

**NARRATIVES OF THE COMMUTE: EXPERIENCES OF  
COMMUTING IN THE PORT ELIZABETH NORTHERN AREAS**

By

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### **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, declare that this dissertation is a presentation of my original research work and that it has not been submitted to any university for examination. Wherever contributions of others are included, every effort has been made to acknowledge these references clearly and consistently.

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work my parents: Fiona Lingham and Ricardo Lingham; my siblings, Britney Lingham, Junior Petersen and Destani Petersen. This work is also dedicated to my great grandfather Frederick Weitz aka “Pa Sakkie” who has been a great source of guidance and wisdom in my life.

Lastly, I would like to make special mention of my late grandfather, Michael Lingham. I am grateful to have known a man as honourable as he was, and I will carry the lessons he taught me wherever I go.

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## **Abstract**

Transportation is a fundamental element of human existence. As urban areas continue to grow at a rapid speed public transport increasingly takes on the role of providing citizens with access to participate in activities of the city. Research has shown that individual perception of public transport is influenced by passenger response to collective mobility when on board modes of transport. This study aimed to investigate the minibus taxi commuters' constructions and relevance of their taxi commuting experiences in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas. Building on existing work it asks: How do commuters in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth describe and narrate their taxi commuting experiences? This thesis is interested in the experience of public transport as told by those who make use of the industry. The study focuses on both commuters and drivers and the way they characterize the social experience of commuting in taxis. These individuals provide first-hand experience and insight of the industry. The purpose of this study is to foreground the voices of those who have first-hand experience of dependency on the public transport industry. It is these voices that must be heard and considered in policy formation. The study found simultaneous vulnerabilities exist between taxi drivers and taxi commuters resulting in both groups being held captive by the taxi industry.

## **List of Acronyms**

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS	ANC
BOTTOM- UP PLANNING	BUP
BUS RAPID TRANSIT	BRT
CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS	COSATU
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT	CBD
INTEGRATED PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEM	IPTS
NELSON MANDELA BAY MUNICIPALITY	NMBM
NATIONAL TRANSPORT POLICY FRAMEWORK	NTPF
NATIONAL TAXI TASK TEAM	NTTT
PAN-AFRICANIST CONGRESS	PAC
PUBLIC UTILITY TRANSPORT CORPORATION	PUTCO
RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME	RDP
SOUTHERN AFRICAN BLACK TAXI ASSOCIATION	SABTA
SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL CIVIC ORGANIZATION	SANCO
SOUTH AFRICAN REVENUE SERVICE	SARS

TAXI RECAPITALISATION PROGRAMME

TRP

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FUND

UIF

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## **CHAPTER ONE: Introduction and methodology of the study**

Transportation is one of the most critical elements of being a human being. It is how we navigate through societal spaces. Transportation plays a significant role in cities, however, public transport specifically, plays an even more relevant role in shaping sustainable cities of the future (Monakali, 2015:7). As urban areas continue to grow, both in developed and developing countries, public transport increasingly takes on a crucial role in shaping the ability for individuals to experience and participate in the activities of the city (Monakali, 2015:7). Having an efficient public transportation system is, therefore, an indicator of whether a society is functioning or not.

More developed countries are often considered as leading examples of sustainable development (Pojani & Stead, 2015: 7785). Some cities in these countries have banned cars from major parts of downtown areas and/or confined them in other ways (Pojani & Stead, 2015:7785). More developed countries are increasingly implementing initiatives to increase the number of citizens using public transport. A high percentage of the population in European countries use public transport (Monakali, 2015:46). Reasons for this can be attributed to the high amount of tax on fuel and car purchases, parking not being made a priority and restrictions on the usage of cars (Monakali, 2015:46). This combined with an efficient public transport service has encouraged the use of this mode of transportation.

However, in South Africa it has become the premise that public transport is largely for the poor and nearly half of the South African population is considered chronically poor (The World Bank Group, 2018:18). The following statistics were highlighted in a media release by The National Household Travel Survey in South Africa (NHTS): in 2014 68,8% of households commuted using taxis, 20,1% of households commuted using buses, and 9,9% of households commuted using trains (Statistics South Africa, 2014).

When speaking about public transport in South Africa, Jack van der Merwe, the chief executive of the Gautrain Management Agency stated: *"It is also a mode of force because many people who use public transport have no other option. It needs to become a mode of choice and the clever thing to do"* (Oxford, 2013). Studies and reports on the state of public transportation paint the image of an industry that is, for the most part, unsafe and unreliable. Mthinkulu

(2017:811) states, *“The South African public transport industry is under immense scrutiny as captive users of these systems face unsafe, unreliable and costly systems.”*

This thesis is interested in the experience of public transport as told by those who make use of the industry. The study focuses on both commuters and drivers and the way they characterize the social experience of commuting in taxis. These individuals provide first-hand experience and insight of the industry. The purpose of this study is to foreground the voices of those who have first-hand experience of dependency on the public transport industry. It is these voices that must be heard and considered in policy formation. The researcher believes that looking at the experiences of commuters who regularly make use of minibus taxis is an essential area of study when investigating approaches to designing and implementing public transport systems. This research study takes the commute as not simply moving from point A to B but rather choosing to unpack the perceptions that contribute towards conceptualization of experiences associated with urban commuting. Of interest are those black South Africans who make up the majority of public transport commuters and whose voices need to be heard when discussing urban commuting.

Although the minibus taxi industry is the predominant means of public transportation there are continuous reports of commuter dissatisfaction. This research study aims to uncover reasons for the continued support of the industry despite the dangers associated with it. Of relevance is why the implementation of safer and more reliable transport options have not deterred commuters from the industry.

### **Boycotting Buses and the Pre-Taxi Era.**

Bus boycotts due to public grievances were common in the cities during apartheid. The political and economic climate was tense at the time bus boycotts were most prevalent. The government had a vested interest in the bus industry and therefore encouraged commuters to use buses. As the cost of living increased, black South Africans found it increasingly difficult to provide for their necessities, including public transport. The Apartheid government sought to monopolize the public transport industry with its formal system, which included fixed prices and routes. The issues black commuters faced during this time ranged from high costs to dirty buses (McCarthy & Swilling, 1985:393). Fare hikes were, however, the primary concern.

Black commuters became increasingly frustrated trapped in a cycle that saw much of their income and time spent using public transport. It was around the 1950s where tension reached an all-time high, leading a commuter boycott of the bus industry; “*in early January 1957, South Africa’s Public Utility Transport Corporation (PUTCO) announced an increase in bus fares of one penny, from 4d to 5d*” (Catsam, 2007:79). The bus boycotts played an important role in South African history as it marked the first united campaign by the majority black population against the Apartheid government (Mangena, 2007). Media articles on the boycotts detail the lengths residents who participated went to, walking up to 25 km to get to work showing their determination to be heard by the government.

Media reports on the Alexandra bus boycotts differ with white reporters suggesting that the boycott was politically motivated and had been planned by leaders in the community (Phahle, 2019). However, residents living in Alexandra insisted that it was spontaneous as residents could no longer afford to commute using the buses. Arthur Magerman, who lived in Alexandra at the time of the 1957 boycott, detailed how for three months, about 70 000 residents travelled by foot back and forth into downtown Johannesburg (Mangena, 2007).

Protests showed no signs of slowing down leading the government to eventually scrap its proposal for the one-penny increase (Mangena, 2007). The events that unfolded in Alexandra were soon mimicked by residents in Soweto and other black townships across South Africa (Mangena, 2007). The bus boycotts showed the impact public protest could have on public policy.

Formalised racial segregation of passengers in trains dates to as early as 1918. The segregation was based upon an enabling act of parliament (Pirie, 1992:672). Informal racial segregation, however, dates to as early as the turn of the century (Pirie, 1992:672). Most notably, in 1893 Mahatma Gandhi was forcibly moved from a whites-only carriage on a train in Pietermaritzburg (South African History Online, 2011). This was an example of the reactions of officials when individuals disobeyed laws that segregated each carriage according to race.

When the National Party was voted into power in 1948 there was a shift from segregation to apartheid in trains across South Africa. The shift involved policing racial prohibition more effectively and introducing segregation to suburban trains. From the second half of 1949 black

South Africans were confined to one point of access that had been set aside (Pirie, 1992:681). This was met with acts of resistance across the country. This included occupying carriages reserved for whites (Pirie, 1992:679; Pirie, 1992:681).

The apartheid spatial design denied opportunities to social wellbeing through repressive control of movements from the city centres of economic production and well-being (Khan, 2014:174). Under the apartheid government, the urban transport system was set up primarily to convey large numbers of 'cheap' black labour from their places of residence to the city centres (Khan, 2014:179). Therefore, spatial apartheid was also sustained by black workers having to pay for themselves to go to work even though the system itself situated them far from their places of work. There was a direct relation between segregated spatial planning and the cost of public transport.

### **The History of the South African Minibus Taxi Industry.**

The history of minibus taxis has its roots in Apartheid South Africa. In the 1970s the taxi industry capitalized on the opportunity to meet the needs of black commuters. During this time commuters were dissatisfied with the state-owned bus industry. There was a need for an option that was not only cost-effective but more easily accessible to the public; the taxi industry provides *"a decentralised, inexpensive, and more accessible alternative to public transport"* (Fobosi, 2013:104). As stated by Fourie, the minibus taxi industry in South Africa has grown from a *"negligible informal sector activity in townships to the dominant mode of public transport in South Africa"* (Fourie, 2003:32). The industry plays a central role within South African society and the economy, in providing public transportation for much of the population. As stated by Fobosi (2013:1), *"it provides an important service to the poor black communities throughout South Africa by transporting them for work and other purposes"*.

The taxi industry is at the core of urban black social experience and identity. It can be found in music, poetry and other methods of storytelling about being a black South African. There has, however, been a noticeable change in how it is mentioned in current pop culture as compared to when it was first introduced.

The song “Zola Budd”<sup>1</sup> by the late South African pop icon, Brenda Fassie was released in 1987. The song, named after Zola Budd (Zola Pieterse), a South African runner who competed in the 1984 Olympic Games. The song is, however, not about the runner but rather the Toyota HiAce minibus, which was nicknamed Zola Budd due to its speed (Estefan, et al., 2017). The two Zola Budds became separate symbols (Estefan, et al., 2017) and for black South Africans, the minibus taxi largely replaced the image of the athlete the song was named after (Estefan, et al., 2017).

The song spotlighted Fassie as a musician able to capture an audience during the South African state of emergency, a time when many other black South Africans had their music banned. It also shone a light on the minibus taxi industry which transported millions of black South Africans. These commuters used the taxis to work in white homes, businesses and government buildings, making the song relatable to many as it spoke to their individual stories.

Mbongeni Ngema, a celebrated anti-apartheid writer, composer and director, mentioned the E20 minibus taxi in his classic love song: *Stimela saseZola*<sup>2</sup>. In this song, Ngema, sang of how he got into an E20 minibus taxi to visit the love of his life in Soweto (Chauke, 2013). The song uses the taxi as a backdrop for a love story, further emphasising the usage of minibus taxis as a symbol for black mobility. It was during the times of Fassie and Ngema where the minibus taxi industry formed part of the way in which black South Africans told their stories, for it was more than just a mode of transportation, it was an intrinsic part of their lives.

When one looks at the way taxis are mentioned in these songs it becomes clear that to take a taxi for a black South African was not seen to be negative, as is so often seen today. It was simply part of their story and therefore played an important role in storytelling. As this thesis unpacks the complicated relationship between the minibus taxi industry and black commuters it is not describing the relationship as inherently bad. Rather, it shines a light on the narratives of the commuting experience.

An example of this is seen when The Soil, A South African band, used minibus taxis as the backdrop for their music video (channel24, 2017). In the music video for their song, *Thambo*

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<sup>1</sup> Brenda Fassie – Greatest Hits: The Queen Of African Pop (1964 - 2004)

<sup>2</sup> Mbongeni Ngema – *S'timela Sase-zola*

Lam, a love story unfolds after a woman catches the eye of a man while walking through a taxi rank (channel24, 2017). This music video shows how the minibus taxi is part of everyday experience and steps away from the negative narrative of the industry. It shows the interaction between young black South Africans as they navigate through the urban commuting experience.

Thambo Lam, much like Zola Budd and Stimela saseZola, recognises that the minibus taxi industry forms part of the everyday lives of black South Africans. Therefore, using a taxi rank and later a taxi as a backdrop for a modern-day love story be relatable for many. The relationship between black urban commuters and the minibus taxi industry is, therefore, more profound than merely commuting. Since its origin taxis have been a source of mobility for black South Africans who previously had limited access to transport. Taxis have thus formed a unique part of the black commuter culture in South Africa. The relationship that exists shows the way taxi culture is perceived and represented as a critical context of South African black urban commuting narratives.

The narrative has however changed in the post-apartheid era as there has been growing mention of minibus taxis and the role, they play for young black South Africans trying to navigate their way through the contrasting realities of rural home to modern work and school. An example of this can be found in the novel '*Dog eat Dog*' by Niq Mhlongo. The novel tells the story of Dingz, a student at the University of Witwatersrand. *Dog eat Dog* elaborately outlines how Dingz, along with his friends navigate themselves through spaces both as university students and as individuals coming from rural areas who are struggling to make ends meet. In the book Dingz leaves the university space and travels to Soweto and the vastly different worlds are outlined. It tells the story of students who once they leave the perceived safe spaces of their university embark on journeys using what is described as death traps (Dlamini, 2015:155) wherein commuters leave their lives in the hands of injurious taxi drivers (Dlamini, 2015:155).

In his storytelling Niq Mhlongo highlights an important area as taxis often work as a buffer between the two worlds that many university students find themselves navigating between. Access to institutions of higher learning is perceived by many black South Africans as a means out of their current poverty, not only for the individual student but also for the family. Minibus taxis provide these students with access to these institutions and therefore form part of the storytelling of experiences of many black South Africans.

In the poem, 'Taxi Ride' by Vangile Gantsho (2017), she writes about the experience of being a woman riding in a taxi. Gantsho describes the different things she sees and hears whilst on her commuting journey. She also details advances made by taxi drivers, these advances are subtly described, but strike a nerve as it is the reality of many women who make use of taxis. ActionAid South Africa released results of a survey they conducted, and it was found that, *"more than two-thirds of women using minibus taxis and taxi ranks have witnessed violence and harassment"* (Business Live, 2017). Although this thesis does not focus on unpacking this reality it is important to note as it may influence the overall commuting experience for women who make use of minibus taxis in South Africa.

The abovementioned storytellers; Fassie, Ngema, The Soil, Mhlongo and Gantsho, like many others, highlight the importance of understanding the minibus taxi industry as more than a simple means of getting from point A to point B. They accentuate the relationship between black South Africans and the taxi industry. Furthermore, they show that the journey brings forth experiences and in turn, stories that are unique to the individuals living through them. This makes understanding the experiences of those using minibus taxis important as they are filled with unique voices. In this thesis the researcher will unpack some of these stories, highlighting the experiences of those using minibus taxis.

The question of how the taxi industry went from being viewed as something for the hip and modern black South African to being viewed as an industry for those who have no other option, is important to unpack. Therefore, in this thesis the researcher looks at how the taxi industry has transformed since its origins. Looking at how the biggest black-owned industry in South Africa, transporting millions of black South Africans, has largely become a symbol of the poor.

Therefore, to understand the way in which the minibus taxi industry has changed since its inception one needs to look at the change in its place in popular culture. The association between black urban mobility has changed vastly since its origins in black urban mobility since the days of Brenda Fassie and Mbongeni Ngema in that the E20 minibus mentioned in both songs were once viewed as something hip and formed part of the middle class black South Africans' lives Today, the minibus taxi industry is rarely associated with stylish black middle class success and now the taxi is seen as the only option for those who are unable to opt out and buy cars. The taxi is, therefore, presently seen as a dangerous industry used by poor South Africans.

## **Post-Apartheid Government Initiatives to Transform the Public Transportation Industry.**

As the discussions on the spatial design and patterns of public transportation during the apartheid era outline, the impact the oppressive regime has had is not a simple task to rectify. It is therefore imperative that we look at the literature on how South Africa has attempted to transform the public transportation industry since its democratisation.

Initiatives focusing on the development and transformation of the public transport industry are intersectional in approach due to the industry's multidimensional nature. Transportation is an area of public policy that always intersects with other aspects of poverty, but these are particularly deep in the post-apartheid context and deserving of immediate attention during the period of transition in the early 1990s (Thomas, 2016:354). The system of apartheid left a legacy of social exclusion and a highly distorted separation of people from both their places of work and most social services required to live a productive life. The following section will touch on two initiatives to transform public policy in South Africa.

These initiatives are the National Transport Policy Forum (NTPF) and Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The researcher acknowledges that there have since been more recent initiatives to the transformation of public policy but has chosen to discuss these two as they were established in 1994, the year South Africa became a democratic state.

### **The National Transport Policy Forum (NTPF)**

In September 1994 the National Transport Policy Forum (NTPF) was published. The establishment of the NTPF came about after much debate between various stakeholders and focused on taking a more people-centred approach to public policy design. In *Integrating Gender into World Bank Financed Programmes* a summarised explanation of the NTPF is given: *"The NTPF, in short, is committed to social transformation, economic empowerment and greater participation of stakeholders as evidenced by the number of organizations that took part in the process of policy formulation"* (Mahapa, 2003:7). This was a step in the right direction for South Africa, and it saw a door being opened to begin conversations on approaches to socio-economic development in South Africa. There were many institutions represented during the debates and discussions.

Some of the stakeholders include: the African National Congress (ANC), the South African National Civic Organization (SANCO), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa, the National African Federated Transport Organization representing 50,000 transport operators, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), the Southern African Black Taxi Association (SABTA), Transnet and several organizations representing the private sector (Mahapa, 2003:7).

This saw various institutions coming together to create a people-centred approach to public policy design, and the voices of South Africans listened to, which served as a testimony to the transformation that was occurring in 1994. However, the researcher believes that the NTPF was a means to open doors for further discussion and thus allow South Africa to build on and expand on how they hoped to see the country develop.

### **Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)**

In the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) document the ANC highlighted the massive spatial and consequential socioeconomic impact the apartheid government left behind, *“the policy of apartheid has moved the poor away from job opportunities and access to amenities. This has burdened the workforce with enormous travel distances to their places of employment and commercial centres, and thus with excessive costs”* (O'Malley, n.d.). The ANC highlighted the effects of the apartheid regimes oppression, making it clear that moving forward and creating public policy to rectify this deep-rooted issue would not be an easy task.

The RDP framework aimed to create a transport policy that created a safe and cost-effective transportation industry. This framework led to the 1996 White Paper on National Land Transport Policy. The White Paper *“recognised transport as one of its five main priority areas for socio-economic development, and envisioned new transportation systems that support government strategies for economic and social development whilst being environmentally and sustainable”* (Jennings, 2015:767). An interesting statement in the RDP policy framework is as follows: *“taxis must act as feeders to bus/rail services or as prime movers if neither rail nor bus is available”* (O'Malley, n.d.). This refers to the Bus Rapid Transit System and what the public transport system aims to do. It is interesting that this was stated in the RDP framework back in 1994 and is only now been implemented in certain cities within South Africa.

