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Operating in a Man’s World: The Perceptions and Experiences of Female Taxi Drivers in Rustenburg, South Africa

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200728406

Minor Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Johannesburg in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Magister Artium in Industrial Sociology

Supervisor: Prof Cecilia Van Zyl-Schalekamp

Co-supervisor: Ms Letitia Smuts

13 October 2015
DEDICATIONS

This Master’s dissertation is dedicated to three women in my life including Kenalemang Nkete, Itumeleng Nkete and Mrs Harriet Solomon.

To mme, *ke leboga Modimo gore o tlhophile wena gore o be mme wa me, you are the best mother in the whole world. Lerato la gago le boikokobetse jwa go bo ntirile mosadi o ke leng ena gompieno. Mo mathateng a re fitileng mo go ona, o nneile mme le ntate wa me, wa nthega ka dithapelo le madi a mannye o o neng o na le one gore ke kgone go ja, ke apare le gore ke kgone go rutega. Kea go rata. Lekwalo le la Masters le supa maungo a go ba motswadi wa me.*

To my dearest sister, Itumeleng Nkete, when Mme relocated to Klerksdorp, in addition to being a sister, you took a role of being my mother. Thank you for loving me and taking care of me when mme was not around. You fed, clothed and made sure that all my books were covered. Even when I began with university, you never stopped taking care of me. *Kealeboga.*

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My sincerest gratitude to my family, Hlomphile Nkete and brother-in law Thabiso Malebatsane, Bruce Modise, McTavish Makubung, Suping Tau, Ntate mogolo Bheki Nkete, Mme Mpewi Semoli, Mbulelo and Xolani Solomon, ITumeleng and Lethlhogonolo Moswane, Nqobile Sipamla, Roxanne Faltian, Ofentse Gumbi and John Kola. Thank you for all your support and prayers. I need to make a special mention of ‘my BIG TEN’, Mme Tebogo Mathe, Aunt Elizabeth Moswane, Mme Nombulelo Mokiti, Mama Paula Gumbi, Mama Sibongile Labase, Ausi Lena Makena, Dr Edith Kekana-Phaswana, Prof Grace Khunou, and Dr Malehoko Tshoedi. You are my role models, ke lebogegela thotloetso le lerato jwa lona, tota ke nnete fa go thwe Modimo ga a fe ka letsogo. I would also like to thank Dr Lauren Graham and Mrs Tessa Hochfeld for their encouragement and support during this project. To my friends Memory Mphaphuli, Thalefang Mthombeni, Agobakwe Ndomeane, Siphesihle Tshabalala, Samuel Akwasi Gyampa Amoako, Dr Palesa Sekhejane, Dr Mondli Hlatswayo, Siphele Mgcwangu, and Gale Lebotse. Thank you for your support and encouragement. Finally I would like to thank my husband Prof Sabelo J Ndlovu-Gatsheni for his support, encouragement and excellent input in this project.

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Setswana se re moja morago ke Kgosi, I thank all the women from Rustenburg who participated in this study, it could have not been possible without you. Ke leboga nako e le ntiretseng yona go bua le nna, la ntshepa ka go mpulela mantlo a lona gore ke bue le lona ka maphelo a lona le tiro e le e dirang. Le fa e le gore ga ke a ledirela sepe go bontsha maleboga a me go lona, ke solefa gore puso fa ebala tiro ee, e tla dira sengwe go tokofatsa maphelo a lona le go lethega mo kgwebong ya lona. Kelebogile go menagane.
DECLARATION

Declaration

I declare that the minor dissertation for the degree, MA in Sociology hereby submitted to the University of Johannesburg, apart from the help recognised, is my own work and has not been submitted to any other university.

Patricia Pinky Nkete

13 October 2015
## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSIR</td>
<td>Council for Scientific and Industrial Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEAR</td>
<td>Growth, Employment and Redistribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAPT</td>
<td>International Association of Public Transport</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCPC</td>
<td>National Conference Preparatory Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>NLTB</td>
<td>National Land Transport Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTACO</td>
<td>Northern Region Taxi Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>National Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTA</td>
<td>National Taxi Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFLWHAC</td>
<td>Ontario Federation of Labour and the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROTACOS</td>
<td>Provincial Taxi Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANTA</td>
<td>South African National Transport Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANTACO</td>
<td>South African National Taxi Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRP</td>
<td>Taxi Recapitalisation Policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Current Taxi Sectorial Determination

Appendix B Profile of Participants

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Map showing the Northern Region Taxi Council
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedications i

Acknowledgements ii

Declaration iii

List of Abbreviations iv

List of Tables and figure v

Abstract vii

CHAPTER ONE: EXPLORING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE TAXI DRIVERS IN SOUTH AFRICA 1

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 Background on the South African minibus taxi industry 2

1.3 Problem statement and study rationale 6

1.4 Structure of the report 9

CHAPTER TWO: WOMEN WORKING IN TRADITIONALLY MALE-DOMINATED INDUSTRIES 11

2.1 Introduction 11

2.2 Unpacking gender and gender inequality 12

2.2.1 Gender in the African Context 17

2.3 Gendered Organisation Theory and Organisational Culture 20

2.4 Women in the Workplace: An International and South African reflection 27

2.5 Black women and the South African labour market 34

2.6 The reality of the taxi industry in the South African context 37

2.7 Black feminist thoughts and post-colonial theories on intersectionality 42
### CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Introduction 47
3.2 Aims and objectives of the study 47
3.3 Research site 47
3.4 Research design 49
3.5 Access 51
3.6 Sampling techniques 53
3.7 Sample 54
3.8 Qualitative methods: semi-structured interviews and observations 54
3.8.1 Semi-structured interviews 54
3.8.2 Observations 57
3.9 Data analysis 58
3.10 Ethical considerations 59
3.11 Self-reflexivity 60
3.12 Strengths and limitations of the study 62
3.13 Conclusion 64

### CHAPTER FOUR: THE EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE TAXI DRIVERS

4.1 Introduction 65
4.2. Reasons for joining the taxi industry 65
4.3 Challenges faced by female taxi drivers 67
4.3.1 Striking balance between working odd hours and family responsibilities 70
4.3.2 Gendered spaces in the taxi industry 76
Appendix B: Information of the participants 113

Appendix C: The structure of the North West Minibus Taxi Industry 115

Appendix D: Requirements to drive a minibus taxi 117
ABSTRACT

The South African taxi industry has traditionally been male-dominated. As a result, society continues to consider it as an exclusively male profession. However, in an era that has witnessed the accelerated emancipation of women through their recruitment in traditionally male dominated industries; the taxi industry is also witnessing the growth, although slow, of female taxi drivers. Through qualitative semi-structured interviews with 13 female taxi drivers and from Rustenburg, and observations it was found that female taxi drivers experience various levels of discrimination and gender inequality in this industry. The study also indicates that women working in male-dominated industries, experience men’s resistance to their presence in the industry. These resistances are experienced through challenges to access and mobility which is also encountered as an unbreakable ‘glass ceiling’ for women; and gender insensitivity in taxi association dynamics. One of the findings of this research is a lack of solidarity among women as they struggle within a male-dominated industry. The report argues that these challenges hamper women’s ability to progress in the industry. In conclusion the report maintains that gender relations in the minibus taxi industry can be understood by grappling with patriarchy entrenched in the industry which is maintained through the established male culture in order to exercise power against women and women’s struggle to transform the working spaces.
CHAPTER ONE: EXPLORING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE TAXI DRIVERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

1.1 Introduction

Transport plays a vital role for people both locally and internationally. This is more so in the contemporary society given that life is experienced in a globalised society with rapidly advancing technology and where everything is fast paced. This fast societal pace demands the quick delivery of goods and services, which are made possible by rail transportation, civil aviation, shipping, freight and motor vehicles. Transport is thus an important basic need for humans as it facilitates access to economic, educational, health and other life opportunities. Although transport is significant for societal functions there are varieties in countries in terms of ‘level of regulatory’, ‘institutional reforms’, ‘operational mechanisms’; and ‘preferred mode of transportation’ (International Association of Public Transport (IAPT): 2008). For instance, in Western countries public transport infrastructure is more advanced and efficient compared to developing countries. According to the IAPT report (2008: 6) transport systems in sub-Saharan Africa remain poorly organised. These obstacles mainly include technical maintenance issues and insufficient and inadequate transport infrastructure (IAPT, 2008: 6).

In South Africa, the most popular modes of public transportation include minibus taxis, buses and trains, with 65% of South Africans travelling by taxis, 20% by bus and 13% by train (Arrive Alive, 2014; International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2003 and Van Schalkwyk, 2009: 3). Even though public transport services ‘have been designed to serve the perceived need to assemble labour from distant suburbs and satellite low-income dormitories, at centralised workplaces’, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) (no date: 1) reports that in recent years, the sector is dominated by the minibus taxis. Statistics South Africa (2013) also found that minibus taxis are the most commonly used public transport in South Africa. In addition, Statistics South Africa (2013:6) reported a general increase in the percentage of households who used taxis between 2003 and 2013. Taxis have increased from 59.9% to 69.0%, buses 16.6% to 20.2% and trains 5.8% to 9.9% (Statistics South Africa, 2013: 6). Even though the South African transportation system ‘for the poor is often depicted through gory pictures of minibus crashes,
bodies of loved ones scattered on our roads’ the Arrive Alive organisation (2014:1) states that ‘the public transportation system represents a model of successful black economic self-empowerment’. The minibus taxi industry is the only sector where blacks control the entire industry through their ownership of the taxi mode of transportation.

There are different kinds of taxis throughout the world and the word ‘taxi’ is used differently across countries. According to Sigurd (2003: 1), in South Africa and African countries, ‘minibus taxis’ refers to the taxis that are small scale compared to bus services and are often unmarked, operating with neither timetable nor formal stops. The South African National Land Transport Bill (NLTB) of 2008 (2008: 11) defines a minibus taxi as a ‘motor vehicle designed to carry legally from nine to 16 seated persons, including the driver’, which conforms to the specifications of the Taxi Recapitalisation Policy (TRP) for a minibus. Thus, for the purpose of this study the term taxi and minibus will be used interchangeably. The NLTB of 2008 (2008: 11) defined the minibus taxi industry in South Africa as ‘an unscheduled public transport service running on specified roads for a fare’.

In the speech delivered at the launch of the South African National Transport Academy (SANTA) in Bloemfontein, the then Minister of Transport, Mr Ndebele (2011) said, ‘the South African taxi industry plays an important role in the economy considering that the majority of South Africans are poor and are dependent on public transport’. According to Arrive Alive (2014: 2) and Sauti (2006: xv) people prefer to use taxis because they are accessible, convenient, run late night services, and pick up and drop off commuters at their homes compared to buses and trains. Taxi fares are also said to be more reasonable than fares for busses and trains (Sauti, 2006). Unlike van Schalkwyk (2009), whose focus was on providing explanations for the fact that nearly 10 years since its inception in 1999, the TRP had not been successfully implemented by the end of 2008. Van Schalkwyk (2009) argues that government subsidises trains and busses annually with R4 billion which makes these modes of transport cheaper as compared to taxis.

