The 20mph limit paradox: drivers who support but don't comply.. and other mysteries of driving.

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Project aims

• The surveys were commissioned by Bristol City Council, in partnership with the Bristol Social Marketing Centre, with the aim of **understanding attitudes and behaviours** with respect to 20mph speed limits in Great Britain.

• We wanted to **ascertain levels of support and opposition**, the reasons for these, and **the likely reaction to 20mph limits** once they are in place.

• One issue of **particular concern** was that **many drivers may not comply** with the limits once they are in place.

• Could this be understood and addressed?
Fieldwork and sample

- Fieldwork was contracted to YouGov, a large UK provider of social and market research.

- Fieldwork was undertaken in summer 2013 and summer 2015.

- A GB sample of 3074 adults of which 2297 were drivers was collected for the 2013 survey.

- A GB sample of 3036 adults of which 2098 were drivers was collected for the 2015 survey.

- The survey was carried out online.
We asked lots of questions..

- But these two in particular are important here:

- **The ‘Support’ question:**
  - *(ask all)* How strongly do you support or oppose a 20mph speed limit in residential areas?
    - Strongly support
    - Support
    - Oppose,
    - Strongly oppose

- **The ‘Comply’ question:**
  - *(drivers)* How strongly do you agree or disagree with each statement.
    - If a 20mph speed limit is introduced, I may not stick to it.
    - *(strongly agree-----strongly disagree)*
Support or Oppose..?  
Comply with the limit or break it?

• 65% of GB adults supported 20mph limits in residential areas
• 31% of GB adults oppose 20 mph limits

• 46% of GB drivers say they may **comply** with 20mph limits
• 31% of GB drivers say they may **not comply** with 20mph limits
How consistent are drivers attitudes with their behaviours?

• Do all supporters intend to comply?

  • No!

• Do all opponents intend to break the limits?

  • No!
### Summary of key attitudes and behaviours that differentiate each group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support and may comply:</th>
<th>Support but may not comply:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘put people ahead of traffic’</td>
<td>‘other drivers are idiots’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oppose but may comply:</th>
<th>Oppose and may not comply:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>‘stick to the rules’</td>
<td>‘roads are for cars’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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What going on..?

Mysteries of driver psychology
These are any of the big factors in driver psychology…

Beliefs…

automatic responses…

default norms…

I am a good driver

I am in control

The risks are low

I am law abiding

20 speed limit

I want to fit in

Sorry, what did you say?

This is my back yard
<table>
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<th>These messages are for others</th>
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<td>I drive everyday and nothing bad happens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The risks are low</td>
<td>This won’t happen to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am law abiding</td>
<td>These speed cameras are there to make money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 speed limit</td>
<td>..= 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to fit in</td>
<td>Everyone else on that road is going quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorry, what did you say?</td>
<td>Oh – were you talking to me.. About driving?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is my back yard</td>
<td>So I’ll drive carefully here.. But back to normal everywhere else</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me.....</td>
<td>So.......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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I'm surrounded by idiots
Specialist MOTING OFFENCE advice

Innocent until PROVED guilty!
OH LOOK
WE HAVE A COPY CAT HERE
Slow drivers

Normal drivers

Road hogs

TURNING RIGHT IN 5 MILES
BETTER SIGNAL NOW

IF THE SLOW DRIVER IN FRONT COULD GO THE OTHER WAY AT THE NEXT FORK
THAT WOULD BE GREAT

Right lane closed 1500ft?
Better wait until last minute to merge

THEY MUST BE HONKING
BECAUSE THEY LOVE JESUS

SORRY I ANNOYED YOU WITH MY SAFE DRIVING

DRIVER IN FRONT IS DRIVING TOO SLOW
GET RIGHT BEHIND HIM
Driving automaticity
YIMBY
Yes In My Backyard
Information about risks… has little or no effect

I am a skilful driver

Driving’s something I never think about

My driving is better than average – these messages are for the others

I can calculate the risks very accurately

I have driven for years and not crashed

I drive just like everybody else – I fit in with the crowd

bettertogether
So...to make further progress, do we need to think outside the box of the current design of road safety campaigns?
3 Es and an M

enforcement  firm but empathetic policing; but a visible presence is needed!

engineering  streets to live in as well as drive through, in-car technology can also help

marketing  Design skillful driving so that it is attractive, normal and easy to do.

education  or to be more accurate, training!
References


McKenna, F. (1993), "It won't happen to me: Unrealistic optimism or illusion of control?" British Journal of Psychology (British Psychological Society) 84, 1, 39–50


Corbett, C. and Simon, F. (1992) Decisions to break or adhere to the rules of the road, viewed from the rational choice perspective. British Journal of Criminology, 32, 4, 537-549

Appreciate your time

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