

**The Erfahrung of Adult Novice Drivers:
An Exploratory Study of the Daily Driving Experiences of
Class 7 License Holders Aged 25 to 35 in
Vancouver, British Columbia**

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Abstract

This paper presents an exploratory study of an often ignored population of drivers: adult novices. The goal of this paper is to provide a better understanding of the 'Erfahrung,' or everyday driving experiences of adult novice Class 7 drivers in the intermediate stage of B.C.'s graduated licensing programme (GLP). B.C.'s GLP is designed to decrease the crash rate of new drivers by reducing their exposure to risk as they gain driving experience. 40 participants aged 25 to 35 (25 women and 15 men) were interviewed for the study. Several key questions are addressed: 1) Why do adult novices delay licensure until adulthood?; 2) What are the routine driving experiences of adult novice drivers?; 3) How do adult novices describe their driving behaviour?; 4) How do adult novices compare the driving behaviour of older and younger drivers?; 5) How do adult novice drivers identify and account for risk-taking behaviour?; and 6) What are the attitudes of adult novice drivers towards B.C.'s GLP?

The findings of this study indicate that there are significant differences in the driving experiences of frequent and occasional drivers. Frequent drivers are employed, college educated, own or co-own a vehicle, and drive routinely. Most occasional drivers are recent immigrants who are unemployed, lack a formal education, do not own a car, and experience difficulties accessing a vehicle to obtain driving experience. Occasional drivers therefore have difficulties exiting the GLP in a timely fashion. Furthermore, occasional drivers may be denied certain employment because of their status as novice drivers in B.C.'s GLP. The only significant gender difference between men and women concerns married immigrant women who assumed more responsibility for childcare duties after licensure. The participants identified several driving behaviours as risky, and also disclosed taking risks in the course of driving. The participants rationalised their risk-taking behaviour as appropriate to particular driving conditions and circumstances.

Recommendations concerning the licensure of adult novices are provided as follows: 1) The social costs of crash involvement of adult novices, particularly occasional drivers, must be compared against the social costs of unemployment, especially where novice licensure acts as an impediment to securing work. 2) B.C.'s GLP should be restructured to better facilitate licensure for all adult novices over 25. 3) Participant observation studies of adult novices' on-road driving behaviour should be conducted to accurately ascertain the types of risks they take in the course of everyday driving.

Introduction

As of August 1998, anyone applying for a first driver's license in British Columbia- regardless of age- will enter the province's Graduated Licensing Programme (GLP). The goal of the GLP is to "save lives, reduce injuries, and keep insurance rates affordable" by reducing new drivers' exposure to risk as they gain driving experience (ICBC 2000a).

In British Columbia, driver licensing and motor vehicle insurance are administered by the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC), an agency of the provincial government. According to ICBC new drivers, irrespective of age, are "twice as likely to cause a collision as experienced motorists" (ibid). More than 80 000 new drivers enter the B.C. licensing system each year (ibid). ICBC notes that one in five drivers is involved in a crash within their first two years on the road (ibid). However, a study commissioned by ICBC found that nearly half of all new B.C. drivers are aged 16, and that about two-thirds are aged 16 to 18 (Cooper et al. 1995, 89).

The study examined claim-related accidents of drivers who received their first B.C. license in 1986, 1987 and 1988, by age of licensure and years on the road from the first to third year of driving. The study found that in the first year of driving, new drivers aged 16 to 35 were involved in approximately 0.07 to 0.05 *non-culpable* accidents per driver (ibid., 94). This accident rate was approximately the same for the general population (ibid., 95). However, first year drivers aged 16 to 24 were involved in approximately 0.12 to 0.20 *culpable* accidents per driver, while drivers aged 25 to 35 were involved in approximately 0.10 to 0.12 culpable accidents per driver (ibid., 94).

The study grouped vehicle use into four categories: occasional use, pleasure only, pleasure / work and business use. Of all occasional users involved in an injury producing accident, approximately 68% were found culpable. For pleasure users the rate dropped to just below 66%. Pleasure and work users had a rate of approximately 65%, and business users involved in injury resulting crashes were culpable approximately 67% of the time.

The majority of new drivers are 16 to 18 years of age, and it would appear that younger new drivers cause more culpable accidents than older new drivers. Indeed, Cooper et al. (ibid., 89) note that

even a [graduated licensing] programme targeting all novices would still primarily affect school-age youth. Those aged 16-18 have been shown to have significantly different accident experience...and the young generally appear to display group accident characteristics different from those of older drivers.

All new drivers of any age must enter the GLP, yet there is some indication that young drivers behave differently from adult drivers. What are the driving characteristics and experiences of adult novice drivers?

In 1987, Stoddart posed a similar question to young drivers. He studied the 'Erfahrung' of young drivers, which refers to one's everyday social environment, orientations, routine experiences, and social encounters (Stoddart 1987, 131). In his study, Stoddart sought to bridge the driving behaviour of young drivers with their "structures of experience" (ibid).

While this research does not replicate Stoddart's study, it does utilise his concept of Erfahrung. The goals of this research are five-fold: 1) to gain a better understanding of why

driving licensure is delayed until adulthood; 2) to determine the driving experiences of adult novice drivers; 3) to assess how adult novice drivers perceive their driving behaviour; 3) to ascertain how adult novice drivers compare themselves to younger drivers; 4) to reveal the risks that adult novices take in the course of everyday driving; and 5) to explore adult novice driver's attitudes towards B.C.'s GLP.

An Overview of B.C.'s Graduated Licensing Programme (GLP)

There are two stages to the GLP, which lasts a minimum of 21 to 24 months: the learner stage and the intermediate stage. Upon passing a knowledge test, new drivers are issued a one year Class 7L Learner's Driver License (LDL) and enter the learner stage of graduated licensing. The learner stage lasts a minimum of six months, but can be reduced to three months with an ICBC approved driver education course (ibid). In the learner stage, drivers must drive with a co-pilot, maintain zero blood alcohol content while driving, carry no more than one extra passenger, display a 'L' 'learner' new driver sign in the rear window or rear exterior of the vehicle, and are prohibited from driving between 12 am and 5 am. It is suggested that learners acquire a minimum of 30 hours of driving before qualifying for their Class 7 license (ICBC 2000a).

After passing the 'Level One' road test, drivers are issued a five year Class 7 Novice Driver's License (NDL), and enter the intermediate stage of the GLP. The intermediate stage lasts a minimum of 18 months. In this stage, drivers must maintain zero blood alcohol content, and display a 'N' 'novice' new driver sign. After 18 months, Class 7 holders can take a 'Level 2' road test. If they pass this test, they earn a Class 5 driver's license that has full privileges. Class 7 license holders who do not take their Level 2 test within five years can renew their license for another five years.¹

Research Objectives and Questions

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the driving experiences of adult novice drivers. Interviews were conducted with a cross section of male and female Class 7 license holders aged 25 to 35. The research is exploratory, and involves interviews with 40 respondents.

The research objectives are:

1. To determine how the Erfahrung of adult drivers influences their driving behaviour.
2. To determine the attitudes and risk-taking behaviour of novice drivers, and how they explain these attitudes and behaviours.
3. To determine the degree of access that novice adult drivers have to vehicles. What are the driving habits of adult novice drivers who own or have regular access to a vehicle compared to adult novice drivers that do not own cars and have only occasional access to vehicles?

The central research questions are:

1. Why was licensure delayed until adulthood?
2. How do adults perceive themselves as novice drivers?

¹ According to one ICBC official, ICBC is considering making the level two road test mandatory for Class 7 license holders. Class 7 license holders would have to pass the Level Two road test within five years, or forfeit their license and re-enter the learner's stage (Class 7L). A similar system exists in Ontario (see Boase and Tasca 1998).

3. How do adult novices explain their driving now that they are licensed?
4. What differences, if any, exist between frequent drivers and occasional drivers?
5. Do novice drivers take risks while driving? What are they? How do they explain their risk-taking behaviour?

Methodology and Research Design

Methodology

Interviews were conducted with a cross section of male and female drivers aged 25 to 35 who classify themselves as either frequent or occasional drivers. Research on the driving behaviour of young novice drivers points to marked gender differences. Stoddart (1987) notes that young male drivers obtain a license for the sake of driving itself, and to improve their stature amongst their peers - it is a "life changing event" (ibid., 151). Young female drivers secure a license to help them complete specific activities, such as helping out with the family- it is a "life facilitating event" (ibid., 152). Furthermore, insurance premiums are lower for women than for men in some jurisdictions, and are established in light of evidence which suggests that women are involved in fewer crashes than men. In contrast, this research on adult novice drivers demonstrates found that males and females alike identify licensure as a life facilitating event. Frequent female drivers who are recent immigrants to Canada noted that they became solely responsible for childcare duties after becoming licensed. No other gender differences between male and female novices were reported. Marked differences in driving experiences, attitudes towards risk, and attitudes towards the GLP were found between frequent and occasional drivers, and between vehicle owners and non-owners.

Frequent drivers are defined as drivers who own, co-own, or have regular access to a vehicle and drive at least five times per week. Most occasional drivers neither own nor have regular access to a vehicle. Only one participant in this study self-identified as owning her own car but driving less than once a week for pleasure only. In all other instances, frequent drivers owned or co-owned a vehicle, and occasional drivers did not own a vehicle. The definition of driver frequency is arbitrary, and includes two extreme groups of users. The rationale is that frequent drivers will have a different Erfahrung than occasional drivers, and that these differences will influence their driving behaviour. Clearly, vehicle ownership or non-ownership determines the frequency with which one drives. The evidence from this research confirms that frequent and occasional drivers have different driving experiences.

The specified age range of participants is 25 to 35. In many jurisdictions, such as Ontario, drivers 16 to 24 are considered 'most at risk,' and pay higher insurance premiums. Drivers over 25 pay lower rates, based on statistical evidence of lower crash involvement. Thus, a study of novice drivers aged 25 to 35 could be used as a basis of comparison to novice drivers of the same age in other jurisdictions. Second, drivers over 25 years of age enjoy specific driving allowances, such as the privilege to rent vehicles. This is of special significance to occasional drivers who do not own cars and have limited access to vehicles.

Research Design

- Forty people were interviewed according to the following criteria:
1. All participants were Class 7 license holders who have had their license for at least six months at the time of the interview. This is to allow for the establishment of driving

routines, whether frequent or occasional. The range of Class 7 licensure for all participants was between 6 and 18 months.

