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Cars seem to create a state of arrested adolescence in many users. Behind the wheel, middle-class, middle-aged men (and the worst drivers are nearly always men) become as reckless as headless as teenagers. They resemble naughty schoolboys not only in their determination to flout authority, but in their resentment when they are "picked on". Yet a car is potentially a lethal weapon. The use of it is a privilege, not a right; the minority who forget that deserve to be hounded as mercilessly as any house-breaker or teenage vandal.

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The argument that exceeding the speed limit is acceptable when the road is deserted or the schools are on holiday is preposterous. Children are more, not less, likely to be wandering around in the holidays, and pedestrians may unwittingly put themselves at risk in the belief that the limit is being observed. In any case a pedestrian hit by a vehicle travelling at 40 mph will almost certainly be killed, while one hit at 20 mph will almost certainly survive. Nor is it so scandalous that revenue from motor-ing fines swells police and Treasury coffers. Raising money from the taxation of socially undesirable behaviour:whether it be smoking, emitting greenhouse gases or parking at road junctions -is a perfectly sound principle...

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There is no argument whatever for treating errant motorists more leniently than any other class of offender, or for making less determined efforts to catch them. Even an ignored "no right turn" sign can cause death or injury to innocent people. An illegally parked car – which may itself lead to an accident – is simply theft of road space, an expensive and scarce commodity. Retailers stuff their stores with cameras to deter shoplifters who cause no physical harm to anybody, it is hardly possible to walk a hundred yards along a high street or a few feet across an airport lounge without surveillance. Why should it be any different when we get into a motor vehicle? The police are said to hound lawbreaking motorists in preference to pursuing burglars. Why is this such a reprehensible order of priorities? Burglars cause loss and distress, but rarely kill or maim.

Our love affair with the motor car blinds to logic and common sense. We strain every sinew to protect children from paedophile murderers. Yet, the number of child pedestrians killed on the roads annually is ten times greater than the number killed by perverted strangers. It is also higher than in France of Germany. The yearly toll of death on the roads exceeds that exacted by Osama Bin Laden's madmen in New York in 2001, and is vastly higher than the number of Britons killed in all recent terrorist attacks. On any sane risk assessment, speed cameras on roads – which have been shown to cut deaths and serious injuries by 35 per cent-are more necessary than armed marshals on aeroplanes.

What a strange attempt to enforce speed limits in srebrenica cars. Attempts to enforce speed limits are denounced as interference with ancient English liberties. Motorists who drive too fast are excused on the grounds that they are "otherworldly", "a description that may as easily be applied to wife-beaters or child molesters." The Sun launches a "stop the highway robbery", campaign against the cameras while a lunatic fringe attacks parliament with hammers and airguns, and threatens explosives....Ministers tremble at the tabloid's wrath and agree to consider proposals to remove cameras where they do not "protect" the public. This is an incoherent thought even by today's 'old standards'. If a legal limit on speed exists, it is worth enforcing.

"In defence of speed cameras"

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5 Public support for cameras

Speeding is a key concern for the public. The 2004 British Crime Survey reported speeding as the leading form of anti-social behaviour, cited by 43% of the 40,000 people interviewed⁴⁴.

"The public support the use of speed cameras because they understand two very simple things: the faster you go, the more likely you are to be involved in a crash and the more severe the impact of the crash"
 Transport 2000

Year	Source	Finding
2003	BBC	75% in favour of speed cameras with only 19% against.
2003	Scottish Executive	75% drivers thought speed cameras to be a good thing.
2003	Used Car Market Report	62% satisfaction rating for speed cameras amongst motorists; sites 75% of London respondents thought cameras should be used more widely on dangerous roads.
2002	You Gov	84% motorists in London and the southern region viewed the use of speed cameras as a good thing, even though more than half had been 'flashed', or flashed and fined.
2002	NOP/Evening Standard	78% drivers believed speed cameras were a good way of deterring people from speeding and were not an infringement of personal liberty.
2001	MORI	70% of respondents supported the use of speed cameras.

Speeding traffic was also identified as a key concern for children in the Transport 2000 and Barnardo's project **Stop look and listen: Children talk about traffic**. Greater use of speed cameras was recommended, including in deprived residential areas where child pedestrians are excessively at risk⁴⁵.

The third year evaluation public surveys on speed cameras found

- 76% agreed that cameras are meant to encourage drivers to stick to the limits, not punish them.
- 68% believed that fewer collisions are likely to happen on roads where cameras are installed.
- 61% thought that cameras mean that dangerous drivers are more likely to get caught⁴⁷.

Public support for safety cameras remains high, as seen by the findings from the most recent camera evaluation. It is worth remembering that there has never been a large scale publicity campaign promoting safety cameras and the National Safety Camera Partnership Coordination Unit was only allocated minimal resources for publicity. The support for speed cameras has come from local communities, unlike the media-fueled opposition to speed cameras. Public support is always useful, but the government did not require or wait for public approval to introduce drink driving regulations in the 1980s.

