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Malayishas as informal remittance couriers. A case study of Zimbabwean remittance transporters (malayishas) in Central Johannesburg

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DECLARATION

I Phefumula N. Nyoni (298091) **declare that "*Malayishas* as informal remittance couriers. A case study of Zimbabwean remittance transporters *(malayishas)* in Central Johannesburg" is my own work that has never been submitted for examination anywhere. I further declare that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.**

Student signature: P Nyoni. Date…18-06-09.

Supervisor signature: E…Worby……. Date…18-06-09.

DEDICATION

To my mother Lizzie Ngwenya and little sister Fikile.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my supervisor professor Eric Worby for the entire professional and wise support as well as the patience that he displayed in making this work a success. Not forgetting the financial support he rendered during the period.

I would also like to thank Dr Brigitte Bagnol, Dr Kelley Gillepsie, Prof Coplan and all the members of the anthropology department who gave me support during the production of my work. This gratitude is humbly extended to my fellow colleagues and friends for all the support they gave me.

I extend my gratitude to my research assistant Ephraim and the 'Big sister' Precious 'Mancu' for all support and prayers, may God bless you. *Yonke imuli yakoNyoni ngithi ngiyabonga*.

Last but not least I thank the research participants without whose help we could not have the study at all. Thank you very much, *Ngiyabonga kakhulu*.

ABSTRACT

The research is a case study on a group of Zimbabwean remittance transporters who are based in the areas around central Johannesburg. These transporters are popularly known as malayishas. It must be noted that the study took place at the peak of the Zimbabwean economic crisis around the end of 2008, a period that was characterised by a boom in the remittance transportation trade. The methods of data collection used include key informant face to face interviews, focus group discussions and direct observations. The research is focused mainly on assessing the role of trust in the establishment and sustenance of relations in remittance transportation. The utility of the concept is therefore noted and explained in malayisha-client relations as well as between malayishas themselves. The study established that trust is not given but rather negotiated between different parties. The process of negotiating and building trust is not only context specific but it is also long and cannot be rationalized or generalised. The study also established that informal activities such as remittance transportation constitute an important source of livelihood for participants and must therefore not be taken as a mere survival strategy. The separation of formality from informality must not lead to marginalization or downgrading of informality but the two sectors must be viewed as complementary of each other.

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