## **The Spatial Design of the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas.**

The spatial design of a city influences the accessibility of citizens and results in the patterns of mobility found in cities. The impact of spatial design on the accessibility of public transport is described by Mbara (2006:125), who states, *“the location of physical infrastructure such as houses, industries, commercial centres has implications on transport costs”*.

In the South African context, it is essential to acknowledge the influence the apartheid spatial design has had on patterns of mobility. On a global scale, cities develop their own spatial structure and transport systems (Rode et al., 2014:4). The root of understanding patterns of commuter mobility in cities is, therefore, found in unpacking the impact spatial design has on these cities.

The Port Elizabeth Northern Areas comprise of predominantly coloured community clusters established under the Group Areas Act 41, of 1950. Agherdien et al., (1997: 94) outlines the socio-economic grouping of those forcibly moved to the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas:

*“The ‘lower-income’ section of the coloured community settled in Salt Lake and Helenvale; the ‘higher-income’ group in areas like West End, Springdale, Gelvandale and Salsoneville; and the ‘middle-class’ bought plots in Gelvan Park and built their own homes”*.

Appendix A shows a social tapestry map of Port Elizabeth outlining how the Group Areas Act 41 of 1950, in its planning and implementation, placed people of colour further from the city centre. In the design, the lower-income families of colour were placed furthest away from the Central Business District (CBD). This increased the cost of public transportation for those working in and around the CBD. This further contributed to the socio-economic oppression of those needing to travel to the CBD.

Acknowledging spatial design and the socio-economic constraints placed on those living in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas is essential when looking at patterns of urban mobility within these communities. It also provides a perspective on the relationship between those living in the abovementioned communities and the minibus taxi industry. As stated by Berrisford (2011:249), *“to varying degrees, each town or city in South Africa reflects not only an unequal*

*distribution of infrastructure, amenities and accessibility but the distances between the places in which the poor and the well off live exacerbate the inequality”.*

The importance of Berrisford’s statement resonates when one looks at the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas. The design of these areas was not centred around providing easy accessibility or proximity to the CBD. We thus see these communities spread further away from the main roads, making accessibility to public transportation stops designed via main roads difficult.

### **Public Transport Trends in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas.**

Investigating public transportation requires an integrated approach. One cannot look at it solely as a form of transport because there are various influences which affect the industry itself. The public transport system in South Africa requires one to use a political lens to understand the relationship between black South Africans in the post-apartheid era and the current public transport systems offered today.

As stated by Walters (2013:35), *“public transport policy and its implementation can however be seen as one of the most complex areas of transport policy in the country due to its political linkages, funding constraints, a significant push to involve previously excluded businesses in the subsidy system, and being faced with financial constraints and a public outcry over the state of public transport in the country (e.g., adequacy, public transport user costs, accessibility, safety issues, affordability)”.*

There are socio-economic and political influences in the development of public transport systems and these need to be addressed concerning the overall commuting experience. The gap that this research study proposes to fill is public transport within the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas needs to be understood beyond the physical movement from one stop to another and rather understood as a journey of commute that has various factors influencing the experience<sup>3</sup>. This study will contribute to how public transportation policies are approached not only within the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas but on a larger, national scale.

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<sup>3</sup> The researcher informally observed parts of Port Elizabeth where a variety of income groups utilizing minibus taxis had no agency whilst on board. Therefore, class was not identified in this research study.

This research study aims to investigate the experiences of commuting for both the minibus taxi driver and the minibus taxi commuter to gain an insider's understanding of the industry. The researcher will use these experiences to advocate for the use of a bottom-up planning approach in creating public transportation policies in South Africa. The reasoning for choosing the bottom-up approach may be found in the works of Cernea (1992:14). Here the author states: *“without proper knowledge of local needs and potentials, even well-intended planners could do no better than choose to make the investments they themselves assumed were needed”*. This research study aims to contribute to the current understanding of public transport design and implementation using an approach to public transport policies that takes the voices of those who regularly make use of public transportation into account.

## **Problem Statement**

The minibus taxi industry is one that continues to grow despite perceptions of it being an unsafe and unreliable transport system. While the industry grows, initiatives such as the BRT have been designed and implemented in various parts of South Africa. The initiative has statistically failed in relation to the capital invested. Also, the overall turnover and support from the public has been much lower than was anticipated. More research is needed to clarify why this is the case.

Transformation in the transportation industry, like others, is faced with difficulties caused by the deep-rooted effects of apartheid. The challenges we face are outlined by Donaldson (2006:344):

*“One of the greatest spatial challenges to overcome in the post-apartheid city is the inequality and spatial inefficiency caused by apartheid planning. Not surprisingly a World Bank report of the early 1990s considered South Africa's cities among the most inefficient in the world. Cities were (are) characterized by low-density sprawl, fragmentation and separation, all of these contributing to the dysfunctional structure where privilege was racially determined. Over a period of four decades, black South Africans were systematically marginalized, among others, in terms of accommodation, leisure, employment, and transport. Structural deficiencies in the*

*former apartheid city, resulting from segregation and low-density sprawl, created long distance work-travel patterns”.*

Formulating transformative initiatives that will impact the masses is, therefore, a complex task with varying, interrelated elements. This further emphasises why the researcher chose to conduct a qualitative research study focusing on the voices of those who make use of the minibus taxi industry. By using a qualitative approach and focusing on the voices of commuters the researcher can hear first-hand accounts of the forces which play an impacting role in their transportation decision making process.

Previous research on public transportation in South Africa focuses primarily on identifying common themes in commuter travel patterns rather than gaining the commuter perceptions. Luke & Heyns (2013:2) highlight that transport opinion polls are uncommon, and there are few examples of opinion polls for the transport industry with more focus being on the travel patterns.

In this research study, the experiences and perceptions of commuters are the focus. By providing those who regularly make use of minibus taxis with the platform to explain what the industry is like and why they continue to make use of the transport system. By interviewing minibus taxi drivers, the researcher can gain perspective into what it is like to work for the industry. These two approaches create a study centred around the voices of those who play a daily role in the industry. By gathering stories of experiences, they have had using minibus taxis the researcher can compile a research study that finds itself enriched by the voices of those who participate in the industry.

## **Research Question**

The main research question of this was:

- How do commuters in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth describe and narrate their taxi commuting experiences?

There are also secondary questions that are broken down into two parts:

- How do taxi drivers describe and narrate their function and role in the commuting cycle?
- What themes emerge from both commuters and drivers' common experiences of the commute?

These questions are open-ended guiding the interview but also allowing respondents to elaborate in their own words.

Questions for commuters:

- Do commuters feel that minibus taxis focus on their safety?
- What do commuters like about making use of a minibus taxi?
- Where do commuters feel the minibus taxi industry could improve?
- How do commuters feel about the IPTS system?

The questions for taxi drivers:

- What are the average daily working hours for a minibus taxi driver?
- What is the biggest concern for minibus taxi drivers?
- Where do minibus taxi drivers feel they are meeting the needs of commuters?
- What are minibus taxi drivers' thoughts on the IPTS system?
- Do minibus taxi drivers feel their needs are protected and looked after working in this industry?

## **Research Aims and Objectives**

The research study aimed to investigate the minibus taxi commuters' constructions and significance of their experiences of taxi commuting in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas. This research study aims to contribute to the overall understanding of public transport design and implementation and highlight the importance of investigating commuter experiences when designing public transport systems. By focusing on the voices of those who are directly involved in the minibus taxi industry the current state of the industry can be exposed and these individuals can express they feel their needs are met and where they would like to see improvement.

There are two main objectives used to guide the researcher throughout the study and these objectives are:

- To explore the experiences of commuting in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas.
- Discern if there are common themes in the commuting experience in the Port Elizabeth Northern areas

## **Research Rationale**

The motivation for doing this research is to contribute to the knowledge of the minibus taxi industry in South Africa. The rationale has been influenced by my own experiences spending my formative years living in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas. My family and I spent many years relying on public transport for mobility. Being taken to the hospital using a minibus taxi as a toddler highlighted the reliance on public transport as the only means of reaching important destinations for those with little money and no access to private transportation.

## **Significance of the Research**

The significance of this research study is that it listens to the voices of both minibus taxi drivers and commuters. It discusses the experiences that have led to the overall general dissatisfaction towards the industry using the voices of commuters and taxi drivers to advocate for a people-centred approach when designing and implementing public transportation systems. The research study also acknowledges the oppressive socio-economic history, which continues to impact black South Africans and how this influences their commuting experience.

## **Key terms and Concepts**

This research study was done in the discipline of sociology and, therefore, it is essential to clarify that the key terms and concepts used throughout this study will have a sociological orientation. Although the constructs are discussed in detail in Chapter 2, they will be briefly introduced in this chapter to allow the reader to make sense of what is presented in the

subsequent chapters. This thesis will use the concept of collective mobilities as explicated by Bissell.

Mobility is linked to one's ability to move (Monakali, 2015:32). In order to take part in the urban city, all citizens need access to necessary spaces. For a public transport system to be considered efficient it needs to consider all the access needs of people to facilitate mobility in the most efficient way possible (Monakali, 2015:33). Access to a means of mobility provides citizens with the ability to get to essential services such as: education, health, shopping centres as well as to sporting, leisure and cultural activities (Stanley & Lucas, 2008:36). An efficient public transport system, therefore, understands that mobility goes beyond looking at getting from A to B (Connective Cities, 2019). The transport mode individuals have access to thus influences perceptions of public transport before the commuting journey begins.

When defining mobility, Bissell (2010:270) states, "*in the process of travel, we temporarily submit ourselves to become part of a mobile collective*". This influences the commuting experience for all passengers as they come together and share a space with a common purpose of reaching a destination. Therefore, for the duration of their journey, these individuals unknowingly submit themselves to forming part of a collective.

Bissell (2010:270) identifies one of the central themes found in research on mobility, is that "*being mobile with other people mobilises a series of relational practices*". Therefore, certain norms form over time. These norms are influenced by the overlapping responses to passenger and driver behaviour as well as environmental forces that infiltrate the public transport system.

## **Research Methodology**

The following section will outline the processes used by the researcher to collect the information and data used in this research study.

This research study uses a qualitative approach to explore commuter perceptions of public transportation in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas. This research study investigated experiences of commuting in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas. Interviews were conducted to

gain insight into the participants' lived experiences. Interviews are a data collection technique based on a series of questions relating to the research topic to be answered by research participants (Bless, et al., 2013:392). Conducting interviews allowed the participants the opportunity to share their experiences of commuting.

Content analysis was used to reach the research objectives. Content analysis is an approach to qualitative analysis, which focuses on the themes or topics addressed by a respondent (Bless, et al., 2013:390). This approach allowed the researcher to identify themes of participant responses. The highlighted themes allowed the researcher to answer the research questions. Primary data was collected from both minibus taxi drivers and commuters. Primary data is *“data collected with the primary aim of answering the research question posed by the researcher”* (Bless, et al., 2013:394).

### **Sampling Technique**

Information was collected from commuters and minibus taxi drivers using the snowball technique. The researcher began by interviewing participants and through word of mouth, collected more respondents to reach the 15-participant target. Each interview lasted approximately 10-15 minutes to allow the researcher to ask the questions and allow the respondents to elaborate on their answers. <sup>4</sup>

Interviews conducted at taxi stops allowed the researcher to interact with participants in the environment where they travel to and from during their commuting journey. This approach provided context to the commuting experience. The information collected in this study provided the researcher with the necessary information to analyse the data to answer the research questions and thus meet the outlined research objectives. This study will contribute to current literature on public transport in South Africa.

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<sup>4</sup> Some interviews were longer than 15 minutes, however, due to limitations regarding safety the researcher was unable to conduct consistently longer interviews. It is recommended that longer interviews be conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the topic.

## Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used in this research study. The researcher conducted interviews with ten commuters and five taxi drivers in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas making the total number of participants 15. As this is a narrative study focusing on individual experiences, there was no set age range, however, all participants are over the age of 18.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews. Galletta and Cross define semi-structured interviews as: *“characteristic of its unique flexibility, the semi-structured interview is sufficiently structured to address specific dimensions of your research question while also leaving space for study participants to offer new meanings to the topic of study”* (Galletta & Cross, 2013:1). Semi-structured interviews allows participants to share their experiences as they are able to elaborate on their views of commuting as well as what informed these views.

A recording device was used in the interviews to capture the exact words of participants. This recording device allowed the researcher to listen to recordings and capture data highlighting themes that are of importance. This also ensured the capturing of potential data overlooked during the interviews, but which is of importance to the study. The data collected will be saved on the researcher’s computer and a memory stick; the researcher will also regularly email the data to herself and her supervisor once a month for safekeeping.

Those interviewed reside in various areas in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas and make use of public transport for mobility. The participants are put into two groups; namely,

- i) The commuter group and;
- ii) The minibus taxi driver group.

Ten in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with the commuter group. This approach allowed for the exploration of commuter experiences. It provided commuters with the opportunity to express their views on the minibus taxi industry. Five in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with minibus taxi drivers to gain context into what it is like to operate in the minibus taxi industry. This contributed to the understanding of the commuting experience within the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas.

Speaking to both commuters and minibus taxi drivers allowed this study to meet the research objectives. Commuters provided their experiences and perceptions of using minibus taxis while taxi drivers provided input on the forces influencing the minibus taxi industry operations. Interviewing both groups provides an in-depth understanding of the commuting experience in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas.

### **Data Interpretation**

The data captured in this study was analysed using content analysis, whereby the researcher drew out central themes and highlighted the number of times the collected data fell into these themes. This approach highlighted patterns in the experiences of the commuters. It also allowed for patterns of experiences of minibus taxi drivers to be highlighted. The researcher was able to find commonalities between these two groups experiences to create an analysis of the commuting experience in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas.

### **Ethical Reflections**

The researcher has a responsibility to protect within all reasonable limits, the safety of the respondents. Therefore, all participants were thoroughly briefed on the potential impacts of the research study. All participants had the research study explained to them and were asked to sign a consent form. Respondents were told that if they are at all uncomfortable at any point in the interview process and no longer wish to be interviewed, the interview would cease. Ethical clearance for this study was given by the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee (FPSC) in the Faculty of Arts, Nelson Mandela University.

## CHAPTER TWO: Conceptual Framework and Literature

The minibus taxi industry is the largest public transport industry in South Africa, transporting approximately 69% of South African Households (Wasserman, 2019). There needs to be assessments on how those who are part of its daily operations perceive the industry. Due to trip satisfaction having implications on travel behaviour (St-Louis, et al., 2014:162). The researcher recognises that there are other individuals such as rank marshals, street vendors and car washers, to name a few. However, to meet the objectives of this study, only the taxi drivers and commuters will be discussed.

Evaluating the literature will involve looking at public transportation systems in different cities in the world to provide a contextual placement for this body of work. The reason behind looking at different systems in different parts of the world is to highlight that within all transport systems there is a commuter culture, with unspoken norms that need to be considered when designing a public transportation system.

This chapter consists of four themes. The first theme looks at collective mobilities and their influence on commuter perceptions. The second theme unpacks urban mobility and current trends in urban mobility. The third theme will look at formalised and informal public transport systems, with specific reference made to the unregulated public transport systems within Africa. Lastly, the fourth theme will unpack initiatives introduced to develop public transport in South Africa.

When defining mobility using public transport, Bissell (2010:270) states: *“in the process of travel, we temporarily submit ourselves to become part of a mobile collective”*. Therefore, individuals using a public transport system form part of a collective of individuals coming together and sharing a space with the common purpose of reaching a destination.

Due to the confined space in a minibus taxi, commuters tend to narrate their experiences collectively. Their experiences are, therefore, conceptualized in relation to others. When the researcher discussed the impact of gang violence on the commuting experience respondents of this study used words such as ‘we’ or ‘us’. Individuals may conceptualise the overall experience differently, however, they view the on-board journey as collective.

The collective experience is not only with other commuters but also with taxi drivers, *“being mobile with other people mobilises a series of relational practices”* (Bissell, 2010:270). A different relationship exists amongst commuters and between commuter and driver. These relationships are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they create a cycle of influence between the two groups.

This study considered individual experiences and identified common themes. Bissell based his research on railway systems; therefore, the size and level of interaction between respondents of this study will differ from that of the respondents of his study. However, his approach to understanding collective urban mobility can still be used on a smaller-scale public transport system such as a minibus taxi.

Edvardsson et al (2003:378) explains that it is not the size of a public transport system but rather the perception of an atmosphere that defines what one has to cope with and suggests the directions for how to behave within a social setting. The existence of collective mobility and how they shape perceptions of passengers remains the same throughout. As Edvardsson et al. (2003:377) states *“aspects of social setting profoundly influence personal experience in the setting”*.

Bissell (2010:281) discusses commuters being collectively annoyed but not speaking out when he explains, *“whilst the uncomfortable atmosphere might be experienced as a distinctly irked collective, in part intensified by the raised eyebrows, huffing, pursed lips, and other gestures of recognition, if other passengers are not intervening, doubts emerge as to whether the registration of such effects are touching others as forcefully”*.

Speaking up individualises the commuter, removing them from the collective. Commuters are influenced by the behaviour of others on board public transport. The behaviour of others creates an atmosphere that influences individuals to act a certain way (Bissell, 2010:274). Therefore, when faced with being collectively annoyed, commuters respond to the actions taken by others around them, choosing to rather conform as part of the collective rather than speak up and individualize themselves.

Bissell's approach to understanding collective mobilities is thus useful when conducting a study centred on how those on board a public transport system perceive their experiences. This approach will assist in framing the lens through which the researcher will analyse and interpret commuter perceptions of public transport in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas.

## **Urban Mobility and Public Transport**

There is relatively little literature looking at commuter perceptions of public transport specifically on the commuter vulnerabilities that exist in public transport when faced with an absence of choice. Literature on commuter satisfaction mostly takes a statistical approach. In the following section, literature centred on trends in mobility will be discussed to provide patterns of commuter mobility both in Africa and on a global scale to provide a contextual understanding of public transport mobility similarities and differences which exist in the developed and developing worlds.

Globally, cities develop their own spatial structure and transport systems are created accordingly. Providing citizens with necessary access to "*people, goods and information*" (Rode et al., 2014:4). The spatial design of a city thus contributes to the accessibility of transport systems. As mentioned, the apartheid spatial design plays a significant role in commuter accessibility of public transportation in South Africa.

Urban transport policies have political, economic and social influences (Poiani & Stead, 2018:99). Therefore, policy solutions to public transport issues should not be approached by implementing policies that have worked in other regions (Poiani & Stead, 2018:99). Developing countries facing similar socio-economic issues may not have the same responses to policies (Poiani & Stead, 2018:99); (Ashmore, et al., 2017:880). Development of urban mobility needs to be context specific ensuring that there is an understanding of how people make transport choices (Ashmore, et al., 2017:876).

In doing so governments ensure that the policies which are formulated are best suited to facilitate the mobility and economic activity of its citizens (Ashmore et al., 2017:876). Furthermore, 'mobilities' study is a field that deals with meaning, interpretation, feelings,

emotions, and hidden motivations behind mobility choices (Ashmore et al, 2017:876). This further emphasises the importance of formulating policies that consider the societal and cultural changes in regions (Thynell, 2009:1).

