



Survey on Behavior, Opinions and Attitudes towards Traffic (2009-2010)

Comparative Document Pre- and Post- Public Service Campaign "*Use a child seat. Travels safely. Gets there safely*"

Study conducted by Factum Consultancy Company exclusively for the Child Road Safety EDU-CAR Plan

Gonzalo Rodríguez Memorial Foundation

Child Road Safety Plan EDU-CAR

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I. Introduction

Road accidents represent a serious public health issue worldwide, they are among main causes of death and injuries. If urgent measures are not taken, they may represent the third cause of death by the year 2020.

Given children's physical proportions (weight, height, muscle maturity, reflex development) completely different from adults', children represent an especially vulnerable group in traffic, whichever their role: pedestrians, passengers in cars, vans, school buses, bikers.

Taking this into account, for the case of cars and vans, the seat belt, which has saved so many lives, does not represent the ideal safety device to protect children. The 3-point seat belt is, in fact, effective for passengers over 1.50m. Children get to this height when they are 8–11 years old. For children to travel safely on cars and vans, it is fundamental that they do so in what is technically called a Child Restraint System (CRS), known as "Child Seats". When installed correctly on the rear seats and complying with recognized technical standards, officially approved and suitable for the child's size, CRSs considerably reduce the risk of death and injury in the event of a traffic accident.

In Uruguay, however, the great majority of children aged 0 – 14 years old traveling in cars or vans do so without using a CRS. Furthermore, scientific research has shown that in Montevideo, most of them travel without any kind of passive safety device, that is to say, completely unrestrained. Together with this behavior, most adults transporting children in their cars and vans consider children are traveling safely and that they do not necessarily need a CRS to be protected. These adults think in fact, that children only need to travel in the back seats to be safe.

In the following pages the reader will be presented findings by the public opinion studies carried out by Factum (Consultancy Company) exclusively for Gonzalo Rodriguez Memorial Foundation's **Child Road Safety EDU-CAR Plan**, aiming at getting to know behaviors, opinions and attitudes of Uruguayan people regarding traffic and the way they consider children aged 0–14 years old should travel in private cars, vans and motorcycles. These studies consider two home telephone surveys nationwide (including rural villages) in two stages: 1) first stage in March 2009 and 2) a second stage, carried out in the second semester of 2010. These stages respectively coincide with pre- and post- stages of public service campaign ***"Use a Child Seat. Travels safely, gets there safely"***, carried out by EDU-CAR nationwide in the first semester in 2010 in order to raise awareness on Child Road Safety.

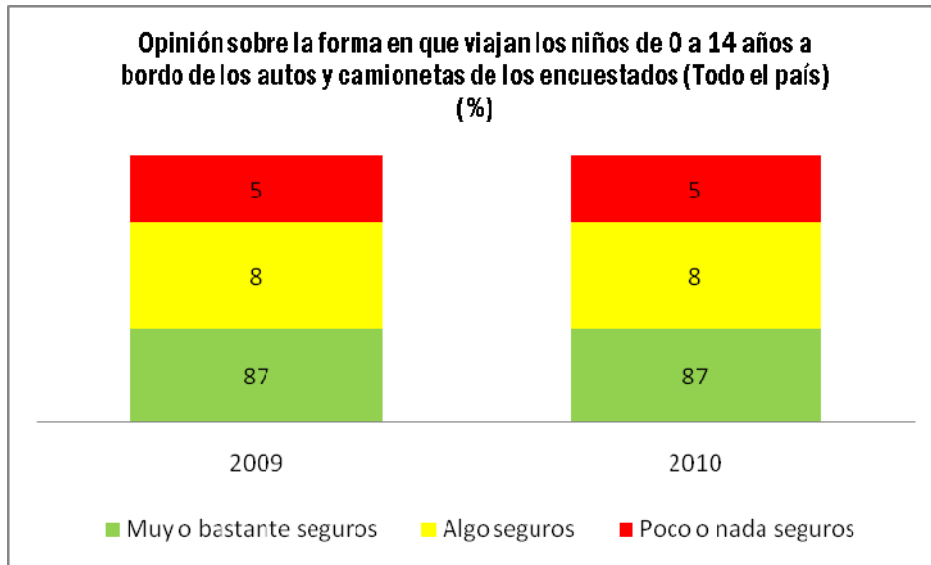
Gonzalo Rodriguez Memorial Foundation is a non-governmental, non-profit organization, with legal status since October 2000, created in memory of the Uruguayan car racer Gonzalo “Gonchi” Rodriguez (1971-1999). With the motto “More education, health, and development”, GRMF has developed different educational programs to favor more than 15,000 Uruguayan children and teenagers. It is within this context that EDU-CAR Plan is created, with the objective of getting to know Road Safety situation in Uruguay and proposing a sustainable model of systematic change, to be later extended to the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean. EDU-CAR is founded by FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society, and the Global Fund for Road Safety from the World Bank. It also technically supported by *BioEchoes, Inc., Task Force for Global Health – Global Road Safety Forum* and *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*.

