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ISSN 2250-5105

DRIVING RESPONSIBLY: Fines and anomie in tourists on roads

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Abstract:

The social imaginary valorizes the belief that cultures are socially determined to abide or break the rules. Some countries, as Argentina, would have developed a social anomie because of the building of abundance of laws. Seniors lecturers as Peter Waldmann have supported a thesis of this caliber. In an opposite direction, the present notes of research shows that argentine-drivers in roads have committed fewer fines than foreign tourists. Based on the records of a private rent-a-car company we rather provide with a new methodology to study the road-security issues. To what an extent, physical and psychological distance may encourage or discourage the attachment to the law seems to be a much deep seated issue which merits to be discussed.

Key Words: Risky roads, Fines, accidents, tourism, anomie.

Introduction

On 20 June of 2007, one of the most read newspapers in Argentina, La Nación, published a column entitled “21 drivers die per day because of road accidents”. The statistics reveals that almost 3.159persons die in accidents in roads or streets. The media portrayed the question of accidents as one of the most importance cause of death in the country. The following Table shows not only how serious the problem is, but also the rise of wounds over five years.

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Table 1 – Victims and Injured in road-led accidents.

Year	Deads	Injured
2001	3796	58530
2002	3178	53527
2003	3124	56669
2004	3505	64707
2005	3443	73066

Source: Indec – Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos humanos, Buenos Aires.

Following this, it is not surprising to see the most populated zones, or urban sprawl areas gathers the major traffic and road accidents. Buenos Aires City and Provincia de Buenos Aires, had for 2005 10.248 and 21.582 injured persons while Tierra del Fuego had only 58. Small states as Santa Cruz and Tierra del Fuego contain less accidents than other more populated states. This evidence suggests that undoubtedly Year Deads Injured the road accidents seem to be an urban issue.

Table 2 – Deads and Injured by state. 2005

State	Deads	Injured	Total
Pcia. Buenos Aires	1033	20549	21582
Buenos Aires	107	10141	10248
Córdoba	395	8050	8445
Mendoza	178	6801	6979
Tucumán	125	2340	2465
Entre Ríos	154	1573	1727
Formosa	41	1573	1614
Salta	88	1488	1576
Neuquén	42	1019	1061
La Rioja	38	835	873
Chaco	102	730	832
Santiago. Estero	64	671	735
San Juan	101	614	715
Catamarca	34	661	695
Corrientes	112	574	686
Misiones	152	497	649
Jujuy	88	540	628
San Luis	40	547	587
Riò Negro	55	357	412
La Pampa	45	288	333
Chubut	14	265	279
Santa Cruz	42	172	214
Tierra del Fuego	6	52	58

Source: Indec – Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos humanos, Buenos Aires.

This raises a more than interesting question, how may explain the problems of accidents in a more mobile world?, is tourism conducive to these types of tragedies?. The present note of research explores not only the problem of anomie, as it has been studied by French sociology, but also gives rich-based empirical information, extracted from the statistics of an Argentinean rent-a-car company. This has been calculated by the examination of the fines, this company receives according to its own rentals. We will attempt to validate that Argentinean drivers detour the traffic rules respecting to other driver nationalities.

The sample is based on 400 records, which contains the information of fines charged to renters during 2006/2007. The investigation is aimed at establishing a valid diagnosis one how drives foreign tourist sand national drivers, secondly, it provides a conceptual

framework to understand the fines by its nature. Last, it is important not to lose sight of the role of nationality in the conformation of fines.

Starting from the premise that fines are the result of driving faults, we may interpolate the information obtained only inside the unit of analysis whereby it has been collated. To protect the real identity of the company, we will name it Vehicle plus.

Preliminary Discussion

The word anomie stemmed from the ancient Greek that means the absence of rules. Although it has been employed in many contexts, many sociologists (as Durkheim) have focused on anomie as a predictable variable that explains social behaviour (Giddens, 1971).

In two of his most important books, *The Division of Labor* and *Suicide*, Durkheim exhibits interest for the role played by anomie in social formation. In this vein, anomie should be understood as a complete absence of norms, which leads people to act in pathological behavior (Durkheim, 2004a; 2004b). From his intervention onwards, the specialized literature can be divided into two different waves:

- Those experts who argue that social deviance is determined by the complexity of structure. As an inherited tool of a much broader structure, the agent is unable to change the rules (McIver y Riesman, 1950) (Merton, 1964:170) (Lander, 1956);
- Other second view, rather, introduces the idea that agents not only can change the norms, but also adapt their behaviour to their contextual interests. For these experts, the rule is always negotiated on a daily basis (Malinowski, 1985) (Turner, 1999) (Garfinkel, 2006) (Sudnow, 1965) (Perrow, 1984).

What is important to discuss here, is what Peter Waldmann denominates, the prone to anomie. Waldmann said overtly that some social groups or nationalities, because of historical conjuncture, are prone to anomie than others. Argentines, in view of this, would have developed a lack of respect for rules, a point which historically developed their social character. As the previous argument given, he insists that Argentina have

created an over-abundance of laws and legal framework. Since the rules are too much to be obeyed, lay-people have developed a counter-response, which ignore the existent legal jurisprudence (Waldmann, 2003). The sense of disorder, as it has been examined by Morley (1996), often is portrayed by the media.

Nevertheless, this collective perception is not based on facts. As noted, it is very hard to define with clear indicators the question of anomie, precisely because it connotes a lack of rules.