With increasing global urbanisation, urban space has become one of the most precious resources in a city (UITP , 2016). In order to participate in the urban city, all citizens need to have an opportunity to access these spaces (Monakali, 2015:3). Urban transport should have mobility benefits, with few, if any inequalities in access to transport infrastructure (Cervero, 2014:180). For a public transport system to be considered efficient, it needs to consider all the access needs of people to facilitate mobility in the most efficient way possible (Monakali, 2015:33).

As the global population continues to grow there is a need to adapt the urban development and transport needs of urban mobility (Costa, et al., 2017:3649). Providing a service which is both adequate and appropriate for growing populations is a challenge that is encountered in almost all cities in the world (Wijaya, 2009:1). Urban mobility initiatives and policies require the protection of the environment whilst ensuring social inclusion (Costa et al, 2017:3649).

Efficient public transport makes it possible for everyone in the city to contribute to the city's vitality (Monakali, 2015:6). Therefore, it is crucial that cities are created to be accessible to all inhabitants (Monakali, 2015:6). An efficient public transport system needs to make life easy and convenient for all. Citizens should not feel they are unable to pursue activities because they do not have the financial means to do so (Monakali, 2015:6). Hence, public transport is one of the most important tools for integrating people into urban life (Monakali, 2015:6).

As urbanisation continues to evolve in cities around the world, there is a renewed investment in public transport (Rode et al., 2015:6). This has reversed the decline in passenger levels seen in the 20th century which has seen expanded light-rail and bus networks (Rode et al., 2015:6). Further advocating the need for research on public transport in urban cities.

When it comes to transport choices, people generally do what is best for themselves (Urban, 2017). Urban (2017) argues that when given options of various modes of transport people will select the one that they feel best suits their needs. She outlines several basics behind decision making; convenience, costs, benefits, commute distance and life events (Urban, 2017). This

approach is better suited to understanding commuter choices in developed countries. This research study is specifically looking at public transport in South Africa, where many commuters are faced with the absence of choice.

Therefore, the public transport journey begins when passengers get on their chosen mode of transport and only ends when they get off. An efficient public transport system understands that mobility goes beyond looking at getting from A to B (Connective Cities, 2019). Public transport is required to ensure, to the best of its ability, that passengers are provided with mobility that is safe, orderly, comfortable and economical (Mugion, et al., 2018:1569).

Furthermore, any mobility-related problem that individuals have will directly affect the perceptions of the public. Perceptions are often formed before someone even selects a mode of public transport. Commuter accessibility to public transport should thus be a primary focus of public transport in urban spaces. Bok & Kwon, (2016:224) characterized the accessibility to public transport as, “*the ease with which inhabitants can reach means of transportation such as buses or metros*”.

In the city of London, initiatives put in place combine new infrastructure with extensive upgrades to the existing underground lines and bus services as well as increased restrictions on car use (Rode et al., 2015:20). With the increase in carbon emissions governments have had to come up with initiatives and plans that seek to motivate the public to use public transport instead of private motor vehicles.

Since the launch of these initiatives in London, there has been a pattern of increased public transport use and a decline in private motor vehicle use (Rode et al., 2015:20). It is important to note that walking is identified as integral to the public transport trip in London (Rode et al., 2015:20). This means that the combined efforts to get the public to walk to several public transport stops as well as the efforts to get the public to make use of public transport has significantly improved the industry.

It is essential to note the congestion in inner-city London led to the introduction of the Congestion Charge (Badstuber, 2019). “*The Congestion Charge is an £11.50 daily charge for driving a vehicle within the charging zone between 07:00 and 18:00, Monday to Friday*”

(Transport for London, n.d.). This further prompted many to switch to using public transportation as their primary mode of transport.

These mobility initiatives which influenced patterns in public transport in London provide examples for how to increase the use of public transport in developed countries. However, initiatives such as the abovementioned Congestion Charge cannot be used as a guideline in developing countries, such as South Africa. South Africa has introduced toll fees for drivers. However, this would not have the same effect on public transport trends found in cities such as London.

Public transport usage in developing countries is primarily out of necessity and not a choice. The necessity refers to individuals not having any other means of mobility. Therefore, if not for public transport, they would likely not have the means to access places of employment, school, leisure, etc. Moreover, those able to afford private motor vehicles are likely not going to switch to using public transportation such as minibus taxis that are viewed as dangerous by the public. The Gautrain, which will be discussed later in this chapter, is an initiative supported by many private motor vehicle owners. However, the exclusivity of this initiative does not provide accessibility for the urban poor. Therefore, to ensure growth in support of public transport, there needs to be more attention paid to the quality of public transportation systems aimed at meeting the needs of the masses.

The city of Berlin has had a long-existing culture of cycling (Rode et al., 2015:7). The city has been able to encourage the public to cycle around the city due to residential densities in the inner-city being high (Rode et al., 2015:13). These areas are home to many commercial and business activities and therefore, the main commuting destinations (Rode et al, 2015:13). There has however been an increase in population, and this led to the increase in people living in the surrounding areas of the inner-city.

Therefore, the spatial design of the city allows for easier accessibility without needing to use a motor vehicle. While car use is still the most common mode of transport, initiatives centred on providing cyclists with a safer journey has allowed for more people to choose it as a transport mode. This differs vastly from the original spatial design found in South African cities designed with the specific intention of moving black South Africans further away from the CBD.

The spatial designs of towns and cities under the apartheid regime created continued socioeconomic oppression of black South Africans. Providing those citizens with carefully planned spatial designs to provide accessibility was therefore not a priority at that time. Although South Africa has been a democratic state for over 20 years, one still sees the effects of the apartheid system concerning the accessibility of communities that were previously designated for black South Africans. The impact of spatial design on the accessibility of public transport is mentioned by Mbara (2006:125) who explains that, *“the location of physical infrastructure such as houses, industries, commercial centres have implications on transport costs”*.

Historical influences need to be understood when contextualising patterns of commuting in South Africa. The spatial design of the apartheid city was specific in its aim to further oppress black South Africans. As previously mentioned, the Group Areas Act saw the black population being placed further away from the CBD, meaning more time and cost associated with travelling. When investigating apartheid spatial planning legislation in South Africa, Berrisford (2011:249) states the following; *“to varying degrees, each town or city in South Africa reflects not only an unequal distribution of infrastructure, amenities and accessibility, but the distances between the places in which the poor and the well off live exacerbate that inequality”*. This statement touches on the difficulty of creating a ‘blanket approach’ to public policy within South Africa. The degree to which the design of various towns, and cities, within South Africa affects the lives of communities vary, makes for a problematic approach to public policy throughout the country.

Berrisford (2011:249) touches on the distance between living areas for the rich and the poor and it is essential to note that under the apartheid government these groups have racial underpinnings and the poor primarily means black communities. Acknowledging that the apartheid spatial design created towns and cities which dispersed black South Africans further from city centres becomes a priority when investigating patterns of transportation.

The transition into democratic South Africa then presents challenges with regards to public policy planning and approaches to spatial transformation of towns, and cities. Berrisford (2011:249), argues that various factors have resulted in the spatial planning of South Africa and there is, therefore, a need for more discussion on how to combat the spatial disparities found concerning public transport initiatives. Years into its democracy, South African urban planning still acts mostly to maintain the social divides created by Apartheid (Allen & Mbembe,

2010:65). Moreover, the root of understanding patterns of commuter mobility in these cities is, therefore, found in understanding the impact social design has on it.

Concerning urban restructuring, in contrast to overseas models the South African city requires far more than just fixing some 'distressed' places, it needs a significant overhaul (Oranje, 2014:39). Therefore, it is important to consider the historical influences of a country to understand trends in public transport. Although designs of public transport system may be used in multiple countries, the blueprint of the system should be modified to meet the needs of the target communities.

For transformation, it is essential to acknowledge how society builds and arranges its urban space and environment (Allen & Mbembe, 2010:65) as it tells us how it defines itself. Therefore, in the South African context transformation in the urban city and further transformation in perceptions of public transport needs to focus on eradicating the core features identified by Professor Mark Oranje in the Spatial Transformation of Cities Conference 2014 Report:

*(1) "quality living and accessibility to economic opportunities, schools and retail entertainment facilities in formalised residential areas in which property has value for the few;*

*(2) A sniff of some of these attributes for some and;*

*(3) Very little to none of these, for the many"*

(Oranje, 2014:36)

Therefore, we see that in order to transform the public transport industry, there needs to be a focus on and acknowledgement of the impact the apartheid spatial design currently has on the accessibility of the masses. Providing a better industry would thus involve looking at how history affects the present.

Keeping in mind that all cities have their own spatial design, and thus their own challenges moving forward, as urban cities continue to grow well past their designed capacity. The

importance of urban design factors is foregrounded when looking at commuter decisions on their best travel mode (Fang, 2015). Therefore, as urbanisation continues within cities, public transport needs to focus on the quality of the service it is offering instead of the quantity, which means that, *“simply building more metro lines or putting more buses on the road is not enough to get commuters to use a specific mode of public transport”* (Fang, 2015).

A high percentage of people living in developing countries fall in the lower socio-economic bracket. Therefore, for them, public transport is often the only viable means of mobility. In Un-Habitat (2013:108) the Four A's of understanding the parameters of urban transport are outlined. These are: Affordability, Availability, Accessibility and Acceptability. In the following section, the four categories will be discussed and used to reflect how the Four A's shape commuter perceptions.

### **Affordability, Availability, Accessibility and Acceptability of a Public Transport System**

Affordability refers to the financial cost of journeys and whether or not these costs allow the commuter to travel when they want to (Carruthers, et al., 2005:1). Therefore, the transport system is considered to be affordable if they can afford to commute for all their activities and are not required to limit or sacrifice trips due to costs. It is important to note that these trips refer to all necessary journeys individuals have to take.

Necessary journeys are defined by Carruthers et al. (2005:2), as, *“work, school, health and other social services, and make visits to other family members or urgent other journeys without having to curtail other essential activities”*. There are very few affordable public transport choices for those with low incomes. The financial constraints leave these individuals vulnerable with only a few options for mobility, therefore, taking away much of their freedom of choice. Developing countries need to provide the public with affordable public transport in order to allow them an opportunity to provide them with accessibility to various opportunities. In a report compiled by the Un-Habitat (2013:108) the importance of affordability is explained as, *“This is a critical equity objective that can reduce burdens and expand opportunities, particularly to persons who are vulnerable and disadvantaged.”*

Availability refers to route possibilities as well as the timing and frequency of a public transport system (Carruthers, et al., 2005:2). A commuter is more likely to use a transport system that

follows a route that is easily accessible to them, as well as the quickest routes possible. The time and frequency of a transport system also influence commuter choices, and the more frequent, the more likely this system is chosen. As Carruthers et al., (2005:2) state, *“if there is no service when a person wants to travel, there is no available transport”*.

Accessibility refers to the ease of all passengers using public transport (Carruthers, et al., 2005:2). Access refers to, *“the ability to get to essential services: education, employment, health, and to food shops, as well as leisure and cultural activities”* (Stanley & Lucas, 2008:36). Therefore, to ensure people are not socially excluded in society, there needs to be active efforts to provide accessible options for the public. Ignaccolo et al., (2016:785) explains that the accessibility of public transport is a simple measure to assess the impact of changes in the transport system.

Acceptability refers to the commuter acceptability of a public transport system. Carruthers et al. (2005:2) provide examples of possible commuter deterrents that could potentially prohibit commuter acceptability; *“potential travelers may be deterred by the state of the vehicles, lack of personal security on buses or trains, particularly at night, drivers’ attitudes and driving style, lack of waiting facilities and other attributes of public transport travel”*. Therefore, this shows that for a commuter to choose a public transport system, they need to accept that this is the best option for them.

However, this research study will show that despite commuters not accepting that minibus taxis are the best mode of public transport; they still choose to use it based on affordability, availability and accessibility. At the present time, minibus taxis are the only South African transport system that is frequently available, easily accessible and is the most affordable for black South Africans commuting in the urban city. In this study, the researcher will demonstrate that the acceptability of the public transport system becomes irrelevant when commuters are presented with few options.

The Four A’s may influence the commuter perception of minibus taxis, however, due to the absence of an alternative public transport system that is as available, accessible and affordable commuters are left dependant on the industry. The commuter perception will be unpacked and discussed in chapter 4.

The combination of availability, accessibility and affordability has left a large number of the population dependant on the minibus taxi industry. This then creates the opportunity for posing further questions regarding government initiatives to transform the industry to make it a safer option for the public. As the industry is as large as it is and is continuously growing, it makes it a vital focus area that the government should be focusing on. It is here where questions around formalising the industry are presented.

This also highlights the importance of listening to the voices of those using public transport systems. They are the ones who make decisions to use one public transport system over the other and thus can provide reasons for their commuting patterns. This research study emphasises the importance of listening to the experiences of those who form part of the minibus taxi industry and are part of its daily operations — specifically taxi drivers and taxi commuters.

While the purpose of the research study is not centred on creating a policy, it does seek to reassess the approaches to policy development. Bottom-up Planning (BUP) involves each group of citizens getting involved in the process of policy formulation (Soltani, et al., 2012:65). This is in contrast to the conventional Top-down Planning which flows from the higher authority to the lower one (Soltani, et al., 2012:65). This research study does not suggest that BUP will create improved perceptions of public transport; however, emphasis should be placed on listening to the voices of those who regularly commute using public transport. These voices will give input into what the public needs for an enhanced commuting experience.

Before looking at the perceptions of respondents regarding their lived experiences of the taxi industry, it is essential to take a more in-depth look into the taxi industry itself. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the South African taxi industry saw black South Africans creating an industry designed to meet the needs of people in society. At the time, there was a lack of transportation options that were not only cost-effective but also limited the time black South Africans spent travelling.

The taxi industry has continued to grow since its inception, with the industry now commuting approximately 15 million South African's daily. As previously mentioned, the taxi industry is primarily viewed in a negative light and regarded as unsafe for passengers. This creates the question as to why this industry continues to be widely supported. The answer is simple, the

minibus taxi industry is not only the most available mode of public transport in South Africa, but it is also the most affordable.

The Taxi Recapitalisation Programme (TRP) has been the centre of much debate amongst various stakeholders involved in the industry (taxi owners, taxi drivers and commuters). The government first announced the TRP in 1999 after the National Taxi Task Team (NTTT) initially recommended it was proposed to regulate and transform the taxi industry. To briefly outline the steps the TRP has set out: the former minister of transport, Jeff Radebe announced the rollout plan for the TRP. The following were noted as critical areas of focus of the TRP:

1. *“Commercialization: The development of sustainable commercially viable Revised Taxi Recapitalisation Programme management solutions leveraging and exploiting opportunities available in the minibus taxi industry’s entire value chain with taxi operators as active and meaningful participants.*
2. *Illegal operations and verification process: The determination of the extent of illegal taxi operations across the country by conducting a nationwide survey to populate a comprehensive database of minibus taxi industry’s operators and operations.*
3. *Change management and unity: The Department of Transport intends to use the Revised Taxi Recapitalization Programme as a catalyst for change to the Taxi Industry’s operating model”*

(Polity, 2005)

Although unpacking the objectives set out by the TRP is a crucial area of study this research topic has chosen to look at perceptions of the industry and therefore, the following section will look at the literature on how these objectives affect the working conditions of taxi drivers. There has been much controversy regarding the set rollout plan, particularly from taxi owners but very little literature on how taxi drivers feel about becoming part of a formalised industry.

To meet the objectives of this research study the researcher will be using the definition of a formalisation provided by Fobosi (2013:2), *“Broadly speaking, formalisation involves post-Apartheid state-regulation of the industry while in-formalisation entails minimizing and undercutting state-regulation”*. The taxi industry has a skeletal form of formalisation, in that there is a higher body consisting of approximately 480 taxi associations and council offices

operating throughout the country (Sauti, 2006) which they belong to known as the associations which govern and regulate aspects such as the cost of a taxi ride and which is intended to hold its members accountable.

However, the daily workings of the industry are primarily informal which influences the labour processes of those working in the industry. Much of the previous literature touches on there being a lack of formal employment within the taxi industry. Without a formal contract, there is always a level of uncertainty, and for those who are unable to find a different form of employment, it creates the opportunity for exploitation.

Fobosi's work foregrounds the labour conditions of the industry. These studies are critical in sociological literature for foregrounding the labour process aspects which are structured within the industry and its inherent labour informality. There is no labour legislation in place for the taxi industry which makes it easy for common labour laws to be ignored, and this has a direct effect on the working conditions of taxi drivers. Government has attempted to implement legislation such as the 'Sectoral Determination 11: Taxi Sector' in which it states that drivers are expected to work a maximum of 48 ordinary work hours per week (Fobosi, 2013:59). Further when one looks at the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, the working conditions of drivers should not exceed nine hours a day or 45 hours per week (Focus on Transport and Logistics, 2018).

When reading studies done with taxi drivers, it is clear that this is not the case. In a study done by Ford (1989:151), it is mentioned that taxi drivers work an estimated 15 hours a day. It could be debated that there has been transformation since this study was conducted. However, it is disheartening to find that reference is still made to their long working hours. Research studies such as that of Fobosi and Sauti refer to the long working hours these individuals are forced to work. This will be discussed further in chapter 4.

The taxi industry is not being regulated, although efforts have been made to do so, which allows for the minimization of costs. Fobosi (2013:50) points out that the informal way in which business is conducted in this industry seems to be sustained by minimizing measures through labour exploitation and not focusing on safety standards or state taxes. This benefits the taxi owners who earn a substantial profit, especially in such a competitive industry. This does not

allow for taxi drivers to have a regulated business practice, and it allows for the exploitation of these individuals.

Due to most taxi drivers not having a formal contractual agreement with their employers, there is a little formal agreement around salary or sick days. A study looking at the perceptions of the minimum wage in the taxi industry, Tumelo (2017:10), makes mention of how the taxi industry in South Africa is tormented by the labour relations that occur between the owners and drivers. He goes on to point out that the taxi owners are likely to maximize their profits, often at the expense of the taxi drivers and this is because the taxi industry is not yet regulated

Regulation and security provide the workers in an industry with a sense of security. This approach to cost minimisation occurs not only in South Africa but in other parts of the world. Workers who do not work within a regulated industry have lowered work satisfaction; this impacts on their overall performance of their jobs and is what is linked to poor driving behaviour. While efforts have been made to formalise the industry, the government has also introduced formalised public transport systems aimed at meeting commuter needs.

Some studies have focused on the difficulties of integrating South African public transport because of the class bias that emerges in new systems, see Van der Westhuizen (2007). The two public transport initiatives proposed by the South African government to provide South Africans with formalised and regulated public transport are: Bus Rapid Transit and the Gautrain. The latter project is an estimated R30 billion project with ten stations between Johannesburg and Tshwane/Pretoria; meanwhile, the former project is, in Gauteng alone, an estimated R15 billion project. Both of these projects were expected to cost considerably less and were to reach a far wider audience than they have to date. The following section will discuss the BRT and Gautrain projects that planners had hoped would transform the public transportation system in South Africa.

The Gautrain is a public transport system designed to transform the commuting experience for commuters. It connects Tshwane/Pretoria, Johannesburg, and the O.R Tambo Airport. This initiative was intended to ease the heavy congestion in the area. An initial motivator for the initiative was the 2010 FIFA World Cup. It was said that the Gautrain would make the entire commuting experience accessible for all during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, and beyond, as well

as create jobs and better infrastructure. There has been harsh criticism of the initiative due to the high costs involved.

