, p. 268) called “counter-conducts”, defined as “struggle[s] against the processes implemented for conducting others” in governmentality. This is the form of resistance explored in this chapter.

Weir, O’Malley, and Shearing (1997, p. 510) define a programmers’ vision of government – “the discourses and programmes of rule” – as the centre of analysis in most governmentality literature. However, they argue that “many programmes exist only in the process of messy implementation” (Weir, O’Malley, and Shearing, 1997, p. 512). The discourses and programmes of rule are thus not “formed by programmers alone, nor... in relations of context with the subjects of rule”, but instead are “multivocal and decentred” (Weir, O’Malley, and Shearing, 1997, p. 505). This chapter delineates two intersecting and often contradictory programmers’ visions. The first – the programmers’ vision for automobility – is represented by specific policies and discourses of automobility that will be explored in the context of the launch of a network of speed cameras as part of the constitution of the dispositif of road safety in the first section of this chapter. The second – the programmers’ vision for neoliberal society – refers to the “phenomenon” in which the concepts and exigencies of neoliberalism permeate debates about automobility (Gilbert, 2013). This is also

discussed through analysis of mediation about the speed cameras' launch, as well as through commuter experiences of commuting and other aspects of automobility. This chapter analyses the complex ways in which resistances manifest in the discourses and practices of driving. In effect, it explores the contradictions and disagreements that result *within* and *between* the two programmers' visions outlined. These negotiations and self-management strategies co-exist with normative and aligned behaviours and together constitute automobility, making-up its reality in practice (McKee, 2009, p. 474).

Resistance was and remains a disputed and ambiguous notion in governmentality literature. Weir, O'Malley, and Shearing (1997, p. 510) argue that resistance, if it is considered at all, is typically seen only as an obstacle to rule and never discussed as an alternative governance, nor given "the constitutive role" that Foucault made available for it. However, Burchell (1996, p. 20) notes that "the introduction of techniques of the self...seems to imply a loosening of the connection between subjectification and subjection". Flint (2002, p. 621) asserts that governing "is often characterised by contradictions, complexities and inconsistencies, a gulf between policy rhetoric, implementation and practices and the fact that outcomes are often partial, uneven and unpredictable". McKee (2009, p. 474) argues that subjection is actually a project "inherently characterised by conflict, contestation and instability"; but while foregrounding the analysis of resistant behaviours, subjection is still suggested as the outcome. Each of these arguments demonstrates the contentiousness of notions of resistance. Nevertheless, McKee (2009, p. 476) argues that "a key role for political contestation, an analysis of the effects of particular governmental ambitions, and the development of a critical stance are all quite feasible" within governmentality. A key here is to clarify the definition of resistance, to see beyond "a binarism of resistance and domination" (Materike, 2013, p. 39). This means viewing it not simply as "liberation from an oppressor", but rather as "an invention of alternatives to current governing practices" (McKee, 2009, p. 471). In this sense, resistance may be considered as not merely political but also ubiquitous. As Foucault (1984c, p. 167) argues, if there was no resistance, there would be no power relations.

For Foucault (1982, p. 221), to govern means to "structure the possible field of action for others", where according to Materike (2013, p. 38), "subjects (the governed) still remain with the ability to initiate and secure possible modes of action in response to

their government”. As such, automobility can be viewed as consisting of “sites of complex processes of domination, resistance and also appropriation that allow for the constitution of power relations” (Materike, 2013, p. 40). These power relations are constituted “with effects of resistance and counter-investments”, meaning that “one type of stable subjugation, given once and for all” never prevails (Foucault, 1976, p. 97 cited in Materike, 2013, p. 40). Indeed, Materike (2013, p. 41) outlines Foucault’s (1976) concept of counter-conducts in order to account for how power relations are constituted. According to Cadman (2010, p. 540) counter-conducts are “wholly immanent and necessary to the formation and development of governmentality”. They are immanent because the critique of liberal government is an intrinsic part of its existence – encapsulated in the question “[d]o we govern too much?” – and also part of liberal government’s ongoing activity as events of “innovation, change or disruption”. Counter-conducts in this context arise “not simply through an internal rationality emanating from governments but through the constitution of, and action between, governors and governed” (Cadman, 2010, p. 548). As already suggested by Weir, O’Malley, and Shearing (1997, p. 510), resistances include conflicts between competing strategies for government. But counter-conducts are not contained within programmes of rule and their discourses and include the resistant actions of the practitioners of automobility themselves.

In counter-conduct resistance can be shown not simply as revolt or dissidence, but as struggles within governmentality – in terms of the activity of conducting others, how one conducts oneself, and how one lets oneself be conducted (Foucault, 1978a, pp. 257-258) – which push or potentially reshape the boundaries of conduct. In this conception, “resistance becomes a form of critique by which an individual renegotiates the limits of the self” (Materike, 2013, p. 41). As such, counter-conducts are not actions that necessarily set out to undermine “the system”, create anarchy or overthrow regimes, although sometimes they could conceivably achieve this. Rather, in this research context, counter-conducts may be viewed as among the necessary agencies that are expressed by subjects in order to better accommodate themselves within the system of neoliberal automobility. Counter-conducts make sense of the contexts in which resistance manifests in this project.

This chapter first briefly explores the operation of the network of speed cameras within the dispositif of road safety as a disciplinary form of power. This discussion locates the

actuality of the cameras as actors in the context of their representation and frames discussion of mainstream media representations and user-generated content about the cameras' launch. The chapter then examines the launch of the camera network in the context of mainstream media rituals surrounding their introduction as well as mediated articulations of resistance to them. Specifically, mainstream print media (*The Irish Times; Irish Independent*) and user-generated content (*boards.ie*) about the camera's launch are investigated. These representations are picked because they portray a controversial issue related to road safety, in which the counter-conducts of automobility may manifest.

Print media reports related to the launch of the cameras and coverage of camera-burning incidents are examples of how neoliberal ideals manifest in the media, and how a dominant media consensus is ritually prefigured in mainstream mediation of the cameras. The analysis in this chapter highlights that mainstream representation of the cameras bolsters the neoliberal governance strategies and subjects mobilised by the operation of the cameras as a disciplinary power. Yet internet forum discussion underlines the actual complexity of issues around the cameras' launch that are denied by the media consensus. Including the "casual" discourse of user-generated content found on internet forums enriches the understanding of how the dispositif of road safety is constituted by contestation and counter-conduct (Weir, O'Malley, and Shearing, 1997). My exploration suggests how politicised and contentious the debate about the cameras could have been if the issues raised by drivers were engaged with by organs such as *The Irish Times*. What is illustrated in these sections are the ways in which the mainstream media goes about constructing its own centrality for itself (Couldry, 2003), how the potentially mythical nature of this centrality plays-out in the user-generated content of internet forums, as well as how the disciplinary power of the cameras is an important actor in the constitution of the dispositif of road safety.

Online forums' dynamics of acceptance, accommodation, and rejection variously connect to the particular ways in which people counter and incorporate the programmer's visions for automobility and neoliberal society into their lived practice. Indeed, the second half of the chapter goes on to explore the "work" in which counter-conducts appear as, in effect, alternative practices or accommodations of the suggestions of governance. By examining discourses and practices of commuters which both incorporate and challenge programmers' visions of government, a better sense of

the complexity of the power relations constitutive of commuting and automobility can be ascertained. When the programmers' views are changed or accommodated this can constitute counter-conduct, but the reality is complex and the extent to which counter-conduct can align with an over-arching neoliberal sensibility is explored.

Counter-conducts and the launch of a network of speed cameras

The rollout of a network of speed cameras is a primary plank of the enforcement component of the *Road Safety Strategy*, shoring-up its education strand in which the message of personal responsibility in relation to road safety is disseminated through the media (RSA, 2007; see also Chapter 2). The importance and technological complexity of the network of cameras to the dispositif of road safety can be seen in how strongly they figure in the "priority actions" of the *Road Safety Strategy*, helping enforce the first listed "key behaviour" to be changed – inappropriate speeding (RSA, 2007, p. 25):

The Safety Camera Network is a significant addition to the existing enforcement programme. Mobile and fixed cameras will be used across the road network. The locations will be based on analysis by the Gardaí of speed-related collisions, which will allow optimal deployment of the safety cameras and hours of operation to achieve the compliance rates... Implementing a successful Safety Camera Network requires an integrated technology system that links the camera output to the vehicle and licence databases and to the courts administration system. The operation of the Safety Camera Network will be supported by a high profile and continuous public awareness campaign to ensure drivers are aware of the role of safety cameras in enhancing their safety. (RSA, 2007, p. 29)

The cameras are also referenced in the introduction to the *Annual Report 2010* (RSA, 2011) in which the Donegal accident is highlighted (RSA, 2011). They are positioned as "one of the most significant developments in road safety since the introduction of Mandatory Alcohol Testing" (RSA, 2011, p. 3). Their rollout is part of a strategy that seeks to prevent accidents like the one in Donegal in the future, and their disciplinary power can be traced as an important constitutive actor of the dispositif of road safety.

Indeed, though subjects are supposed to negotiate strategies of governmental responsabilization through the effective management of the choices they make (Ouellette and Hay, 2008), the goals of such strategic interventions can also be enabled by the threat of sanction. The penalty points the cameras generate leverage the

neoliberal assumption of “competitive, acquisitive and uniquely self-interested behaviour which is the central fact of human social life” (Gilbert, 2013, p. 9) albeit in a somewhat perverse manner. They create a kind of contrary league-table in which poor performance (that is breaking the speed limit at a camera location) results in the “awarding” of penalty points that culminate in the loss of a driving licence when a set target is “achieved” (twelve points). As the site of government intervention, individuals “compete” to ensure they do not fall foul of the cameras and ultimately lose their driving licences. For any car commuter, the loss of a licence has the potential to severely affect the ability to work and thus to consume, denying “the main consolation for participation in neoliberal culture: access to a wide range of consumer goods” (Gilbert, 2013, p. 13).

But good performance in relation to avoiding the cameras is rewarded with nothing at all – except the ability to continue to live lives as complex negotiations of programmers’ visions. Penalty points make the highly demanding task of feeding ones children “and keeping them out of relative poverty” potentially more difficult because they can damage the ability to perform this task in a car-dependent society (Gilbert, 2013, p. 14). The disciplinary power of the cameras shows how neoliberal ideology can interpellate “subjects as consumers, while simultaneously legitimating a political programme which actively undermines the capacity of citizens to consume” (Gilbert, 2013, p. 18). This power is predicated on and reproduces the assumption that “inherent” competitive individualism ensures acquiescence with the system. But acquiescence is not secured, because as the RSA’s own figures show, 479,651 fully licenced drivers had penalty points active on their driving licences from all offences types as at April 2014 (RSA, 2015b) ¹⁹.

The cameras’ interventions “materially instantiate” neoliberal ideology and institutionalise “ritual forms of behaviour in which [subjects] are obliged or persuaded to engage” (Gilbert, 2013, p. 12). Their disciplinary power helps construct the subjectivity that is necessary to the operation of the competitive, individualistic regime of commuting (inculcating it as the required, as well as desired, action [Stewart, 2001, pp. 18-19]). The sort of behaviours they promote lead to an “internalization of

¹⁹ This was the latest available data. The RSA website notes that “points are wiped from a drivers licence after three years” (RSA, 2015b).

standards” which is used by subjects to self-regulate conduct “inculcating virtues such as prudence and self-control” (Barnett, 2010, p. 286). Vigilance – specifically of excess speed in this context – can mitigate the threat of the loss of freedom the cameras potentially represent. But while speed cameras help enforce the imperative for responsabilization encountered in relation to the Donegal accident, they do not simply create the outcomes projected by policy. Governance is never complete or total as the agency to choose the ways in which behaviours and counter-conducts are self-managed is always retained. Assemblages of cars and drivers, the dispositif of road safety, and networks of automobility are shaped by the threat of discipline. But as will now be explored, they are also shaped by other actors including consensus formation by mainstream media, resistant and normative discourses of user-generated internet forum content about the cameras, and the counter and aligned practices of the users of the system.

Mainstream media and consensus formation around speed cameras

Although now barely remaining in public consciousness, the launch of a network of speed or “safety” cameras in Ireland in 2010 was accompanied by significant resistance, including a spate of camera burnings in the months following the start of their operation. However, print media coverage of these events and the launch itself depict resistance around the cameras as pre-settled and defused and illustrate how neoliberal ideals manifest in the media coverage. An article entitled “No clear pattern to burning of speed vans” appeared in *The Irish Times* on April 16th 2011 (Lally and McAleer, 2011). It was published on page 3 of the *Weekend Review* section of the paper, positioned below a much larger article concerning the fate of Ireland’s golf clubs in light of economic recession (figure 6). In the “speed vans” article, the journalists detail three instances of camera van burnings that had occurred over the previous six months in Counties Louth, Wicklow, and Donegal. The article reports progress towards solving each incident, with the Gardai hoping for an “imminent development” in the Wicklow case, while there was hope that a detailed description of the vehicle used in the Donegal incident would help solve that crime. The Louth event was proving to be more difficult to resolve. The article speculates about the involvement of the “republican movement” in the burnings, before detailing extra security provisions that were being considered to defend the vans against attack. However, the Gardai were reluctant to reinforce security on the vans “feeling that a fleet of heavily fortified vans could alienate the public”.

Conor Faughnan of the AA then sets-out the broad level of support for the vans' introduction, as well as detailing the issues that "annoy the public" in relation to their deployment. The vans are operated on behalf of the Gardai by GoSafe, a private entity that won the tendering process to provide this network of mobile speed cameras. The Garda Commissioner of the time is quoted as saying GoSafe's work was "vital" and that the attacks were wrong. Faughnan is given last word in the article, describing the burnings as "pure thuggery".

News Review

TV REVIEW
Arts & Books, page 6



IN TOM CREAN'S FOOTSTEPS:

 Bernice Harrison watches Charlie Bird let his ego off the leash

Golf hits the bunker



FIONA REDDAN

We created too many courses for too few golfers and now face the prospect of ghost golf courses. Only rock-bottom green fees are easing the pain

IT'S A SHOWERY Sunday morning in April and, despite the lack of sun, golfers are lining up to tee off at Tullaghan Hotel and Golf Resort, in Co Wicklow. Although the grey skies overcast and the light falling rain are obscuring the view of the 18th, the falling rain is obscuring the view of the... this particular scenic parkland course. For the golfer who drops by unannounced in the hope of getting a tee time, disappointment awaits. A look at the club's time sheet reveals that the course is almost booked out for the day.

To the casual observer it would appear that the golf resort is in a state of ruckus. But it isn't. It's broke. Just like the country's many bankrupt hotels, golf courses around the country are being kept open at the behest of lenders. Clubs such as the Heritage in Portlaoise, Monaghan in Co Kildare and the Cipswick in Co Dublin are being kept open to bring in any revenue they can to satisfy their creditors. Some say that, in doing so, they are aggressively undercutting their competitors. But while such an approach is undoubtedly good news for the consumer, it is quite the opposite for the struggling industry. It's no so long ago that Irish golf businesses were riding a wave that, as with the property sector, many believed would never crash. In 2006 the Ryder Cup came to Ireland and the hype surrounding the event was at its zenith. Developers capitalised on tax incentives to build hotels with championship golf courses alongside. They opened up stores, and some restaurateurs and farm folk tried to sell the new resorts. Rising disposable incomes meant demand for membership soared, while some newcomers sought the prestige of owning

property on one of these courses. But this fashion for bigger and better golf courses, fuelled by bank lending, was sowing up major problems for the industry. Between 1995 and 2000 about 100 new courses were created, according to research by the financial adviser FGS, which meant that when the economy tanked and people's disposable income took a nosedive, there were simply too many golf courses and not enough people to play on them. "Many courses were ill-conceived, in the wrong location or overdeveloped. In the real world they should be out of business, but they're not; they're there competing in the market place," says Mary Carr, chief executive of the Carr Group, which manages golf clubs including Moyville and South County. This, the argument goes, is creating an unfair imbalance in an industry already battered by the recession. On one side are the golf clubs that are struggling to survive but still have to service their debts, but nonetheless still open so as to generate cash for the receiver.