EDU-CAR is a three-year plan (2007-2010) focused on the promotion of actions and public policies regarding child road safety. For this promotion it considers all the elements linked to the child’s safety and well-being between 0-14 years of age in their role as motor vehicle passengers. Through this plan, GRMF started a project aiming at promoting road safety for the most valuable asset of a nation: its children.

II. Some misconceptions to be dispelled: the idea of “safe child on board”

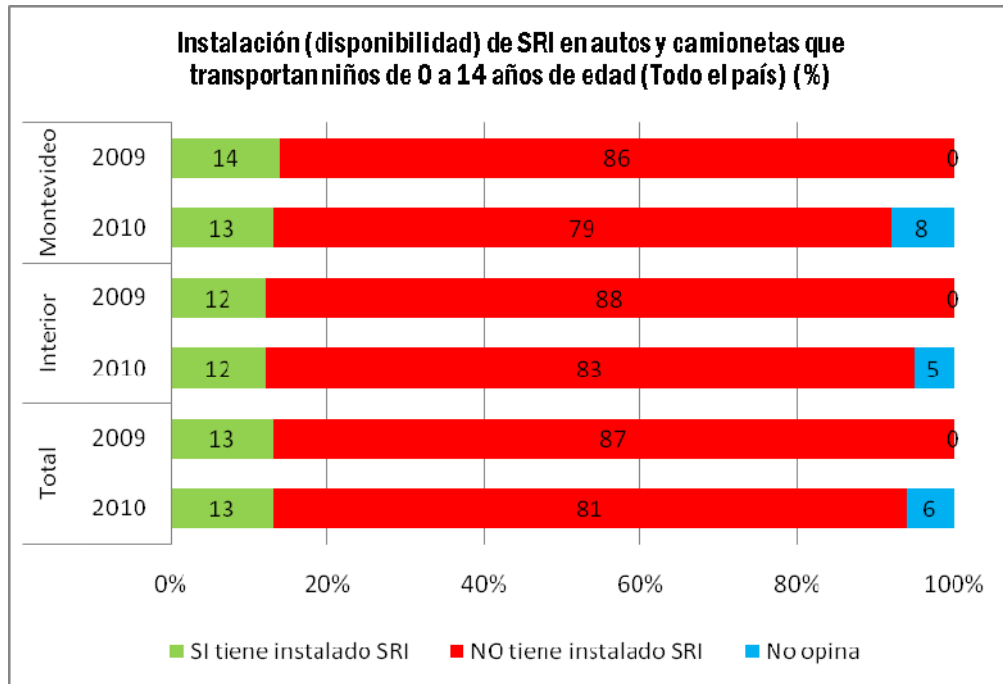
In a country where more than 500 people die annually as a consequence of road accidents, most of them young people under 35 years of age, most Uruguayan drivers frequently transporting children aged 0 – 14 years old, consider their children travel safely or rather safely in their vehicles. As shown in [Figure 1](#), 87% of people support this idea, both in 2009 and 2010 studies.

