How much does a life cost?

An analysis of the Swedish road safety assessments between 1950-1970

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Författare: David Benthe
Handledare: Per Lundin
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Introduction

When taking a look at old family videos, it is not uncommon for kids to be playing with cars and imitating their sound. In today's society, it would be unthinkable to imagine a life without cars, and from its invention, it has only grown in importance. The car is one of many means of transportations that has changed our lives and our society. Another example would be the train which radically revolutionized transport and trade. The car revolution was quite different from the train introduction to society as to what it meant and means to ride a car. It is universally accepted that the car means freedom; you can drive where you want, when you want! When researching the subject deeper, the answer to what the car means to the individual ranges from including a symbol of wealth, masculinity and class.¹

In the 1950s, Sweden had the highest number of cars per person in Europe.² After the Second World War, the Swedish demand for cars grew exponentially, and the acquisition of cars became almost uncontrollable. Stockholm City Planning Department estimated that 100 cars per 1 000 population would be reached in 1965, but this limit was reached ten years earlier, already in 1955.³ This problem became one of the most important issues both for society and in politics, political parties spent more and more time trying to find reasonable solutions accommodating the citizens’ increasing numbers of cars.⁴ This led inevitably to the question of car and traffic safety. The growing number of cars was inevitably going to be directly or indirectly linked to the growing number of accidents and even deaths.

¹ Tengström, Emin, 1991, Bilismen – i kris?: En bok om bilen, människan, samhället och miljön, Kristianstad (Kristianstad Boktryckeri AB) p. 55-82.
² Lundin, Per, 2008, Bilsamhället: Ideologi, expertis och regelskapande i efterkrigstidens Sverige, Stockholm (Stockholmia) p17
³ Ibid p. 21.
Throughout the years after the cars introduction in society, a debate with a wide range of questions has surrounded it. In Sweden, the first car was introduced in 1898 in Stockholm\textsuperscript{5}, and it is widely recognized that Sweden turned into a “car society” in the 1950’s.\textsuperscript{6} As previously stated, the growing number of cars undoubtedly led to a growing number of accidents. How to prevent this was a very important and relevant question for the political parties during the 1950’s as it is now. This progress was therefore carefully observed and analyzed by state officials.

\textit{Graph 1. Number of registered passenger cars in Sweden 1920-2012}

\textbf{Purpose and Questions}

Before the Swedish government issues legislations, it tends to appoint a committee of experts to examine the current situation to see what kind of laws need to be passed in order for solutions to have the best possible effect. Therefore the purpose of this essay is to investigate


\textsuperscript{6} See Lundin and Andreasson
what the Swedish Government Official Reports (SOU)\textsuperscript{7} say about car and traffic safety between the years when the increasing of cars was at its top, 1950-1970. Therefore the main question of this essay is as follows:

**How has the road safety view changed in the Swedish governmental reports between 1950 and 1970?\textsuperscript{8}**

Due to the impreciseness of this question, it must be followed up by more exact questions. What topics are focused on in each SOU? What is not focused on? How is the economization of lives treated by the group of experts? What are the different solutions to the everlasting traffic problems?

**Material**

In order to answer the questions given previously, a number of SOU will be examined. Since there are many of these, only a few randomly selected reports will be chosen. The following SOU were chosen randomly:

- SOU 1954:38 Traffic safety\textsuperscript{9}
- SOU 1957:18 Traffic safety\textsuperscript{10}
- SOU 1958:1 Road Plan for Sweden\textsuperscript{11}
- SOU 1969:56 Road Plan 1970 and its appendix 1969:57\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{7} Statliga Offentliga Utredningar (SOU)  
\textsuperscript{8} “Road safety view” in this sense means road, car and traffic safety.  
\textsuperscript{9} SOU 1954:38 Trafiksäkerhet  
\textsuperscript{10} SOU 1957:18 Trafiksäkerhet  
\textsuperscript{11} SOU 1958:1 Vägplan för Sverige  
\textsuperscript{12} SOU 1969:56 Vägplan 1970
Even though these reports were made with not that many years apart, different solutions were proposed. These reports include studies made by temporary researchers, the current situation with very detailed accounts on every aspect of the debate, and the proposed actions that the inquiry recommends.