"Those who are trading shakily, and are operating profitably but can't service their debt, are more likely to be kept alive by the financial institutions because there's a better chance of extracting value out of them at some stage," says Carr. In order to extract value, however, debt-ridden clubs are slashing their rates. Tullaghan is offering annual membership from just €10,000, and daily rates are available from €20, or €30 at weekends. These figures are down from a previous signing fee of €15,000 and green fees of €50 or €60. At the Heritage, where green fees would have once set you back up to €35 at weekends, you can now get on the course for €40 on Saturdays, while in midweek there's a golf-and-lunch package for €35. Carr has introduced a range of membership options. Its annual fee used to be €1,000, but this has come down to €1,100, while it has a private-members option starting at €500. Farther south, at Bannary Golf Resort in Co Cork, the annual fee has remained constant at €1,200, but membership now includes access to the hotel's leisure facilities and there is no longer a joining fee of €5,000. There is also the option of a three-month trial for €350. While golfers are happy to have the opportunity to play at top-class courses for cut-throat prices, embattled golf clubs feel differently. "The fact that we're offering a €50 green fee for the best residents, and rates of €65 to €75 for non-residents. The joining fee is now €5,000, with

A good time to join the club: a solitary player on the Tullaghan golf course, in Co Wicklow. Photographs: Gary O'Neil

budgeting golf courses," says Carr. For Richard Collins, chief executive of Druids Glen Resort, Co Wicklow, the situation is "irresponsible and wrong. ... We all have to acknowledge that the taxpayer is paying for these properties to stay open. It puts pressure across the system, and viable golf courses will go into trouble".

Bernard Gibbons, general manager of Powercourt Golf Club, in Co Wicklow, agrees, arguing that zombie clubs are doing "so much damage to top-end clubs" by knocking down rates to levels nobody can compete with. But the zombie golf courses, just like their hotel counterparts, are not for turning. Although Mary Howell, general manager at Tullaghan, has sympathy with other clubs, she feels Tullaghan has managed to turn things around "by undercutting" but on its own merits. "I don't think we're necessarily driving the price down," he says, adding that golfers are no longer willing to pay the prices of old.

THE DOWNWARD pressure on prices is part of a larger trend. Kevin Markham, the author of *Hitler's*, a book about playing all of Ireland's courses, estimates that about 70 per cent of them have dropped their prices over the past two years, sometimes by as much as 50 per cent. Many players would argue that the industry as a whole is to blame for its woes, rather than just clubs in financial difficulties. "People get carried away, with prices that are now difficult to justify," says Markham.

Another case in point is the large joining fee that clubs used to require (see panel, above), while some also sold preferential-type shares, which enabled their owners to sell them on in the future, ostensibly at a higher price. At Powercourt, for example, members paid €50,000 for a redeemable preference share. Now, however, Gibbons would put a price of €15,000 to €20,000 on the Powercourt share, although "even at that you couldn't shift it at the moment". "A lot of courses are still hanging on to this concept of joining fees, but it's gone in the short term," says Collins. Unsurprisingly, clubs are finding it difficult to maintain their business models. In 2004 Ireland's Premier Castle Golf and Country Club, in Co Clare, embarked on a €5 million redevelopment, with the aim of establishing its golf course as the top tier. According to its managing director, Mark Nolan, the plan was to charge green fees of about €120 and a joining fee of about €25,000. When the economy slowed and tourism started to wane, however, prices no longer looked viable. Nolan's club offers a €30 green fee for hotel residents, and rates of €65 to €75 for non-residents. The joining fee is now €5,000, with

Changing face of golf From boom to bust

	Then	Now
Joining fees		
Moyville	€17,500	€6,000
Tullaghan	€15,000	€6,000
Heritage Golf Resort	€5,000	€6,000
Druids Glen	€45,000	€6,000
The Heritage	€25,000	€6,000
Bannary Club	€14,500	€4,000
Number of golf courses (1996)	333	433
Number of members per club (2002)	661	590
	(2002)	(2008)
Number of courses predicted to close		50

Sources: FGS, golf clubs, FGS

SLASHING RATES WON'T guarantee survival for the embattled clubs. In north Co Dublin Turley Golf and Country Club, which had been offering early-bird rates of €15 and €20, closed earlier this year. Limerick County had been offering membership from €600, with no joining fee, but it too closed in January. And at Tullaghan, despite its €100 rate, membership remains flat, according to the club.

But which ones will go? Typically, it's the market that decides, but with banks keeping open courses that can't pay their bills, it's not so clear. For some it's the zombie courses that need to be got rid of. "The only way this market is going to survive is if it's closed," Gibbons says. "Rather than have them battling against each other, best to bank, you could merge two or three courses together to have one very high-end, viable golf course," he says. Meanwhile, Rory McIlroy's close call in last week's US Masters might give a boost to the game. "The Masters is seen by most casual fair-weather golfers as the start of the season, time to dust off the clubs," says Anthony Brady, sales and marketing director at Moynalty, in Co Kerry, which launched a membership drive during the tournament. According to Brady there was an "overwhelming response" to the advertising campaign, and the club is in the process of covering inquiries into subscriptions. Unlike other top-rank courses Moynalty never had a joining fee for individual members, but its corporate joining fee has been cut from €5,365 in 2006 to €4,000 this year. It has also cut its annual subscriptions from a high of €3,375 in 2009 to €2,450. Another potential bright spot on the horizon for golf clubs comes in the shape of the midweek, but rarely recently signed, American golfer. Although he hasn't yet played in the county, the newly signed player has a high of €3,375 in 2009 to €2,450. Another potential bright spot on the horizon for golf clubs comes in the shape of the midweek, but rarely recently signed, American golfer. Although he hasn't yet played in the county, the newly signed player has a high of €3,375 in 2009 to €2,450. As in 2010, an international team event is coming to Ireland. The Solheim Cup, the women's version of the Ryder Cup, will take place in September in Killon Castle, Co Wick. This time, however, rather than hoping on untalented business, it is hoped that it might just get more people back on the golf course. See also: Shane Hegarty, page 16

No clear pattern to the burning of speed vans

Three recent arson attacks on speed-detection vans were too far apart to be linked, write Conor Lally and Michael McAlister

IF YOU GO online you might conclude from internet discussion boards that a string of arson attacks on speed-camera vans over the past six months is the logical result of motorists' anger about punitive fines and misplaced speed limits. But those messages ignore the fact that the vans are driven by employees of Garda, a consortium that has been asked to try to save lives on our roads. The first incident occurred in Co Louth last November. The

driver had parked his survey van at Milltown, on the Carrickmacross/Dandale road, in the early hours of November 20th to assess the van's suitability to be used by a working speed-camera van. The attacker smashed the front window and set the vehicle on fire. On the evening of March 15th another Garda van was destroyed by fire during a similar incident when it was checking speeds on the old N11, south of Arklow. Most recently, early last Saturday morning a van was destroyed in an arson attack at Cahel in Co Donegal, on the Carracough-Oldigo's Point road. In each case the occupant escaped unharmed.

The investigation into the case in Co Wicklow is said to be progressing well, and Garda would be hopeful of an imminent development. In Co Donegal Garda believe that a detailed description of the vehicle used by the attackers, a

blue Peugeot boxer-style van with a 10-LK registration, may help solve the crime. The investigation into the incident in Co Louth is proving more difficult. Garda sources say that the attacks are too far apart geographically to represent a pattern. "Having said that, it's very possible that people involved in the republican movement were involved in the Louth and Donegal incidents," says one source. "Both are in the Border regions, and because the vans effectively act as CCTV some people involved in smuggling and other crimes linked to republicans wouldn't want them there."

Extra security is being considered: the vans' undercarriages could be fortified and made fire-resistant; more could be put over the windows. But guard any way, Garda sources are confident that if they were to identify the perpetrators they would be able to solve the crime. They'd be alone at the enquiry,



Fast burn: the remains of the speed-camera van set on fire near Arklow, Co Wicklow, last month. Photograph: Gary O'Neil

trying to catch people out rather than trying to make them safer and saving lives," says a source here. Evidence suggests that public support for the speed-camera programme is strong. Covering 93 per cent of motorist support for the cameras are

designed to make money. On the first point, Faughan says, the cameras are generally in the right places and are not black spots, and the Garda website never places these areas. It is possible that the 44 Garda vans are being confused with the 18 Garda vans that can be set anywhere, including, some would say, locations that prove lucrative. "It raises public cynicism and frustration. It's that sort of thing that destroys the reputation of speed cameras in the UK," says Faughan. "Our surveys consistently show about 20 per cent of motorists remain cynical and simply cannot be shaken from the view that the cameras are a money-making exercise. It's a minority view but not a negligible one." The fact is, the contract that Garda won is for hours work and bears no relationship to how many fines are issued. During the debates about the introduction of cameras, of which I was a part, there were calls within government to ensure the cameras were self-financing, but we were argued against it. The argument that clinched it was the work done by Peter Bacon on the economic impact of a road death. He estimated that it cost the economy about €3 million, while each speed fine netted about €80 to the State... If

speed camera prevents one death happening, its economic benefit is greater than 37,500 speeding fines, so the Government savings are made through saving lives, not speeding fines. After the attack in Co Louth Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan said: "Garda's work at the side of the country's roads helps to save many of our communities from the tragedy and pain of loss of family and friends to road collisions. It is so wrong that this vital work directed at making our community safer for everyone should be the subject of such misadvised attacks." Faughan, who describes the attacks as pure thuggery, says: "The perpetrators might attend a bit of bravado to it, or seem self-justification, but there is absolutely no way ordinary motorists support that sort of action."

Figure 6: The Irish Times, Weekend Review, Page 3, 16th April, 2011.

The article describes GoSafe as “a consortium that has been asked to try to save lives on our roads”. The description of the contracting process in which GoSafe won the multi-million euro right to carry out this complex technological and logistical operation as merely being “*asked* to try to save lives on our roads” (Lally and McAleer, 2011, emphasis added) seems an excessively reductive, simplistic, and casual assertion to make. This is because the awarding of the contract represents the culmination of years-long processes of expert group pronouncements, legislative change, context setting by the media and government and the completion of a complicated procurement process. The personalisation of institutional actors created in the phraseology of GoSafe simply being “asked” masks a political and economic process by making it appear as personal service, and obfuscates the agency of the state and other institutional actors such as the RSA involved in governance infrastructure. In particular, the hiring of private contractors for policing purposes demonstrates the diffusion of governance through market mechanisms. Harvey (2005, p. 2) notes that a role of the state in neoliberal theory is to create markets, but intervention into them once created “must be kept to a bare minimum”. However, one must also consider how neoliberal ideals do not imply reduced state action in practice. Neoliberalism actually advocates deliberate intervention in order to cultivate entrepreneurial behaviours that are assumed to be humanity’s natural state in the absence of intervention by government (Gilbert, 2013, p. 9). As such, intervention is not about simply transferring state functions to the market, thus reducing the state’s role in the process, but rather reordering these functions around the principles of the free market which does not necessarily imply minimal intervention at all.

Indeed, the RSA’s (2007) targets in relation to reducing road deaths were actually achieved three years early and without the help of the cameras. This underlines that imperatives other than the need to save lives were at work in the gestation of the network. While the complex processes implicit in the awarding of the operation of the safety camera network to GoSafe suggest the kind of market interventions that state and institutional actors are actually involved with in neoliberal practice, this is denied by the assertion that the consortium have simply been “asked to try to save lives” (Lally and McAleer, 2011). This denial mirrors the deflection of state responsibility exemplified by the discourses of responsabilization that make social maintenance a matter of personal provisions (Lemke, 2002, p. 12). Thus the discursive minimisation of state intervention occurs repeatedly in the dispositif of road safety and is an important way in

which neoliberal theory manifests in mainstream mediation. The state's role is diminished here by the reduction of governance to an interpersonal relationship but this strategy is belied in practice by the "all sorts of state intervention" that actually go on (Barnett, 2010, p. 285).

Indeed, the increased complexity of interactions between state actors and corporate entities that is necessitated by the setting-up of the camera network is reinforced in an *Irish Times* report from the 13th of November 2010, written just before their launch. Headlined "Privatised speed check vans go live on Monday" (Carroll, 2010), the report outlines the rollout of the camera network, which was expected to become fully operational by the following February, as well as some of the mechanics of its set-up and operation. It also emphasises the business facets of the camera network and its five year, €55m contract, which had been signed the previous November by the Garda Commissioner, the then Minister for Justice (Dermot Ahern), and representatives of the GoSafe consortium. The cameras were to provide 6,000 hours of checks every month, spread over 600 locations across the state, the report explains. The location and operation of the cameras were to be centred on places and times where crashes took place in the past. The article goes on to state that the GoSafe network bolsters the Gardai's own assemblage of "400 hand-held speeding devices and more than 100 automatic number plate recognition cameras which are installed in Garda cars for checks that capture 200,000 speeding motorists annually". Those caught speeding by the GoSafe cameras would receive penalty points, to be administered by the Gardai. The report states that 11 million cars would be monitored annually by the cameras, before explaining how GoSafe would be paid for their services. It ends with some background information on the number of crashes in which speed was cited as the main factor, varying from 15 – 54 per cent, depending on the type of crash involved. The article is the main story on page 5 of the *Irish Times* that day (figure 7) and is positioned beside a picture of a family whose previously conjoined twins "had captured the nation's hearts" (The Irish Times, 2010). Another article on the page concerns power cuts caused by a recent storm, while a final smaller article reports comments from the Turkish ambassador to Ireland about the slaughter at Gallipoli during the First World War. All of the articles take up one half of page 5 in total. The other half of the page consists of an interesting intertextual counterpoint: a large advertisement for the Land Rover Freelander, depicted, as has already been argued is characteristic of car

advertising, on an empty mountainous route. Small print on the advertisement cautions “Drive responsibly on and off-road”.

The deletion of the actors in the preferred reading of the Carroll (2010) article’s headline and sub-headline (it is the vans themselves that “go live”; crash-risk sites are “scanned by cameras in marked vehicles”) echoes throughout the piece (Richardson, 2007, p. 55). The cameras’ operators are named as “the GoSafe consortium”, or “the consortium”, or are referred to as “a consortium” led by a vague and almost preternatural entity “the Spectra Group” whose interests and activities seem to fade into the ether. The use of “the consortium” as a phrase reinforces this sense of mystery, giving little indication of who or what GoSafe consists (Carroll, 2010). The consortium’s strategic intent is denied by its designation as the mere operators of cameras, as the management of the network is the responsibility of the Garda (“The consortium...will be directed by the Garda and overseen by gardai at the Garda Office for Safety Camera Management”). Despite being the operators of the cameras, GoSafe’s agency is transferred to the cameras themselves. It is the cameras that execute: they “check”, “enforce”, “operate”, “provide”, “monitor”, and “perform”. These metonymic strategies, as Reisigl and Wodak (2001, p. 58) argue, “enable the speakers (or writers) to conjure away responsible, involved, or affected actors (whether victims or perpetrators) or to keep them in the semantic background”. These strategies further the theme of deflection of state agency, even while the article constitutes a description of the extent and nature of the interventions the state and institutional actors have been involved in (and will continue to be involved in) in relation to the camera’s administration and management.

Henry Gorecki
Columnist, page 18



With its themes of war and separation in a slow, stark style, *Symphony of Sorrows* became a surprise the best-seller following a recording released in 1992

Home News

Privatised speed check vans go live on Monday

Crash-risk sites scanned by cameras in marked vehicles

STEVEN CARROLL

A NETWORK of privatised mobile speed enforcement cameras is to begin operating from Monday. A limited number of the cameras will be used over the coming months but they are all expected to be operating by February.

Garda Commissioner Fáilte Murphy and Minister for Justice Dermot Ahern signed a five-year €55 million contract with the GoSafe consortium to provide the service last November.

The secretary general of the Department of Justice, Seán Aylward, previously estimated the proposed network might generate a million speeding penalties a year. At €100 per speeding fine, the privatised speed cameras alone could generate roughly €40 million per annum.

A Garda spokesman said the cameras were not a revenue-gathering exercise but a means to improving safety on the roads.

The consortium, led by the Spectra company, will be directed by the Garda and overseen by gardai at the Garda Office for Safety Camera Management.

A Road Collision Factbook prepared this year by the Road Safety Authority shows that in single-vehicle crashes, speed was cited as the main factor in 54 per cent of cases. When two vehicles were in a fatal crash, speed was deemed to be the main cause in only 15 per cent of cases, with drinking on the wrong side of the road causing 82 per cent of these.

Little fighters: family of formerly conjoined twins honoured in annual awards



Azzedine and Angie Benhafal with daughters Malika and Iman and their formerly conjoined twins, Hassan and Hussein, as they receive a special merit award at the annual maternity and infant awards in the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin. After being born conjoined the twins captured the nation's hearts, enduring a 14-hour surgery in London's Great Ormond Street in April this year before astonishing doctors with their subsequent progress. Photograph: Robbie Reynolds

50,000 homes hit by power cuts

DOIN BURKE-KENNEDY, FOGHAN MACDONNELL and DAN KEZMAN

UP TO 50,000 homes mainly in the west and northwest experienced power outages during Thursday's storm, the ESB said yesterday.