1.2 Background on the South African Minibus Taxi Industry

During apartheid era public transport was dominated by the state, through state-run trains and subsidised bus companies (International Labour Organisation (ILO)),
During this period, it was rare to find a black African man with a permit to operate a taxi (ILO, 2003: 8). This was because ‘the apartheid dispensation and planning processes were designed to marginalise and systematically exclude black people from the mainstream economy and economic activities, in this regard the Group Areas Act created a new problem for black people. As a result the need for public transport emerged’ (South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO), 2014:1). Throughout the apartheid era, black South Africans were desperately in need of public transport. Their need for public transport was mainly due to two reasons; the majority of black people were too poor to own motorcars and the apartheid government moved black people far away from the commercial and industrial centres of the country’s cities (ILO 2003: 8). As a result, some black people were removed from easily accessing work opportunities. The minibus taxi industry thus became the transport system predominantly utilised by the black population who travel from townships to urban areas for work.

Van Schalkwyk (2009: 3) asserts that ‘regulating the minibus taxi industry is important since it has grown into being the backbone of the country’s public transport sector’. During the emergence of the South African taxi industry (in the wake of the apartheid government’s policy of economic deregulation initiated between 1970 and 1987) the National Party (NP) government in an effort to maintain political and economic control over black South Africans, initiated various policies and legislation in the transport sector. The policies that were enacted included the 1973 Driesen Commission which established that the taxis were providing services that supplemented the more traditional public transport modes (buses and trains) (Britz, in Van Schalkwyk, 2009:1). According to Van Schalkwyk (2009:1), the then public transports initiated the Road Transportation Act 74 of 1977 which stipulated that applications for taxi permits had to prove that the existing public service was inadequate in the area or along the route for which they applied for a permit. In the absence of state regulation for the minibus taxi industry, groups of operators banded together to form local taxi associations which intervened to regulate loading practices and prices. It highlights the uniqueness and one of the strengths of the industry, that is, a class of entrepreneurs organised and governed themselves regardless of the contradictions of the South African society in general. They continued to be self-organised up until the amendment of the legislation. ‘Legislation was since enacted
to provide for the transformation and restructuring of the national land transport system of South Africa and matters incidental thereto’ (Arrive Alive, 2014).

Therefore the legislation was aimed ‘to create a platform together with government towards the establishment of a united structure representing all formations within the taxi industry’ (SANTACO, 2014). Furthermore, the SANTACO (2014) paper adds that ‘this was done in the form of the MOU between the then South African Taxi Council (SATACO), National Taxi Alliance (NTA), Provincial Taxi Councils (PROTACOS) and government. The structure which was facilitating this process was called the National Conference Preparatory Committee (NCPC) led by government’. Illustrated here was the government’s endeavour to formalise the minibus taxi industry. However, it also touches on the debates of whether the industry is informal or formal which will be discussed in the subsequent chapter. It is argued in this paper that this discussion is important because it adds to the multiple vulnerabilities that female taxi driver’s experience.

When looking at the corporate governance of the South African minibus taxi industry, SANTACO (2014) claims that the industry exercises ‘democratically elected leadership, subscribes to corporate governance principles and standards and does so by following full annual audits and accountability procedures’. Even though SANTACO (2014) sheds some light onto the South African minibus taxi industry by highlighting progress they have made and the challenges they face, the one thing that is missing is a discussion on the everyday interaction and/or experiences of the drivers, especially the female minibus taxi drivers.

Subsequently, the South African Network for Women in Transport (SANWIT) (2007) was established as a result of the need to break existing barriers for entry into the taxi industry and transport sector as a whole and to demystify existing myths. In addition, their mandate was to engage business and government on issues that impact on women’s development in the transport sector, including entrepreneurship. In support of the above argument SANWIT (2007: 7) held a meeting in August 2005 and a wide range of problems and challenges were outlined including the following:

- Transport is a male-dominated environment and the nature of the operations is against women
- Victimisation and discrimination of women (that is, they are set up to fail)
• Funding for training of women is insufficient
• Lack of facilities that will build knowledge of the industry
• Women’s lack of confidence
• The skills shortage amongst women
• Lack of funds or access to assets
• The working environment is not conducive for women
• Balancing responsibilities (that is, home and work)
• Culture, traditions and socialisation
• Men’s insecurities
• The HIV/AIDS pandemic impacts on women’s participation.

The South African taxi industry is made up of three job categories. The first category includes fleet drivers/taxi operators, which refers to drivers who own three or more taxis and employ full-time drivers to operate all their taxis while they concentrate on running their business (Khosa, 1992: 236). Secondly, there are owner-drivers, referring to entrepreneurs who enter the taxi business by driving their own vehicles on a particular route. Usually when owner-drivers have earned enough money from the existing operation, they put down a deposit for the purchase of another vehicle and employ a driver to operate the second taxi (Khosa, 1992: 236). The last category includes taxi drivers, ‘who are defined as employees who has to return a specific target income to the taxi owner each day and is paid according to how much he/ (she) makes’ (Khosa, 1992: 236).
Table 1: Current Taxi Sectorial Determination

Table 1: Minimum wages for employees in the Taxi Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Categories</th>
<th>Minimum rate for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014</th>
<th>Minimum rate for the period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015</th>
<th>Minimum rate for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Hourly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers</td>
<td>R 2643.47</td>
<td>R 610.08</td>
<td>R 12.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin workers</td>
<td>R 2643.47</td>
<td>R 610.08</td>
<td>R 12.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank marshals</td>
<td>R 2113.11</td>
<td>R 487.68</td>
<td>R 10.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers not elsewhere specified</td>
<td>R 1848.97</td>
<td>R 426.72</td>
<td>R 8.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minimum wages increased by CPI (excluding owners equivalent rent) as released by STATSSA six weeks prior to the increment date (5.9%) + 2% = 7.9%.

Minimum wages increased by CPI (excluding owners equivalent rent) as released by STATSSA six weeks prior to the increment date (6.2%) + 1.5% = 7.7%.

CPI (excluding owners equivalent rent) as released by STATSSA six weeks prior to the increment date, plus 1.5%.

Table adapted from the SANTACO presentation 2014

The taxi drivers are paid in one of four ways. For example, some drivers hand over a fixed percentage of the week’s takings to the owner and keep the rest, whereas others are paid according to what is called a ‘wage plus system’. The latter means that they receive a basic wage and they take a percentage of the takings to the owner and keep the rest. Other drivers hand all the takings to the owner and receive a regular wage. Finally, some drivers keep the takings of one day in the week, and give the takings from all the other days to the owner. Even though taxi drivers are paid by their employers (ILO 2003: 5); the ILO (2003) and Sauti (2006) assert that taxi drivers are generally paid low wages. Table 1 shows examples of what the wages ranges from.

1.3 Problem statement and study rationale

The taxi industry in South Africa emerged in the wake of the apartheid government's policy of economic deregulation initiated in 1987 (International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2003; Sauti, 2006). The Van Breda Commission of Inquiry (1977) into the Road Transportation Bill found that South Africa ‘had reached a stage of economic and industrial development which enabled it to move towards a freer competition in
transportation’. The Commission’s findings reflected a shift in economic policy that ‘resulted in generalised deregulation, commercialisation and privatisation’. As a result, the majority of the black population became reliant on taxis to travel from rural to urban areas to work. ‘From the early 1980s onwards, taxi operators began using larger ‘kombi’ minibuses that could carry up to 15 passengers. Until formal deregulation in 1987, such taxis were defined as illegal’ (Arrive Alive, 2014). The ‘minibus’ taxi is, thus, a common form of public transport in contemporary South Africa and is still mostly used by commuters from working class black communities. The South African taxi industry consists of approximately 150 000 minibus taxis and 185 000 workers (ILO, 2003: 5 and Arrive Alive, 2014). The ILO (2003:5) found that within the taxi industry in South Africa, very few people are self-employed (own taxis). Arrive Alive (2014) found that there were about 20 000 employers and 200 000 taxi drivers.

The largest cohort of workers in the South African minibus taxi industry is black men (Arrive Alive, 2014 and ILO, 2003: 5, Mahlangu, 2002). Women are predominantly absent in the industry, and when they are present, they exist in the margins of the minibus taxi industry. Less than 2% of employees in the industry are women and many of them carry out the administrative work for the taxi associations (Arrive Alive, 2014, Barrett, 2003: xi and ILO, 2003:5). However, in an era that has witnessed accelerated female emancipation and recruitment in traditionally male-dominated industries, there has been an observable, be it small, presence of female taxi drivers on the road. This presence suggests that the masculine domination of the minibus taxi industry is being challenged to some degree. In addition, women’s presence in the taxi industry also suggests the fluidity of gender roles. Gender roles are fluid in the sense that it ‘reflects individual’s current context and socio-historical cohort’ (Frable, 1997: 62). In other words, female taxi drivers’ presence in the taxi industry proves that taxi driving is not a masculine job as it has historically been but something that women are capable of doing as well.

Most local literature on women in the informal sector and in precarious work tends to focus on the mining, food retail, and the footwear and clothing industries (Kenny, Mosoetsa and Van der Westhuizen, 2005 and Ralushai, 2003); as a result little is known about female taxi drivers in South Africa. Again, most literature that focuses on the taxi industry in particular concentrates on the history of the taxi industry, taxi
violence, the taxi recapitalisation policy, accessibility of transport for women residing in the rural areas and disabled people, trade unions and organising in the taxi industry, ways to improve the taxi industry, road safety and male taxi drivers’ behaviour and recently the condition and family life of taxi drivers (see Arrive Alive, 2014; Barrett, 2003; Bonner, 2006; Boudreaux, 2006; Ferreira, 2010; Govender and Allopi, 2006: 100; Khosa, 1992; Mmadi, 2013; Sauti, 2006 and Van Schalkwyk, 2009). There, thus, exists a gap in literature on the day-to-day experiences of female taxi drivers in the South African context.

The gap in knowledge on the experiences of female taxi drivers suggests that the minibus taxi industry was initially never structured to include women. In his doctoral thesis of the Taxi Recapitalisation policy in South Africa, Van Schalkwyk (2009:9) stated that the underrepresentation of women became evident to him when he came across only one female taxi-owner after visiting a number of minibus taxi ranks in the Western Cape, North-West, and Gauteng provinces. Another confirmation of this gap in literature is the fact that a 1997 study by Khosa is the only study which addresses specifically female taxi drivers in South Africa (see Khosa, 1997). Apart from Khosa’s study, there are only newspaper articles and an Internet blog called City Search Blog that focuses on female taxi drivers, which will be discussed later in the literature review chapter. The ensuing study aims to fill this gap in literature by bringing the experiences of female taxi drivers to the fore.

The significance of the study lies in the contribution it seeks to make to studies on male-dominated industries, particularly in the informal sector, and precarious work and it will do so by providing an understanding of the lived experiences of female taxi drivers and the challenges they face on a daily basis within the South African taxi industry. The study also aims to have an influence on transport policies in order to understand the issues female taxi drivers grapple with, thus, making sure that the minibus taxi industry is a safe working environment for them.

This study explored the following research question: What are the perceptions and experiences of female taxi drivers in Rustenburg, South Africa?

To answer this research question, the following aims were identified:
• To investigate the challenges female taxi drivers face in the minibus taxi industry.

• To inquire into the kind of strategies female taxi drivers employ to cope and survive in the taxi industry.

• To explore how female taxi drivers negotiate their gendered identities within the male-dominated minibus taxi industry.