The reason for SOU’s to be the primary source instead of for example newspaper articles are many. Firstly, the reports are reports, which make them more objective than the average newspaper article, written by a journalist who most likely has a political motive. Also, because this is a committee appointed by the government, they can suggest or recommend the government to take certain precautions. Secondly, these reports are very important to the governments. These are the documents that directly can influence policymakers. Thirdly, the reports are much more detailed than any article. There is simply much more to read about this matter in official state reports. Finally, the inquiries are led by a group of experts. This means a lot of things, including that the facts presented in the reports are much more reliable than that of journalists. This means that what the experts write about doesn’t necessarily have to reflect the general public attitude to the questions at hand. This does not pose a problem for the essay since it is what is said in the specific reports that are analyzed, not the public debate.

Secondary sources used in this essay consist mainly of literature. To understand the history of the car society in Sweden, *Bilsamhället* by Per Lundin and *Bilismens genombrottsår I Sverige* by Rune Andréasson et al. will be used. *Politik, mobilitet och miljö* by Gunnar Falkemark talks about the emergence of cars in a system which was not prepared for it. In *Bilismen – i kris*, diskuteras Emin Tengström the psychological impact that the car has on the individual. Ylwa Hasselbergs *Fara eller frihet?* will be used as source for technology’s advance in society through history.
Method

This essay will follow a simple disposition. Each of the reports will be analyzed separately where both what is discussed and not discussed is relevant. If for example one SOU includes the effects of the headlights and the other one doesn’t then that is relevant. Connections to today’s debate with the cars effects on global warming and pollution can be made as well, where the emissions of gas will be somewhat discussed during the twenty years that will be analyzed in this essay.

Many restrictions will have to be made in this essay since the debate about traffic safety is very wide. One of these is that the means of transportation in this essay when talking about traffic means only cars, not train etc. Other restrictions are already made by the

Prior research and Relevance

This topic is relatively new when comparing to other fields of research; the trains establishment in society happened 1750-1800, and the cars introduction in society at least in Sweden didn’t happen until the 1950s. “So it is a fairly young research tradition we are dealing with”¹³ as Hasselberg put it. With this being said, there is a lot of literature surrounding this topic. This is very logical due to the fact that Sweden had the highest percentage of cars in Europe which the state had to deal with, and as aforementioned, it became one of the most important questions in the political agenda.

The specific topic of how the traffic debate has changed in Sweden in a specific time in specific documents has not been researched. Of course, in various research projects this process has been followed, but with other greater developments in mind. This essay will strive

¹³ Hasselberg 10 when discussing large technical systems
to do what prior research has neglected to do, specifically analyze the debate through the
governmentally appointed reports.

Earlier this year the largest pile-up occurred in Sweden’s history.\textsuperscript{14} This topic, traffic
safety, is undoubtedly an important subject as it is still relevant to society today. Then, as
now, we have tried to find out ways in which we can continue to keep our way of life, and not
get hurt. Meaning, how we can use the car, without causing accidents. These type of questions
still aggravates politicians today, is it the driver himself, or are there other structural faults
with the road networks? This essay will show that during different times, different solutions
were proposed.

\textit{SOU 1954:38}

During the early years of the car society in Sweden, the country relied heavily upon reports
made in USA. USA was, as the authors of the SOU 1954:38 put it, Sweden was behind the
US with 30 years. Since it seemed that the US could accommodate the vastly growing number
of cars that could not compare to any other place in the world, it would only be logical to
follow in its footsteps. This is the reason for the countless numbers of statistics and reports
that are included in the report. Articles in the first part of the report are headlined with
something that has to do with the US. For instance, “[S]peed limit in USA”\textsuperscript{15} is later
compared with “[M]otor traffic speed in Sweden.”\textsuperscript{16} This is a trend that is evident throughout
the beginning of the report; USA is seen as an authority when it comes to planning a society
built for cars. The greater majority of the statements made in this report are backed up with
facts and statistics from USA. A very detailed account of the different speed limits is given in

\textsuperscript{14} Olyckan på Tranarpsbron, see for ex. \url{http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/en-omkom-i-jattekrock/}
\textsuperscript{15} SOU 54:38 s.68
\textsuperscript{16} SOU 54:38 s78
report; for example, driving in the dark, wherever it may be is 80 km/h.\textsuperscript{17} This is one of the features that characterizes the general debate that could be followed in other circles. Lundin writes in his dissertation that “during these decades, America represented the modern society more than ever before.” Technological historian Thomas P. Hughes notes that