At the height of the storm some 10,000 customers were left without power in the worst hit areas of Galway, Sligo, Donegal and Athlone where high winds felled trees, damaging power lines and blocking roads.

The stormy conditions also caused isolated outages in pockets of north Dublin, including Ferenborough, Cabra and Howth.

Last night, ESB crews were still attempting to restore power to 790 homes on the Sligo Leitrim border and around the village of Drumbar.

The poor weather also brought flooding to many parts of the midlands, the north and northwest. A number of secondary roads in north Clare and south Galway remained flooded and impassable.

The Irish Farmers Association (IFA) warned that many areas were completely unprepared to deal with flooding, and accused the Government of inaction in relation to flood prevention measures.

IFA flood project team chairman Michael Sille said just two days' rain could cause flooding around the Shannon equal to levels experienced 12 months ago.

"If you look at the flood that's here today, you look behind and you see thousands of acres of land and that's literally after two days' rain," he said.

"If it was to stop raining it would take at least a month for these waters to recede. If we get two more days' rain, we are going to have a serious, serious flood on a par with last year."

Extra powers given to the Office of Public Works have helped to produce results, the organisation claimed.

Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) claims to have reconnected some 22,000 customers in the North who suffered blackouts during the height of the poor weather. At one point more than 6,000 subscribers were without power across Northern Ireland.

By early yesterday that number had been reduced to just 600 and these were gradually reconnected throughout the day.

All six counties were affected from Fermanagh in the west to Down and the greater Belfast area along the Irish Sea coast. East Antrim and the south Antrim areas were the worst affected.

While the worst may be over, Met Eireann has predicted further showers in the north and west today which would be heavy and thundery later.

Slaughter at Gallipoli avoidable, says envoy

ROMAN MCGREEVY

THE SLAUGHTER at Gallipoli could have been avoided had the British accepted Turkey's offer to side with them during the First World War, the Turkish ambassador to Ireland has claimed.

Turkey was courted at the start of the war, but joined it on the German side in late October 1914 after a series of incidents, most notably when two German warships refuelled under the Turkish flag, opened fire on Russian ships.

Atay Cengizler said his country's entry into the war was the subject of "revisions thinking" which gave the impression that the Turkish-led Ottoman empire was just waiting for the opportunity to join the Central Powers.

Mr Cengizler who has an MA in International History from the London School of Economics, will address a conference on Britain's involvement in the war this morning at Collins Barracks in Dublin.

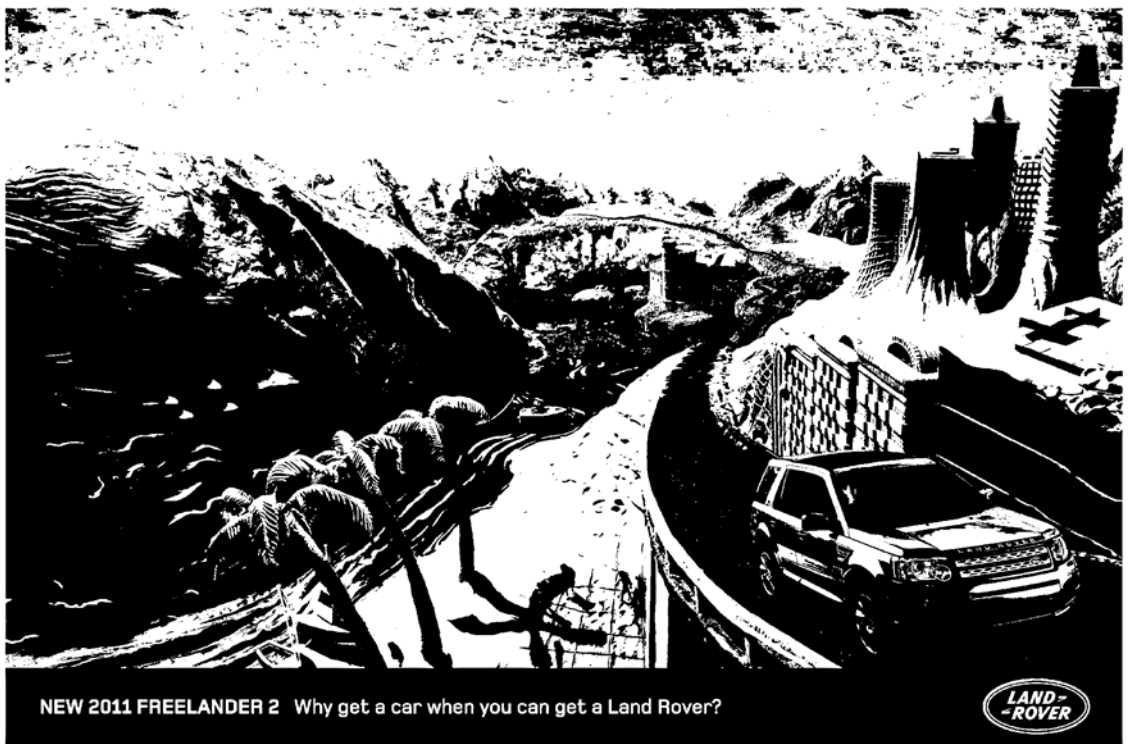
His theme will be "diplomacy of the choice" which he said was the result of the attitudes of the Entente powers of Britain, France and Russia to Turkey at the start of the war and a promise that Russia had a claim on Bosphorus.

"Turkey had no other choice, because it was going to be partitioned by the Entente," he said.

"Turkey wanted to become allied with the Entente Powers, but the Turkish government at the time was reluctant because of the desire, mainly of Britain, to keep Russia on its side," he said.

"When the Liberal Imperialist government of (Herbert) Asquith and (Edward) Grey was in place, they continually turned down Turkish offers. They did not comply with anything meaningful in relation to Turkish neutral status. They underestimated Turkey's strengths."

Turkey's entry into the war led to the disastrous Battle of Gallipoli in 1915 with the loss of hundreds of thousands on both sides, including an estimated 4,000 British who were killed during the battle. President Mary McAuliffe visited Gallipoli earlier this year.



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Figure 7: The Irish Times, Page 5, 13th November, 2010.

Although it is pointed out this is the first time law enforcement has been entrusted to a private body, this is not dwelt upon and is rather constructed as a state-of-affairs: as “outsourcing”. This is a useful nominalisation that, again, obscures the state’s agency in constructing, managing and deciding upon this process. The lack of comment in the article about this articulates a view of the privatisation of law enforcement as a natural progression. Such privatisation of public or communal assets is one of the basic elements of neoliberal policy (Gilbert, 2013, p. 11), where a “sector” – in this case policing – is partially transferred to the private sphere. A market system has been imposed to support this privatisation and the ground-rules for market competition must properly be observed within it (Harvey, 2005, p. 65). In relation to the launch of the cameras, neoliberal predications can be argued to overpower the imperative to save lives and they explain the desire to implement the network even though targeted reductions in road deaths were achieved without the cameras’ assistance.

The backgrounding of the consortium’s strategic necessity to act in its own competitive interests and those of its shareholders is bolstered in the article by two denials, the first of which is about the payment of commissions: “The consortium is being paid a flat fee for the service. There is no provision for commissions or bonuses related to how many motorists are caught speeding” (Carroll, 2010). The passive transformations of the verbs “pay” into “being paid” and the nominalisation of “provide” into “provision” work to obfuscate the attribution of whom is being paid and by whom (Fowler, 1991, pp. 78-80; Richardson, 2007, p. 50). It is the state who uses public funds to pay the private entity to provide the service but attention is drawn instead to the denial of additional bonus payments as the problematic issue of concern. The effect is to authorise the former as a status quo and to highlight that the unacceptability of the latter was already dealt with in the contracting process.

The second denial, attributed to a Garda spokesman, states “the cameras were not a revenue gathering exercise but a means to improving [sic] safety on the roads”. Here, problematic considerations of the marketization of public resources or policing are defused by again shifting the provisioning of the speed cameras away from issues of revenue generation and the influence of private interests and towards the issue of road safety alone. Although writing in the context of racism, Van Dijk (1992, p. 92) notes that acts of denial such as these examples are generally “part of a strategy of *defence*, presupposing explicit or implicit accusations” (emphasis in original). The modality of

the writer of the article (Fowler, 1991, p. 85) towards the desirability of the way in which the cameras were provisioned may be indicated in how the first denial is presented as a separate paragraph, without any explicit attribution to a source being provided. Fowler (1991, p. 85) regards modality “as ‘comment’ or ‘attitude’, obviously by definition ascribable to the source of the text, and explicit or implicit in the linguistic stance taken by the speak/writer”. The denial stands on its own as a declaration without a sense that the privatisation of law enforcement may be subjective and therefore contingent and not absolutely necessary.

As such, both the Garda spokesman and the newspaper become implicated in the same strategy of defence of neoliberalism, safeguarding debate about the introduction of the speed cameras from its problematic implications and counter-consensual viewpoints. This exemplifies how the consensus is built: it is ritually deflected by prefiguring counter-conducts that are then presented as already settled and thus requiring no further debate. It makes *The Irish Times* an important actor in the construction of a dominant social consensus about the introduction of the cameras within the dispositif of road safety. This consensus includes organs of the state and intermediaries; the Gardai, the Department of Justice, as well as the GoSafe consortium. It is a consensus for which *The Irish Times* apparently speaks on behalf of “everyone”.

The Irish Times and other mainstream actors also conjure up memories of a dark past of terrorist “folk devils” (Cohen, 2002), mobilising Irish history to rationalize a common sense narrative around the introduction of the cameras. As noted, the Lally and McAleer (2011) article states the Gardai were exploring the possibility that “the republican movement” were involved in camera-van burnings. The quoted source says that, “because the vans effectively act as CCTV some people involved in smuggling and other crimes linked to republicans wouldn’t want them there”. In making the connection to republican smugglers, other potential counter-conducts around the issue of the safety cameras are discursively attached to subversive or illegal activities. They become grouped with already “off message” viewpoints expressed on the internet: the article begins with “If you go online you might conclude from internet discussion boards that a string of arson attacks on speed camera vans over the past six months is the logical result of motorists’ anger about punitive fines and misplaced speed limits”. The grounding of the consensus in this common sense narrative (Harvey, 2005, p. 39) – that only criminals or subversives could not want the camera network – is simply

reinforced by the writers' use of the collective term "our roads" for the places where GoSafe have been asked to save lives. Editorialising comments like this indicate "our" behaviour as it is supposed or ought to be (Harvey, 2001, p. 16). Motorist anger about the cameras thus becomes categorised together with the actions of republican dissidents and criminals as the "unauthorised" expression of resistance around the cameras.

Indeed, another *Irish Times* article, concerning the camera van burning incident in Co. Louth, had already created the impression of this common sense consensus (O'Brien and Lally, 2010). Headlined "Attack on new speed survey vehicle condemned by Garda Commissioner", the report was published on the 27th of November 2010, within two weeks of the vans going "live". The article details the timeline of events surrounding the incident and includes comments by the Garda Commissioner condemning the attack. At this stage, the Gardai were unsure of the direction the investigation would take, but were examining CCTV footage and appealing to the public for information. The article appeared on page 6 of *The Irish Times* that day, beneath a large picture of the scene headed "Arson attack: GoSafe van destroyed in blaze" (figure 8). Other articles on the page include a report on a work-to-rule at Aer Lingus, plans for a redevelopment of the RTE campus, and a piece on an appeal by An Taisce against planning approval for a casino. Beside the picture of the destroyed van, another report headlines the continued threat posed by republican paramilitaries in Northern Ireland (Moriarty, 2010). Both the Moriarty (2010) and the O'Brien and Lally (2010) articles are very strongly intertextually linked through the presence of neoliberal themes in each and through the surfacing of common actors in both²⁰. For example, the Chief Constable of the PSNI is quoted in the Moriarty (2010) article as saying – in connection with the issue of human rights – that there was a need to move from "the age of regulation to the age of responsibility", a key neoliberal tenet. In the same article, the Chief Constable pays tribute to the Garda Commissioner, referring to "his unprompted comment that an attack on the PSNI was an attack on the Garda Síochána". The proximity of these two articles to each other – an element of the staging of the reports – also creates a visual connection between the two (Deacon, et al., 2007).

²⁰ Deacon, et al. (2007, p. 182) note that news reports are "not separate and independent from other texts and discourses, but...interrelated with that which surrounds it and that which assigns it a contributory function in a more general ensemble".

The point is that the link to paramilitary involvement in camera burnings is foreshadowed in the intertextual connections between both of these articles, although the explicit connection would only later be made. The link is underlined in the O'Brien and Lally (2010) article's headline that deploys the language of condemnation ritually attached to terrorist acts especially during The Troubles, and the Commissioner's comments that the burning of the speed van was "an outrageous and reckless act which could have had grave and tragic consequences". The Commissioner goes on to conflate GoSafe's work with that of the Gardai: "GoSafe van personnel are out on our roads day and night working with An Garda Siochana to reduce speed related collisions and stop the needless loss of lives on our roads", he notes. "It is important work directed at ensuring that fewer families and communities here have to endure the pain and suffering which follows collisions and deaths on our roads". Language use by the Commissioner is affectively laden, "sticking" the concepts of fear and care to the camera network and aligning the speed vans with protection from negative affects like these (Ahmed, 2004 a, b). Accordingly, connectivity to Ireland's folk devil past is part of the armoury of consensus building, marking-off of ideologically safe counter-conduct around the cameras.

Home News

Aer Lingus pilots work to rule for 'fair and humane' rosters

MARTIN WALL
Industry Correspondent

PILOTS AT Aer Lingus are to undertake a work to rule from today in a row with the airline over rosters.

As part of the limited industrial action pilots will not report for duty at times when they are not needed for days off or during annual leave.

The entire nation of Ireland, that the association has chosen to threaten Aer Lingus customers with industrial action.

He said that management had initially asked for two weeks to consider the request.

Aer Lingus warned the market several weeks ago that pilots had voted for industrial action in a dispute over rosters.

RTÉ gets green light for campus revamp

Ruling on €350m initiative subject to 23 conditions

FRANK McDONALD
Environment Editor

RTÉ HAS been granted planning permission by An Bord Pleanála for a planned €350 million redevelopment of the northern half of its Monrovia campus in Donnybrook, Dublin, over a period of 10 years.

The securing of planning permission is an important milestone in a project which commenced in 2002 and which aims to ensure that RTÉ is properly equipped to meet its obligations in a digital age, the station said.

Arson attack: GoSafe van destroyed in blaze



The scene of the attack on the Carrickmacross Road west of Dundalk yesterday. The fire quickly engulfed the vehicle but the occupant escaped without serious injury. Photograph: Tom Conway

Attack on new speed survey vehicle condemned by Garda Commissioner

TIM O'BRIEN
AND CONOR LALLY

GARDA COMMISSIONER Fachtma Murphy has condemned an arson attack on one of the new fleet of speed camera vans in the early hours of yesterday morning.

A silver car was seen leaving the area at speed immediately after the fire.

It is important work directed at ensuring that fewer families and communities have to endure the pain and suffering which follows collisions and deaths on our roads.

DUP conference told republican paramilitaries a 'severe' threat

GERRY MURPHY
Northern Editor

PSNI CHIEF constable Matt Baggett has told DUP supporters that dissident republican paramilitaries were a "substantial minority" who continued to pose a "severe" threat to security in Northern Ireland.

He said the PSNI was the finest counter-terrorism police force in the world.

They were developing technical expertise and were using a variety of tactics ranging from car bombs to carrying out hand grenade attacks, Mr Baggett said at the DUP annual conference in east Belfast yesterday.

He posed a threat that must not be underestimated. "I have got to respect these people... I respect their ability and their technical capability. If I unclerly that then I have got a problem," he told DUP delegates.

Mr Baggett said the continuing police focus on dissidents was "to keep them on the back foot" through good policing, intelligence gathering, intervention and through isolating those involved in dissident activity.

He said that last year 17 people were charged with terrorist offences, but that had risen sharply to 74 so far this year.

He said the PSNI was the finest counter-terrorism police force in the world.

Mr Baggett said there was strong overt and covert co-operation between the PSNI and the Garda.

It made no reference to funding.

Designed by Scott 'Yallon Walker, the new broadcasting complex would extend to more than 63,000sq m (653,000sq ft) above basement level in buildings ranging from nearly five to 26m in height - the equivalent of nine storeys.

Gardaí in Dundalk are examining CCTV footage from the area in an attempt to identify the vehicle. It is thought there may have been two people in the car.

Last year a garda had a narrow escape when the vehicle in which he was monitoring traffic was set alight in Ilroney, Co Cork.

He had to be "realistic" about budgets in the current economic situation but repeated that this was "not the time to cut police numbers of capability."

