

RESEARCH REPORT

**DOES THE SPIRIT OF *UBUNTU* EXIST IN THE MINIBUS TAXI INDUSTRY: A FORM
AND FUNCTION OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIVES OF QUEUE MARSHALS IN
BREE TAXI RANK, JOHANNESBURG?**

BY

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TITLE PAGE

DOES THE SPIRIT OF *UBUNTU* EXIST IN THE MINIBUS TAXI INDUSTRY: A FORM AND FUNCTION OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIVES OF QUEUE MARSHALS IN BREE TAXI RANK, JOHANNESBURG?

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Abstract: The minibus taxi industry plays an important role in helping thousands of commuters daily in reaching their desired destinations. The minibus taxi industry emerged in South Africa under the apartheid era in the wake of the country's economic deregulation initiated in 1977. This industry has grown rapidly since then overtaking both buses and trains with an estimated 14 million passengers using taxi services each day (Minibus Taxis and Road Safety, internet, 2015: 10:00am). The latter is due to its accessibility, affordability as well as convenience. The minibus taxi industry has also been stereotypically identified as an industry dominated by violence amongst various taxi associations over access to various routes while being heavily dominated by patriarchal male figures. Nevertheless, the minibus taxi industry and particularly queue marshals have however, not received the much needed attention as key players in the public transportation sector. Limited literature has been written on the taxi industry in general and on queue marshals specifically and yet, 14 million commuters use taxis daily to get around (Minibus Taxi and Road Safety, internet, 2015: 10:00am). It is as a result of this limitation that this

research study aims to contribute to the existing body of literature on the minibus taxi industry by analyzing the socio-economic lives of queue marshals focusing specifically on the form and function of queue marshals in Bree Street taxi rank, Johannesburg as well as the observable presence of patriarchy that is found in these ranks and whether the same influence is found within their households. In doing so, this research study hopes to examine whether or not the spirit of *ubuntu* exists within the industry that has been stereotypically perceived by society as violent and dominated by taxi drivers with ‘bad attitude’ and reckless driving skills. The hope is that, through understanding the socio dynamics of the lived experiences of queue marshals within the minibus taxi industry, queue marshals will no longer be ‘invisible’ while helping to reveal a different perception (two different worldviews to one coin) of an industry solely believed to be dominated by violence, ‘unruly’ and ‘rude’ individuals (Sauti 2006).

DECLARATION

I **THEMBEKILE GLADNESS MASUKU** declare that this research report is solely my own work and is being submitted for the fulfillment of my Masters degree in Development Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand. I further declare that this research report has not been submitted before for any degree or submission at any other university.

Signature:

Date:

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-From me, never give up and always remain true to yourself and the ultimate goal.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION- OBSERVATION OF BREE TAXI RANK AS A SPACE, DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS, JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH AND RESEARCH QUESTION/SUB-QUESTION.

1. Introduction

The study of informality has been widely studied over the years by various authors paying much attention to street vendors selling vegetables, fruits as well as snack-foods. Various authors have also paid attention to non-perishable items from used cloths, to cosmetic shops, shoe repairs amongst other items. The taxi industry has however, not been studied as much and where it has been, the focus has been on the taxi drivers, their behavior as well as function within the industry. This has involved looking at the harsh working conditions they experience (that has been perceived as one of the sole reasons for the high road accidents experienced daily) as well as finding measures to protect them from these harsh conditions. We also find studies on *‘Documenting history and significance of the taxi hand signs through anthropology and art...’* the *‘Minibus taxi drivers are they all ‘children born from the same mother’* amongst other studies. However, little or close to nothing has been written on the role occupied by queue marshals who form part of the lowest hierarchy (constituent) in the taxi industry. As a result, the latter raises questions about the form and function occupied by queue marshals within the taxi ranks of South Africa and whether or not the work they occupy is considered as labour. It further raises questions about the queue marshals’ persona and whether or not it has contributed to the lack of knowledge on their existence within the taxi industry.

It is also interesting to note that, although the taxi industry has undergone changes as women begin to drive taxis, we have not yet seen female queue marshals. Nevertheless, the existence of the queue marshal can only be understood with the emergence of the historical context of racial segregationist laws under the apartheid government in South Africa, that forced the black majority into reserves (Bantustans) leading them to seek employment in the cities as wage labours. The expensive transport fees on state owned buses and trains led to the rise of the minibus taxi industry as a cheaper and convenient alternative (as shall be discussed below).

Nonetheless, Pinkerton (2002) (cited in Sauti, 2006: 17) writes about “...how blacks became economically empowered through the minibus taxi industry”. He states that “a taxi in South Africa is not a luxury but a necessity, filling in for a government that can’t afford mass transit and a populace that can’t afford autos” (cited in Sauti, 2006: 17). This has not changed in contemporary South Africa for the majority of the people. This research is an attempt at understanding the political economy of the taxi industry with specific focus on the position occupied by queue marshals. It is interested in understanding what the terms of employment of queue marshals are: a case study of the Bree Street taxi rank, Johannesburg.

The minibus taxi industry plays an important role in helping thousands of commuters daily in reaching their desired destinations. The minibus taxi industry emerged in South Africa under the apartheid era in the wake of the country’s economic deregulation initiated in 1977. This industry has grown rapidly since then overtaking both buses and trains with an estimated 14 million passengers using taxi services each day (Minibus Taxis and Road Safety, internet, 2015: 10:00am). The latter is due to its accessibility, affordability as well as convenience. In South Africa, this industry of public transportation forms one of the most successful black economic self-empowerment models to emerge in the late 1980s (Rodseth, 2001: 15). The taxi industry is

also said to be “the only sector where blacks control an entire sector through their ownership of the Taxi mode of transportation” (Minibus Taxis and Road Safety, internet, 2015: 10:00am). It also plays an important role in the country’s economy since the majority of South Africans are poor and live far from the cities and thus depend on public transport. The latter can be attributed to the historical legacies of the apartheid segregationist policies (as shall be discussed under the literature review section). Nevertheless, according to the Minibus Taxi and Safety report (internet, 2015: 10:10am), ‘taxis account for 65% of the total transport total, 20% by bus and 15% by rail’ with ‘approximately 150 000 public minibus taxis’. The general understanding of the minibus taxi industry has also been widely perceived by our society as violent, patriarchal while dominated by ‘unruly’ ‘rude’ taxi drivers (Sauti 2006). The taxi driver therefore emerges as the main (popular) figure that is associated with the very existence (success) of the taxi industry.

The latter, is particularly as a result of the taxi industry and particularly queue marshals not receiving the much needed attention as key role players in the public transportation sector. There is not a lot of literature written on the taxi industry in general and on queue marshals specifically and yet, 14 million commuters use taxis daily to get around (Minibus Taxi and Road Safety, internet, 2015: 10:00am). It is as a result of this limitation that this research study aims to contribute to the existing body of literature on the minibus taxi industry by analyzing the socio-economic lives of queue marshals focusing specifically on the form and function of queue marshals in Bree Street taxi rank, Johannesburg as well as the observable presence of patriarchy that is found in these ranks and whether the same influence is found within their households. In doing so, this research hopes to examine whether or not the spirit of *ubuntu* exists within the industry that has been stereotypically perceived by society as violent and dominated by taxi drivers with ‘bad attitude’ and reckless driving skills. The hope is that, through understanding the socio dynamics of the lived experiences of queue marshals within the minibus taxi industry, queue marshals will no longer be ‘invisible’ while helping to reveal a different perception (two

different worldviews to one coin) of an industry solely believed to be dominated by violence, patriarchy, 'unruly' and 'rude' individuals (Sauti 2006).

1.2 Description of Bree taxi rank, Johannesburg

Johannesburg is one of the smallest provinces in South Africa that plays host to thousands and thousands of people coming in from all over South Africa and Africa in hopes of finding employment, tertiary education amongst other factors. The minibus taxi industry known for its conveniences and inexpensive taxi fare has dominated the transport sector as the largest informal transport system. The rapid urbanization and integration into the formal working sector resulted in a large black population in need of a quick and cheap transportation system to their desired (work/school) destination. Bree Street taxi rank thus emerged in Johannesburg as one of the second largest taxi rank (Noord taxi rank being the first) hosting hundreds of thousands of commuters daily. Mbatha (2011, the-back-door-to-Bree-street-taxi-rank, internet source, 2015: 14: 38PM) states that "Bree Street taxi rank building is formally known as the Metro Mall. It was opened in 2003 and was built at an estimated cost of R100 million". This building is further divided into three tier building identified by symbols such as: "C4, C7, C5 etc". It also has two Bree Street taxi ranks facing opposite direction to each other hosting about "500 traders, at least 3000 taxis and sees up to 500 000 commuters daily each" (Mbatha, 2011, internet source, 2015: 14: 38pm).



Figure 1: Bree Street taxi rank divisions e.g. C5, C6, C7

Bree Street taxi rank is located on corner Bree and Jeppe Street and is overcrowded with people from all walks of life which include, women and men selling food, vegetables, hair products (also known as street vendors) amongst other products. These activities are also identified as representing the informal sector (economy) that will be briefly discussed in chapter two (literature review). Nevertheless, we also find hundreds or even thousands of commuters, taxi rank cleaners as well as taxis parked with taxi drivers waiting to transport passengers. Noticeably, we can also find in every row of the taxis arranged for various destinations, queue marshals assigned to every parked and ready to leave taxi, calling out commuters, directing commuters to their desired taxis and even telling the taxi drivers what number their taxis are in transporting passengers in relation to their colleagues. These individuals are known as Queue

Marshals. It is however, interesting to note that, despite the important role these queue marshals play in the minibus taxi industry and especially in the daily lives of commuters, little or close to nothing has been written about them and yet we find them all over South Africa's taxi ranks. The hope is thus to make known the role played/occupied by queue marshals within the taxi ranks in order to make the unknown queue marshal known while revealing a different perception of the overall image of the minibus taxi industry as we know it.



Figure 2: Street vendors selling inside Bree taxi rank.

Nevertheless, Bree Street taxi rank has become a place of opportunity, hope and constant interaction amongst various people daily. Bree Street taxi rank can also prove to be quite intimidating and frightening for visitors coming to Johannesburg, queue marshals therefore play an important role in organizing and directing taxi drivers as well as commuters to their desired taxis as well as destination (as shall be discussed in chapter three). It is however, evident that Bree taxi rank has also become a place where many dreams have been crushed leaving many

homeless and in search for any form of employment (mostly, informal). Various odors (urine, polluted water, and fesses, sweat amongst others) can be smelt at this public space. Littering of paper, plastics, banana peels, and old shoes amongst other items can be witnessed in Bree taxi rank. Taxi Association squad cars assigned to the various taxis found at the rank can be seen alongside the entrance of the taxi rank as well as parked broken down taxis being fixed. Queue marshals as well as taxi drivers can also be heard yelling for commuters from all directions at the taxi rank. Queue marshals can be heard calling out “Auckland Park lana! Auckland Park! Woza sihambe!”(Meaning: “Auckland Park here! Auckland Park! Come let’s go!”) And “o hamba yedwa, ngena la!” (Meaning: "travelling alone, come in here!!") It is also worth noting that, queue marshals as well as taxi drivers do not take too kind when ‘black’ commuters start speaking English with them especially when asking for directions. In fact, I have witnessed some commuters being turned away for communicating in English with the marshals and taxi drivers. The latter, is largely due to the fact that Bree taxi rank is dominated by ‘traditional’ black/African men who are perceived as very patriarchal in nature. Overall, Bree Street taxi rank is a public space that offers various opportunities for those living, working and passing through each day.

1.3 Definition of the concept queue marshal, ubuntu, patriarchy and stereotype

What is meant by the concept queue marshal?

The concept queue marshal may sound very self-explanatory however; it means a whole lot more. More often, the concept queue marshal has been defined as meaning ‘a person nominated by a taxi association to regulate all taxi rank services’ (Internet source, accessed: 16.10.2015 at 13:37pm). When speaking with various queue marshals as well as rank managers on what is

meant by this concept, the general consensus is that, ‘a queue marshal is a person who represents an organization, looks after passengers going to various destinations and controls taxis within the ranks. Fezile* (*Note: the names of the participants used throughout this report are not their real names) one of the queue marshals defines the concept as meaning, “inkhosi yolini” (meaning: “king of the lines”). The concept queue marshal is further described as a ‘controller’ who controls all movements within the ranks which includes taxis, disciplining unruly taxi drivers as well as commuters’. Queue marshals are however, not authority upon themselves as they are accountable to higher authority (rank managers) that ensure that queue marshals do not take advantage of their ‘power’. Bra Shedi*, one of the taxi rank managers responsible for the Faradale Taxi Association state that “bonke o driver kumele balalele o queue marshal bethanda bengathandi” (meaning: “all taxi drivers are obliged to listen to all queue marshals whether they like it or not”). Queue marshals are thus, individuals who are responsible for every taxi coming in and out of the ranks as well as ensuring that taxi drivers keep to time schedules in collecting commuters. Overall, the concept queue marshal is used to describe an individual who is appointed to ensure effective functionality (mobility) within the taxi ranks.

What is meant by the concept *Ubuntu*?

While the concept *ubuntu* means various things to different groups of people studying this term over the years, *ubuntu* is understood as “describing a way of life, a universal truth, an expression of human dignity, an underpinning of the concept of an open society, African humanism, trust, helpfulness, respect, sharing, caring, community and unselfishness, etc” (Cilliers, internet, 2016: 14:00pm, 1). Ubuntu is also said to mean ‘humanity’ or ‘humanness’ a belief that “one is a human being through others” “I am because you are” a Zulu and Sotho translation of “*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu. Motho ke motho ka batho*” (cf. Ramose 1999: 49.; Shutte 1993: 46) (cited

in Cilliers, internet: 2016: 14:00pm, 1. Broodryk, 2006: 6 and Bennett, 2011: 30). Cilliers (internet: 2016: 14:00pm , 2) states that “ubuntu is the principle of caring for each other’s well-being...and a spirit of mutual support...each individual’s humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through recognition of the individuals’ humanity”. Cilliers (internet: 2016: 14:00pm, 5) asserts that “ubuntu is the willingness to form and to be formed, the capacity of inter-forming within the space of interfacing”. The latter definition hints to the employment role and function that queue marshals possess within the taxi industry/ranks as shared amongst taxi drivers, rank managers as well as commuters alike.

Broodryk (2006: 4) identifies eight characteristics that describe an ideal men, or leader possessing virtues of ubuntu, such as: “*kind person, generous, living in harmony, friendly, modest, helpful, humble and happy*” and while queue marshals possess most of these qualities their happiness in this form of employment is however, questionable. Nonetheless, Broodryk (2006: 21) further describes ubuntu as “a philosophy that embraces harmonious thinking, talking and behavior that eases tensions in all situations. It’s about applying non-critical attitudes for increased harmonious living. Even when others do harm to a person, a cool approach is to be followed”. The latter, is a true reflection of what a queue marshals work entails (as shall be discussed in chapter three).

What is meant by the concept patriarchy?

A sense of patriarchy has been identified and is observable within the running/functioning of the minibus taxi industry that is dominated by men (particularly Zulu speaking men). Lerner (1986: 212) describes patriarchy as “a historic creation by men and women in a process which took nearly 2500 years to its completion” it is a system which expressed itself through families, rules

as well as values. As a result, patriarchy is defined as a structure that is predominantly traditional in nature. More often than not, this system usually results in gender inequality which, according to Walby (1986:5), “is the primary form of social inequality; gender inequality as a resulting from patriarchal relations so intertwined with capitalist relations that they form one system of capitalist patriarchy”. Walby (1986:11) further states that, “sexual inequality means that wives are dependent upon their husbands for the determination of their life chances and that the paid employment of wives has little impact on their situation” (as observed later in chapter seven). Finally, Walby (1986: 23) states that “patriarchy is seen as the primary form of social inequality” alongside, “racism, as well as capitalism”. Patriarchy is therefore a system aimed at oppressing women in most social structures while advancing male dominance over them. Walby (1986: 23) however, identifies two ways in which patriarchy can be understood, for instance it can be defined as “domination of men over women” and secondly, as “fathers over both women and younger men”. It is as a result of the latter definition that this research study aims to examine what absent fathers, brothers, uncles etc working as queue marshals far from home means to these social constructs related to gender perceptions about society in general.

This research study does not however, aim to put much emphasis on the social inequalities faced by wives and husbands but rather to understand what absent male figures (queue marshals) mean for different households (families) where women are left behind to run the household (a role given to men through gender as well as cultural related stereotypes/notions as well as practices).

Asiyanbola (2005:2) however, defines this system as, “patriarchy is a structure of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex, which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of females”. Traditionally, Asiyanbola (2005: 2) asserts that “men do not participate in domestic work

including child rearing-such tasks are considered to be the exclusive domain of women”. Asiyanbola (2005: 2) further asserts that “males are classed as having the following qualities: strength, vigour, virile/powerful courage, self-confidence and the ability to meet the outside world... while women oversee the domestic chores which includes, looking after the houses, processed and cooked foods as well as help plant and harvest food crops and cash crops”. Patriarchy is furthermore, defined as ‘describing the power of the father as head of household, a system of male authority which oppresses women through its social, political and economic institutions’ (Asiyanbola,2005:3). Eisenstein (cited in Walby, 1986: 31) defines patriarchy as “...a system of order and control”. The above mentioned description is therefore important in understanding the role of queue marshals not only in the taxi ranks but within their homes as a result of the nature of their employment status (as shall be discussed in chapter seven).

What is meant by the concept stereotype?

The concept stereotype is understood as a conception, opinion or image of a group of people or things. Violence and male dominance (patriarchy) in the taxi ranks being an example of this stereotypical understanding/thinking of this transport industry amongst our societies. As a result, Lerner (1986:212) states that, “gender became created, define, and established” by societies over the years. The latter, expressed through values, customs, law and social roles.

Finally, it is worth noting that this research study is not aimed at unpacking the concept of *Ubuntu* or Patriarchy as a theoretical framework as to which this research study is to be evaluated or understood but rather, these concepts are used in order to find out whether or not the spirit of *Ubuntu* as well as patriarchy exist within the male dominated taxi ranks as well as the predominantly ‘violent’ taxi industry as perceived by many.

1.4 Justification of the research and the research question/sub-questions

1.4.1 Aim/purpose of study

While this research aims to contribute to the limited literature written on the taxi industry in general, ultimately, this research seeks to understand the role and function of queue marshals that form the lowest hierarchy of the taxi industry within the taxi ranks. The hope is that, by understanding the socio-economic lives of queue marshals within the taxi industry a different image of the taxi industry will be revealed that shows ubuntu as constituting the other side of the same coin as perceived by society when speaking of the taxi industry. The core purpose of this research study is therefore aimed at understanding (uncovering) the employment status of queue marshals within the taxi ranks (taxi industry) focusing specifically on what the work they do entails, how much they earn, some of the challenges they face within the industry, where do they come from, how did they end up as queue marshals, what is the nature of their relationships with taxi drivers and commuters as well as how is patriarchal structures/dominance maintained within their households, if at all, amongst other factors. This is especially important since little or rather close to nothing has been written on queue marshals within the taxi industry (ranks) who are a constituent in this industry. As a result, of the latter problem and the intended objective of this research, a brief evaluation of the historical developments of the taxi industry in South Africa (the deregulation of the taxi industry under the apartheid era and its contemporary recapitalization attempts) will be examined in order to provide the necessary background against which to understand how and why queue marshals emerged in the taxi industry and what their very existence reveals about the social order of this transport sector unknown to society.

