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How does the South African media socially construct minibus taxi drivers?

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Abstract

The following research report aimed to determine how the South African print media socially constructs minibus taxi drivers. In order to achieve this aim, a media survey of South African newspaper articles reporting on minibus taxi drivers in the year 2014 was conducted. The collected articles revealed the print media's social constructions of minibus taxi drivers. The media is a very powerful entity which has the ability to create and shift the perceptions of those who read their reports. It is through this ability, that the media portray the current social relations existing in post-Apartheid South Africa.

The researcher was able to determine these different social constructions through the use of a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodology. This methodology allowed the reader to look beyond the words the journalists used, and rather to focus on the implications of these words as well as what had not been explicitly mentioned. This research found that the minibus taxi driver was socially constructed using three discourses: 'The Bad Citizen', 'The Victim' and 'The Good Citizen'. This research provides the platform for future research into the perceptions of the minibus taxi and the minibus taxi industry. Understanding these perceptions is vital in transforming the transportation industry of South Africa.

Key words: Minibus taxi drivers; Minibus taxi industry; Social constructions, South African print media; Newspaper articles, 2014.