Figure 1



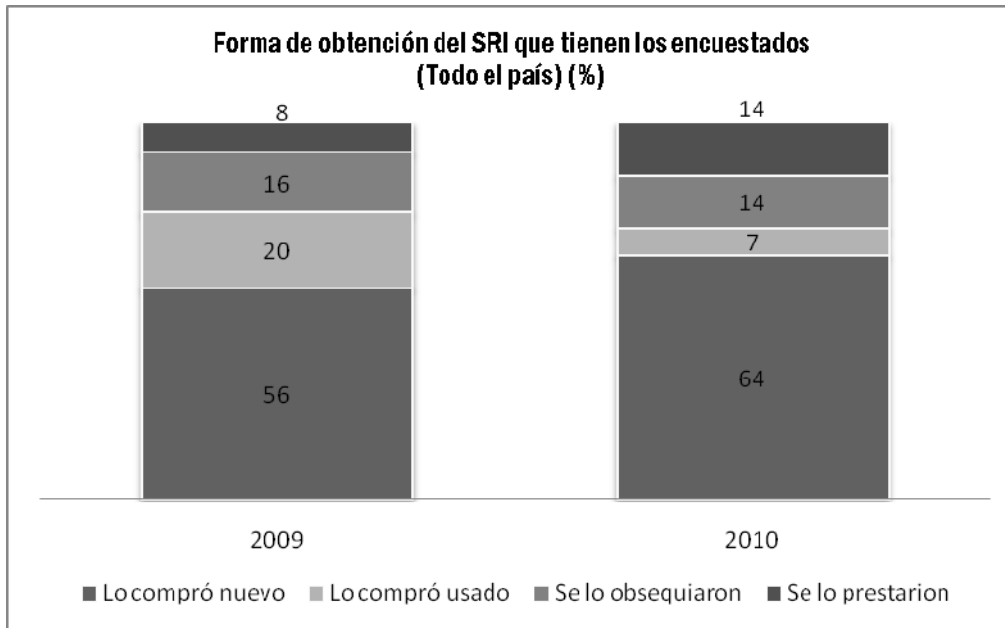
On the other hand, however, there is a small and constant number of car and van drivers that transport their children restrained in Child Restraint Systems. As shown in Figure 2, in the period 2009 - 2010, only 13% of people surveyed nationwide stated they had a CRS for children aged 0-14 years old. Although figures show a decrease in the non-availability of CRS from 87% to 81%, the post campaign study shows a 6% of no answer. At the same time none of the surveys showed significant differences between Montevideo and the Provinces.

Figure 2



On the other hand, although there was no verification of an increase in the availability of CRSs among people surveyed, after the post campaign study "Use a Child Seat", there was an increase in the number of new child seats used by drivers. Figure 3 shows that the percentage of people surveyed stating they had bought a new CRS, went from 56% in 2009 to 64% in 2010. At the same time, the number of people that stated they had bought a second-hand child seat decreased from 20% to 7%, CRS borrowed went from 8% to 14%.

Figure 3



Going back to the idea of “safe child on board”, Figure 4a shows that when people interviewed are asked about the safest way for children aged 0-14 years old to travel, the most frequent answer repeats the perception that children only need to travel in the back seat in order to be safe: In contrast, in 2010 only 8% point out that the safest way for children to travel safely is restrained in a CRS. In 2009, the percentage of people surveyed making reference to child seats was 10%, and they were divided between those that thought the children travel safely when doing so in a CRS in the back seat of the vehicle (2%), and those that only mentioned the device, without stating its position in the vehicle (Figure 4b).

