The SafeCulture project – Results on safety culture in professional transport in Greece

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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: Examination 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:

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Key road safety facts

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.

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Key road safety facts

The number of fatalities in accidents involving HGVs in Greece in 2015 constitutes a non-negligible percentage of the total road fatalities. More than 70% of them occurred outside built-up areas.

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Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT)
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)”.

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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?

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The SafeCulture survey in Greece

- Conduct of personal **interviews** with transport professionals (10 Heavy Good Vehicles and 10 Bus drivers)

- **Survey** among transport professionals (100 Heavy Good Vehicles and 100 Bus drivers)

Main examined issues:
- **Working** conditions with safety implications
- **Organizational** safety culture
- Safety **behaviours**
- **National** transport safety culture
- **Sector** transport safety culture

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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.

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Main findings - speeding

• 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. When in struggle to meet timelines, there is considerable disregard of road safety rules (e.g. signage violations - stop sign and traffic lights, honking and verbal abuse).

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Main findings - speeding

- Avoiding speed violations and tickets in fear of loosing their jobs is also common.

- Professional bus drivers consider **speeding and outdated speed limits** the most common factors for aggressive driving and for the violation of the Traffic Code and disrespect towards other drivers respectively.

- Overall, professional drivers are **supportive** of measures to prevent speeding.

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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.

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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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