The planning board ruled that it would be "an acceptable form of development at this location, within the setting of the protected structures and the architectural quality of the campus" and that it would not seriously injure the amenities of the area.

The board has also specified that a full architectural and photographic survey of the Radio Centre be carried out prior to commencement of development, with a copy to be lodged in the Irish Architectural Archive.

The van, including equipment, was worth about €70,000.

Attacks have also taken place on fixed speed cameras on the N4 outside Kells, and the M1 ringway north of Dublin.

Mr Money's too tight to mention? To go to London for the final performance of 1980s pop sensation Simply Red, you can now watch the gig live at your local cinema.



AN TAISCE is appealing against the planning approval granted last month for a proposed €460 million casino, sports and leisure venue in Co Tipperary.

A former garda, Mr Quirk is the owner of the Dr Quirkie's Guinness restaurant and gaming arcade on Dublin's O'Connell Street and has the support of independent TD for North Tipperary, Michael Lowry.

They say that a number of the project's features, particularly the entertainment venue, would be better suited to one of Munster's three gateway cities - Cork, Limerick and Waterford.

Marine experts and Kelly gathered at Blackwater on the Kenmare river in Co Kerry yesterday hoping a stranded female minke whale would survive until the tide came in last night. Representatives from the Irish Whale and Dolphin Society and a vet were at the scene.

An architect's impression of the proposed new RTÉ building. The plan for the modernisation of its production facilities goes back to 1962.

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Figure 8: The Irish Times, Page 6, 27th November, 2010.

The creation of the effect in which social antagonisms towards the cameras seem already diffused also involves the detailing of authorised deviation from consensus. This is achieved through the medium of AA spokesperson Conor Faughnan. The image of the AA, predicated on its history as a member's club that assisted broken-down motorists (Freedman, 2010) persists despite the fact that it is a commercial entity owned by Acromas Holdings (Acromas, 2015). Faughnan's role is to step into the discursive vacuum created by the marginalisation of dissent constructed by grouping motorists with smugglers and criminals. He acts as a safety-valve and a counter-balance to the non-credible situation that would be produced by one-sided discussion of the burning of safety cameras without any opposing view-points at all. Such one-sided discussion would not have created the required "myth of objectivity" (Davies, 2009, p. 112) that allows some discursive space for ideologically safe counter-conduct which does not disturb the imperatives of neoliberalism, and it bolsters the inherent claim that *The Irish Times* speaks for society.

Indeed, Faughnan's pronouncements in the Lally and McAleer (2011) article conflate the interests of motorists with those of "the public", before the authorised counter-conducts he describes are funnelled into "safe ideological harbours" (Storey, 1998). Involved in what he calls "the debates about the introduction of the cameras" (Lally and McAleer, 2011), the AA's spokesperson sets out the circumference of socially-acceptable counter-conduct. Exclusively authorised are specific debates about the location of the cameras, the inconsistent speeds which seem to trigger them, and the perception that they are primarily for the purposes of revenue generation. However, Faughnan immediately distances the AA from this third point, reiterating the "fact", as the Gardai and *The Irish Times* themselves had done already, that "the contract is for hours worked and bears no relationship to how many fines are issued". According to Faughnan, there had been arguments for the cameras to be self-financing, but the AA was against this. This does implicitly confirm that the cameras can be used for revenue generation, however. The debate on the self-financing issue, Faughnan underlines, was secured not on the basis of the life-saving potential of the cameras, but on the basis of the economic cost of fatalities:

The argument that clinched it was the work done by Peter Bacon on the economic cost of a road death. He estimated that it cost the economy about €3 million, while each speed fine netted about €80 to the state...If a speed camera prevents one death happening, its economic benefit is greater than 37,500 speeding fines, so the Government savings are made through saving lives, not speeding fines. (Lally and McAleer, 2011)

Read (2009, p. 28) argues that in neoliberalism “[e]verything for which human beings attempt to realize their ends, from marriage, to crime, to expenditures on children, can be understood ‘economically’ according to a particular calculation of cost for benefit”. It appears here that death should be understood in this way too. Faughnan’s words exemplify the “active encouragement of competitive and entrepreneurial modes of relation across the public and commercial sectors” (Gilbert, 2013, p. 12), because they articulate death in terms of cost-benefit and its effect on the bottom line of government spending, a key index of Ireland’s “competitiveness” with respect to trade and business. This points to a consensus in which programmes’ veracity (and legitimacy) are checked for their logic against neoliberal criteria.

That expert authority in advanced liberalism becomes detached “from the apparatus of political rule” and relocated into “a market governed by the rationalities of competition, accountability and consumer demand” has already been explored in this thesis (Rose, 1993, p. 285). And while it has just been shown how the rationalities of the market have again been imposed in relation to the cost-benefits of speed cameras, as part of the Policy Advisory Panel to the RSA (RSA, 2007, p. 93) Faughnan also exemplifies how authority of expertise has become detached from the state. He represents the motorist in expert form; the motorist whose views are further conflated as the views of the public, but actually emanate from the commercial entity that is the AA. Faughnan joins the pantheon of expertise surrounding the *Road Safety Strategy* that includes individuals such as Gay Byrne, Noel Brett, and Noel Dempsey, who are authorised to articulate rational solutions to road safety issues. In such mainstream reporting, Faughnan is ritualistically wheeled-out as the voice of the homogenous and reasonable motorist and his job is to construct a very particular type of authorised counter-conduct around the introduction of the cameras. In this process, objections are choreographed into acceptable issues (the safe ideological harbours of Storey [1998]) that take the existence of the cameras and the normative context of automobility for granted. Faughnan creates the appearance of robust debate and negotiation for consent on these issues and suggests

easily managed counter-conducts that citizens can debate – for example in relation to the positioning of the Garda cameras vans.

In this section, it has been shown that neoliberal governance strategies about the management of resistance or counter-conduct involves the articulation of a pre-figured consensus in which state and corporate agency, for example, is denied. The problematic issue of the privatisation of law enforcement is constructed as a status quo and potentially contentious issues about the use of public funds are deflected. Debate about the introduction of the cameras is safeguarded from viewpoints that run counter to a neoliberal consensus which encompasses state actors, intermediaries such as the RSA, as well as GoSafe, and “the public”. The consensus is reinforced by the setting-out of a common-sense narrative in which authorised counter-conducts are delineated. But these never threaten the existence of the camera network itself and actual resistance to their introduction becomes conflated with the acts of criminals and ultimately dissident republicans. Delineating the consensus that the camera network is necessary expands the analysis of how neoliberal ideals manifest in the mainstream media. This consensus is not so much about saving lives, but instead represents the description of a new market in which entrepreneurial behaviours can be cultivated; one where what were previously government agencies can be managed in new neoliberal ways (Slater and Tonkiss, 2001; Barnett, 2010; Gilbert, 2013).

Disrupting the consensus

Lally and McAleer (2011) go beyond straight reportage to editorialise about how online constructions of van-burning stories differ to *The Irish Times*' own – or to the mainstream consensus that *The Irish Times* is implicated in constructing in the above analysis. Sometimes the consensus is not quite so easily delineated, however. For example, a thread on the motoring forum of *boards.ie* entitled “Gaybo does it again. Is there no stopping this dinosaur windbag?” (*boards.ie*, 2011b) discusses reasons for the decline in road traffic accident deaths. It links to an *Irish Independent* article reporting Gay Byrne's comments as Chairperson of the Road Safety Authority that reductions in the number of Traffic Corps Garda meant that “the general view is that overall

enforcement is down and the bad behaviour is starting to return” (Kelpie, 2011)²¹. In the article, which appeared on page 4 of the *Irish Independent* published on the 29th of December, 2011 (figure 9), an assistant Garda Commissioner disagrees with Byrne’s view, saying that his assessment was crude and that the Gardai had investigated “smarter” methods of enforcing Road Traffic legislation: “Yes, resources are reducing”, the Commissioner says, “but over the last couple of years we’ve looked at smarter ways of doing our business on the roads”. He subsequently adds that Byrne’s comments didn’t “do credit to the great work that is done, not just by An Garda Siochana but by all of the agencies involved in making our roads safer”. The article goes on to detail the events surrounding the deaths of seven people in separate road traffic accidents that week. Byrne’s failing is that he hasn’t quite grasped the ground rules of market competition in neoliberalism, in which initiatives such as the speed cameras can “increase efficiency and productivity, improve quality, and reduce costs...through reduction of the tax burden” (Harvey, 2005, p. 65). His resistance is checked by the Commissioner against neoliberal criteria and his logic is found wanting. A major plank of the “smarter” methods the Commissioner refers to is the introduction of the speed enforcement cameras. Such smarter policing methods in turn facilitate cost reductions in policing, particularly in the area of the numbers required for traffic enforcement²².

²¹ Byrne’s comments were originally made in the previous days *Irish Independent* in a column written by Byrne himself which was headlined “Fewer gardai on roads means more dead bodies” (Byrne, 2011).

²² This analysis also highlights how market imperatives for the cameras’ introduction already explored in *The Irish Times* coverage around their launch is not restricted to *The Irish Times* itself.

Gay Byrne's warning on road safety is 'crude' - garda chief

Colm Keble

A LEADING garda has dismissed Gay Byrne's claims about cuts in numbers in the force's Traffic Corps as too "crude" and simplistic. The number of traffic corp gardai has dropped from 1,200 in 1990, leading the broadcaster to warn that word will spread among motorists that enforcement has been scaled down.

Writing in yesterday's *Irish Independent*, Mr Byrne, who has served as Road Safety Authority chairman since 2006, said the "general view" that overall enforcement is down and the "bad behaviour" of starting to return.

But Assistant Garda Commissioner John Twomey disagreed with Mr Byrne's assessment yesterday and said the bureau had looked at "smarter" ways of enforcing the Road Traffic Act with reduced resources.

Referring to Mr Byrne's warning, Mr Twomey said: "I wouldn't agree with that. That's a very simple, crude deduction to make."

"It doesn't do credit to the great work that is done, not just by An Garda Síochána but by all of the agencies involved in making our roads safer."

It is expected that official end-of-year figures will show the total of road deaths at below 200 for the first time since 1959, when records began.

However, seven people have been killed on the roads over the past five days, bringing the total for the year so far to 184.

The latest death was a 20-year-old man in his 70s who was killed when the car he was driving collided with another at Gallop, Co. Wick.

Three of those killed on the roads over the past five days have been pedestrians, including a man in his 30s in Straffan, Co. Kildare, on Tuesday night.

Aislin 'Vixy' Noonan, from Clonsilla, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, was killed as he was walking along the R603 at Boreesh, Straffan, at about 10pm.

Mr Noonan's funeral will take place on Friday at St Mary's Church, Maynooth.

Laborer TD Jimmie Deegan said: "He was a very decent fellow, a very good fellow. This is a real tragedy."

Mr Twomey said the deaths in recent days were a stark reminder of the potential dangers of the roads. While accepting that resources within the traffic corp were falling, he said the force remained committed to enforcing the Road Traffic Act.

He added: "Yes, we accept that we're in changing times. Yes, resources are reducing, but over the last couple of years we've looked at smarter ways of doing our business on the roads."

In a black week for road deaths, Aaron Moore, from Colbrinke, Co. Kildare, lost his life after he was hit on the N4 at Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, on Tuesday.

Michael Moran (69), an inpatient at the Mid-Western Regional Hospital in Limerick, was killed on St Stephen's Night when he was knocked down near the hospital entrance.

Enforcement
And Teresa Kilty (49), from Malpas, Co. Wick, was killed and her 16-year-old daughter was seriously injured when her car was hit by an SUV on Tuesday afternoon at Douglaspark, Co. Kildare.

Gardaí have also appealed for witnesses to a crash on the Bacheloch Road in Dublin's Ballyfermot on Christmas morning, when the driver of a red Citroen Saxo was seriously injured after his car hit an electricity pole.

The man was named last night as 75-year-old John Widger from Waterford city.

Mr Widger, a teacher, had been returning from a walk on the beach with his dog when tragedy struck.

His grand-niece Laura Burke said: "He was a lovely man and this is a difficult time for the family."



Sisters Dervla (28), Niamh (18) and Sinead Arthurs (22) enjoy the Leopardstown festival yesterday. GAVIN DOUGLAS

Gamblers

Punters 'lose' on 28/1

Luke Byrne had Viker Le Vedette at 28/1, meaning every bet of €1 would win €28.

Just under €2m was placed on the horse at these odds, meaning that almost €50m would be paid out.

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Roche speaks of relief after he and wife escape from blazing Mercedes

Fiach Kelly

A FORMER minister has spoken of his relief after escaping a car just before it was engulfed in flames.

Dick Roche's 2010-registered Mercedes burnt into flames as he and his wife were enjoying a St Stephen's Day drive.

He said he had notified the dealership he bought the car from, as well as his insurance company, and said they would be looking at the incident over the coming days.

But he said the cause of the fire has yet to be determined and it is unlikely to be resolved until after the holidays.

"Well, it's the holiday period so you don't know how long it will take them to look at it. Nobody quite knows what happened."

"Someone was speculating that it was the catalytic converter, but that's just speculation."

Visit
Mr Roche, who was previously environment and European affairs minister, was driving in his Mercedes E200 during a visit to his family in his native Westland at the time.

Dramatic pictures showing the charred shell of Mr Roche's vehicle illustrate the lucky escape by Mr Roche and his wife, Blaise.

Paul also started to leak from the tank as the fire blazed.

"We were lucky it was diesel, not petrol," Mr Roche said last night.

The ex-Wicklow TD said the whole incident happened in the space of about five minutes after the car's engine started to fail.

Mr Roche said motorists behind noticed sparks and flames belching from under the car, but he only spotted this when he pulled over into the car park of the Perrygarra Hotel, which is situated just outside Westland town.

"People started flashing their lights because they thought we were slowing down," Mr Roche said last night.

The car smattered a number of times, leading Mr Roche to pull into the hotel. It was then he noticed the flames belching from under the wheels, and he ran to get a fire extinguisher - but it failed to stop the flames. The flames also caused some damage to the exterior of the hotel building, but Mr Roche praised hotel staff and firefighters for their help.



Dick Roche: tackled blaze but failed to stop flames

Figure 9: Irish Independent, Page 4, 29th December, 2011

Byrne's comments, when viewed in terms of counter-conduct, illustrate how "subjection" is characterised by "conflict, contestation and instability" (McKee, 2009, p. 474) and how counter-conducts can be constitutive of the dispositif of road safety. Rather than simply toeing the official line, Byrne actually contests the actions of other official actors and goes on to suggest the general consequences that will result from the cutting back of Garda resources. Of course, Byrne's role as the then Chairman of the RSA affirms the legitimacy he has to contest the plans of other public bodies involved in road safety where he perceives it to impact on the effectiveness of the RSA. However, his authority in that role is contingent upon the presumption that his symbolic capital as the once most prominent broadcaster in Ireland readily converts into currency in the entirely different area of road safety. Further, the credibility or authority of Byrne's comments is predicated upon the myth of a centre to society for which, as a media figure, he can speak (Couldry, 2003; 2012). Byrne's celebrity authorises him to represent and know the mind of the general public ("the general view is...", he says), but this is a myth constructed and endorsed by the RSA and ritually reiterated in mainstream media representations.

In these contexts, official actors such as Byrne and the assistant Garda Commissioner compete to speak for the "true" centre of society, pointing to how the constitution of the networks of automobility is never straightforward. Gilbert (2013, p. 7) notes that the diversity and complexity of the broad family of neoliberal ideas leads some to argue it to be incoherent notion. The contradictions between Byrne and the Garda Commissioner mean there is no "absolute uniformity of a pure doctrine" in their statements (Gilbert 2013, p. 8), but they can be considered together in terms of the messiness of realpolitik (McKee, 2009). This exemplifies how governing is characterised by the "contradictions, complexities and inconsistencies" that Flint (2002, p. 621) argued (also see Foucault 1972, p. 134). What binds Byrne's and the Commissioner's sentiments together in neoliberalism is that while the latter embraces the rationalisations the cameras enable for policing, the former is merely debating the efficacy of imposing these cut-backs on the Garda Traffic Corps rather than somewhere else. Acceptance that cutbacks are necessary or a given is presupposed in both cases ("The country is bankrupt", as Byrne notes [Kelpie, 2011]).