Figure 4a

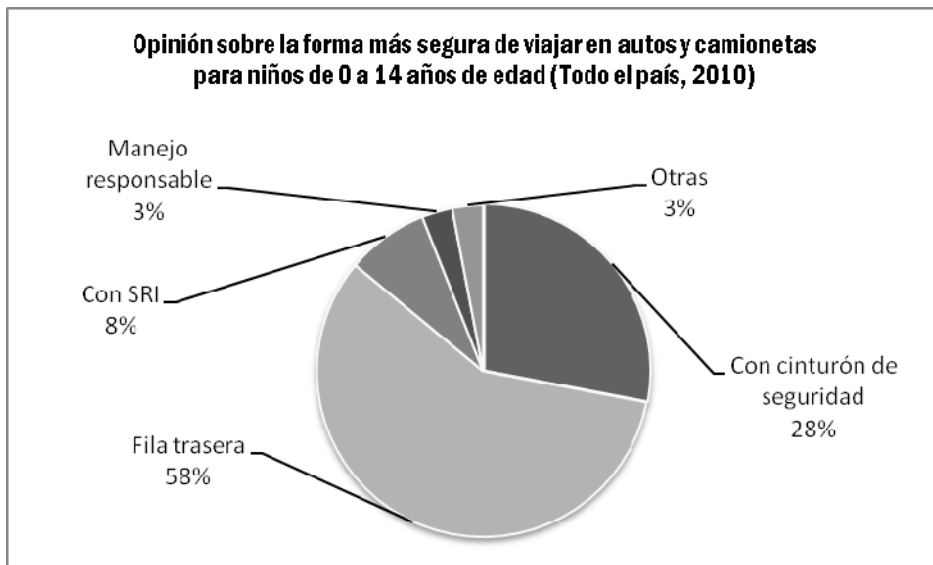
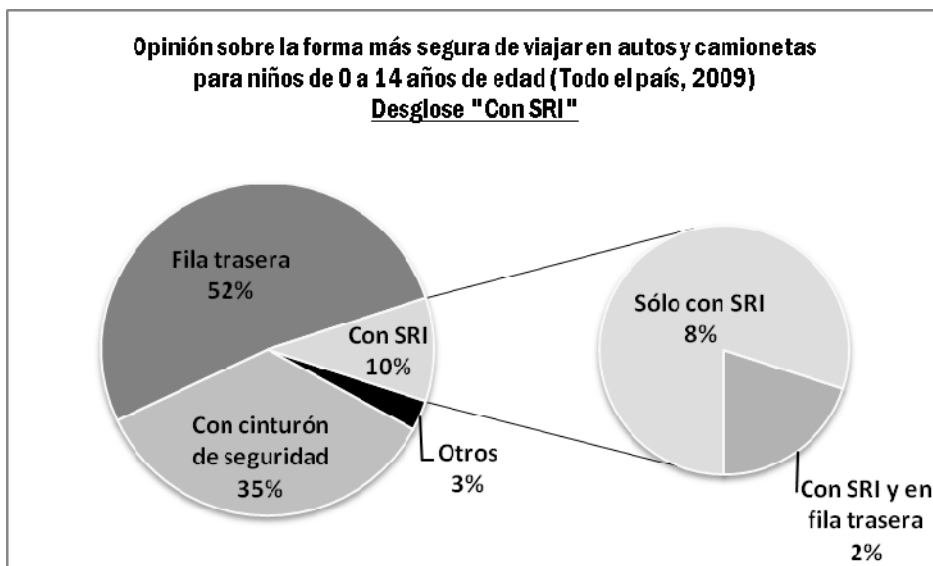