I got caught twice for speeding last year. Since then, I drive more carefully and am more conscious of my speed. I am sick of the attitude that cameras are only there as part of some insidious Government plot to raise revenue. I broke the law, got caught and faced the consequences instead of whinging about the injustice of it all. The fine for both tickets was £120 with six points on my license. I am not rich, but I don't think the fine was large enough nor a deterrent. They should increase the fines if anything, and, if the moaners want to avoid getting caught and fined, then obey the law, stupid.
 S. Rickard, Metro, 21/1/04

Reduction in injury crashes and K/SI casualties ²⁶

All injury crashes:	33% decrease (4,030 fewer collisions) 23% decrease in pedestrian collisions
K/SI casualties:	40% decrease (870 fewer K/SI and 100 fewer deaths) 51% decrease at fixed camera sites and 28% at mobile camera sites 35% decrease in pedestrian K/SI

After a nationwide study in the mid 1990s found that speed cameras led to a 28% reduction in K/SI casualties²¹, a two year pilot study was begun with eight safety camera partnerships. But after just the first year, safety cameras proved so successful (35% decrease in K/SI collisions with 47% fewer people killed and seriously injured), the government decided to roll out more safety camera partnerships immediately²². The second year evaluation reported a similar success, with a 35% reduction in K/SI casualties²³.

The most recent evaluation focused on the 24 partnerships that had at least one year of data after camera installation. The impact on crashes and casualties is based on an analysis of 2,300 sites in those 24 partnerships. Almost all the sites showed casualty reductions with only 5% of the sites found not to be effective. The casualty decrease was reported to be particularly large for children and pedestrians²⁴.

Reduction in crashes and casualties

Reducing vehicle speed is essential for a sustainable transport system.

For more information, visit www.slower-speeds.org.uk

Average speed:	7% decrease (2.4 mph)
Speeding:	32% fewer drivers speeding 71% less at fixed camera sites and 21% at mobile camera sites
Extreme speeding:	43% fewer drivers exceeding speed limit by more than 15 mph 80% fewer at fixed camera sites and 28% at mobile camera sites

Reduction in speed and speeding

The most recent evaluation of the impact of cameras on speeding was based on 11,600 speed surveys¹⁹. There has been no criticism of the evaluation of the impact on speeding and there is no doubt that speed cameras have reduced the number of drivers breaking the speed limit at camera sites. This alone is enough to justify their use, especially as speeding is the top anti-social behaviour concern in the country.

At the risk of stating the obvious, speed cameras were developed to deter speeding, not just speeding involving death or injury. Less than 10% of gun crime results in an injury but this does not mean non-injury related gun crime is acceptable²⁵.

Reduction in speeding

3 Effectiveness of speed cameras

'Iron law of evaluation'

Because their impact on crashes and casualties can be quantified, speed cameras have suffered from the 'iron law of evaluation' and have been held to a higher standard of evaluation than other measures. Yet the criticisms of speed camera evaluations apply to all safety interventions that are selected on the basis of a high number of collisions.

There is concern that the safety benefits may be overestimated on occasion due to the effect known as the regression to the mean (RTM). As speed cameras are only allowed at sites that have experienced a high number of fatal and serious injury collisions in recent years, a reduction in collisions would be expected by the natural pattern, even without cameras. Yet a large scale study covering the longest time period found high crash savings from speed cameras. The study reviewed 49 camera sites in Cambridgeshire over a 14-year period and found a reduction of over 45% in injury collisions in the immediate vicinity of a camera site. Covering such a long time period, it was possible to estimate the impact of speed cameras, net of RTM, long term trend and seasonality²⁶.

Another study did find RTM contributed to the casualty reduction. This study of cameras on 30 mph roads estimated that while K/SI crashes fell by 34% at camera sites, 18% of this decrease was due to RTM, 5% due to long term trend, and only 11% directly attributable to the cameras. But when this same study analysed the impact on total injury collisions, cameras accounted for 24% of the 26% decrease in total injury collisions. This study did not criticise safety cameras but concluded that

To realise the full potential safety benefits of cameras what is needed is wider deployment and less emphasis on fatal and serious accidents in selecting locations for new cameras ... The main obstacles to achieving the road safety benefits possible from further deployment of speed enforcement cameras seem to be public opposition and a consequent lack of political will. Speed enforcement cameras on 30 mph roads have been shown to offer safety improvements over a distance of up to 1 km upstream and downstream of the camera, with reductions in accidents over this distance averaging 20% or 1 PkA/km/y attributable to reductions in speed ²⁷.

However the Government has recently announced a freeze on fixed speed cameras (thus blocking almost 500 new speed cameras), which is believed due, at least in part, to their concern over the effectiveness of speed cameras and the regression to mean effect. This ban was condemned by ACPD who claimed it could cost lives, with speeding being allowed to continue on known dangerous roads²⁸.

Greater benefits possible with covert cameras

The benefits to society could be even greater if cameras did not have to be conspicuous. Research in New Zealand and Victoria, Australia, has shown that covert cameras are more effective in reducing casualties as they have a wider general deterrent effect than do conspicuous cameras²⁹. A report commissioned by the Motorists' Forum also recommended inconspicuous cameras on roads where speeding occurred over a long section or in a local area³⁰.