Monitoring road safety culture in Europe
SafeCulture

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The SafeCulture project

SafeCulture - Safety culture in private and professional transport: examining its influence on behaviours and implications for interventions

Aims to compare the safety culture in different transport modes and social contexts between Norway and Greece.

Land transport: Comparison of car users, powered two-wheelers, HGV and bus drivers.

Funded under the “Transport 2025” program of the Norwegian Research Council.

Duration: 36 months (Jan 2016 – Dec 2018)

Partners: Institute of Transport Economics, Norwegian Centre for Transport Research
Norway and Greece were selected to be compared since their road safety status differ significantly.

The number of fatalities in accidents involving HGVs and buses/coaches in EU fell by nearly 50% between 2005 and 2014. However, the percentage of fatalities in accidents involving HGVs and buses or coaches didn’t decrease considerably.
Safety culture in transport

- The concept of safety culture is applied to an increasing range of sectors, including professional and private transport.

- Safety culture explains considerable variation in safety behaviour in various transport forms operated by private and professional drivers.

- Transport safety culture (TSC) is defined as: “shared norms prescribing certain transport safety behaviours, shared expectations regarding the behaviours of others and shared values signifying what’s important (e.g. safety, mobility, respect, politeness)”. 
Research questions

• How much does membership in different sociocultural units (e.g. nation, region, peer-groups, sector, organizations) influence individual transport safety behaviour in professional and private transport?

• How much does TSC influence safety behaviour and outcomes relative to known risk factors like gender, age, experience, technology and infrastructure?

• How can the knowledge on group membership influencing TSC and the relative importance of TSC as a predictor of transport safety behaviour and safety outcomes be used to increase transport safety?
Main findings - overall

• There is a relationship between national transport safety culture, transport safety behaviour and accident involvement.

• Aggressive violations are predicted by national transport safety culture (e.g. Bus drivers in Greece report more aggressive violations in traffic than Norwegian bus drivers) and predict accident involvement.

• Organizational safety culture contributes negatively to aggressive transport safety behaviours, meaning that a positive organizational safety culture may reduce aggressive violations in traffic.
Main findings - speed

• Professional drivers generally drive at **speeds lower than the speed limits** not necessarily by choice but also due to technical restrictions (e.g. tachograph, difficult urban environments). They admit speeding up while driving on the highway.

• Choosing speed depends on the **pressure** upon the driver for a delivery, from a client or from the management. Avoiding speed violations and tickets in fear of loosing their jobs is also common.

• Professional bus drivers consider **speeding and speed limits** the most common factors for aggressive driving and for the violation of the Traffic Code and disrespect towards other drivers respectively.
Next steps

- Study safety culture, actual safety behaviour and safety relevant outcomes (accidents, incidents) among private car and PTW drivers in Norway and Greece.

- Sample stratified according to region (i.e. islands). The Greek islands may provide a “natural experiment” with respect to the development of a safety culture through interaction of locals and tourists.

- The hypothesis will be that on touristic areas the interaction between tourists in rental cars and PTW and the Greek driving population will result in a different traffic culture than in the usual Greek traffic.
Future challenges

• The **importance** of transport safety culture (TSC) in understanding and influencing transport safety behaviour and safety outcomes is very high (as it is in hazardous industries) and more quantitative research is needed.

• **Linking quantified metrics of TSC with road safety metrics** (performance indicators and outcomes) is a great challenge, which might reveal important hidden parameters influencing road safety.

• There is need to study large driver samples and different nationalities in order to identify links between road safety and **organizational and tourist safety culture** across Europe.
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