2. All participants were between the ages of 25 to 35 inclusive.
3. Twelve participants were women and frequent drivers.
4. Thirteen participants were women and occasional drivers.
5. Ten participants were men and frequent drivers.
6. Five participants were men and occasional drivers.

Participants were contacted by letter or public announcement (such as public postings and the placement of ads in print media). Participants were paid \$20 per interview. Interviews lasted approximately one hour. The interviews consisted of a series of open ended questions that sought information on the participants' driving experiences, driving behaviour, risk perception and risk taking and attitudes towards B.C.'s GLP. The research was conducted between February 1999 and July 2000.

Ethical Considerations

All interviews require the informed consent of participants. Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. The interview data maintains the anonymity of participants through the use of pseudonyms. The identity of participants will not appear in any report or publication pertaining to this research. Participants were required to produce their driver's licenses in order to verify their eligibility to take part in the study, however no personal information, including license number, name, address, or date of birth was recorded from the license in any form.

Limitations of the Research Design

There are several limitations to the research design. The first concerns the size of the study. Given the small number of men and women participating in the study, the results cannot be deemed representative of the population of 25 to 35 year-old male and female Class 7 license holders.

Second, the recruitment of participants is by public solicitation, and thus constitutes a "non-probability" sample (Babbie 1992, 230). It was not possible to conduct a random sample of Class 7 license holders, as the researcher did not have access to ICBC license records.

In addition, because participants were paid, public solicitation 'pre-selected' respondents who desired to take part in the study, and thus omitted people who do not respond to public solicitation, but would otherwise participate via random sampling.

Contributions of the Study

This study considers a population of novice drivers that researchers have largely ignored. Although exploratory in nature, this study will contribute to an understanding of the driving behaviour of adult novice drivers. The onus of this research is on the respondents' presentations of self, or 'self-reports' of their driving experiences. As Cutler et al. (1993, 1197) note,

...self-reports...have great practical significance. ...if driving behaviour is influenced by perceptions of driving skills, assessment of such perceptions might

play an important role in programmes designed to influence behaviour.

All new drivers, regardless of age, must enter B.C.'s GLP. The findings of this study will provide a point of comparison to previous studies of young novice drivers (Rothe 1987a; Rothe 1987b; Stoddart 1987; Stoddart and Rothe 1987), and to adult novices in other jurisdictions.

The study will identify the *Erfahrung* of adult novices, and show how their day-to-day experiences and routines influence their driving and risk-taking behaviour.

The study will provide feedback on the effectiveness of the GLP by assessing how novice licensure affects the driving experiences of adults, as well as their reactions to the GLP. The study will inform licensure policies and propose areas of future research.

Literature Review

Erfahrung and Driving Behaviour

There is a wide body of literature on the driving habits of teens, which speaks to both the statistics and the 'group accident characteristics' of young drivers. For example, teens may take more risks than the general population, such as driving too fast, driving recklessly, or driving while intoxicated (Naatanen and Summala 1976; Rothe 1986; Rothe 1987a; Rothe 1987b; Rothe 1987c; Rothe 1994; Stoddart and Rothe 1987).

A smaller body of literature examines the psychology of driving. Shinar (1978) examines the driver as an 'information processor' as well as driver personality. As an information processor, Shinar deals largely with an individual's response to the mechanics of driving; attention, visual search, perception and perceptual judgement, decision and decision time, and response capabilities.

Shinar also explores the personal characteristics of drivers in relation to their driving behaviour. He notes that insurance companies are often concerned with identifying "problem drivers in relation to demographic variables that in the past have been shown to be related to accident involvement" (ibid., 30), such as age, sex, and driving experience. While these variables may be related to crash involvement, they do not show how they *cause* collisions (ibid.).

Shinar suggests that other areas of study, such as social maladjustment, personal maladjustment and, the use of driving to satisfy non-driving needs, may shed more light on the causes of accidents (ibid., 31). The study of social maladjustment asks the following question: "Can people who violate traffic laws and norms be identified on the basis of a more general characteristic, such as inadequate adjustment to society's norms in other areas?" (ibid.). One social maladjustment study asked youth questions pertaining to their level of social integration, such as, "How many times have you moved residences in the past five years?" (ibid., 33). The study of personality maladjustment seeks to determine how difficult times in people's lives, or "life stresses," influence driving behaviour (ibid., 36). For example, people who are depressed or going through a divorce will drive differently than "normal" people (ibid., 35). The use of driving to satisfy non-driving needs considers how driving "provides us with the opportunity to satisfy needs such as excitement, risk, power, and status" (ibid., 38). For example, people may have the desire to drive fast and "feel the wind" (ibid.). Also, the effects of advertising from manufacturers who sell their cars as fast, sexy, and sleek automobiles will influence what kind of cars people buy and how they use them (ibid.).

Shinar's concept of driver personality is close to the concept of *Erfahrung*, but does not entirely hit the mark. The problem with 'driver personality' is that personalities change over time. Social and personal maladjustment are time specific conditions. People can socially 'readjust,' and personal problems are eventually resolved. Driving to satisfy non-driving needs may also change with the passage of time. For example, the non-driving needs of people may change when they leave the 'single life' and start families, as their attitudes towards driving shift to meet the everyday needs of parenting (Hallett 1990, 8). The above concepts of driving personality provide a 'snap shot' of an individual's traits at a given point in time. These concepts focus on the psychological profiles of drivers, but omit a consideration of the everyday factors that influence how and where people drive. As Marek and Sten note (1977, 53)

Even when the requirement of relevance of person-centred characteristics is satisfied, the explanatory power of these variables relative to other variables characteristic of the...situation... remain unknown.

The concept of *Erfahrung* provides a more holistic understanding of people's driving behaviour. An *Erfahrung* approach to a survey of car users considers how they use their vehicles in their day-to-day lives. The concept of *Erfahrung* is exemplified in Stoddart (1987) and Rothe (1991). Stoddart examines why young drivers drive the way they do, and the driving circumstances in which they find themselves. He considers how gender and social demands influence the driving behaviour of young drivers. Consider, for example, the situation of one young inexperienced driver:

This boy received his license during the ski season. Within weeks, it was his turn to drive his friends to Whistler for a day of skiing. "I was a wreck when we got there," he said. "I'd never driven on the highway before and I'd never driven in snow. And all the while I had to be cool." (Stoddart 1987, 170)

This situation shapes the driver's behaviour in two ways. It demands that he 1) Be able to drive in previously unknown driving conditions (drive at a higher speed and in poor road conditions); and 2) Maintain a certain level of impression management that conforms to the social environment (that he remain 'cool' in front of his friends).

A more 'routinised' example of driving behaviour and risk-taking is articulated in Rothe's study of truckers. Consider this statement:

...it is the socio-economic environment in which truck driving occurs that has profound implications on driver decision-making and behaviour. For example, a trucker who operates a rig while fatigued usually does so to fulfil the everyday needs and expectations demanded by the company dispatcher. (Rothe 1991, ix)

Clearly, the demands of specific driving situations, and the purposes behind them, influence how people drive and the risks they are willing to take.

Risk and Driving Behaviour

The research that links risk to driving behaviour examines the decision-making processes of drivers. As Covello and Johnson (1987, viii) note, "risk is not an objective

reality; instead, the perception of risk is a social process.” Indeed, there is a wide body of literature on the culture of risk-taking, and the social forces that determine whether or not we take risks (Apter 1992; Douglas 1992; Ericson and Haggerty 1997; Hughes 1998; Mowen 1993; and Sprent 1988). Another body of literature considers the social construction of risk (Covello and Johnson 1987; Ericson and Haggerty 1997; and Furedi 1997), or how we select and define ‘risky’ or unsafe situations. For example, activities that were hitherto enjoyable, such as enjoying the sun or taking a Sunday drive, are now unhealthy or imbued with risk (Furedi 1997).

Part of this research examines the risks taken by adult novice drivers. The study of social risks and driving behaviour pertains to risk-taking as part of the everyday driving experience. Social risk-taking is determined by three related variables: driving exposure, driving demands, and risk compensation / reduction behaviour. They are ‘social’ risks because they comprise the external factors that influence an individual’s driving behaviour. Driving routine is described as how one uses one’s car in day-to-day activities. Driving task considers *how* drivers get from point a to point b, the conditions people are driving in, and how much experience they have driving (Lund and O’Neill 1986).

Risk compensation theory states that “any benefits that might result from safer cars and roads will be partially offset by drivers who take greater risks” (Lund and O’Neill 1986, 367). For example, the safety features in some cars, such as air bags, might encourage people to take greater risks because of the perceived safety benefits of air bag deployment in the event of a crash. Risk compensation can also be extended to the notion of ‘moral hazard,’ or how “insurance insulates people from the true costs of accidents” (Hemenway 1993, 359). In other words, the knowledge that a vehicle is insured influences how people drive their cars. Some owners of older or inexpensive vehicles may drive more recklessly with the belief that insurance will replace their car in the event of an accident, without regard to the costs incurred by other drivers, property owners, and pedestrians who may be adversely affected by the accidents they cause. As Mowen (1993, 111) notes, “the choice between risk and security is based in part upon how highly decision makers value the gains versus the losses that may occur.”

Conversely, risk reduction is likely to be exercised by people who wish to avoid damage to their vehicles, and maintain low insurance premiums. This is especially true in jurisdictions- such as B.C.- with ‘bonus-malus’ insurance systems. Bonus-malus insurance systems “penalise the insureds responsible for one or more accidents by an additional premium or malus and will reward the claim-free policyholders by awarding them a discount or bonus” (Lemaire 1985, 117-118).

The evidence from the literature suggests that there are a number of variables that influence the risks that people will take while driving. However, the majority of studies on risk and driving focus on the population considered most at risk: youth. Why? Youth are deemed to be most at ‘risk’ because of their age and their driving (in)experience (Stoddart 1987). Stoddart (ibid.) asserts that age must be considered in light of other related variables, mainly the social environment that mediates the day-to-day lives of teens (ibid). Given that graduated licensing affects all new drivers in many jurisdictions across Canada and the U.S. (ICBC 2000a), it is surprising to find a virtual absence of literature on adult novice drivers. Clearly this population warrants investigation. While most novice drivers start from similar points of experience, the *Erfahrung* of youth and adults differs considerably. Thus, the social environment of adult novice drivers will have a unique influence on their driving behaviour and the risks they take. It will be shown that adult novice drivers self-identify as

cautious drivers who exercise better judgement than young drivers, despite the fact that they themselves routinely take risks while driving.