The idea however, is not to pay too much attention to the taxi industry itself but rather the queue marshals whose very existence can only be understood within this context. This therefore means that, due to the fact that little is known about queue marshals, most of the necessary information on the subject matter will emerge from the fieldwork through interviews and observations conducted on these individuals. The latter, therefore means that, at this point, my literature review will not be able to add more information on the queue marshals specifically, beyond what is already mentioned, as that is the only available literature written on the subject. And while, this might be viewed as a negative, it can be used as a positive in revealing the importance of conducting this research study as a pioneering study where conventional studies on the taxi industry do not address the existence of queue marshals but rather pay much attention on the taxi drivers as the sole representatives of this industry.

And while the taxi industry is not a unique form of informality, much of its informality is highly structured unlike the various examples that constitute the informal sector (street vendors, shoe polishers amongst others). Nevertheless, this research further seeks to explore the social aspects of queue marshals in relation to: what role they play within the taxi industry.

1.4.2 Research question:

Does the spirit of ubuntu exist in the minibus taxi industry: a form and function of the socio-economic lives of queue marshals in Bree Street taxi rank, Johannesburg?

Sub-questions:

1. What are the dynamics of the employment status of queue marshals within the taxi industry (this includes: contract of work, employment benefits, rate of payment etc)?
2. Are queue marshals a necessary component of the taxi industry?

3. What is the relationship status of queue marshals with the taxi drivers and commuters, if any?

1.5 **Conclusion**

The overall, objective of this research study is therefore to understand and make known the ‘invisible’ queue marshals who form the lowest hierarchy in the taxi industry in South Africa’s taxi ranks and is responsible for the effective mobility that exists within the taxi ranks particularly amongst taxi drivers as well as commuters while evaluating whether or not the spirit of ubuntu exists within the idolized violent, male dominated (patriarchal) taxi industry.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW, METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN.

2.1 **Introduction**

Although the taxi industry is not a unique form of informality, much of its informality is highly structured unlike the various examples that constitute the informal sector (e.g. street vendors, shoe polishers, traditional herb sellers amongst others). It is therefore important to understand the historical emergence of the minibus taxi industry that has become one of the largest and successful black owned transportation sector found all over South Africa. It is through understanding the latter, that we can begin to examine the objectives of this research study.

2.2 **Literature review:**

This research study is interested in looking at the structured informal nature of the taxi industry with a specific focus on the role, contribution and the position occupied by queue marshals. The study will thus attempt to examine the informality of queue marshals within the structured informal minibus taxi industry, with regards to employment issues such as; wages, pension funds and the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) amongst other working conditions they might experience. Furthermore, this study will be located in Johannesburg Bree street taxi rank where many different aspiring individuals interact daily in hopes of securing their day-to-day livelihoods.

Bree street taxi rank is overcrowded with people from all walks of life which include, women and men selling food, vegetables, hair products (also known as vendors) amongst other products.

These forms of activities are also identified as representing the informal sector (economy) that will be briefly discussed below. Nevertheless, we also find hundreds or even thousands of commuters, taxi rank cleaners as well as taxis parked with taxi drivers waiting to transport passengers. Noticeably, we can also find in every row of the taxis arranged for various destinations, individuals assigned to every parked and ready to leave taxi, calling out commuters, directing commuters to their desired taxis and even telling the taxi drivers what number their taxis are in transporting passengers in relation to their colleagues. These individuals are known as Queue Marshals. It is however, interesting to note that, despite the important role these queue marshals play in the minibus taxi industry and especially in the daily lives of commuters, little or close to nothing has been written about them and yet we find them all over South Africa's taxi ranks.

Informality plays a major role in the existence of the minibus taxi industry. As a result, this study aims to contribute to the body of literature written on informality in general and that which, tends to 'exclude', neglect or 'forget' about the existence and the possible contribution that queue marshals make to the overall functioning of the minibus taxi industry. There have only been three accounts of scholarly work (that I came across thus far) around the study of the minibus taxi industry, that have made mention of queue marshals' in passing. These include, Ingle (2009) in his paper, *'An historical overview of problems associated with the formalization of the South African minibus taxi industry'* and Gloria Sauti (2006) in her thesis, *'Minibus taxi drivers are they all 'children born from the same mother?''* Ingle (2009) in his explanations about the problems that need to be taken into account by governments' attempts at formalizing this industry, makes mention of the structure, size and importance of the minibus taxi industry and states that, " indirectly, the taxi industry supports a host of upstream and downstream economic

activities. These include advertising, motor repairs, vehicle financing, passenger insurance, and the maintenance of taxi rank ablution blocks. The latter reveals the relationship that exists between the formal and informal economy of the taxi industry despite the view that these sectors are two distinct opposites. Thus, while the taxi owners contribute to the formal economy through the maintenance and payment of their taxis and the taxi driver through transporting commuters to their formal employment, it will be interesting to know how the queue marshal contributes/links to the formal economy, if at all. Nevertheless, the industry also employs *rank marshals*, car washers, and fare collectors from drivers themselves” (Ingle, 2006: 75). He also makes mention of the minimum wage taxi drivers earn (R1350) as well as rank marshals (R1080) a month. Not much is mentioned about the role, or the origin and the contribution, if any, that queue marshals make to the industry. One cannot help but wonder why this is the case. Sauti (2006), on the other hand, uses queue marshals as participants in her thesis in understanding the perceived violent/reckless ‘uncultured’ behavior experienced by commuters and spoken about in the media with regards to taxi drivers.

Despite there being little literature written about the minibus taxi industry in general, some scholarly work has been written focused on (a) minibus taxi wars/violence since its inception, often as a result of competition amongst different taxi associations over access to certain road routes as well as maximized passengers, (b) on ‘*Documenting the history and significance of taxi hand signs through anthropology and art...*’ looking at how this informal nature of hand signs came about and how it can contribute to the blind by Woolf (2013), (c) on ‘*Minibus taxi drivers are they all ‘children born from the same mother’*’ looking specifically at the different perceptions commuters have on the behavior of taxi drivers by Sauti (2006), as well as (d) ‘*Stakeholder Analysis on the Recapitalization of the Taxi Industry*’ focused on the emergence of

the taxi industry and the states attempts at redirecting the nature and function of the taxi stakeholders within this industry by Rodseth (2001). There has also been scholarly work written in the media department on the concept '*Four-Four Masihlalisane-Newspaper representation of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system*' by Selekane (2014), his paper predominantly focused on critically analyzing the media's newspaper representation of the minibus taxi industry with regards to the introduction of the BRT system in 2009.

Lastly, with regards to the informality of activities emerging within the minibus taxi industry (and in general), not much is written about the informal nature of queue marshals within the structured informal taxi industry. Rather, authors mention street vendors, hair salons, shops, clothing stores found all over small towns, shoe menders, flower sellers as well as taxi drivers (Dewar, 1981). The question that arises from this observation is therefore: Are queue marshals 'invisible' (their informality)? How did their existence come about? Are they necessary to the functioning of the taxi industry and if so, why? Why is it when we think of the taxi rank industry the first thing that comes to mind is the rude taxi driver, the taxi owner, the violent pandemic that consumes this space as well as the taxi associations but not the queue marshal? This study will therefore look at the relation and debates that exists between formality and informality (self-employment in informal enterprises), the historical emergence of the minibus taxi industry and much later, the emergence of queue marshals, the gendered nature of this 'occupation' (male dominated) as well as the possible regulation and working conditions of queue marshals. This study thus aims to understand and make this 'invisible' queue marshal visible or known.

2.2.1 Historical emergence of the minibus taxi industry

The emergence of queue marshals can only be understood within the emergence of the minibus taxi industry in South Africa. The emergence of the minibus taxi industry in South Africa is of great importance in transporting thousands of low and middle class commuter's daily. This industry emerged under harsh racial segregationist apartheid policies that hindered blacks from all forms of economic benefits offered by the country. During this period the state owned buses and trains that offered the people of South Africa with expensive transport fees that disadvantaged the majority of those living in the reserves. It is as a result of the latter that the minibus taxi industry emerged as a cheaper alternative despite the governments' attempts at dismantling this phenomenon. Nevertheless, at present, the taxi industry has become a popular mode of transportation and is believed to be 100 percent black-owned.

Rodseth (2001: 13) states that the "taxi industry's origins were grounded in the National Party's apartheid town planning methodology, and driven by a rationalized ethos of spatial separation and dispersion". The apartheid segregationist and racial policies that were enforced in the 1913 Native Land Act and the Group Areas Act of the 1950s gave rise to the migrant labour system that forced the majority of the people in rural areas and townships to seek employment in the cities (Rodseth 2001). As a result the majority of the people living in reserves (homelands) depended on transportation to get to work (in the cities) (Selekane, 2014 and Sauti, 2006). At the same time the only forms of transportation that existed were buses and trains. These forms of transportation provided by the state were costly for the poor commuters and thus the minibus taxi industry presented them with a cheaper alternative. McCaul (1990: VI) states that "transport in South Africa has long had a political dimension, arising mainly from the Group Areas Act. One consequence of this law, which imposed residential segregation on the country, has been that

poorer, black communities have often been forced to live far out of town, meaning that transport costs have eaten heavily into family budgets”. The latter is still a reality for many people living in South Africa.

Since its inception in the early 1970s, the taxi industry functioned without support from the state (Rodseth, 2001). Prior to the late 1970s, it is said that, black taxi operators used sedan cars that were equipped with the fare meters to transport their passengers (Rodseth 2001; Woolf 2013 and Selekane 2014). This was also made possible by the 1977 Road Transportation Act that stipulated that “taxi driver could no longer drive nine-passenger vehicles and would have revert to sedans to transport four passengers” (Woolf, 2013: 61). Ingle (2009) (cited in Selekane, 2014: 2) however, states that “after 1977 public transport was deregulated, leading to the black community’s use of minibus taxis that disregarded the use of meters in taxis and that carried 15 passengers at a time”.

McCaul (1990: 35) states that *“the black taxi industry before 1977 was not a significant part of the taxi industry at all. It was from about 1977, however, that taxi operators-new entrants as well as those formerly operating sedan vehicles-began introducing ten-seater minibuses (kombi taxis) on to feeder and commuter routes”*. In 1978 ten-seater minibuses were legalized as taxis but were only allowed to carry eight passengers and in 1986 16-seaters were allowed to carry fifteen passengers. The latter is still the case although taxi drivers and queue marshals sometimes overload their taxis. Nonetheless, the rise of the taxi industry has resulted in the formation of executive bodies such as, taxi councils and taxi associations responsible for controlling, organizing and dividing up routes between operators and setting taxi fares within the taxi ranks (McCaul, 1990: 73). McCaul (1990: 73) states that taxi associations are responsible for “employing marshals, as called rank managers, to allocate passengers to the taxi which queue at

the ranks on a first-come-first served basis, and allow only members to use the ranks. They write registration numbers in a book to establish waiting lists and some associations expect them to keep a record of who leaves, for where and how many passengers each taxi has taken". This is important in understanding the role of queue marshals however; many questions about their existence and importance still remain unanswered such as: Can the taxi industry do without them? Is the form of work they occupy considered as labour by the department of labour amongst other factors?

Khosa (1991: 315) states that "the most significant milestone in the history of the taxi industry occurred on October 1980, at the DOCC Hall in Orlando (Soweto). It was here that representatives from more than 40 taxi associations from most parts of South Africa gathered for the first time" the purpose of this meeting was to "seek the co-operation of local and regional taxi associations, from both rural and urban areas, with the aim of amalgamating them into a united taxi front (UTF)". This meeting led to the emergence of the South African Bus and Taxi Association (SABTA) in May 1981 as a programme aimed at "self-regulation and funding assistance as an alternative to the complete deregulation of the industry" (Rodseth, 2001: 15).

However, the increased number of accidents and road deaths on the roads due to reckless driving and poorly maintained taxis has resulted in governments' need to regulate and formalize the taxi industry by introducing the Taxi Recapitalization Programme (TRP) without success (Woolf, 2013 and Rodseth 2001). Rodseth (2001: 16) states that the regulation of the taxi industry began in 1994 and later with the appointment of the National Taxi Task Team (NTTT) that aimed to provide "safe, reliable, effective, efficient, and fully integrated transport operations and infrastructure which will best meet the needs of freight and passenger customers at improving levels of service and cost, a fashion which supports government strategies for economic and

social development whilst being environmentally and economically sustainable”. Woolf (2013: 73) however, states that, ‘the informal culture of the minibus taxi does not allow for the formalization of this industry amongst other factors’. She mentions the ‘spontaneous change of routes by taxi drivers at commuters/passengers request’ as an example (2013: 75). The formation of the minibus taxi industry in the 1970s and the rapid growth thereof, has resulted in employment opportunities for all those (predominantly males and uneducated) left out from the restricted from occupying formal employment. And while the minibus taxi industry represents a successful black owned transportation system, it’s very emergence reveals or rather justifies why the taxi industry has been perceived as violent (competitive) in nature over the years.

2.2.2 Informality vs. formality: the taxi industry as part of the informal sector.

Government’s early attempts at excluding and later limiting the function of the minibus taxi industry “resulted in those who did not want to be unionized choosing alternative informal arrangements to do business” (Woolf, 2013:71). Various authors have therefore written extensively on the notion of informality and how it came about. It is however, worth noting that the concept of informality has faced much contestation amongst various scholars. According to Sindzingre (2006: 59), the term ‘informal’ was established by Keith Hart in his article on the informal income opportunities in Ghana. It was however, the International Labour Office (ILO) that brought light to the term ‘informal sector’ (Sindzingre 2006).

Informality is thus regarded as activities occurring ‘outside’ the legal regulation of the state (Meagher, 1995). The informal economy is often regarded by various scholars and authors as the opposite of the formal economy (Lomnitz, 1988: 54) (cited in Centeno and Portes, 2003: 9). One of the leading and most cited authors on the subject of informality, is known as Hernando

De Soto in his book, '*The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World (1989)*'. In this book De Soto analysis life in Third World countries, particularly in Latin America and the emergence of the informal economy or 'black markets' in Peru (De Soto, Foreword).

De Soto (1989, xii) states that the informal economy emerges when, 'the state cannot respond to the basic needs of the impoverished masses', when "legality is a privilege available only to those with political and economic power, and those excluded-the poor-have no alternative but illegality". It is however, worth noting, that the emergence of the informal economy does not necessarily mean 'illegality' although the process towards formality may be costly (the process of business registration etc). Centeno and Portes (2003) thus, attempt to clarify the distinction between informal and illegal activities. Centeno and Portes (2003, 6) state that, "illegal enterprises involves the production and commercialization of goods that are defined in a specific society as illicit" whereas the informal enterprise "deals, for the most part with illicit goods". Interestingly, De Soto (1989: 12) states that, "individuals are not informal; their actions and activities are". Bromley (1978: 1035) furthermore, makes an important observation that "not all persons who work in the informal sector are poor, and not all poor people work in the informal sector". The latter is usually the assumption made by many people when thinking about the informal sector. Thus, Castells and Portes (1989: 12) argue that "the informal economy is not a euphemism for poverty".

Meagher (1995, 260) by contrast to De Soto, states that, "according to the informalization perspective, informality must be analyzed, not as a product of bad state policy, but in terms of shifts in the possibilities for accumulation in the context of the current global economic crisis". While it may be *easier* to get into the informal economy, this is not the case in the formal economy. The former also represents South Africa's contemporary neo-liberal context which is

largely characterized by ‘corporate ownership, large scale operations, capital-intensive and often imported technology as well as protected markets of trade licenses, tax payment and tariffs’ (Dewar, 1989: 36). Nonetheless, Centeno and Portes (2003, 16) concluded that, “the vacuum left by the state opened way for the informal economy”. This vacuum is also left open by big company’s desire of making huge profits. Nonetheless, the former is true with regards to the formation of the minibus taxi industry and the economic activities that followed.

According to Selekane (2014, 3), “in South Africa, the informal sector is not viewed as a tax generating sector. In most cases, workers in this sector do not pay income tax...” This is the case with the taxi industry in South Africa hence the need by government for the recapitalization process. This process can also be examined within the broader neo-liberal market-led economic approach of the country. This neo-liberal market-led approach that seeks to ensure maximum profit gains through taxation at the expense of the people as offered by the formal economy.

According to Centeno and Portes (2003: 7), “the state manifest itself in three offices: the regulator, the policeman and the taxi collector”. Centeno and Portes (2003: 7) furthermore, state that the responsibility of these offices is to “assure the collective good by making sure that everyone lives by the rules and pay their dues”. The informal sector/economy however, avoids all contact with these rules. Castells and Portes (1989) (cited in Preston-Whyte and Rogerson, 1991: 2) state that “the informal economy is a process of income generation characterized by one central feature: *it is unregulated by the institutions of society, in a legal and social environment in which similar activities are regulated*”. The informal sector therefore generates its income from activities outside state regulated production systems. Interestingly, Castella and Portes (1989: 12) argue that “*the informal economy is not a set of survival activities performed by destitute people on the margins of society. Some activities in the informal sector may derive from*

the desperate need of a worker to obtain the means of subsistence for his or her family. But a similar motivation could lead a worker to accept lower wages in the formal sector”.

Preston-Whyte (1991: 34) thus attempt to “classify money-making strategies which combine ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ characteristics” of working conditions by making an example of domestic workers. Preston-Whyte (1991: 34) states that “at first sight...domestic service seems to have all the characteristics of an ongoing and formal institution. A closer look at the conditions under which domestic work suggests that they might be better categorized as part of the informal economy”. This is due to the fact that “they invariably earn relatively low wages, lack an employment contract and benefits such as pensions or medical aid, and, above all, they have little or no protection against exploitation by their employers” (1991: 34). At first glance the taxi industry can also be thought of as representing a form of formal economy because of its structured nature (although informal) however, this is not the case.

Lastly, the concept of informality has also been explored by neo-classical economists such as Douglass North in his analysis of institutions (North 1990) (cited in Sindzingre, 2006: 65). North (1990) (cited in Sindzingre, 2006: 65) “defines institutions as constraints that structure political, economic and social interactions and consist of informal-that is, self-enforcing-constraints (sanction, taboos, customs, traditions, codes of conduct, conventions, and norms of behaviour) and formal regulations (constitutions, laws, and property rights)”. According to North (1990) (cited in Sindzingre, 2006: 65), “formal constraints are ‘created’, written, and intentional, whereas informal constraints evolve over time and are unwritten”. The responsibility of institutions is therefore to ensure or “reduce uncertainty, introduce regularity and stability by establishing a stable but not necessarily efficient structure to human interaction” (North 1990) (cited in Sindzingre, 2006: 65). The concept of informality therefore does not offer the latter

instead it creates the opposite effect. North (1990) (cited in Sindzingre, 2006: 66) states that “informal arrangements, transactions, and contracts are supported by mechanisms such as personal and repeated exchanges, trust, and reputation, in environments that are characterized by uncertainty, problems of collective action and free-riding” as is the case in the formal structured taxi industry.

