

A Systematic Categorization of Arguments against the Vision Zero Goal: A Literature Review

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Abstract : The Vision Zero is a long-term goal of preventing all road traffic fatalities and serious injuries which was first adopted in Sweden in 1997. It is based on the assumption that death and serious injury in the road system is morally unacceptable. In order to approach this end, vision zero has put in place strategies that are radically different from the traditional safety work. The vision zero, for instance, promoted the adoption of the best available technology to promote safety, and placed the ultimate responsibility for traffic safety on system designers. Despite Vision Zero's moral appeal and its expansion to different safety areas and also parts of the world, important philosophical concerns related to the adoption and implementation of the vision zero remain to be addressed. Moreover, the vision zero goal has been criticized on different grounds. The aim of this paper is to identify and systematically categorize criticisms that have been put forward against vision zero. The findings of the paper are solely based on a critical analysis of secondary sources and snowball method is employed to identify the relevant philosophical and empirical literatures. Two general categories of criticisms on the vision zero goal are identified. The first category consists of criticisms that target the setting of vision zero as a 'goal' and some of the basic assumptions upon which the goal is based. Among others, the goal of achieving zero fatalities and serious injuries, together with vision zero's lexicographical prioritization of safety has been criticized as unrealistic. The second category consists of criticisms that target the strategies put in place to achieve the goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries. For instance, Vision zero's responsibility ascription for road safety and its rejection of cost-benefit analysis in the formulation and adoption of safety measures has both been criticized as counterproductive. In this category also falls the criticism that Vision Zero safety measures tend to be too paternalistic. Significant improvements have been recorded in road safety work since the adoption of vision zero, however, for the vision zero to even succeed more, it is important that issues and criticisms of philosophical nature associated with it are identified and critically dealt with.

Keywords : criticisms, systems approach, traffic safety, vision zero

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