"The second discovery of America" took place during the 1920s, but this time, it was not a discovery of a pastoral idyll, but a full-fledged technological landscape and the world's most productive land.\textsuperscript{18}

This quote accurately describes the mentality of Swedish many road and technical experts, who came back from voyages to the US and wrote articles with such headlines as “to learn about traffic in the US” or “what the US has to teach us about traffic”.\textsuperscript{19} This observation shows two things, one is simply that inspiration of transforming and safety according to the dimensions set in the US, and two, that a transformation was a necessity. Swedish roads and towns were not meant for the countless cars, and would therefore need to transform its society, whether its citizens liked it or not.

This report from 1954 includes a lengthy discussion regarding traffic safety where an interesting observation is made. With time, the number of cars increases, therefore the number of accidents also increases. However, the percentage of fatal accidents to total number of cars stays the same. Therefore, more and more drivers are getting ‘better’ at driving. As a result of this, external circumstances play a far greater role in the rise of accidents.

\textsuperscript{17} SOU 54:38 s. 69, see also the graph on p. 70
\textsuperscript{18} Lundin p29 Under dessa årtionden representerade Amerika det moderna samhället mer än någonsin tidigare. Teknikhistorikern Thomas P. Hughes uppmärksammar att "den andra upptäckten av Amerika" ägde rum under 1920-talet, men den här gången handlade det inte om upptäckten av en pastoral idyll utan av ett fullfjädrat teknologiskt landskap och världens mest produktiva land.
\textsuperscript{19} Lundin p 29 Att lära om trafik i USA eller Vad har USA att lära oss om trafikplanering?
### Table 1. The number of traffic accidents, fatal and injured people between 1946-53

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fatal Accident</th>
<th>Other severe injury</th>
<th>Slight Injury</th>
<th>Sum of Traffic Accidents</th>
<th>Procent killed in accidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>6546</td>
<td>8783</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>2141</td>
<td>7187</td>
<td>9855</td>
<td>0.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>6641</td>
<td>9114</td>
<td>0.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>6985</td>
<td>9495</td>
<td>0.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>2471</td>
<td>8112</td>
<td>11178</td>
<td>0.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>2681</td>
<td>8559</td>
<td>11948</td>
<td>0.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>2854</td>
<td>9992</td>
<td>13596</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>3414</td>
<td>11619</td>
<td>15956</td>
<td>0.11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SOU 1958:38

There is actually no graph or table in the text that shows an overall trend in fatal accidents. However, this is an easy task to find out, and therefore the last column in Table 1 has been added for the sake of simplicity. One can clearly deduce that after 1949 there is neither a positive nor a negative trend. The expert group reason that this is because there is a logical correlation between the increasing number of cars and improving driving skills. This seems to be a logical assumption, and it is reported as a positive development; however, there is nothing positive with fatal accidents still occurring. Thus the report then goes on to describing external factors as the main reason for accidents. The report analyzes 5 external factors which they deem the most important:

The Committee has (...) recognized the following circumstances, which in one respect or another had a role in the occurrence of accidents. A) road type, b) road conditions, c) obstruction, d) light and weather conditions and e) defects of the vehicle.\(^2\)

\(^2\) SOU 1954:38 p36, the table does not include external casualties such as pedestrians, cyclists etc.
Out of these five conditions, three seem to be more important than the others, road conditions, which in this case answers the question whether the Swedish roads are good enough, high speed, and light conditions, which means the absence of light. Numerous tests are made, such as the correlation between type of flaws in a car and the number of accidents. In the later sections of the report called “recommendation of action”, a lot of focus is given to these three categories.

Before H-day, Sweden did not have real rules regarding speed. Sweden had in fact no speed limits on country roads since 1930 and in 1936 this law had also been applied to urban areas. Therefore, the committee saw it suitable to regulate speed in order to decrease accidents. A necessary regulation would be 45 km/h in urban areas and 80 km/h in the countryside. These regulations were made in other countries as well such as the US, UK and France.