2.2.3. Unemployment and employment in the informal sector

The lack of employment opportunities in South Africa and elsewhere in the world has resulted in a large number of people having no access to jobs especially in the formal sector that has marginalized many. This has therefore resulted in the formation of informal employment as a poverty elevation strategy amongst the poor and the marginalized. Taxi ranks (Bree Street taxi rank/Meyerton taxi rank/Noord taxi rank etc.) have thus become a public space that caters to creating and accommodating the unemployed in creating their own survival activities where government has failed. Queue marshals therefore represent a small percentage of those who through unemployment found themselves working as taxi washers, street vendors at the ranks before becoming part of the structured informal minibus taxi industry. According to Dewar and Watson (1991: 181), “our urban populations are becoming increasingly poor, unskilled, and unemployed and this is affecting levels of health, crime and general social stability”. As a result Dewar and Watson (1991: 1881) believe that it is the informal economy that will help those who desire and need to generate an income outside the formal economy. Dewar (1981) believes that unemployment is not a problem in itself but it contributes to problems of inequality and poverty.

Dewar (1981, 4) furthermore, states that, “structural unemployment in South Africa may be traced, on one hand, to increasing levels of capital intensification and a mismatch between skills

and available jobs, and on the other, to an ever-growing rate of population increase”. “What it means, in effect, is that even if South Africa were to achieve the most optimistic projection possible of economic growth rates over ten years, the total number of jobless can still be expected to rise” as is the case at present. It is therefore the absence of employment opportunities in South Africa and elsewhere, that has resulted in the emergence of informal activities. Chaudhuri and Mukhopadhyay (2009: 56) state that there are two forms of unemployment; first, there is “voluntary unemployment a supply side phenomenon where workers prefer remaining unemployed to being employed in the informal sector”. Second, there is involuntary unemployment that “arises when workers are willing to accept informal jobs but are unable to find one”. Interestingly, Chaudhuri and Mukhopadhyay (2009) state that, the latter becomes a problem where scholars have defined the informal economy as offering easier entrance unlike the formal economy.

This literature review, it is important to note attempts to fill an empirical gap within the taxi industry through a qualitative research method. This will include interviews and observation amongst other practices.

2.3 Methodology:

Despite the limited literature written on the taxi industry in South Africa there is documented literature on the historical existence of the taxi industry, taxi violence and the media’s perceptions thereof, the symbolic hand signs gestures used at the ranks as well as the Taxi Recapitalization Program amongst other related topics. This research study is therefore aimed at understanding the role and function of queue marshals within the minibus taxi industry. This

section as a result, discusses the research design and methodology that was conducted during this research process.

A qualitative research approach was adopted in this research. Berg (1995: 6) defines qualitative research as “properly seeking answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings”. Berg (1995: 7) states that qualitative research is “interested in how humans arrange themselves and their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth”. Because the sole purpose of this research study was to understand the role as well as contribution queue marshals hold within the taxi industry, the best way to achieve this was through a qualitative research method. In order achieve the desired outcome for this research project, this study started off with a form of participant observation at the Bree street taxi rank Block C7 in order to gain trust of the participants required to conduct this study. Participant observation was also the best option in helping the researcher in understanding the daily social routine of queue marshals. The primary advantage of conducting observations for this study was based on the flexibility of this method. This study also aimed to observe the behavior and interaction of queue marshals with the taxi drivers, taxi association owners as well as the daily commuters in understanding the role and function of the work they occupy daily.

Field notes, audiotapes/tape-recorder of conversations and interaction with the participants was utilized in order to collect the necessary data. A camera was also used in order to take photographs of this space (taxi rank) in order to give readers a visual feel of this location. Queue marshals were furthermore, informed that the objective of this research was to gather information that will help share better insight on they lived experiences. The latter, was all made possible through an informed consent form, informal consent form as well as an audio-taping interview as

well as photo-taking (camera) consent form that were given to all participants of this study (See Appendix).

Furthermore, in-depth interviews in the form of semi-structured and unstructured interviews were conducted. Unstructured interviews were useful in shedding more light on questions/variables not thought of that might have been helpful in understanding the queue marshals. Interviews for this study was also useful in gathering information about the queue marshals beliefs and perspectives about the facts of their working conditions, their feelings and motives amongst other factors. Berg (1995: 69) states that “semi-standardized interviews are located somewhere between the extremes of completely standardized and completely unstandardized interviewing structures” whereas unstandardized interviews “do not utilize schedules of questions... the interview begins with the assumption that they do not know in advance what all the necessary questions are”. Considering the fact that most queue marshals like taxi drivers are either less educated or not educated at all, unstructured interviews were helpful in making them comfortable enough to answer the questions of much more importance as well as shedding some light on queue marshals’ personal life experiences. It is worth noting that interviews with the queue marshals, taxi drivers as well as the rank managers (where necessary) were conducted during their free time (e.g. lunch breaks/leisure time) while observations (of this form of employment) was done during their working hours. Access to the queue marshals for interview participation was not a problem since this already falls in line with the work they do (assisting commuters). In approaching the queue marshals I further informed them of my research study and the reasons for conducting it.

This research study took place at the Bree Street taxi rank Block C7 in Johannesburg and where necessary a comparison was made between queue marshals from the Meyerton taxi rank (reason

for location: close to where the researcher stays) in order to evaluate whether or not queue marshals function in the same manner. It is worth stating that, the Bree street taxi rank location is divided into many blocks and it is furthermore, divided into two distinct taxi ranks opposite each other. Nevertheless, the reason for the choice of location was solely based on the richness of information and interaction that occur daily within this space by thousands of commuters that travel through town to their places of work and schooling. Queue marshals working in this area (Bree) unlike the smaller taxi ranks (Meyerton) were also more likely to possess valuable information necessary in understanding and answering the research question posed for this study.

2.4 **Sampling method:**

This research study used a qualitative research method of non-probability sampling. This study applied two various sampling techniques namely: snowball and quota sampling. Snowballing is almost similar to convenience sampling (*accidental* or *availability* sample) however, snowballing is able to ensure access to various participants that offer relevant information on the study being conducted in order to answer the research question at hand. It is as a result of the latter, that the snowballing method was most suitable for this study aimed to access different information on the working conditions of various queue marshals within the taxi rank and beyond (e.g. household security in terms of wage payments etc). Depending on the relationship queue marshals have with each other, convenience sampling was also conducted. Quota sampling, Berg (1995: 33) identifies as “beginning with a kind of matrix or table that creates cells or stratum”. It uses a non-probability method to “fill these cells through selected variables such as gender, age, education amongst others” (Berg 1995). Quota sampling was useful in focusing on the group of male dominated (masculine) queue marshals as well as the female commuters, in order to understand their relation with one another. It was also helpful in

observing how commuters interact with queue marshals' visa versa. Finally, quota sampling was also important in accessing information on queue marshals from taxi drivers, taxi owners as well as members of the taxi associations/rank managers that would have not been possible otherwise.

Access to the Bree street taxi rank Block C7 as a commuter myself was not a problem however, as a masculine male dominated environment and coming in as a female researcher raised some hostility amongst the queue marshals. As a result, I had to secure two gatekeepers (Bongani* and Siyabonga*) (Note:* these are not the real names of the participants used in this research) who were responsible for connecting me with the necessary individuals needed for this study. These gatekeepers, Bongani and Siyabonga are important because they know the environment very well and have been working here selling fruits and vegetables for a number of years now and have thus formed good relations with many people (taxi drivers and the rank managers) as well as the queue marshals found in this space. They also offered to ensure my safety during the course of my research study within the taxi rank. The fact that I am a commuter within the selected location also meant that I have some form of relationship with the queue marshal from my area (home to town) thus getting access to other queue marshals was not impossible.

Ethics, getting access to the participants (queue marshals) at the centre of this study was therefore not a problem. This research also aimed to ensure that all participants' remain anonymous throughout this process. Information discussed with one queue marshal was not discussed with another. Participants of this study were also informed upfront that this study was solely for academic purposes. Key informants such as the taxi association that form part of the highest hierarchy of the industry within the taxi rank who ensure the regulation and function of the industry were also given consent forms in order to access and interview them as well as the

queue marshals. The latter, was furthermore, important in ensuring the safety of all members. Lastly, no promises were made to queue marshals about the outcome of this study.

2.5 **Conclusion:**

Overall, this research study aims to understand the role, function and contribution that queue marshals possess within the structured informal taxi industry. In order to examine whether or not this practice is necessary or can the informal economy (taxi industry) do without them. This research seeks to understand the role of informality within the neo-liberal context of South Africa. This study understands that access to certain literature within the study might be a possible limitation however; this can also be viewed as strength as engagement with the participants that are at the centre of this study, was instrumental in combating the possible limitations on the topic.



Figure 3: Parked minibus taxis waiting in line for departure at Bree Street taxi rank.

CHAPTER THREE: QUEUE MARSHALS OBSERVATION AND INTERVIEWS.

3.1 **Introduction**

This chapter seeks to identify the role and function of queue marshals within the taxi ranks/industry. It seeks to understand who is the queue marshal? What does it mean to be a queue marshal? What persona should one have to become a marshal? What does a typical day in the life of the marshal look like? What are some of the challenges they face in this job? What are some of the benefits (e.g. sick leaves, promotions etc) awarded to queue marshals in their field of work? These interviews will be held with queue marshals from Bree taxi rank, Johannesburg as well as Meyerton taxi rank. The former, is important in understanding the socio-economic lives of queue marshals as well as examining whether or not the spirit of ubuntu exists within the taxi industry or are the stereotypical assumptions of violence dominating this industry true.

3.2 **Observation and interviews on queue marshals.**

During my years of travelling by taxi from Meyerton to Braamfontein, I have come across a large number of individuals placed in various rows of every taxi assigned for different destinations. These individuals are known as queue marshals and are found all over South Africa's taxi ranks while those found in Durban and Cape Town function differently from those found in Johannesburg. It is rather interesting to know how little or rather close to nothing has been written about these individuals who form the lowest hierarchy of the taxi industry and are responsible for ensuring order and mobility within the taxi ranks. At first glance the existence of

these individuals in the taxi rank might seem unnecessary, having no proper job description and even overcrowding the already crowded and over-populated ranks. It is however, only when you begin to interact with them that you realize the importance of their existence within this space. It is also interesting to note that, while most emphasis has been put on taxi drivers when speaking about the taxi industry, it is in actual fact the queue marshals within this industry who hold absolute ownership and control over the functioning of the taxi ranks. As a result, the success of the taxi industry has been argued by various taxi drivers as well as rank managers as depending on the 'healthy' relationship queue marshals establish with passengers and everyone who uses this space in order to access their means of transportation.

The different queue marshals assigned to the various taxi associations that exist within Bree taxi rank therefore become the image of that association. Excellent customer (commuter) service from these individuals means the success of that association and overall, that of the taxi industry. What does the existence of queue marshals within the taxi ranks tell us about the overall industry, if anything at all?



Figure 4: Queue marshal near taxi in his vest (reflector) taking notes of the taxi driver and the number of commuters' loaded inside.

3.2.1 Who is this individual (person) known as a queue marshal?

As stated before, queue marshals are individuals found all over South Africa's taxi ranks in shopping centers, in open spaces and some alongside the robots where taxis to various places are parked. These individuals do not only form a part of the taxi industry but play an important role that is often undermined and neglected especially within academic writing. These individuals known as queue marshals are breadwinners, husbands, fathers, friends, brothers as well as hopefuls. Queue marshals are ambitious, goal driven, have feelings and dreams like everyone else to better themselves and to one day become taxi owners, to go back to school and to be successful. When asking Bra Shedi* (*Note: the names of the participants used in this study are not their real names) a rank manager for Faradale Taxi Association about the queue marshal, the first thing he uttered was that “uqueue marshal umuntu hai isilwane” (“meaning: the queue

marshal is a person and not an animal...”) This response tells one a lot about how queue marshals might be perceived and treated within the industry (taxi drivers) and by passengers in general. What’s however, evident from the observations conduct with the marshals’ is that they pride themselves with the work and role they play within the taxi industry. The latter, is particularly evident when I asked Bongani what he tells his family members when asked what form of employment he does. Without hesitation Bongani asserts that “ngiyabachela ukuthi ngigibeza abantu” (meaning: “I tell them that I help transport people”).

3.3 **Queue Marshals persona**

At Bree taxi rank you are most likely to meet queue marshals from different regions of the country communicating in different languages, with different belief systems and cultural practices. These queue marshals range from different age groups as young as sixteen years and as old as 50 years. Some of these queue marshals have wives and children who they have left back home in Kwa-Zulu Natal and elsewhere, while others are fresh out of school hoping to make it big in the city of Johannesburg. It is also interesting to note that although, they come from different walks of life a sense of *community* and brotherhood has formed amongst them. For instance, during the initial stage of my interviews it was a queue marshal from Braamfontein who ended up introducing me to most of the queue marshals and rank manager interviewed in this research study. The former observation (as shall be revealed throughout this research) shows that a sense of ubuntu as understood by Broodryk (2006) exists in the functioning of queue marshals within the taxi ranks/industry. Regardless, of the evident cultural differences that exist within this space isiZulu has also become the dominant language spoken amongst the drivers as well as marshals.

Johannesburg taxi drivers are known for their violent behavior, reckless driving and ‘bad attitude’ towards the passengers and other drivers on the road, however, queue marshals have gained a good reputation as friendly and approachable people (virtues of ubuntu). Although undermined for the work they occupy, their appearances seem to be of great importance to them. All the queue marshals at the Bree taxi rank can be easily identified with a yellow/lime green red stripped vest (also known as a reflector) that they wear on top of their shirts or t-shirts. And while they hold the lowest form of employment within the taxi industry, looking neat is close to their hearts as clean cloths; shinny shoes or clean sneakers are the order of the day. Considering the fact that queue marshals wake up and are at work at the same time as the first taxi driver carrying the first load, queue marshals appear more presentable than most taxi drivers. The general consensus amongst the queue marshals is that, ‘a queue marshal needs to be someone who loves working with people, who puts humanity first before all else and who respects all commuters since their livelihood depends on this encounter’. Broodryk (2006: 6) asserts that “ubuntu **brotherhood** is based on the expression umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu (a person is a person through other persons). Meaning of life is a reference to the social and physical interdependence of people” in this case between queue marshals, taxi drivers as well as commuters. While the former might be true, it is evident that some commuters take advantage of the queue marshals’ kindness. For instance, while observing the marshals interaction with the commuters I noticed how certain passengers would send the marshal to buy them juice or chips amongst other things while they relaxed in the taxis to avoid losing their favorite seat. The latter, can therefore be said to reveal a ‘dark side’ of the spirit of ubuntu. Cilliers (internet: 2016:14:00pm, 3) states that when the ‘dark side’ of ubuntu is present “ubuntu can degenerate into an oppressive conformity and blind loyalty to the group or clan”.

3.3.1 A typical day in the life of a queue marshal

Most queue marshals arrive at the taxi rank at around 4:45am and begin working at 5:00 am in the morning when the first taxi departs. The queue marshal is the first person commuters interact with before the taxi drivers. The atmosphere in the morning (sometimes day) for both the queue marshal and the commuter is thus established from their first encounter. From the time the queue marshals arrive for work they get dressed into their work vest and indulge in 'breakfast' sold by various women selling hot tea, biscuits and sometimes sandwiches.



Figure 5: Queue marshal assisting commuters at Bree taxi rank.

After breakfast, they begin lining up the passengers waiting to be transported to their different destinations. The queue marshal greets everyone and wishes them safe travels. They further take out a tiny handbook and start writing down the license plate of the first taxi parked and that of those following it. This book is also used to record the number of times each taxi has transported passengers for the day. Furthermore, the queue marshal writes down the number of passengers

carried by each taxi as it leaves ensuring that there is no overload *four-four masihlalisane* (meaning: the placing of four passengers in a seat designed for three people) that taxi drivers are so famous for (although, more often than not, taxi drivers do get away with overloading their taxis). Small slips written the name of location as well as time schedule from the queue marshals to the taxi drivers can also be witnessed.



Figure 6: Queue marshal after taking notes of commuters inside the taxi leaving.

When that is done, the taxi driver rolls down his window and calls out to the queue marshal who then accepts a R5.00 fee. When asking Mfundo* one of the taxi drivers about what the R5.00 fee was for, he stated that ‘it’s a form of appreciation for helping us fill up our taxis’. This fee is further said to help queue marshals buy airtime during the course of the day in order to communicate with the different taxi drivers on where passengers are waiting to be collected especially, where passengers have been waiting for a long time. Queue marshals also use the

airtime to contact taxi drivers, alerting them about where traffic police might be conducting a road block. This kind of information helps the driver to avoid the possibility of getting a ticket fine for his taxi that may not be road worthy. At times, the queue marshal may use this R5.00 fee to buy himself lunch and to help certain passengers (friends) who might not have enough money on them to pay the taxi driver. While observing the work of queue marshals in the early morning hours, I further realized that queue marshals help commuters in possession of R50 and R100 taxi fare in obtaining small change where taxi drivers complain about not having change in the morning. The latter, helps commuters avoid the wrought of the taxi drivers. Broodryk (2006: 7) asserts that “a spirit of brotherhood is essential for successful teamwork, and this spirit of teamwork is also found globally”.

In an interview with Fezile* whose worked as a queue marshal for sixteen years and has become very popular amongst his people and taxi drivers, I asked him about the R5.00 fee, he stated that ‘in a day he makes about R320.00 on this fee alone’ excluding his salary that is paid at the end of each week. During this time, he reaches into the pocket of his shirt and shows me R380 excluding the R120 that he used to buy airtime as money accumulated for the day. If it were to be argued that queue marshals cease their activities at work at 19:00 pm then they are most likely to accumulate a reasonable amount of money each day. Moreover, Fezile asserts that this money is sufficient when added to his weekly salary (that he was unwilling to disclose). Fezile is a queue marshal in his early 40s working for the Faradale Taxi Association which is one of the most feared association in Johannesburg for its violence and attacks against other taxi associations. It’s worth noting that, in the interviews with the queue marshals about the role and function of the work they occupy, it was important for me as a researcher to know more about the individual before asking them about their employment status.

The Kwa-Zulu Natal born Fezile has been working as a queue marshal under the Faradale Taxi Association for sixteen years to date. He first arrived in Johannesburg in the year 2000 having lost his job at the mines. Failure to find employment elsewhere led to him being identified by the taxi drivers working for Faradale Taxi Association as a suitable candidate to work as their marshal due to his friendly personality. When talking to Fezile*, he defines his name as “UMelusi” (meaning ‘leader/ruler of people’) hence his love for working with people as a marshal. Fezile expressed that initially he was not happy with working as a queue marshal but with time and his love for people his attitude quickly changed. He also asserts that, “kulomusebenzi umuntu uzakuqala nokuphepha kwakhe” (meaning: “in this job his first priority is the person (commuter) and ensuring their wellbeing”). The queue marshals’ job therefore begins from the time the first taxi departs (5: 00am) and ends when the last taxi leaves (19:00pm) the rank for the day. The work schedule of queue marshals is quite flexible in a sense that they determine their own lunch breaks. During the quiet hours at the rank queue marshals are free to socialize. Moreover, the taxi rank is mostly busy during the early morning hours (around 5:00am to 10:00 am) and later (around 14:00 pm till 19:00pm) when the last taxi leaves the rank. I was therefore able to conduct my interviews from around 11: 00am when the taxi rank was more manageable. While in the beginning of my research and observation process, I would arrive at the rank at 7:00am and get nothing done. This was however, only until I mastered the inflow of people within this space (silly though, since I have been commuting for seven years).