The qualitative research method was used in order to address these aims and to answer the research question. This report is based on interviews conducted with a total of 13 women including taxi owners, owner drivers, and taxi drivers from Rustenburg.

1.4 Structure of the Report

Chapter 1 establishes the research territory by providing background information on the South African minibus taxi industry, reviewing preliminary literature in the area of women who work as taxi drivers. In addition, due to the fluidity of the concept of ‘taxi’, definitions are provided together with a brief discussion on the major stakeholders in the taxi industry.

Following is Chapter 2, which is divided into five sections. On account of the fact that the study is grounded in feminist theory, the first section of the chapter focuses on unpacking the conceptualisation of gender and the debates on gender inequality. The second section discusses the incorporation of women in the workplace and it does so by taking into consideration both international and South African literature. The third section shifts focus onto black women and the South African labour market.Fourthly, as part of contextualising the research, literature on the minibus taxi industry in South Africa is examined. Finally, the intersectionality perspective, as a tool of analysis, is discussed to illustrate a way in which women in male-dominated industries can be understood or studied.

Chapter 3 discusses the methods and techniques employed in conducting this study. Data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews and observations. Through a snowball sampling technique, 13 female taxi drivers from Rustenburg were interviewed. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse data. Participants
who agreed to be interviewed signed an informed consent form which stipulated clearly the purpose of the study and also assured them confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms. A discussion of reflexivity is included to account for the researcher’s positionality and how it influenced the different stages of the research process.

Chapter 4 is a combination of findings and analysis. It is based on the different themes that arose during the analysis process. Mostly the chapter focuses on the participants’ gendered daily work experiences in the taxi industry. In addition, this chapter highlights the challenges that female taxi drivers face on a daily basis as they navigate the historically male-dominated minibus taxi industry. The Chapter shows the multiple oppressions that female taxi drivers experience as they negotiate their gendered identities.

Finally, the report moves to the conclusion chapter. It provides a critical summary of the study, as well as concluding remarks, followed by recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER TWO: WOMEN WORKING IN TRADITIONALLY MALE-DOMINATED SPACES

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter delineates the theoretical and empirical literature that underpins the study. Since there has not been much attention on female taxi drivers in South Africa, the study will draw on the relevant international and local literature on women employed in male-dominated jobs/occupations. Additionally, in order to provide a rich and deep understanding of the experiences of female taxi drivers working in a traditionally male-dominated environment, the study will draw on the work of Ralushai (2003) and Benya (2009) who focus on the experiences of female mine workers in Rustenburg. Given that the minibus taxi industry structures mirror the structures of trade unions in South Africa, Tshoaedi’s (1999) study on roots of women union activism will provide the study with a theoretical sense on gender and work within the local context. In addition, Chuchu (2012) and Komane’s (2013) studies on female bus drivers, as well as Naysmith and Rubincam’s (2012) examination of female truck drivers, will provide some insight into the experiences of South African women working in traditionally male-dominated industries.

Although the focus of this study is on female taxi drivers, which forms part of the informal sector, it is important to also look at the experiences of women in the formal sector. This is due to the fact that some women’s experiences in the workplace transcend the borders of both informal and formal sector. As a result, this chapter will also examine literature dealing with the experiences of women in the formal sector. It is, however, important to note that although women employed in both formal and informal jobs face almost similar challenges in the workplace because of their gender, race, class, sexuality and nationality, it is imperative to highlight that their experiences differ depending on whether one is employed in the formal or informal sector. The same point is made by Irving (2008: 165) who asserts that women cannot be treated or analysed as a homogenous cohort. The terms formal and informal sector/economy are relative concepts. However for the purpose of the present study, the informal sector will refer to any economic activity that is not taxed.
or monitored by the government. The formal sector would then refer to the opposite of the informal sector.

Given the interest of this study in understanding the experiences of women who work in the taxi industry through an intersectional paradigm (Choo and Ferree, 2009, Collins, 1990, Davis 2008, Merich, 2008 and Reed, 2008), how institutionalised gendered practices impacts these women’s experiences will also be looked at.

This chapter then provides definitions of important concepts and outlines the theoretical framework that informs this study. To do this, the chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section looks at how gender has been conceptualised within feminist theory and focuses on a discussion of women in male-dominated jobs, gender and power, gender and organisation, intersectionality and sexual harassment. The second section contains a detailed discussion of literature on precarious work, gender and work, women in the workplace in South Africa and a history of the South African minibus taxi industry. These discussions are followed by a brief summary and some concluding remarks on the chapter.

2.2 Unpacking gender and gender inequality

Since the study is grounded in feminist theory, gender is a fundamental concept to grapple with and a starting point to studies that aim to give voice to women. Thus, this section is dedicated to unpacking gender and its relation to gender inequality. In the West, before the advent of the feminism movement, gender was rarely discussed within the sociological scholarly debates. The prominent members of the sociological canon focused on political, industrial revolutions, the rise of capitalism and socialism (Ritzer, 2008: 5). This has to do with the fact that society deemed and continues to see masculine and feminine domains as mutually exclusive with women confined to the private sphere and men to the public sphere. It is only after the birth of the feminism movement, when feminists began to question their role in the society, that gender as a concept was given attention. The historical sociological analysis of gender centred on the distinction between biological sex and socially constructed gender which has ‘changed considerably over the last fifty years’ (Richardson, 2008: 3).
According to Richardson (2008: 3) before the advent of the feminist movement, ‘gender referred primarily to what is coded in language as masculine or feminine’. Some of the early scholars who wanted to understand the subordination of women conceptualised gender on the basis of biology. In fact for pre-1960s scholars gender was not a popular term as compared to sex which was ‘conceptualised in terms of binaries: male/female; man/woman; masculine/feminine’ (Richardson, 2008:4). During this era, Richardson (2008:4) posits that male and female were comprehended ‘as opposites, who, despite their differences, complement one another’. Gender was understood as something natural and what one was born with and was located in the body. This means that women’s value and social functions were attributed to biological necessity.

In subsequent years scholars began to critique, deconstruct and reconstruct the concept of gender. According to Beasley (2005:11) gender ‘refers to the social process of dividing up people and social practices along the lines of sexed identities’. Beasley (2005: 12) stated that ‘gender has been variously theorised as personality traits and behaviours that are specifically associated either with women or men, for example women are caring, men are aggressive, to any social construction having to do with the male-female distinction, including those which distinguish female bodies from male bodies; to being thought of as the existence of two different social groups “men” and “women” that are the product of unequal relationships’. In other words gender was perceived and comprehended as a ‘hierarchy that exists in society, where one group of people (men) have power and privilege over another group of people (women)’ (Richardson, 2008: 3; Sharma and Sharma, 2012: 19). Beasley (2005:11) argues that ‘the gendering of social practices may be found, in contemporary Western societies, in a strong association between men and public life and between women and domestic life, even though men and women occupy both spaces’. This links to gender roles that men and women assume. As a result, the hierarchies created through the gendering process are in such a way that ‘one or more categories of sexed identity are privileged or devalued’ (Beasley, 2005: 11). There is a lot of empirical evidence which substantiate that women are devalued and men are privileged as a result of their gender roles (Beasley, 2005, Moen, 1992, Motsei, 2007, Potash, 1995 and Tshoaedi, 1999). This happens at both the macro and micro levels of society.
For instance, the private sphere is a place where society historically believed women should belong, and in some cultures where women are still confined because of their ‘feminine tasks’ such as cooking, taking care of the husband, children and elderly citizens in the household (Acker, 1990, August 2009, Demaiter and Adams, 2009). In addition, even though the private sphere is assumed to be safe and feminine, it is however a space where women are often exposed to domestic violence, rape, illiteracy, and are at times economically abused (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forced (DCAF), 2005 and Payne and Wermeling, 2009). On the contrary the public sphere is presented as masculine and cruel to women and assumed as men's space to fulfil the ‘breadwinner’ or ‘provider’, role. Therefore, when using this dichotomy, the public sphere privileges masculinities and the private sphere supposedly privileges femininities.

Hesse-Biber and Carger (2000: 91) defined gender as ‘determined socially or it is societal meaning assigned to male and female’. Since gender varies across cultures and there is wide latitude in acceptable behaviour for each gender, Hesse-Biber and Carger (2000: 91) adds that ‘each society emphasises particular roles that each sex should play’. In other words, people are born female/male but learn to be girls and boys. Simone de Beauvoir (1973) confirms the above argument and shows in her book how unnatural gender is.

In her book the Second Sex, De Beauvoir (1973: 41) made a distinction between sex and gender and sees gender as ‘the cultural meaning and form that the body acquires, the variable modes of that body’s acculturation’. In other words, gender to De Beauvoir (1973) is not natural rather it has to do with the cultural meaning that the body assumes. In her response to scholars who attributed the values or social functions of women to biological necessity, De Beauvoir (1973: 301) argues that ‘one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’. This conceptualisation of gender refutes the myth that gender is something that we are born with. Butler (1986:35), in her review of the Second Sex, indicates that ‘what we become is not what we already are’, and that ‘gender is dislodged from sex, that is, the cultural interpretation of sexual attributes is distinguished from the facticity or simple existence of these attributes’. In her interpretation of De Beauvoir (1973), Butler (1986: 36), posits that the verb ‘become’ indicates that ‘not only are we culturally constructed but in some sense we construct ourselves’. Butler (1986: 36), in conversation with De Beauvoir,
states that her understanding of the gendering processes ‘to become a woman is a purposive and appropriative set of acts, the gradual acquisition of a skill, to assume a culturally established corporeal style and significance’. This suggests that not only do we become women through the cultural interpretations that our bodies assume but we also proactively participate in constructing our own gender and in some cases perpetuate gender stereotypes. Thus one could then argue that the construction of gender is a two-way street.

Consequently, the contemporary feminists criticised the earlier feminism scholars who perceived gender as universal, assuming that women experience gender in the same way. Thus, they then began to question the conceptualisation of gender. Scholars such as Butler (1990) defined gender as ‘performance’. This means that ‘gender is understood to be continuously produced through everyday practices and social interactions’ (Richardson, 2008: 3). Butler (1990) sees gender as the analogy of acting where one assumes different roles both on the stage and outside the stage. So in other words, gender and the gender roles that people assume are relative, in the sense that they change depending on context and constant social interactions. Bargatta and Moutgamery (2000: 1057) concur with Butler (1990) and elaborate that ‘through interaction with caregivers, socialisation in childhood, peer pressure in adolescence, and gendered work and family roles women and men are socially constructed to be different in behaviour, attitude and emotions’. As a result, gendered social order is based on and maintains these differences. Therefore, Beasley (2005: 11) posits that the hierarchies created through the gendering process are such that ‘one or more categories of sexed identity are privileged or devalued’ and are embedded through the system of patriarchy which results in gender inequality because of the ‘male-centred norms operating throughout all social institutions and become the standard to which all people adhere’ (Lindsey, 2011: 3).