The remainder of this paper consists of six sections. Section one explores the reasons behind delayed licensure to adulthood. Section two addresses the driving experiences of adult novices. Section three discusses adult novice driver self-perceptions and how they compare themselves to younger drivers. Section four addresses risk perception and risk taking behaviour among adult novices. Section five discusses the attitudes of adult novice drivers to B.C.'s GLP. Section six concludes the paper and offers recommendations for facilitating the licensure of adult novices and proposes other avenues of research.

Section One: Delayed Licensure

The participants in this study identified a number of reasons why licensure was delayed until adulthood.

Failed Road Test When Younger

Two participants secured their learner's license when they were younger, but failed the road test. One participant, angry that she had failed the road test, did not attempt to re-qualify for her license.

"Initially when I was 16 I took my first road test. I went, and I think it crushed me more than anything. I've never failed anything in my life. And then I get here, I was done the road test, come back into the service centre, and I failed to yield- it was an automatic fail. I was devastated- it hurt me. But I also said, I'm never going to do this again. I was pissed off to be honest, and I never went back. I was living in Toronto then, so it wasn't a necessity."

Another participant failed her road test after having completed a driving course. She was verbally reprimanded in front of her peers by the driving instructor. The humiliation she suffered dissuaded her from attempting a re-test.

"I failed at it once when I tried when I was young, and I was berated so badly for it by the driving teacher, and humiliated in front of all the other kids, and I just thought, "No more."

Public Transportation, Expenses, and Circumstances

Several participants stated that it was not necessary for them to obtain a driver's license before coming to Vancouver, because of the superior transportation systems that existed in their previous city or country of residence. In addition, some cited the high cost of driving lessons, cars, and insurance as a disincentive to driving. One male novice driver, a recent Filipino immigrant states:

"...when I first came here, I started out in Toronto. Their transit system is so efficient. When I got out of my Aunt's apartment, the bus is right there. And in Toronto the buses run 24 hours a day. So no problems, and I was starting out, so

I know how expensive it is to have a car, plus the insurance and everything. I just decided to commute everyday."

One woman who emigrated from Germany to Canada says:

"I grew up in Germany, where it's rather expensive to take lessons, and there is not much need for a car, because public transport is very good. Dense communities where you don't have to go very far."

Eighteen of the participants in this study are recent immigrants, most of whom have lived in Canada for five to six years. A few participants had relatively high incomes in their country of origin, which afforded them the use of a private car and driver.

"I come from a different country, Afghanistan. In my country we had money. I had a driver and I didn't need to drive. It's the Middle East, you know. Everybody has drivers. But then with the war in my country we lost everything, and so we ran away."

Indeed, the immigration experience adds to the time new immigrants require to settle in Canada and establish themselves. For most, learning to drive is initially not a high priority.

"I didn't have an opportunity to do it before. I moved to Canada 6 years ago. Pretty much just came with a suitcase. It's all I had. Just that whole process of starting over, and going to school, and getting established. A car and learning how to drive was not a priority."

Other participants qualified for and renewed their learner's licenses several times over a few years, but never opted to take a road test. These participants cited easy access to transit and having friends with cars as the main reasons for not qualifying for a license. Some participants with learner's licenses lived in rural areas and drove (illegally) without a licensed accompanying driver. Others moved often when younger and never had the opportunity to qualify for their license.

"I've had my learner's several times. I can't remember how many times since high school. There was always transit, so there was no big rush."

"I've had a series of learner's licenses but never actually got around to taking the test. But I've been driving for years. I drove by myself in the country. I knew how to drive pretty well."

"The opportunity was never really there. I went to boarding schools, where cars were not allowed. I graduated and went to Queen's, you didn't need a car there, and I lived up near U.B.C. Campus. I didn't need a car. I moved to Whistler for a couple of years, and always had access to a car, and if I really needed it, I could drive without a license. It was never really a priority."

Traumatic Experiences

One of the participants in this study did not qualify for a driver's license because he was involved in a fatal car crash as a child, in which his father was killed. Another participant also witnessed a fatal car crash. Both participants stated that their experiences instilled a fear of driving.

"I'm in therapy now to overcome problems associated with watching my dad killed in a car accident. I couldn't overcome the fear. Without a psychologist's help, I couldn't even sit in the driver's seat without vomiting. I preferred to walk long distances rather than be a passenger, particularly in the front seat."

"I saw my best friend's dad killed in an auto wreck. It spooked me and I never really wanted to drive."

Alcohol and Drug Use

Two of the participants in this study identified youth aged alcohol use as a deterrent to qualifying for a driver's license. The participants' self-identified as heavy drug and alcohol users at age 16, associating with a group of other drug and alcohol using youth. The majority of their friends had been charged with impaired driving. Both participants feared that they would be unable to abstain from drug or alcohol use when driving, and so elected not to qualify for their driver's license and avoid potential criminal charges. Both participants subsequently entered 12 step drug and alcohol recovery programmes.

"Substance abuse. A big reason why I stayed away from driving: my drinking. A friend's drug problem and solution in N.A. (Narcotics Anonymous) led me to A.A. (Alcoholics Anonymous). I'd hate to think of being caught drunk at the wheel. Bad news."

"I'm in a 12 step programme. I have been for 8 years. And that's part of the reason why I didn't have my license. Because when I was that age, all of my friends were getting impaireds, and I just saw the writing on the wall, for myself back then, like if they're getting them, then I'm surely going to get them, because I'm drinking and using at least as much or more."

Section Two: The Driving Experiences of Adult Novices

Why They Became Licensed: Independence, Job Facilitation and Job Seeking

Section one briefly explored the reasons participants provided for delaying licensure until adulthood. Section two explores the driving experiences of adult novice drivers. The first questions that must be answered are: Why did they become licensed? What motivated the participants to decide to qualify for their driver's license? The overwhelming majority of participants cite independence and employment as the two primary reasons for becoming licensed.

Immigrant Women, Independence, and Childcare

All participants note that licensure adds an aspect of convenience and independence to their lives, one that affords them a sense of greater mobility.

Ten of the twelve women who are frequent drivers are married. Three of these women have children, and own their own cars. These women identify licensure as providing them with greater independence from their spouses.

"I think it is necessary in this country to have a license. Because I don't want to rely on my husband if I want to go shopping. And I want to go sometimes by myself, and have my independence."

"Well, normally my husband does the driving, and that works out just fine, but there are occasions where it would come in handy for me to be able drive myself to stores and be out on my own. Partially my psychologist encouraged me to get my license, so that I could be more independent."

"But after my second baby I thought really I need to do something for myself and try for my kids, because sometimes they need to go out. And my husband, sometimes it's very difficult to find the time. So I make this decision for myself. And to prove to myself and my husband that I'm not just a housekeeper. So then I started to study all the stuff about the driving."

The three female respondents cited above are recent immigrants to Canada. Licensure has provided them with an opportunity to become less dependent on their spouses and more self-sufficient. However, the concept of independence requires qualification.

Married female drivers with children note that licensure also means taking on childcare and domestic responsibilities.

"I have two kids, and with going to school and doing volunteer work and work-work, and everything else, so now I have to get them back and forth to day care, in addition to everything else."

"My husband works everywhere, we have a son. I pick him up from school, deliver him to his swimming lessons. I don't ask my husband to drive me to shopping. I do it myself."

Licensure may provide for greater independence, but for some women, it can mean becoming solely responsible for childcare, even if both spouses are employed. None of the men who participated in this study identified themselves as being married, or having children. Therefore, a comparison of the childcare responsibilities of female adult novices to male adult novices is beyond the scope of this paper.

Further research into car-use patterns among recent male and female immigrants to Canada (especially married couples) may be of use to researchers studying immigrant integration and mobility in Canada. For example, employment, income, and other socio-economic status indicators have been analysed to determine the economic mobility of immigrants (Li 2000). Indeed, male immigrants tend to earn higher incomes than female immigrants (ibid).

One of the less developed areas of immigration research concerns the social organisation of immigrant families and the division of family responsibilities. It could be hypothesised that gender differences in car-use are closely related to gender differences in income. What are the differences between the domestic and employment driving experiences of married couples? Do couples co-own one vehicle, or own two or more vehicles? If a couple owns only one vehicle, then how does access to the vehicle differ between partners? An assessment of vehicle access and use among recent male and female immigrants could prove useful in identifying gender differences in the nature and experience of the settlement process.

Frequent Drivers vs. Occasional Drivers: Differences in Novice Licensure

In the context of licensure decisions, there are distinct differences between occasional drivers and frequent drivers. The majority of occasional drivers reported being unemployed or underemployed. They qualified for their driver's license to seek and secure employment. With the exception of one occasional driver, occasional drivers did not own or have access to a vehicle. The majority of occasional drivers are recent immigrants to Canada, all of whom are single.

The expectation after licensure is that they will be able to secure employment opportunities targeting licensed drivers. This is not the case. Adult novices seeking employment quickly found that these job opportunities were restricted to fully licensed Class 5 license holders with at least one year of driving experience.

The majority of frequent drivers reported becoming licensed to facilitate the jobs that they already held. This included driving to and from work everyday, or driving to and from places as required by their employment.

Frequent Drivers and Job Facilitation

Frequent adult novice drivers self-identify as college or university educated, and employed. Except as noted with recent immigrant women, there appear to be no discernible gender differences in the licensure decisions of frequent adult novices.

The majority of adult novice drivers obtain a license for convenience, recreation, and to get to and from work more quickly. In some instances, participants work more than one job. In other cases, driving is a requirement of employment. Obtaining a driver's license is therefore necessary to maintain one's employment.

"Just getting from one place to the next. I'm working at three jobs. I need to get from one part of town to the next in pretty quick order. And also I go up to Whistler quite a bit, on the weekends. And I need the car for that."

"I was in the trades, right, and when I first got in there, I was working with somebody who introduced me to someone who got me an apprenticeship and he was driving me around to all the sites. That was really good for the first little while when we had really big jobs, but then the boss of the company decided that he needed to be able to split us up and shoot us in different directions, and if I didn't get a license, I wasn't going to be able to stay employed."