Tourism and Anomie

Although tourism and crime seems to be inextricably intertwined, specialists acknowledge that tourists avoid those destinations which do not provide the condition for safety and security (Fisher, 1993; Marshall, 1994; Shine, 1994). Security is over valorized as an asset or resource whereby the tourism industry grows. The idea of protection plays a pivotal role in the development of international tourist destinations (Pacyniak, 1993; Gatty, 1994). Following this, W. Palfrey (1988) showed that the rise of crimes depends on the development of cities, and under some conditions when tourism is adopted as primary industry. Tourists, from this viewpoint, are not victims of crimes, they promote the material asymmetries so that deviant behaviour surfaces.

Many tourists go to peripheral countries to make what is banned in their own delivering societies. Even if the encounter between hosts and guests is almost troublesome (Hiernaux, 2000; Krippendorf, 2003; Cofré, 2007), attachment to the law depends upon the physical and psychological distance perceived by agents abroad. While some tourists feel fear to go beyond the safety of their hotels, other breaks the rules defying the police and societal order (De Kadt, 1991; Ascanio, 2003; Santana, 1994; Korstanje, 2012). Quite aside from this, the social systems generate diverse prohibitions to local inhabitant's but paradoxically, encourage international tourist deviance such as drug abuse, or sex traffic consumption. At some extent, few studies have focused on the tourists as a criminal. Tourism creates a pervasive space where the culture of hosts and guest are formulated according to the weight of capital. Rich-related tourists impose their views on third world countries to the extent to introduce a change in cultural

values or even social disintegration (Hershatter, 1999; Ryan & Hall, 2000; Karseboom, 2003; Clift & Carter, 2003; Aramberri, 2005; Uriely & Belhassen, 2006).

Last but not least, E. Morin made a signification of car in West. This profound essay-review gives insight on the connection of mobility and self. Morin said that vehicles propose a level of comfort and masculinity to drivers that often may be addictive. The masculinity is determined the ability to drive fast creating a symbolic bridge that serves as protective bubble to driver. The deep desire to consume mobility does not depend on pathological behavior, but with masculinity.

This means that driver wants to keep the control over road. Rules and interaction with others occupy a secondary role in the driver mind. As a result, many drivers not only ignore their risky behavior but also feel attracted by them. Breaking the rules, although this represents a threat for self-safety is one of the most valued aspects of modernity.

Methodological discussion

The design of this research entails some conceptual clarifications. We have entered in the fields interviewing Peter, a frontline employee who processes the fines to renters in a most famous rent a car company. Peter said originally that argentines drives responsibly while foreigners commit many fines. With more than 24 locations all them situated along Argentina all, this rent a car estimates that in 2006 almost 11.533 argentines rented a car at least one time per year.

This cipher represents almost 56% of sales. Almost 8.848 foreign renters opted to rent a car in the same conditions. While the problem of nationality seems not to be easy to solve, simply because many tourists hold double citizenship, what is important to define is the area of residency. Therefore, we used the driver licensee origin as exclusive variable (country of driver licensee issuance). The driver attachment to cultural values is circumscribed by its identity. Presenting licensee for a country is away of validating its group of belonging. "Vehicle Plus rent a car makes daily a table of fines, which once received are charged on their renter credit card accounts. These fines not only can be classified by reason but by nationality. Thanks to this information we may establish specific pattern of driving in local and foreign renters.

To our surprise, table 3 shows that foreigners do more fines than local drivers. At a first glance, fines charged to local drivers are 172(43%) while international drivers hold 228 (57%). This suggests that Waldermann's account is not demonstrated here.

Table 3 – Fines by Residency

Residency	Fines	% Total
Strangers	228	57
Argentiniens	172	43

Source: Vehicle Plus, Buenos Aires. 2007 Self Elaboration.

If we examine this information dividing by country (table 4), American drivers had 72 fines (31.58%), followed by Brazilians 28 fines (12.28%), Spaniard (10.96%) and Mexicans 18 fines (representing 7.89%).

Table 4 – Fines by Driver license origin

Origin	Fines	% total
United States	72	31,58
Brazil	28	12,28
Spain	25	10,96
México	18	7,89
Italy	16	7,02
Chile	15	6,58
France	12	5,26
Germany	6	2,63
Colombia	4	1,75
Peru	4	1,75
Austria	3	1,32
Norway	3	1,32
Belgium	2	0,88
Canada	2	0,88
Finland	2	0,88
Holland	2	0,88
Switzerland	2	0,88
Sweden	2	0,88
Turkey	2	0,88
Bolivia	1	0,44
Slovakia	1	0,44
Guatemala	1	0,44
Japan	1	0,44
Korea	1	0,44
Portugal	1	0,44
Uruguay	1	0,44
Venezuela	1	0,44
Total	228	

Source: Vehicle Plus, Buenos Aires. 2007 Self Elaboration

Per the information discussed here, one might see how foreigner drivers committed 228 fines in 2007. Almost 66 records were due to parking fines, 40 by driving with low lights, and 27 were charged to renters in basis of red light violations.

Conclusions

The present exploratory investigation questioned the thesis of Waldmann that points out Argentinians are prone to anomie, which may be expressed in their lack of respect for rules. Our information suggests a contradictory outcome, foreign renters, because they are abroad, is prone to commit more fines than Argentinean-drivers.

Americans, Brazilians, Spaniards and Mexicans are radically the renter who more fines obtained in our experiment. Following Morin's view, what would remain to be seen whether is if car-size and not nationality is a key factor of fine commitment. The sentiment of omnipotence given by the size and model of cars would be a predictable variable in the study of road accidents. Our thesis is that psychical displacement proper of tourists presupposes a rule-attachment weakening, which reflected by obtained evidence. On this, much investigation should be continued.

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