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

**Professor Alan Tapp**Bristol Social Marketing Centre, UK



## **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?







# Summary of key attitudes and behaviours that differentiate each group

**Support and may comply:** 

'put people ahead of traffic'

49%

Oppose but may comply:

'stick to the rules'

11%

Support but may not comply:

'other drivers are idiots'

**17%** 

Oppose and may not comply:

'roads are for cars'

23%

# What going on..?

Mysteries of driver psychology

 These are any of the big factors in driver psychology... I am a good driver

I am in control

The risks are low

Beliefs...

I am law abiding

automatic responses...

20 speed limit

default norms...

I want to fit in

Sorry, what did you say?

This is my back yard

# So....

I am a good driver	These messages are for others
I am in control	I drive everyday and nothing bad happens
The risks are low	This won't happen to me
I am law abiding	These speed cameras are there to make money
20 speed limit	= 28
I want to fit in	Everyone else on that road is going quickly
Sorry, what did you say?	Oh – were you talking to me About driving?
This is my back yard	So I'll drive carefully here But back to normal everywhere else

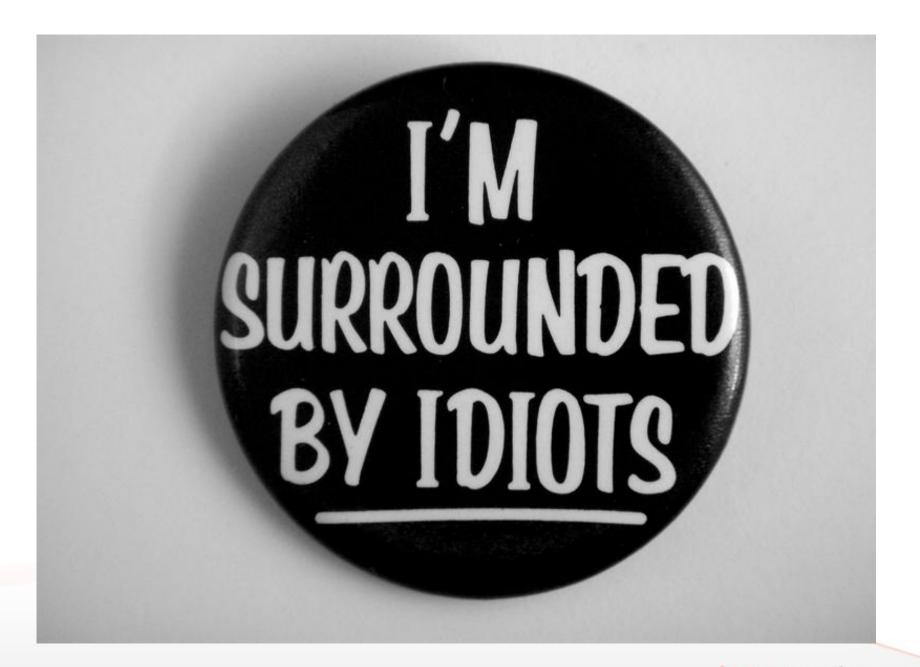
bettertogether

Ме
----

#### So.....

#### Underlying psychology....

I am a good driver	These messages are for others	Self enhancement bias
I am in control	I drive everyday and nothing bad happens	Illusion of control
The risks are low	This won't happen to me	Judgement of risk
I am law abiding	These speed cameras are there to make money	Attitudes to the law
20 speed limit	= 28	Personalisation of speed limits
I want to fit in	Everyone else on that road is going quickly	Copycat driving
Sorry, what did you say?	Oh – were you talking to me About driving?	Automaticity
This is my back yard	So I'll drive carefully here But back to normal everywhere	JIMBY effect
	else	bettertogether







MOTORING
OFFENCE
advice





Innocent until PROVED guilty!







#### Slow drivers

#### **Normal drivers**

#### Road hogs



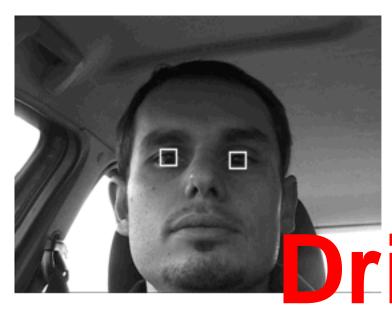


















# ИВ Yes In My Backyard



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

Stradling, S., Campbell, M., Allan, I., Gorrell, R., Hill, J., Winter, M. & Hope, S. (2003) The Speeding Driver: Who, How and Why? Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Development Department Research Findings No. 170/2003.

Svenson, O. (1981) Are we all less risky and more skilful than our fellow drivers?, Acta Psychologica, 47, 143-148.

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

McKenna, F. (2010) Behavioural research in road safety. Road Safety Congress: Eighteenth Seminar; London: Department for Transport.

Recarte, M. and Nunes, L. (2002) Mental load and loss of control over speed in real driving: towards a theory of attentional speed control. Transportation Research Part F, 5, 2, 111-122

Corbett, C. and Simon, F. (1992) Unlawful driving behaviour: a criminological perspective. Contractor report 310. Crowthorne: Transport Research Laboratory.

McKenna, F., (2010) Education in Road Safety – Are We Getting It Right? Report for RAC Foundation. Report Number: 10/113

Roberts, I. (2013) Why improving public health may lead to more injury not less. In Safety, sustainability and future urban transport, ed. Mohan, D., Eicher: New Delhi

Musselwhite, C., Avineri, E., Fulcher, E., Goodwin, P., and Susilo, Y. (2010b) Public attitudes to road user safety: a review of the literature 2000-2009. University Transport Study Group; Plymouth.

Wells, H., 2012, The fast and the furious: drivers, speed cameras and control in a risk society, Ashgate: Surrey.

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

Corbett, C. and Simon, F. (1992b) Unlawful driving behaviour: a criminological perspective. Contractor report 310. Crowthorne:

Transport Research Laboratory.

# Appreciate your time

Alan.Tapp@uwe.ac.uk