For some frequent drivers, driving replaces taxis and public transportation as the primary mode of transportation.

"When I was younger I took buses, and as I got older I started taking cabs. And so my cab bill was astronomically expensive. In proportion to my car it was probably about the same. But now I can go lots of places, whereas before it was like, work, go home."

Frequent drivers note that they have more time to visit friends and explore areas of Greater Vancouver that were previously inaccessible.

"One of the reasons I got my license is because my friend had a son. He's my godson, and they live in Harrison Hot Springs. So I go up there every couple of weeks. And then all my friends live at Lougheed, and Burnaby and stuff like that."

Many frequent drivers express an extreme dislike for the Vancouver area transportation system, citing travel times, infrequent service, and overcrowding as disincentives to taking public transit.

"I would take public transit on occasion. I hate taking public transit. Yeah, basically because from where I live, is the pick-up route to U.B.C. So, for 8 to 9 months a year, it's horrendous hell on the bus. You stand up, you have to listen to this school crap, and I've got enough stuff to – you know, I hated it. It really irritated me. And also too, the waiting. I wanted to be able to go here, and for instance if we're doing errands at work, that was another motivation for getting a car. OK, so I have to drive here, then I have to get off the bus, then I have to transfer and get the bus. And all these different places that used to all be downtown, all moved. And so there's some on 41st, there's some on 6th and Burrard, they're inconvenient now. So before it was more realistic to just take one bus. But I ain't going to take it anymore. Sorry!"

The interview data from frequent drivers confirms that driving licensure is a life facilitating event (Stoddart 1987), especially in the context of facilitating access to work, or driving for work. Stoddart (1987, 152) found that for young men, licensure was a life changing event that gave them "something to do." Young women viewed licensure as a means to accomplish tasks, such as attending music lessons and running errands (ibid., 153), rather than driving for the sake of driving. In contrast to the discrepancies among young male and female drivers, driver licensure is a life facilitating event for both male and female adult novice drivers. As one male adult novice driver states:

"I don't drive to show-off. I drive because I need to."

Illness

Several of the frequent adult novice drivers cite ill health as one reason for becoming licensed. Some participants recalled times when they had fallen ill and experienced difficulties accessing medical attention.

"A couple of things happened this year that made me change my mind about getting a car. One was a medical emergency in the middle of the night, and you know, I ended up - I was in a real bind, and I didn't have enough cash on me to take a cab, and I just thought, "This is really awful, what am I going to do here?" I didn't want to call an ambulance. If I had had a car, it would have been easier."

Some participants have a persistent illness for which driving is a necessity. They prefer not to take public transit, because walking to and from bus stops, coupled with commuter times, overcrowding, and inclement weather, exacerbate the effects of their illness and leads to fatigue.

"11 years ago, I was diagnosed HIV positive. Up until last year, my health was fine. I recently became ill. My big problem is the fatigue. I finally caved in to the reality that I have to drive. So, now I have a car and have been driving for four months. Now I feel freer than I could have imagined. AIDS is setting in and driving will allow me to take care of myself longer and better. I am too tired not to drive."

Occasional Drivers- Job Seeking and the Impediments of Novice Licensure

Occasional drivers overwhelmingly identified licensure as a stepping stone to employment. The majority of occasional drivers are single male immigrants to Canada who have lived in Canada for five years or less.

The impetus for occasional drivers to secure a driver's license stems from the job seeking experience. They were turned down from employment opportunities because they did not possess a driver's license.

"It's jobs. Certain jobs it's a requirement. In B.C. I see the necessity of having a car. So if you have a driver's license, a car you can purchase...but it's always necessary to have a current driver's license. It's a step."

"Sort of more just for convenience, you know, and with job opportunities some of them ask if you can drive."

"But unfortunately I was laid off from work, and I was trying to look for work and I was almost hired by an airline company, and they required a driver's license."

Occasional novice drivers do not fare well in seeking employment after securing a Class 7 license, because most employers demand a Class 5 license with at least one year of driving experience.

"I was looking for work with express courier companies, like Purolator. I passed everything but I did not have a driver's license. And they wanted a Class 5 license, with one year of experience. So, I didn't get the job because of that. And I keep on applying, but the company turns me down."

Courier jobs were attractive to the male occasional drivers interviewed in this study for several reasons. First, these participants stated that they had friends or relatives in the

courier business who could act as references on their behalf. Second, most courier companies provide their own cars and vans, so as employees the drivers would not have to invest in their own vehicles. Third, the participants noted that they did not possess university degrees or technical skills that would allow them to seek other forms of employment.

The participants viewed courier jobs as 'low-end' jobs that would, save for the Class 5 license provision, be easy for them to secure. Indeed, most of the occasional drivers seeking employment envisioned driving for a courier company by day while taking university or technical courses at night, so as to augment their skills and employability. All of the male occasional drivers were seeking employment and receiving income assistance at the time of the study.

Novice licensure is an impediment to securing employment for unemployed or underemployed occasional drivers. This must be contrast with the rationale of a universal GLP. As Boase and Tasca (1998), Lonero (1999), Simard et al. (1999), and Williams and Mayhew (1999) note, GLPs are designed to reduce the social costs associated with the higher accident rates of novice drivers. Social costs include the loss of future earnings, insurance, property damage costs, emergency and medical response costs, and pain and suffering caused by automobile crashes (Boase and Tasca 1998, 3).

The rationale behind B.C.'s GLP is that all new drivers, regardless of age, are twice as likely to cause a collision as experienced motorists, and that one in five drivers is involved in a crash within the first two years on the road (ICBC 2000a). Cooper et al (1995, 100) note that occasional novice drivers "produce the highest proportion of crashes in which the novice driver is deemed culpable." The central tenet of Cooper et al's (1995) findings is that driving exposure is related to accident culpability (the longer one is exposed to driving, the less that s/he will be involved in an accident). However, the proportion of occasional adult novice drivers over 25 who produce culpable crashes is lower than for those aged 16 to 24 (see page 1, this paper). On the basis of age alone, more than 66% of new B.C. drivers are under 18 (*ibid.*, 89), and in Quebec 85% of new drivers are under 25 (Simard et al 1991).

Research by Massie et al. (1995) and Williams and Mayhew (1999) confirms that younger drivers are more likely to cause crashes than older drivers. In the context of occasional drivers, even Cooper et al (1995, 103) note that one's 'noviceness' may "not be particularly meaningful for describing what is really going on in causal relationships." Furthermore, since the data in Cooper et al's (1995) paper is gleaned from novices involved in accidents, "there may well be a larger group of new drivers [those not involved in accidents] who successfully compensate and apply risk-avoidance strategies" (*ibid.*, 103-104).

In other words, we cannot assume that all occasional drivers are at equal risk of becoming involved in an accident. To that end, the evidence would suggest that in the context of frequency, younger occasional drivers are more at risk of causing crashes than older occasional drivers.

The wisdom of an 18 month intermediate stage designed to provide novices with greater driving experience must be questioned, especially with respect to occasional adult novice drivers. In the first instance, the notion of experience requires qualification. How long must the novice drive to be considered 'ready' for re-testing? That is, how often must we reasonably expect one to drive over an 18 month period?

Second, it is unlikely that unemployed occasional adult novice drivers receiving income assistance will be able to purchase a car within the 18 month intermediate stage. Therefore, it is likely that their driving 'experience' will be minimal for 18 months, if not more. In contrast, most young novices, the majority of whom live with their parents, will have routine access to a vehicle at their parents' discretion.

Third, it has been suggested that novice licensure, for the occasional driver, is an impediment to securing certain forms of employment. This is exacerbated by the fact that the low education levels of some adult novices restrict the range of employment for which they are qualified to apply. In the context of social costs, how do the costs of car crashes compare to the costs of income assistance for unemployed adult novice occasional drivers?

If Class 7 licensure has a significant impact on the ability of occasional adult novice drivers to secure employment (coupled with a low level of education), then we can surmise that they will not qualify for a Class 5 license until they find employment or obtain enough experience to master the Level 2 road test. Experience in this sense does not necessarily correlate to a pre-defined defined length of on-road driving experience, but the experience required to *pass the test*.

Re-testing and vehicle access present major problems for the occasional adult novice driver seeking employment.

"I wouldn't go for the test any time soon, even though I'm eligible because I still haven't bought a car yet, it depends on when I get a job. So I still have that problem with lack of access. So once in a while my friends will let me drive, just so I can get experience in a car, so I haven't really had much practice, so I can't really say that my skills from the Learner's stage have developed that much more."

One occasional adult novice driver, employed by a driving school, comments on the plan ICBC is considering to make the Level 2 road test mandatory for Class 7 holders.

"If I had my own car, I think it would, because there are so many times when I think, 'Damn, I wish I had a car.' But initially, I just keep on thinking about the money that I'm going to have to be spending in 18 months, to get a Class 5, you know? And now that I've heard that they're going to try to make that mandatory, I'm not too happy about that. Because when it first came out, it was in 18 months you can either get it, or in 5 years you can renew it again. And apparently now they are thinking about making it mandatory."

Indeed, the costs associated with taking the Level 2 road test and qualifying for a Class 5 license are high. It costs \$50.00 to take the road test and \$17.00 for a new Class 5 license. Furthermore, occasional drivers are more wary about taking the Level 2 road test without enough experience or skills to pass the test. Since they have irregular access to vehicles, the only two alternatives to practice for the test are to rent vehicles or take driving lessons.

Actually, my problem is that car rentals charge too much. Especially when they notice that it's an N. And I was hoping, because I took a driver's, you know the course? So instead of taking the test in six months, I just took it in three months because I had the course and I was told by my instructor that I can just show it off to any insurance company so that I would not pay that much but they said 'No way, you're a new driver, you've got an N.'

Both car rentals and driving lessons are expensive propositions for the occasional adult novice driver. Adult novices are penalised economically when they rent cars, because of

their status as 'novice drivers.'² All of the occasional drivers stated that they took driving lessons before qualifying for their Class 7 license. The Level 1 (Class 7) test is more 'basic' than the Level 2 (Class 5) test (see ICBC 2000b), and occasional drivers considered initial licensure less of an economic risk. That is, the expectation that they would pass the Class 7 test was high. Occasional drivers felt more confident that the economic investment they made on driving lessons to pass the Level 1 test would bear positive results. This is not the case for the advanced Level 2 test.