While the consensus about the cameras is never threatened by Byrne's intervention, it can be undermined by user-generated content on internet forums that disregards the mainstream media construction of certain views around the introduction of the networks as unacceptable, for example. As already argued, including casual statements such as comments on internet fora assists the ability to analyse the role of counter-conduct and how programmers' visions are negotiated by agency. Indeed, a close examination of another thread on *boards.ie* entitled "Another speed camera van burned!!" (*boards.ie*, 2011a; figure 10) shows the apparent consensus about the cameras to be undermined by opinions and issues that have no echo in mainstream media representation. The thread includes the views of posters who think the perpetrators of van burning are "scumbags" that should be imprisoned (*boards.ie*, 2011a). Other contributors to the same thread view the burning of vans as the logical extension of the rolling out of safety cameras (one poster asks: "what did you expect?") and sympathise with the motivations of the perpetrators: "Whoever done it should be given a medal!". Many qualify their positions as being against the vans, but also against the motives of the perpetrators. Some admit to speeding or other illegality: "I speed regularly, in conditions and on roads that I think are safe to go faster than the speed limit in. I'm not a fan of the vans. I haven't been caught yet, and hope not to be. But Jeebus – burning a vehicle that you know has a person inside?"

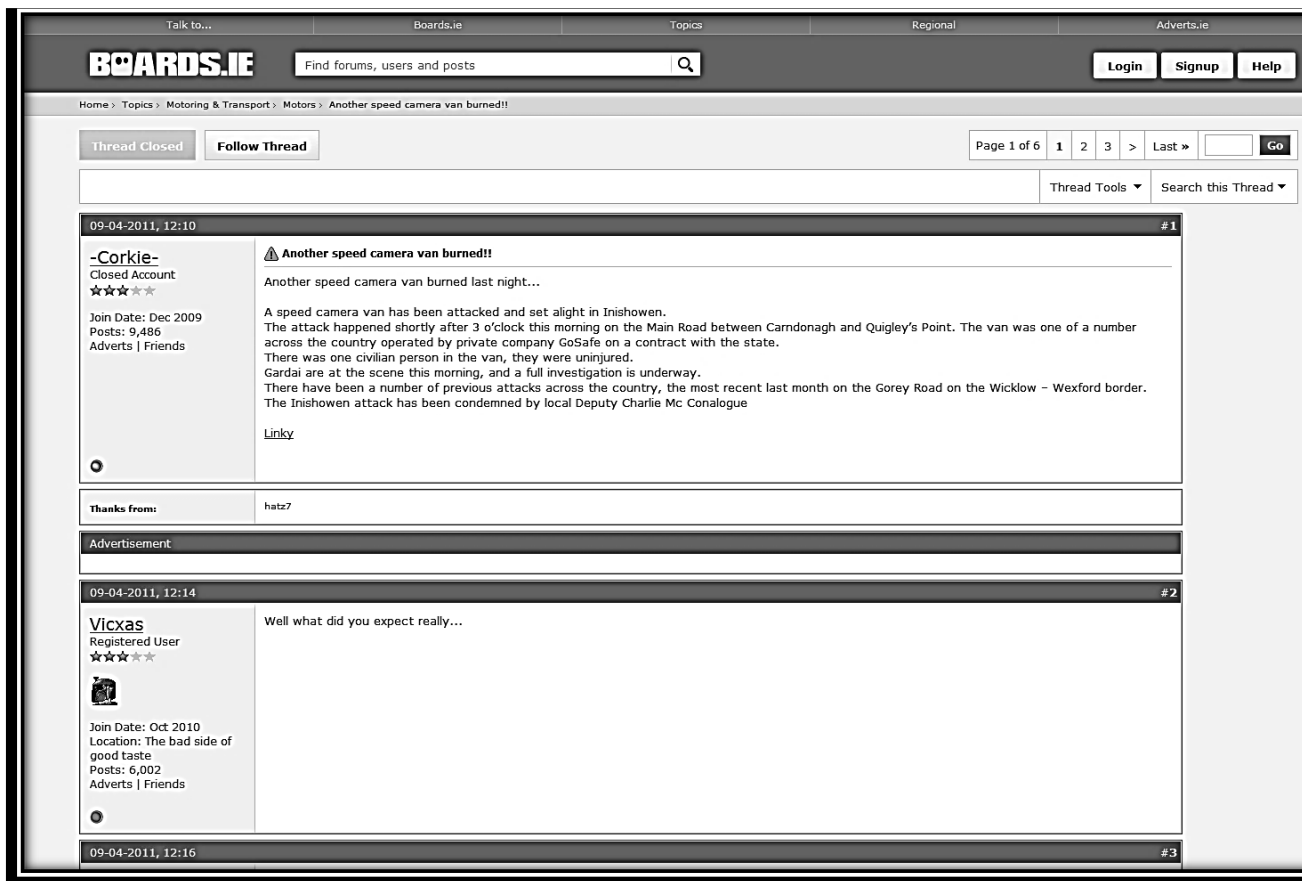


Figure 10: *boards.ie, Motors forum:* “Another speed camera van burned!!”, 9th April, 2011.

A number of posters profess knowledge of GoSafe, sympathise with those who work for the company or try to distance the camera operators from a belief in their work, or in other ways empathise with the workers’ plight: “i know the drivers and they wud be happy to get out and walk away and leave them to it, the crap wages there on they cudnt care less about a van”. As the thread develops, some posters offer opinions on the “real” role of the cameras; that is, the belief that they are there to generate revenue rather than improve safety: “these things are just another money grabbing exercise by our disgrace of a government. Anyone who thinks they’re for safety is living on planet jedward”.

Others add that it would be better if the vans were operated by the Gardai: “I doubt people would be inclined to burn them [in that case]”. On the forum, the debate broadens out to include the merits and demerits of privatised enforcement and the discussion loops around to questions of recession and austerity, containing intertextual references to those discourses:

with all that's happened in the last few years, with the banks and people losing their jobs and maybe their homes. and families losing their children to emigration, and business closing down everywhere, well, I think it's one thing too much to accept private companies policing our roads.

What is seen in this thread is connectivity being established between interventions such as speed cameras and wider discourses of economy and society that are generally absent in the mainstream media representations explored above, although this does feature in Byrne's criticism of the cut-backs to the Garda Traffic Corps. These wider discourses underpin an opposition that quickly develops between those who articulate responsabilization discourses – arguing that fines generated by the cameras are avoidable if one doesn't speed – and those who consider the privatisation of the cameras as ideologically questionable. This opposition is visible in the following extracts, each taken from different individual posters, where those who are suspicious of the cameras create wider connections between the cameras and public/private entity actions that penalise ordinary citizens for the boom-time behaviours of powerful business and government entities:

The speed vans are just another symbol of what's rotten in the governance of this country.

...these things are just another money grabbing exercise by our disgrace of a government.

I'm paying to bail out the banks as well... There is no way those camera vans should be allowed to engage in blatant profiteering at the expense of the already over taxed motorist.

Sure isn't there signs up on roads where the vans are? If a person gets caught it's their own fault, fools.

If you don't like the USC maybe move.

If you don't like water charges maybe take control of the situation yourself to cut down costs (water butts etc.)

If you don't like getting fined for speeding then don't speed.

All the options are in your hands and under your control so no point giving out about it really... just get on with life and be happy.

This final comment suggests absolute acceptance of the individualised neoliberal responsabilization discourses and conceptions of human self-hood. However, the poster does not express “a resigned compliance” with neoliberal programmes nor explicitly

reject its ideology, as Gilbert (2013, p. 13) suggests is the most common relation to neoliberalism. In fact neoliberalism is embraced by this poster, who takes consolation that the adverse consequences of neoliberalism are natural and “what life is really like” (Gilbert, 2013, p. 15).

Taken together, however, this analysis of online discussion shows a wider conception of the implications in the safety camera debate than allowed for in the mainstream media framing. Compared to *The Irish Times* coverage, much more credence is given to viewpoints which illustrate Keohane, Kuhling, and Horgan’s (2002, p. 49) observation that, in Ireland, “a general feature of postcolonial cultural legacy can be the state’s inability to enforce the law due to an evasive and subversive attitude to rules and regulations and to the law in general”.

There is much greater acceptance online of a reality that the cameras are primarily revenue generators, whatever the truth of that argument. There is also debate about the implications of privatised enforcement that is not seen in mainstream media representation. This attachment to wider discourses of the recession does not inhere to the mainstream mediation around the launch of the cameras either. Of course, there is always a problem in highlighting the positions of a narrow minority of people on internet fora, who may post their viewpoints vociferously because of the relative anonymity of the internet. Nevertheless, the ease with which angles on the speed camera debate not covered in the mainstream media emerge on these sites is indicative of the greater complexity of counter-conducts (and even aligned practices) within the road safety dispositif compared to the suggestions of mainstream representation.

Despite Gay Byrne’s disrupting comments in the *Irish Independent*, a social consensus is still constructed by mainstream media around the issue of safety cameras. In *The Irish Times*, competing viewpoints are simplified and an equivalence is drawn between being against the cameras and the destruction of the vans. Nevertheless, this analysis has shown how official actors such as Byrne go on to be implicated in counter-conducts beyond that initially allowed for in the assumed consensus constructed by *The Irish Times*. Analysis of online debate reinforces the impression that the pre-settlement of resistance around speed cameras is a mainstream-media created myth that works to inhibit discussion of nuanced opinions and counter-conducts about the legitimacy of the cameras. Together what has been shown so far is how mediated articulations of

consensus and counter-conduct illustrate the programmers' visions for automobility and neoliberalism as they are actually discursively represented. But the lived reality – how consensus and counter-conduct emerge and circulate as part of commuter practice – has yet to be explored.

Aligned practices, counter-conducts and the commute

To properly explore “the extent to which...political ambitions have been realised in practice” (McKee, 2009, p. 473), the material practices that also constitute the context in which strategies and discourses about speed cameras circulate must also be considered. Among the challenges, limitations, and critiques of governmentality research is that it tends to draw on mediation or textual representations only (McKee, 2009). Although material practices were incorporated into Foucault's conceptualisation of discourses, much post-Foucauldian research, including works by Dean (1995) and Rose (1999), falls into this category. But there is a difference between the mediated strategies of rule and their actual implementation or operation (McKee, 2009, p. 473) and, as has already been seen in the other chapters of primary research, the results of strategies of governance cannot simply be read off or assumed from their textual representations alone. Foucault “was concerned with the inherent ability of the subject to think and act otherwise” (McKee, 2009, p. 474) and it is only by getting closer to practices, as has been the case in the other chapters of primary research, that this concern can begin to be addressed.

The practices explored in this section relate to reflections on activities and rituals commuters observe in the space of the car on their way to or from work and home. This is an additional way of thinking about the conduct of conduct in automobility and its relationship to governance. My focus group's experiences illustrate how the agencies of driving become absorbed in what is required and afforded by the space of and time spent in commuting. They encompass events and activities that occur inside the car and focus attention on the ways in which the car affords, shapes, or conditions the performance or production of particular activities. These activities can frequently be viewed as normative behaviours. But as normative behaviours they are not always practices aligned with the programmers' visions for automobility such as those of the *dispositif* of road safety promulgated through the mainstream media, so they can often

simultaneously constitute counter-conducts. Conversations with commuters in the previous two chapters already implicitly illustrate what people “do” in their cars while commuting and exemplify how people negotiate specific strategies of road safety and responsabilization, as well as how they rationalise the inevitability and the benefits of car commuting for their own ends. Some of these rationalisations speak of implicit counter-conducts around the uses that are made of the car in practice. Perhaps because of being ordinary and unremarkable (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Moran, 2005), the commute produces a tendency towards the performance of other practices within the car space to fill the time. However, many of these activities can be recast as forms of work and it is these work-related practices and counter-conducts that are concentrated on in this section.

For Laurier (2005), driving on the motorway is not enough “to fully occupy the locus of accountable activity that is an intelligible and reflective actor” (2005, p. 263). Laurier, et al., 2008, p. 26) note that: “There are all manner of social phenomena occurring during the journey that are worthy of the attention of those interested in how mobile life happens while in motion”. Moran (2005, p. 60) argues that: “The unremarked, repeated acts of commuting do not encourage us to reflect on their relationship to wider factors such as public policy, planning, investment and corporate culture – their location, in other words, within workspace”. Considering Laurier’s (2005; Laurier, et al., 2008) and Moran’s (2005) words helps us explore the ways in which the activities undertaken in the car underscore and facilitate the needs of “workspace”. As identified by Laurier (2005, p. 263), commuters, whether employees or students, work “while driving to get their work done”. There are different ways in which the activities carried out while commuting by car can be considered as work: travelling to and from jobs or performing actual job-related tasks in the car through the use of mediating technologies such as mobile phones can be considered forms of work. Some activities carried out in the car, including the psychological processing of the working day, can enable more efficient or effective work in other locations (e.g. the home or office) or enable leisure and family life and thus underscore the ability to sustain productivity. The ways in which some of these commuting practices, and counter-conducts associated with them, reproduce the exigencies of workspace in contemporary neoliberal society are now explored. These activities represent antagonistic interrelationships or accommodations between the strategies of the programmers of automobility and the programmers of neoliberal economy and society.

Working in the car

Commuters in my focus groups often use the car as an adjunct to their work or study space. For some this involves work phone calls (Barry, f1; Graham, f4; Kevin, f6) where the car becomes the “extension of the office” (Graham, f4; also Fiona and Barry, f1). For Graham (f4) this is particularly important on the way home at the end of the day when he can talk to colleagues in the US whose working day is only beginning. Emer (f3), a student, notes the car is “my capsule, my office – my mobile office...I have all my books all stacked up”. Emer reveals that she has also started to tape her lectures and that she used time in the car to listen to them: “Some of them are quite heavy stuff and you need to listen to them a few times to get a grasp of it, you know?...So that fills that hour completely” (Emer, f3). Emer also uses flash cards to test her knowledge of subjects as she commutes. For Barry and Fiona (f1) working in the car means less time needs to be spent in the office:

Fiona: So you would probably spend longer in the office if you had to make all those calls. Whereas the commute on the way home is “work” really.

Barry: Actually that’s a very good point. I would rarely – or I try to avoid taking a phone call in the office because it just kills time. When I’m in the car I’ll ring them back. Over the years, it’s a clever thing to do. (Fiona and Barry, f2)

The car better facilitates the work day compared to public transport for Beth (f2) because it means she doesn’t have to bring additional clothing – such as a coat or runners – that would be required for commuting on the Dart in bad weather:

It’s also wardrobe related...And I also carry a laptop with me a lot of the time. So it’s a whole kind of palaver basically. Then you’d have to change out of the wet clothes when you get to work...You have to change your shoes...you have to change your tights – it’s an issue. (Beth, f2)

While for Caroline (f7) the car also supplements her normal study space as a student, other students found it too uncomfortable for this purpose (Tony, f7) or felt they didn’t spend enough time commuting to make it feasible: “I’m not one of those people that lives....in the car” (Therese, f8). On the whole though, commuters try to use their commuting time as productively as possible (it’s so boring...I have to make it work [Emer, f4]). For many, this involves the planning of activities for the day or after the commute is over (“I would plan things: ‘Oh yeah when I get home I can do that’” (Don,

f1). Beth (f2) noted: “[It’s] a chance to plan the day ahead – and a chance to focus on work after home stuff – so all the way in, dedicated work stuff – planning...I like it as a good way to start the day”. For Fiona, once the kids were dropped off, the remaining commute time could be used to relax – and plan “I would have an hour of a commute to work. It was so relaxing in my own space with just me there. And I could think-out the whole day, plan work plan everything. It was probably the only quietness that I had” (Fiona, f1). Working from the car facilitated not only the work day, but also its perceived ending, as well as enabling leisure time activities after the work day is over. As Barry (f1) notes: “I ring Fiona and see what the line-up is for the evening”.

For Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 320), driving a car is an experience “that becomes entwined...in everyday practice such that it becomes ordinary and the re-orientation of the body to the rest of the world ceases to be remarkable in itself” and a sense of that is evident in commuters’ understandings of their driving practices that have already been explored. It is only when unpacked, when the black-box of commuting is opened, that surprisingly complex and sometimes intricate forms of banal and ordinary behaviour and self-management come into view. Commuter practices can be considered ordinary in the sense of ranking lower in a hierarchy of concerns, because they are normally not reflected upon, but they are also ordinary in the sense of “correct or standard, shared by everyone”, even though they are performed individually (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Moran, 2005, p. 17). Once attuned to the requirements and the possibilities of the commute, many of these practices that the car enables become routinized for commuters, as Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues, but over time they effectively also become compulsory for them too (Urry, 2005). Commuting by car is therefore strongly suggestive of Foucault’s (1984c, p. 169) argument that sometimes:

What characterizes power is the fact that it is a strategic relation which has been stabilized through institutions. So the mobility in power relations is limited, and there are strongholds that are very, very difficult to suppress because they have been institutionalized and are now very pervasive in courts, codes and so on. All this means that strategic relations of people are made rigid.

