Comparison Of Travel Behaviour In 11 European Countries By Use Of Post- Harmonized European National Travel Surveys

Travel behaviour comparison among countries has become interesting to understand structural differences in travel behaviour between countries which are important to help developing more sustainable transport policies. To that end, National Travel Surveys (NTS’s) are the most suitable tool. The aim of this paper is to compare travel behaviour among 11 European countries using NTS’s. A post-harmonization process is developed to overcome methodological differences between the surveys and to isolate the differences in travel behaviour. Travel behaviour is measured as mileage, time use, and trips per trip-maker by mode and differences between countries as a function of travel distance, purpose, license holding, and family type are presented.

The results demonstrate that the number of trips per responding trip-maker on an average day are very similar over the countries whereas mileage differs most, from 33 km for Spain to 54 km for Sweden and 52 km for Finland. If only trips shorter than 100 km are included the variation is on par with the variation for time use. The minimum mileage is still made by Spaniards with around 23 km whereas the maximum mileage is made by Belgians with 37 km and by Danes with 35 km per trip-maker. We analyse how the mileage is related to the population density and income of the country and it is discuss how other structural differences influence the results. The comparison also highlights cultural differences, such as a high share of commuting in the Netherlands and Belgium, of weekend leisure for Finland, and of weekend shopping for Great Britain. The modal share is especially differing from the rest for the Netherlands with a high share of bike trips, and for Switzerland with a high share of public transport. Further research is recommended to uncover influence of structural differences in urban structure, density, income, shopping centre structure, and business structure on travel behaviour. The mileage at the international travel is a special challenge which should be investigated further.

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Contributors: Christensen, L., Hubert, J., Järvi, T., Kagerbauer, M., Sobrino Vázquez, N., Weiß, C.
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