

Does the country make a difference: risky driving of Lithuanians, Irish and Lithuanian emigrants living in Ireland?

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Abstract

Background. In a sense of globalization cultural differences and their societal impact become serious issue across the world. Migrational flaws affect the road user composition and their behaviour as well. Countries must deal with drivers that come from different background nurtured by different traffic culture and culture in general. The legal recognition of driver's status obtained in foreign country is problematic. Even though behavioural differences that emerge due to the cultural effects create the challenges for safety policy world-wide. Previous research proves the significant variations in drivers' behaviour and perceptions of traffic culture across the countries. Drivers from Western and Northern Europe seem to have less aggressive and violative driving style than Southern European residents (Özkan et al., 2006; Warner et al., 2011). Still, information on cultural differences on driving behaviour is rather intuitive than scientific. It is little known how immigrants adapt to the traffic culture in foreign country. It only might be guessed if they accept the driving style of new country or hold the old style of driving. The aim of this study is to compare the driving behaviour among Lithuanian, Irish, and Lithuanian emigrants living in Ireland.

Method. Three hundred sixty participants (190 females and 170 males), aged 18- 65, filled in the self-report questionnaire. The convenience sample consisted of three groups of drivers – 128 Lithuanians, 116 Irish and 116 Lithuanians living in Ireland. The mean time of living in a host country for migrants was 5.8 years. Participants were recruited for the study using “snowball” sampling method. In order to control significant socio-demographic differences among groups (age and education) multivariate data analysis was necessary. The questionnaire included Driver Behaviour Questionnaire (Reason & Parker, 1990), The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT), and The Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST V3), developed by WHO.

Results. Data analysis revealed that Lithuanian male emigrants reported committing more driving violations than Irish male drivers, but there was no statistically significant difference between violations of Lithuanian emigrants and Lithuanians. Lithuanian female emigrants committed more driving violations when compared to other study groups. Concerning driving errors, Lithuanians living in own country reported more errors than Irish or Lithuanian emigrants in male group. Irish male drivers reported more driving errors than

Lithuanian emigrants. Irish male drivers reported more driving lapses when compared to Lithuanian male emigrants as well. No significant differences in driving errors and lapses were found in female drivers' groups. Finally, correlation analysis revealed that risky driving components are related to other health risk behaviours despite country differences. Self-reported driving violations were positively correlated to alcohol and substance abuse, whereas reported driving errors and lapses were positively correlated only to alcohol abuse.

Conclusions and implications. Lithuanian emigrants in Ireland, especially males, are seen as a special group of drivers in Ireland as they admit making more violations than locals. They reported the lowest level of driving errors and lapses than other comparison groups. This might indicate either higher self-confidence or difficulties to monitor and understand own behaviour. The data support the hypothesis of self-selection for emigration, and it manifests via driving as well as other risky taking behaviour.

Presenter's CV

Šeibokaitė Laura, PhD in Social Sciences, Psychology, currently works as Associate Professor in Psychology Department of Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania. She teaches Developmental Psychology, Research Methods, and Group Theory and Practice for Bachelor level students at university, Advanced Topics of Research Methodology in Psychology for Master level students. Her research interests are issues and difficulties of adolescence, problem behaviour in adolescence and adulthood. Most of current research pieces are dedicated to the topic of traffic psychology, mainly personality and attitudinal predictors of risky driving in young novice drivers, psychological changes during standard driving training, hazard perception in young and older drivers etc. Together with colleagues she published more than 30 scientific articles and two books. Laura actively participates in many national and international research projects. She is a member of CADROSA (Consortium of Adolescent Road Safety) and TPI (Traffic Psychology International). She serves as Co-Editor of peer-reviewed journal *International Journal of Psychology: A Biopsychosocial Approach*.