This is not to suggest that such contestation is impossible, but there is a general lack of resistance to the requirement to commute per se from research participants. What is actually seen in the data is how counter-conduct manifests to constitute commuting by

countering other (neoliberal) interventions into automobility – such as strategies within the dispositif of road safety – where these are perceived to threaten practices involving cars that more directly reproduce the programmers’ vision for neoliberal sociality. It is within this normative yet complex context that counter-conducts manifest. Counter-conducts tend to reinforce, rather than undermine, the actual requirement to commute by car to work, at the expense of the requirement to commute by car safely. It is in this sense that they are “counter”. In this, the complex operation of human agency on the ways in which programmes (and the programmers’ visions) are implemented is glimpsed (McKee, 2009, p. 474).

For example, commuters struggle to accommodate what is required of them when the pressures of work and their private lives are combined within the context of what neoliberalism and automobility makes necessary and desirable (Stewart, 2001; pp. 18-19). Whether their commuting journeys were long (equivalent to a day a week Fiona, f1; Kevin, f6; Emer, f3) or short, commuting made commuters pushed for time, corresponding with Bauman’s (1998 cited in Keohane, Kuhling, and Horgan, 2002, p. 50) analysis of globalisation effects where “first world” commuters are constantly busy. These time constraints produce combinations of actions – such as eating, actual work, and planning while driving – that are carried out in the car space but are not necessarily easily accommodated by it. For Keohane, Kuhling, and Horgan (2002, p. 50), the driving culture of commuting’s “commitment to a very particular economy of time” results in people being “nudged” out of the way on the road by faster moving traffic. Further manifestations of this time-compression phenomenon resulted in commuters drinking their mug of tea or coffee while driving (Emer, f3; Caroline, f7), “stuffing their face” in the car (Tony, f7), or maximising the extra time that emerged when the requirement to leave home early to avoid the traffic paradoxically resulted in extra time at one’s destination (“I get in early and I have a flask” [Emer, f3]).

Commuters also capitalise on the opportunistic time-segments that could emerge from the infrastructural management of traffic flows within any given journey. As Therese (f8) notes: “at the traffic lights, if I know I’m going to be stopped for a couple of minutes I probably take a sup of coffee or something like that”. Laurier (2005, p. 266) says that in situations like these “mobile workers...make assessments as to...whether they have to stick to driving alone”. Again, these types of activities have “not been designed to go together” in the car, yet workers “managed to artfully combine them”

(Laurier, 2005, p. 262). That this is learned behaviour is also indicated by commuters whose conceptualisation of driving and commuting differs from the reality that emerged once the use of a car became commonplace for them:

When I got my car I was like “nobody is eating in my car ever” and now I’m regularly found going between locations, trying to grab a sandwich or something as I sit at the side of the road in the hard shoulder or a McDonald’s drive-through or whatever – because I’m so far out as well. (Susan, f8)

These activities and behaviours, while helping enable programmers’ visions for a neoliberal society, can very clearly be considered as counter-conduct in terms of the programmers’ vision for automobility and the dispositif of road safety: a cursory internet search reveals instances where activities such as eating while driving are construed as “counter” to media-centric discourses of road safety. Local news reports detail drivers being fined for eating and drinking (non-alcoholic) beverages at the wheel (*Leinster Leader*, 2008; *Wexford People*, 2012). A survey from AA Motor Insurance covered in *thejournal.ie* reports a spokesman as saying “you certainly shouldn’t be fumbling with the cup while you are on the move. A simple incident like the lid coming off and coffee spilling could become disastrous” (Wade, 2011). Other behaviours cited in the same survey as “distracting” include reading while driving, changing clothes, and brushing hair (Wade, 2011).

In another example, a handbook on safe driving for work cautions (in capital letters) “Never eat and drive at the same time” (Health and Safety Authority, An Garda Síochana, and RSA, 2012, p. 27). Liberty Insurance (2014) advises drivers to “Eat before your journey or pull over to a safe place before snacking”. The *Rules of the Road* (RSA, 2013), does not list eating while driving as a separate, specific offence. However, “careless driving” is an offence, punishable by mandatory court appearance, penalty points and a court fine upon conviction. This catch-all transgression was added to the penalty points system in 2004, when it was reported that “doing virtually anything inside your car, except driving it, could cost unwary drivers five precious points” (Reid, 2004). As such, it can be seen that sometimes commuter work can yield multi-faceted and counter-productive activities in relation to specific aspects of governmentality. Automobility requires “intense flexibility” (Urry, 2005, p. 28) and the efficient maximisation of time and space for successful living, but the programmes and processes

that guide conduct in specific spheres sometimes conflict with neoliberalism's overall exigencies, forcing us to negotiate ad hoc pathways.

This situation represents, in part, how neoliberal power relations are maintained in the face of the contingent choice-making of its subjects. And it also underlines how resistance as counter-conduct constitutes automobility in the face of media-centric assumptions about the media's power to effect strategies of governance (Couldry 2003; 2012). Here, a sense of the "gulf between policy rhetoric, implementation and practices" and why "outcomes are often partial, uneven, and unpredictable" is understood, and the contingency (rather than effectiveness) of some power relations in automobility can be seen (Flint, 2002, p. 621). Together, what aligned and counter practices describe is how automobility is comprised of "sites of complex processes of domination, resistance and also appropriation" that constitute power relations which are never fully settled (Foucault, 1976; Matereke, 2013, p. 38). The flexible, multi-tasking worker has many options with what to do with their time in the car but such choice creates a kind of tyranny (c.f. Schwartz, 2006, p. 7). As Urry (2005, p. 28) puts it, automobility:

forces people to juggle fragments of time so as to deal with the temporal and spatial constraints that it itself generates. Automobility is a Frankenstein-created monster, extending the individual into realms of freedom and flexibility whereby inhabiting the car can be positively viewed and energetically campaigned and fought for, but also constraining car "users" to live their lives in spatially stretched and time-compressed ways. The car is the literal "iron cage" of modernity, motorized, moving and domestic.

The struggle for work and leisure time

Though it is easy to imagine how stressful the commute can become given the negotiations it necessitates and the complexity it represents, it can also be seen how many commuters in fact use their space and time commuting to relax and recuperate from the stresses of home and work life. This manifests in an array of comments that show remarkable agreement across the sessions. These include: "you just want your own space" (Barry, f1); "space to myself sometimes" (Fiona, f1); "People like their space in the car" (Don, f1); "it's my space" (Beth, f2); "it's just your time" (Brian, f2); "That's my peace and quiet – everybody go away" (Geraldine f2); "It's the only time when you get any peace and quiet in your own thoughts" (Michelle, f4); "It's my space,

you know?” (Declan, f6); “I’d see it as a kind of sanctuary” (Tony, f7) and “I’m in my own personal little bubble” (Colm, f8). As Michelle (f4) also notes: “It’s an hour and a half no matter what I do so I may as well turn it into something that I’m actually enjoying”. The peace and quiet sought in the car also clearly facilitated the better performance of work for commuters. Michelle (f4) delineated this point directly:

Definitely you leave work sometimes and you’re still thinking through all of the problems, and actually I’ve found if you try to push yourself to find a solution and it doesn’t come, often when you’re wondering home thinking of something else, you think “ah well that was it – that’s what I should have done at 12 o’clock today (laughs) to solve that”.

It is clear commuters’ comments represent normative behaviours, enabling and reinforcing neoliberal exigencies of work in late capitalism, while also reinforcing individualised freedom discourses around car consumption (Packer, 2008). However, these practices can again conflict with other specific discourses and programmers’ visions for automobility. The construction of the car by commuters as a personal, peaceful space shapes opinions on car-sharing for example, practices around which commuters generally held negative views that run counter to policies governments can be keen to promote in order to sustain mobility. Barry and Pauline (f1) opine that sharing the car with others resulted in the loss of this personal space that is so attractive to commuters:

Barry: Well you know you’ve got, let’s say, a stranger in the car and you want to... listen to something on the radio. Or you don’t want to talk...And you’ve Joe Bloggs sitting in the seat beside you.

Pauline: It depends who it is I suppose, if you’re good friends with them, then it’s grand, but if you don’t really know them that well, if it’s just a colleague it might be a bit uncomfortable.

Barry: Yeah but carpooling...It’s fine the odd time, but on a Monday to Friday (basis), ah forget it.

Brian (f2) agrees that the presence of others could be disconcerting: “If there’s somebody in that space – you’re going: “Wha? What the hell is that person doing in my car?!” For Beth (f2) car-sharing was constructed in terms of the invasion of the space they had so keenly carved out as their own. Clare (f9) also notes: “I don’t know. I like when you’re on your own you can listen to whatever CD you want to listen to. Or you’re not worried that – are they really – Do they hate this CD?” Indeed, some

commuters are quick to offer explanations as to why car-sharing doesn't work.

Michelle (f4) argues there was no-one in her work that lived near her to share with, while Pauline (f1), David (f4) and Declan (f6) note the potential that car-sharing has for making you late. Clare (f9), who gives a lift to another student, also notes the potential for delays involved in car-sharing and said that she becomes distracted when others were in the car.

Yet the National Transport Authority's (NTA) *Draft Transport Strategy for Dublin* (2012, p. 152), which covers policies designed to limit growth in car traffic over the next 15 years includes "lift sharing initiatives to reduce single occupancy car use". The NTA website on car-sharing aims at creating "smarter travel workplaces" and has signed up a number of organisations and institutions in Ireland including Maynooth University and Symantec – "one of the world's largest software companies" (*carsharing.ie*, 2014). The first benefit of car-sharing listed is that it "saves you money" including reduced fuel costs, road tolls and parking, as well as reducing "wear and tear on you your vehicle...less maintenance, a longer car life and fewer repairs" (*carsharing.ie*, 2104). So as well as articulating neoliberal rationality in the promotion of car-sharing (because, for example, this can be understood "according to a particular calculation of cost for benefit" [Read, 2009, p. 28]), *carsharing.ie* neatly undermines the representation of freedom that is the (neo)liberal mediated frame of the car. It does this by promoting car-sharing as part of the "production of an apparatus that sustains increased mobility" (Packer, 2008, p. 8). Combined with the counter-conducts of commuters in resisting concepts such as car-sharing, what is again shown the "complexities and inconsistencies" and the contingency that can inhere to governance (Flint, 2002, p. 621). But such counter-conducts do not worry the programmers' vision for neoliberal society – in terms of the over-arching neoliberal subjectivity in which an "individualistic conception of human selfhood" overrides other considerations (Gilbert, 2013, p. 11).

Even further complexity is evident here, however. Laurier, et al. (2008, p. 21) considers car-sharing as work in itself and argues for the need to understand what it is that makes it such a "perilous obligation" if it is to be encouraged. Indeed, the widespread assumption that car-sharing is fraught with social danger forms the premise upon which the humour of the TV series *Peter Kay's Car Share* (2015), for example, is predicated upon and built. But for my study's commuters, part of car-sharing's peril derives from

its potential to also undermine a different kind of work: the way in which the car facilitates this psychological “processing” of the working day. This form of responsabilization encompasses thinking or planning tasks, the relaxation practices that have been seen, or even singing along to the radio. “Processing” such as this (or indeed any other work done in the car) is disrupted or threatened when the need to car-share presents itself, though it is not necessarily mutually exclusive of car-sharing per se. To foreground the work that is done on ourselves in the car is to emphasise this as an important facilitation of the sustained successful performance of jobs or careers (and private lives) in neoliberalism. Though unpaid, the space for the performance of this work is fought for and defended from threat by these commuters (Urry, 2005). What is shown is how “the time we pass in the car is of value in other significant ways beyond, or parallel to, the necessary reductions of traditional economic models” (Laurier, et al., 2008, p. 26), while facilitating the operation of such models in practice. Yet the connectivity of this “processing” accomplished in the car to workspace is a generally unremarked upon facet of the reproduction of life-as-it-is. This also illustrates the way in which social relations are made up of normative behaviours which are in turn constituted by both aligned practices and counter-conducts.

Moreover, for working commuters, their practices in the car constitute a struggle between actual working time – what is allowed as the maximum duration allocated to a company’s amassing of surplus labour and value – and leisure time. This is a struggle with consequences, not least for people’s private lives, but potentially for health and wellbeing. The struggle is nothing new, however, although the car produces particular manifestations of it as has been shown. Karl Marx, albeit writing about the second industrial revolution, argued that “the capitalist has bought labour power at its day-rate” (Marx, 2011, p. 120) and that “the working day contains the full 24 hours” (2011, p. 290). Marx (2011, p. 292) found that capitalist production, in seeking to extend the working day as far as possible, produces:

not only the deterioration of human labour-power by robbing it of its normal, moral and physical conditions of development and function. It produces also the premature exhaustion and death of this labour-power itself. It extends the labourer’s time of production during a given periods by shortening his actual life-time.

Many writers have emphasised the utility of Marx’ analysis to contemporary currents and tensions in late capitalism. Fordist notions of work in Europe and North America,

for example, have been replaced by the idea of the “socialized worker”, bringing into being “a new epoch in which the factory is increasingly disseminated out in to *society as a whole*” (Gill and Pratt, 2008, p. 5; emphasis in original). This manifests in concepts such as the “social factory” and “the factory without walls” (Negri, 2005), in which the entirety of society becomes accessible to capital, concomitant with the transformation from the Keynesian to the neoliberal state (Gill and Pratt, 2008, pp. 5–6). Indeed, Read (2009, p. 33) and Negri (2005) point to the a “real subsumption” of society in neoliberalism, in which “all subjective potential, the capacity to communicate, to feel, to create, to think” is incorporated “into productive powers for capital”.

In terms of implications for quality of life, writers such as Ross (2003, p. 19) describe how in “no-collar” knowledge industries for example, work has become “recalibrated” and incorporates “activities, feelings, and ideas that are normally pursued during employee’s free time”:

everything that employees do, think, or say in their waking moments is potential grist for the industrial mill...For employees who consolidate office and home, who work and play in the same clothes, and whose social life draws heavily on their immediate colleagues, there no longer any boundaries between work and leisure.

Ross (2003, pp. 50-51) refers to Whyte’s (1960) *The Organization Man* in which American middle-class workers of the Fordist post-war decades were “encouraged to find the true meaning of themselves in leisure time and consumption, and where the authoritarian workday was a dreary sacrifice that earned them the right to pleasure on evenings and weekends”. This constitutes the antithesis of the contemporary no-collar mentality of flexible working environments, flat management structures, and an extended working day (epitomised by the Microsoft slogan “we offer flexible time – you can work any 18 hours you want” [Ross, 2003, p. 52]). Indeed, Moran (2005, p. 39) says that the “decline of formal hierarchies (at work) comes at the cost of increased uncertainty about where work begins and ends”.

Commuting is heavily implicated in this blurring of the edges of the workday for my participants. While only one focus group cohort specifically worked in IT industries and another cohort worked in financial services, other commuters worked in media,

teaching, human resources, and pharmaceuticals, while more were mature students, many with part-time jobs. There is not the scope here to compare the ways in which more hierarchical or flat management structures prevail in each of the different sectors these commuters worked in, nor to comprehensively analyse the extent to which the Irish experience might differ to the American and European ones. But it is remarkable across the work (and study) environments the degree to which “the daily activity of reaching that space becomes part of work itself” and how “the commute has become workspace” (Moran, 2005, pp. 48-49).

Fraser’s (2001) concept of “job spill”, in which new mobile technologies “turn commuting into a form of multi-tasking” (Moran, 2005, p. 49) helps conceptualise the forms of labour that emerge in the car. The idea is developed by Gregg (2011) in the concept of “presence bleed” in which technology makes work constantly available and possible:

Communication platforms and devices allow work to invade spaces and times that were once less susceptible to its presence...firm boundaries between personal and professional identities no longer apply. Presence bleed explains the familiar experience whereby the location and time of work become secondary considerations faced with a “to do” list that seems forever out of control. It...explains the sense of responsibility workers feel in making themselves ready and willing to work beyond paid hours. (Gregg, 2011, pp. 14-15)

These communication technologies work together with the affordances of commuting to constantly reproduce the blurring of boundaries between work and home environments and personal and professional identities. The blurring of boundaries is reproduced by way of actual work done in the car, the processing work highlighted here, or the later facilitation of work that the flexibility of the car enables, through dropping children to school, for example.