Since novice drivers must demonstrate that they can perform a greater number of manoeuvres, a greater amount of 'experience' is required. Occasional novice drivers are reticent to invest in driving lessons and car rentals because the economic risks of failing the Level 2 road test are high.

Several preliminary conclusions can be drawn from the above observations. First, it is conceivable that the social costs of unemployment due to novice licensure may outweigh the social costs of crash involvement of occasional adult novice drivers. This area of research requires serious consideration. The crash rate of adult occasional novice drivers must be assessed against the unemployment rate of adult occasional drivers, many of whom are recent immigrants.³

Evidence from De Silva (1997) indicates that recent immigrants are more dependent on social assistance than immigrants who arrived prior to 1975. In Canada, 8.18% of all Black men who immigrated between 1966 and 1975 received social assistance compared to 23.43% of Black men who immigrated between 1984 and 1990 (ibid., 384). Large increases are also cited for other groups of immigrant men and women.

What percentage of all occasional adult novices are involved in crashes? How do the social costs of crashes compare to the social costs of unemployment? If the social costs of unemployment outweigh the costs of crashes, then we must question the extent to which a GLP affects the social mobility of a specific subset of drivers- mainly recent immigrants to Canada. Future research can also determine the percentage of recent immigrants who are among the total population of occasional adult novice drivers.

Second, if ICBC elects to make the Level 2 road test mandatory, it is conceivable that many occasional adult novice drivers will let their license lapse, due to the aforementioned economic costs associated with re-testing.

Third, the concept of 'driving experience' does not apply in any meaningful sense to occasional drivers. For those occasional drivers who can afford to rent cars or pay for lessons, they will obtain enough experience to *just* pass the test and obtain their Class 5 license. Until they secure employment or purchase a car, it is unlikely that occasional drivers will drive routinely either before or after the Level 2 road test.

² Participants note that rental companies will often not rent cars to Class 7 license holders unless they purchase loss damage waiver (LDW) insurance, which costs between \$19.00 to \$25.00 per day over and above the rental charge. LDW insurance is normally provided as an option to drivers, and is not mandatory.

³ The author was unable to secure information about the number of immigrants over age 25 who qualified for a Class 7 license since August 1998. Anecdotal evidence from informal conversations with driving instructors in both British Columbia and Ontario indicate that most male adults who enter graduated licensing programmes are recent immigrants, many from 'developing countries.' The number of adult females who enter graduated licensing are split equally between native born Canadians and immigrants. This is because Canadian born women are more likely to delay licensure than Canadian born men. Given the manner in which participants were solicited for this study, constituting a non-probability sample, no discernable differences in delayed licensure were noted. Future research may yield more robust results.

There are two possible scenarios for occasional Class 7 adult drivers. If they are unemployed and have no access to a vehicle or external assistance (family and friends), they may remain Class 7 license holders or let their license lapse (unless their economic situation changes within the 5 years from licensure). If they have the income to rent cars or to take lessons, they will do so close to the Level 2 test date, but only for the purposes of learning the skills needed to pass the test.

For occasional adult novice drivers, the 18 month intermediate stage is an arbitrary waiting period, since occasional drivers will not drive routinely during this period. Indeed, for occasional drivers who pass the Level 2 road test, it is unknown how frequently they will drive *after* Class 5 licensure. The GLP simply extends the time required for occasional adult Class 7 drivers to qualify for a Class 5 license- or excludes them from full privilege licensure- without fulfilling the purported mandate of the programme, which is to provide new drivers with more driving experience and exposure to different driving situations.

More will be said on the attitudes of frequent and occasional novice drivers towards B.C.'s GLP in Section five. The following section discusses the reactions of the general driving public to adult Class 7 license holders.

Reactions to the 'N': Driving as a Novice Driver

One of the requirements of B.C.'s GLP is that novice drivers must post a 'N' new driver sign in the rear window or on the outside rear of the vehicle they are driving. The 'N' is posted to alert other motorists that the driver of the vehicle is a novice driver. The rationale behind identifying novice drivers to the driving public is to prevent motorists from taking dangerous actions that might endanger newer and inexperienced drivers. In fact, the opposite is true.

On the basis of the interview data, all adult novice drivers felt that placing the 'N' in the back window of their cars caused more dangerous actions than it prevented. To the driving public, novice drivers are a nuisance to be avoided, rather than drivers who are to be afforded extra care and courtesy. According to the respondents, many motorists feel that novice drivers drive too slow or are indecisive about taking actions, such as 'waiting too long' to change lanes. Instead of being patient with novice drivers, motorists will tend to honk, make rude gestures, or pass novice drivers in a dangerous manner.

"They see I'm going to change a lane or something and sometimes it makes them more impatient. Or they think I'm driving too slow, and they're like "get out of my way."

"It's more of a nuisance, I think than anything else. I don't see the purpose for it besides letting everyone drive big around you. It's annoying, but it's there, so I try to ignore it."

"I've driven with people that the cars I was letting pass, they would have gone. So, I thought it was maybe cause these are people who would have gone, and they're getting impatient because they were wondering, well, she could have gone, why isn't she going? And maybe they're not realising. You hope that with the N there they realise "OK, she's a Novice, let's give her a little more time." I guess they ignore that. It doesn't work. But you hope that people will give you a bit of a break."

"I find that with the 'N', they're waiting for you to do something wrong."

"Because I am new driver, everybody thinks I am too slow, so they try to keep ahead of me. And I keep my distance with the car behind, and they are always passing me by, cutting me off, whenever there is a gap. Not that they care much. Sometimes they do. I think it's because of the N."

"Always I have to do 50. And they are all going fast! And they are all pushing the horn, and bothering me. I am here in the middle lane and some of them are coming around me and some of them are coming from the left lane in front, and some of them from the right lane."

"Yeah, yeah, because I had to drive under 50. And felt sometimes when I check in the mirrors that 'Oh my God, there are three four cars behind and me and they are all in a rush!' And some- it happens two or three times that a car will pass the side and horn. I feel so strange and self-conscious when they horn to me. It's like I have no right to drive with other drivers on the road."

"I have an N. I'm stopped here. I can't go any faster than the people in front of me. So they think, "I can't be stuck behind her" so they come up, and there are parked cars beside me. So they try to zoom up. I mean, most of the time you see them, but I can't assume. I can't see their signals because they're making a turn. So I go to make a turn, and they try to get in front of you. I've had probably three or four near accidents. It's horrendous."

"I don't like it. I wish I didn't have it. I find that people are very impatient with me. Some people just ride on the back of my car, and I really don't like it so I'll pull over to let them pass."

The participants provide two reasons why the general public reacts so negatively to novice drivers. The first, as cited above, is that novices are viewed as nuisances who get in the way of more experienced drivers. The second is a lack of public awareness. All of the novices in this study reported being approached by other motorists who inquired about the 'L' or the 'N' on the rear of their cars. It would appear that, at the time of this study, there were many B.C. drivers who are unaware of the province's GLP.

To remedy the situation, the participants felt that an ad campaign- similar to other ICBC ads promoting courteous driving- should be mounted to inform the public about B.C.'s GLP. In particular, the ads should encourage the public to treat new drivers with a special degree of courtesy, patience and respect on the road.

Section Three: Self-Reports of Driving Behaviour and Comparisons of Older Drivers to Younger Drivers

The participants were asked to identify how they perceived themselves as drivers. They were also asked to compare themselves as older drivers to younger drivers. Adult novice drivers tended to self-report variably as cautious, defensive, and 'aware' drivers. There were no discernible differences in driver self-reports among frequent and occasional

drivers, despite the fact that more frequent drivers (19) took driving courses than occasional drivers (3).

As compared to younger drivers, the participants note that younger drivers possessed better driving skills (i.e. ability to handle the vehicle), but exercised poorer judgement on the road.

Self-Reports of Driving Behaviour

Most adult novices describe themselves as either nervous, cautious, or defensive and aware drivers.

Nervous drivers self-identify as lacking the quick responses or sense of direction that more experienced drivers have- despite the fact that they are aware of and pay attention to their surroundings.

"I'm a nervous driver. Just that I know that I don't have the skills, or the quick timing responses that – I'm more aware and prepared for possibilities but I don't have as quick a response. I don't know my way around as well as I thought I did. It's a lot different when you're driving than when you're taking the bus or walking."

Other drivers self-reported on their progression from nervous driver to competent driver.

"I thought I was a really nervous driver, even after having taken the driving course. I was actually questioning as to whether everybody was out there having near-misses like me. Cause I wasn't driving really radically, I was just like "whoa!". It was a little bit scary, right? But I mean, I think that's just like, kinda like, you have to shake off that rust. I knew enough because I had driven before, but I had to get the cobwebs out, right? Even when I went for my road test, the instructor passed me, but he said that I was very, very, very stiff. I was like, rigid. But I don't believe I'm like that now, everybody that drives with me says that I'm a pretty good driver."

Some cautious drivers relate caution to speed. For them, cautious driving means driving slowly.

"Actually, when I took the test, the comment of the examiner, was that I am too cautious. So, I don't know, maybe I'm just too scared to have an accident, yeah. I drive slower. To the extent that, who cares if I don't overtake that car, I know that I'll get there!"

For other drivers, driving cautiously means driving according to the 'letter of the law,' obeying all the rules of the road. Driving according to the rules of the road is the only way to avoid scrutiny or to have one's driving abilities questioned.

"I'm cautious. I always read the booklet. So, you know, to make a left turn or a right turn and things like that. Those rules are - even when no one is looking, I shall go about it by the booklet. The thing is, if I'm exactly driving as per booklet, I will not give any individual to question my driving. You know, you should have used your indicator, you should have hand signalled. Things like that. I try to drive as the safe driving booklet says."

The above examples of cautious driving involve 'self-monitoring.' That is, the drivers focus on their own driving abilities and skills. The following examples of defensive or 'aware' driving involve 'other-monitoring,' where drivers focus on the behaviour of other motorists and traffic related anomalies.

"I'm aware yes, very much so. I try to watch for anything that moves, basically, whether it's a car, or a bike, or pedestrian, or a cat or a dog or whatever, I just try to be aware of it, consciously, not just subconsciously.