3.4 What it takes to become a queue marshal (role and function of queue marshals)?

A person who does not know about the role and function of queue marshals might think that there is no set structure or route in becoming a marshal and that any person can just wake up and start calling out to commuters at the ranks. While, this may be the case especially where street

kids are concerned, queue marshals are registered with their various taxi associations. Fezile mentions that ‘every person working as a queue marshal should be registered in order to get paid and in instances where commuters are unhappy with a certain marshals behavior’. In an interview with Fezile, he states that ‘while anyone can become a queue marshal whether educated or not, it’s only those who are identified by the taxi drivers and rank managers as passionate about working with people who qualify’. Bra Shedi however, argued that ‘queue marshals should at least have basic literacy skills in order to write down the different number plates, write down reports on incidents that may occur at the taxi ranks as well as sign documents such as; income received amongst other factors’. Experience (knowing the taxi routes) within the ranks of the taxi industry is also essential (although not compulsory) in securing employment as a queue marshal. For instant, while interviewing the queue marshals I discovered that prior to their current employment as marshals some of these individuals were car washers at first, friends or relatives with taxi drivers, while some were street vendors who mastered the skill of the taxi routes and the time schedules of each taxi route before becoming a marshal. Furthermore, queue marshals need to be people who are not easily irritable; they ought to be patient and attentive in dealing with people of various needs coming into the taxi rank. The latter, therefore means that, queue marshals need to possess ‘harmonious personalities’ in dealing with the different stresses that come from dealing with various people of all walks of life daily. Broodryk (2006: 20) thus mentions that “the skill of harmony, which is to be exercised during these circumstances, comprises of the recognizing ability of impending crisis, to maintain absolute calmness of mind, and not allowing emotions of anger and frustration to rule one’s behavior”.



Figure7: Car washers allegedly aspiring to become queue marshals.

Once a person has been identified as a possible candidate on the basis of his personality and attitude towards people, his/her information is collected and submitted to the taxi association offices where that individual is called in and trained to become a queue marshal. Bra Shedi states that ‘training involves mental preparation for the individual as well as observing how that individual deals with different people in varying circumstances unlike your typical academic training’. The latter, is said to be of great importance in minimizes complaints from unhappy commuters. Furthermore, like any other institution, queue marshals are not allowed to drink on the job or come to work drunk. Fulfilling their personal agenda during work hours despite the flexibility that exists is prohibited. Bongani* states that ‘neglecting your duties during work hours can be risky especially in instances whereby conflict erupts among taxi drivers or commuters’. During any eruption of conflict at the taxi rank the queue marshal must be able to provide the details of the conflicts to the rank managers when questioned about the matter.

Bongani is a queue marshal in his late 20s located in Meyerton. He has been marshalling for three years having recently joined the family business where his dad was a taxi owner before passing away. Bongani mentions that ‘before becoming a registered queue marshal, he tried to become a taxi driver but quickly realized that wasn’t for him. He then began to observe other marshals working at the Meyerton taxi rank and would help out where he could for about two-three days before quitting’. He was however, asked to return by some of the taxi drivers who had observed his work ethic during his two days of work. These drivers then gave him a form to fill in his details in order to get registered with the Meyerton Taxi Association. During his training, he was taught how to deal with difficult passengers, how many people each taxi (e.g. quantum, siyaya etc) carries per load, the routes of all taxis, taxi prices as well as how to write a report in an event where an accident occurs on site or on the road. Bongani says that ‘in order to be a queue marshal one needs to be straight forward when dealing with difficult passengers’. Unlike Fezile, who was reluctant about disclosing his salary, Bongani informs me that ‘he gets paid R700 weekly in total R1500 including the R5.00 fee’. R1500 can be considered a reasonable amount of money considering that some domestic and garden workers only get paid that amount monthly.

Mdu* on the other end, is a queue marshal in Bree taxi rank around his mid-20s coming from Mpumalanga. He has lived in Johannesburg for seven years now with the hopes of studying sound engineering one day. Failure to achieve this goal resulted in him travelling with his brother who’s a taxi driver at Bree. He has now been marshalling for three years and enjoys working with people. Mdu says in order to become a queue marshal ‘one has to be able to control ones temper and avoid confrontation with passengers as much as possible’. Mdu (in an irritated tone) highlights that most passengers lack respect for marshals and hardly greet them but expect to be

assisted. The characteristic of ubuntu expressed through remaining humble, helpful and friendly is therefore essential in the hopes of achieving the desired outcome, in this case, effective mobility between commuters and taxi drivers in the taxi ranks by queue marshals. Broodryk (2006: 21) therefore states that “ubuntu is indeed in essence about applying non-critical attitudes for increased harmonious living. Even when others do harm to a person...” this sentiment expressed by many of the queue marshals interviewed in this study.

Regardless, queue marshals are entitled to taking days off from work and where necessary leaves which are reported and granted by the rank managers and the squad man (guys who sit on site in the taxi association cars waiting to track down ‘unruly’ taxi drivers) found at the taxi rank. Fezile states that ‘sick leaves are allowed as long as you call your rank manager beforehand’. He further states that ‘despite not being able to work when sick, you still get paid your weekly salary’ this is however, dependent on whether or not you informed the rank managers. Mthetho* adds that, ‘it is the responsibility of the taxi drivers to find a replacement and to pay that person in the absences of a sick queue marshal’. Interestingly, Bongani mentions that, ‘queue marshals are rarely fired but voluntarily stop working on their own’. It is only in instances where taxi drivers and commuters are no longer satisfied with the marshals’ performance that the association has no choice but to terminate the marshals’ registration’. Queue marshals are furthermore free to move from one taxi association to the next where disputes have occurred with the other.

Over some time, my interviews with few of the queue marshals as well as the rank managers began to sound similar with most of the questions asked (it felt like interviewing the same person repeatedly) “uQueue marshal ubalulekile kakhulu kakhulu kulomusebenzi...” (Meaning: “queue marshals are very, very important in this line of work...”).

Overall, queue marshals are individuals who represent an organization (association), who looks after passengers going to different destinations and controls movement in the ranks. Queue marshals are the first people who come into contact with commuters before the taxi drivers. Taxi drivers do however; assist passengers now and then when the marshals are out on lunch. All queue marshals should know all the taxi drivers and taxis assigned to him at the rank as well as the different locations, taxi fare and time schedules of each parked taxi. The marshal is also responsible for resolving conflict amongst passengers as well as the taxi drivers (re-emerging spirit of teamwork/brotherhood). Because the queue marshal is so versed with the inns and outs of the taxis and has established a good relationship with the drivers, he is able to help track down lost items for passengers. In essence, Bra Shedi says, ‘the queue marshal is a controller who controls all movements within the ranks which includes taxis, taxi drivers as well as commuters’. Queue Marshals can also assume the responsibility of disciplining ‘unruly’ taxi drivers by reporting them to the head office. McKenna (etc in Jorsey-Bass, op cit: 564) (cited in Broodryk, 2006: 21) expresses that ubuntu “in terms of crises is to calmly attempt to get the facts, identify the problem, decide how the situation should be handled, involve others (delegate) if necessary...” this is the very function queue marshals occupy within the taxi ranks in ensuring the well-being of all those using taxis daily.

Queue marshals are however, not an authority upon themselves as they too are accountable to higher authority (rank managers, squad cars as well as the taxi associations). Bra Shedi mentions that ‘all taxi drivers are obliged to listen to all queue marshals whether they like it or not’. Furthermore, constant communication amongst the drivers and the marshals is essential in order to ensure the success of this industry.



Figure 8: Taxi association squad car and rank managers' car.

3.5 Employment benefits and other income strategies for queue marshals

There are many ways in which queue marshals can secure income within this industry. Not only do they receive their weekly income from the taxi association bosses and the taxi drivers R5.00 fee but they can also accumulate further income by selling sweets, cigarettes, airtime amongst other goods. I further observed that queue marshals sometimes wash taxi drivers taxis during their off peak hours in order to make extra money. Extra money making schemes are particularly important within this industry since Bongani states that ‘in this form of employment no salary increases occur and that complaining to “umlungu” (meaning: “white boss”) will only result in getting fired’. As a result, they don’t complain but rather focus on ensuring that they generate enough money to feed their families.

Mfundo* mentions that ‘taxi drivers as well as queue marshals are only considered as eligible taxi owner after ten years of service specially those working under Faradale Taxi Association’.

While this may sound like a long time and unrealistic queue marshals as well as taxi drivers appear enthusiastic at the thought of one day becoming taxi owners. And while no formal benefits are secured by marshals for the work they occupy, in a situation where a queue marshal passes away the taxi association, taxi drivers as well as the rank managers (squad cars) are responsible for collecting money to help with the funeral arrangements. Taxis can also be offered to the family to transport family members to the graveside. The latter, is however, not compulsory but dependent on the relationship that that specific queue marshal had with the people he worked with. Some queue marshals also assert that it was through their relationship with the taxi drivers that they first learnt to drive. Fezile states that ‘a trophy can also be awarded to a retiring queue marshal who has worked well with that taxi association’. Queue marshals are furthermore allowed to take sick leaves while still getting paid despite not being at work. Whether this is enough or even qualifies as employment ‘benefits’ is questionable.



Figure 9: Queue marshals' pastime income source selling sweets at the Meyerton taxi rank.

Nonetheless, self-empowerment is paramount in moving up the ladder in this line of business where ‘formal’ promotions are nonexistent. Bongani states that, ‘as a queue marshal one can become a taxi driver however, it is up to the individual to get a driver’s license and to start saving’. Furthermore, queue marshals are not awarded pension funds (retirement package) or any medical aid benefits during their employment status in this industry. The number of years a queue marshal can work is also very much dependent on the ‘healthy’ relationship he establishes with the drivers as well as the rank managers.

3.6 Challenges faced by queue marshals at the taxi rank and industry.

Fezile identifies drunken passengers who are unwilling to take instructions as one of the major challenges/risks they face as queue marshals. Taxis that are not road worthy are further identified by queue marshals as challenging especially where commuters are waiting to be transported. The marshal is therefore responsible for ensuring that drivers take good care of their taxis in order to ensure happy passengers (commuters). This is however, not entirely possible as queue marshals only have access and control over the taxi driver and not the taxi owner. Fezile says ‘delayed and broken transportation equals trouble for them from the taxi association as well as rank managers who expect movement at the end of the day’. Broken down taxis therefore compromise the ‘spirit of brotherhood that is essential for successful teamwork’ amongst taxi drivers, queue marshals as well as passengers that is essential for the success of the taxi industry as mentioned by Broodryk (2006).



Figure 10: A broken down taxi secured by bricks being fixed outside Bree taxi rank.

Bra Shedi (rank manager) makes mention of the queue marshals work attire being a risk factor especially during taxi wars in which they become easy targets. As a result, some queue marshals opt not to dress in their attire during conflicts in order to keep a low profile. The latter, is however, not as simple as it may sound since the work they occupy requires them to be in constant interaction with passengers. It's equally worth noting that, the bigger and busier the rank (Bree taxi rank) the bigger the challenges however, the smaller the rank (Meyerton rank) the less the challenges as highlighted by Bongani in his interview. Furthermore, Mdu identifies their late departure time from work as 'challenging and sometimes risky as they become targets of possible hijacks and pick pocketing'. Mdu further mentions the duty of marshalling as a risk where taxi drivers want to replace the current marshal with their own. Mdu further alleges that at times 'some drivers would resort to killing the current marshal in order to get their desired

marshal employment’. This is where friendliness, a cool temper as well as good communication skills play a huge role (virtues of the spirit of ubuntu).

While it is evident that the spirit of ubuntu exist amongst queue marshals that helps contribute to the effective mobility and success of the taxi industry/ranks Ntate Sam* mentions that the lack of job security makes it hard to enjoy this kind of employment. He states that “siyadampwa, namuhlanje ngikhona kusasa angisenamusebenzi. Ayikho iUIF kulomusebenzi, ayikho ipension fund, ngibeke le yakagovernment ipension” (meaning: “we get dumped, today I am employed and tomorrow I am out of work. There are no UIF benefits or pension funds, I am just waiting for my pension from government when”). Ntate Sam further asserts that having no available avenues to report bad working conditions or unfair dismissal experienced at work makes the lives of queue marshals harder. Ntate Sam further states that not having a pension fund means all your funeral expenses will be covered by your family members who might not even have enough money to do so.

3.7 **Conclusion**

While these individuals may be undermined and looked down upon by commuters (and at times taxi drivers), it is undoubtedly undeniable that they play an important role within the taxi ranks and overall industry. This role and function may even surpass that of the taxi drivers although equally important for the taxi industry. Moreover, it’s interesting to note that, although, the taxi industry is portrayed as a violent industry with ‘unruly’ ‘rude’ taxi drivers, the queue marshals’ behavior is the total opposite which possess virtues of ubuntu such as: friendly, kindness, helpfulness amongst other qualities. Queue marshals pride themselves with their sense of humility and in ensuring the safety and management of commuters as well as the taxi ranks. It’s

furthermore, fascinating to observe how much respect queue marshals have for their rank managers while holding their Brand manager Mr. Dlamini (who's always too busy for interviews) so highly. It is from the above mentioned observations that I believe that the taxi industry would be a far safer (non-violent) industry if all its members (particularly the taxi drivers) were as humble, as welcoming and down-to-earth as the helpful queue marshals found in Bree, Meyerton taxi ranks and elsewhere in Johannesburg. As a result, one cannot imagine the taxi ranks without queue marshals as order and control within this space comes from their authority and dedication. The rank has therefore become the heart and life of most queue marshals who spend most of their time in this space establishing new relations daily. Being a queue marshal is therefore a job like any other that secures bread on the table of loved ones although found in the informal sector of the minibus taxi industry.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMMUTERS' PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF QUEUE MARSHALS.

4.1 **Introduction**

This chapter will present commuters' perspectives on the work occupied by queue marshals within the taxi ranks. It focuses on the queue marshals' behavioral patterns, interactions as well as their attitudes towards commuters at the Bree taxi rank (and to a lesser extent, Meyerton taxi rank). Furthermore, the chapter seeks to highlight the significance of the shared relationship that exists amongst commuters as well as queue marshals. The latter, is important in evaluating whether or not the spirit of ubuntu exists in this industry. And lastly, commuters' perspectives on whether or not queue marshals are a necessary function to the taxi industry will be evaluated.

4.2. **Observation of queue marshals attitude, behavior and interaction with commuters' visa versa.**

For the past seven years queue marshals have been a great part of my life, as I began traveling to university in the year 2009. Queue marshals were very helpful during my first year at university because I was not familiar with how the taxi industry operates and where to locate taxis going to Braamfontein from Bree. During this time, however, I was not aware of the role and function queue marshals occupy within the taxi ranks not to mention their existence. I was mostly grateful to have met someone who was genuinely willing to help a hopeless young lady such as myself, trying to find her way to university on time for her first lecture. Over the years however, my

curiosity about these individuals who are found all over the taxi ranks of Johannesburg and even alongside different hotspots of different shopping centers, grew increasingly. I pondered upon what my first experience travelling by taxis (in the city of Johannesburg) would have been like with no queue marshals to assist me. I was greatly intrigued by the fact that so little is known about these individual, their role and function, about the R5.00 fee that they receive from every passing taxi driver. The question at the back of my mind was whether this R5. 00 fees was their only source of income or whether they received a formal wage hence my initial interest in the topic.

Nonetheless, Bree taxi rank is overcrowded with hundreds of people from all walks of life all in a hurry to reach their desired destinations. This taxi rank has become a place of hope, opportunity and endless possibilities. It is also evident that this space has also destroyed thousands of dreams for many passing through and living in Bree. Located in this space are beggars who left home in search of employment in Johannesburg but were unsuccessful in their quest as a result of the high crime rate experienced within this public space. Getting robbed and losing valuable belongings is a natural phenomenon in Bree taxi rank and other ranks although; taxi drivers as well as queue marshals have tried to fight crime inside the ranks. For instance, while taking notes one Monday afternoon, a lady with three big bags asking for directions to her desired taxi had her handbag snatched from underneath her arm. Out of nowhere a man (commuter or salesman) began screaming and pointing “vimbani bo!” (Meaning: “stop them!”) At this point, the taxi rank was at a standstill with the victim in tears and people were questioning her about what had occurred while others began shouting “vimbani bo!” Immediately the taxi drivers, rank managers and queue marshals began chasing after the robber, it was not long before the lady had her handbag back in her possession. A lady who is a vendor

at the rank mentions that ‘no one has ever not been caught once the phrase “vimbani bo” has been uttered at the rank’. Sjamboks, whips and other objects are used on culprits found committing a crime. Although people still get robbed around Bree taxi rank, the crime levels have minimized.

Failure to find employment in the ‘city of gold’ has also left many hopefuls becoming homeless and stranded opting to become street vendors, operating the wash car business amongst other activities in order to accumulate enough money to return home. The latter, objective has however, not materialized for many who overcrowd the rank doing nothing. Bree taxi rank has furthermore, become a hotspot for various legal and illegal (selling of stolen goods) business transactions amongst different people. It is also surprising how accustomed people working in Bree taxi rank have become to inhaling the various odors coming in from all directions. Bree taxi rank is by far the least hygienic place I have ever come across thus far. Regardless, some commuters appear relaxed in their body language and show a sense of familiarity in being at the rank while some, look lost, terrified and desperate to get out of the taxi rank.



Figure 11: Street vendor selling goodies at Meyerton taxi rank.

Inside the rank, commuters are assigned by the queue marshals to different queues of varying lengths where they wait ‘patiently’ for taxis to collect them as the lines get shorter. While some commuters already know where to find their taxis and automatically start forming queues to their desired taxis, some stand all over the place creating disorder and confusion. It is here, where the queue marshals intervene by directing lost commuters to the right taxis and in straightening lines for those already in line waiting to board a taxi. Commuters are however, not always patient while waiting for taxis to show up. As a result, the queue marshal ensures that no passenger cuts the line in order to get to the front. Soft whispers amongst terrified, irritated and sometimes ‘rude’ commuters can also be seen (sometimes heard) where taxis are running late. Loud screams from drunken passengers can also be heard from the queues “haibo! sibalate thina!” (Meaning: “we are running late!”). The queue marshal however, keeps his composure while making a phone call to find out how long till the next driver arrives to collect the impatient passengers. He furthermore, reassures the commuters that he is doing all he can to ensure that a taxi comes to

collect them as soon as possible. Broodryk (2006: 20) thus states that “harmonious personality is therefore to be promoted to counter-act stress, which prospers especially in times of crisis. During these periods it seems to be a natural tendency for people to be criticizing or condemning others or complain emotionally. This type of behavior is not promoting harmonious relationships...” the latter quality is observable in Bree taxi rank and is essential for all queue marshals working in this line of duty.