Thus, it can again be seen that the behaviours and practices of these commuters, while sometimes aligned and sometimes counter to particular discourses of governmentality, can nevertheless work to reinforce a general neoliberal social structure. But rather than seeing this as tyranny, commuters view it as a norm and fight to defend the space and time spent commuting by car for the purposes of performing aspects of these different forms of work (Urry, 2005). In a sense, what has been shown in this section are the

complex ways in which governance is never total, nor power relations never settled once and for all in these car-commuting environments. It has been shown how some strategies of governmentality about automobility can be undermined and overtaken by other strategies that work to reinforce the exigencies of, or programmers' visions for, a neoliberal society and economy, but in complex and perhaps unforeseeable ways.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored car-commuting and mediation around the introduction of safety cameras as sites of counter and aligned conducts that constitute assemblages of cars and drivers, the dispositif of road safety, and automobility's power relationships as they are lived. The exploration of the safety camera network as a disciplinary form of power highlighted how the cameras help inculcate the subjectivity required for the self-regulation of conduct in neoliberalism. The cameras do not simply create these "necessary" behaviours by themselves, however. As has been shown, mainstream media support is marshalled to legitimize the cameras and limit counter-conduct around their introduction. The analysis has shown how the media underscores the legitimacy of the camera network through the ritual construction of a common-sense consensus. The elements of the consensus include the denial of private and corporate agency, a denial that is belied by newspaper reports that constitute a description of the actual complexities of these intermeshing agencies and relationships. The consensus is also built through the channelling of ideologically safe counter-conduct through the AA and Conor Faughnan and through the categorization of unauthorised debate alongside the activities of criminals and dissidents. *The Irish Times* is authorised to speak for "everyone" in this consensus, the delineation of which forms an analysis of the ways in which neoliberalism surfaces in mainstream print media. It has been shown that the consensus is not so much about road safety per se, but rather the creation and maintenance of a new entrepreneurial marketplace that further internalises standards of behaviour associated with neoliberal tenets (Barnett, 2010).

Yet neither the disciplinary power of the cameras nor the mainstream consensus can simply enact an unproblematic neoliberal reality. The actuality is much more complex and messy and shows how programmers' visions for automobility and neoliberal sociality are formed in "multivocal and decentred" ways (Weir, O'Malley, and Shearing, 1997, p. 505). First, official actors clash over the "correct" way to implement

cutbacks that may have an adverse effect on road safety. But the resulting counter-conducts of Gay Byrne never threaten the neoliberal imperative because he does not question that cutbacks are required, merely disagreeing with where they are being imposed. Next, analysis of online contributions reveals much richer debate around the implications of the cameras' introduction, debate that is dismissed by the mainstream consensus created by *The Irish Times*. Mainstream media inhibits discussion of nuanced opinions and counter-conducts, while pointing to the actual complexity of opinion around the issue of the cameras. Online though, resistance can manifest in the expression of opposition to the cameras from *boards.ie* members, whose discontent suggests alternative courses of action which, although perhaps micro in scale and destructive at times, represent alternatives to current governing practices.

However, all of the above analysis derives from media forms, albeit from both mainstream print sources as well as user-generated content. The chapter went on to analyse commuters' reflections on their activities in their cars, considered as a form of work, both in mediated and non-directly media related contexts. The messy practices described by my focus group participants constitute normative behaviours that both align with the programmers' visions and act as counter-conducts. Counter-conducts occur while commuters struggle to accommodate what is required of them when the complex pressures of work and private life are combined within the context of what neoliberalism makes necessary and desirable through commuting. The "work" of these commuters included eating in the car, the use of the car as a space to plan the work day or leisure time, as well as the need to defend the car as a "processing" and actual work space. All of these behaviours can be considered counter-conduct in the light of particular aspects of the programmers' visions for automobility – the dispositif of road safety for example – but help manage the pressing requirements of work, so underscore programmers' vision for neoliberal sociality. Car-sharing becomes perilous because while it might help sustain automobility in a new form, it undermines the imperative to use the time and space spent commuting to relax and unwind, to process the working day, which itself reinforces the programmers' vision for neoliberal society. And the time and space to do that psychological processing is fought for by commuters, in the face of its encroachment by strategies such as car-sharing, which are also articulated in an economic and entrepreneurial fashion.

Car-sharing undermines a salient feature of automobility – the maintenance of a particular type of individuation (Rajan, 2006) – in which the individual can cut loose on the open road (Ingliss, 2005). Ironically though, the facility to break free becomes associated with the maintenance of the ability to continue the tyranny of working. The commute thus becomes an arena in which different, sometimes competing neoliberal strategies are actively managed by commuters in complex ways as they struggle to negotiate the forms of social action and the boundaries of work and leisure time that neoliberal sociality and automobility makes compulsory. Overall, the chapter describes how the agency of users, the media, and the car together shape the form and content of social action occurring within it or afforded by it (Dant, 2005). The picture painted is one of a complex interrelationship between official actors and citizens, serious and casual statements, mainstream and user-generated media forms, and self-management and discipline; all of which together trace the lived reality of automobility and how these networks are constituted by counter-conduct.

Conclusion: Media-centrism and the complex networks of automobility

This thesis set up the argument that although the *Road Safety Strategy* outlines the need for legislation, enforcement, funding, political commitment, and engineering measures in order to make it a success, it relies on an assumption of media-centricity – that the mainstream media are central to sociality – to help to transpose policy initiatives into practice (Couldry, 2004; 2012). My contention was that this assumption needed to be problematized. This is not only because policy aspirations are filtered through a potentially ambivalent mainstream media and popular culture, but also because they are mediated by the users of automobility (Sheller and Urry, 2000; Urry, 2005) who can alter proposed actions in practice. My argument is set into a context in which the mediated articulation of policy strategies that seek to ameliorate the car's problems, as well as the everyday meanings of how lives are shaped around it, remain under-researched, especially in the Irish experience. This lack remains despite how strongly the car signifies modernity and desirability and how its antagonisms are increasingly acknowledged (Rajan, 2006; Conley and McLaren, 2009).

I argued it is possible to cut across the institutions and practices that attempt to coordinate a response to the social issue of road safety by considering it as a *dispositif* – an ensemble of disparate discursive and non-discursive elements that have been brought together in an attempt to resolve this social problem (Foucault, 1976; Thiele, 1986, p. 255; Rabinow and Rose, 2003). Considering road safety as a *dispositif* has enabled the exploration of both strategy documentation and its mediation in a fashion that highlights the range of actors involved in the constitution of this apparatus. However, it was argued that the *dispositif* of road safety also needs to be investigated for how it is lived in order to explore the outcomes that actually occur, rather than simply those that are planned in advance (Muntigl, 2002). This is not only because it cannot be assumed that the users of automobility will decode policy initiatives in the ways intended (Hall, 1980). It is also because of the complexity of social and material networks that constitute assemblages of car-drivers and the networks of automobility as they are lived in the context of neoliberal governmentality (Foucault, 1978b; Rose, 1999; Dant, 2005; Merriman, 2005). Therefore, my study did not set out to simply check if people

understood road safety policy per se. Instead, it explored the ways in which policy understandings are immanent (or not) in how commuters – as users of the socio-technical system of automobility – articulate how their practices are organised around the car. Each chapter’s particular concerns and focus confirm “the complex networks of sociality and materiality” (Merriman, 2005, p. 158) that constitute the dispositif of road safety and the networks of automobility as they are lived, problematizing media-centrism and delineating how the social order of automobility is produced.

Using the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident as a starting point for this questioning of assumed relationships between mediation and practices, a very different conception of the freedom of the car has been found in Chapter 2. Freedom, as a liberal binary of freedom versus constraint in which the maximisation of individual liberty is a key value or ultimate goal that exists in opposition to government, is radically reconceptualised. Instead, while people are extended the freedom to drive, it is immediately and systematically linked to (self) government by the requirement for responsible action across social practices. The maintenance of the responsabilized self constituted by these discursive constructions entails the distancing of state authority from the subject and the re-articulation of expertise in terms of a competitive marketplace for road safety. In this context, ethics and morality become equated with economic analysis, underlining the obligation to this very particular kind of neoliberal freedom (Rose, O’Malley, and Valverde, 2006). Commuters articulate received notions of the desirability of the freedom the car provides – its potential to enable a breaking free from day-to-day responsibilities. But their descriptions of their own practices show just how theoretical such ideas are when constituted within the responsibilities of work, study, and family. Commuters’ freedoms are the product of ongoing dialogues that negotiate the requirements of different forms of self-government, as well as the threat of discipline that also signals the limit of responsabilization strategies.

The communicative frame of road safety discourses explored throughout this dissertation, that construct responsabilization and the economically moral actor as a natural centre of “our” values or way of life, is predicated upon an assumption that the media’s “natural” stake in this process is to express this nature (Couldry, 2003; Couldry, 2008a, p. 96). Certainly, this centrality seems reinforced in the replication by commuters of the fiction of the responsabilized subject. Yet it is undermined by commuter self-government that, in practice, plays with and subverts the meaning of

mediated messages around specific strategies of responsabilization. Gaps between envisioned policy outcomes, its mediation, and practice do not represent signs of policy failures however, as much as the very conditions of existence of the strategies and actors of neoliberalism and its technologies of government (Lemke, 2002, p. 9). This really problematizes the mediated centre as a necessary feature of social organisation because while the mainstream media is certainly an important actor, it exists as part of the networks of other actors that figure in social organisation.

Chapter 3 shows the complexity and contradiction that characterises the deployment of feelings. This is illustrated in how the mediated policy context of the Donegal accident utilises instrumental rationalities, while simultaneously intensifying rationalities of feeling. Commuters' logics can mirror instrumental rationalities deployed in media representation about the Donegal accident, but their practices are actually entangled in a web of multiple rationalities. Commuters' active deployment of affective language contrasts with how ordinary citizens of Inishowen are represented as passive ciphers of policy strategies. But commuter experiences that point to the profundity of how the car is implicated in social formation go further than a mere contrast between mediated representation and practice. While the media generates stickiness and intensities that constitute the affective components of the dispositif of road safety, what is pointed out again is the complexity and range of social actors involved in the constitution of automobility in practice, and the role of the car in constituting a web of affective relationships. The car-driver assemblage is implicated as a powerful actor that shapes the rationalisation of decisions, choices, and feelings that commuters express and make through the forms of social actions it facilitates. Reflexive commuter rationalities circulate with the rationalities of policy contexts, and together they constitute the forms of sociality that emerge as the dispositif of road safety and the lived experience of automobility. This insight undermines the "individualistic rational choice model" that is ubiquitous to the formation of solutions to the problems the car creates (Sheller, 2005, p. 222), speaks of the contradictions and tensions that exist between competing strategies of governance, and problematizes a media-centric view of the constitution of sociality.

These tensions have also been explored in Chapter 4, which reveals more of the complexities and inconsistencies that inhere to governance as it is messily implemented. For example, the way in which the work imperative trumps the road safety imperative in

commuter reflections on their driving practices mirrors how the consensus about safety cameras articulated in mainstream mediation is predicated upon neoliberal considerations, rather than road safety per se. This in turn mirrors the way in which the risk management strategies of commuters explored in Chapter 2 articulate the outcomes of road traffic accidents in terms of the consequences for insurance premiums, rather than the well-being of their victims. What is suggested is the over-riding importance of the reproduction of a neoliberal status-quo over the welfare of the subjects it constitutes.

The centrality of the media to the construction of social forms is also problematized in Chapter 4 in relation to the difference between concerns of mainstream media versus user-generated contributions to internet forums. Online counter-conducts can disrupt the mediated consensus between powerful political and media actors about the introduction of speed cameras because the diversity of user-generated content provides new outlets for opinion and counter-conduct. However, if this seems to suggest a decline in traditional print and broadcast media forms, that does not mean the same thing as a decline in media-centrism. For Couldry (2012, p. 23) new forms of audience interactivity are not necessarily democratizing but instead facilitate (new) media institutions' need to hold our attention by creating new ways "to speak for, and link audiences to, the mediated centre" and "provide media producers with key market information while intensifying audience identification with particular products". Further research into the implications of user-generated content and social media (for example) to the acceptance of policy initiatives could expand upon the ways in which the dispositif of road safety is constituted by digital media forms in this fashion.

As already argued, the concept of the dispositif enables reality to be cut a different way (Rabinow and Rose, 2003, p. xv), although punctuating moments – such as the Donegal accident – are required in order to usefully mould a potentially infinite range of actors and entities into a manageable research problem. The dispositif brings a sense of coherence to what in other contexts could be considered disconnected realms of media and practices, allows actors to be traced across media forms, and interrogates the shaping influence of an expanded range of actors on social practices. This can be applied in a variety of other contexts. As already pointed out, road safety is only one antagonism of the car and others include the environmental harm, congestion, and the oil dependence that it causes (Bohm, et al., 2006). Exploring the dispositif of environmental protection, for example, could provide new insights into the relationships

between environmental policy and the way such policies are implemented by industry or lived in practice in a variety of contexts. For example, it would be interesting to research the recent VW emissions scandal in terms of the dispositif of discursive and non-discursive elements that led to such a monumental breakdown of corporate governance. On a smaller and more local scale, I believe car-sharing strategies would benefit from further exploration of meanings attaching to the car that condition how the dispositif of environmental protection is mediated by a complex range of actors in Ireland and thus how successful these initiatives can be.

An avenue of investigation that fell outside the scope of my research was interrogating how group and individual accounts of commuting play out in embodied practice. This would involve the exploration of relationships between how people account for what they do and what they actually do (Laurier, et al., 2008): Participant observation of where commuting “gets done” in practice could elaborate meanings articulated in focus groups and identify new meanings in a very important setting of research – the car itself. This could provide even more granular data on the complexity of actors and interactions that constitute the dispositif of road safety and the system of automobility. Of course, the concept of the dispositif does not need to be confined to applications about automobility. The dispositif allows for the investigation of a full range of social problems in ways that can shed light upon the nature of the interrelationships between a wider conceptualisation of their constitutive elements and actors.

As already noted, Couldry (2004, p. 8) states that the belief in mediated centres is a feature of Media Studies as a discipline, where “undue prominence” is given to the media in conceptualising these constituent actors and the elements of social forms. In my thesis, exploring rituals in mainstream media that expressed this myth as well as practices that do not seem directly connected to media consumption per se has helped to avoid this charge. This means that media representation has been placed in a wider context of an expanded range of mediating actors and this has drawn-out a more complex articulation of the dimensions of the media’s social role than the interrogation of practices related to the media alone could ever do. Media-centrism is problematized across the thesis in how some media-promulgated discourses more readily chime with commuter experiences than others. In Chapter 4, for example, commuters could discard certain aspects of road safety discourses when these came up against the imperative to competently negotiate day-to-day working lives. This seems to point, in these particular

circumstances, to the backgrounding of the media as an important actor in the material constitution of automobility and of road safety. But on the other hand, the way in which commuters adopt individual, entrepreneurial, or competitive behaviours that was identified across all the chapters of primary research aligns with how these neoliberal ideologies manifest in mainstream media representations. Nevertheless, my analysis shows the complex ways commuters live their lives is not explained with exclusive reference to mediated discourses that espouse neoliberal tenets. The point, again, is that the media is but one of many constituent components of the assemblage of car-drivers and complex networks of automobility in practice. Any simplistic assessment of its symbolic power must be considered in light of that realisation, which underscores the way in which while “everything goes on as if” mediated centres are necessary, this is not logically required (Couldry, 2012, p. 22).

Ironically, the idea that the media are central to social organisation creates a sense for policy initiatives such as the *Road Safety Strategy* that media roles require little further consideration. But finding that mainstream media are but one aspect of the materiality and sociality of the car-driver assemblage and the dispositif of road safety shows that there are gaps in knowledge of how media shape public perceptions of policy in practice. What my research indicates is that in order to bridge these gaps between the assumed role of the media and the constitution of social practices, it is necessary to contextualise the reception of mediated policy initiatives as part of a much larger framework of actors and entities that constitute social realities. This becomes an analysis of how the car shapes what freedom is in lived experience, meets emotional needs, and operates as a vehicle in which forms of resistance can be performed. But that could not be pre-supposed prior to research. It is only by exploring this larger framework that a fuller understanding of the range and operations of actors which, in addition to the media, constitute automobility’s networks in practice draws nearer. While some actors are more powerful than others at different times and in different spaces, a range of actors shape and condition practices and in doing so both practices and actors are conditioned and change. What is required is a better understanding of what people “do” with mediated policy initiatives, and this can only be properly assessed when “what else is going on” – what other actors and entities are constituting or mediating the practices that are the focus of policy – are expanded upon and understood. In a road safety context, I believe this understanding would inevitably result in a fundamental shift away from the idea of personal responsibility as a key

motif, because this is predicated on the notion that cars and drivers are known quantities and entities, “black-boxes” that do not require further examination about how they are actually constituted.