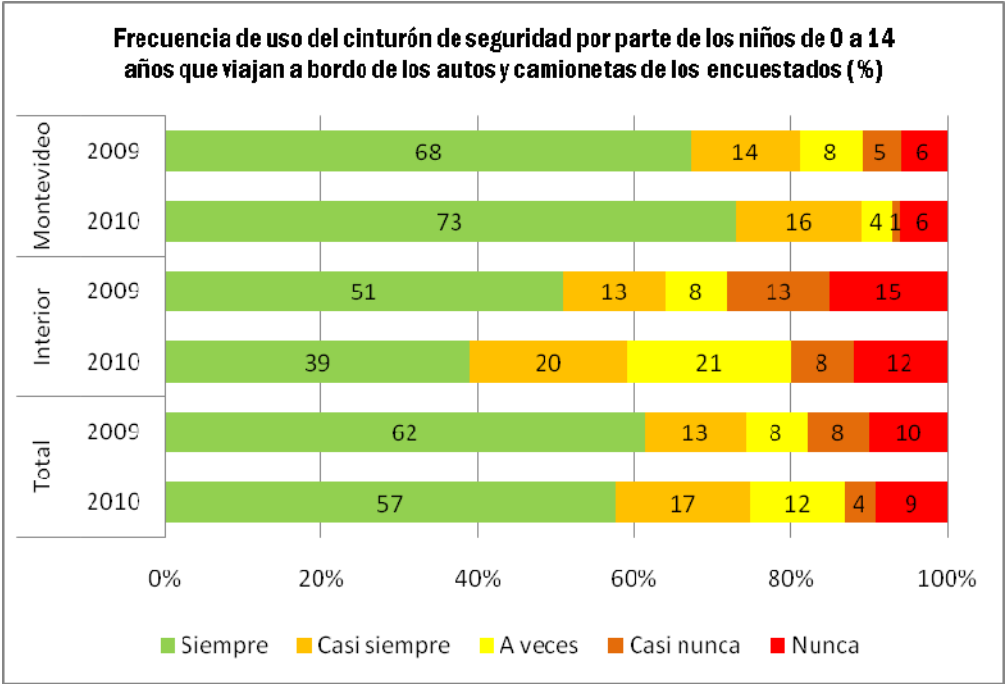
Figure 4b



Going back to Table 4a, in 2010 28% of those interviewed stated that the seat belt was the safest way to transport children. However, when they were asked how often child passengers wear said device, the “always” category reached 57% (Figure 5). Said figure shows a 5-percentage-point drop in relation to the study before the "Use a Child Seat" campaign: In 2009, 62% of people interviewed answered their children were always

traveling wearing a seat belt. This decrease nationwide shows differences depending on the area of residence: while in Montevideo the “always” category increased from 68% in 2009 to 73% in 2010, in the Provinces there was a drop from 51% in 2009 to 39% in 2010.