Although her general theorising is said to be controversial, in her book *The Intervention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*, Oyewumi (1997) begins to provide an African critique of the Western universalising of gender. She writes about gender as not being a universal term but rather a Western concept. Oyewumi (1997) documents why and how gender came to be constructed in the Yoruba society of south-western Nigeria and how gender is constituted as a fundamental category in academic scholarship on the Yoruba.
uses the concepts ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ interchangeably. This is because in African context, ‘there is a lack of separation between sex and gender, taking the two as synonyms, where being born male means being born a man and being born female means being born a woman’ (Chauraya, 2012: 254). In contrast, in the European context, the difference between sex and gender is very distinct. Hence the likes of De Beauvoir (1973) assert that ‘one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’. Oyewumi (1997: xii) argues that unlike in the western societies where the ‘physical bodies are always social bodies’, ‘human body need not be constituted as gendered or be seen as evidence for social classification at all times’. Furthermore, Oyewumi (1997) elucidates that ‘in precolonial Yoruba society, body-type was not the basis of social hierarchy: males and females were not ranked according to anatomic distinction’. In a nutshell, Oyewumi (1997) states that in the precolonial Yoruba community, that is, before the infusion of western culture, ‘gender was simply not inherent in human social organisation’. Thus, gender cannot be used as a universal model to account for women’s subordination and oppression because women are not a homogenous group.

Mama (1995: 146), in her discussion on black femininity and subjectivity, poses two overlapping fundamental questions. Firstly she asks ‘what does it mean to say that subjectivity is gendered?’ Secondly, ‘are all the positions that women, or for that matter men, take up gendered; that is to say, specifically ‘feminine’ or ‘masculine’?’ In an attempt to answer Mama’s questions, I concur with Butler (1990) on her definition of gender (as ‘performance’) and argue that all women’s positions are gendered. Women’s positions are gendered from the day a ‘female’ child is born until the day she dies (this applies to men as well). To support this statement, Motsei (2007: 127) in her book, The Kanga and Kangaroo Court states ‘that born being a female is threatening and risky and from the day a female child is born where she is subject to some form of discrimination’. To show how gendered women’s positions are, when they reach adulthood, they are faced with unequal access to educational, political and economic opportunities. However, not only is women’s position gendered, but it is also entangled with class, race, culture, nationality and other socially constructed categories. Grosfogesl (2012: 9) refers to this as ‘heterarchies of power’ which is defined as ‘multiple power hierarchies entangled to each other in complex and historical ways’. For us to understand female taxi drivers in the taxi
industry, we cannot only study gender alone or an inclusive category because gender is overlaid by other variables (as mentioned above).

Historically, women were denied the right to vote and were not allowed to obtain education and were economically dependent on men because of their association with the private sphere. Thus making them vulnerable and disempowered which then resulted in female oppression and exploitation. For a very long time women were subjected to domestic labour. Domestic labour as a concept was developed within the feminist theory to analyse the significance of unpaid work performed by women at home. According to Scott and Marshall (2009: 190), within Marxist feminism, domestic labour is sometimes referred to as ‘reproductive labour’ aimed at re-creating the worker or the capacity to work. Scott and Marshall (2009: 190), in their discussion of the conceptualisation of domestic labour, state that ‘most definitions of domestic labour equate it with housework but some include “emotional work” such as tension management and caring’. In the 1970s feminists’ theories debated and questioned whether domestic labour should be considered productive or unproductive and whether it should be seen as a benefit for men or capitalism or both. Even though there have been debates around the conceptualisation of domestic labour, Scott and Marshall (2009:190) posit that it is important that we recognise domestic labour as providing a fundamental basis for inequality between sexes, entailing some degree of exploitation of women by men.

2.2.1 Gender in the African context

As a result of South Africa’s apartheid legacy, studying and understanding gender is very complex. When applying a global understanding of gender in the South African context, Shefer (2002:428) advises us that ‘one needs to be constantly vigilant in resisting the “natural” scientific urge to globalise, universalise and establish as fact’. Having said this, the South African feminist theorising and practice is said to be dominated by white middle-class women (Kilroe, 2002: 40). Since this is the case, one is propelled to raise questions about knowledge production and its purpose to empower women, that is, do white middle-class women’s perspectives or lens adequately explain black women’s experiences considering the fact that historically they have always been privileged compared to black women.
In South Africa, ‘patriarchy has tended to dominate across the lines of race and class and it is only since liberation in 1994 that the fight against gender inequality has been recognised and legitimised’ (Kilroe, 2009: 40). Although this is the case, in pre-colonial Africa, African woman possessed power that held society together (Afisi, 2010: 229). Afisi (2010: 229) further adds that this does not deny the existence of the patriarchal system in Africa. Hutson (2007: 83) makes a similar argument that ‘in pre-colonial South Africa, women actually had status and authority because they were the main agricultural producers’. In the case of South Africa, due to the common struggle that black men and women shared of apartheid laws, black women were more committed to fighting the apartheid system (African National Congress (ANC), 1980). In support of the above statement, Tshoaedi (1999: 2) points out that during the apartheid era ‘both men and women joined forces in building strong unions to challenge management prerogative in the workplace’.

To refute the universalistic approach that women experience gender the same way, Weir (2007) provides evidence by showing the powerful positions that black women held in pre-colonial society in Southern Africa. Before the Dutch settlers in South Africa, a woman’s role was very important and most African cultures were not as patriarchal as they became after the invention of imperial rule. Weir (2007) uses the Zulu culture to illustrate her argument. One of the main reasons for this is that the Zulu, unlike other African societies that have fragmented historical evidence, ‘are often presented as fiercely patriarchal and militaristic’ (Weir, 2007: 5). However, with Zulus this was not the case because ‘many records attest to their existence’ (Weir, 2007: 5). Women in black cultures were considered important figures in families and were part of leadership structures, exercising power in a variety of ways (Weir, 2007).

In Southern Africa’s pre-industrial farming societies, cattle had a central role in the economic and ritual life among Africans, including Zulus (Weir, 2007: 5). Even though cattle were a male activity and women specialised in crop cultivation, Weir (2007: 5) states that there was some flexibility. For instance, Barotsi Mulena Mokwae¹ owned cattle. In addition Thomas (cited in Weir, 2007: 6) also provides evidence that Ndebele queens were owners of cattle. Since these experiences do

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¹ In 1897, Barotsi Mulena Mokwae was the chief princess.
not apply to all women, Weir (2007) states that cattle accumulation ‘allowed other economic advantages’ in the pre-colonial period. In cases where woman-to-woman ‘marriages’ existed, women were able to ‘acquire wives of their own’ and paid *lobola* (bride price) for them and their children because they were economically independent as a result of cattle ownership (Weir, 2007: 6).

Another example given to illustrate and provide evidence of women who were influential in the Southern African society is that of chiefly women. Ba-Pedi or Transvaal Ba-Sutho has many chiefly women. In addition, Barotsi Mokwae was also one of the powerful women in pre-colonial South Africa. Weir (2007) states that due to her position in her community, she sat in the *le khothla*, taking part in state affairs and making judgements. These accounts challenge the western conceptualisation of gender which is more universalised and puts emphasis on gender as the main significant social marker and also indicates how complex gender is in the African and South African context. According to Oyewumi (2002) using the concept of gender in the African context is problematic and she warns that it must not be taken at face value and rather suggests that it must be treated with caution. Oyewumi (2002:3) states that ‘feminist research use gender as the explanatory model to account for women’s subordination and oppression worldwide’. This approach is problematic because gender as a social construct varies across different cultures. Due to the fact that ‘European and Africa differs in culture, values and identities … the application of gender in a European context differs from its application in an African context’ (Chauraya, 2012: 253). Therefore, Oyewumi (2002) advises that we should not allow Europe to define Africa, because to do so we obliterate much which is at stake (Chauraya, 2012).

Subsequently, taking the context of the study into consideration, in order for us to understand inequalities, we cannot study gender independently from other socially constructed categories. Thus, male privilege is not only gendered but also class and race related. Intersectionality theory contends that ‘it is intersection itself that produces a particular experience of oppression and one cannot arrive at an adequate explanation by using an additive strategy of gender, plus race, plus class, plus sexuality’ (Ritzer, 2007: 487). Therefore for us to understand black women’s

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2 These relationships were non-sexual in nature. In fact, it was an economic arrangement.
experiences adequately, this dissertation calls for an intersectionality lens which allows for class, race and gender (and other social markers) to be performed in a hierarchy of power and privilege. This will be discussed in-depth in the subsequent section on intersectionality. This said, one space where gender inequality has often been seen, is in the workplace. The focus will now shift to discussion on women in the workplace.

2.3 Gendered Organisation Theory and Organisational Culture

In an attempt to understand women’s persisting inequalities in male-dominated industries which in this case, is the taxi industry, two theoretical paradigms will be discussed. These paradigms include Janet Newman’s (1995) organisational culture lens and Joan Acker’s (1990) theory of gendered organisations. Before delving into detail in discussing the above theories, it is essential that we briefly indicate where the authors are writing from. Their socio-political context is fundamental as it reflects and influences how they see the world and theorise thereof. Even though both scholars are from global north, Canada and the United States of America to be specific, their work proves to be pertinent to the present study because it illustrates how established male culture in organisations disadvantages women in male-dominated industries. Subsequently, the application of this theory in this study propels us to raise the question of how theories such as theory of gendered organisations and organisational culture which are applied to formal bureaucratic organisations, are relevant to the South African minibus taxi industry which is said to be part of the informal sector.

Subsequently, it is not the study’s intentions to discuss the debates about the conceptualisation of organisations. However, in the attempt of defending the applicability of the above theories in the context of this study, Buchanan and Huczynski (1986) define organisation (s) as ‘social arrangements for the controlled performance of collective goals. It can also refer to a group or institution arranged for efficient work or a process-activity to achieve collective goals’. Furthermore, Buchanan and Huczynski (1986) dismantled their definition of organisation (s) into three parts.
Firstly, with regard to social arrangements, someone working on their own does not constitute an organisation. Organisations have a structure to enable people to work together towards a common goal.

Secondly, controlled performance, organisations have systems and procedures to ensure that goals are achieved.

Finally, collective goals, organisations are defined primarily by their goals.

The taxi industry might not meet all the criteria of an organisation when applied in its formal context. According to Lindell (2010:5) when using the notion of informality, it does not necessarily involve dualistic assumptions of economic development, where the informal is understood as marginal, residual and a mere appendage to the formal economy. Lindell (2010:5) adds that the boundary between the formal and the informal economy is blurred. The two interconnect in varying degrees and in multiple ways and often contain elements of each other. Mahlangu (2002) points out that the taxi industry is subjected to contradictory processes of formalisation and informalisaiton. On the basis of Lindell’s (2010) argument about the definition of informality, and the fact that the taxi industry is situated within the informal sector, there is a key element that distinguishes it from other activities within the informal sector, that is, its structure. Interestingly, just like Acker (1990) and Cockburn (1991), Lindsey (2011: 1) states that ‘an explosion of research on gender issues now suggests that all social interactions, and the institutions in which the interactions occur, are gendered in some manner’. This suggests that the structure of organisations is not gender neutral and that job contracts and related documents that structure organisations are gendered (Acker, 1990: 139). Clegg et al. (cited in Acker, 1990: 140) state that ‘writers on organisations and organisation of women and gender but their treatment is usually cursory, and male domination is, on the whole, not analysed and not explained’. Since the focus of the study at hand is on women employed in male-dominated industries, this feminist theory of gendered organisations will be pertinent in this context.