In fact, a shift away from personal responsibility is already in evidence, as was shown in McAndrews’ (2013) account of the way in which the Vision Zero strategy attempts to make road safety experts responsible for road safety. Such a more systemic conceptualisation of road safety is centred on the transportation sector, not on consideration of the social and cultural factors that give the car-driver assemblage meaning on a day-to-day basis, however (McAndrews, 2013; Redshaw, 2008). Distributing causal responsibility for road accidents to experts appears relatively unproblematic in terms of the neoliberal strategic sensibilities explored in this thesis. But a general acknowledgment of the social and cultural factors that give rise to road traffic accidents may be more problematic for neoliberal governance predicated on the redistribution of social responsibilities through the media ultimately to individual citizens. This is because such an acknowledgment has the potential to orient scrutiny towards the roles of neoliberal governmentality in the creation or reinforcement of social or systemic conditions that result in road traffic accidents in the first place.

Indeed, what makes most sense of the themes of freedom, emotion, and counter-conducts explored in this thesis are the exigencies of neoliberalism. That commuters fight to retain the space to process the working day alone in their cars, for example, speaks of how advanced liberalism starts “as a norm to be implanted into citizens” but becomes “repossessed as a demand which citizens can make of authority” (Rose, 1993, p. 15). The neoliberal sensibility underlies mainstream textual representations, aspects of online debate, and commuter practices. The neoliberal life is what’s predominantly described and what best makes sense of the “work” of all these networks of practices taken together. In combination, what is described is how automobility is comprised of “sites of complex processes of domination, resistance and also appropriation” that constitute power relations which are never fully settled (Foucault, 1976; Matereke, 2013, p. 38). And it is because, rather than in spite, of the way in which counter-conducts, emotions, and freedoms are articulated that the status-quo prevails. The reproduction of automobility occurs through practices associated with the car that work to continually inscribe the car-system and arguably make incrementally more difficult

the transformation of both contingent and predictable practices (Dean, 1999, p. 36) into something else.

The question and urgency of the need for transformation (as noted by Dean, 1999) is not actually resolved here. Urry (2005, p. 26) argues automobility “reorganises how people negotiate the opportunities for, and constraints upon, work, family life, childhood, leisure and pleasure”. But in my review of literature, Wolf’s (1996) critique highlighted that the genesis of the reorganisation that automobility entails does not actually exist in living memory. It is therefore only visible to the historian or academic for example and is not necessarily apparent to commuters themselves. So people have actually not *reorganised* their lives around the car at all, they’ve organised their lives around it. The car and its systems and infrastructure are already there. All it takes is the necessary personal resources and investment for a commuter to utilise them. Automobility thus presents as such an ubiquitous force that it is backgrounded and not imposing in a way you might expect an “extraordinarily powerful complex” and critical shaping actor to be (Urry, 2005, p. 26). How the car insinuates, rather than imposes, itself into everyday lives underlines the power of its presence and shows the way automobility operates through the facilitation of “the general direction of travel in which social processes tend” (Gilbert, 2013, p. 19). This facilitation is especially evident through commuters’ practices that articulate as “technologies of the self” (Lemke, 2002, p. 12), rather than solely as the threats of discipline such as speeding penalties. Threats of discipline represent the reinforcement of a particular (neoliberal) vision of automobility, rather than encumbrance of the system of automobility *per se*.

Harvey (2001, p. 201) argues that “we cannot see much further than the horizon broadly dictated by where we already are” and that in such argumentation, the hegemonic imposition of ways of viewing the world limits the ability to consider alternatives and “is always a central task for dominant institutions of power” (Harvey, 2001, p. 197). The way in which the required/desired action of the fact of commuting has been inculcated in commuters’ subjectivity as generally unproblematic (Stewart, 2001, pp. 18-19) perhaps best illustrates how limited the construction of alternatives is. But this thesis has emphasised how social relations are never fixed once and for all, as well as where they can appear to be so. After all, the purpose in exploring resistance, for example, as argued by Dean (1999, p. 36) is:

to open the space in which to think about how it is possible to do things in a different fashion, to highlight the points at which resistance and contestation bring an urgency to their transformation, and even to demonstrate the degree to which that transformation may prove difficult.

In other words, to make it possible to glimpse beyond the horizon that Harvey (2001, p. 201) argued could not be meaningfully achieved.

But attempting to open a space in which to think about how it is possible to do things in a different fashion may simply demonstrate the ways in which actions that reinforce the neoliberal status quo can be done “better”. For example, for Laurier’s (2005, p. 263) car-workers, work done while driving was a norm, but the risks around it were:

not rendered accountable to their institution: ...there was surprising lack of deliberate planning by companies who did not yet treat the growing daily mobility of their personnel with the same precision as the long-standing logistics of their products.

While Laurier might have seen this as a deficiency, technological advances in the area of autonomous cars could transform the accountability of that space. Workers would no longer be also responsible for their own safe transport because they wouldn’t need to actually drive such a car, so there would be no reason for them not to “get on with” their work. Some have conceptualised how the interior design of the car could be adopted in the context of autonomous cars and make the concept of a mobile living-space more of a literal reality (figure 11).



Figure 11: Mercedes-Benz’s F015 concept: ““Anyone who focuses solely on the technology has not yet grasped how autonomous driving will change our society,’ emphasises Dr Dieter Zetsche, Chairman of the Board of Management of Daimler AG and Head of Mercedes-Benz Cars. ‘The car is growing beyond its role as a mere means of transport and will ultimately become a mobile living space’” (Mercedes-Benz, 2015).

There is no indication that the resulting spaces will be seen as a form of tyranny that further blurs the boundaries of the work day. Given how much commuters’ subjectivity is inculcated with the exigencies of neoliberalism, such developments seem much more likely to be accepted as a shiny new horizon as the as-yet unknowable and unforeseen practices and contradictions these new spaces will generate are negotiated. They will certainly facilitate new ways in which emotional relationships associated with the car can be performed, for example, as well as new forms of work enabled by the deletion of the requirement to drive that seem likely to be articulated as new freedoms. It is hard to see research into these new scenarios and their negotiations finding that they disturb the exigencies of neoliberalism, not least because they derive from its industry. Perhaps we are so invested in the system, so rushed and primed for accumulation as Harvey (2001, p. 201) might say, that it really is impossible to see beyond its horizon.

These conclusions raise interesting implications for future Irish scholarship that underline how my research is entangled in broader international and interdisciplinary contexts. That we are moving from the era of personal responsibility to shared responsibility for road safety goes hand-in-hand with the diminution of road safety as a social issue – at least in the richer countries of the world. It is in association with the rise of new marketable technologies that can help prevent or mitigate road traffic

accidents that the usefulness of individual responsibility as cornerstone of road safety diminishes, and experts can conceivably take on causal responsibility for it (McAndrews, 2013). Indeed, a crash-free future is inextricably linked to ever-increasing autonomy in cars. As computer systems increasingly step-in to mitigate the effects of, or avoid entirely, an imminent crash, the heavy crash structures of today's cars will become increasingly unnecessary. The car of the future may behave like a fish, never crashing into other objects in its surroundings. Cars can become ever lighter, and as a result, more fuel efficient, and much less polluting. As road traffic accidents become engineered out of existence, the need for mediated policy around road safety, and the drive towards responsabilization, becomes less pressing in this context. This is not to suggest the concept of responsabilization will go away: the attention of governmentalization structures of discipline and self-responsibilization will turn elsewhere. It is up to us as researchers across disciplines to explore the nature of governmentality that emerges in a range of new and heterogeneous contexts.

Indeed, while there are gaps in our knowledge of public perception of policy initiatives and roll of the media in shaping these perceptions, there are also gaps in knowledge in how government and the media themselves understand the role of the media and how it works. For my project, addressing these gaps has meant a focus on how policy is implemented in lived experience, problematizing the idea that what the car means to people is already known and fully understood. In other words, I have sought to connect people to the analysis. The study of subjective experience interrogates the conditions of existence of automobility and policy about the car. This is really important because examining these conditions represents how we connect people and their experiences to policy and its analysis. Where I have found the lived reality of policy initiatives imbued with unintended outcomes for example, one logical conclusion must be that such outcomes are likely to exist across many different contexts. So the idea of connecting people to the analysis does not need to confine itself to my mediated policy context. I would say to future researchers that if we do not explore the direct experience or phenomenology of policy, we will never gain a fuller understanding of the range of actors involved in how that context is lived; never understand the particularity of unintended consequences to the context under investigation, nor will we be able to feed such knowledge back into the formation of better policies – as well as better mediated programmes designed for their implementation. Future media scholarship should investigate more of this subjective experience. This, in turn, will open up further

research problems to be explored based on the findings of such research and make for an innovative form of the study of media that has more relevant and practicable applications to better policy formation. It will also lead to better understandings of the media and the constitution of social forms – understandings that can never be accused of media-centrism.

Appendices

Appendix A: Basic demographic indicators of focus group participants

Focus group 1: Five participants: *Pilot group of extended family members.*

Name:	Gender:	Age:	Occupation:
Pauline	F	39	Public Sector Operations Manager
Barry	M	50	Senior Banking Executive
Fiona	F	51	Professional Development Trainer
Don	M	54	Secondary School Teacher
Brid	F	52	Primary School Teacher

Focus group 2: Four participants: *Friends of the researcher.*

Name:	Gender:	Age:	Occupation:
Brian	M	47	IT Personnel Manager
Chris	M	40	Journalist
Geraldine	F	30	Recruitment Consultant
Beth	F	39	Pharmaceuticals Training Manager

Focus group 3: Three participants: *Mature students of Maynooth University.*

Name:	Gender:	Age:	Occupation:
Gary	M	53	Student
Caitriona	F	55	Student
Emer	F	48	Student

Focus group 4: Three participants: *Employees of a large local multi-national computer company.*

Name:	Gender:	Age:	Occupation:
Michelle	F	47	Human Resources Consultant
Graham	M	39	Project Manager
David	M	39	Human Resources – Compensation and Benefits

Focus group 5: Four participants: *Students of Maynooth University.*

Name:	Gender:	Age:	Occupation:
Gerard	M	42	Student
Dermot	M	27	Student
Evelyn	F	39	Student
Jane	F	18	Student

Focus group 6: Six participants: *Employees of a Dublin city-centre multi-national banking organisation.*

Name:	Gender:	Age:	Occupation:
Lisa	F	60	Bank Administration
Una	F	52	Banking Manager
Margaret	F	54	Bank Official
Kevin	M	32	Banking Manager
Declan	M	44	Banker
Brendan	M	54	Manager

Focus group 7: Two participants: *Students of Ballyfermot College of Further Education (BCFE).*

Name:	Gender:	Age:	Occupation:
Caroline	F	37	Student / Part-time Teacher – Adult Education
Tony	M	24	Student

Focus group 8: Four participants: *Students of BCFE.*

Name:	Gender:	Age:	Occupation:
Therese	F	39	Student
Anne	F	21	Student
Susan	F	33	Student
Colm	M	23	Student / Part-time Sales Person – Retail

Focus group 9: Two participants: *Students of BCFE.*

Claire	F	24	Student
Sara	F	23	Student / Part-time Radio Producer

Appendix B: Sample participant information sheet, consent forms and background questionnaire for focus group participation

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research, which is based in the Centre for Media Studies at NUI Maynooth. The study will include a variety of people from different circumstances who commute to work by driving. Your contribution is very important to the project and your commitment is highly valued. This information sheet explains the nature of the study and what we will be asking you to do. It also explains how the data you provide us with will be used.

About the research

The purpose of the study is to investigate the social meanings attributed to the car and car commuting by the participants in the study. These meanings are your own understandings and knowledge that you associate with your commute by car. The study will investigate the gaps between these meanings and the way in which the car is understood in government policy. It will help in the development of a broader understanding of the role of the car in peoples' lives in Ireland and the formulation of better government policy in this area.

Your data, which will be anonymised in order to protect your privacy, will form part of the primary research for a PhD thesis based on the research. This data may also be used in a subsequent publication (e.g. a book or academic paper) based on the research subject to the confidentiality provisions agreed below.

The purpose of the focus group is to explore your thoughts and feelings about commuting. The session will last approximately 90 minutes and involve up to ten people. You will only be asked to participate in one group session. You are asked to fill out the brief background information questionnaire before the session starts (see separate sheet). The session will be recorded.

About your participation

Your participation in any section of the research is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw your data at any time up until the work is published without giving a reason and without obligation. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to, at any stage of the research. You can withdraw from the research during a session by simply indicating your desire to withdraw to the researcher. In addition, during a research session you can request that recording is stopped and you can request to have sections of tapes erased. You can withdraw your participation after a research session by contacting the researcher (Patrick Boyle) or one of his supervisors. Contact details are provided below. If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or discarded in any way or if you are unhappy about the process please contact the Secretary of the National University of Ireland Maynooth Ethics Committee at researchethics@nuim.ie; tel. 353 (0) 1 7086019, or the researcher's supervisors:

Dr. Kylie Jarrett ; Dr. Gavan Titley.

The Centre for Media Studies

NUI Maynooth: (01) 708 3624.

Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Principal Investigator:

Patrick Boyle

Centre for Media Studies

NUIM Maynooth Arts Building

National University of Ireland

Maynooth,

Co. Kildare

(01) 708 3624

Email: PATRICK.BOYLE.2010@nuim.ie

Having read this information sheet please read and sign the consent form.

Consent form: Focus Group

Project working title: Routine Journeys, Unique Meanings: Mediated policy contexts and experience of automobility in everyday Ireland.

Principal Investigator:

Patrick Boyle

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NUIM Maynooth Arts Building

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Maynooth,

Co. Kildare

Centre for Media Studies Office: (01) 708 3624

Email: PATRICK.BOYLE.2010@nuim.ie

The supervisors of this research are Dr. Kylie Jarrett and Dr. Gavan Titley. They can also be contacted through the Centre for Media Studies office at (01) 708 3624.

Material gathered during this research will be treated as confidential and securely stored in a locked cabinet at NUI Maynooth for a period of 5 years from the date of first publication. You have the right to access your transcripts at any time (this comprises media files and electronic text transcripts of your focus group sessions, as applicable).

Please answer each statement below concerning the collection of the research data

I have read and understood the information sheet. **YES** **NO**

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research. **YES** **NO**

I have had my questions answered satisfactorily. **YES** **NO**

I understand I can withdraw from the research at

any time without having to give an explanation. **YES** **NO**

I agree to the recording of my participation
and for the contents to be used for research purposes. **YES** **NO**

Below are sets of statements about how you wish your participation to be used. Please answer each statement.

I agree to my data being used for
subsequent publications related to the research. **YES** **NO**

I agree to my data being made available for discussion
with other bona fide researchers. **YES** **NO**

I would like my name acknowledged in the report
(without linking it to content or quotation). **YES** **NO**

Name: (Printed) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Your contribution is very valuable. Please feel free to contact the researcher or the supervisors if you have any questions.

Please note that focus group participation does not constitute any kind of counselling or medical treatment. If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or discarded in any way or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the National University of Ireland Maynooth Ethics Committee at researchethics@nuim.ie or 353 (0)1 7086019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Participants are asked to fill out the following **background questionnaire** before the focus group commences.

Name

Address

Contact Phone Number

Gender

Age

Occupation

Car driver (Make / Model / Year)

How often do you commute by car each week?

What is the typical duration of your commute? (time and distance)

When I commute I travel from _____ to _____

Who do you typically travel with on this journey? (Please state whether you travel alone or typically with family, friends, colleagues as appropriate and the typical number of occupants in the car.)

Appendix C: Sample topic guide/interview schedule for focus groups

Participants to be shown video, for example of a road rage incident or road safety advertisement.

Questioning/ prompting and discussion will then respond to this video:

In relation to the video clip:

- Have you ever experienced this kind of driving?
- What did you do when it happened?
- How do you react in situations like this?

In relation to general commuting practice:

What do you think makes a person a good driver?

What makes you a good driver?

What's the most frustrating or pleasurable thing about driving?

Is your car important to you? Why? What does the car mean to you?

Why do you use your car to commute? How would you cope without it?

Do you ever use public transport?

How do you feel about road safety campaigns?

Tell me about your daily commute...

What do you see inside or outside of the car?

What do you think about?

Who else do you travel with?

If you travel with others, what might you talk about?

What else do you do while you drive (e.g. eating, talking on phone, radio)?

What do you listen to?

Imagine you had no car. Can you tell me what your commute would involve?

Do you enjoy or look forward to your commute?

What would you like to drive instead of your current car?

What might upset you if it occurred on your journey (e.g. delays, congestion, bad driving)?

How do you react in such circumstances?

Do you always drive straight to/ home from work or do you do other things?

When you think about how cars are represented in media, what sorts of words or images come to mind?

Can you elaborate on these?

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