Van Der Westhuizen (2007:334) touches on such critique by stating, “*primarily justified on the basis of its close association with South Africa’s hosting of the 2010 World Cup, the sheer scale of the infrastructure costs involved, set against the larger and more pressing national transport shortages, invariably prompts questions about the rationale behind the construction of the Gautrain*”. The initiative is a good example of a public transport system targeted for the wealthier demographics rather than for the masses.

With daily congested traffic, there is a need for a means of easily accessible and fast commuting in, and between, Johannesburg and Tshwane/Pretoria. This created the perfect space for a rail system to meet the needs of commuters. Having a rail system would ideally lessen the time spent commuting. The issue with the Gautrain is the intended target demographic. As illustrated in Appendix B, the routes the Gautrain operates on are not easily accessible for those living in townships but instead focus on the higher-income areas.

It is difficult to defend a R30 Billion Rand project not aimed at catering to the needs of the broader public. This is not to say that public transport should not cater to the middle- and higher-income individuals, but with such an expensive project, the target demographic should be a more substantial portion of the population. Questions should be asked regarding how and why a project such as the Gautrain was approved, especially in the economic climate of South Africa when it does not provide an easily accessible and cost-effective mode of public transport. Much can be drawn from the criticism of the Gautrain project.

The concept of the Gautrain has its objectives focused on economic and transportation development within the region. In the dissertation by Aregbaeshola, some of the motivating factors for the initiative are set out: these include job creation, air quality, road user cost, traffic volumes and urban sprawl (Aregbaeshola, 2009:45). These motivators are, therefore, all centered on the development of the Gauteng region. However, acknowledging criticism of the project concerning cost and target demographic, it becomes clear that there is a disconnect that occurred along the way. Taking into account this public transportation policy design implementers can look at the positive elements of the project but also identify better means to

achieving these objectives, ways in which a more significant number of the population can partake in the system.

Similarly, attempts to roll out a mass bus transit system have failed. Maunganidze & Del Mistro (2012) argue that the spatial design of towns, and cities needs to be understood when designing public transport systems. In 2009 the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) was launched in South Africa. It draws mainly on the BRT system launched in Latin America in 1974, which was the first large-scale development of its kind. The essential features of the system are dedicated right-of-way, busway alignment, off-board fare collection, intersectional treatments, platform-level-boarding (The BRT Standard, 2014:14). It was developed to transform the travelling experience for South Africans.

In an article on the role of Bus Rapid Transit in improving public transport levels of service the importance of this is perfectly captured, *“as local public transport problems and needs as well as local realities may differ drastically from those in other case cities, BRT solutions need to be tailored so that they can work within the South African environment or under South African conditions (i.e., under existing demographic, economic, environmental, physical (or urban form), social, and political conditions)”* (Maunganidze & Del Mistro, 2012:643). Here one sees the importance of understanding issues such as the spatial design of towns and cities under the apartheid regime as well as other historical factors which have influenced the current state of the country when designing public transportation systems.

In Johannesburg the Rea Vaya links the township of Soweto with other parts of Johannesburg, providing residents with a bus system that is more easily accessible. The website, The Conversation details findings of BRT studies, and states that current BRT users, as well as potential BRT users, prefer a more frequent and easily accessible transport system with lower fares over a system with shorter travel time (Venter, 2011). These findings will be discussed in this research study during the interviews with the study participants. The BRT system, in theory, provides a transformative travel experience; however, in practice, it has received underwhelming support by South African citizens. There is an importance in modifying the blueprint of a public policy system to fit the historical influences of the selected country.

The BRT system sought to improve the public transport experience for commuters in Port Elizabeth. The BRT system used in Port Elizabeth was influenced by the design used in Pereira, Latin America, *“As far as the planning of the integrated urban transport system by the NMBM was concerned, the BRT planning design was adapted from the Latin American City of Pereira”* (Siyongwana & Binza, 2012:198). The planners chose to adapt the planning design used in Pereira due to the similarity in city size.

When discussing city size, it is essential to note that some criticism of the BRT system in Port Elizabeth is that the city is too small for the establishment of such a system. In their assessment of the BRT system Adewumi & Allopi, 2014:248 state, *“Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) has been adopted as an improvement on regular bus services through the combination of features like infrastructure changes that resulted in better operation speeds and service reliability”*. The implementation of the BRT system should have positively impacted the public transport industry in Port Elizabeth. However, the BRT system failed dismally in Port Elizabeth due to poor planning, and as noted by Adewumi & Allopi (2014), the *“Port Elizabeth BRT system was a disaster”*.

The system has had difficulty since the announcement of its planned launch in Port Elizabeth in 2008. *“Plans for BRT were announced in Nelson Mandela Bay in 2008, but because of prolonged disagreements between the city and the affected taxi operators, construction stalled and the project remains in a state of postponement, while ownership and operational arrangements are being negotiated”* (Wood, 2015:573). There was a delay in the planning of the system followed by administrative errors that cost the city millions. When designing the Port Elizabeth BRT system, *“dedicated lanes were to be created only where necessary and to be shared by paratransit and bus operations, with the first being installed for the 2010 FIFA World Cup”* (Behrens, et al., 2015).

However, due to errors in design and planning as well as administrative errors, the Port Elizabeth BRT system failed in its initial implementation. Errors in design and planning, as well as administrative errors, played a role in the failure of the Port Elizabeth BRT system. There is much to be learnt about policy design and implementation by investigating the system. The system set out to create a public transport system that would provide commuters with a

safe and reliable means of transportation. Mistakes made by the parties involved could prove to be crucial teaching moments for future public transportation initiatives.

Since the initial launch of the BRT system in Port Elizabeth, there has been a re-launch of the system. The buses can now be regularly seen driving through the city. There is currently not much literature on the re-launch and the impact it has made in the city. Therefore, in this research study commuters will be asked questions relating to their perceptions of the bus system in the hopes that this will provide the reader with some perspective of the current state of BRT in Port Elizabeth. The researcher hopes that this will create opportunities for further engagement with the system.

It is important to note that this chapter touched on Rea Vaya and the Gautrain transportation systems, both of which are in the Gauteng Province. This was done to identify flaws in approaching public transport initiatives using a top-down approach that does not meet the needs of citizens at large. The public transport systems that access the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas are buses and minibus taxis. There is a Metrorail that operates between Uitenhage and Port Elizabeth (Wevell, 2011:39); however, it does not run through the Northern Areas. For this reason, the researcher chose to focus on minibus taxis which are the predominant mode of public transport in the area as well as buses as there are government initiatives aimed at providing public transport that as the literature reflects is largely viewed as failing. Therefore, making it an area of study that needs to be unpacked when considering public transport initiatives.

## **Concluding Remarks**

The objective of this chapter was to explore literature about urban mobility and public transport. The researcher identified the relevance of Bissell's collective mobilities when unpacking how passenger interactions influence an individual's perception of a public transport system. It was also found that during the commuting journey, individuals choose not to speak out when witnessing bad driver behaviour as this will isolate them from the collective.

The chapter explored urban mobilities and initiatives introduced in London and Berlin and highlighted the difference between encouraging the public to choose public transport over

private motor vehicles and the South African context where many commuters have no other alternative, and public transport is their only means of mobility. This led the researcher to discussing how the influence of the spatial design of a city impacts the initiatives proposed by the government. For example, in Berlin, commuters are encouraged to cycle in the inner-city, whereas the spatial design of the Apartheid city makes it difficult for those living in the areas formerly allocated for black South Africans.

Literature discussing the TRP was discussed to highlight the aims and objectives it was designed to meet, but more importantly, how little progress has been made since its initial announcement. Looking at patterns that exist within the unregulated and informal transport industries provided valuable information to inform this study. The importance of improving the current minibus taxi industry was emphasised when the BRT and Gautrain systems were discussed as these initiatives have been found not to cater to the masses as initially proposed.

A gap in the literature on commuter perspectives was identified as the literature on public transport is mostly centred around statistical analyses. Moreover, although this is useful to identify trends and patterns, this research study fills a gap by providing data on the reasons for trends in public transportation.

### **CHAPTER THREE: 'It's mos not safe!': Gangs, reckless driving overloading impact on the taxi dependent commuter in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas'**

This chapter will focus on the commuter perceptions of public transportation in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas. The primary aim of this research study was to describe the commuter constructions and meaning making of the minibus taxi industry in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas. Hearing experiences from those who regularly make use of taxis provides data regarding the factors that motivate feel towards the industry.

Participants' narrations allowed the researcher to understand how the industry is perceived by those who use it. The following questions were of interest: (1) Do commuters feel that minibus taxis focus on their safety? (2) What do commuters like about making use of a minibus taxi? (3) Where do commuters feel the minibus taxi industry could improve? The narratives revealed the diminishing public opinion of the taxi industry in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas.

This chapter examines four themes. The first theme looks at the influence the size of a public transportation system has on how commuters perceive their collective mobility. The proximity commuters have to one another in a minibus taxi creates a set of norms. These norms are generally found throughout all minibuses in the area. The second theme examines commuter concern regarding overloading. The third theme looks at narratives given by commuters regarding taxi drivers driving recklessly. Lastly, the fourth theme looks at crime and how areas with high levels of crime create distinct fears amongst commuters, thus influencing their overall perceptions of the industry itself.

#### **Northern Areas Crime and Gang Context**

Gangsterism in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas was birthed in the early 1970's (van Greunen & Veldsman, 2018:62). Issues that existed were due to turf wars between rival gangs (van Greunen & Veldsman, 2018:62). Conflict within gangs also resulted in the splitting and creating of new gangs (van Greunen & Veldsman, 2018:62). However, the fear and violence that exists in these communities has grown rapidly in recent years. It has become a norm to read articles on the Northern Areas that detail the gang violence that is experienced in these communities. The interviewer identified that when speaking to both commuters and drivers in this research study there is a notion that things are not what they once were. That the danger they face in these

communities is far greater than what they experienced before. This will be unpacked throughout the rest of this study.

Therefore, it is important to highlight how socio-economic conditions increase the vulnerability of citizens joining gangs. van Greunen & Veldsman (2018:62) describe the community members as, “*stuck in a perpetual cycle of poverty, sickness, crime and hopelessness...*”. This cycle has had a devastating impact on the citizens. Many young people join gangs with the hope of financial gain (van Greunen & Veldsman, 2018:62). In an interview conducted by Ngcukana (2016) a respondent emphasised that increased youth unemployment and desperation due to socio-economic conditions leads many to joining gangs.

There is an importance in highlighting the prevalence of gang violence in the Northern Areas as it impacts various aspects of citizens lives. In recent years schools and clinics have had to be closed due to fear of safety. Therefore, one cannot investigate public transport and not consider that it will be influenced by the growing gang violence and crime in the communities.

### **The Influence of Collective Mobility on Commuter Perceptions**

When making use of a minibus taxi commuters unknowingly form part of a mobile collective. Although they might be travelling individually by sharing a space with a common purpose, they collectively share experiences that create sets of unspoken norms that govern how they conduct themselves when on-board a taxi. Bissell (2010:270) describes the process that happens when travelling using a public transport system, “*in the process of travel, we temporarily submit ourselves to become part of a mobile collective*”. Therefore, when individuals board a mode of public transport, they temporarily submit themselves to the idea of ‘being with’.

As a result of their collective mobility and shared experiences with other commuters those that use minibus taxis in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas have created norms out of experiences they have had while commuting. Someone unfamiliar with the various influences of the taxi industry in these areas will not be familiar with the norms established. The norms identified in the interviews focused on protecting themselves against crime on board the taxi. Unspoken norms identified by the researcher include hiding the straps of handbags, avoiding phone visibility and not wearing jewellery that might draw attention.

The size of the taxis plays a role in the norms created. If one were to board a large-scale mode of public transportation such as the New York City subway you are likely to experience the journey with those in the same train car as you. Therefore, your experiences might differ from those in separate train cars to yours. This reality might be different if every day the same group of individuals boarded the train at the same time and sat in the same train car. There then develops a sense of familiarity with one another.

However, looking at a subway system that saw approximately 1,727,366,607 passengers in 2017 (MTA, 2018) and that has 472 stops, and 27 different subway lines open 24 hours a day with 5,580,845 individuals riding on an average weekday (MTA, 2018) the concept of familiarity does not seem probable. This unfamiliarity does not mean that these commuters are not experiencing collective mobility and creating their own sets of unspoken norms.

Bissell (2010:271) explains communication on-board a railway system when there is a sense of unfamiliarity with one another, *“the degree of acquaintance that characterises these relationships, to a large part, mediates the type of communication that takes place between passengers”*. Therefore, there would be a clear difference in the way passengers using a minibus taxi would communicate with one another as compared to a larger subway system. However, this difference does not eliminate the sense of ‘being with’ it just affects the degree to which individuals experience it.

Exploring the influence that the shared space has on commuters is essential to understanding how commuter norms are created in various public transport systems, *“some physical environment facts, such as space arrangement and physical condition, have a direct impact on people’s behaviour”* Yudhistira et al., (2015:334). While passengers avoid verbal communication, they may still be able to maintain a form of social contact at a distance (Bissell, 2010:271). So, the existence of interconnectedness that exists between commuters using a smaller mode of transport may not exist, but nonverbal social norms are still formed.

The avoidance of one another is seen as a respectful norm, *“subway riders recognise one another and for the most part universally agree to respect each other’s boundaries through a degree of avoidance”* Ocejo & Tonnelat (2014:497). The commuting journey, therefore, sees a

collection of strangers who choose to remain strangers for the duration of their journey, with as little social interaction as possible.

The findings of the abovementioned study differ considerably from the respondents of this study who all live in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas. Regular commuters who journey from the same place at the same time have a higher probability of becoming familiar with one another, and because these communities are small, many individuals already know one another. Therefore, there would be more familiarity and communication with one another.

A similarity between the two modes of transport, however, is the avoidance of singling out a member of a collective, *“People may observe others provided they do not disrupt the social order such as by turning a fellow passenger into a target of special attention...”* Ocejó & Tonnelat (2014:497). Regardless of the size of a public transportation system commuters prefer to nonverbally follow norms to avoid standing out from the rest of the collective.

Although norms on how to interact with others may differ what connects commuters on the New York subway and taxi commuters in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas is the collective unspoken norms which govern their behaviour and shape how they interact with one another. Thus, shared space creates norms within a public transport system regardless of the mode used or the capacity of the people who use it.

This research focuses largely on rank taxis which, as the name suggests, operate from one rank to the other. Sweeper taxis choose a starting point and pick up commuters as they go along their journey. Therefore, several commuters get in and out of the taxi during one single trip. This does not give enough time for them to be in the shared space, lessening the possibility for norms to develop. Bissell’s theory of collective mobilities, therefore, cannot be applied when looking at commuter interactions in sweeper taxis.

### **Overloading Minibus Taxis**

Overloading taxis goes beyond being uncomfortable, it puts the lives of all those who are in the van at risk, *“exceeding the allowed seating capacity in a vehicle puts occupants at risk for injury in a crash, and can result in vehicle overloading, which can affect vehicle handling and*

*increase the risk for a crash*” (Govender & Allopi, 2006:105). By overloading a vehicle, there is an increased risk of accidents even without issues such as reckless driving. This increased risk is due to overloaded vehicles being less stable than legally loaded ones (Shah, et al., 2016:131).

The vehicle is therefore not only more likely to be involved in an accident, but the accident is also likely to be more severe than if the vehicle were legally loaded (Shah, et al., 2016:131). Accidents due to overloading of minibus taxis are a common occurrence on roads in South Africa, *“on National, Provincial and Local roads each year there are a lot of accidents which statistically are shocking, especially when it is realised that it is because of irresponsible driving, overloading, and lack of proper documents”* (Moyake, 2006:128).

In the interviews conducted, the researcher found that the biggest concern for commuters interviewed in this research study is the overloading of taxis. The taxis discussed in these interviews are all designed to carry 15 passengers; however, they have been known to carry 20 to 30 passengers per trip. The motivation behind overloading vehicles is the attempt to maximise profit (Shah, et al., 2016:131). However, this attempt to maximise profit for the day creates an uncomfortable and unpleasant experience for commuters and most importantly, as previously mentioned, is a dangerous decision to make. When asked about her biggest concern taking a minibus taxi participant 16 said the following:

“Overloading, it’s a 15 seater but there’s 20 people in the taxi. It’s like you and me get into a taxi now I’ve got my granddaughter with me, now she’s supposed to sit on my lap because there’s another four people that must sit on this seat here. I had an experience like this and I told the gaatjie I’m not going to pay for her because she must sit on my lap. And you must come sit next to me. You understand? Why must I pay for her? You know? I had several experiences where they overload taxis, several. If we can talk about it we will talk the whole day about overloading taxi”.

Participant 10 reiterated the sentiments made by other participants. When discussing her experiences of commuting and the issues she has with the minibus taxi industry, she said the following:

“Actually, what worries me is the fact that they put so much people in the taxi. They put too much people in the taxi and what’s going to happen if an accident happen to that taxi. We were travelling to town one day me and my sister’s child and my sister so she got off at Greenacres taxi but then because I moaned in the taxi in Korsten for them putting too much people. The collector of the taxi he said to me, I must get out of the taxi and I had to get out of the taxi because I complained about moving up and moving up you have to move up. They put 5 people where 3 people must sit. So I got out of the taxi”.

The combination of speed and overloading creates fear amongst the participants of this study. What arose from the interviews was that the commuters feel powerless in their engagement with the taxi driver and the taxi gaatjie. As Participant 10 explained when she voiced her frustration after a taxi was overloaded, she was told to get out and find another taxi. She was not given her money back and felt her concerns were disregarded in that situation.

There is apparent exploitation of the commuter vulnerability. Commuters do not have power when it comes to voicing concerns regarding the overloaded vehicles, and there is a definite negative power dynamic between commuters and those providing them with the transport service. Commuters have become powerless because they know they will either not be listened to or that they run the risk of getting into an altercation with the driver. No public transport system designed for the people should have its commuters feel that they have no power to influence what they are being offered.

Seating almost double the passenger limit in a vehicle increases the chances of a minibus taxi accident. There is a reason for the seat limit; it takes longer to brake when driving an overloaded vehicle thus comprising the time drivers have to respond in an emergency situation. This, coupled with driving at a fast speed, creates a dangerous combination. When taxis drive at an excessive speed and are overloaded the stopping distance of the vehicle changes putting the lives of all passengers at risk (Arrive Alive , n.d.).

Therefore, the concerns that commuters have regarding overloaded taxis need to be taken more seriously. Commuters narrated experiences where almost every day they had staggeringly high numbers of people in minibus taxis only suitable for sixteen passengers. It is hard to understand

how these taxis can continuously overload the vehicles and not get pulled over by officials. This needs to be regulated to ensure consumer safety.

Taxi overloading has resulted in some taxis using makeshift seats to optimise the space, these seats often made of crates with cushions on top of them. Not only are they uncomfortable to sit on, but they are not sturdy and can result in injury. Participant 13 described how her mother sustained an injury using a minibus taxi:

“Now recently my mother, we always go in a full taxi. My mother recently was sitting on a chair and it was one of the Malabar taxis in the Malabar rank in Korsten. She lives in Malabar, now the driver didn’t tell her, or the gaatjie<sup>5</sup>, the seat she was sitting on was broken. While he was opening the door the seat where the gaatjie is, my mother actually fell, and she fell out of the taxi and she hurt herself. But she did complain to the rank and they did send her to I don’t know to doctor or something now she must go for x rays because of that incident that happened so that’s why I say it is unsafe.”