Figure 5

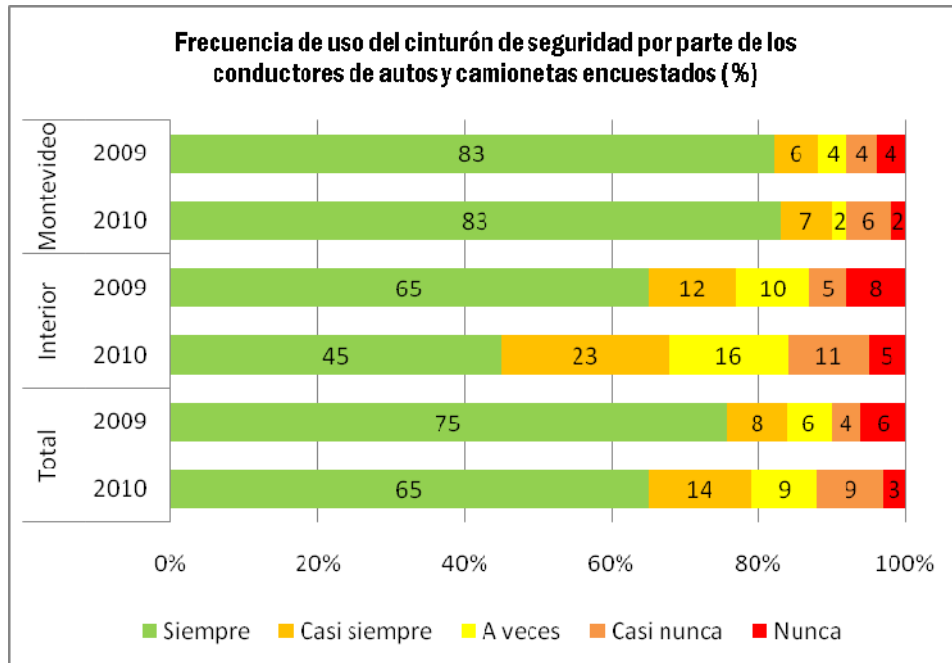


III. Focusing on adults: Behaviors and opinions of drivers of cars, vans and motorbikes

III.i. Adults and the use of seat belts

Regarding car and van drivers, as in the case of children, there is also a significant decrease in the use of seat belts: The number of people interviewed stating they always use these passive safety elements decreased from 75% (2009) to 65% (2010). Once again, this reduction at national level shows important differences between the nation’s capital and the rest of the country: while in Montevideo the percentage of drivers stating they always wear a seat belt stays in 83%, it decreases 20 points in the Provinces, going from 65% in 2009 to 45% in 2010 (Figure 6).