"I think a defensive driver is more along the lines of seeing what situation might happen. And I'm looking always at the minimum lead time, you know two blocks ahead, checking for parked cars, seeing if they're going to turn. 'Ok, this guy's signal's on, but he's missed two streets.' You know that kind of thing. I think defensively you have to be out there, especially in this city any ways, because they're all crazy."

"I don't really think I'm a cautious driver per se, I mean I do pay attention to other people, and I try to anticipate the stupidity that they could – when you learn to drive, you realise just how stupid people are, at least as far as driving goes. People make unbelievable – I'm amazed that there aren't more people dead, so yeah, you just pay attention to what other people are doing, it's way more important. As long as you're confident in what you are doing, and initially you are so busy paying attention to what you're doing that you miss what everyone else is doing. But once you get over that you basically just pay attention to everyone else. Do I think that guy is going to change lanes in front of me? You know? And then they slow down, or you do something. So basically that's what it is. It's more – you really have to pay attention to what everyone else is doing."

Other adult novices who consider themselves aware drivers qualify the situations or circumstances that make them aware. Some of these drivers associate particular areas of the city, such as the downtown core, as areas that require greater awareness when driving. Two of the novice drivers in this study drove motorcycles before qualifying for their Class 7 license. Both were involved in accidents. Previous accident involvement is cited as a factor that fosters greater driver awareness and caution.

"I think that when there are more cars on the road, at rush hour, I'm definitely more aware and I go over my techniques that I learned at YD. I'm much more aware, I'm really concentrating and paying attention. Sometimes when I'm driving with my son, he'll turn the music up too loud and I'll have to turn it down. My doctor is downtown, so when I go downtown, I'm always much more aware when I'm down there, because people just sort of dart in front of you, and there's more traffic, and I – the last time I went down there, I got very flustered because there was a lot of construction, a lot of people sort of weaving in and out, and people walking right out in front of the car. I don't really like driving downtown a lot. I don't have a phobia about it but I'm sure in time I'll get more comfortable."

"I consider myself as an aware driver. I always know what's going on. I think I

know what's going on. I wouldn't say I'm cautious so much as I- because I was in motorcycle accident only three years ago, and so I sort of have this heightened awareness of what's going on around me and so on, and I have this sort of reflex when something's about to happen kind of thing so I tend to react to quickly. And maybe I am a little bit cautious where I won't put myself into situations where I would get into an accident. It's - ok I'm on the highway, and a car is approaching me, and I'm behind a really slow car, whereas before I was in my accident I would have tried to make the pass, you know and get a little closer than I should have. Now I'll just wait. Things like that. I'm cautious in terms of avoiding different circumstances to avoid getting into accidents."

How Adult Novices Compare Older and Younger Drivers

The majority of adult novice drivers participating in this study cited differences between adult and young drivers. This is not surprising given the well-known statistics demonstrating the high crash rates of young drivers under 25 (Groeger and Brown 1989; Nelson et al., 1993; Cooper et al 1995; and Massie et al 1995). The participants identified differences between adult and young drivers in the following inter-related domains: Attitude and skill, peer pressure and impression management, and awareness of the personal, economic and social costs of driving.

The attitudes of adult novice drivers towards young drivers generally confirms Nelson et al's (1993) findings that older drivers view younger drivers as unsafe drivers, but at the same time acknowledge their own driving deficiencies. A small number of adult novices felt that age had little bearing on driving behaviour.

Attitude and Skill

Several adult novices note differences between adult and young drivers in the domains of attitude and skill. Generally, adult novices feel that they have a more mature attitude towards driving than do their younger counterparts. In the adult view, youth have careless or cavalier attitude towards driving that make them more susceptible to taking risks and to driving inappropriately.

On the other hand, adult novices rate youth higher on their driving skills, specifically the mechanics of handling an automobile. Occasional drivers note that youth have a higher level of skill because they have regular and routine access to their parents' vehicle(s). Occasional drivers note that it is difficult for them to acquire the same level of skill since they cannot afford a car and have little access to vehicles.

"Kids are more risky because of their behaviour right? It's not a question of can they drive. I think they can drive. It's more a question of like when they see people, like, you know have cars, you know, they want to, they are more susceptible to 'Come on, let's race!' right? If I can do it, you can do it. Unless when you're an adult, right? You're more responsible in your thinking. But to me, like, I think they have the skills too, whether they are older or young, I think they have the necessary skills to drive, yeah. It's their attitude, it's more of a psychology you know, than the skills of driving."

"Now, in the area of experience I would rate the 16 year olds better than me, because likely they have a family, and a family car, and a parent, and their going to get lots of experience. So in this area too. You know, your adult person, someone with my profile is that we couldn't afford it or we couldn't have access."

Peer Pressure and Impression Management

Adult novices rated themselves as less likely to be influenced by peer pressure than younger drivers (peer pressure amongst youth is well documented in Stoddart 1987). Indeed, many drivers compared their experiences and concerns as teens to their lives as adults. Adult novices note that there is less pressure among their peers to drive dangerously.

"I think that I'm not as prone to be emotional behind the wheel. I'm not into impressing anybody with what I can do with my car. So I think I am less likely to do irresponsible, stupid things, like when I was 16 hanging out with all of my friends. I think I'm more mature, and I don't think would react the same as a young man filled with testosterone."

"They give into peer pressure, but we don't care about peer pressure anymore. But even a 17 year old who wants to drive cautiously, may be talked out of wearing their seat belt, and insisting that all the others wear their seat belts too, because they're making a big stink about it, so she says OK, and she gets into an accident, and she gives into peer pressure."

An interesting point was raised by one adult novice driver, who noted that younger drivers do not have 'futuristic concepts' about how the actions they take may impact upon them later. Youth are more concerned with feeling that they belong to a particular social group, and less concerned about the outcomes of their actions, especially if they have no stake in the costs and maintenance of the car.

"Younger drivers are risk takers. They are also driving to show off to their friends, girlfriends, college peers, so it can be a hazard. But when you're showing off, it's speed, and then I compare my self to be safe. The thing is at that age, the young people feel that if they hit the car, well, the car is purchased by their parents or something. So they're not paying for it. Cost is a factor. And also young people drink a lot. At that age, they live from day to day. They don't have futuristic concepts. It's that, and also the peer pressure. They have to live up to certain expectations. You know, if you don't smoke cigarettes, then you're not one of us. If you don't drive in a certain way, then you know, you're not part of us. So you don't live up to the expectations of your friends."

Peer pressure interacts with other variables to affect the degree to which youth will consider the possible outcomes of their actions. For example, if young people are not responsible for the maintenance, gas or insurance on their parents' car, they will be more susceptible to peer pressure that influences them to drive dangerously. Since they do not bear any 'real' responsibility for the car, they may not seriously consider the ramifications of driving dangerously.

Awareness of the personal, economic, and social costs of driving

Adult novice drivers rate themselves as more aware of the personal, social and economic costs of driving. Affirming Stoddart's (1987) findings, they note that younger drivers drive for fun, while adult drivers drive to facilitate their everyday needs.⁴ Adult drivers note that they are more aware of their mortality, the social costs associated with causing accidents, and the economic costs associated with owning and maintaining cars.

As previously noted, adult novices feel that younger drivers are less inclined to consider the above factors when driving, because their parents are likely assuming the majority of the maintenance and insurance costs of the vehicles they drive.

"I think that it's made a big difference since I was a teenager. I really didn't worry about crashing the car, or speeding or I didn't really worry about my own mortality. And now I'm acutely aware of those possibilities. I try to clear them from my mind when I'm driving, and just concentrate on the driving. But you're more aware of the consequences of a crash, dealing with insurance, fixing the cars, repairs, and all that that entails."

"I'm more aware of my mortality more than the average 16 year old. I maybe concentrate a little better, and I'm a little bit more patient I guess. And also, I don't drive for fun. I drive to get from place to place. I don't look at it as something to do and I don't push the envelope towards that end."

"I notice with 16 to 18 year olds, all they're doing is, 'I want to drive, I want to drive, I want to drive.' And the adults are going, 'I'm thinking about buying a car, I'm thinking about the insurance, I'm thinking about this, I'm thinking about that- they're not thinking 'I gotta drive.' They're thinking of everything else that goes with the driving- gas, maintenance. And I think that has a lot to do with maybe why they're scared. Or maybe they were in an accident for all I know but that's just something that they think more of, whereas a 16 year old is only thinking- 'driving.' Because that's all they care about. But it's not their car. And even if they get their own car, dad's still paying for it."

Age Not a Factor in Driving Behaviour

A small minority of adult novices feel that age has no bearing on driving attitudes or behaviour. Some drivers note that even seasoned professional drivers take risks and cause accidents. This is because seasoned drivers do not have to concentrate to the same degree as novice drivers, and are apt to 'let things slip' and perform dangerous actions, such as changing lanes without shoulder checking.

⁴ The participants in this project, in contrast to Stoddart's (1987) study, did not perceive any differences between young men and young women drivers, or between adult male and adult female drivers. Indeed, as Lonero (1999) notes, traditional gender differences in driving and risk taking behaviours are on the decline.

"No, I don't think age has anything to do with it. It depends on the person. Even professional drivers, sometimes they do crazy things. You say, "Oh my god, is he professional?" Even my husband, who's had twenty seven years of driving, sometimes he forgets to brake, and release the brake, or turn on the light, or make a wrong turning. Sometimes, everybody makes mistake. Professional or new driver. There's something that's inside the driver that they should know about themselves that which way they can go. Just really an inside feeling. It helps the people along. But to concentrate is very important for new driver, some professionals, they think that they have experience, so that they don't have to turn to see the car, or check the mirror, but new drivers have to be more conscientious. So, I think it depends on the driver on how they think, and how the road is dangerous."

Section Four: Identifying and Accounting for Risk: 'Other' and 'Self' Oriented Descriptions of Objective and Subjective Risk

The participants were asked how they perceived risk (in this sense, driving behaviours that they considered to be 'risky') and what risks they thought were acceptable to take in the course of everyday driving. The participants were forthcoming about the personal risks they took when driving.

They way in which the participants perceived of risk and the acceptability of risk taking conform to Groeger and Brown's (1989) concepts of objective and subjective risk. In the context of risk perception, the participants tended to view risks 'objectively.' According to Groeger and Brown (ibid., 156) "objective risk is reflected by the proportion of times a particular behaviour has resulted in unfavourable consequences." Indeed, when assessing driving behaviour that they deem risky, the participants recount times when other motorists performed dangerous actions on the road.