The Swedish roads were definitely not good enough for the increasing number of cars. Sections are headlined with “[a]re our roads built for high speed limits?” and the simple answer to that was no. Different situations were analyzed such as the road type’s effect on braking distance. However, this section is included in another section, specifically speed limits. This shows the importance of this category, and how information was used. These reports purpose was to try to sway the minds of those in power, to influence the decision-making in Sweden. Speed limits are a very important topic in 1954.

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23 Right-hand traffic diversion 1967
24 Lundin 160, “Fri hastighet hade nämligen införts 1930 på Sveriges landsvägar och även 1936 även inom tätbebyggt område.”
25 SOU 1958:38 p280
26 SOU 1958:38 p90
27 SOU 1958:38 p90
Another topic that is very important in the report of 1954 is the use of automotive lighting. Reading about this issue with today’s standards makes the text seem very basic. This section is concluded with that it is imperative that the cars will be equipped with lights and reflectors. As seen with the other topics, a need to educate motorists is not discussed, but external factors are more important.

SOU 1957:18

This report is actually an extension of the previous report. However, as we will see, it gives different solutions than its predecessor. It does have traffic safety as its focus which is why it is chosen in this essay.

This report is much more focused on the driver and his flaws. The human factor is not analyzed in a psychological study, it tries to find out whether one specific group of people is responsible for accidents, and whether it would the authorities could trace them. This is of course a very difficult question which the committee is very aware of. Therefore all of the statements of this section are very reserved. The committee reason that there are people who are more accident-prone than others. Once again, statistics was used from the US.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of offences</th>
<th>Number of drivers</th>
<th>Sum of all offences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28 SOU 1958:38 p235
29 Lundin 163
This table shows that there are in fact a few drivers who are more prone to cause accidents than others. The committee calculates that “12% are responsible for 278, or 80%, of the offences.”\(^{31}\) This inevitably leads to testing whether a specific age group is more responsible than others.

Even though the number of deaths between the earlier years and midlife is not there to support the thesis, there is certainly a connection between being young and causing more accidents. The report concludes this section with a minor psychological analysis of the youth:

> With increasing age, the impulsiveness diminishes. One starts to think first and acting second. The selfishness reduces with time and interested is directed towards the worlds actions. One starts perceiving the necessity in ones relationships with others that

\(^{30}\) SOU 1957:18 p41
\(^{31}\) SOU 1957:18 p41
\(^{32}\) SOU 1957:18 p52
understanding and consideration are central for the adaption of the changing requirement of the world.33

These are examples of the types of discussions taking place in the 1957 report. The report focuses more on the human factor, as in impulsive driving and not reacting quick enough, as the most important aspect when considering traffic accident causes. The committee therefore recommended raising the driver’s license age to 1834 and alcoholics and people with a criminal record not allowed a permit. How one lives one’s life reflects on his driving.35

SOU 1958:1

This report was written not only for the traffic safety reasons, but as a general paper on how traffic in general could improve, for instance improving road types. Therefore, parts of the text will be ignored since it is not relevant to the essay, such as the geometric standard of the road. It is also a very different text compared to the others as an economization of traffic safety is discussed, as in how much an accident costs, and difficult topics as in how much can be spent to avoid traffic safety.

Sweden is still at this point the leading country in Europe when it comes to advances made in the name of car society.36 The number of cars has of course grown even more. A statement that has continued to be one of the most copied in all of the reports so far is that the roads in Sweden are not good enough. This is the main topic of the report, how can the roads

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34 SOU 1957:18 p66
35 SOU 1957:18 p390
36 SOU 1958:1 p57
be improved in order to accommodate the needs of the citizens, and also to a certain degree decrease the number of accidents.

This study takes both the physical and psychological aspects into account. This also makes them aware that studying through different perspectives or what kind of measures needed to be taken, might not be the most economical way of finding a solution. This is in my opinion a controversial subject as one would think that the keeping people from dying on the roads would be priority. However, what the committee means in this is how to distribute the money in different types of solutions, but also allowing higher speed limits for transport and trade to increase profit. This is suggested because of the lengthy discussions about the road networks in Sweden, where the primary purpose would be to “connect the more important consumption and producing entities in Sweden,” and the opinion of the maritime administration was included which would include roads to ports hence improving trade. It is evident that economical purposes are very important.

