

Title: COMPLIANCE OF ULTRA-ORTHODOX AND SECULAR PEDESTRIANS WITH TRAFFIC LIGHTS IN ULTRA-ORTHODOX AND SECULAR LOCATIONS

Presenting Author: Tova Rosenbloom

Authors: T. Rosenbloom 1;A. Shahar 1,2;A. Perlman 1;

Affiliation

1. The Interdisciplinary Department of Social Sciences, Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel,
2. Department of Psychology, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK,

Abstract:

Previous research findings indicated Israeli pedestrians in an ultra-orthodox environment committed as much as three-times the traffic violations of secular environment pedestrians, age and gender notwithstanding (Rosenbloom, Nemrodov, & Barkan, 2004). As religious society usually prioritize a religiously-sanctioned law over the state law (Yagil & Ratner, 2002), the traffic violations bias found in the ultra-orthodox environment is, presumably, the result of different sets of road crossing behavior norms in secular and ultra-orthodox environment.

As the previous study focused on the road behavior of pedestrians in their home neighborhood, the present study set to examine the influence of both in-group and out-group road crossing norms. Specifically, it focused on the road behaviors of pedestrians both in their own in-group environment and in an out-group environment, and observed whether ultra-orthodox pedestrian "give in" to secular crossing norms when crossing in a secular city; and vice versa, whether secular pedestrians adopt local crossing behavior when crossing at an ultra orthodox city crosswalk.

We observed the red light crossing behaviors of 995 pedestrians in the neighboring ultra-orthodox and secular Israeli cities of Bnei-Brak (ultra-orthodox) and Petah-Tikva (secular). The observed crosswalks were similar in terms of road formation, traffic and pedestrian volumes, and red light phase duration. A logistic regression was used to assess the tendency to cross on a red light as a function of estimated age, gender, religiosity, crosswalk location (religious/secular city), red light phase duration, and traffic and pedestrian volume.

The model significantly predicted the tendency to cross on red (omnibus chi-square (8, N = 995) = 108.65, $p < 0.001$) and accounted for 10.4% (Cox & Snell R Square) to 16.4% (Nagelkerke R Square) of the variance in tendency to cross on a red light, with an overall prediction accuracy of 80%. We did not find a significant difference between ultra-orthodox and secular pedestrians' road crossing violations. However, we found an interaction between the crosswalk location and the pedestrian religiosity, such that in the ultra-orthodox city 44% of the secular pedestrian and only 21% of local ultra-orthodox pedestrians crossed on red (Chi Square = 17.20, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$); and, in reverse, in the secular city, where 23% of the Ultra-Orthodox pedestrians, but only 13% of the secular pedestrians, crossed on red (chi-square = 7.14, $df = 1$, $p < 0.05$). The odds of crossing on a red light decreased as a function of both the number of people waiting at the curb (0.73) and the number of vehicles (0.95). Consistent with previous research, males crossed on red more often than females, regardless of religiosity and location.

The interaction found between pedestrian's religiosity and crossing location suggests red-light crossing behaviour is affected by the crossing locale, to such extent that pedestrians in their own neighbourhood committed half the traffic violation than in a markedly different neighbourhood. Possibly, both pedestrian groups felt more comfortable breaking traffic laws when they weren't in their own neighbourhood, because their in-group social norms were perceived as more lax, and less prone to social sanctions (Grasmick, Bursik, & Cochran, 1991).