In the context of risk taking, the participants qualify instances where it is acceptable to take risks. Groeger and Brown (ibid) refer to this as subjective risk, which "is the driver's assessment of the objective risk associated with a particular situation and the driver's assessment of his/her ability to avoid undesirable consequences."

Other-Oriented Descriptions of Objective Risk

The participants' perceptions of risky behaviour are 'other-oriented.' Other-oriented perceptions focus on external circumstances or the actions of other people that result in risky driving situations.

Several participants cite failure to keep with the flow of traffic as risky.

"And at intersections. I have a friend who wanted to give me driving lessons, and she drives so slow, when she drives there's a procession of cars behind here all getting uptight, and she doesn't go with the flow of traffic, and she goes at her own pace, and it's slow. And going through intersections, cars are always honking at her, because she pauses, and the time to look is before heading out, and most of those really bad intersection smash up happens."

Behaviours that affect judgement and the ability to manipulate and manoeuvre one's vehicle are deemed risky by the majority of participants. These include speeding in school zones, drinking and driving, talking on cell phones, and in-car distractions.

"I think it's risky to talk on the cell phone while driving. Drinking and driving. I think it's risky to speed. I think it's risky having distractions inside the car, like a dog that can start yapping!"

"I think it's risky exceeding the speed limit in school zones, especially in parks. And I find that cars are piling up behind me because of it! I'm inside the limit and everyone else thinks it's far too slow."

"Well, excessive speeding not paying attention to the signs, and school zones, and oh my gosh, to see those cars zooming through the school zones. Just general discourteousness to everybody else out there."

Participants also noted that weather and night driving can exacerbate risk. Of particular note is the impression that Vancouver motorists drive faster when it rains.

"The weather, when you can't see. Darkness. Those kinds of things. If you can't see then you shouldn't drive."

"Speeding when it's raining – this was something that was pointed out by my driving instructor. He said that when it rains in Vancouver, they speed up. And I've noticed that. And I don't do that. I think it's risky and dangerous. Especially if it's raining hard and you can't see. So I tend to go the speed limit or below that. And people get very frustrated with that. People who weave in and out, like they constantly cut people off. I would never do that, I think it's way too risky."

"The causeway on the Lion's Gate Bridge is risky when it's raining. You can't see the lines on the road and there's deep water on the one side and all that stuff."

A few participants feel that the riding habits of cyclists pose the greatest threat to drivers. These participants are particularly annoyed with cyclists who do not use designated bike lanes and ride on other city streets. The perception is that cyclists do not have the right to use city streets, save those streets designated as 'official' bike routes. Cyclists are criticised for weaving in and out of traffic, not obeying traffic signs, and for not following safety regulations that require the wearing of helmets.

The participants note that if a crash occurs between a vehicle and a cyclist, the cyclist is the one who will be injured. The participants want to avoid risky situations that could lead to injury producing crashes with cyclists.

"Cyclists are a thing I hate most, more than anything in the world. Cyclists are the stupidest – and my boyfriend's a cyclist, and my boss is a cyclist. OK? But they are the stupidest people the second they start to get on the side of the road. OK. Here's a bike lane. Big road. Completely made for bikes. It says "bikes" everywhere, they even advertise it everywhere. They drive along Tenth, where there are parked cars, and it's a narrow road. Cyclist, no helmet, with sandals on. And this is what they do.

They go out into the middle of the traffic, and it's like, even if it's my fault, if it's your fault, the only person who's going to get hurt is you, and the only person that could die is you, and I don't really want to feel responsible for that. And I find cyclists want to be treated like cars, but they don't act like cars. They don't stop at stop signs, they just look. And you know, those are the cyclists who drive you crazy."

"I almost had an accident going on to the Burrard Street bridge, because there was some cyclist that decided to cut in. There was no one or nothing else there, they just weren't paying attention, and I had literally almost knocked off the mirror of this truck right beside me, because he came in so close. And he didn't look or anything like that. My favourite is when two of them are riding together, kissing each other. I don't want to be the person that killed someone, I don't even want to hurt you, I don't want to bend your wheel, I don't want to do any of that kind of stuff. So the way I look at it, there are specific designated ways to get somewhere, I'm sorry if it's two blocks out of your way, but, it doesn't bother me at all when suddenly I have to go down this way, and I have to wait for the cyclists, or that sort of stuff, right? Because the reality is that designated routes are made for them."

Many participants cite aggressive driving as a risky form of behaviour. As previously noted, novice drivers feel especially prone to the dangerous actions of other members of the motoring public. All novice drivers reported problems with other motorists cutting them off and making improper lane changes. Many drivers have also experienced other motorists following them too closely. These behaviours cause novices to become nervous and therefore hinder their ability to drive safely.

"Changing lanes without signalling, excess speed I guess, left and right turns where there isn't really time to get out of oncoming traffic, so they'll just make traffic wait, that kind of stuff. Stopping in the middle of the street to let somebody out of the car or something, you know, cutting across, failure to look, cutting people off, even if they signal, just aggressively changing lanes, not waiting until it's safe to open up, that kind of stuff. There's a lot of aggressive driving, like tailgating and that kind of thing. There's a lot of that, especially in rush hour."

"I think it's risky when you get too close to the car in front of you, and then they start bugging you and making you nervous, because then start feeling nervous and then you make mistakes more easily."

Self-Oriented Descriptions of Subjective Risk

The participants' description of subjective risk is self-oriented. That is, their focus is on internal explanations of one's own risk taking behaviour. The participants explain risk taking behaviour in three main ways. A few participants provide an *honest*, straightforward account of the risks they take. Some participants provide *contradictory* explanations of their risk taking behaviour. That is, they claim not to take risks when in fact admitting to risk-taking. Other participants *qualify* their risk taking behaviour, identifying the specific circumstances when it is acceptable to take risks.

'Honest' risk takers provide forthright accounts of their risk taking behaviour, admitting freely that they take risks when driving. Examples include speeding, improper lane changes, rolling stops, failing to check blind spots, and making improper turns.

"Well I change lanes not always on the dotted line. I might change lanes in the middle of an intersection if there's no one else around- that kind of thing. Rolling stops, turning corners and of course going over the speed limit sometimes as well. And if I have other people in the van then I'm not paying as much attention to the road as I probably should."

"Definitely not checking my blind spot. There's been a couple of times where I was about to change lanes, but for me it's habit, and I checked, and there was someone there, so that would definitely be risky."

"Say I want to turn left, and there's a car coming from the other lane, and it would probably be more appropriate for me to pause and let the car go by, where I will put into gear, punch it and go, right?"

"Trying to go with the flow of traffic and everyone really speeding, and I'm going with the flow of traffic on Kingsway, say I'm going 65 or 70. To me that's risky because I'm going over the speed limit, I'm going with the flow of traffic, so I sometimes get a little nervous about that."

Contradictory risk takers state that it is important to obey rules. At the same time, rules can be broken if the driving situation demands it, or if the rule is deemed to have little bearing on the safety of the public and other motorists. Contradictory drivers prioritise rules according to self-defined importance. Examples of appropriate rule breaking generally pertain to disobeying road signs.

"I think all traffic signs are important- maybe not all u-turn ones. But most of them- like school grounds and playgrounds- those are, I think with those you have to go by the rules, because look at all the accidents there are anyways."

'Qualifying' risk takers are careful to explain the situations and circumstances when rule breaking is acceptable. The main rule that the participants qualify breaking is speeding. In fact, all of the participants in this study reveal that they drive above posted speed limits (so in a broad sense, they have 'contradicted' the statements made in Section 4a). It is interesting to note how the participants qualify or account for breaking the speed limit.

Many participants identify particular circumstances when speeding is acceptable, such as having the skill to control the car, not having children in the car, speeding on freeways as opposed to city streets, speeding if the road is clear, and speeding in non-residential areas.

"I think you can speed when you know how to speed, like when you have control of the car."

"I drive faster when my kids are not in the car. About 5 km over the speed limit. But I would not do that when they are in the car. Besides bumping over the speed limit a little? That's about it."

"It's never ok to bend the speeding rules- only on highway and freeways, where the traffic is more open."

"When they see plainly no cars behind or ahead of them, and no pedestrians, the road is not really populated. Maybe a bit over speeding. Maybe 5 kilometres would be OK."

"Oh, I speed on the road! I don't want to be one of those people that were on the news today, that nailed someone at 200 – somebody did that on Knight Street, the guy got blown 200 ft. I don't want to be taking anybody's life driving. I guess I give myself the go ahead when I see nobody else on the road, and it's a straight-away, and when I have good vision, like I mean, they call it eye-lead time, or whatever, right? If I can look ahead, look at the picture of what's going on and that, if in that split second say it's safe, I will go."

"If they think it's safe enough for me to go 80, and you're going 85, I think that's a little OK. But if you're doing 80 and you're supposed to be doing 50, in some residential area, that's where I think people should be ticketed. I think it's ok to speed when I don't think anyone is going to jump out in front of me. I will not exceed the speed limit when I'm in a residential area where a cat, a dog, a person, a child, a ball, anything like that could come flying out. But if I'm up at U.B.C., basically all that there is open space. So there's some places where it's not OK to speed, but it's OK within reason, I guess to speed? But within residential areas, anywhere that I think I could run over someone, I can't go fast. I don't care, I mean 50 million people could pass me, but I'm not going to be the one that ran over that person that wasn't paying attention. So that's the difference, I guess."

A Note on Speeding to Keep with the Flow of Traffic

It is interesting to note that most participants qualify speeding on city streets as necessary to keep up with the flow of traffic.

"I know on Broadway that people speed all the time. But isn't that going with the flow of traffic? "

"When I first got my license, I was very much go with the speed limit, but people were very angry, some were giving me the finger, so I thought that well, this is creating problems for other motorists so I started going more with the flow of the traffic, but I find sometimes that that's still not fast enough, and I find that I'm going 60 with the flow of traffic on Vancouver streets and it's not fast enough. I usually let someone pass or pull off."