Overloading of a public transport system is not a uniquely South African concept and is found in various countries around the world. India has shocking rates of fatal crashes of overloaded buses. On July 1, 2018 The New York Times reported that at least 48 people were killed and about a dozen more were injured after a 28-seater bus plunged into a gorge (Schultz & Kumar, 2018). The 28-seater bus was reportedly carrying over 60 people at the time of the accident.

Overcrowding has been a concern for the Indian government which commonly found in buses and trains. It is not uncommon for bus passengers to ride on the outside of the vehicle (Pucher, et al., 2004:7); or in peak-hour traffic for passengers to hang out the doors or windows, ride between the train cars or even to hang outside of train cars Pucher, et al. (2004:7). Overcrowding on public transport systems is not something that happens overnight. It begins by pushing the limits more and more over time and when nothing is done by the government to stop this overcrowding/overloading it normalises this dangerous act.

Furthermore, by stating that the government is normalising negligent behaviour does not mean that they are actively doing anything to encourage the continuance of these behaviours they are,

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<sup>5</sup> The guard who calls for passengers and takes in the money on a minibus taxi.

however, not doing enough to stop it. Like in South Africa, there has been a struggle with regulating public transport systems in India and the failure to regulate and coordinate the private operators in Delhi has led to, “*unsafe, overcrowded, unpredictable and uncoordinated private buses*” (Pucher, et al., 2004:16). Here we once again see that issues stemming from unregulated public transport systems affect its daily operations, and in this, it affects the experiences of commuters.

There are various reasons for the overloading of vehicles, many of which are focused on maximising profit. Regardless of the reasons for the overloading, commuters should not feel that they have no choice but to put themselves in a position where they feel unsafe and uncomfortable. If an industry is known to put the lives of passengers in danger through overloading it is difficult to understand how this continues to occur at such a large rate.

Because commuters rely on taxis, there is clear exploitation of power. Commuters have adopted a ‘what can I do’ mentality. They choose not to speak up on issues they have because they do not want to have any conflict with the taxi drivers and *gaatjies*. Bissell’s theory of collective mobility provides insight into why this occurs; commuters choose to remain quiet about their concerns out of fear that if they speak up, they single themselves out, and are, therefore, no longer part of the collective.

With commuters not feeling comfortable to voice their concerns it begs the question, who is going to listen to the voices of those who are unhappy with a public transport system? South Africa as a democracy should have opportunities for citizens to feel that they have a say in the systems put in place to meet their needs. This statement is reiterated by Luke & Heyns (2013) who refer to democracies requiring public participation due to dependency on responses of the population. Taking commuter perceptions into account, listening to stories of commuter experiences is necessary when attempting to improve the lives of all citizens.

## Reckless Driving

Narratives told by commuters in this study tell of taxi drivers driving recklessly; some reckless habits include but are not limited to: (1) driving over the speed limit (2) driving too close to other cars or (3) drivers driving through red robots. It became clear when discussing their experiences that commuters do not feel that their safety is a priority for the drivers. Thus, we see taxis that are often overloaded and taxi drivers breaking the rules of the road to get to their destination quicker.

People who rely on public transport for mobility and accessibility are forced to take risks that are associated with reckless driving. When questioning why commuters use public transport if they know it is unsafe, Sauti (2006:36) found, *“Most of the commuters interviewed argued that if they could find an alternative to taxis, they would, but that it is unfortunately the only convenient transport considering where they have to alight”*. The findings of this research study support Sauti’s findings. Commuters interviewed in this study explained that the accessibility and availability of the taxi industry is the only reason they continue to use this mode of transport. When asked if she feels the minibus taxi drivers take her safety into account, Participant 10 says:

“No not at all, that’s mos now when like... riding over red robots its mos not safe and getting in front of the car that’s like by the robot getting in front of the car when they ride over the red robot no matter if it turns red, the robot turns green for the person that person had to wait to get all the in the taxi so I mean it’s not safe so if it’s a rude person he will drive into the taxi so our life will also be in danger”.

Literature and media reports on the minibus taxi industry show that there is a trend in the reckless driving of minibus taxi drivers, with the industry contributing an annual total of 70 000 crashes (Arrive Alive , n.d.). After listening to commuters interviewed in this study, it becomes apparent that they are scared when they drive in taxis. One participant stated that when she leaves her house, she is not sure whether or not she will return home at the end of the day. Not having access to private transportation should not result in commuters having to give up their sense of safety when commuting.

Public transport is considered a safe alternative in the developed world, and contrastingly, it is considered to be a dangerous option in Sub Saharan Africa (Booyesen, et al., 2013). Overloading and speeding are both linked to the dangerous driving conditions throughout Sub Saharan Africa (Booyesen, et al., 2013) and the findings of this study confirm the observations made by Booyesen et al. (2013) It becomes increasingly apparent that attention needs to be given to investigating why this trend occurs throughout these regions. Participant 17 said that the combined reckless driving with the overloading causes her the greatest concern:

“My biggest worry on a taxi is the way they are driving, the speed they are doing, and you can’t talk to them because they are much more dingees<sup>6</sup> than you are that is my main concern and secondly overloading”

The popularity of minibus taxis is attributed to the accessibility that they offer at an affordable price (Janmohammed, et al., 2019:2). However, despite the advantages it offers the industry remains plagued with unroadworthy vehicles, reckless driving and speeding (Janmohammed, et al., 2019:2). The popularity of minibus taxis highlights that the industry has found a way to meet the needs of commuters that other public transport systems are unable to. However, there is a clear need for swift regulation of the industry to hold drivers accountable for negligent driving behaviour. These negligent behaviours have resulted in growing commuter dissatisfaction with the industry.

Public transport is a right that everyone should have. Participants discussed that they feel nobody is willing to listen to their concerns and make a change. One individual explained that even if the government created a policy, there is the fighting that occurs between the government and the taxi associations and it will take a long time and a few strikes before anything gets done. Participants feel that they have no say in the policies and how the taxi industry runs, something which directly affects them.

A chain of power exists, and the consumers within the industry are at the bottom of it. Public transportation policy being people-centred and considering their experiences not only allows for a more comprehensive system to be built, but it also makes the public feel they are included

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<sup>6</sup> Informal word for something whose name is unknown or forgotten.

in decisions that impact their everyday lives. Moreover, this will result in better commuter perceptions of the industry.

When one researches media articles on the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas, the typical result over the last few years relates to some form of gangster-related crime. In June 2019, it was estimated that the area saw more than 100 gun-related deaths in the last five months (African News Agency , 2019). Any attempt at researching a public transport system that is operating in areas that have high crime rates needs to acknowledge that crime will affect the industry. The industry will, therefore, to some degree, be impacted by crime.

When addressing issues of public transportation, one of the findings made by the researcher is that commuters are in constant fear of the gangsterism in the community. This fear influences their perception of public transport. This statement is touched on by Odufuwa & Fasina (2012:147) who when discussing incidents of crime noted that *“the increasing rate of crime incidence particularly in public transport cannot be divorced from the pattern of travel and ‘travel satisfaction”*.

This, therefore, makes it an important area to cover in this discussion section. This becomes significant when looking at approaches to dealing with crime in public transportation. Let us first define what we are looking at when we say crime in public transport. Newton outlined three different situations where this occurs:

1. *“Walking to, from or between transport facilities or stops (walking from departure point e.g. home to a taxi rank or back; from a taxi stop to a bus station; from a train station to a destination point e.g. workplace or back).*
2. *Waiting at boarding points and facilities (e.g. taxi/bus stops, train/bus stations, modal interchanges etc.).*
3. *Travelling on board a mode of transport such as a bus, train or taxi”*

(Newton, 2004:29).

When asked what worries her when commuting Participant 12 said:

“I’m worried about the gangsterism because what is happening now is they shoot the driver and the gaatjie like some of the guys they want money and you can’t give it to them and they stab you and they shoot you.”

Public transport systems are greatly affected by crime within a community as it influences the thought processes behind commuter choices. Smith & Clarke (2000:170) outline three influences behind public transport choices: (1) rewards offered by efficient modes of transport (such as speed and dependability), (2) effort they must expend to reach their destinations (such as proximity of stations), and the risks involved (including possible crime victimisation). Therefore, a commuter who chooses to use a public transport system regardless of whether they feel unsafe often does so because when weighing up their options, it is what they believe is the best option for them.

A concept that came up in almost every interview was a protection fee. When asked about what this means, Participant 12 explained:

“It’s like the route that the taxi goes sometimes the gangster stands by the stops and if you want to pass you have to pay them.”

Therefore, when a taxi gets stopped, and the driver is asked to pay a protection fee, the taxi driver is required to pay the gangster. This protection fee ensures the safety of everyone inside the vehicle. The gangsterism in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas needs to be an area of study for those looking to design public transport systems which are useful and widely supported by the communities. Kruger & Landman (2007:115) identify the importance of tackling crime in a context-specific, local-level approach; *“it is essential to develop context specific crime reduction initiatives that respond to particular problems”*.

Therefore, the development of tools to combat crime within the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas needs to be accomplished in a manner that assesses how to best deal with the issues they are facing. Commuters mentioned that gangsterism occurs at any point in the commuting journey, some saying that the gangsters will sit in the taxi and then rob other passengers while they are

on their journey. Commuters mentioned that some of the taxi drivers and gaatjies are involved in gangs as well. This apparent reality has further led to their lack of trust in the industry. While conducting interviews, it became clear that the crime within the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas plays a significant role in the commuter minibus taxi experience. All commuter respondents at one point or another referred to the fear they experience due to gangsterism. Participant 11 says:

“At the moment you fear every day because before you get into a taxi you must look inside the taxi who is sitting at the back seat or anything because it is dangerous these days to take a taxi. One day I come from Baywest, I came from work and there was some guys at the backseat of the taxi and the thing is this, the drivers they put the music too loud on so like I said you can’t trust the driver and you can’t trust the gaatjie and the four guys wanted to rob the people in the taxi and that was the most horrible experience I’ve had. They get off at the first stop in Schauder and we didn’t see them, but they took one guy’s phone and his wallet”.

Interviews done with commuters who have used minibus taxis for several years showed that perceptions of the industry changed as the crime rates increased and gangsterism grew in the community. Discussing how the minibus taxi industry has changed over the years, participants feel the industry has changed along with the growing gangsterism in the community Participant 14 says:

“Gangsterism, that is the main problem the people can’t even go through Katanga (Helenvale) anymore like they used to they are being stopped now and the people take off their stuff and they’re not wearing what they used to because they’re afraid of being robbed. I can say I’m going there but who knows I’ll end up there? Because life is so not predictable anymore, verstaan jy? No, I can’t say I’m going there and then I don’t reach uh uh”.

A minibus taxi can load passengers in areas outside of the Northern Areas; however, any taxi that travels through the areas is at risk of being targeted. Therefore, regardless of it being a contract work taxi, a sweeper taxi or a rank taxi; commuters are in fear of gang-related crimes when travelling in and around the Northern Areas.

It is important to note that when conducting interviews with commuters, the situations mentioned by Newton were introduced by the commuters. The last point: travelling in a mode of transport is where many commuters say the issue of gangsterism comes into play. Stories were told of gangsters getting into taxis at any stop along the journey and robbing passengers of their belongings. One participant noted that people try to avoid wearing jewellery, name brand clothing and try to not show their handbag straps out of fear of being targets for thieves. Participant 15 mentioned an experience his wife had with the dangers of gangsterism in the community when gangsters wanted to stop the taxi and have the driver pay the protection fee, and the driver did not stop. He said that they wanted to shoot the driver:

“They wanted to, they were coming out of work there in Schauder and they stopped the taxi and when the taxi didn’t want to stop then they shot at the taxi”. Now they have to pay protection fees they have to play along with the gangsters to make their money, you see what I mean?”

It was previously mentioned in this study that as a result of collective mobility, commuters in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas have unspoken norms while on their commuting journey. These norms are in place to ensure that commuter journeys are as secure as possible (Page & Moeketsi, 2000). The actions taken by passengers can be either as a group or individually based (Page & Moeketsi, 2000). The results of this study found that actions taken by commuters in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas are collectively made, however they are individually based. This means that the passengers influence one another nonverbally by making active efforts to ensure their phones are not visible and hiding the straps of their bags. However, the actions are still individual.

The difficulty of combating crime on the minibus taxi journey is the size of the taxi itself. It would not be permissible to have an officer on each taxi because there are large numbers of taxis in the area. Having more metro police visible in these areas could alleviate issues relating to the protection fees and issues that may arise on the various stops. However, when on the commuting journey, it becomes difficult to govern how the passengers are to be protected when faced with on-board robbery and threats of violence.

One cannot use a crime prevention strategy on a public transport system that has millions of commuters per trip and apply this same strategy to the taxi industry in South Africa. Although one specific taxi may have large numbers of passengers each day, there are a limited number of commuters on each trip. Monitoring the system would mean monitoring each trip, which is complicated by the costs that are associated with it. This safety issue on-board minibus taxis in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas is an area which requires further research.

### **What do commuters like about the minibus taxi industry?**

The previous themes identified the three biggest concerns identified by commuters when discussing whether they feel safe when commuting using a minibus taxi. In the following section, the researcher will discuss what it is that commuters enjoy about the minibus taxi industry in Northern Areas.

It became inherently clear during the interview process that commuters had few positive things to say about the taxi industry. When asked about what they like about the taxi industry, many of the participants made it clear that there is nothing they like about commuting using a taxi and given a choice they would use private transportation. However, those who discussed an element they like all identified the convenience of taxis as being the only thing they like about the industry.

Although negatively depicted in the media, the minibus taxi industry remains the most convenient mode of public transportation for many South Africans Kgwedi & Krygsman (2017:363). Taxis are convenient as they offer passengers regular availability and accessibility. The findings of this study reflect the statement mentioned above. Commuters interviewed in this study mostly had negative views on the industry yet continued to use it because of the convenience it offers them. This convenience contrasts with other public transport modes operating within the area.

The regular availability of minibus taxis is what makes them convenient for commuters. As previously mentioned, availability is one of the 'Four A's' used to understand the parameters of urban transport. Availability is used to refer to the route possibilities, timing and frequency

of a mode of public transportation. Participant 16 explained what she liked about commuting using a taxi:

“A very positive element of taking a taxi is if I walk out by my gate there’s probably going to be one coming past. We don’t have to walk a distance to get one. You understand my point? That’s the convenient part of the story. You understand? And some of them are good hearted, if you ask them to drop you off nearer to your house. That is now a good element of the story”.

These findings are similar to that of Sauti (2006:42) who when researching taxi drivers in Johannesburg found that the reason commuters continue to use minibus taxis is due to their convenience. Unlike regulated modes of public transport that run on a specific schedule and have a set-out route, one sees a taxi drive by every few minutes in the Northern Areas.

The regulated buses, for example, run according to where the bus stops are and due to the spatial design of these areas not being based on accessibility these stops generally require commuters to walk to and from them. In areas with high crime, commuters choose to avoid walking and making themselves vulnerable. Therefore, the respondents stated they choose to use minibus taxis because they know they are not required to walk far, as there is a taxi passing near their homes every few minutes. When discussing why she chooses to use a taxi when she expressed her desire to use the IPTS Participant 16 explained:

“You see the buses, it’s far from us. Like you know now the buses only start to ride now but it’s still a distance to walk. You see? And so, there’s no buses from us to town and like that. You see? Now that, you get robbed if you go there. You can get robbed, mugged or whatever. You see? So, the taxis come up here and that’s why we rather prefer using them”.

Given the negative responses regarding their experiences and perceptions of the taxi industry it was important for the researcher to discuss where commuters would like to see improvement in the industry. For most respondents, the industry is too far gone, and they do not have faith that any initiatives would change their experience. As explained by Participant 14:

“There’s nothing. Even if they implement something it will take 5 or 10 years and then we are old. You understand? Then one of my children is riding a car and I won’t even see that change that they have made”.

The response provided by this participant is of relevance when one revisits how long the government has taken to formalise the taxi industry. The slow rate at which the TRP is being implemented continues to the present day (Mashishi, 2010:34) to negatively affect the very people it aims to benefit. While the initial steps were taken when the TRP was first introduced, from a user perspective, these proved to be too slow (Mashishi, 2010:34).

The government announced that 80% of the taxi fleet would be recapitalised by the end of the 2009/10 financial year (Mashishi, 2010:34). However, in 2019, only 72,653 of the targeted 135,894 taxis have been scrapped. This number reflects the slow physical change of scrapping taxi vehicles, steps that were outlined by former Transport Minister, Jeff Radebe have seemingly made no progress in being implemented.

The slow progress has left many commuters with little faith in there being a transformation in the taxi industry. The researcher probed for thoughts on where commuters would like to see improvement in the taxi industry in the Northern Areas. The improvement of driver behaviour was the response given by commuters. Participant 13 explained what she would like from the taxi driver to restore her faith in the industry:

“If they set a limitation on overloading. A limitation on drinking and driving, that’s the most popular thing that’s happening now. And robbery especially, because if you see then the taxi driver or the gaatjie is also involved in that. That is what happens. So, I will say I want more improvement on that side”

The response provided by participant 13 shows that improvement in driver behaviour and eradicating norms such as overloading could lead to a possible change in commuter perceptions of the industry. The following chapter will unpack the forces that impact driver behaviour to highlight that bad driving behaviour is often due to external pressures. However, driver behaviour and crime are the most significant issues commuters face when commuting in the

Port Elizabeth Northern Areas. They are also what negatively impacts the commuter's perceptions of the taxi industry.

### **Concluding notes**

The objective of this chapter was to highlight the forces that impact commuter perceptions of the minibus taxi industry in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas. Through interviews with commuters, the researcher was able to identify key themes that influence the commuting experience. These themes can be grouped into two categories, namely, driver behaviour and fear due to gang-related crime in the community. The two most significant issues commuters have with taxi drivers is the overloading of vehicles and reckless driving.

It was identified that how taxi drivers interacted with passengers influenced their commuting experience. Drivers are described as rude, and commuters stated that they do not speak up when they are unhappy with something the driver did out of fear that they will retaliate negatively towards them. In contrast, drivers who were friendlier towards passengers made them feel more comfortable and were said to go as far as dropping individuals off closer to their homes. In an area with high crime levels, this positively impacts the commuting experience.

Gang-related crimes were identified as having a significant impact on their commuting experience. An element which emerged was the 'protection fee' taxi drivers are expected to pay when stopped by gangsters in the area. This fee ensures the safety of all individuals in the vehicle. It highlighted the importance of researching ways to provide safety to passengers while on their journey.

Lastly, the chapter explained that commuters in this study only identified the availability and easy accessibility of minibus taxis as a positive element of the industry. This positive element was followed by commuters largely being dissatisfied with the industry and not having faith that any public transport initiatives can save the current bad state of the taxi industry in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: Informality, Competition and Exploitation: Taxi driving narrated as a labour process**

Literature and media reports on the minibus taxi industry describes unsafe and unreliable industry. The industry accounts for an annual total of 70 000 crashes (Arrive Alive , n.d). Sinclair & Imaniranzi (2015:106) argue that reasons for the high incidents of accidents of this industry include: “(1) taxi drivers pushing through on hard shoulders, (2) ignoring the right of way of others at intersections, (3) violating road traffic signals and signs and performing unsafe manoeuvres”. The fact that taxi drivers are predominantly described as bad drivers who prioritise profit over the safety of their passengers is discussed in this chapter.