The key theoretical point, which Acker (1990: 140) elaborates further through her paper is that gender segregation of work, which includes divisions between paid and unpaid jobs are created through organisational practice and that income and status inequality results from the organisational process (Acker, 1990). The most astute
point is that stereotypical cultural images of gender are invented and reproduced in organisations (Acker, 1990: 146). For instance, women are given jobs related to their feminine traits and men are given masculine jobs (see 11th Annual Commission for Employment Equity Report, 2010-2011).

In the course of her discussion, Acker (1990: 145) makes a sharp observation about gender and class which she argues has theoretical implications. Acker (1990: 145) argues, citing other authors like Acker, 1988; Cockburn, 1985; Game and Pringle, 1984; Knights and Willmott, 1985; Phillips and Taylor, 1986; and Sorenson, 1984; that organisations are places where gender and class differentiations are produced. This clarification supports a preceding definition of gender, which indicates that, ‘the core of the definition rests on an integral connection between two positions, gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power’ (Scott, 1986: 1067). This definition rightfully emphasises the social construct of gender and its implications for power relations.

Furthermore, Acker (1990: 146) links the acquisition of skills to masculinity and concludes on the note that for a woman to occupy a position of significance in an organisation, she must rob herself of her feminine qualities and embrace manly attributes. Berry (1997) conducted a study titled ‘The Experience and Expression of Gender among Women Taxi Drivers in Halifax’. She also touches on the issue of the link between acquisition of skills to masculinity and makes the argument that even though ‘to some, the job description of the taxi driver may not appear particularly gendered; however, upon closer examination it becomes evident that even the most fundamental element of the industry has historically been considered a manly pursuit-driving’ (Berry, 1997: 39). The empirical data on women employed in male-dominated jobs and those that occupy management level confirms the above argument. For instance, Demaiter and Adams (2009) and Prescott and Bogg (2007) found that women in male-dominated jobs experience ‘de-gendering’ and that one of the coping mechanisms they use to survive is assuming masculine traits such as dressing like men, being aggressive and assertive. Acker’s (1990) argument is important as it will shed light onto the present study to elucidate how female taxi drivers balance their ‘feminine attributes with their perceived manly roles’.
Acker (1990: 146) in her discussion of the social interactions that produce gender explains that ‘although there are great variations in the patterns and extent of gender division, men are almost always in the highest positions of organisational power’. In support of the above, Tshoaedi (1999) illustrates with trade unions organisations that ‘women occupy administrative positions, while men dominate the more senior and powerful leadership positions in the unions’. Acker (1990: 146) citing Cohn states that managers' decisions often initiate gender divisions and organisational practices maintain them - although they also take on new forms with changes in technology and the labour processes. Acker (1990: 146) citing Cockburn, ‘has shown how the introduction of new technology in a number of industries was accompanied by reorganisation, but not abolition, of the gendered division of labour that left the technology in men’s control and maintained the definition of skilled work as men’s work and unskilled work as women’s work’. Furthermore, Acker (1990: 86) elucidates that ‘the construction of symbols and images that explain, express, reinforce, or sometimes oppose the gendered divisions have many sources or forms in language, ideology, popular and high culture, dress, the press, television’. Berry (1997:41) provides evidence that ‘the connection between the automobile and manliness is so strong in these publications⁴ that images of women are to compliment the manly image of the car driver and car owner’. Moreover, Berry (1997: 41) adds that women featured in the publications are most often portrayed as either charming automobile accessories or sex objects that appear to be both attracted by, and to the car. Thus, Berry (1997) concurs with Acker (1990) and concludes that historically, the workplace is one of a number of environments where appropriate gendered behaviour is learned.

Again Acker (1990) mentions that other processes that produce gendered social structures including organisations, are interactions between women and men, women and women, men and men, including all those patterns that enact dominance and submission. It is apparent from the above arguments that not only are men responsible for the gendering of social structures, women are also proactive in the process. West and Zimmerman (cited in Acker,1990: 147) found that ‘conversations

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⁴ Magazines from United Kingdom and the United States including: Street Machine, High Performance Mopar, Supercharged Performance and Car.
analysis shows how gender differences in interruptions, turn taking, and setting the topic of discussion recreate gender inequality in the flow of ordinary talk.

Consequently, Clegg and Dunkerley (cited in Acker, 1990: 147) posit that ‘gender is a constitutive element in organisational logic or the underlying assumptions and practices that construct most contemporary work organisations’. In addition, Acker (1990: 147) states that ‘organisational logic has material forms in written work rules, labour contracts, managerial directives, and other documentary tools for running large organisations, including systems of job evaluation widely used in the comparable-worth strategy of feminists’. To substantiate her argument, Acker (1990: 147) refers to the International Labour Office report which points out that ‘job evaluation is accomplished through the use and interpretation of documents that describe jobs and how they are to be evaluated’. In the minibus taxi industry, the organisational logic does not take a similar form to the above. Organisational logic is manifested through the role that the taxi marshals play of regulating the queuing of taxis. Women fall victim to these strategies that taxi marshals use by pushing your taxi backwards in the queue which results in taking fewer loads. Therefore, the fewer loads you take, the less money you make. It becomes a problem considering that taxi drivers are paid in commission (SANTACO, 2014).

Acker (1990: 89) discusses a female body and how it is employed in job categorisation. The sexualisation and objectification of the female body is relevant in the context of this study to help us explore the relationship that exists between female taxi drivers and their male counterparts. Traditionally a female body was perceived as weak and dependent on the man who assumed the role of the breadwinner (Berry, 1997: 43). In male-dominated jobs, a lot of women experience sexual harassment because it can serve as an equaliser against women in power, motivated more by control and domination rather than by sexual desire (McLaughlin et al. 2012: 625). This theory above links with Newman’s (1995) argument about the organisational culture which will be discussed in the following section.

Newman (1995: 11) defines organisational culture as ‘shared symbols, language, practices (‘how we do things around here’), and deeply embedded beliefs and values’. According to Newman (1995: 11) all these domains are gendered and they constitute an important field in which gendered meanings, identities, practices and
power are sustained. Organisational culture is an important tool of analysis in this research because it illuminates how women in male-dominated industries are unable to move past the ‘glass ceiling’. Newman (1995:11) states that organisational culture can help us comprehend this issue by examining the culture entrenched within organisations. Newman (1995: 11) explains that cultural messages embedded within organisations often stipulate the ‘proper place’ for women, producing a gendered hierarchy, with men at the top and women at the bottom of the occupational structure. Adopting Newman’s (1995) lens in her study, Tshoaedi (1999: 15) argues that the division of labour is produced by the practices of this organisational culture resulting in a gendered hierarchy which then leads to gender inequality.

Newman (1995) identified a few reasons that explain why culture has become a prominent issue for analysing gender relations in organisations. Firstly, organisational culture serves as a significant barrier to change. According to Newman (1995: 11) this is evident in organisations where equal opportunity initiatives are well developed, one finds that their culture may be resistant and intractable. Therefore women’s inability to rise above the ‘glass ceiling’ particularly those who are employed in masculine jobs is a result of organisational culture. Consequently Newman (1995: 11) explains that the informal organisation may continue to transmit cultural messages about the ‘proper places for women, and a gendered hierarchy, with men mainly at the top and women mainly at the lower levels of an organisation’. This is sustained and reproduced through cultural messages about the values of male and female labour. Tshoaedi (1999: 15) adds that the private and public spheres are reflected in organisations, with women being associated with the former and men linked with the latter. Since the public sphere is preferred and considered important compared to the private, Tshoaedi (1999: 15) concludes that labour of females in organisations is often under-valued, producing a gendered hierarchy with men being promoted or appointed to higher positions.

Newman (1995: 16) also contends that gender relations and the patterning of male and female identities are influenced significantly by the ‘shifts in the managerial regimes of public-sector organisations’. She identified three cultural forms which have profound implications for gender relations; the first is traditional culture, which she explains as based on ‘a mix of administrative and professional regimes; the culture which characterises many of the old public-sector bureaucracies; the second
is competitive culture, which results from the introduction of a competitive and business ethos into the public sector, in which parts of an organisation are exposed to external competition and are set up in relation to internal competition; and finally she refers to transformational culture, which is based on the application of a ‘new managerialist’ ethos to the public sector’. Newman (1995: 16) concludes by stating that ‘none of these cultures exists in pure form in any one organisation, they are overlaid on each other in complex ways’.

For the purpose of this study, traditional culture (ways of doing) in organisations will be discussed in detail. Even though Newman (1995) states that the above types of cultures intersect, due to the nature of the study on women in male-dominated jobs, the traditional culture dominates. Newman (1995: 15) states that traditional culture is organised in two ways: firstly it is hierarchical, where women are clustered at the lower grades and tiers. There exists a body of literature of women in male-dominated jobs indicating the above (see Arrive Alive, 2014, Jacobs and Schain, 2006, Khosa, 1997, Prescott and Bogg, 2011 and Tshoaedi, 1999). Secondly, traditional culture is organised through the definition of jobs as ‘women’s work’ or ‘men’s work’, which is done across both horizontal and vertical divisions. For instance, Newman (1995:15) asserts that ‘the gender typing of jobs has traditionally been fairly strong, with women occupying functional specialisms such as nursing, teaching and social work most closely associated with female roles’. This strong distinction has meant that women were frequently found in senior positions in some settings such as hospital matrons, infant school heads, and personnel managers. Khunou et al. (2012: 121) makes a similar argument that women are clustered in traditionally caring professions such as social work and nursing, and because these professions are associated with mothering, they become women’s work.

Again, Newman (1995: 15) states that traditionally there has always been ‘an invisible hierarchy operating between sectors, with male-dominated professions generally accorded more pay and status than traditional female professions, whether occupied by men or by women’. She concluded by saying that ‘traditional cultures have tended to be based on a sexual division of labour reflecting traditional views about appropriate male and female roles and they had also tended to be hierarchical, with strong degrees of role distance and expected deference between high (typically male) and low (typically female) status jobs. However, the gendered
basis of ‘traditional culture transcends the sexual division of labour’. Newman (1995: 15) states that it is ‘built on sets of gendered and sexualised meanings operating within workplaces, which set up ‘invisible’ hierarchies between male and female roles and the men and women who occupy them’. Thus, due to the fact that men dominate organisations, Tshoaedi (1999: 16) argues that often the values and practices of the organisation will advantage men more than women.

Male dominance in organisations is associated with sexual harassment of women which leads to gender inequality and other forms of discrimination (McLaughlin et al. 2012: 625; Tshoaedi, 1999: 16). According to Gruber and Welsh (cited in Chamberlain et al. 2008: 263) sexual harassment can manifest in various forms and includes derogatory sexist remarks, hostile environments (produced by sexually oriented objects, pictures, comments, and gestures), solicitation, touching, quid pro quo arrangements, and even forced sexual contact - with grave consequences for work life. McLaughlin et al. (2012) have noted that sexual harassment in the workplace, serves as an equaliser against women in power by men and is motivated by control and dominance more than by sexual desires. To expand on the argument, Mills (cited in Tshoaedi, 1999: 17) argues that sexual harassment for women is twofold. On one hand, it challenges a woman’s feelings of independence and on the other hand, it reinforces the notion of inferiority and subordination to men.