Keeping with the flow of traffic presents an interesting dilemma for adult novice drivers. Drivers must weigh the legal imperative to drive within posted speed limits against driving to keep with the flow of traffic, which is often well above the speed limit. Indeed, many participants note that it is more dangerous to drive at the speed limit than to drive faster with the flow of traffic. The participants note that driving too slow in fast traffic leads other

motorists to pass dangerously, and increases the chance of crash involvement. As noted in Section 2, this is exacerbated by the fact that the 'N' identifies novice drivers to other motorists, who are apt to take dangerous actions to avoid driving in proximity to novices.

Furthermore, there is an impetus for adult novices to monitor their driving behaviour in the Class 7 stage, as they must prepare for the Level 2 road test. When passing the Level 1 road test, all Class 7 license holders are given a pamphlet entitled *Moving on to Class 5: A Guide to the Level 2 Passenger Vehicle Road Test* (ICBC 2000b). The pamphlet outlines some of the driving skills on which novices will be tested. Speed control is one of those skills. Drivers are supposed to "maintain a safe speed, one that keeps up with the flow of traffic and is within the posted speed limit" (ibid). However, the participants in this study note that it is impossible to keep with the flow of traffic *and* stay within the posted speed limit.

Indeed, for participants who took driving lessons, many instructors told them to drive at 60km/h in a 50km/h zone to keep up with the flow of traffic, but to ensure that they drive at 49km/h for the road test. The reality of driving on city streets and keeping with the flow of traffic means that one must exceed the speed limit. This differs with the theory of the Level 2 road test, which requires novices to keep with the flow of traffic and stay within the speed limit. The main worry of novices is that they will fail the Level 2 test if they speed to keep with the flow of traffic, or drive at the speed limit and disrupt the flow of traffic. The testing criteria of speed control may warrant re-examination.

Section Five: Attitudes Towards B.C.'s GLP

The participants hold a variety of opinions of B.C.'s GLP. Not surprisingly, there are differences in opinion between occasional drivers and frequent drivers. Almost all occasional drivers dislike the GLP, because of the extended learner and intermediate stages, and the costs associated with re-testing. Frequent drivers on the other hand support the programme.

Attitudes of Frequent Drivers to B.C.'s GLP

Since frequent drivers own their own vehicle and are employed, the GLP poses fewer obstacles to full licensure. They can afford the Level 2 road test and feel that they will be able to master the skills required to pass the test with relative ease within an 18 month time period. Even if they fail the test, they will be able to re-test as many times as they need to pass before the Class 7 license expires. The likelihood that frequent drivers will move on to full licensure is therefore quite high.

Frequent drivers tended to advocate more practice time in the learner stage, over and above the 30 hour requirement. They feel that new drivers require more experience on the road.

"I think if you haven't had a license, you need to get the experience, right? I know that you're supposed to have, I think it's 30 hours before you can go for the road test. And you know what? It's a drop in the bucket. It's nothing. In my opinion, it's not enough time. You've got to learn by being out on the road."

"I sort of respect what it's trying to achieve. Especially in the city where there are a lot of people coming in - the immigrants and the young people. It's a young city

and it's also a city with a lot of people that haven't driven a lot before, and that haven't grown up around a certain grid of traffic or whatever. I think in terms of that waiting period it's probably a good idea to give people that experience."

Several frequent drivers feel strongly that all drivers be re-tested on a regular basis.

"Everyone should be tested every two years."

"And I think personally, you know how we have this GLP thing? I think that people should have to take their license again. After 20 years of driving, and I know no one will agree with me, but I think three quarters of the people that are driving on the road would have failed. That's my opinion."

"All drivers should be tested regularly."

Attitudes of Occasional Drivers to B.C.'s GLP

The attitude of occasional drivers to B.C.'s GLP is quite different from that of frequent drivers. The majority of occasional drivers in this study are unemployed and seeking work. Most of them are recent immigrants. The length of the GLP delays the time it takes to become a fully licensed driver, and thus excludes them from employment opportunities that they may otherwise be able to secure. If the occasional driver is unemployed, the costs of re-testing will be prohibitive, especially when a lack of access to vehicles and a lack of practice increase the chances that they will fail the Level 2 road test. It is no wonder that the majority of occasional drivers advocate a shorter and less restrictive licensing programme.

"I won't go for that 2nd test because I'm very much aware of the purpose of the 2nd test and the fact that I haven't had the time to practice. So, would you say the programme worked for me? Not really. The fact remains that I still don't have access to a car. That's the key thing about driving, how well I'm going to drive, so I don't know how it was for somebody who has been driving all of this time, I'm not sure how much the second road test would mean to them."

Some occasional drivers desire one global driving test that examines all manoeuvres and skills, rather than providing two different tests in two stages. In other words, ICBC should administer the equivalent of the Level 2 test after the learner period. If drivers pass that test, then they have proved that they are able to drive, and require no further testing.

"Because most of my friends who, I understand that if you took the knowledge test before the implementation of this law, then once you pass the test then you get a Class 5 right away. And I have lots of friends – we took the same road test, they passed, I passed, but I am still at a Class 7 because of the law. My reasoning behind it is if you pass, you pass. They cannot just give you a temporary license because you know they are scared that you might be involved in too much, accidents right? That's the reason why, especially kids, you know? If the examiner thinks that you don't deserve to pass, then you don't deserve to pass, because, you know, to me driver's licences shouldn't be a middle road, either or thing, you either pass or you fail. If

you're not ready, you're not ready. So, they should upgrade the test right away. I heard that to be able to pass the Class 5 after having that N you have to drive on the highways, back into a parking space, whatever. Make the first test a more comprehensive exam."

Other occasional drivers are more sympathetic to the rationale of B.C.'s GLP, and even advocate two stages of driving. However they question, as discussed in Section Two, the rationale of testing occasional drivers who may, for the foreseeable future, remain occasional drivers. These drivers advocate a 'bonus malus' point system, which restricts drivers on the basis of demerit points. Whether they drive a lot or a little, drivers who drive dangerously and cause accidents should be penalised accordingly. Drivers should not be re-tested if they drive point free.

"I don't mind the going through 2 stages. I think it's totally fair and valid. The thing that I'm not so sure about is the test at the end of the 2nd stage. If you've managed to drive without accidents for a year and a half, then I don't think a test is going to make more sense, to get the license. It's fair to have two stages, but I don't think there should be a test at the end of the 2nd part. I think the same rules should be for everybody, whether they are driving a little or a lot, whether they own a car or don't, it shouldn't – nobody should go around asking questions on how many hours of driving they did, it's not like flying a plane or something. And if they feel comfortable enough driving for every now and then, then I think that's fair enough. The dilemma is moral. After the year and a half, if they drive accident free, then we can probably assume that hopefully they'll just drive as accident free as everybody else who's driven a year and a half without accidents. If they don't, you prolong it. B.C. should have a point system. I think that should be the indication."

Section 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

The goal of this paper has been to provide- from the point of view of the participants- an exploratory account of the Erfahrung, or routine driving experiences of adult novice drivers. It has touched on some of the issues and concerns that affect adults in B.C.'s GLP.

The most salient findings of this study concern 1) The differences in Erfahrung between frequent and occasional drivers; and 2) The differences between the participants' objective and subjective interpretations of risk.

B.C.'s GLP should be designed to treat all adult drivers equitably. In most provinces, driving is considered a privilege, not a right. However, the granting of certain privileges is often facilitated for adults, who are generally deemed more responsible than youth. ICBC notes that one in five new drivers is involved in an injury producing accident in the first two years on the road. Young drivers 18 and under constitute 66% of all new drivers (Cooper et al. 1995), and the rate of crash involvement of adult novices appears to be lower than youth novices (ibid).

Lonero (1999, 1) notes that "supporting mobility is the main function of formal driver education." The evidence from this paper suggests that the design of B.C.'s GLP has

not considered the mobility needs of all adult novice drivers, particularly occasional drivers, many of whom are recent immigrants, unemployed, and for whom vehicle ownership and access are problematic. In its present state, B.C.'s GLP favours two groups; 1) youth- the majority of whom have access to their parents' vehicles, and 2) frequent adult novice drivers- who own or co-own their own vehicles.

The GLP fails to meet the mobility needs of occasional adult drivers. For adults, mobility is not simply an issue of driving from one point to another, it is one of securing opportunities that provide them greater social and economic freedom. Three recommendations concerning future research and the licensure of adult novice drivers are proposed.

Recommendation One: Social Costs Research

ICBC must conduct research that compares the social costs of crash involvement among occasional adult drivers (specifically those who are unemployed, have little formal education or job skills and do not own cars) to the social costs of unemployment.

Recommendation Two (Preliminary): Restructure the GLP for Adult Novice Drivers

The following recommendations are preliminary, and depend in part on the results of the social costs analysis proposed in Recommendation One.

1. B.C.'s GLP should adopt a programme that mirrors Quebec's GLP. In Quebec, new drivers over 25 years of age are exempt from the GLP. All drivers must enter a 12 month learner period (8 months with an approved driver course). If drivers over 25 pass the road test they become fully licensed drivers (Simard 1999).

2. B.C. could adopt a point system whereby adult drivers over 25 enter a two year probationary period. Driving infractions will increase the probationary period or result in prohibitions from driving. Drivers would not be removed from probation until after two years of point-free driving.

3. If either of the above strategies were adopted, it would be essential to award adult novices Class 5 licenses after completion of the first road test. Licenses could be issued as 5 year original licenses, or 2 year probationary licenses. In either case, Class 5 licensure will facilitate the mobility of needs of all drivers, especially occasional drivers seeking employment requiring Class 5 licensure. The requirement that a 'N' new driver sign be posted should also be removed, if future studies confirm the negative reactions of the motoring public to novice drivers.

Recommendation Three: Conduct Participant Observation Studies on the Driving Behaviour of Adult Novices

Adult novice drivers self-reports indicate that there are discrepancies in their objective and subjective interpretations of risk and risk taking. It is clear that adult novices report taking unacceptable risks, notably speeding. Further research on the driving behaviour of adult novices must be conducted. Specifically, participant observation studies, similar to Rothe's studies on truck drivers (Rothe 1991) should be undertaken with adult novices. That is, researchers should accompany adult novices when they drive to document their driving behaviour.

Statistics abound providing 'post-hoc' data on the crash involvement of drivers. Much less has been said about how different categories of drivers operate their vehicles on a day to day basis. Future research geared towards the first hand observation of adult novice's driving experiences, encounters, and feelings will no doubt provide a more holistic understanding of this largely ignored population of motorists.

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