Figure 12: Commuters queuing in line for taxis to arrive at Bree rank during peak hour.

It is worth noting that, during this research, it was important to observe the queue marshals interaction with the commuters as well as their attitude towards each other in order to determine whether or not the spirit of ubuntu exists in this industry known for its violence and ‘rude’ (bad behaviour) taxi drivers (Sauti 2006). It is unbelievable how helpful, welcoming and passionate queue marshals are in the work they do. From the time I arrived at the taxi rank, it was

Siyabonga* my initial gatekeeper who introduced me to the queue marshals necessary for this research. It was however, one of the queue marshal who introduced me to Bra Shedi* (rank manager at Bree) and ensured that all taxi drivers were cooperative and accommodating in allowing me to conduct some of my interviews inside their taxis. But what's even more surprising, is how commuters were more than willing to cooperate in my research study. As a commuter myself, I know that passengers are always in a hurry to get to the next destination and are exhausted after work to talk to the next person let alone answer a couple of questions from a stranger. Finding people who were willing to participate in this research study was however, not as difficult as I had anticipated. It's equally incredible as a researcher to observe how alive this space (Bree taxi rank) becomes when looking at it from a different lens. As a researcher one begins to form a deeper understanding and meaning about the environment around oneself while trying to remain objective.

Furthermore, when interviewing the required participants (commuters) for this research, the main objective was to target taxis that were not in demand as those going to Auckland Park as they quickly filled up making it impossible to interview the passengers inside. Instead, I opted for taxis with passengers travelling as far as De Deur, Fourways and Cosmo City that took longer to fill up thus, making the passengers more willing to converse freely while passing time. I also made sure that interviews with passengers were conducted from 11:00am when the taxi rank was more quiet and manageable while observations were conducted during the ranks busiest times (from 7:00am till 10:30am).

It was furthermore, important to know the duration of the passengers commuting history before asking them about their relationship with the queue marshals. The general consensus amongst the commuters was that queue marshals play an important role in the functioning and organization of

the taxi ranks. Most commuters interviewed spoke about the bond formed over the years with their queue marshals and expressed how establishing these bonds are essential where favors may be required in the future. For instance, one commuter by the name Sne*, expressed how she was once unable to pay her taxi fare having misplaced her wallet and how her queue marshal helped pay for her ride that night. She further expressed how having a healthy relationship with her queue marshal 'saved her life' that evening or else she would have been stranded in Bree. Broodryk (2006: 21) identifies an act of kindness as a quality of the spirit of ubuntu as described by Mandela. Broodryk (2006: 21) states that "the skill of kindness is simple to practice: it is helping crippled people over a busy street, holding the door open for others, allowing another driver to go ahead of one on a highway..." and while queue marshals do not possess all these acts of kindness, kindness is an act required in their line of employment as expressed by Sne.

Moreover, during my observation it was interesting to note that female commuters share a closer bond with the queue marshals unlike the male commuters. I also observed how queue marshals have a soft spot for the elderly commuters, always ensuring that these commuters sit behind the taxi drivers seat while ensuring that they 'comfortable'. For instance, students coming into the taxis always avoid the front seats in fear of counting the taxi fare but when an elderly steps into the taxi and finds that the only seats available are the front seats, the queue marshal is entitled to move the students making room for the elderly.



Figure 13: Queue marshal making room for the elderly behind the taxi drivers' seat.

Zodwa*, a young lady in her mid-20s commuting by taxis all her life expressed that, ‘she appreciates the presence of queue marshals within the taxi ranks especially when it comes to calling unruly taxi drivers into order’. In an interview with Zodwa, she explained an incident in which a taxi driver to whom she stays from Bree taxi rank was “harsh” and “rude” towards her for denying him her phone numbers to the point of running over her foot when she got off his taxi. Without knowing where to report this taxi driver she thought of the queue marshal from Bree and reported the driver the following day. It was this marshal who then took the complaint to the executives of the taxi association who then sent the driver to a disciplinary hearing that resulted in his suspension. Zodwa asserts that, “although these queue marshals may look like clowns standing there, they are in actual fact very effective and I have great respect for them ever since”. Broodryk (2006: 26) thus describes a person with the spirit of ubuntu as possessing values such as *“togetherness, brotherhood, equality, sharing, sympathy, empathy, compassion,*

respect, tolerance as well as *humanness*” amongst other characteristics. The spirit of empathy and compassion clearly evident in the case of Zodwa and her queue marshal.

Karen* on the other hand, commuting all her life as well states that “my experience with the queue marshals has not always been a pleasant one. I think the treatment you receive from them is dependent on their mood on the day. However, they are very helpful in helping commuters find the taxis they are looking for and in maintaining order in the ranks”. It is however, evident that not all commuters share the same sentiments with regards to the queue marshals functioning, attitude and interaction in the ranks.

A commuter by the name Nomsa*, argued that “queue marshals are just a waste of time, all they good for is wasting commuters time and getting them late to work by delaying the drivers from getting on with their driving”. Another passenger argued that queue marshals are “rude and sometimes try to prove a point that they can be as harsh as the taxi drivers”. Despite these different responses, most commuters (like the taxi drivers) agree that queue marshals play a pivotal role within the taxi industry in bringing about effective mobility within the ranks. Bra Shedi* stated that “queue marshals play a crucial role as regulators of the taxi ranks”. Bra Shedi further compares them to the ‘heads of the household responsible for giving direction to all those living in that home’ (“oqueue marshal bafana nenhloko yomuzi onika wonke umuntu umtheto kuwo”). The latter analogy about queue marshals by Bra Shedi thus reveals the patriarchal nature or understanding of the function of the taxi industry but also the male dominance that is evident in this space that translates itself from their cultural/traditional private domain (household). It is however, much of a concern to realize that in as much as the queue marshals are praised for the duties they carry out at the taxi rank they are also greatly undermined.

4.3 Commuters relationship with the queue marshals

Moreover, during my observation on the queue marshals and their shared relationship with passengers, it was fascinating to observe how marshals go the extra mile to ensure that passengers get into the right taxi and are safe. For instance, during one of my sessions at the taxi rank a guy going to Braampark for an interview had just arrived after the last taxi (9:00 am) heading that direction had departed. Looking all helpless and defeated, it was the queue marshal who pleaded with the next taxi driver to please allow the passenger to go with him and have him dropped closer to where his interview would take place. Later that day, the man from the morning returned searching for the marshal to thank him and inform him that his interview was successful as he has secured the employment position he was interviewed for. It is without a doubt, true that one has to have a heart and passion for this emotionally demanding job. When asking Fezile*, one of the queue marshals at Bree what he enjoys most about his work he stated, “ngithanda ukusebenza nabantu nokwazi ukuthi ngigibez odocta, nonesi nazoisigane zesikolo, kuyangijabulisa lokho” (meaning: “I enjoy working with people from all over and knowing that I am helping to get doctors, nurses, and school children to their destination of choice safely each day, it’s very rewarding”). It is without a doubt that queue marshals pride themselves in the work they do. Queue marshals constantly try to ensure the safety and guidance of all commuters irrespective of the ill treatment they sometimes receive from impatient moody commuters. Broodryk (2006: 21) thus asserts that “keeping one’s cool includes the effective control of anger management”. This being a quality most taxi drivers do not possess as expressed in Sauti (2006) study on the ‘*minibus taxi drivers are they all ‘children born from the same mother’*’ as a result of their bad behavior and reckless driving skills that has resulted in the taxi industry being perceived as violent and patriarchal in nature amongst other factors. Despite this, it is evident

that maintaining humility at all times is therefore central to this form of employment occupied by queue marshals.

Nonetheless, not all commuters share a 'wonderful' relationship with queue marshals. Seuntjie* whose been commuting to De Deur for a long time now, expressed that 'some queue marshals lack the sense of "hospitality" and "humility"' needed when working with people. Seuntjie quickly asserts that "not all of them behave in the same manner". For instance, Seuntjie describes an incident in which a taxi driver was not willing to give him his R4.00 change claiming he had no small change in the morning. Seuntjie, showing great emotion while explaining this event, stated that "this taxi driver hurt my feelings especially since I would have not been allowed to enter the taxi if my taxi fare was a R1.00 short". When questioning him about why he had not taken the initiative to report the incident, he merely shrugged his shoulders with a perplexed look on his face. From the latter, it's evident that not all passengers (commuters) know that they are entitled to report 'bad behavior' experienced at the hands of taxi drivers.

While most commuters interviewed reveal that they have a healthy relationship with their marshals, some (particularly female commuters) expressed that queue marshals can be sometimes "irritating" especially after work when commuters are exhausted and all the marshal does is ask them out'. Some agitated male commuters also complained that queue marshals pay more attention to female commuters than they do them. Some commuters further complain about the queue marshals who take lifts with taxi drivers in the morning who then instruct the driver to take a route more convenient for them whilst inconvenient for passengers. I also observed how queue marshals kindness can sometimes be taken for granted by commuters. For instance, commuters would send the queue marshal to buy them water or cold drinks from nearby tuck shops while they relax in the taxi trying to avoid losing their favourite seat to other passengers.

Despite the latter, a sense of trust between the queue marshals and the commuters can be observed. When conducting some interviews at Bree taxi rank, for a second I was distracted when a female commuter (woman in her late 20s) left her groceries and new born baby with the queue marshal in order to finish some errands around the rank. This sense of trust (in a stranger) really startled me. This act is however, a true reflection of the spirit of ubuntu at play that exists within the taxi industry that is reflected in the queue marshals' persona and function within the taxi ranks.



Figure 14: Queue marshal and commuter interacting with each other.

As a commuter (for seven years) and recently a researcher, I have been fortunate enough to observe how queue marshals are able to ask other passengers to allow a commuter who is not feeling well (e.g. nauseas or experiencing morning sickness) to sit next to the window. While queue marshals are responsible for ensuring order, straight lines among commuters as well as preventing commuters from cutting the line to the front. I have however, witnessed some queue

marshals allow certain passengers to cut the line particularly beautiful female commuters as a strategy to impress them. Unfortunately, queue marshals don't always get away with such behavior. Queue marshals have also learnt a way of disciplining commuters who avoid getting into a particular taxi due to their dislike for that specific taxi driver or the condition of that taxi. In this case, the marshal will inform the taxi driver next in line (most likely driving a quantum) not to allow that specific passenger into his taxi for refusing to take instructions from the marshal. This form of discipline and cooperation thus shows the spirit of '*brotherhood/togetherness*' that exists between taxi drivers and queue marshals alike.

4.4 Commuters perspective on the necessity of queue marshals in the taxi industry.

Regardless, most commuters interviewed argued that queue marshals are essential for this industry especially since the taxi industry hosts hundreds and thousands of people daily. As a commuter myself, I recall one winters night in which I was travelling from Braamfontein to meet with my sister in-law in Alberton. The agreement between my sister in-law and I was to meet up at around 17:00 pm at a place called Jackson, 45 minutes away from her place as she was coming from Southgate mall. She was however, delayed and so was my taxi and I eventually arrived at Jackson (a doggy spot when it's late at night) around 18:30pm. At this point, the only person I found where I got off was the queue marshal and one other male passenger waiting for the last taxi coming from town. Sihle* (the name of the marshal), around his mid-30s asked whether I was waiting for a taxi and why I had arrived so late. I informed him that I was waiting for my sister in-law who was running late from Southgate. As late as it was and considering that he too was waiting for the last taxi from town, he offered to wait with me until my sister in-law arrived. We spoke about his daughters amongst other things, while I said a silent prayer for his taxi to delay and for my sister in-law to arrive. Cut a long story short, my sister in-law finally showed

up and so did Sihle's taxi. The whole ride home my sister in-law couldn't believe that such caring, sympathetic and passionate people exist and not only because they job requires it but because they genuinely care about the safety of the next person. It was this incident that confirmed the need to fulfill my curiosity (interest) about the role and function of queue marshals in the taxi industry.

Overall, most of the commuters' interviewed expressed that the presence of queue marshals in the taxi ranks assists in ensuring that they always on time for work by ensuring that taxis leave the ranks on time. Queue marshals are furthermore viewed as 'convenient' in helping commuters and making their lives easier by directing them to their desired taxis and in ensuring that no conflict erupts amongst the commuters, especially in instances where other passengers cut into the front of the queues. Queue marshals are particularly essential in an industry that draws hundreds of commuters a day when compared to trains and buses.

4.5 How do commuters' imagine the taxi industry without queue marshals?

The general consensus amongst the commuters interviewed was that the taxi industry would be "chaotic, disorganized and ineffective" in getting passengers where they should be. People would enter into wrong taxis; taxi drivers would overtake one another in leaving the rank and not report to work if they pleased. Moreover, passengers would arrive late for work where taxis are running late and taxi drivers are failing to keep the correct time schedules. Violence in the industry would escalate not only amongst taxi associations but amongst commuters and taxi drivers alike. Bra Shedi stated that 'the taxi industry would not be the success it is presently'. Another commuter expressed that, "the taxi ranks (and industry) would be like sheep's without a shepherd". The

overall, findings of this chapter was that commuters appreciate the role and function queue marshals play in the taxi ranks and ‘their very helpful’ in their daily travels.

4.6 **Conclusion**

It’s therefore evident that, both queue marshals as well as commuters share a mutual understanding of the role they play in each other’s daily lives. Queue marshals understand that without the commuter they would be out of business while commuters understand that without the queue marshal they would always be late for work and thus without employment. Furthermore, safety, order and discipline within the ranks would cease to exist. This form of inter-dependence thus reflects the true essence of what ubuntu is all about.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATION WITH TAXI DRIVERS ON QUEUE MARSHALS.

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter will discuss the taxi drivers' perception on the role and function occupied by queue marshals within the taxi ranks and whether or not they are a necessary function to the overall taxi industry. This chapter will further discuss the shared interaction, behavior as well as attitude that exist amongst queue marshals and the taxi drivers as observed. This is important in understanding what the spirit of ubuntu means and whether or not it exists amongst taxi drivers and queue marshals.

5.2 Observations and interviews on the attitude, behavior and interaction of taxi drivers with queue marshals.

Taxi drivers are known in the taxi industry for their 'bad behavior' and 'reckless' driving. Considering the fact that the taxi industry dominates the transport sector, it is highly inevitable that you will not find taxi drivers all over South Africa and where there's a taxi driver one is bound to find a queue marshal. Bree taxi rank is one of the largest taxi ranks in Johannesburg and where most taxi drivers and queue marshals are found. A sense of 'dependency' between the queue marshal as well as the taxi driver is observable at the rank. Taxi drivers depend on the 'instructions' they receive from the queue marshal in keeping time schedules for departure and in ensuring constant movement amongst commuters waiting to be transported. Without these instructions taxi drivers can be seen arguing amongst each other over departure times that they

themselves have created. The latter, is mostly evident on Fridays and month ends where taxi drivers want to knock off early in order to go drinking or visit girlfriends amongst other personal matters. A sense of 'togetherness' is therefore essential and evident between taxi drivers and queue marshals.

However, taxi drivers dominate this space and while 'feared' by most commuters for being a 'law upon themselves' the taxi driver is almost 'submissive' when it comes to listening to queue marshals'. It's as if the driver becomes a naughty child who is known for bullying others but fears being punished by his mom (the queue marshals). It's very fascinating to observe this form of submissiveness/obedience that occurs between these individuals. What's equally fascinating is the fact that despite the obvious hierarchy that exists within the industry (the queue marshal occupying the lowest position) some taxi drivers 'work well' with the marshals and almost respect them. This form of respect and obedience that is observable between queue marshals and taxi drivers thus reasserts the spirit of ubuntu that exists within this space (taxi ranks) and the overall taxi industry that has not been given much attention when reading and speaking about this industry.



Figure 15: Taxi driver in his taxi at Bree taxi rank during leisure time with his colleague.

Taxi drivers are furthermore, responsible for identifying and hiring potential queue marshals. Before queue marshals become registered employees of the taxi industry, it is the taxi driver who is responsible for paying the queue marshal from his pocket. As a result, it is the taxi driver who is most likely to report and ‘fire underperforming’ queue marshals. It is furthermore, the responsibility of the taxi driver to ensure the replacement of a queue marshal who is sick or on leave. Despite the former, taxi drivers share an interesting relationship with the queue marshals. For instance, taxi drivers don’t expect queue marshals to pay taxi fare when catching a lift with them. When asking Mfundo* why this was the case, he replied by saying “thina o taxi driver sisebenza ngemali hayi o queue marshal, o taxi driver yibona abafuneka bakhokhe mabegibela nathi hayi o queue marshal” (meaning: “we taxi drivers work with money all day and queue marshals are not like us, a taxi driver should pay when catching a lift with us not a queue marshal”). At first, the latter response can be perceived as the taxi driver being sympathetic towards the queue marshal however, with further scrutiny one realizes that some taxi drivers

actually undermine the work queue marshals occupy. But, like most commuters who ‘trust’ queue marshals with their lives, so do most taxi drivers. Looking out for one another is crucial and evident in this line of work. Lowu (2010: 1) thus states that “ubuntu is power sharing, it constitutes the sharing of power”. As such, Lowu (2010: 2) asserts that ubuntu “articulates basic respect and compassion for others: caring, sharing, warmth and understanding”.



Figure 16: Commuters getting into taxi at Meyerton taxi rank.

The atmosphere at Bree taxi rank is relaxed with taxi drivers and queue marshals teasing one another all day long. As a result, there’s never a dull moment in this taxi rank. Competition as well as minor arguments form an everyday phenomenon with regards to women passing through the rank, time schedules for departure, over who’s buying who alcohol after work as well as who left the queue marshal with a bigger ‘tip’ (‘appreciation fee’) amongst other factors. The latter, is the order of each passing day.

I further witnessed that sometimes, certain taxi drivers tip ('bribe') queue marshals more than usual in order to overload their taxis whilst that's prohibited. From my own experience throughout the years and my observations during this research, I witnessed how passengers sometimes insist on '*four-four masihlalisane*' (the overloading of a taxi by adding a fourth passenger in a seat designed for three people) particularly in the morning when commuters are running late for work. While queue marshals may make an exception with this regard, a few taxi drivers disagree with the overloading of their taxis in order to avoid receiving ticket fines from traffic officers while ensuring the safety of commuters. While a taxi drivers' refusal of *four-four masihlalisane* may be applauded in ensuring the safety and 'comfort' of commuters, some passengers stir up drama and throw tantrums particularly in the mornings or peak hours. The overloading of taxis is particularly dangerous in the event of a car accident. Queue marshals are thus held accountable in this regard (taxis involved in a car accident with *four-four masihlalisane*).