2.4 Women in the workplace: An International and South African reflection

Women’s role in the workplace has changed over time. Even though there is a lot of literature that recorded women’s participation in the workforce during WWI, WWII and post-war, Grint (1998) states that there are some studies that show that women did work outside the home before the industrial revolution and the two world wars. In pre-industrial societies, it was common for women to work side by side with their husbands. However, their work was not paid. This is one of the issues that feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft and other feminist theorists intended to address (Evans, 2003: 24). According to Grint (1998: 80) in Britain during both World Wars particularly WWII there was high demand for labour and women were recruited to undertake masculine duties. Women were accepted in jobs that were reserved for men in sectors such as engineering, shipbuilding and agriculture. However, the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre
(OFLWAHC) (2006: 4) stated that most women held familiar positions including working as secretaries, clerks, typists and factory workers but for the first time, many worked in heavy industry particularly munitions.

The war era also served as a breakthrough for married women. When labour demand skyrocketed, the European government went to the extent of hiring married women albeit first preference was given to single women. To accommodate married women and maximise production and profit, the European state increased the level of nurseries and crèches, women were encouraged to form neighbourhood shopping leagues and were granted unofficial leave to do their shopping (Grint, 1998:82 and Winter, 2006). The OFLWAHC (2006: 5) however stated that even though women were allowed to work, their wages never equalled men’s in the munitions factories where they earned 50-80% of their male counterparts salaries. Their employment was temporary, since after the war women were sent home and replaced with men. Nonetheless, Grint (1998: 81) mentioned that women still remained in clerical work. The OFLWAHC (2006) also asserted that even though a few women did make it to the new areas of the economy, domestic service still remained the most common female occupation.

Although women were recruited during both wars, the plan was not to make them permanent. Grint (1998:81) stated that the government restructured unemployment legislation to discourage women from seeking work and Britain’s leading trade unions were notably absent in the movement for equality. It is apparent that society has never advocated women’s participation in the workplace.

To substantiate the above argument, Domenico and Jones (2006: 1) stated that ‘at various times throughout history working women were viewed as immoral and unfeminine objects of pity’. Despite the struggles to participate in the workplace and the cutbacks and layoffs of women in the 1920s, OFLWAHC (2006: 5) claimed that during this period, women had re-established their wartime levels of labour force involvement. Furthermore, Grint (1998: 81) contended that in Britain women over 30 with some property won the vote and in 1928 all women over 21 achieved a right to vote on equal terms with men. It is during this era, that some female professions were emerging such as library work, social work and physiotherapy, but the most rapidly growing occupations were clerical work (OFLWAHC, 2006).
With regard to South Africa and women in the workplace, the International Women Forum (IWF) (2011:5) reported that, ‘South Africa’s development path has historically relied heavily on exploitation of its abundant resources, and this legacy remains today. The result of this over-independence means that South Africa is vulnerable to external forces such as international commodity price shocks’. The emphasis on resource exploitation is also detrimental to the environment and South Africa’s biodiversity (IWF, 2011:5). The IWF (2011: 5) report argues that ‘although resource-exploitation contributes to economic growth, it is not gender-sensitive. This means that women are unable to benefit from some of the positive aspects of resource-extraction such as job-creation and the opportunity to participate in the economy. One example is the mining sector. The South African Mining Charter introduced in 2002, made a 10% target for women participation in mining by 2009, to redress the inequality in this sector. The target has been reached and there are now approximately 600,000 women miners in South Africa. However these numbers also include office personnel and cleaners, and female applicants in the core technical disciplines are uncommon’.

South Africa is one of the countries made up of both formal and informal employment relationships (Cohen and Moodley, 2012: 321). According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (cited in Cohen and Moodley: 2012: 321) ‘for the 1st quarter of 2012, there are 13.4 million people currently employed in South Africa, comprising 9.5 million in the formal sector and 2.1 million in the informal sector’. Furthermore, the same report (cited in Cohen and Moodley, 2012: 321) ‘indicated that 6.2 million people work in the informal sector, which it defined as the fastest-growing sector’.

In order to help us to grasp and fully comprehend what informal employment means, Cohen and Moodley (2012: 321) adopted Statistics South Africa’s definition of informal employment which is defined as ‘employment in precarious work situations with no written contract and no benefits’. Equally important, it is further explained that ‘informal employment includes the self-employed in informal enterprises, workers in unregistered enterprises and wage workers in informal jobs many of whom fall into what has been referred to as the ‘survivalist’ category of workers’ (Statistics South Africa cited in Cohen and Moodley, 2012:321).
The adoption of neo-liberal policies resulting in non-standard employment and companies need to compete at the global level has given rise to the growing canalisation and externalisation of the labour market and an unregulated and insecure labour force. In South Africa these new forms of employment tend to attract a large pool of women. According to Statistics South Africa (cited in Cohen and Moodley, 2012: 322) ‘gender inequalities continue to undermine decent work objectives, in spite of female labour force participation in South Africa having increased from 38% in 1995 to 48.5% in 2012’.

The reality of women in the workplace is that ‘women employees face inequality and disadvantage in the workplace and face glaring pay differentials, gender stereotyping, discrimination based on maternity and family responsibilities and difficulties in balancing work and family life’ (Cohen and Moodley, 2012: 322). As a result of the above, Cohen and Moodley (2012: 323) posit that ‘women are mainly concentrated in the feminised professions such as nursing and teaching which is known as horizontal occupational segregation while at the same time remaining in lower job categories than men known as vertical occupational segregation and remain grossly underrepresented in senior positions’. The Department of Labour (cited in Cohen and Moodley, 2012: 323) put forward that the ‘11th Annual Commission for Employment Equity Report (2010-2011) notes women constituted a mere 19% of top management, with African females constituting a partially 3.5%’. Furthermore, the Business Womens Association (cited in Cohen and Moodley, 2012: 323) found that ‘4.4% of women held CEO/MD positions, 5.3% of chairperson positions, and 15.8% of directorships’. In the 2010-2011 reporting cycle (cited in Cohen and Moodley, 2012:323) it is reported that ‘women constituted 39.9% of professionally qualified employees and 43.7% of skilled employees’. According to Cohen and Moodley (2012: 323) it is evident from the above reports that ‘African and Coloured females are disproportionally under-represented at all senior levels and are the least promoted’. To substantiate their argument Cohen and Moodley (2012: 323) cited the Department of Health which confirmed that ‘women employees remain over-represented in lower paid, less secure and unskilled positions, with 16% of women employees being employed in the informal sector, 21% in the elementary sector, and 15% in the domestic sector’.
Even under these unequal conditions, Evans (2003: 31) asserted that women’s conditions and participation in the workplace is instrumental for their liberation. Evans (2003: 31) citing Marx stated that the ‘emancipation of women was defined by the extent to which they entered social production’. One can argue that Marx failed to anticipate the kind of challenges that work presented to women, not realising how work makes it difficult for them to execute their family responsibilities or balance work and family responsibilities. Since the study is grounded in a feminist perspective, we need to question why caring tasks like cooking, cleaning, ironing, feeding and caring for the children, husbands and elderly, remain the responsibilities of women.

There are a number of reasons that can help us answer the above question. One could argue that reproductive labour is a women’s identity. This means that even though women have joined the workforce, domestic labour is still linked with women’s identities. Again, a second view could be because of how the expected gendered roles of women are viewed in the society. However, Evans (2003) and Smit (2001) claim that work did not completely emancipate women; instead it had doubled their load. For instance, Domenico and Jones (2006: 2) contend that women were expected to perform duties as wives and mothers in addition to fulfilling their professional responsibilities. Some scholars have attempted to problematise the double burden of the home and work phenomenon. However, it is equally important that we question why that double burden exists. Thus, a Marxist feminism lens informs this question, that is, one can learn a lot from them in attempting to answer the research question, since they argue that woman’s subordination is not a result of her biological disposition but of social relations and that men’s efforts to achieve their demands for control of women’s labour and sexual faculties have gradually solidified and become institutionalised in the nuclear family. Similarly, Clarke (2004: 1) states that Marxist feminists argue that gender distinctions are a function of economic rather than anatomical or other factors. Since Marxist feminists draw upon Marx’s base/superstructure model of society, Marx asserts that social relations of production, the means of production, and the forces of production constitute the economic base of a given society and that this base determines in turn the ideological superstructure.
Therefore, Marxist feminists acknowledge the biological differences between men and women. However, they contend that patriarchy is rooted in economics, that is, the forces of production are so constituted that historically men have largely owned the means of production while women have owned only their labour. According to Clarke (2004: 3) the class-structure, that is, unequal distribution of wealth, is also a gender-inflected hierarchy, inequality between the sexes being ultimately reducible to economic inequality. Clarke (2004: 4) contends that this results in a sexual division of labour in which women are either not allowed to work at all or are confined to certain menial, poorly remunerated tasks in the public sphere.

A Swedish study on domestic gender equality and childbearing showed that despite the fact that family structures have begun to change with high levels of shared parenting, that is, men get more involved in the household; women still perform a large share of household tasks in addition to childbearing (Goldscheider et al, 2013: 1097). Jacobs and Schain (2006: 98) conducted a study in the United States of America on professional women and their continuing struggle for acceptance and equality, and they concur that the integration of women in the workplace, particularly women in non-traditional jobs, does not necessarily mean both acceptance and equality nor does it mean that the stress created by work-home conflict has been resolved. Thus, Evans (2003: 55) argues that women in the workplace have 'become the ideal employees of [a] current form of capitalism in which profit is generated through service and consumer-led production rather than in manufacturing industry'. For instance, the decline in industrialisation resulted in the workforce service sector oriented jobs attracting a pool of women. Looking at South Africa in particular, the government’s adoption of neo-liberalism and GEAR policies led to the privatisation of companies and adoption of the non-standard employment relationship. Flexibility, cost cutting and high productivity are at the core of these policies. This resulted in more and more women being employed in retail stores, clothing and footwear industries (Kenny, 2005; Mosoetsa, 2005). The new form of work has presented women with more challenges and they are subjected to gender inequality, wage disparities, exploitation and discrimination.

Existing research on women working in male-dominated fields has interrogated the reasons for gender segregation in employment. This includes persistent horizontal segregation, where certain fields are almost exclusively all-male or all-female, and
vertical segregation where certain positions in the same field are routinely occupied by either men or women. ‘The majority of these studies examines the experiences of women in the global north and tends to focus on women in business or management as opposed to skilled blue-collar work’ Naysmith and Rubincam (2012: 582). Therefore, Naysmith and Rubincam (2012: 583) conclude that involvement of women as unskilled manual labour in the global south is normalised and well documented.

The social and gender construction of work has meant that historically, women have been relegated to feminine jobs and responsibilities. For example, women were and still remain in jobs such as nursing and teaching and perform the so called ‘mom’ and ‘smile’ work (Lester, 2008:1). Consequently, women’s entry into the workplace has throughout history been accompanied by challenges. These challenges include a struggle for acceptance by their male colleagues, sexual harassment, a wage gap, difficulties balancing work and family responsibilities, gender segregated facilities, ‘fewer opportunities for progression, less autonomy, less authority within the organisation and challenges with their own gender identity’ (see Prescott and Bogg, 2011 and Revill, 2007). In order to survive in the workplace, some women, particularly those employed in traditionally male-dominated jobs, use strategies such as making their gender identity invisible, or become masculine in terms of their dress code and their ability to act like men (see Griffiths et al, 2007; Lester, 2008 and Wajcman, 2007). Although women employed in both professional and non-professional jobs face almost similar challenges, it is imperative to highlight the fact that these challenges differ depending on whether one is employed in the formal or informal sector. Notwithstanding the fact that women share universal challenges in the workplace, Irving (2008: 165) asserts that women cannot be treated or analysed as a homogenous group.

