

Do Non- drivers and Drivers see the same road?

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Most large surveys of public opinion regarding road safety and road user behaviour (such as SARTRE, for example) sample drivers only, and address traffic and safety issues primarily from the point of view of drivers. The opinions of non- drivers are typically assessed in the context of community based or other focused studies, where the sampling population might be of parents or residents (many of whom might also be drivers) and not necessarily only drivers.

In two recent surveys, in Poland and in Israel, nationally representative samples of drivers and non- drivers were interviewed at home about experiences and opinions concerning various aspects of road safety, road- user behaviour and traffic law enforcement.

The same methodology of sampling and interviewing was used with all respondents. The questions to non-drivers constituted a sub-set of the items that drivers were asked. Some were adapted, when logically necessary, to respondents who do not drive but are passengers in cars, passengers in public transport, pedestrians and bike riders.

Drivers, too, are sometimes passengers and are always also pedestrians. However, non-drivers are more bound to the pavement and the back seats, and differ from drivers in other attributes as well. The two sub-populations share many opinions about safety and about safety, but diverge when it comes to very specific issues which affect them in separate ways.

As the size of the actual non-driving population is quite significant, it is important that the content and methodology of public opinion surveys give proper representation and voice to the needs, interests and points of view of non- drivers. This is particularly important when public opinion surveys are used to support national or local road safety policies.