Three themes will be discussed in this chapter. The first theme looks at what the experience of working in an unregulated industry is like for taxi drivers. This theme has five subthemes: long work hours, inconsistent salaries, no sick days, no coverage under the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) and pressures due to competing with sweeper taxis. The second theme discussed is taxi drivers’ fears due to gang violence in the Northern Areas. Lastly, the third theme discusses the taxi drivers’ lost faith in the metro-police.

The researcher chose three research questions that will guide this chapter. The questions are:(1) What are the average daily working hours for a minibus taxi driver? (2) What is the biggest concern for minibus taxi drivers? (3) Do minibus taxi drivers feel their needs are protected within the industry?

### **The In-formal, Unregulated Minibus Taxi Industry**

There is no labour legislation in place for the taxi industry, which makes it easy to ignore common labour laws, and this has a direct effect on the working conditions of taxi drivers. Fobosi (2013:50) explains that the informal way in which business is conducted in the minibus taxi industry is seemingly sustained by minimizing measures through labour exploitation and ignoring safety standards.

The South African taxi industry has been negatively affected by the labour relations that occur between taxi drivers and taxi owners (Tumelo, 2017:10). The industry is known for the

exploitation of taxi drivers by vehicle owners as they operate in an unregulated industry. This exploitation has been found to lower job satisfaction, which negatively influences driver behaviour.

Efforts to regulate the taxi industry have faced delays and complications. In 2019, over twenty years since TRP was first announced and government-initiated efforts to regulate the industry were presented, the industry remains unregulated. The following section will unpack how taxi drivers are affected by working in an unregulated, predominantly informal industry. Similarities between the working conditions of public transport drivers in developing countries will be discussed. This discussion shows that there is a distinct correlation between working conditions in unregulated industries and driver behaviour.

Government has made efforts to protect minibus taxi drivers through legislation such as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, and more specifically, the 'Sectoral Determination 11: Taxi Sector'. However, due to the industry not yet being regulated, the concept of 'cutting corners' to maximize profit is prevalent. This reality is seen before the taxi driver even starts working for the vehicle owner, as there is often no formal contract in place, and therefore drivers are reliant on a verbal agreement between themselves and their employers.

As mentioned, the reason for using verbal agreements is that by doing business informally, the taxi owner maximises their profit. By not following the formal channels of employment, they are not required to pay the drivers minimum wage or provide them with employee benefits. Fobosi (2013:50) states, *"Many informal ways of doing business in the industry prevail and these seem to be sustained by cost minimisation measures through labour exploitation and general disregard of safety standards and state taxes"*.

South Africa is not unique in the issues it faces with the unregulated, informal minibus taxi industry. The vacuum left by inefficient public transport systems is filled by the informal transportation industry (Salim, n.d.) in many countries, particularly in Africa. These transport systems are known to cause road congestion, accidents and are linked to road fatalities (Salim, n.d.). Investigating how to improve these industries needs to be the focus rather than merely seeking to abolish the industries entirely. There is a reason for commuters continuing to use

unregulated transport systems despite the availability of formalised public transport systems; these reasons should be investigated more thoroughly.

The voices of taxi drivers are relevant to the industry as it is often overlooked how much they can impact on the industry through their thoughts and opinions on the current state of the industry. Propositions to improve informal transport systems tend to assume that drivers in the industry do not have any of their own solutions and recommendations (Salim, n.d). This assumption leads to the voices of those who are working in the industry often being silenced. The researcher chose to interview minibus taxi drivers in this regard. It is providing taxi drivers who work in the industry who are depicted as the reason for the negative perceptions of the taxi industry an opportunity to reveal their thoughts and experiences. It also affords them the opportunity to discuss what it is like working in the industry.

The Basic Conditions of Employment Act states that the working conditions of drivers should not exceed nine hours a day or 45 hours per week (Focus on Transport and Logistics, 2018). More specifically in 'Sectoral Determination 11: Taxi Sector' it states that drivers are expected to work a maximum of 48 ordinary work hours per week and are entitled to annual leave (Fobosi, 2013:59). However, because many vehicle owners do not formally employ taxi drivers, the hours taxi drivers work do not comply with legislation.

Furthermore, many taxi drivers are paid a commission-based salary resulting in them making as many trips as possible in order to make a decent income. When discussing his working hours and how his days are typically structured Participant 7 breaks down his average day:

"Okay, this is like now the gospel truth now, I get up ten to four in the morning, right? I have a shower and then I walk up to Standford Road, I haven't got my own transport. I walk up to Stanford road then I get a lift with another taxi to Hillside where my taxi is parked, I get my van and I start that time. Then we go lay at Korsten, because I do Korsten, Greenacres. Sometimes for the whole day we get three trips or four trips, when it's busy five trips, month end and the first but we just lay here the whole day. But what's nice about this place is that they've got free Wi-Fi for us now. So, we make use of it, it's something nice". But I end roughly at about half-past six."

Conversations with taxi drivers working in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas concluded that on an average working day they are at the rank at 05:00 and they end their day between 17:00 and 18:00. They wake up approximately one to two hours before they are at the rank, depending on how far away they live. The earlier they arrive at the rank, the better their spot in line which sets the tone for how many trips they will be able to take. When discussing the reasoning behind being at the rank as early as possible, Participant 5 says:

"I start at 3 in the morning until 5 p.m. You see I came from home nuh and then I must look for the place there at the bottom by Korsten for the bookings. There's a booking system. The first van that comes in then you have to ride that time so you're the 4th van or the 5th van then you must fall in that time. And there's also vans that are sleeping on the rank so you're falling behind that vans".

Research conducted on the work hours of minibus taxi drivers reflects similar findings to that of this study. Therefore, it is not only the norm within the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas only, rather it is the norm within the industry itself. Antrobus & Kerr (2019:6) concluded that most taxi drivers work nearly twice as long as the weekly working hours regulation limit of 48 hours. Similarly, Fobosi (2013:62) discussed that within the taxi industry, there is the exploitation of labour processes; for example, the taxi drivers having to work long hours while being paid poor wages. The findings of this research study confirm the findings of the studies mentioned above.

It can, therefore, be concluded that the long working hours of taxi drivers are prevalent all-over South Africa. Although there is the existence of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, and more specifically, the 'Sectoral Determination 11: Taxi Sector' many vehicle owners do not adhere to these conditions. Taxi drivers are therefore pressured to work long hours in order to meet targets out of fear of losing their jobs.

Furthermore, the taxi industry is commuter driven and taxis will continue to operate as long as there are commuters who need transportation (Fobosi, 2018:3). The industry thus contrasts with the formal sector as its operations are unplanned and in this regard taxi owners and drivers act as free agents (Fobosi, 2018:2). This means that extended working hours in the industry are typical due to the nature of the service offered. As driver income is directly related to the

number of passengers, they commute several problematic behaviours emerge. These behaviours are referred to as the "*battle for the cent*" (IPTD, 2017).

The findings of this study found that taxi drivers in the Northern Areas choose to end their day between 17:00 and 18:00 due to issues regarding safety in the high-crime areas. Therefore, regardless of the financial implications taxi drivers are unwilling to put themselves at an increased level of vulnerability. It is not surprising that the long working hours combined with high speeds and aggressive driving leads to hazardous road safety conditions (IPTD, 2017). Drivers are fatigued as a result of the long hours they work, most often working six or seven days a week. The fatigue affects their driving ability, and when combined with the high speeds and aggressive driving to meet targets for the day, this creates a recipe for disaster.

### **Inconsistent Salary**

Taxi owners set the wages the taxi drivers receive and generally choose to pay their employees on a commission basis (Fobosi, 2013:50). The reasoning for using a commission basis is due to the fluctuation of income weekly, monthly and seasonally (Fobosi, 2013:50). Choosing to use a commission basis means there are no standard salaries for drivers. Therefore, their income is based solely on the number of trips they make.

In doing so, the vehicle owner can maximize profits. Therefore, during specific periods of the month where the business is slower than usual, they are not required to pay a standard amount to their drivers. When discussing the salary, the recurring statement made by drivers was that the income they receive throughout the month varies based on the time of the month. The busiest days tend to be around paydays, whereas the slowest tends to be during the middle of the month. Participant 9 described the salary inconsistency:

"It depends on the month, the date. Sometimes it is very slow and sometimes it is very fast, it depends on the... like the 25th, the 1st or something like that. Because the people get more money on the 1st so there's a lot of movement around. But if it's like on the 8th then it is a little bit slower. On the slow days we're out of the rank at around say 3 trips but on a busy day we get about 8 or 9 trips per day. Which means your money is

less on a slower day which comes down to say about R150 a day and on a busy day you get about R800 or R900 a day".

Fobosi (2013:94) explains that drivers are pressured to travel as fast as they can in order to make as many trips as possible in a day. This pressure is due to the targets set by the owner and to maximise their commission-based income. The need to meet set targets is described by van Ryneveld, (2018:7) as leading to the aggressive driver behaviour, which is the origin of many problems in the industry. The pressure placed on them by owners as well as the need to make a decent living leads to the reckless and often dangerous behaviour of the driver. Because there are large numbers of other minibus taxis on the road, the industry is plagued with fierce competition. When speaking about his biggest concern as a taxi driver, Participant 6 said:

"The dwindling income that we generate at the moment. A year ago we never saw this money, we used to see actually double or triple what we're seeing at the moment. Because, everybody is pumping vans, buying vans, saturating the road and there is no work for everybody. Now they tend to steal onto each other's business."

Attempts to make maximum profit and beat the competition often lead to reckless and dangerous driving. Cervero & Golub (2007:446), loosely associate working in the informal sector, and the low-profit margins driver receive as prompting drivers to compete for customers, which sometimes has dangerous consequences. *"Competition induces drivers to engage in aggressive and dangerous driving behaviour, causing additional congestion and safety problems"* (Dumba, 2017:2).

Barrett (2003:9) provided findings on vehicle owner justification of low wages paid to their drivers. These vehicle owners claim that taxi drivers steal up to 50 per cent of the profit made. These vehicle owners argue that the drivers pocket a large percentage of the earnings, and therefore, they are justified when providing them with low wages. Interestingly, the study goes on to state that the drivers interviewed do not deny pocketing some of the earnings, however, that the percentage they take is considerably smaller than vehicle owners claim (Barrett, 2003:9). However, unpacking the contrasting statements by taxi vehicle owners and taxi drivers is difficult due to the absence of reliable information on the real takings of the taxi industry (Barrett, 2003:9).

The above findings provide an interesting take on debates around the taxi driver's salary. Vehicle owners were not interviewed in this research study, and this may be a limitation. The researcher also acknowledges that questions regarding what percentage taxi drivers extract from their takings were not explored. However, the findings of this study reflect similarities of previous studies conducted on inconsistent salaries found in in-formalised industries. Taxi drivers interviewed explained that they sometimes only earn approximately R150 on a slow day; numbers like this were confirmed throughout the interview process. It is important to consider this low profit when looking at the justification provided by vehicle owners for low wages paid to taxi drivers.

## **UIF**

Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) gives short-term relief to workers when they become unemployed or are unable to work because of maternity, adoption leave, or illness. It also provides relief to the dependants of a deceased contributor (SARS, 2019). UIF serves as a safety net for workers. This safety net is necessary if a person is unable to work due to any of the above-mentioned reasons. UIF only covers those who are employed in the formal economy; therefore, taxi drivers are not protected if they are unable to work. When asked if he feels protected as a taxi driver participant 5 said:

"At the moment there are no benefits here, if you get sick or maybe UIF you don't get that pension money so it's like a casual job. There's no benefits I can't say he is looking after me because if I don't feel like coming into work today, he's going to put another driver on the van. The van won't stand, his business is going on."

Participant 6 discussed not being able to voice concerns regarding not having the benefit of UIF with the vehicle owner:

"There's no other jobs now that's why we taking these jobs it's like no UIF here and we work long hours. We can't go and say ja you didn't pay us UIF tomorrow he's just going to get another driver and there you must go"

Because they are operating without a formal employment contract, taxi drivers avoid having the necessary conversations regarding their working conditions as they fear the owner will

replace them with someone else. Taxi drivers expressed that they are aware that they can lose their job and their only source of income at any moment, which is a major concern to them. The lack of economic security that comes with not having a 'safety net' such as, for example, UIF is described by Mmadi (2012:16) as something that, "*exposes taxi drivers to exploitation and ensures that they are forever attached to the labour market with negative consequences for themselves and their families*".

### **Sick Leave**

Because there is no formal agreement between the vehicle owner and the taxi driver, there is often the absence of paid sick leave. In the interviews, drivers explained that if they needed to take a sick day, their employer expects them to find a replacement for the time that they are unable to work. The replacement pockets the profit for the day, and the employed driver must forfeit their income. Participant 6, who has diabetes and must go to the local clinic regularly said:

"You see in my case I'm a diabetic, my boss... I told him look I'm a diabetic, the past 3 years now and I told him I have certain days where I have to go to the clinic and certain days where I've got to go for blood pull and all of that and he understands. But I will tell him look here boss I can't work on this day I can't work on that day but then he'll tell me get somebody on your van. Who am I going to get that is reliable? So, I told him if I get somebody it's got to be somebody that they know, but according to sick leave we don't get sick leave, no holiday, no nothing. No work no pay. Actually, in my case it's okay because I work on a scheme, other guys they work on a 30% target. So, I will put money away because I make, sometimes I make more money than them. I put money away for those days. Which is unfair because that could've been my luck you understand?"

Participant 6 was the only driver interviewed who does not work on a commission-based income, which he says relates to him having a personal relationship with the vehicle owner. However, this shows that even those who have a personal relationship with the owner, still do not receive any benefits such as paid sick leave, therefore, forfeiting their income for that period.

The responses given by the drivers interviewed in this study confirm that found in previous literature. In their study, Antrobus & Kerr (2019:6) found that only 16% of drivers in their study reported receiving sick leave. Similarly, Mmadi (2012:114) also had responses reflecting the absence of sick leave for the majority of taxi drivers and went on to state the following; *"theoretically, taxi drivers are entitled to all the benefits enjoyed by those defined as 'employees', but regrettably, the situation on the ground depicts a different picture"*.

Therefore, given all of the subthemes mentioned above, it becomes clear that for the lives of the taxi drivers to be improved there needs to be a focus on exploring ways to implement better legislation aimed at protecting the taxi drivers in the industry. The unregulated and informal nature of the industry may allow for the maximization of profit, but this profit mostly goes to the vehicle owner. This leaves taxi drivers only receiving the minimum wage with no additional benefits.

The findings of the subthemes are similar to the findings made by Fourie (2003:61) who stated, *"Poor regulation and control is directly to blame for most of the problems that lead to the taxi industry's appalling safety record and appears to be the core problem of the whole system"*. This study identified and explored how the unregulated industry directly affects driver behaviour. When looking at negative perceptions of the taxi industry, and more specifically of driver behaviour, it is essential to keep in mind the working conditions these individuals are facing.

### **Competition between Rank Taxis and Sweeper Taxis.**

Chapter 3 briefly touched on the difference between rank taxis and sweeper taxis. The difference between the two is explained as follows: *"Although minibus taxis operate mainly from designated ranking areas, the last number of years has also seen the introduction of the "sweeper" taxi, especially in the Northern Areas and along the Govan Mbeki Avenue and Stanford Road corridors. These sweepers mainly operate independently and do not belong to any recognised taxi association"* (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality , 2006:10).

As mentioned, the sweeper taxis do not belong to an association, and as the name implies, they pick up those commuters who are walking along their path. The sweeper taxis who do not belong to an association cause a great deal of tension between the rank taxi drivers and the sweeper taxi drivers. Participant 2 gave his definition of a sweeper taxi by saying the following:

"Sweeper taxis they ride everywhere, and they pick up everyone. Sweeper how can I put it to you, if the sweeper decides he's going to town now then he just... He not only loads town people. He loads everybody along the way to town. He loads everyone."

Given this definition of the sweeper taxi and taking into consideration the already inconsistent income of rank taxi drivers, one sees why there would be a negative perception of sweeper taxis. There is a belief that sweeper taxis are taking profits away from them which was revealed during the discussions further adding to the additional pressures rank taxi drivers are facing. Speaking on his attitude towards the sweeper taxis, Participant 4 said:

"They are running on our routes, you see? And what can we do?" We then went further and discussed whether he feels commuters prefer the sweeper taxis, he said, "some of them, you see some of them come here with sweeper vans and at night we must take them home and some of them mostly Gelvan people they ask us why don't we want to load Gelvan people because we actually explain to them. Say out of the 100% only 10% of that people of Gelvan come with us to Greenacres but at night there are more than that 10% you must transport them back home. They actually prefer to come here to Greenacres with the sweeper vans... With the sweeper taxis and they are sitting on each other's lap. Here they are full of issues on the rank is like a how can I say there's rules and you have to obey the rules with a load of 15 people but they come to Greenacres with maybe 20 or 30 inside the taxi. At the end of the day the sweepers that's why they are calling them sweepers they are sweeping everywhere on everyone's route and it is not only us here by East Cape you see? All the other associations all the sweepers are breaking us down"

The interviewed drivers made it clear that there is not much competition amongst themselves as there are association rules that they are required to adhere to. This refers to their reasons for

being at the rank as early as possible to secure their spot in line for the day. The competition they mention is between them and sweeper taxis who drive along their routes.

Sweeper taxis break away from the organised taxi structure itself. They act on their own accord as they do not belong to any associations and therefore are able to create norms of their own without being regulated. In comparison to rank taxi drivers who have structured times and routes, the sweeper taxi drivers reach their goal of making maximum profit without needing to follow strict guidelines. Therefore, making it harder to compartmentalize how collective mobilities would exist between commuters and drivers. As this is strictly a relationship that requires drivers to get commuters to their destinations as quickly as possible.

Bissell (2010:270) provides an example of a relationship the driver of a vehicle has with passengers differs greatly to the relationship that would exist between unacquainted people on a plane. This difference is linked to the level of familiarity between the relevant parties. Given the nature of sweeper taxis it becomes apparent that unless already familiar with one another, due to the inconsistent nature of the mode of transport regarding routes, it is unlikely that collective mobilities would form among passengers.

Competition between drivers of unregulated and informal public transport is linked to the behavioural characteristics of drivers. Dumba (2017:6) describes the behavioural characteristics as including: *"overspeeding, cutting corners, red light and late amber running, tailgating and following closely to the leading vehicle in a queue, driving in the inner lane of the opposing traffic and creation of artificial lanes during the peak periods, loading and dropping off passengers outside the designated bus termini"*.