Figure 6



III.ii. Adults and the use of helmets

Regarding the use of helmets by motorbike riders, Figure 7 shows that the great majority of people surveyed stated they had a helmet: From the 95% recorded in 2009, there is an increase to 97% in 2010. However, having a helmet does not imply its use by drivers. In this sense, there is a five-point decrease in the number of people interviewed nationwide stating they always wear a helmet, from 75% to 70% (Figure 8).

Figure 7

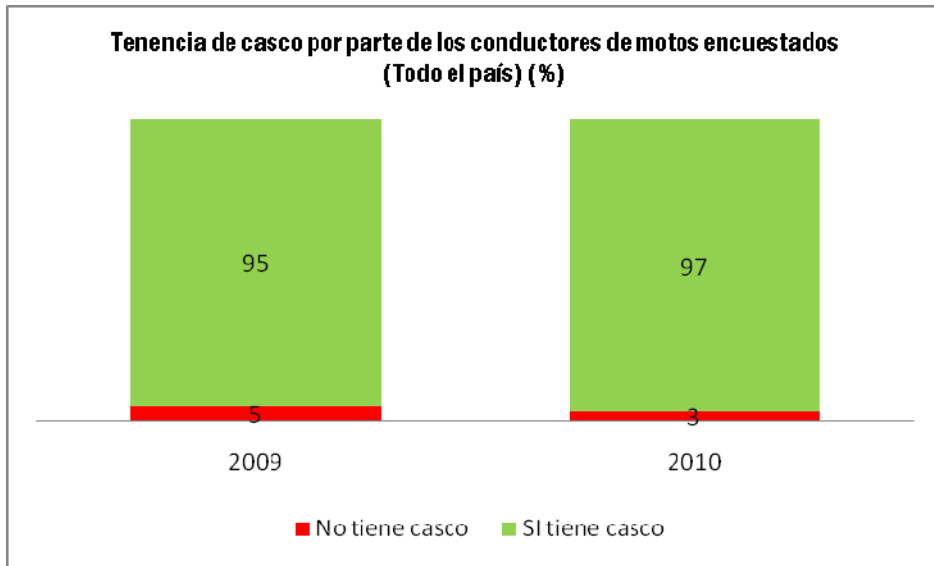
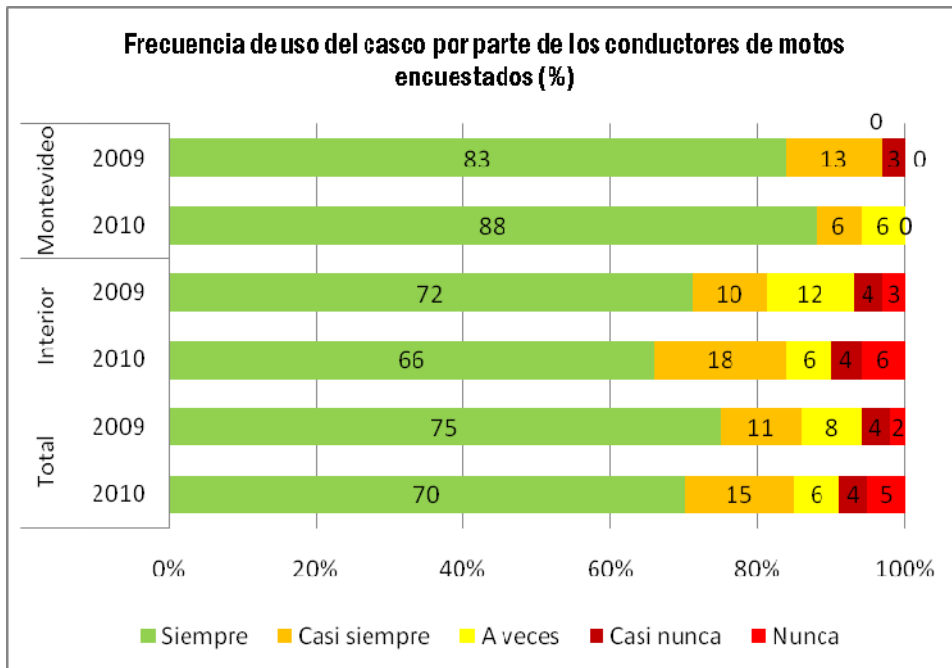