The literature shows that since the 90s there has been an increase, albeit slow of recruitment of women in the workforce in general and traditionally male-dominated/non-traditional occupations (Peitchinis, 1989 and Bradley, 1999). Although the focus of the study is on women in a non-professional traditionally male-dominated occupation, which in this case is female taxi drivers, it is important to briefly show what literature exists on women employed in professional occupations for the sake of comparison.
There is a lot of literature on women in professional traditionally male-dominated occupations that centres around cooperate environments and physically oriented industries such as engineering (electrical, chemical, mechanical etc.), geology, metallurgy, mining, information and technology, medicine, crafts, construction, manufacturing, banking, finance and insurance, agriculture, forestry, fishing, law, professional sports, the military, law enforcement, firefighting (Prescott and Bogg, 2011; Peitchinis, 1989; Jacobs and Schain, 2009: 98).

Jacobs and Schain (2009) conducted a study in America examining some issues that continue to plague women as they attempt to progress in their professional fields. Some of the challenges that women encounter include the belief that men and women have different leadership styles, gender stereotyping is also problematic, and there is stress caused by role conflict or multiple roles, including the work/family conflict. Jacobs and Schain (2009: 100) stated that due to the work/family conflict, women tend to change their jobs, to work part-time or ‘exit the labour force for a spell because families cannot afford to lose fathers’ wages’.

Another study was conducted by Prescott and Bogg (2011) exploring segregation in a male-dominated industry paying close attention to women working in the computer games industry in the United Kingdom. They found that women are both underrepresented in the games industry workforce and in certain roles within the industry. Furthermore, Prescott and Bogg (2011) found that women are concentrated in more traditionally feminine roles such as marketing and administration and very few women occupy jobs in core creation and development roles such as coders, designers and artists, roles that require technical skill and knowledge. Just like the taxi industry in South Africa, Prescott and Bogg (2011) found that there is limited research in the area of women working in the computer games industry. They concluded that occupational segregation still persists in the computer games industry. Further, they asserted that gender role identity and attitudes are important issues when looking at segregation within the industry.

2.5 Black women in the South African labour market

This section focuses on black women in the South African labour market. During the apartheid era, the South African labour market was racialised. Therefore, unlike women in the west as discussed in the previous section, most black women joined
the labour force as domestic workers as a result of the apartheid system. Black women and their incorporation into the South African labour market has a political dimension to it. According to Ntuli (2007) during the apartheid era, black women were discriminated against mainly on the basis of their race, and their incorporation into the labour market was hampered by the legacies of the protracted discrimination. The apartheid system was structured in such a way that most black women in South Africa were absorbed in the domestic sector.

According to Naysmith and Rubincam (2012) there have been notable changes for women in the sphere of employment, including an increasing feminisation of South Africa’s workforce. Naysmith and Rubincam (2012: 582) argue that ‘while more South African women appear to be working, their employment is often insecure, frequently seasonal and overwhelmingly concentrated in care-giving jobs and more informal sectors, such as subsistence agriculture, where women must “make work for themselves”’. Casele and Posel in Naysmith and Rubincam (2012: 582) argue that the South African labour market has not sufficiently absorbed the swell of women entering the labour force, resulting in a share increase of women without work and continued ‘feminisation of low-paid insecure forms of employment’. Naysmith and Rubincam (2012: 582) contend that ‘South Africa is a country where significant obstacles face women attempting to succeed in a traditionally male-dominated workforce’.

The informal sector plays an important role in the lives of many poor people in developing countries, particularly in Africa. The informal sector forms an important part of the economy in South Africa. According to Rogerson and Preston-Whyte (1991: 1) for millions of people, particularly black South Africans, work and incomes secured in this sector have shaped the course of their working lives. Rogerson and Preston-Whyte (1991: 1) continue by saying that historically, South Africa’s informal economy has been both a potential source of opportunity and upward mobility for some households and individuals and a sinkhole of exploitation for many others.

According to Hiralal (2010: 29), in South Africa informal work is an important source of income for many poverty-stricken and unemployed individuals, most notably women. Literature in the field of women in non-professional jobs tends to focus mostly on mining (underground workers), food retail, the footwear and clothing
industries, street vendors/hawkers, domestic workers and home-based workers (Benya, 2009, Kenny, 2005, Hiralal, 2010, Lund, 1998, Mosoetsa, Ralushai, 2003, Seedat, 2009; and Van der Westhuizen, 2005) and little is known about female taxi drivers in South Africa. Most women employed in the informal sector face many challenges including low wages, long hours, poor working conditions, and limited regulation by the law; hence they do not have maternity leave, sick leave and all the other benefits that formal sector employees enjoy.

Ralushai (2003) and Benya (2009) conducted research on women mine workers in the Rustenburg Platinum mines. The aim of Ralushai’s (2003) study was to understand the experiences of women working in South African mines and Benya (2009) explored how women coped in response to the masculine occupational culture and physical demands of underground work in South African mines. One of the most important findings from Ralushai’s (2003) study is that women in the mining sector continue to be clustered in feminine/traditional jobs such as cleaning of the conveyor-belt and offices. Although they explored different gender dynamics in the masculine environment, their findings were almost similar. They found that one of the challenges that women workers face includes the issue of acceptance by their male colleagues. One of Ralushai’s (2003: 42) respondents reported that they are not being ‘accepted and recognised by their male colleagues’. The reason why men find it difficult to accept female mine workers is that there is a belief that they bring bad luck underground, that is, they are responsible for rock falls and disappearing of the minerals. Benya (2009: 107) found that women miners also struggled with facilities like toilets especially during menstruation. In addition to poor ablution facilities, her respondents reported that they find the protective gear (one-piece overall) a challenge especially when they want to use the toilet, as they have to take off the whole overall unlike men. When looking at the wage issue, Benya (2009: 84) states that although the financial department response was positive, that is, they claim that they do not ‘discriminate based on gender or race and that if some men earn high wages, it is not because of their gender but because of the experience they have gained throughout the years in the mines’.

In contrast, the women mine workers reported that they earned less compared to men and that the money was not enough to take care of them and their families (Benya, 2009: 84). To show the masculine nature of the mines, both Ralushai’s and
Benya’s respondents complained about the working environment, that it is very hot and the high temperatures made it difficult for them to work and that when they are in their menstrual cycle they feel dizzy and tired. Another important factor that is worth noting is the issue of the cage, that is, the transport used to go underground. Benya (2009: 92) stated that due to the fact that the cage is small, both men and women have to squeeze in for them to fit. Women miners reported that men usually push them harder than they do with other men and if you are late and have not secured a good place in the cage, men touch their buttocks (Benya, 2009: 98). Benya (2009: 98) debates that while one may think that having women-only teams might help curb the challenges; this is not the case in the mines. She argued that in women-only groups, ‘there are challenges as some tasks are beyond their physical abilities’. Hence, ‘women have to ask men to help them and the women-only teams tend to be riddled with infighting, women disliking one another because of the internal factions that tended to arise’. Although this is the case, in order to cope with some of the challenges they encounter underground; women form coalitions and defend each other (Benya, 2009: 98). Age also plays an important role, that is, the older women believe that there is safety in numbers and that the bigger their social groups are, the lower their chances of being ill-treated by men (Benya, 2009: 98).

2.6 The reality of the minibus taxi industry in the South African context

Generally, transport plays an important role in the everyday lives of human beings. It is important in both women and men’s lives and it determines accesses to essential resources such as employment, healthcare, education and childcare (Khosa, 1997: 19). In South Africa, there are three modes of public transportation, namely minibus taxis, buses and trains. Studies reveal that in 1993 65% of South Africans travelled by taxis and only 20% by bus and 13% by train (Van der Reis, 1993 and ILO, 2003).

According to Arrive Alive (2014) and Sauti (2006: 24) black people prefer to use taxis because they are accessible, convenient, run late night services, and pick up and drop off commuters at their homes compared to buses and trains. Taxi fares are said to be more reasonable than those of busses and trains. On the contrary, present taxi commuters in the country would disagree with the above statement because trains and bus fares are less compared to the taxis. Perhaps this could be explained by the fact that the government subsidises public transport (both busses and trains).
annually with R4 billion and the taxi industry does not get a share (Van Schalkwyk, 2009: 3).

The taxi industry in South Africa emerged in the wake of the apartheid government’s policy of economic deregulation initiated between 1970 and 1987 (ILO, 2003; Sauti, 2006; Van Schalkwyk, 2009:1). The taxi industry was predominantly patronised by the black population who travelled with them from rural areas to urban areas to work. During this period, the National Party (NP) government (in an effort) to maintain political and economic control over black South Africa, initiated various policies and legislation in the transport sector. The policies that were enacted included the 1973 Driesen Commission which established that the taxis were providing services that supplemented the more traditional public transport modes (buses and trains) (Britz, in Van Schalkwyk, 2009: 1). According to Van Schalkwyk (2009:1) the then public transport initiated the Road Transportation Act 74 of 1977 which stipulated that applicants for taxi permits had to prove that the existing public service was inadequate in the area or along the route for which they applied for a permit. This Act allowed legal carrying passenger capacity in one vehicle to increase from four to eight. According to Sauti (2006: 30) prior to this period, taxis were only available in the white suburbs; individuals in these areas could call a taxi as the need arose.

There are three categories of people operating in the South African taxi industry. These are owner-drivers, fleet drivers and the taxi driver (Khosa, 1992: 236). Data from the 2003 ILO report indicated that the South African taxi industry consisted of approximately 150 000 minibus taxis and 185 000 workers (Arrive Alive, 2014, International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2003: 5). The industry is dominated by black male taxi drivers, making it an exclusively male profession (Arrive Alive, 2014; ILO, 2003: 5), less than 2% in the industry were however women with many of them performing administrative work for the taxi associations (Arrive Alive, 2014; Barrett, 2003: xi and ILO, 2003: 5).

The ILO (2003: 5) found that within the taxi industry in South Africa, very few people are self-employed (own taxis). Arrive Alive (2014) found that there were about 20 000 employers and 200 000 taxi drivers. The taxi drivers are paid in four ways. Firstly, some drivers pay a fixed percentage of the week’s takings to the owner and keep the rest. Some taxi drivers are paid according to what is called ‘wage plus
system’, meaning that they receive a basic wage and they take a percentage of the takings to the owner and keep the rest. Other drivers hand all the takings to the owner and receive a regular wage. Finally, some drivers keep the takings of one day in the week, and give the takings from all other days to the owner. Therefore, the ILO (2003: 5) and Sauti (2006) further showed that regardless of how taxi drivers are paid by their employers, taxi drivers are generally paid low wages.