In an industry that is already exploiting the drivers, the competition that exists creates additional strain on them to ensure they can make a profit. Fobosi (2018:7) discusses the dilemmas taxi drivers are faced with when working in the industry and identifies the daily competition over passengers as drivers attempt to make a profit as a contributing factor. Although the competition exists, this is not to say that all rank taxi drivers have negative perceptions of sweeper taxi drivers. Some drivers discussed their understanding of sweeper drivers needing to make a living and finding a means to do so, however, it is how it is approached that causes tension for them. Participant 6 stated:

"They are an issue but to avoid any troubles I will... If they respect me, I will respect them. They've got to make a living but not the way they're going about it. It's all these young guys, some of them don't even have their driver's licence and the vans haven't even got the normal... uhm... public driving permits that we have because our association forces us to have these things. Insurance, in case people get accidentally hurt in the van, you are covered. Each person will be covered for about like R50 000 in the van in the event of an accident. Those guys... Nothing. And they overload their vans and the skollie element in the van. So that is why I try not to engage them... to antagonise them. But they mustn't antagonise me".

Therefore, we see that even those rank taxi drivers who are not as bothered by the sweeper taxis have an issue with sweeper taxis not belonging to an association. Rank taxi drivers believe sweeper taxis not belonging to an association means they are not governed by anyone. So as a result, sweeper taxi drivers do not conform to any rules. This belief makes the relationship between the two types of taxis strained. In this research study, rank taxi drivers highlighted that they expect sweeper taxis to have respect for others, something which they feel they currently do not have.

It is important to note that rank taxi drivers collectively placed blame regarding bad driving and overloading on sweeper taxi drivers. However, interviews conducted with commuters offer a different view. Commuters stated that their negative perceptions were based on experiences with not only sweeper taxis but rank taxis as well.

### **Crime in the community and how it affects the taxi driver**

As mentioned in Chapter 3, in June 2019, it was estimated that the area saw more than 100 gun-related deaths in the last five months (African News Agency, 2019). With media outlets regularly reporting incidences of gang-related violence in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas, it is essential to assess how this affects the daily life of a taxi driver working in these areas.

Essenburg (2003:15) outlines the risks workers in the taxi industry face and these risks include: *"working alone, working with the public, working at night, working in high crime areas, and working with cash"*. Due to the nature of their work taxi drivers are mobile and therefore

protecting them while they are completing their trips is not an easy task. Moreover, this leaves them at a higher risk for violent crimes while making a living.

This study found that gang violence has influenced the routes that taxi drivers choose to take. Taxi drivers have to pay protection fees to gangsters in order to drive through specific stops. Failing to do so results in violence and participants in this study mentioned gangsters shooting at taxi drivers for failing to pay the protection fee. Taxi drivers explained that they are targets because they have large amounts of cash with them at all times, and the gangsters know this and exploit it by robbing them. Participant 7 described an incident where he was held at gunpoint:

"I've been gunpointed already in Booyens Park by a guy that came up to me. I went to go and fetch my gaatjie at his house. I sat in my taxi and this guy came knocking on my window. Asked me for a job and I said no man I'm waiting for my gaatjie and I just pulled up the window again and then I heard again another knock, a different knock, with his gun now. Hey open this door and he keep on telling me to keep quiet and I mustn't make a noise and all that but I tell him, Boet I just started work now, you know? Where must I get money? I had R30 on me. I took the R30 out and my driver's licence was with it so he grabbed it, right? So then he asked me for the tape. So I said no man it's a built in tape I can't take the tape out, you know? I can give you the face but we're going to struggle here. He asked is there an amp so I said ja, there's an amp at the back. So I said to him let me get out. So I got out and he turned his back on me, that's when I grabbed his gun and we struggled and my guard came out and we overpowered this guy. But apparently it was one of the big gangsters there in Booyens Park that we know, it was one of his boys that did this now to us now. We got away and he ran away. And we went straight to. The other guys told us no whose gun is it, so we took the gun back to him. There's no use going to the police because then you're in trouble also and that guy even said to me I made a wise choice giving it back to him".

Taxi drivers interviewed indicated that they refuse to drive after a specific time as they feel it leaves them more vulnerable to crime. Fear as a result of high crime levels result in taxi drivers being willing to lose out on potential profit. Reflecting on the extent of crime in the Northern Areas Participant 3 described an incident that occurred after he did not have money to give someone who stopped him:

"Just now recently I had an issue where they threw my front windscreen just for a R5. I didn't want to give a R5 so they threw the windscreen".

With the increased fear of crime in the Northern Areas, it becomes vital to have a police presence in the areas. The Metro-police was set to do just that in the Northern Areas. The purpose of the Metro-Police was outlined as: "*three statutory functions of municipal police agencies are traffic policing, crime prevention and municipal by-law enforcement*" (Newham, et al., 2002:1).

Through interviews with taxi drivers, the researcher has concluded that they have lost faith in the metro-police to ensure their safety. One participant explained that taxi drivers identified crime hotspots and notified the metro-police, however, nothing came of this. There is a consensus that the metro-police choose to take the 'easy option' by handing out fines to motorists rather than combat crime in the area. When discussing where he feels the metro police's priorities are, Participant 7 says:

"Here's the problem, metro police, what is their duty? Really you know they are there in Bloemendaal mos there's a lot of them now nuh they were given to Bloemendaal police station, but they carry on like they are traffic cops and they pull us over. They don't go and catch gangsters and stuff; they take the easy targets here. So, we want to know what is the metro police's job actually?" When asked about whether he feels that the focus of the metro police is more pulling over taxis and giving drivers fines, the driver responded, "Ja, but I mean even with the normal cars the metro police were employed in the Northern Areas you know, for gangsterism and they're not doing that. They stand and target taxis and cars and pull them over"

This explanation given by the taxi drivers may, however, be biased due to the metro-police regularly handing out fines to taxi drivers. As mentioned, traffic policing is part of the function of the metro-police, and taxi drivers motivated their statements by saying that they are regularly receiving fines. If the vehicles they are driving are not roadworthy or they are not obeying the rules of the road, then the metro police are working within their job description by handing out fines. This does not mean the statements by the taxi drivers should be disregarded. The taxi's transport people through dangerous areas and ensuring that enough is being done to protect all those in the taxi should be a priority for all.

There are clear dangers associated with being a minibus taxi driver and transporting individuals within the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas comes with its challenges, therefore, the taxi drivers feel that more needs to be done to ensure their safety while doing their job. When discussing what would make him feel safer driving in the communities, Participant 5 said:

"If there is some policing around, if they are visible and we don't get pulled off by gangs in Gelvandale area looking for money and the safety of the people in the van. If the police are visible, they won't do it maybe, but they are not visible, and we must take our own chances."

Newton (2004) outlined three situations where crime in public transport occurs. Of these situations, the third, travelling onboard a mode of transport such as a bus, train or taxi was identified as a cause of concern for taxi drivers. Because they work with cash, they become targets for being pulled over and must pay the protection fees. When asked about whether he feels protected, Participant 3 said:

"To be honest no. Because we identify the hotspots especially coming to crime areas and you can report it every single day and just, we might say, they might say, police might say they doing something about it but we can see nothing is being done about it". He further went on to speak about how the industry can improve and he said, "the only way it can improve if government removes all the illegal vehicles from the industry. It's the only way."

Drivers have indicated that in addition to feeling the metro-police are not providing protection, they are also regularly having to pay bribes. There is no secret that some government officials have been known to request or accept bribes from members of the public. The corruption that occurs is described as the abuse of entrusted power for private benefit (Arrive Alive). Such an instance is described by Participant 6:

"We've approached them to help us stand on certain spots they actually came and gave us fines because we were standing on the curb. Just goes to show that there is no protection from the police authorities and if you get pulled over the first thing, they will ask you for is a bribe. Underhand... But I've got proof of that because I was told to come

to the van because he hasn't got any cigarettes and chips. I had to give a R60 otherwise I would have gotten a R400 and something rand fine. And that is what we deal with every day. That is why I try to not overload, I try to keep my van presentable, tyres and I tell my boss look here this is wrong and this is wrong and he will tell me no and I will say if I get a fine I will give it to you. And they understand".

Paying officials bribes is therefore seen as an alternative to paying the fine they would be required to pay. Often the fines are more than what taxi drivers make in a day, and this is a reason for the decision to pay bribes. Taxi drivers have indicated that they are aware they are wrong for paying bribes, but they feel it is their only option when pulled over. Paying of bribes means that there are often unsafe acts that are overlooked and endanger members of the public thus, *"the impact of corruption increases risk of unsafe conditions on both our roads and transport systems"* (Arrive Alive , n.d.).

### **Concluding Remarks**

The objective of this chapter was to unpack the working conditions of taxi drivers in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas. The narratives provided detail on how the long working hours, inconsistent wages, unpaid sick leave and no additional employee benefits negatively impact the taxi driver. There is a distinct link between working in an unregulated, informal public transport industry and the bad driving behaviour of taxi drivers. The researcher explored how the pressures placed on taxi drivers to meet targets set by vehicle owners created difficult working conditions for them. The pressures were also identified which influence instances of taxi overloading and speeding directly. These pressures coupled with the competition that exists in their line of work creates an unpleasant working environment and it is no surprise then, that taxi drivers indicated they would leave the industry if they had an alternative means of employment.

This chapter also explored the dangers associated with being a taxi driver in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas as it is a high-crime area. The gang-related crimes occurring in these communities have impacted on the daily operations of taxi drivers. Taxi drivers stated that they choose to end their day between 17:00 and 18:00 as working later increases their level of vulnerability. This study identified that taxis are a target for crime due to drivers carrying profits

made throughout the day. The importance of researching ways to provide a safer work environment for taxi drivers was emphasised in this chapter. The research is necessary to ensure that they are working in an industry that protects them. The current state of the industry reflects an exploitative nature that leaves taxi drivers captive within the industry.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: Simultaneous Vulnerabilities: Drivers and commuters as captives of poor public transport systems.**

Chapter 3 looked at commuter perceptions of public transport and identified common themes of passengers that exist when commuting using minibus taxis. Chapter 4 looked at narratives of taxi driver perceptions of working in the taxi industry. A common theme between the two groups was identified; that there is an existence of simultaneous vulnerability for both drivers and passengers of minibus taxis. There is very little research done on narratives of vulnerability and lack of choice in public transportation, therefore, much of this chapter will use media articles to provide a contextual reference.

The following chapter comprises of three themes. The first theme will look at the vulnerability of both commuters and taxi drivers. The second theme will look at how taxi drivers enforce their power over commuters when they get into the taxi vehicle. The third theme will look at taxi drivers and taxi commuters being held captive by the industry — both due to the absence of choice.

The literature on commuter vulnerability focuses mainly on issues of crime in communities and how this affects public transport satisfaction. This study, however, chooses to look at the vulnerability of commuters through the lens of their overall commuting journey. Crime forms part of this category. The researcher identified simultaneous vulnerabilities as taxi drivers are held captive by the industry due to being unable to find other forms of employment and taxi commuters are held captive due to the absence of choice of a suitable public transport system.

In this study, commuters stated that given a choice to commute using a private vehicle, they would choose that over minibus taxis, however, financial constraints prohibit that from happening. Therefore, it can be found that individuals in the communities rely on public transport because, unlike other types of transport such as private vehicles, public transport requires the least monetary pressure (Hernández, 2017:151). Participant 14 stated:

“When you get in the taxi now you don’t know if you’re going to come home. Because the drivers and the gaatijies they don’t care, they ride over the red robots and they put

lots of people in the taxi. Now what if there's an accident? Nobody cares. That's why my son, he's in Grade 11 now nuh and I want him to learn to drive and go study at the college so he can get a car and drive me where I need to go”

This participant identifies her dependency on a public transport system she deems dangerous due to the fact that she has no other choice. However, she stated that she hopes to get her son into a position where he can afford a car of his own one day. Therefore, for this participant, access to a private vehicle is seen as access to a better life.

Commuters are more likely to continue using minibus taxis as they provide a service, unlike regulated public transport systems. Minibus taxis are readily available throughout the Northern Areas, and commuters have explained that they get dropped off closer to their homes at the end of the day. Therefore, although perceptions of the industry are negative commuters are unlikely to choose a different public transport system. Other public transportation modes only offer scheduled services, whereas minibus taxis provide unscheduled services (Sinclair & Imaniranzi, 2015:105). The benefit of having an unscheduled service is explained by Participant 15:

“You see the buses, it's far from us. Like you know now the buses only start to ride now but it's still a distance to walk. You see? And so there's no buses from us to town and like that. You see? Now that, you get robbed if you go there. You can get robbed, mugged or whatever. You see? So the taxis come up here and that's why we rather prefer using them”.

Therefore, commuters are more comfortable using a minibus taxi as it offers more of a door-to-door, or at least close to door service — something fundamental in areas of high crime. Further, if a commuter urgently needed to get to a destination, they would have to wait for the next scheduled mode of transport. Waiting for scheduled transport directly influences the decision to use the informal minibus taxis as the formal systems offered by city governments are often incapable of meeting the transport needs of the population (Brussel, et al., 2019:5).

As previously stated, the vulnerabilities of commuters regarding public transportation is an area not explored enough in research. However, the few survey results available suggest that those

who use informal transport services fall in the low-income bracket and have few available mobility options (Cervero, 2000:33). The findings of this study agree with the statement made by Cervero. Commuters continue to use minibus taxis as this industry is currently the only industry catering to the mobility-related problems associated with accessibility in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas.

Bissell (2010:271) discussed how on board a railway system, there is a sense of unfamiliarity between passengers and this influences interactions. As the researcher outlined in Chapter 3, this research study includes the taxi driver in the mobile collective due to their proximity to passengers meaning they can directly influence the experience through their actions. However, as discussed in previous chapters this is prevalent in rank taxis and not in sweeper taxis.

As Bissell (2010:271) explains, *“the degree of acquaintance that characterises these relationships, to a large part, mediates the type of communication that takes place between passengers”*. In this regard a taxi driver has a degree of acquaintance with commuters for example through commuters regularly driving with the same driver a relationship may begin to develop. This relationship could benefit commuters; an example of this is provided by Participant 16:

“A very positive element of taking a taxi is if I walk out by my gate there’s probably going to be one coming past. We don’t have to walk a distance to get one. You understand my point? That’s the convenient part of the story. You understand? And some of them are good hearted, if you ask them to drop you off nearer to your house. That is now a good element of the story”.

Therefore, taxi drivers are exploited working in the unregulated industry; however, the unscheduled nature of the industry is what motivates commuters to continue using it. This reality highlights an interesting dynamic when moving forward with plans to regulate the industry. Although regulation of the industry has been identified as necessary, ensuring that it is still able to meet the needs of commuters in the way that it currently does, is necessary.

The availability as a result of the industry being unregulated was identified by commuters interviewed in this study as the only benefit to using minibus taxis. Contrastingly, the industry

being unregulated is what taxi drivers find most dissatisfying about the industry. It is also what many studies have identified as the reasons for the bad behaviours of drivers which commuters attached to their negative perceptions.

Taxi drivers interviewed in this study have indicated that they would prefer to be part of a regulated industry. The motivation for wanting to be regulated is due to the benefits attached to this industry; such as a fixed salary, UIF and sick leave. When discussing the IPTS, Participant 8 said the following:

“IPTS is a good thing that come in now, you see? And you get your straight wages every week you see and it’s worth it. You see? And there is no robbing. I never hear the taxi was... robbing that red taxi with the buses. So, it’s going to happen, but I don't know when, you see? They said soon but as I tell you now the first phone call I get, I’m out of here.”

Taxi drivers are, therefore, exposed to exploitation within the industry, and this creates negative consequences for themselves and their families (Mmadi, 2012:16). This exploitation is what many have identified as a cause of driver behaviour. As drivers are surviving on low-profit margins, and this leads them to actively and sometimes dangerously, compete for customers (Cervero & Golub, 2007:446). The exploitation they are exposed to is described by Participant 6:

“The owners they don't give us anything when the petrol prices go up my 30% stays my 30% since beginning of the year so we feel it as drivers but we’re waiting for IPTS to come to Greenacres and yes it will be better. At least with this job that I've got now, there's no other jobs now that's why we taking these jobs it's like no UIF here and we work long hours. We can't go and say ja you didn't pay us UIF tomorrow he's just going to get another driver and there you must go but when its IPTS its going to be much better for us.”

Working in the minibus taxi industry in South Africa has been historically marked by its exploitative relationship between owners and drivers (Fobosi, 2018:2). This exploitative relationship is as a result of wanting to maximize profit at all costs (Fobosi, 2018:2). Drivers

interviewed explained that they did not enter the industry out of choice but due to the difficulty of finding formal employment elsewhere. Taxi drivers are, therefore, held captive within the industry.

Barrett (2003:27) provides findings from an interview conducted with a taxi driver. The findings are particularly relevant to this study as the response mirrors that of the responses given by taxi drivers interviewed in this study. It was stated that taxi drivers must be thinking of the owner, the passengers and traffic authorities at the same time (Barrett, 2003:27). Furthermore, drivers state that although they are perceived as rude by most of the public, they are naturally not, but pressures take a toll on them (Barrett, 2003:27). The vulnerabilities faced by taxi drivers, thus negatively impact their attitudes and behaviour.

A limitation of this research study is that the researcher did not formally interview taxi owners. Taxi owners' responses would be able to provide a greater understanding of how this industry works. Mndebele & Cabe (2019) explain, "*Despite consistent economic growth brought by the taxi industry over the years, it remains characterised by appalling labour relations*". Without understanding the overlap between ownership and the way the taxi industry is run there is a gap in piecing together the industry as a whole mechanism.

The long hours, low pay and lack of basic safety nets leave drivers exposed and vulnerable. It is necessary to attempt to understand why owners allow this to happen. It is also necessary to gain perspective of the industry as they see it. Therefore, the researcher recommends that this be a focus point for further studies to gain a more in-depth understanding of the industry.

It is important to note that literature shows that taxi drivers have described commuters as adding to the pressures they are faced with while working in the industry. Passengers are said to yell at drivers because they are late for work (Barrett, 2003:27; Sauti, 2006:113). Therefore, a bad commuting journey is not necessarily due to bad driving behaviour. Taxi drivers were not asked about experiences, such as those mentioned above. Not asking drivers about passenger behaviour toward them might prove to be a limitation of the study. However, during the interview process taxi drivers did not mention commuters contributing to the pressures they experience.

Chapter 4 identified how taxi drivers are exploited working in the taxi industry, and how the pressures placed on them influence driver behaviour was also discussed. However, through interviews with commuters, it became apparent that when drivers get into the taxi, they become the one holding the power. Drivers are now in control, and they are directly influencing the commuting experience for passengers. It is interesting to note how commuters explain the treatment by taxi drivers. Participant 10 discussed her issues regarding safety due to reckless driving:

“No not at all, that's mos now when like... riding over red robots its mos not safe and getting in front of the car that's like by the robot getting in front of the car when they ride over the red robot no matter if it turns red, the robot turns green for the person that person had to wait to get all the in the taxi so I mean it's not safe so if it's a rude person he will drive into the taxi so our life will also be in danger”.

Therefore, although taxi drivers are exploited on a larger scale working in the industry, they're not taking commuter considerations regarding safety into account means that they become the exploiter when in the taxi. This bad behaviour leads commuters to develop a negative perception of taxi drivers influencing how they interact with them and overall, how they experience their journey. Sauti (2006:44) found that drivers are often described as rude and said to act as if they own the minibus taxi, which is often not theirs.