Figure 8



Once again there is a significant difference between Montevideo and the Provinces: While 88% of motorbike riders state they always wear a helmet in 2010 (5 percentage points

more than in 2009), the frequency in the provinces for “always” wearing a helmet is, in 2010, 66% (a 6-point drop when compared to 2009).

III.iii. Adults and their opinion on Provincial Traffic officials

In the same way there are differences in the use of passive safety elements between Montevideo and the Provinces, the same happens when it comes to opinion on Traffic officials, these opinions are also different depending on the area of residence. As shown in Figure 9 and in Table 1, there is an increase nationwide of the criticism to provincial traffic officials: the percentage of people interviewed with a “very good” or “good” opinion falls from 49% (in 2009) to 44% (in 2010), while at the same time those with a “very bad” or “bad” opinion rise from 26% (in 2009) to 34% (in 2010).

Figure 9

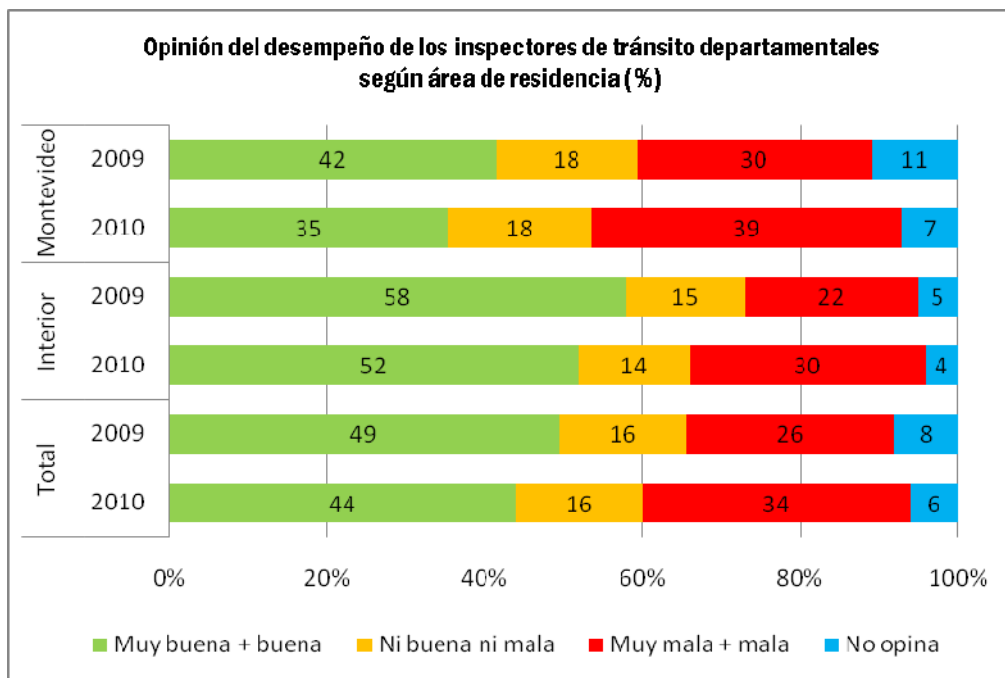


Table 1

Breakdown of Opinion on Provincial Traffic Officers according to area of residence (%)

	Montevideo		Interior		Total	
	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010
Muy buena	5	1	9	10	7	6
Buena	37	34	49	42	42	38
Muy buena + buena	42	35 ↓	58	52 ↓	49	44 ↓
Ni buena ni mala	18	18	15	14	16	16
Mala	21	22	17	23	19	22
Muy mala	9	17	5	7	7	12
Muy mala + mala	30	39 ↑	22	30 ↑	26	34 ↑
No opina	11	7	5	4	8	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Data show that Traffic Officials' image is much worse in Montevideo, 39% of those interviewed in 2010 rated their performance as "very bad" or "bad" (9 percentage points worse than in 2009), and only 35% considered their performance "very good" or "good" (7 percentage points worse when compared to 2009).

Meanwhile in the Provinces, although there has been a 6-percentage-point drop in the positive image of traffic officers between 2009 and 2010, and an increase of 8 percentage points in the most negative image, figures are still mainly positive: 52% of people interviewed think traffic officials' performance is "very good" or "good", against 30% that consider it "very bad" or "bad".

IV. Conclusions

- Data from 2010 study ratify what was stated by the previous year study, adult drivers transporting children in their vehicles believe they do so safely even when the great majority do not use appropriate Child Restraint Systems for their weight and height.
- Although 87% of car and van drivers consider children aged 0-14 years old that travel in their vehicles do so safely or rather safely, only 13% (figure that has not changed since 2009) stated having installed a CRS.
- No differences have been recorded between Montevideo and the Provinces regarding CRS availability.
- The idea that traveling in the back seats is enough for children to travel safely tends to spread: 58% of people interviewed spontaneously stated that this is the safest way for children to travel. There is a General Traffic Regulation by the Municipality of Montevideo stating that, "in vehicles for more than three passengers, children under 12 should not travel in the front seats" (Art.D.677.2).
- Although legislation in the capital of the nation requires children under 12 to travel in the back seat of vehicles, there is no equivalent regulation in Montevideo or elsewhere in the country, making the use of CRS compulsory. Together with this lack of legislation, there is also a lack of awareness by drivers of the fundamental importance of transporting children in a child seat: Only 8% of drivers interviewed in 2010 (2 percentage points below 2009) point out that children should be restrained to said passive safety devices in order to travel safely in cars and vans.
- Taking into account opinions collected it becomes essential to disseminate the advantages of CRSs as passive safety devices for the protection of children in cars and vans; even in the back seats children are not safe if not restrained in a child seat suitable for their height, officially authorized and correctly installed.
- The lack of awareness regarding children safety goes hand in hand with a decrease in the use of passive safety devices by drivers.
- Results in 2009 and 2010 nationwide show that the percentage of car and van drivers stating that they always wear a seat belt falls from 75% to 65% and motorbike drivers using passive safety devices falls from 75% to 70%. This fall represents the lack of use of said devices in the provinces.