Figure 17: Four-four masihlalisane

5.3 Taxi drivers' relationship with the queue marshals

In this line of work it is important for queue marshals as well as the taxi drivers to maintain a 'healthy' working relationship throughout hence the shared 'brotherly' relationship that exist amongst them. From my observation, taxi drivers are particularly friendly with queue marshals when in need of various 'special' favors that can result in the taxi driver offering the queue marshal lunch, cigarettes, as well as money and if they lucky, a trip home after work. These 'special' favors also include, queue marshals ensuring that the girl a certain driver has been 'eyeing' gets into his taxi and not the other taxis. And while these girls may already be inside the drivers' taxi, it's the queue marshals' responsibility to ensure that they are moved to the front seat next to the driver. As a result, queue marshals have become 'match makers' for many of the taxi drivers working at the ranks. It's worth noting however, that a jealous or spiteful queue marshal can sabotage a taxi drivers' hope of meeting 'the girl of his dreams'. Unfortunately, I

was not able to investigate if any long term relationships have transpired from this ‘match making’ scheme.

Nonetheless, during both the taxi drivers and queue marshals free time, a board game called “umrabaraba” (played like chess) can be observed. When playing “umrabara” no longer excites the taxi drivers and the queue marshals, spotting attractive women, what women and men are wearing passing through the taxi rank becomes the next game played. Taxi drivers as well as queue marshals can also be heard sharing conversations about various issues experienced during the course of the day or experienced back at home. Moreover, queue marshals and taxi drivers can be observed contributing money to buy lunch. It’s also quite fascinating to observe that the person who contributes the most money receives the bigger piece of meat.

Taxi drivers have also developed their own code (secret) language (mostly spoken in numbers) that allows them to communicate with queue marshals without commuters overhearing their conversation. Queue marshals have over the years become mediators among taxi drivers who don’t see eye to eye. For instance, while travelling to Bree taxi rank from Ennerdale, I overheard a conversation between the taxi driver and his queue marshal in which, the driver asked the marshal to inform JKD 312 (license number plate of the other driver) that there were ‘popes’ (term ‘popes’ used to describe traffic officers or policemen) in the direction he was heading towards. Taxi drivers also play an influential role in helping queue marshals discipline difficult commuters who are unwilling to take instructions from the marshals. This is particularly evident in a situation where a taxi needs one more passenger before it can leave the rank and the passengers next in line refuses to enter the taxi due to disliking that specific taxi driver or the condition of the taxi. This incident therefore results in the following taxi drivers’ refusal in

allowing that specific commuter inside his taxi. A true spirit of “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu” (ubuntu) (Broodryk 2006, Cilliers, internet, Bennett 2011 and Lowu 2010).

Most taxi drivers have further allowed their queue marshals to reverse their taxis while on lunch breaks, or having a conversation with other taxi drivers or during their ‘nap time’. Some queue marshals assert that ‘it was through the shared relationship they have with taxi drivers that they first learnt how to drive’. While taxi drivers may take ‘power naps’ during their off peak hours, queue marshals cannot be found napping on the job. I was also fortunate enough during my observation to witness a newly trained queue marshal being ‘indoctrinated’ by the taxi drivers in developing thick skin and adopting the ‘taxi rank culture’ of being ‘hardcore’; ‘no-nonsense’ type of person (a form of patriarchy at play here of male behaviour). While I would have loved to sit down with this queue marshal and hear more about his training experience amongst other factors, he was too scared to be interviewed in fear of losing his newly found employment. Developing thick skin is essential in this line of work especially when working with difficult commuters as this allows for maintained harmony amongst individuals. Regardless, queue marshals can also be found washing taxis during their taxi drivers off peak hours in order to make extra income separate from the R5.00 ‘appreciation fee’ they receive from drivers. The extent of this shared relationship between taxi drivers and queue marshals has also upset some commuters who complained about queue marshals who take lifts with taxi drivers in the morning and then instruct the driver to take a route more convenient for them whilst inconvenient for late passengers.



Figure 18: Queue marshal reversing minibus taxi before departure.

The relationship between the marshals and drivers is however, not always rosy. More often than not, queue marshals argue over the unfair treatment they receive from taxi drivers. For instance, I observed how taxi drivers sometimes promise to give queue marshals extra money (‘appreciation fee’) by hurrying up their load but once the marshal has ensured his end of the bargain the taxi driver takes off without leaving them anything. Later when the marshal enquires about the extra money promised to him by the driver, taxi drivers tend to ignore them (this is an example of the ‘dark side’ spirit of ubuntu). As a result, verbal fights can be observed between taxi drivers and queue marshals who disagree although; these fights never escalate into physical violence. The latter, can make or break the working atmosphere for that specific day as a result, fights are avoided. Furthermore, when interviewing taxi drivers about their relationship with queue marshals they expressed that some marshals are pleasant to work with while others can be quite difficult. Sthe* a taxi driver under the Faradale Taxi Association who first began working in the taxi industry as a car washer and then a queue marshal in 2008 before becoming a taxi driver in

2010 mentions that, difficult queue marshals result from “o driver abadelelayo” (meaning: “difficult/rude taxi drivers”).

Overall, taxi drivers and queue marshals share a ‘healthy’ and ‘friendly’ relationship. While some taxi drivers take advantage of the queue marshals kindness and work ethic some really do appreciate the presence of marshals within the ranks mainly in making their job easier. Newly employed taxi drivers also share the same sentiments on the role played by queue marshals particularly in familiarizing themselves with the new job requirements. A ‘healthy’ relationship between these individuals is therefore beneficial and important in maintaining the success of the taxi industry (as mentioned above).

5.4 Taxi drivers view on whether or not queue marshals are a necessary function to the taxi rank and industry?

The effective functioning of the taxi industry has been argued by various participants as solely dependent on the queue marshals. When asked if queue marshals are a necessary function within the taxi industry, Bra Shedi stated that “awukho umuzi onganababa’ (meaning “there is no household without a father”). The latter, is however, arguable. Nevertheless, Bra Shedi further, asserts that ‘without the queue marshal taxi drivers will be uncontrollable’. Bongani further goes on to say that “ngaphandle koqueue marshal abagibeli bangalahleka” (meaning: “without queue marshals commuters would get lost”). A sentiment shared by many drivers, commuters and queue marshals. While queue marshals play an important role in the overall functioning of the taxi ranks as well as taxi industry, it is evident that the success of this industry relies on the dependence relationship that exists amongst all its members. Without the taxi drivers (specially, where queue marshals can’t drive) commuters would not reach their destination irrespective of

the marshals' organizational skills. However, without the queue marshals there would be chaos at the taxi rank and most commuters would most likely be lost as they will be finding it difficult to locate their taxis.

Sthe expressed that queue marshals are important in informing taxi drivers about where they are stationed for the day and in preventing taxi drivers from other taxi association in taking their loads "ngogemthetho" (meaning: "illegally"). It's also worth noting that, the absence of queue marshals can easily be observed particularly in Meyerton taxi rank with escalated disputes between the taxi drivers and commuters.

On the other hand, Zweli* has been a taxi driver since 2004 transporting passengers to Southgate and Lehae. Zweli states that "ngaphandle kweQueue marshal umsebenzi ngeke wacontroleka ngendlela eright" (meaning: "without the queue marshal work would not be controlled in the right way"). He further asserts that "ungumhleli womusebenzi" (meaning: "his is the organizer of work"). I then asked Zweli if he thought queue marshals are more important than taxi drivers. He responded by saying 'queue marshals should not hold the lowest hierarchy in the taxi industry but rather the taxi drivers should assume that position'. Sthe however, quickly corrects Zweli (in a very defensive manner) and states that "no sobabili sibalulekile" (meaning: "no we both important"). Interestingly, Sthe adds that "izenzo hizona ezigqamisa omunye" (meaning: "it's our actions that make the other more important when compared to the other"). From the latter response, one can't help but wonder if acting and behaving like taxi drivers would help make queue marshals more 'visible' as members of the taxi industry. It is however, evident that a sense of *equality* (a characteristic of ubuntu) between taxi drivers and queue marshals exist while it may not always be expressed equally amongst these individuals.

Most taxi drivers expressed that it's because of their relationship with the queue marshals that they have been able to avoid ticket fines, road blocks, and major road accidents amongst other obstructions that could have hindered their check off points later. This is especially important to taxi drivers since taxi owners expect them to pay off these fines from their own pockets. As a result, queue marshals' presence in the ranks and industry is considered 'helpful' in strengthening the already convenient and reliable transport sector by bringing harmony in an industry known for its violent nature.

5.5 Taxi drivers' perspective on how they imagine the rank without queue marshals.

The words 'chaotic', 'disorganized' amongst others can be heard from all the participants interviewed in this research study. When asking Sthe how he imagined the taxi ranks without queue marshals, (looking down and shaking his head) he says "angazi ukuthi kungaba hinto enjani kodwa angeke ibeyinhle" (meaning: "I don't know how it would be but I know it wouldn't be a good thing"). Some taxi drivers expressed that business would be 'slow' and that 'egos would rise' amongst taxi drivers. Some taxi drivers also expressed that commuters would join other modes of transportation thus negatively affecting the taxi industry. Taxi drivers also expressed that they would probably place different commuters going to various destinations into the same taxi. Sthe states that taxi drivers would take other driver's departure times and this would be bad for business. Queue marshals are therefore essential within this industry and the lives of taxi drivers as well as commuters in asserting the spirit of ubuntu that is often unknown when speaking of the taxi industry (different worldview of the same coin).

5.6 **Conclusion**

In this chapter it is evident that some taxi drivers value the role and function of queue marshals within the taxi industry while others undermine the work occupied by queue marshals. Taxi drivers nonetheless, admit that without the assistance of the queue marshals as well as commuters they would lose their employment as a result they need to be amicable with each other although challenging at times. Some taxi drivers also admit that queue marshals duties are 'more important' than they are while others disagree and assert that taxi drivers and queue marshals are equally important reinforcing the spirit of ubuntu that exists in this industry. Overall, taxi drivers and queue marshals find pleasure in working with each other and in ensuring movement within the ranks and the overall taxi industry.

CHAPTER SIX: INTERVIEWS WITH FAMILY MEMBERS ON QUEUE MARSHALS SOCIAL STATUS.

6.1 **Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the views and perspectives of the queue marshals' family members as it is understood that they are the most important people in the lives of queue marshals. The opinion of the queue marshals' family members is particularly important in understanding their lives outside their role and function within the taxi ranks. This chapter is also important in explaining the role of queue marshals as the heads of households, breadwinners, as brothers, fathers, uncles etc. The latter, reinforcing what is understood as a form of patriarchy (as defined in the first chapter). In essence, this chapter aims to understand queue marshals as people outside the taxi ranks and in the space (household) that forms the rest of where their time is spent.

While it can be said that the lives of queue marshals revolve around their work in the taxi ranks helping difficult taxi drivers as well as commuters, queue marshals' also spend the rest of their time 'home' with loved ones. During this research process it became important for me as the researcher to discover the nature of the relationship queue marshals have with their family members and what their thoughts are on the role and function occupied by queue marshals within their workplace and at home as important male figures. I was fascinated to discover whether the queue marshals possess the same persona (spirit of ubuntu and male dominance/patriarchy) in the household as that evident in their workplace. It's worth noting that, arranging to meet with family members was not an easy task especially due to the fact that most queue marshals have

relocated to Johannesburg for work purposes thus their family members were left back home in the rural areas.

As a result, I found that most of the queue marshals interviewed were bachelors only returning home in December for the Christmas holidays (at most). And while this seemed like a stumbling block at first, I had to rethink what the concept ‘family members’ meant, was my perception of this term based on what society conceives ‘normal’ family members to be (a spouse, children, brothers, sisters and in-laws etc) or rather in the manner families have formed for queue marshals over the years as a result of their work amongst other factors. As a result, I decided to focus on the people the queue marshals spent a lot of their time and money outside of the work sphere that they identified as ‘family’ (girlfriends or those they cohabitate with).

The main focus of this chapter is therefore to begin by interviewing people who have worked as queue marshals for longer than two years as this would help in shedding more light on the employment status of queue marshals within the household. And if possible, this chapter will also attempt to interview children (hopefully male children) of queue marshals or brothers in order to understand how absent brothers/fathers affect them, if at all. This chapter further hopes to examine whether or not the evident patriarchal structures and existence of male figures within the taxi industry exists within the queue marshals households and on the basis of this, how is it maintained, if at all.

6.2 What are the family members’ views/perspectives on the work occupied by queue marshals?

While queue marshals have been praised by taxi drivers, rank managers as well as commuters for playing an important role within the taxi ranks as well as the minibus taxi industry as the “heads

of the taxi ranks” this sentiment is however, not shared in the private domain (household). Patriarchy in the form of male dominance (masculinity) is quite evident in the taxi ranks as well as the taxi industry. Patriarchy, according to Asiyanbota (2005: 3), is “originally used to describe the power of the father as head of household... refers to the systematic organization of male supremacy and female subordination”. This supremacy is however, not limited to women but younger male figures within households. Whilst family members appreciate their husbands, fathers etc for their efforts in financially providing for them, it seems they also resent the long working hours that separates them from their loved ones

Asiyanbota (2005: 3) states that “a patriarchy is considered the head of the household and within the family he controls productive resources, labour force, and reproductive capacities based on the notions of superiority and inferiority and legitimized by differences in gender and generation” Asiyanbota (2005: 4) further states that the “roles of men in the family are closely linked to the attributes of masculinity”. Masculinity being a social construct (ever changing) that defines men and women’s gender roles within various societies. Lastly, Asiyanbota (2005: 4) states that “boys are taught by their mothers and shown by their fathers how to be man and are excused from performing ‘female’ tasks around the house”. These ‘female’ tasks include: ‘women overseeing domestic chores, cooking food, planting and harvesting crops as well as rearing and bearing children’ (Asiyanbota, 2005: 3). The absence (relocation) of queue marshals as male figures in most of their households as a result of their employment status therefore raises questions about the defined stereotypical gender roles by society. It also brings into question whether or not patriarchal structures evident at the ranks exist in the queue marshals households.

Duduzile Ndlovu* (in her mid-50s) has been living in Johannesburg for 22 years (originally from KZN). She has six children with her husband in which two passed away at birth. Having lost her

job as a domestic worker when her “mulungu” (meaning: “white boss”) moved back overseas she decided to move to Johannesburg in search of her husband. This was largely due to the harsh living conditions (“indlala”) she experienced in KZN in the absence of her husband.

While rural women are not allowed to work outside the private domain (the home) by their spouses Mrs. Ndlovu states that upon arriving to Johannesburg she was fortunate enough to find employment as a domestic worker while her husband (a former miner) searched for employment and ended up becoming a queue marshal as a result of spending lots of time at the Bree taxi rank. The latter, Mrs. Ndlovu states was important for her husband “ngoba engathandi ukuwondlwa umuntu wesifazane” (meaning: “because he was unwilling to live off a woman’s salary”) as a man. This reinforces our understanding of what we already know about the concept of patriarchy. She mentions however, that initially “...wayefuna ukuba udriver kwasho kona ke ukuthi imali yokwenza ilicense ayihlangani” (meaning: “he wanted to become a taxi driver but was unable to save up enough money for the drivers’ license”). Not forgetting the needs of the children that further hindered his dream of getting his drivers’ license and becoming a taxi driver. It is worth noting that, while queue marshals somewhat enjoy the work they occupy it is evident from the interviews conducted with some of them that being a taxi driver was their most preferred option of employment. There’s also a sense that some queue marshals perceive being a taxi driver as more superior position than the one they occupy in the minibus taxi industry.

Nevertheless, I was interested to find out whether or not queue marshals spouses understood what their husbands’/boyfriends etc job entails. Mrs. Ndlovu (proudly) states that “umyeni wami uyena o fika kuqhala erankeni before utaxi driver wokuqhala. Phela o myeni bethu o manager berank, o manager ngiyakutshela!” (Meaning: “my husband is the first person to arrive at the taxi rank before the first taxi driver. Our husbands are rank managers, managers I tell you!”). Slie*

on the other hand, states that “ubaba uvuka ngo 4am ekuseni eyemsebenzini ebuye ngo7pm ebusuku. Ba controlla amataxi ukuthi ahamba kanjani, nokuti abantu bangami isikhathi eside. Uphonele o taxi driver bese bathole okuncane ko driver” (meaning: “my man wakes up at 4am in the morning for work and comes back at 7pm at night. They control taxis, how they travel and ensure that commuters do not wait in line for a long time. He also calls the taxi driver and is given a small token of appreciation by the taxi driver”). It was however, fascinating to know that the spouses of queue marshals do not know how much their husbands/boyfriends earn let alone who is responsible for their wages.

Slie (late 30s) has been cohabiting with her queue marshal spouse for four years and have two daughters in grade 7 and in grade 1 together (not queue marshals biological children). Slie is originally from Limpopo while her man comes from Kwa-Zulu Natal and has been living at her aunts RDP here in Johannesburg. Slie unlike Mrs. Ndlovu is unemployed instead she volunteers at the local clinics not far from where she lives. Her spouse is therefore responsible for providing her with transport fare, buying food for the house as well as giving the children ‘spending money’. This therefore reasserts the stereotypical gender roles defined by society on the role men ought to constitute within the household and society in general. Slie states that while they do not pay for rent they have to pay for electricity as well as water thus she hopes to find a permanent post at the clinic so that she can contribute financially at home. And while the nature of patriarchy does not allow for women (particularly married women) to partake in economic activities of wage earning, Bird et al (1989) (cited in Asiyanbola, 2005:7) asserts that, “...a wife who shares the paid employment role should have a right to expect a more equitable allocation of family tasks at home”. The latter is however, not the case for many queue marshals as well as

their spouses who live separate from each other as a result of marshals relocating to Johannesburg and wives/girlfriends staying behind in the rural areas.

Despite this, it's interesting to note that while queue marshals pride themselves in the work they do, it appears that they do not desire their children to become queue marshals since “uzosebenza ungatholi lutho, uhluleke ukuthenga imotho abangani bakho abayidrivayo” (meaning: “you will work and in the end receive nothing, you won't even be able to buy a car that your friends are driving”). The latter, explains a lot about the queue marshals inner turmoil and their dissatisfaction with their working conditions.

6.3 What are some of the challenges families face in the absence of their male figures (queue marshals)?

For decades men have been perceived by societies as breadwinners, heads of the household, having the responsibility to protect and provide for their families amongst other stereotypical gender roles (Asiyanbola 2005). Men from a tender age of six years are taught to be strong, not to cry and to strive for success while women on the other hand, are taught to be submissive, obedient, take care of the children amongst other socially constructed biological differences between men and women. Being a queue marshal has however, altered these societal gender roles that exist between men and women. Queue marshals who live on their own have assumed female defined roles having to cook, clean and take care of themselves in the absence of their wives/girlfriends. Fezile asserts that “ngihlala ngedwa, mangifika endlini ngiyacleana, ngipheke ngilale” (meaning: “he lives alone and when he gets back from work he has to clean, cook and then sleep”). Fezile further asserts that ‘while it's sad not having my family around he had to accept the new living arrangements for the sake of work’. Women have on the other hand, started

filing the male defined gender roles of being ‘tough’, ‘strong’ as well as head of households in their homes. Mrs. Ndlovu mentions that having an absent male figure during the day is problematic especially since having boy children requires them to have their dads’ guidance as a male figure. She states that as a woman her male children do not take her seriously when attempting to discipline them. The latter, reinforces the feminine character (biological construct) given to women by society as well as the patriarchal structures that view women as ‘weak’ and ‘soft’. Women like Mrs. Ndlovu thus believe that she is inferior when compared to her husband in disciplining her male children. The latter, is however arguable.