Further exploration of the shift in power dynamics when inside a minibus taxi is necessary. Although the researcher has extensively highlighted the pressures placed on drivers, this could not possibly be the only reason for this behavioural trend. A particularly alarming description was provided by Participant 16 when discussing her main concern regarding the taxi industry: “For me it's the gaatjies and the taxi drivers because how many times did I get into a taxi then the gaatjie and the driver sit and smoking dagga here in this small environment and you can't say anything because they are like ‘hey don't tell me’, you know? They smoking dagga and some of them are even drinking, having liquor on the taxi. Not knowing they've got people's lives in their hands in the taxi. That is how bad this thing has become”.

Bissell (2010) discusses collective mobilities and the influence it has on the overall commuting experience and how those on-board public transport influence one another. The researcher

highlighted that when on-board a small-scale sixteen-seater vehicle, the taxi driver forms part of this mobile collective. The driver behaviour and treatment of commuters is, therefore, a direct influence on the commuter perceptions. Participant 10 explains an instance where she spoke up about the overloading that occurs in the taxis:

“We were travelling to town one day me and my sister's child and my sister so she got off at Greenacres taxi but then because I moaned in the taxi in Korsten for them putting too much people. The collector of the taxi he said to me that I must get out of the taxi and I had to get out of the taxi because I complained about moving up and moving up you have to move up. They put 5 people where 3 people must sit. So I got out of the taxi”

The response mentioned above is the only response the researcher received regarding a commuter expressing their dissatisfaction with the commuting experience while in the taxi. The rest of the respondents expressed that although they were extremely unhappy with the industry, they felt there was nothing they could do to improve the situation out of fear that a consequence such as a Participant 10's would occur.

The Port Elizabeth Northern Areas comprises of mostly low socio-economic clusters of individuals. As mentioned, the Apartheid city design created a coloured area that separated individuals not only by race but by class. This left the more impoverished individuals further away from the CBD and thus resulting in them spending more time and money travelling. It became apparent during the interviews that commuters only continue making use of minibus taxis in the area due to them currently being the easily accessible option; as mentioned commuters want to make the switch to IPTS when it becomes more easily accessible to them.

In addition to the fear when taking minibus taxis, the two other points outlined by Newton (2004:29): “*walking to, from or between transport facilities or stops and waiting at boarding points and facilities*” influence potential users of IPTS in the area. The findings highlighted that commuter's worry about their safety when travelling to the stops due to them not being as close to their home as they would hope. Fear as a result of having to walk in the area influences reasons for not yet making use of the IPTS.

The issue for commuters is not using the buses but rather the design and the chosen location of bus stops. There was a general theme that commuters feel unsafe having to walk from their homes to the stops and that played the most significant role as to why they are still making use of minibus taxis. This further emphasises the statement made previously in this section: although regulation of the industry is necessary, it is essential to understand that the convenience of taxis is what motivates commuters to use them.

Critique of IPTS touched on the times of the buses being an issue for commuters and potentially influencing decisions to use them. As stated by The Conversation current BRT users as well as potential BRT users, prefer a more frequent and easily accessible transport system with lower fares over a system with shorter travel time (Venter, 2011). The researcher explored this perspective with respondents of the study. Participant 16 provided her thoughts on both the taxi industry and the introduction of the IPTS:

“That's a very good thing. That is a very good thing, but then there's gangsterism going in there as well. The people are making use of the buses yes and I'm going to tell you later on about the inconvenience as well. They're throwing the buses you're sitting in the bus you can get hurt, right now tis the most pleasurable transport you can use at the moment but with us staying up here they've got taxis picking you up and taking you to Stanford road you get off there as well when you get back. Then the taxi must bring you back there's no taxis doing that. There's no taxis there doing that but at the moment the buses are the safest than the taxi although certain points where they throw the buses you know with stones and that type of thing you know but right now the buses for me are the most pleasurable to use at the moment. She further went on to say a positive element is that the gangsters will have a harder time infiltrating the IPTS, “there's more gangsters participating in the taxis than in the buses because the buses won't allow that.”

In Chapter 3, the researcher identified the difficulty in ensuring passenger safety in a mobile vehicle. It is harder to monitor the journey due to the number of vehicles, and this creates room for criminal activities to occur. Commuters and drivers would benefit from monitoring of the trips, and this could ensure safety. However, there are currently approximately 250,000 taxis operating (Wasserman, 2019), and the financial cost associated with this would be extremely high.

The spatial design of a city contributes to the vulnerabilities of commuters. The spatial dislocation of the poor has left most of more impoverished people staying relatively far away from their places of employment (Kruger & Landman, 2007:116). This spatial dislocation results in increased time spent travelling and thus increased the vulnerabilities to the potential crime during these journeys (Kruger & Landman, 2007: 116).

(Kruger & Landman, 2007) suggested an approach to combating crime by reducing not only the causes of but also the opportunity for, criminal events. This approach incorporates the following:

1. *“Physical/spatial planning: urban planning approaches used at a strategic level and dealing with the form of the city, e.g. the promotion of mixed land-use, the reduction of vacant land, promoting pedestrian use of infrastructure, ensuring the equitable and efficient provision of facilities and infrastructure, and supporting urban renewal.*
2. *Design: the detailed design of physical urban elements, such as the movement system and roads, open spaces, buildings and lighting.*
3. *Management: spatial management of the city and its different functions including infrastructure maintenance, bye-law enforcement, implementing crime prevention strategies and initiatives etc”.*

The findings of this study identify a limitation in this suggested approach. Although the points outlined are necessary to ensure reduced crime levels in South African transport, provisions need to be implemented to cater to the vulnerabilities that exist while on board the transport systems. It was identified that this is where commuters feel most vulnerable to gang-related crimes. Therefore, to ensure passenger safety provision needs to be made to create a public transport system that goes beyond looking at getting from A to B (Connective Cities, 2019). Incorporating this into crime prevention approaches will ensure that passengers are provided with safe mobility (Mugion et al., 2018:1569).

## **Concluding Remarks**

The objective of this chapter was to highlight the existing vulnerabilities of both the taxi commuter and taxi driver in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas. At the beginning of the chapter, the researcher explained that much of the current literature on commuter vulnerability focuses specifically on crime. This research study chose to look at the vulnerability of commuters through the lens of their overall commuting journey. Commuters being vulnerable to crime forms part of that journey. The commuting journey has been identified in this study to begin before getting on board the public transport system until the commuter gets home at the end of their day.

The financial constraints of commuters were identified as holding the commuters captive to the minibus taxi industry. If commuters had a choice, they indicated that they would rather use a private motor vehicle. Private motor vehicles were associated with access to a better life. It was also identified that the unscheduled nature of the industry is what commuters like about the taxi, and it is also a primary reason they continue to use this mode of transportation.

Taxis not running to schedule is a result of the unregulated industry in which it exists. The unregulated industry was identified as being the cause of taxi driver vulnerability as they are faced with daily pressures to make ends meet. An interesting finding was that commuters described the exploited taxi drivers as generally rude towards them. Therefore, it is shown that when taxi drivers are inside the vehicle, they hold power over the commuters. Thus, the individual exploited by the industry outside of the taxi is seen to exploit those within the taxi. The relationship that unfolds between the taxi driver and taxi commuter while on their journey was identified as an area that needs further research.

The crime prevalent in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas was identified to lead to vulnerability of both taxi drivers and taxi commuters highlighting the importance of further investigation to ensure the safety of all when using public transportation. The researcher explained that more research needs to be conducted on ensuring passenger safety while on their commuting journey as this is where both taxi drivers and commuters identified they feel most vulnerable.

## **CHAPTER SIX: Conclusions and Recommendations**

This research study used narratives provided by taxi commuters and drivers to explore perceptions of public transport in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas and found the following:

First, David Bissell's approach to collective mobilities on board public transport is relevant when unpacking how passenger interactions influence the commuting experience. The researcher adapted Bissell's approach and included drivers in the collective due to the size of a minibus taxi. The proximity of the driver and passenger means they can influence one another's experiences. A finding of this study is that norms are developed as individuals collectively experience the journey in their shared space.

Secondly, improving patterns of urban mobility are directly linked to the spatial design of cities. The Port Elizabeth Northern Areas was designed during the apartheid era and thus accessibility of those living in the areas was not a priority. Initiatives need to pay close attention to how spatial design affects the accessibility of public transportation. Commuters indicated that alternative modes to minibus taxis would require them to walk to and from stops and given the high crime rates in the area it places them at a risk they are unwilling to take.

Thirdly, gang-related crimes have hugely impacted the commuting experience for those living in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas. Taxis have become targets for gangsters in the area who have implemented the 'protection fee' which requires taxi drivers to pay them a required amount in return for the safety of all on-board the vehicle — the instances of crime highlight the importance of finding solutions to ensuring passenger safety while on-board minibus taxis.

Fourthly, the working conditions of minibus taxis have resulted in low job satisfaction. Working in an unregulated industry means vehicle owners can exploit taxi drivers by; having them work long hours to meet targets, paying drivers a commission-based salary, not providing drivers with paid sick leave and not ensuring drivers have additional benefits such as UIF. This exploitation can continue due to drivers' fear of unemployment. Taxi drivers indicated that if given the opportunity, they would leave the taxi industry.

Lastly, simultaneous vulnerabilities exist between taxi drivers and taxi commuters resulting in both groups being held captive by the taxi industry. The taxi commuter is held captive within

the industry as citizens do not have another mode of transport that provides them with the level of accessibility and availability the taxi industry does. The taxi driver is held captive by the industry as a worker who does not have other options for employment.

### **Limitations of the study**

Firstly, this research study did not include interviews with taxi vehicle owners. Not interviewing vehicle owners, therefore, means that they were unable to provide explanations and justifications for the issues identified by taxi drivers.

Secondly, the researcher did not ask taxi drivers about their experiences with commuters. The research study looked at how taxi drivers perceive working in the industry and the effect this has on them. However, unpacking the perceptions of both taxi drivers and taxi commuters could have provided a better understanding of how these two groups influence each other during their commuting journeys.

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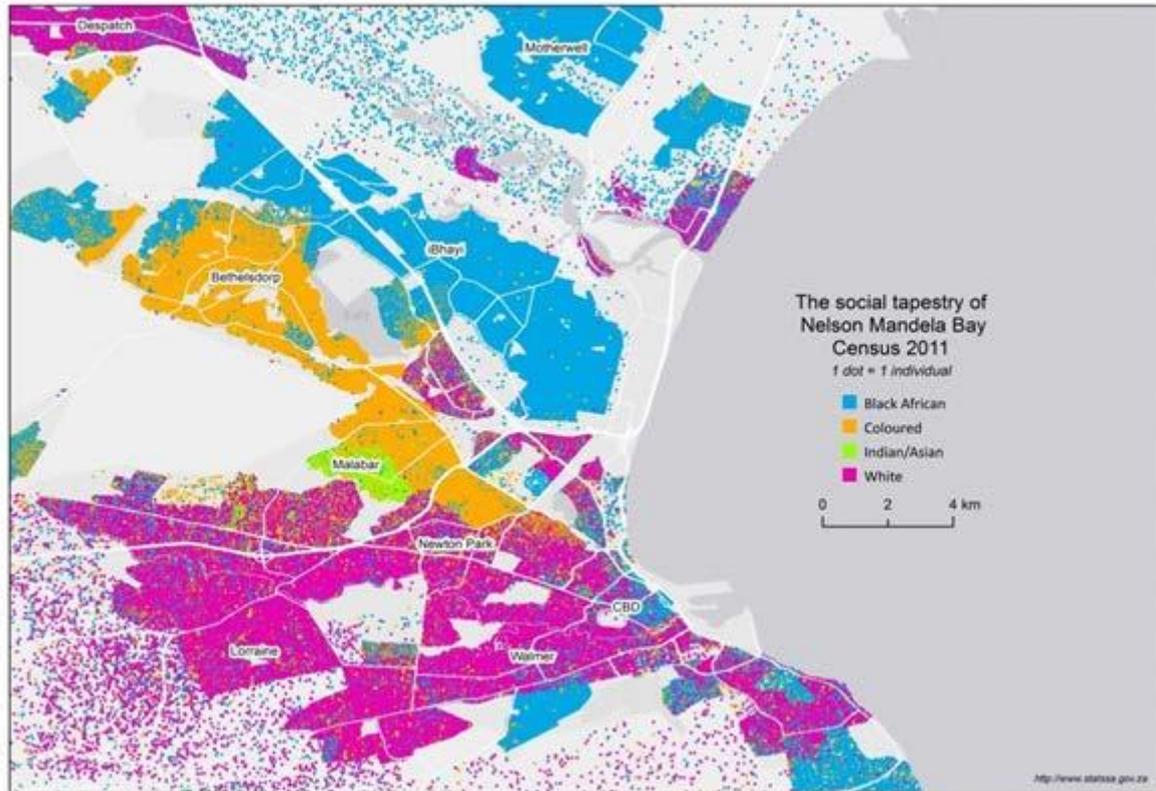
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## Appendix A

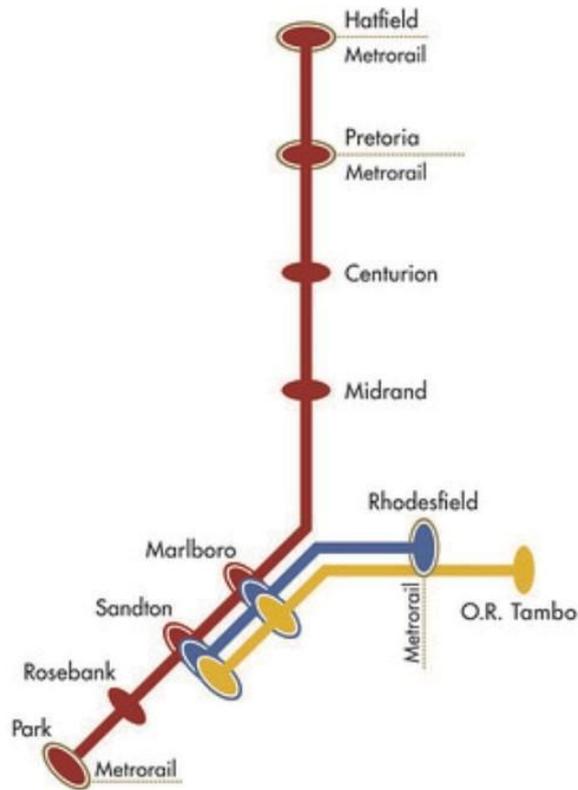
### Map of the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas



<http://www.statssa.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/NelsonMandela-1024x724.jpg>

## Appendix B

### Gautrain route



<https://www.myguidejohannesburg.com/things-to-do/gautrain-station-or-tambo-airport>

## Appendix C

### Ethical clearance



**SOUTH CAMPUS  
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[Noxolo.mngonyama@mandela.ac.za](mailto:Noxolo.mngonyama@mandela.ac.za)

Ref: H/18/ART/SA-004

31 July 2018

Ms SRL Lingham  
41 North Street  
Moselville  
UITENHAGE  
6229

Dear Ms Lingham

**RE: APPLICATION FOR ETHICS CLEARANCE**

**APPROVED TITLE:**

**NARRATIVES OF THE COMMUTE: INVESTIGATING EXPERIENCES OF COMMUTING IN THE PORT ELIZABETH NORTHERN AREAS**

Your above-entitled application for ethics clearance was considered by the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee meeting (FPGSC) of the Faculty of Arts.

We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the committee. Kindly note that this approval remains subject to the necessary formal permission being granted by gatekeepers relevant to your study.

Your Ethics clearance reference number is **H/18/ART/SA-004**, and is valid for three years, from 23 July 2018 – 17 July 2021. Please inform the FPGSC, via your supervisor, if any changes (particularly in the methodology) occur during this time. An annual affirmation to the effect that the protocols used are still those for which approval was granted, will be required from you. You will be reminded timeously of this responsibility.

We wish you well with the project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Noxolo'.

Mrs N Mngonyama  
FACULTY ADMINISTRATOR

cc: Supervisor  
HoD  
School Representative: Faculty FPGSC

## Appendix D

### Consent letter for participants



**CONSENT LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS  
Nelson Mandela University  
Department of Sociology & Anthropology**

Dear Sir/Madam

**REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN  
RESEARCH STUDY**

I am a MA (Sociology) student at **Nelson Mandela University**, presently engaged in a research project entitled "NARRATIVES OF THE COMMUTE: INVESTIGATING EXPERIENCES OF COMMUTE IN THE PORT ELIZABETH NORTHERN AREAS", under the supervision of Professor Nomalanga Mkhize of the Department of Sociology & Anthropology.

**1. Objective of the study**

The objective of this study is to explore experiences of commuting in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas as well as Discern if there are common themes in the commuting experience in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas

**2. Procedures**

In order to complete this study I need to conduct interviews of approximately 15-20 minutes' duration, which will be audiotaped for verification of findings by an independent expert in qualitative research.

**3. Confidentiality**

In this study I undertake to safeguard your identity by omitting the use of names and places. Confidentiality will be assured by erasure of taped material on completion of transcriptions of these tapes. Only an independent expert on qualitative research and I will share the transcribed material. You are giving informed consent to these proceedings and reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any stage. It is understood that you are under no obligation to participate in this

**4. Participation and Withdrawal**

If you do partake, you have the right to withdraw at any given time, during the study without penalty or loss of benefits. You withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

**5. Potential benefits to subjects and/or to society**

The direct benefit to you for participating in this study is that you will have the opportunity to verbalise your experiences of commuting in the Port Elizabeth Northern Areas.

**A summary of the research findings will be made available to you on request. Should you wish to contact the researcher, you may do so by email or phone using the following contact details:**

**Cell: [0815167140](tel:0815167140)**

**Email: [s213268906@nmmu.ac.za](mailto:s213268906@nmmu.ac.za)**

Thank you

---

**Name of Subject/Participant**

.....  
.....

**(SIGNATURE)  
PARTICIPANT**

**DATE**

.....  
**Ms S Lingham  
(Researcher)**

.....  
**Professor N Mkize  
Supervisor**

## Appendix E

### Interview Question sheets



**Name: Shelly Rochin Lingham**

**Student Number: 213268906**

#### **Interview Questions Sheet**

The interviews conducted in this research study will be semi-structured interviews. The following interview questions will be asked in the interviews. As stated in the research proposal there will be two groups interviewed in this research study; commuters and minibus taxi drivers.

#### **Interview Questions: Commuters**

1. How often do you make use of public transport?
2. How far do you travel each day? (Name locations)
3. Approximately how long is the travel distance each day?
4. Do you feel the minibus taxi ride makes the travel distance easier?
5. How do you feel about taking public transport?
6. Do you feel that minibus taxis focus on your safety?
7. What is your biggest concern when making taking minibus taxis?
8. Is there a specific taxi that you prefer taking? If so how did you build a relationship with the taxi driver?
9. What do you most like about making use of minibus taxis?
10. Where do you feel the minibus taxi industry could improve?
11. Where do you feel the minibus taxi industry best meets your needs as a commuter?

#### **Interview Questions: Minibus Taxi Drivers**

1. What are your average daily working hours?
2. How long have you been working with your current employer?

3. Do you have any regular commuters that ride in your taxi? If so, how did you build your relationship with the commuter?
4. What is your biggest concern as a minibus taxi driver?
5. Do you feel that you are protected and looked after as a minibus taxi driver?
6. Where do you feel the minibus taxi industry could improve?
7. Where do you feel the minibus taxi industry meets the needs of commuters?