The main argument in this report is that in previous SOUs, the relationship between road standards and accidents. The road types and conditions, as the road itself and not ex. darkness, have barely been studied in previous reports. As in the previous reports, the roads in Sweden are simply good enough. “Basically you could say that it is only the post-war, and particularly the 1950s, new and reconstructed roads and streets that function for current traffic satisfactorily.” If one were to see the traffic accidents as a cause of the roads, then this generalization definitely is appealing.

Graph 3. Road types effect on number of accidents 1957.

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37 SOU 1958:1 p126
38 SOU 1958:1 p92
This graph is an example of the inquiries made in the study, as it shows one of many examinations between the road and the number of accidents. The thought that solving road problems leads to decreasing accidents is superior to any other explanation. The committee says that “roads with motorway standard have significantly lower accident rates than other types of road, which is a result of different collision risks are reduced or even eliminated.”

The standard of the roads is of course a very important factor contributing to traffic accidents, though not in the level that the study suggests. The study suggests that even though many very different studies on the topic, road standards are superior compared to for example driving education. It is also proven, according to the study, that improved roads are the quickest way to decreasing traffic accidents. Falkmark suggests that this is due to the contemporary debate in Sweden, which was led by different motor organizations which didn’t

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40 SOU 1958:1 p96
41 SOU 1958:1 p95, ”vägar med motorvägstandard ha väsentligt lägre olycksfrekvens än övriga vägtyper, vilket är en följd av att på motorvägen äro olika kollisionsrisker minskade eller eliminerade”
42 SOU 1958:1 p98
43 SOU 1958:1 p98
want the driving freedoms, such as speed limits, to be violated.\textsuperscript{44} With the ameliorating standard of the roads, a decrease of traffic accidents with close to 50\% is to be expected.\textsuperscript{45} Therefore the committee recommends, among many other things, a middle partition strip in order to prevent collisions.\textsuperscript{46} This means a return to the first SOU studied in this essay, that the external elements are a greater cause to accidents rather than the human factor.

\textsuperscript{44} Falkman, Gunnar, 2006, Politik, Mobilitet och Miljö: Om den historiska framväxten av ett ohållbart transportsystem, Riga (Preses Nams) p. 297.
\textsuperscript{45} SU 1958:1 p99
\textsuperscript{46} SOU 1958:1 p99
This report is saturated with economical calculations, trying to define what is the most profitable. The task of the investigation was from an economic perspective to appropriately allocate resources within certain spending limits for the operation of constructing roads until 1985.\footnote{SOU 1969:56 p9} Just like in previous years, the amount of cars has risen, and just like last time, the exponential rise was unexpected.\footnote{SOU 1969:56 p19} Every type of traffic branch would finance itself, which would be a relief for taxpayers. However, how much money would be put into each branch initially is an assessment of profitability in terms of money as well as traffic safety. In order for a calculation to take place, the study takes an individual’s consumption into account.

As in the previous governmental report, the economics of the roads were almost more important than traffic safety. I am not stating that the roads were made without thinking of traffic safety; however, the topic of trade and transport were more vital. Of course, the whole point of a road network is for transport, which is why it was logical to think in those terms. The study clearly stated that the “delegation meant that the nationwide road network would include “the most important roads for business and the population that are connective.””\footnote{SOU 1969:56 p23, Delegationen avsåg att riksvägnätet skulle omfatta ”de för näringslivet och befolkningen viktigaste vägarna samt de genomgående och sammanbindande lederna.”}

The committee realizes that the profitability calculations are already made every single time a “road plan” is made.\footnote{SOU 1969:56 p99} For example, what is more gainful, investing in connectivity where profit can be made, or traffic accidents, which would lead to having to pay a smaller amount for accidents since they would occur less? However, it is harder to calculate in such terms due to the uncertainty of what actually is the cause for accidents, which is obviously shown in this paper and by the committees.
The evaluation of the cost of an accident is of course a question of how much society is prepared to pay for the accidents. It is also a question that is filled with ethical consequences. At first glance it is taken for granted that society will pay for accidents because it is the human thing to do. However, planning and executing ideas for societies is very expensive and 100% of taxes cannot fund the prevention of traffic accident, and therefore these types of calculations are made. It is always a sensitive subject trying to determine a human life’s worth. The commission is well aware of that, and discusses extensively the implication of the loss to a society. It is determined that a fatality in traffic is estimated to be 750 000 kr, which is the sum of the loss in production and medical care.\footnote{SOU 1969 Bilagor p 301 all costs in 1968s monetary value.} An accident costs approximately 9 000 kr.\footnote{SOU 1969 Bilagor p 301, all costs in 1968s monetary value.} These are interesting calculation simply because a human life is worth much more, yet these are the sums that would have to be reached in order for society to continue.

