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## **FASTER TO VISION ZERO VIA SANTAYANA: THE RECESSIONARY EVIDENCE**

Gullon, AI\*

**A**utomobiles+**C**oncepts+**E**nvironment**S** (ACEs), CANADA

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### ABSTRACT

Those who do not remember (ed: learn from?) the past are condemned to repeat it. [George Santayana](#)

As the US-triggered global recession became ever deeper, we have seen safety officials in many countries announcing, nearly a full year before the data normally becomes publicly available, large decreases in traffic fatalities while crediting their continuing safety efforts with this welcome development. The author's first three papers, of eight (three with FISITA), using epidemiological data from 17 countries representing every inhabited continent, have shown that the annual deviations of the fatality rate from the trendline correspond strongly with the ups and downs of the 'business cycle'. When the half-century trendlines for the fatality rate (per VKmT) of the US, Great Britain and Canada are plotted together it can be seen that the fatality rate drop in the four preceding recessions is roughly proportional to the drop in GDP for all three countries. And the current recession follows that pattern well.

Psychologically this correlation is very credibly explained by 8 traffic police officers (seven countries, two continents) who all identified the fundamental cause of traffic crashes, alcohol aside, as mental distraction (now called AMPS - Absent Minded Professor Syndrome).

That tri-country graph also reveals that the large decrease from 1970 to the late '80's (and the 'flat-lining' thereafter) in all three countries, as well as the inter-country differences, is (with important help from increases in traffic density) completely explained by the history of passive safety, particularly seat belt installation and usage, in the three countries. This suggests strongly that the conventional 'active safety' programs, e.g. general speed limits applied to entire road networks, have been almost entirely ineffective. Public officials are then provided a route map to Vision Zero by heeding Santayana's dictum and using ITS (e.g. VMS with strobe lights) to counteract AMPS in dangerous traffic situations. Examples are provided for such collision 'black spots' as motorway junctions and suburban intersections.