She further asserts that there is never time to discuss family matters since her husband is always tired when he returns from work. In an almost embarrassed/shy manner Mrs. Ndlovu states that “kanti nezidingo zakho njengomuntu wesifazane unazo” (winking) (meaning: “I also have my own needs as a woman, you know”). She also identifies not knowing how much her husband earns can be problematic/frustrating. Growing up in a Zulu household myself, I have witnessed how Zulu cultural practices, do not allow for women to know how much their spouses earn. Hadebe (2010: 58) asserts that “in the traditional Zulu society men are given socially privileged positions over women by fulfilling the gender based role of conducting rituals and providing resources”. Hadebe further states that “the notion of Zulu households’ headship which values respect and dignity and authority enforces male supremacy and dominance” (2010: 59). This highlights the strain that this line of work puts on queue marshals relationships with their spouses as a result of their absence amongst other factors. However, it also reveals the constraints that these biologically constructed gender roles place on men and women in performing in a certain manner that may be beyond expectation. Patriarchy nevertheless, automatically privileges men or women in many rural households.

On the other hand, Mrs. Ndlovu's husband controls the finances of the household. She adds that "mangihola kufanele ngiyinike yonke imali yami kubaba" (meaning: "when I get paid I have to give my salary to my husband") who then distributes it for transport fare, food and for the children's school needs. This thus reasserts the submissiveness characteristic of the patriarchal social structure that is required from women by men (their spouses). And while "ayanele" (meaning: "it's never enough") for the whole month, Mrs. Ndlovu mentions that she cannot complain to her husband. She further asserts that "imali angeke inele futhi ngoba icontrolla umuntu ongahlali nokuhlala endlini" (meaning: "the money is not enough especially since it's being controlled by someone who doesn't even stay with us"). The latter, further asserts how "patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" particularly in cultural institutions. Mrs. Ndlovu expresses how the former is frustrating especially since "faneke wenze sho ukuthi iwashing yawonke umuntu iwashiwe" and the extended families. (Meaning: "you need to ensure that everyone's laundry is taken care of). Even though they do not pay rent in the house they reside in at present, Mrs. Ndlovu states that her child's transport fare to college in Pretoria might as well be considered as paying rent since it takes up a lot from the household earnings. Looking depressed she adds "ngiyamukhumbula umlungu wami o wahamba phesheya o wayenginika incipho nokudla for ingane zami" (meaning: "I miss my white boss who went overseas who use to give me soap and food for my children"). As a researcher I got a sense that Mrs. Ndlovu's salary together with her husband's was not enough to sustain the livelihoods of their families hence she appreciated the extra food she was receiving from her previous employer.

Slie on the other hand, states that "kwesinye isikhati imali ubaba ayenzayo iyanela kodwa sometimes ayinele for ingane ekhaya" (meaning: "sometimes the money he earns is enough but

sometimes it's not enough for the children and the household"). And while she was reluctant to mention in detail what she meant by the latter, she states that "ubaba uyakhona ukusisupportea nomaincane imali yakhe" (meaning: "my man is able to support us even though he doesn't earn much"). Slie mentions that "abantwana bayamudinga ubaba wabo but ngoba usebenza late uthola ukuthi uzobuya ingane encane isilele nasekuseni futhi ehambe ingaka vuki" (meaning: "the children need their father but because of his working hours, he arrives late from work when our younger daughter is asleep and leaves early in the morning when she's still fast asleep"). She further states that her spouse's absence during his working hours is problematic especially in instances where there are problems that need his urgent attention at home. In a worried tone Slie mentions that "ngiyakathazeke mayengakafiki ngo 7:30 pm ekhaya ngoba ngicabanga ukuthi khona osokwenzekile kuye emsebenzini" (meaning: "I worry all the time especially when he is not home by 7:30 pm because I start thinking something might have happened to him at work"). She adds that she would have preferred for her spouse to knocked off work at 5pm but considering that most commuters leave work late she understands that this is not practical.

6.4 Queue marshals opinions on how they feel about leaving their families on their own due to work demands.

During my interviews with the family members it was important for me as the researcher to understand how queue marshals felt about knowing that their wives (girlfriends etc) and children are left home without a male figure.

Ntate (meaning: father) Sam has been a queue marshal for 15 years and stays at Ekenhof Johannesburg. Originally ntate Sam is from Limpopo and only goes back home to visit during the Easter and Christmas holidays because he works seven days a week. Before becoming a

queue marshal, ntate Sam worked as a sub-contractor in his own small business but having been misled by his friend, ntate Sam closed shop and left for Johannesburg to become a marshal. As a queue marshal ntate Sam earns R200 a week sometimes he gets paid the same amount fortnightly excluding the R5.00 appreciation fee. From his salary he sends home R500 a month and uses the R5.00 appreciation fee to support himself. Back in Limpopo, ntate Sam has left his wife as well as 6 children (all girls) of which three are married, two are in secondary school and one has completed her grade 12 last year. His wife also lives with their three grandchildren.

Ntate Sam is the sole breadwinner of his family since his wife works as a street vendor selling sweets and chips. She also collects wood for fire, does washing for the children as well as cook for them all. Ntate Sam states that “imali ayikho, incane” (meaning: “the money is not enough, it’s little”) and therefore he can’t afford to send his daughter to university who passed very well with a Bachelors symbol. Ntate Sam asserts that “kubulungu ukungakwazi ukunceda izingane zakho” (meaning: “it’s painful not being able to help your children”). What is even more disturbing (pain in his eyes), ntate Sam mentions is ‘coming back home to find your youngest child pregnant and not knowing who the father of her baby is’. The latter, indicates the breaking down of the patriarchal system/structure within the queue marshals households as a result of their employment status.

I then asked ntate Sam whether or not he thought his absences contributed to his daughter falling pregnant? His response (becoming very emotional) was “yebo kunomuthelelo ukusebenza kude, ngoba uyabona ukuhlupheka kwengane kwenza kubenje. Abafana bayakukhohlisa ngemali ngoba imali usatane” (meaning: “yes working far from home has contributed to my daughter falling pregnant because poverty especially for a child makes them believe the lies men tell them for the sake of making money, money being the root of all evils”). He further mentions that his

absence from home has made his children skeptical “bakhula benganalo ithemba kahle ukuthi nguwe ubaba wabo ngoba awukho njalo kodwa ngoba umama wabo akabakombi omunye ubaba bafaneke bakholwe” (meaning: “they grow up having little faith that you are the father because you are never around but because the mother does not introduce other men to them as their father they have no choice but to accept you as their father”).

I was then curious to find out if his children still respected his authority as the head of the household. Ntate Sam as well as Fezile mentioned that “umthetho wasemakhaya wenza ukuthi bangilalele” (meaning: “the cultural practice of the rural areas requires them to respect my authority regardless”). Fezile further expresses that “umuntu okondlayo ngeke ungamuhloniphi” (meaning: “you cannot disrespect the person who puts bread on your table”). Fezile therefore states that “kumunyama kubovu, kumele bakulalele” (meaning: “come sunshine or rain, they have to listen to me”). This response from Ntate Sam and Fezile displays their patriarchal nature that is shaped by changing cultural/traditional practices of masculinity and femininity amongst men and women.

Ntate Sma as well as Fezile also mentions that in their absence at home the wives assume the position of the household heads as they become solely responsible for disciplining the children and thus face a lot of challenges that would have required the attention of both parents. And while they trust their wives to take care of the household duties as well as the children, they worry about the safety and security of their family members in their absence. Fezile however, asserts that “kodwa ukuhola le mali engiyiholayo ingcono kunokuhlala ekhaya ngingatholi lutho” (meaning: “but getting paid what I get paid is better than staying home and not earning anything”). This is an example of the spirit of ubuntu that presents itself in the form of *compassion, tolerance and sharing* by queue marshals for their families.



Figure 19: Queue marshal with his wife outside their home.

6.5 **Final thoughts on my interaction with family members**

While it may seem that queue marshals have things under control and play an important and valued role at the taxi ranks, it is evident that the most important role of their lives as fathers, husbands and male figures suffers each day due to their absence. While the work queue marshals occupy may have helped extend their houses where they come from, send children to school and put bread on the table daily, it is clear that family members would appreciate it if the queue marshals could spend more time at home physically to assist in raising the children among other factors. Family members (wives and children) also seem quite frustrated with not knowing how much they queue marshal members earn as this makes them unaware of their limitations towards their requests for their financial needs and wants. Expectations or financial outlook is therefore not clear for all parties involved. Queue marshals have minimal understanding of what is

expected of them from family members' visa versa. A sexual limitation from absent husbands has also been stated as a major challenge and an embarrassment to mention in an interview for Mrs. Duduzile Ndlovu in our interview. Multi-tasking that is evident at the taxi ranks when observing queue marshals is clearly non-existing when it comes to juggling work and family demands/responsibilities. It is also interesting to note that, while queue marshals' spend most of their time at the taxi ranks the rest of their time spent at home is usually for eating, bathing and sleeping. There is never enough time to socialize with family members as a result the people they interact with at the ranks can be viewed as family knowing more about them than their actual family members back home hence the concept 'family members' can be understood in different ways in this research study. It's also interesting to note that, while queue marshals appear confident in their role and function within the taxi ranks the same confidence is lacking in the home front. And while the spirit of ubuntu is evident, the patriarchal male dominance that exists and is evident within the taxi ranks/industry is almost absent, broken down or altered in the homes of queue marshals. The constructed biological gender roles are thus altered in the households of queue marshals with their female spouses assuming their 'privileged' patriarchal roles/responsibilities.

And while queue marshals as well as their spouses understand that they work under the informal sector "ibisinisi lomuntu omunyama leli" (meaning: "this is a black man's business") they nonetheless desire government's intervention in securing them with better working conditions as well as salary payment. Ntate Sma says "uR5.00 akusi imali ongaphila ngayo" (meaning: "R5.00 is not money you can support yourself with"). This proves that despite the queue marshals' hard work in keeping the taxi ranks in order they are under paid, it is unjustifiable why ntate Sam earns less than R1000 a month while he has 15 years of work experience. Had the queue

marshals been employed in a formal sector they would at least be protected by the labour laws of the country and be free from exploitation.

Slie and Mrs. Ndlovu state that their wish is for government/taxi associations to assist them in financing their children's tertiary fees once they complete grade 12 especially since "obaba babo bavuka ekuseni kakhulu, bebuye late only to get paid imali encane" (meaning: the fathers wakes up very early and comes back very late and yet they are under paid"). Slie states that she would appreciate it if government intervened in order to secure their spouses with pension funds, permanent working conditions/contracts amongst other benefits enjoyed by those working in the formal sector. Mrs. Ndlovu mentions a tertiary loan from taxi associations that will pay at least 50% of their children's fees as necessary especially for queue marshals who have been working for the taxi industry for more than ten years (like her husband).

Ntate Sam (in an emotional state) mentions that "mangifa akekho noyedwa ozoza ezongingcwaba ngoba kuyabiza ukuya eGiyani kodwa besengisebenza isikhathi eside eGoli. Bazocabanga ukuthi bengiyisigebengu" (meaning: when I die none of my colleagues will come to my funeral because Giyani is very far and expensive but I have been working in Johannesburg for a long time. Instead people from my hometown will think I was a criminal stealing in Johannesburg"). Nevertheless, queue marshals like all parents only wish what's best for their children and their future. This therefore means, "...ukubekezela kulomusebenzi. Akufani kunokuthi ngilale ngingadlile, akufani kunokuthi izingane zami zingawutholi u8kg wempuphu nekhlabishi" (meaning: "being patient in this line of work. It's better than sleeping without eating, better than not buying an 8kg of mealie mealie and cabbages) (virtues of ubuntu). Ntate Sam (heartbroken) expresses that, his only wish now, is that one of his daughters may never marry, find a good job and build his and his wife's legacy where he failed to accomplish this due to his

employment choice. It is also worth noting that, while this research study had hoped to interview boy children of queue marshals in order to understand how they cope without male guidance (their fathers/brothers/uncles), it was not possible due to scheduling as well as relocation.

6.6 **Conclusion**

The most important role queue marshals' can ever play outside the taxi ranks is within their households. It is interesting to note that despite the role and function queue marshals possesses within the taxi ranks that is authoritative as well as organized, queue marshals don't always possess the same authority and control over their households especially when it comes to assuming their 'rightful' duties and responsibility as fathers, older brothers and disciplinarians (a patriarchy of the household). Many women whose husbands, fathers, brothers etc have become queue marshals find themselves assuming the 'forbidden' (denied) biologically constructed gender roles by society as heads of households responsible for order, discipline and authority in their homes. Women therefore play multiple roles as nurturers (femininity-female construct/gender role) as well as the law enforcers (male constructed gender role) making the 'absent' queue marshals the favored parent/family member since their never around. And while it seems like all the parties involved have come to some form of understanding and acceptance of this living arrangement (a spirit of *tolerance* a characteristic of ubuntu) it is quite evident that most women miss their male figures and would appreciate having more time to spend with them while helping in grooming their male children in becoming better/responsible men in the future (Asiyanbola, 2005: 6). It is therefore evident that the stereotypical gender roles that society has constructed (submissive/kitchen based women and patriarchal men as heads of the household) do not hold within the lives of queue marshals and their households. Women play a much dominant role as mothers, fathers as well as 'breadwinners' (at times) in order to help keep their

households in order (as is the case with ntate Sam's wife in Limpopo). The latter, being biologically forbidden/denied in studies around masculinity (patriarchy) as well as femininity (the empowerment of women in all domains).

And while queue marshals do try to make the most of the time they spend with their families here (Johannesburg) and back home (KZN, Mpumalanga, and Limpopo etc.) it is evident that family members would rather prefer to have them physically home rather than have them send money. It is also worth noting, as mentioned above, that the stereotypical gender roles that we have become accustomed to do not apply when it comes to queue marshals and the way their households are run. Men in these households have therefore to a certain extent become undermined by their male children as heads of the home and in disciplining them although cultural practices/norms oblige them to do so. This does not however, mean that they have lost all respect for them.

In some households the queue marshal members have become more favored due to their absence and lack of authority. Queue marshal members have become somewhat 'visitors' within their own homes to be enjoyed for that time frame (Easter and Christmas holidays). Mothers have to a certain extent become unfavourable in the households, the 'monsters' and most feared in these homes due to the fact that they are left to reprimand unruly children. The irony in the latter is that while Zulu men pride themselves in their customs and traditional practices (patriarchy) as 'man and the head of the home' women have now assumed the very roles they have been socially denied and subjected to.

Regardless, it does seem that some cultural practices/customs especially amongst Zulu queue marshals have been maintained. For instance, most Zulu queue marshals unlike the Sotho

speaking queue marshals have been reluctant in disclosing how much they earn when interviewed. The latter, seems to be the same when it comes to their wives/girlfriends who are in the dark about how much their spouses earn as a result making it hard/frustrating to organize household finances that is predominantly determined by absent male figures who have little knowledge about the daily expenses of their homes. This is largely due to the fact that, Zulu men believe that “umuntu wesifazane akamele azi ukuthi umuntu wesilisa uholo malini” (meaning: “a woman should not be allowed to know how much a man earns”). An example of the reinforcement of patriarchal structures within the household by male figures (husbands). And while patriarchal structures/male dominance is evident and inevitable within the taxi industry, queue marshals (particularly those living in Johannesburg from other areas) seem to have lost their dominance (to a certain extent) within their households as a result of the altered socially constructed gender roles. Queue marshals living or cohabitating with spouses have however, managed to maintain their ‘rightful’ male gender roles (masculinity).

Nevertheless, this chapter has therefore attempted to shed light on queue marshals as people working to better themselves and the lives of their families’ in an industry that offers no guarantees. It is clear that queue marshals sacrifice a lot (particularly those living in Johannesburg because of work away from home) in order to ensure efficiency within the taxi ranks as well as ensuring mobility for all who depend on taxis as they mode of transportation daily. One can only hope that the occupation held by queue marshals’ can be respected for more than what meets the eye from here on.

CHAPTER SEVEN: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION ON QUEUE MARSHALS AND WHETHER OR NOT THE SPIRIT OF UBUNTU EXISTS IN THE MINIBUS TAXI INDUSTRY.

7.1 Overall observations and conclusion on the socio-economic role and function of queue marshals in the taxi ranks and taxi industry.

The main purpose of this study above all else, has been to make known the socio-economic lives of ‘Queue Marshals’ who form part of the lowest hierarchy (constituent) of the taxi industry. In doing this, this research study hoped to show a different side of the same coin of the minibus taxi industry that has been predominantly identified/idolized by society as violent and male dominated (patriarchal) with ‘rude’ and reckless taxi drivers (Sauti 2006). And while this may be true, this research study on queue marshals reveals to us that within this idolized violent minibus taxi industry people of integrity and humanity actually do exist in this socially stereotyped industry and thus reveals a social order of ubuntu unknown to society about the taxi industry. Queue marshals therefore presents a different worldview (side) of the same coin (violent taxi industry) that possesses humble and down-to-earth people who are often not acknowledged in academic writing (and generally, when speaking about the taxi industry) due to the fact that little or rather close to nothing has been written about the very existence of queue marshals who play an important role/function in bringing about effective mobility in this industry.

This research study therefore shows us that while the taxi industry can be said to be violent and male dominated amongst other factors, a different side to this industry exists that possesses a

sense of ubuntu that can only be acknowledged (understood) by acknowledging the socio-economic existence of the queue marshal who occupies the lowest hierarchy in the minibus taxi industry. This therefore means that the limitation or rather the lack of knowledge on queue marshals and the overemphasis on the recognition of reckless 'rude' taxi drivers as the image that constitutes this industry and makes it appear solely violent, hinders society's acknowledgement of ubuntu that exists within this space and makes up the other worldview of the same coin. This research study is thus important as it brings forth uniqueness to how the taxi industry is perceived by society without taking anything away from what we already know about this industry. As a result, this study is indeed a pioneering research study because conventional studies on the taxi industry do not address the socio-dynamics of queue marshals lived experiences as key players in the functioning and success of the minibus taxi industry. And while the findings of this research study cannot be collaborated with similar comparable studies on the taxi industry (as already identified in the literature review), queue marshals socio-economic dynamics represents a spirit of ubuntu that is found in this industry unknown to society (till now).

It therefore goes without saying that the role played and occupied by queue marshals is central to the functioning and success of the taxi industry by ensuring effective mobility within the taxi ranks for all commuters as well as taxi drivers whose 'daily bread' depends on this interaction. This success is however, only attainable through the marshals persona that reveals and reinforces a sense of ubuntu within the taxi industry.