The cost of a casualty in traffic can simply be put as the equal to the discounted value of the loss of production during the otherwise probable remaining life.\footnote{SOU 1969:56 p104} This of course is a very ambiguous definition which makes the maximum and minimums range considerably. There are also other issues that should be taken into account such as hospital bills etc.

In the appendix to this SOU, accident related topics are discussed in more detail than in the actual report. It is also shown that traffic security is one of four components when looking at building new roads.
Diagram 1. Things to take into account when planning to build a road.

This image basically shows in what ways the committee thought, and how to take action. Of course, there are even more things to take into account than the four where traffic accidents occur. These are listed in the report as well and include things such as political requirements, effects on societies and access to working forces.\(^{55}\)

The topic of environmental consequences is touched in this report. The report recommends that at every new community (that was planned to be built), careful planning had to be done in order for least amount of polluting.\(^{56}\) However, in this section, environment in

\(^{54}\) SOU 1969 Bilagor p18
\(^{55}\) SOU 1969 Bilagor p81-82
\(^{56}\) SOU 1969:56 p140
the sense of nature etc., is second to traffic environment, meaning that best possible driving is experienced.

**Comparison**

These governmental reports are very different in the nature of what they bring up as the most important factor contributing to the increasing number of traffic accidents. The reports that are studied in this essay were written when the number of cars were increasing like never before which is why different strategies are not uncommon.

There are basically three large themes that divide these reports: the human factor, external influences and the economical aspect. When looking at the first three governmental reports, there seems to be a trend of what the reason behind the accidents is. At first, the external factors are in focus, conditions such as the road, weather, darkness and car malfunctions are discussed extensively. The first report analyzed in this essay writes extensively about external factors such as road conditions and defects of the vehicle. This is similar to the report made in 1958, where the road standards are crucial in improving traffic. In between these two a report was made where the human factor was in focus. One theory as to why the focus keeps going back and forth is appeasement of different groups that had influence over the car society. For example, motorist groups would not want speed limits hence the focus on the individual and his faults. The responses could also have unfolded in the way that they did simply because when report came out, the recommended arrangements were made and did not really solve the problem. There are many underlying causes for the motivations.

The economical aspect of the traffic accidents are mainly studied in the report made in 1969. Of course, there are calculations of the same sort in the other reports yet not in the same
manner. Its main purpose is to calculate how much of the funding made by the state should be placed in different sections, which is mainly the reason of this reports’ difference compared to the other texts.

Something that all of these reports share is statistics, facts and tests from USA. As previously written, the US was the leading country when it came to the car society. Therefore it is no wonder that the texts contain facts from the US in order to back up their statements.

Todays most heated debate regarding traffic is the emission of greenhouse gases, the safety of the environment is now the most important issue. This was not at all the case in the 1950s; however, in the last report studied in this essay, the consequences to the environment are studied. This is very interesting simply because these observations were made half a century ago.

Conclusion

This essay has focused on one specific country, in a certain amount of time. The beginning of the 1950s started out with the focus of the governmental report being external factors. Due to the increasing number of cars, and number of fatal deaths being constant, it was deduced that man had improved his driving skills and therefore the external factors were at fault. A reaction to this was written only a few years later, with different groups interests in mind, writing that the human factor was always present, making the individual at fault. Yet another reaction was published, and outside forces were the main cause of accidents. The last report of the essay deals with the economics of traffic, questions like how much an accidents costs.

The nature of the traffic safetyview has certainly changed over the years studied in this essay. Due to the vastness of the topic, it is not unusual for the discussion to do so, even
among experts. The threat that the evolving and ever-changing technology has on society causes the traffic safety debate to change in the same way. The amount of cars has and most likely will grow for very many years to come. Thus, the question of how to make society a safer place will always be in different countries political agenda however they chose to rank it. Cars have grown to a necessity in life, for transport, and for business.
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