Queue Marshals are therefore people with dreams and hopes in creating a better future for themselves and their loved ones. Queue marshals are also quite sensitive although their exterior might fool you. While some queue marshals expressed that queue marshalling has not always

been their first ‘choice’, it has however, become a ‘treasured’ source of their livelihoods. Queue marshals pride themselves in the work they occupy and in knowing that they contribute in helping taxi drivers transport future leaders daily. The safety of each passenger that they come across is thus close to their hearts. As a result, ensuring road worthy taxis is of great importance to them. Constant communication between the taxi driver, the commuter and the marshal, like most relationships, is paramount in sustaining the success of the taxi industry evident through the spirit of ubuntu expressed in the shared relationship of *brotherhood and teamwork* between queue marshals and taxi drivers alike (Broodryk 2006). It’s however, interesting to note that, despite the pleasure queue marshals embody from this line of work, they don’t share the same enthusiasm as taxi drivers in making their story known. Being ‘reserved’ and somewhat ‘invisible’ has almost become a normal part of their very existence. It is as a result, of the latter, that I hope this research will help shed light into the socio-economic lives, role and function of one of the most ‘influential’ people found within South Africa’s taxi ranks.

It was furthermore, important during this research study to ensure that all the participants involved were comfortable with capturing their responses in an audio tape recorder while notes were jotted down for those who felt uncomfortable. I also had to be careful not to offend any of my participants particularly the older generation of queue marshals, when asking certain questions (e.g. background information and their life aspirations) that might have come across as offensive. I came to a realization that queue marshals were reluctant in disclosing too much information concerning the taxi associations they are employed under. For instance, while interviewing Fezile, he mentions how Faradale Taxi Association will soon become a business and then quickly stopped himself adding that “kodwa ke akusi’ndaba yami leyo” (meaning: “but that’s none of my business”). I further realized that queue marshals don’t stress themselves with

information that might affect them in the near future. For instance, when asking one of the queue marshals from Bree how they think the recapitalization programme will affect them once (if) approved, his response was “angazi” (meaning: “I don’t know”) without a care in the world. While it may seem like queue marshals have a ‘good’ working relationship with taxi drivers, they appear to thread easily amongst the taxi drivers as if their objective is to please them. The latter, might however, have more to do with the taxi drivers role in identifying, hiring and contributing to firing ‘underperforming’ queue marshals.

It was also important for me as a researcher to know the person (queue marshals, commuters) first before interviewing them about the work they occupy within the taxi industry or the relationship commuters have with the marshals. Whilst I had anticipated that coming into the rank as a researcher (female) and not a commuter would have been challenging it was quite the contrary. Queue marshals managed to make me feel welcomed in an environment that smells and look forsaken. It appears that people who are employed (as well as self-employed) in Bree taxi rank have become accustomed to inhaling the various odors (urine, feces, polluted water etc) coming in from all directions. Before conducting this research topic I was curious about the lack of female queue marshals in Johannesburg taxi ranks in fact, I automatically assumed that it was as a result of the patriarchal nature of this industry that female queue marshals were not visible however, while at Bree taxi rank I realized that it is unlikely for women to work under such unhygienic and unhealthy habits that consumes this space (as a lady myself I know that cleanliness is next to godliness). Bree taxi rank is by far the least hygienic place I have ever come across thus far. As a result I made sure that I avoided drinking liquids while on site in order to avoid using the restroom. I now understand why I haven’t come across any female queue marshals in this industry thus far. The demanding long working hours (standing) can also be part

of the reason why females don't take up this occupation as a result of their biologically constructed gender roles by society.

Nonetheless, the taxi rank has also become a hotspot for business transactions between commuters and street vendors found selling various goods inside and outside Bree taxi rank. While queue marshals are allowed to take sick leaves among other leaves, no formal benefits exist for this kind of employment. 'Patience', 'humility', 'friendliness', 'respect' are some of the characteristics that queue marshals need to possess in order to survive in this emotionally demanding job. These characteristics reassert the spirit of ubuntu that queue marshals ought to possess and that they display in their daily function within the taxi ranks. What was furthermore, interesting to observe about the queue marshals was the manner in which they conduct themselves. Their demeanor never changed not once, whether I was there to observe or ask them questions it remained the same. Instead, I had to stop recording at times in order to allow them to assist commuters who needed help. While at times they would just rush off to help a commuter in need without asking me to stop the interview. It's also worth mentioning that most of the interviews conducted were recorded in isiZulu as preferred by the participants of this research study. Nevertheless, while queue marshals understand that they are vulnerable ('easy targets') in the work they occupy they appreciate every passing moment spent helping commuters and taxi drivers. And although, they understand the value they hold in this work, queue marshals are not boastful about being the heart of this whole institution (taxi industry) instead when asked if they considered themselves more important than the taxi drivers' they comment "sonke sibalulekile" (meaning: "we are all equally important"). A true reflection of what it means to have the spirit of ubuntu (*equality/modest*) as defined by Broodryk (2006).

Keeping track of the numbers taxi drivers as well as queue marshals have received a day from potential girlfriends is the order of each day. During off peak hours taxi drivers and queue marshals play “umrabaraba” (game played like chess) as a way of entertaining themselves, when they are not playing “umrabaraba” they spend their time picking on attractive women, making remarks about commuters’ outfits and couples passing through the taxi rank becomes the next game played. I too, became prey of this game once I was done with my research study, it was so funny. While no sign or code (secret) language exists amongst queue marshals and commuters, a code language is evident between marshals and taxi drivers (mostly communicated through license number plates of other taxi drivers). It’s also worth noting that, a closer network exists in taxi ranks that are much smaller in size than bigger taxi ranks. For instance, I observed that in Meyerton taxi rank taxi drivers and queue marshal share a closer bond when compared to Bree taxi rank that hosts about 500 or more taxi drivers including queue marshals. What’s also evident in these two taxi ranks is that no ‘formal’ introductions need to be made in Meyerton taxi rank whereas the contrary exists in Bree. As a result, bigger taxi ranks tend to be busier and thus increase the chances of violence and crimes placing lives of queue marshals at risk. For instance, Bongani (Meyerton queue marshal) expressed that ‘they are not at risk of taxi wars amongst other violent activities’ experienced in other taxi ranks’. As a result, theft hardly occurs in Meyerton rank while that’s not the case in Bree taxi rank. Lastly, when comparing the functioning of Bree taxi rank with that of Meyerton taxi rank, I realized that while Bree is mostly busy from around 5:00am till 10:00am, Meyerton taxi rank only starts getting busy from around 9:00am till 18:30pm. As a result, queue marshals from Meyerton taxi rank only arrive to work at around 6:00am-6:45am in the morning. It’s worth mentioning that while this research was mainly focused on Bree taxi rank as a research field I felt it would only be appropriate to analyze

queue marshals from Meyerton taxi rank where necessary in order to draw comparisons and thus making sure that my observations of queue marshals function is the same on both taxi ranks.



Figure 20: Meyerton taxi rank during peak hour.

Furthermore, at the Meyerton taxi rank my presence was not as questionable as in Bree taxi rank where Siyabonga* (my initial gatekeeper) ensured my safety during the early stages of my research before I became ‘family’ (part of the furniture). At first, the taxi drivers from Meyerton taxi rank thought I was Bongani’s girlfriend and I did not dispute this assumption. This however, did not last long since I had to start interviewing various people. Overall, everyone at both these taxi ranks was very accommodative and cooperative. So accommodative that at times queue marshals and taxi drivers would buy me lunch or juice particularly when the heat was unbearable (once again revealing the *caring* virtues of ubuntu).

I further observed that unlike the taxi drivers who are able to take ‘power naps’ during off peak hour’s queue marshals from Bree taxi rank cannot be found napping on the job. The latter is

however, not the case for queue marshals found in Meyerton taxi rank who I have found napping on a couple of occasions. Queue marshals' work also requires him to stand all day long only resting his feet when he is on a lunch break, when taxis and commuters are not around and when going to the restroom. Some taxi drivers have also emphasized the necessity of queue marshals in this form of employment stating that 'had it not been for the queue marshals they would have never been able to avoid the "popes" (meaning: the police or traffic officers) and accidents on the routes.

It's also worth noting, that some of the queue marshals interviewed in this research obtained grade 12 higher certificates but were unable to further their studies due to financial constraints while others found themselves without a job and resolved to become queue marshals. It's furthermore, interesting to note that, queue marshals as well as taxi drivers were far more relaxed answering questions when I was not recording them however, as soon as the recorder began taping they froze as a result notes were jotted down with some of the participants while others didn't mind talking while being recorded.

Queue marshals are also more trusted by commuters than taxi drivers in ensuring the safety of their lost/misplaced luggage's in between taxi rides amongst other personal belongings. I also observed how commuters sometime take advantage of the queue marshals' kindness for granted by sending them to buy water or cold drinks from nearby tuck shops while the passenger relaxes in the taxi. This behavior exceeds the queue marshals' job description while expressing what Cilliers (2010: 3) identifies as the 'dark side' of ubuntu. Some queue marshals can however, be seen taking advantage of their job description by allowing beautiful female commuters cut the line to the front as a way of impressing them. Unfortunately, they don't always get away with such behavior.

It's also worth noting that, when I first arrived to interview Fezile he was with his rank manager Bra Shedi, while I had anticipated that this would be problematic the contrary occurred. In fact, Bra Shedi was very instrumental in this interview as he provided insightful information and even offered to answer any further questions I may have. While there are no 'formal' benefits for the queue marshals like the taxi drivers, I do hope that in the near future the managers of the taxi industry will begin to reconsider this phenomenon especially when one considers the fact that this industry is exempted from paying tax. People (queue marshals and taxi drivers) who work in such a dangerous industry deserve to be taken care of 'formally' as the very existence and success of the taxi industry depends on their lives. Furthermore, queue marshals need to be offered better working conditions (e.g. some form of shelter for those cold winter days and nights, chairs, a kitchen etc) since most of their day and night is spent on the taxi ranks unlike the taxi drivers who's always on the road or taking a 'power nap' in 'his taxi' (taxi drivers form of shelter). Overall, I observed that queue marshals take their work very seriously as any other employee would their work. The rank has therefore become the heart and life of most queue marshals who spend most of their time in this space establishing new relations daily. Being a queue marshal is therefore a job as any other form of employment that puts bread on loved ones table. The governments lack in securing employment for all especially within the formal sector has thus resulted in the creation/emergence of the informal sector that caters to all those hoping to better themselves and their loved ones. The latter, includes the queue marshal who without the structured informal minibus taxi industry (taxi ranks) would not be the success it has become since its inception in 1977.

It is also worth noting that, the stereotypical gender roles/structures (patriarchy, masculinity, femininity etc.) that we have become accustomed to when it comes to household duties do not

apply when it comes to queue marshals and the way their households are run. For instance, women (their wives, girlfriends and mothers) have assumed men defined roles in these homes. Men in these households have therefore to a certain extent become undermined by their male children as heads of the home and in disciplining them. This does not however, mean that they have lost all respect for them. In some households the queue marshal members have become more favored due to their absence. Queue marshal members have somewhat become ‘visitors’ within their own homes to be enjoyed for that time frame. Moms have therefore become the ‘monsters’ and the most feared in these homes. The irony in this is that while Zulu men pride themselves in their customs and traditional practices as ‘man and the head of the home’ while women have now assumed the very roles they have been denied and subjected to by the biological construction of gender roles.

Regardless, it does seem that some cultural practices/customs especially amongst Zulu queue marshals have been maintained. For instance, most Zulu queue marshals unlike the Sotho speaking queue marshals have been reluctant in disclosing how much they earn when interviewed. The latter, seems to be the same when it comes to their wives/girlfriends who are in the dark about how much their spouses earn as a result making it hard/frustrating to organize household finances that is predominantly determined by absent male figures who have little knowledge about the daily duties of their homes. This is largely due to the fact that, Zulu men believe that “umuntu wesifazane akamele azi ukuthi umuntu wesilisa uholo malini” (meaning: “a woman should not be allowed to know how much a man earns”). This therefore, reinforces what we know about the nature of patriarchy that is evident amongst most men especially in the private domain. It’s also interesting to note that, while queue marshals appear confident in their

role and function within the taxi ranks the same confidence is lacking in the home front where structures of patriarchy in the form of masculinity is altered.

7.2 **Overall conclusion**

The lives of queue marshals are indeed very dynamic while at first value it may seem direct and simplistic. I can only hope that this research study has been able to meet its intended objective and purpose in understanding the socio-economic lives of queue marshals within Bree Street taxi rank that reveals the spirit of ubuntu that constitutes the other side of the same coin of the minibus taxi industry that is not only violent in nature. I further hope that we as commuters, taxi drivers as well as passerby's can begin to show queue marshals the well deserved respect and patience (sense of ubuntu) they offer each day in ensuring that our lives are made easier daily. It is as a result of this quality (ubuntu) found in queue marshals that the taxi industry has thus continued to reach greater heights as one of the most successful black owned transportation sector/system.

APPENDIX A: Informed Consent Form

Investigating: what are the terms of employment of queue marshals in Bree Street taxi rank, Johannesburg.

You are being asked to participate in a research project investigating ways in which queue marshals function and contribute to the overall mobility of the taxi industry.

This research is interested in understanding the work queue marshals occupy within the ranks and whether or not this is considered as labour and if so, why are they ‘invisible’? It is hoped that the results of this research will help shed some light on the role, function and contribution of the queue marshals within the taxi industry especially for those interested in this project in future. Your participation in this research may also help to clarify and understand the challenges and conditions faced by queue marshals daily. Although you may not directly benefit from this research, results from the study may be useful for future studies on your lived experiences.

If you agree to participate, you will do this voluntarily. If at any time during this study you wish to withdraw your participation, you are free to do so without prejudice. If you have any questions prior to your participation or at any time during the research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

AUTHORIZATION: I have read the above and understand the nature of this study. I understand that by agreeing to participate in this study I have not waived any legal or human right and that I may contact the researcher at the University of Witwatersrand (Thembekele, +27 82402872) at any time. I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I may refuse to participate or I may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice.

Participant’s signature: Date:

Researcher’s signature: Date:

APPENDIX B: Informal consent form

Due to the low level of education obtained amongst the intended participants of this research, queue marshals and taxi drivers. This research will also focus on informal verbal consent agreements that will take the form of the researcher reading out the consent form to the participants and through a tape recorder, record their agreement to participate in this research project.

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO-TAPING THE INTERVIEW

I _____ Consent to be interviewed by Thembekile Masuku for her study on the intricacies of formality and informality on the taxi industry focusing specifically on the form and function of queue marshals in Bree street taxi rank.

-The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person in this organization at any time, and will only be processed by the researcher.

- The tapes will be securely stored at the University of the Witwatersrand by the researcher's supervisor.

- All tape recordings will be destroyed after the final research report is complete.

- My identity will be protected and no identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The questions addressed in this research aim to deepen the understanding of the function, contribution and role played by queue marshals within the taxi industry at Bree Street. These questions also seek to make the ‘invisible’ employment occupied by queue marshals more visible in its pure nature and in their life experiences. This will be done through a non-probability sampling method of snowballing, quota sampling as well as convenient sampling method interviewing queue marshals, taxi drivers as well as commuters.

1. Queue Marshals

Question may include but not limited to the following:

- 1.1 Tell me about yourself and what your work entails?
- 1.2 How are queue marshals employed?
- 1.3 Who is responsible for the functioning of queue marshals?
- 1.4 How is your salary negotiated, if at all, and do queue marshals have a fixed income wage?
- 1.5 Who came up with the R5.00 rate paid to queue marshals by taxi drivers daily and is it sufficient?
- 1.6 Do queue marshals pay for Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF)?
- 1.7 What are the benefits of doing this type of informal work?
- 1.8 What are the working hours of queue marshals like?
- 1.9 Is the work you do a necessary function to the mobility of the taxi industry and if so, how?
- 1.10 Is there a difference between queue marshals working locally and those working on long distance trips?
- 1.11 What are the risks (possible risks) of being a queue marshal?
- 1.12 How does the persona of queue marshals affect their interaction with commuters and the taxi drivers, if at all?

1.13 Is there pride in the work they occupy?

1.14 Can queue marshals find alternative methods of making income outside this form of employment?

1.15 Is there a link between queue marshals with the formal economy and what is it?

1.16 How many years can one work as a queue marshal?

1. 17 Are queue marshals recognized under the LRA?

1.18 Are there people/individuals pretending to be queue marshals and how does this affect your work, if at all?

1.19 What skills are required for this kind of work?

2. Taxi drivers

2.1_What is the relationship between the taxi drivers and the queue marshals?

2.2 Is the presences of queue marshals within the rank necessary and if so why?

3. Commuters

3.1 What is the relationship between the commuters and the queue marshals?

3.2 is the presences of queue marshals within the rank necessary and if so why?

4. Family members

4.1What are the family members' perception on the employment of queue marshal family members?

4.2 What are some of the challenges they face in the absence of their spouses?

4.3 What is the Queue marshals' opinion on the family dynamics in their absence?

APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Bree street taxi rank is filled with hundreds of different people from all walks of life. These include street vendors selling food, vegetables, and hair products as well as second hand clothing items. These activities are also associated with the informal economy. In this space we also find taxi drivers waiting to transport commuters to their desired destinations, taxi association cars responsible for the different taxis, taxi cleaners and street kids as well as queue marshals who are considered to be the managers of the taxi ranks. Interestingly, however, little or close to nothing has been written about these individuals that form the lowest hierarchy of the taxi industry. The question arises are queue marshals 'invisible' (their informality) and is the work they occupy considered as labour? This research project therefore seeks to make this individual more 'visible' by understanding who he is and what he does (role and function). This is especially important since we find them all over South Africa's taxi ranks and yet when thinking about the taxi industry we only speak of the violence that consumes this space, the informal hand sign gestures used in this space, the medias representation of the taxi industry as well as the unruly taxi drivers behavior but no focus on the queue marshal.

The primary objective of this study is therefore:

1. To analyze and understand the form and function of the queue marshal.
2. To make this 'invisible' individual within the taxi industry known.

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APPENDIX F: RISK PROTOCOL

Bree street taxi rank is overcrowded with people from all walks of life (of different ages, gender, young persons and children) traveling to and from various destinations. This interaction alone can be viewed as a risk factor considering that everyone in this space comes from different backgrounds as well as psychological backgrounds. Crime in this space is therefore one of the problems faced by commuters using this space hence it is important for me to ensure my safety through have and creating close ties with the taxi drivers and the queue marshals who are known for their 'zero tolerance' approach to crime in this space.

Health is also a possible risk factor considering that this space consists of dirty running water from the taxi washing that occurs during the taxi driver's free time. Bree taxi rank is also filled with paper littering amongst other minor factors. As a result there is a very minor possibility of hazards injury occurring (that might require first aid attention) at this location. Although the taxi industry has been identified as a violent space I have been assured by a few (two) gatekeepers of my safety during this (one/two months) plan in undertaking this research. In ensuring my safety, I will further under the informal consent form record the gatekeeper's agreement in offering me protection during the research with the queue marshals.

There is also the possibility of being mugged especially if a camera and a tape recorder will be used. This however, means that I have to be strategic as to where I conduct these interviews and during what time of the day. This therefore means that interviews with the relevant participants will be conducted during the day (12pm-2pm, depending on when the queue marshals get free time) and inside parked taxis.

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