The Arrive Alive (2014), ILO reports (2003) and Sauti (2006: 35) found that taxi drivers work under harsh conditions. For example, taxi owners deduct costs of repair and traffic fines from drivers’ wages (Arrive Alive, 2014; ILO, 2003). Sauti (2006:36) and Bonner (2006: 7) have also demonstrated that long hours, low wages, no fringe benefits, harassment by traffic officials and pressure from passengers make taxi driving a stressful job. Consequently, they resort to driving fast in over-loaded vehicles to increase take-home pay which adds to their stress. To mitigate these conditions, the government in 1998 implemented the Taxi Recapitalisation Policy in an effort to revamp the taxi industry. However it was not fully successful, for numerous reasons (see Van Schalkwyk, 2009).

To give a glimpse of taxi drivers’ daily activities, Sauti (2006:38) found that typically a taxi driver’s day begins at 04:00 and ends at 19:00. They work seven days a week, in order to make a reasonable wage. She also found that the highest level of qualification amongst taxi drivers is secondary school, although some have post matric. There is no formal qualification required to become a taxi driver other than a standard code 8 driver’s licence (Sauti, 2006). In addition, Bonner (2006:10) explains that the taxi industry is excluded from labour law and social protection, because the majority of taxi drivers are not in an employment relationship. This puts them in a vulnerable position.

The New Age newspaper published an article titled ‘A day in the life of a female taxi driver’ (Kekana, 2012: 28). The article is about a female taxi driver by the name of Sibongile ‘Beyoncé’ Nobazi who is said to be one of only three female taxi drivers in Klipgat, North West. The focus of these newspaper articles and blogs is on their experiences and challenges that they face whilst inside the taxi industry. First and foremost, Nobazi reported that she joined the taxi industry because it appeared to be a lucrative business. When she started in the taxi industry, she used to operate
illegally and she got caught and was penalised. Kekana (2012: 28) mentions that Nobazi claimed that the taxi industry is very difficult to break into especially for women. Furthermore, Nobazi shares about the autonomy that comes with owning a taxi. She said that this gives her flexibility to maintain her lifestyle. However, Kekana (2012: 28) reports that even though this woman stated that her job gives her flexibility, one of the challenges of driving a taxi is to wake up in the morning while your children are still asleep. However, the children are older, so they are able to take care of themselves when the mother is at work. Nobazi told Kekana (2012: 28) that another challenge with working in the taxi industry is that ‘people take advantage of you because you are a woman’. She added that for one to survive ‘you have to be assertive, something I learned from this trade’ (Kekana, 2012: 28). In summary, Kekana (2012:28) concludes that even though taxi industry has challenges for women, there are positive aspects. Firstly, flexibility, that is, you manage your own hours. Secondly, financial independence, you are able to gauge your own profit. Finally, driving your own taxi comes with versatility; the industry helps you broaden your scope in the transport sector. The challenges that Nobazi raised includes the dangers of the taxi industry, that it can be violent at times. In addition, dealing with different people with different personalities on a daily basis is a challenge. Most of these women joined the industry through their family members who are already in the business, or as employees. Participants of the study at hand reported that joining the taxi industry is not so much of struggle per se since they all begin as taxi drivers, there are always taxi operators looking for employees because they are said to fire and hire as they please. However, the major challenge for the participants in the taxi industry was the issue of acquiring operating permits and taxi association membership fees. Since taxi associations are mostly led by men, participants reported that the men make it difficult for them to obtain the taxi association membership which is a requirement when purchasing a taxi. They do so by increasing the membership fees.

This has been mentioned before that literature on the taxi industry focuses on issues such as the history of the industry, taxi violence, the taxi recapitalisation policy, accessibility of transport for women residing in rural areas and disabled people, trade unions and organising in the taxi industry, ways to improve the taxi industry, road safety and male taxi drivers’ behaviour (see Arrive Alive, 2014, Barrett, 2003,
Bonner, 2006, Boudreaux, 2006 Govender and Allopi, 2006:100, Khosa, 1992, Sauti, 2006 and Van Schalkwyk, 2009). This is repeated to stress the lack in literature and the themes that have been addressed in this field.

Although Khosa (1997) is among the few scholars who wrote about female taxi drivers, his study only covers one small component of female taxi drivers namely the experiences of female taxi drivers and neglects to give a detailed picture of the livelihood of these females. Having said that, Khosa acknowledges the fact that female and male drivers experience the taxi industry differently. For instance, taxi drivers, in general, are paid relatively little, but Khosa (1997: 31) states that women’s wages are lower than their male counterparts. One of the challenges that both female and male drivers face is lack of quality time with their families. However, Khosa (1997: 32) found that female drivers in particular complained about their struggles to balance work and family responsibilities. Khosa (1997) also argues that female drivers were especially concerned with their safety while on the job and took certain precautions to protect themselves against rape, hijacking and robberies. It is apparent that there exists a gap in knowledge on women in non-professional traditional male-dominated industries in South Africa.

To show the scarcity of female taxi drivers, Van Schalkwyk (2009: 60) stated that even though he conducted research in the taxi industry for five years, he never came across a single female taxi driver in any of the provinces where he conducted his research. As this is the case, it is apparent that there are few scholarly studies that focus on female taxi drivers in South Africa, except for some existing newspaper articles and a blog called City Search Blog on the Internet.

According to Berry (1997) in Canada, Halifax to be precise, working in a traditionally male industry, women taxi drivers often attract the attention of the press and the public as an amusing novelty or a scandalous disgrace. This seems to be a same shared sentiment of female taxi drivers in South Africa (Kekana, 2012). Berry (1997) further stated that their reactions are, in part, the result of the popular perception that the masculine and feminine domains are mutually exclusive, restricted to men and women separately and respectively. She states that the Halifax taxi industry is a highly competitive and dangerous industry. She asserts that while the place of women is generally considered to be outside of masculine culture, women taxi
drivers demonstrate the fluidity of gender cultures as they adeptly navigate the contested terrain of their masculine work-culture. Berry (1997) found that despite the routine comments and questions from passengers and colleagues alike, most women drivers find a considerable degree of membership within the larger community of drivers and in this sense become ‘one of the men’, seen first as taxi drivers and then as women.

2.7 Black feminist thoughts, and post-colonial theories on intersectionality

Intersectionality theory is a best fit for this research for two reasons. Firstly intersectionality is relevant in the context of the present study because the focus is on black female taxi drivers who are difficult to locate, in relation to whether they are part of the informal or formal sector, and also because South Africa is full of multiple inequalities. Secondly, following the thinking of black feminism on western feminism’s inability to explain black women’s experiences adequately intersectionality theory would aid us to ‘understand and assess the impact of converging identities on opportunities and access to rights for the female taxi drivers. Again it will help in thinking about how policies, programs, services and laws that impact on one aspect of our lives are inextricably linked to other’ (Catalyst report, 2008: 20). Therefore what follows is an in-depth discussion on intersectionality and how it relates to women in male-dominated industries particularly female taxi drivers. To do this the work of Patricia Hill Collins and other black and postcolonial feminists will be engaged in the discussion.

As stated in the earlier section, black feminism and postcolonial theorising emerged as a response to particular limitations in western feminism. According to Reed (2008: 96) black feminism ‘served to critique the universalism inherent in much feminism’. Furthermore, Reed (2008: 96) adds that ‘it placed black women’s experiences on the feminist agenda and pushed for the need to recognise difference and diversity in feminism and contributed to the development of feminist thought through recognising the need to explore the multiple sites of oppression, not just focusing on gender relations’. Mohanty et al. (1991) point out that the Universalist approach within western feminism ‘is too narrow to be applied to the plight of the Third World woman and women of colour in particular’. Collins’ main focus is on black women, ‘the relationships among empowerment, self-definition, and knowledge’. In her book
Black Thought, Collins asserts that ‘women are uniquely situated in that they stand at the focal point where two exceptionally powerful and prevalent systems of oppression come together: race and gender’. She calls this position intersectionality which she argues ‘opens up the possibility of seeing and understanding many more spaces of cross-cutting interests’ (Collins, 1991: 4). Furthermore Collins (1991: 4) argues that, ‘understanding the social position of black women ought to compel us to see, and look for, other spaces where systems of inequality come together’. Intersectionality is fundamental because it helps us to understand how lived experiences of oppression cannot be separated into those due to gender on one hand and on race on the other hand but rather it suggests that these experiences are simultaneous and linked (Brewer, 1993). Espiritu (cited in Ferree and Choo, 2009: 8) states that because women of colour argued that their oppression was experienced in a qualitatively different way, their experiences required distinctive attention in order to see how ‘race, gender and class, as categories of difference, do not parallel but instead intersect and confirm each other. Equally important, understanding the conflicting dimensions of inequality also requires studying the ‘unmarked’ categories where power and privilege cluster’. Therefore intersectionality is fitting in this context not only because of the potential to enlighten social divisions that persist and perpetuate inequality but it has the capability of foregrounding the voices and experiences of a marginalised cohort such as black female taxi drivers.

Intersectionality theory gained prominence in the 1990s when Collins incorporated its theoretical underpinnings in her work on black feminism. Intersectionality theory was developed by black feminist scholars, subaltern scholars and feminists of the third world countries such as Collins (1991), Gaidzanna (1997), Mikell (1997) and Hooks (1984) just to mention a few. These feminists accused feminism theory as a whole for universalising and ‘essentialising’ women’s experiences. Intersectionality was originally introduced by a scholar named Kimberlee Crenshaw in 1989. Crenshaw (1989) introduced intersectionality to ‘capture the applicability of black feminism to anti-discrimination law’ which according to Crenshaw looked at gender and race separately.

Black feminists argued that women should be studied holistically, focusing on how the ‘matrix of domination’, in Patricia Hill Collins’ language, intersects to shape the lives of women and results in different identities. What is at the core of their
argument is that challenges that black women face are ‘qualitatively’ different from those of white women. For instance in South Africa not only is a woman discriminated against because of her gender but due to apartheid legacy, her race matters and her social positioning in society also matters. Hence, ‘focusing on one form of oppression without acknowledging the other forms of oppression, and how they intersect, is alienating and results in a lack of real progress' (Satterthwaite, 2004: 12).

According to Crenshaw (1993: 23), intersectionality theory holds that ‘the classical models of oppression within society, such as those based on race and ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, and class do not act independently of one another, instead these forms of oppression interrelate creating a system of oppression that reflects the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination’. From Ritzer’s (2007:204) point of view, intersectionality theory begins ‘with the understanding that women experience oppression in varying configurations and in varying degrees of intensity. The explanation of the variation is that while all women potentially experience oppression on the basis of gender, women are, nevertheless, differentially oppressed by the varied intersections of other arrangements of social inequality’.

Subsequently, saying that the experiences of a black woman taxi driver and that of a non-black woman with a different background are universal, is according to Satterwaite (2004), alienating. One would also argue that implementation of equality and emancipation policies so to speak, have failed partly because policy-makers focus on one form of oppression and do not consider how for instance race intersects with other forms of oppression like gender and class to determine the social position of women.

In support of the above argument, Wei (1996) concurs with Collins (1990), who argues that black women experience discrimination in multiple spheres or what McKay (1994) calls ‘triple oppression’ that cannot be categorised as solely race-based or gender-based. Moreover, Wei (1996: 771) argues that ‘black women’s experiences are the by-product of both their race and gender in addition to other ‘matrix of dominations’.

This permits us to ask how the above arguments are pertinent to the study of the perceptions and experiences of female taxi drivers in Rustenburg. It is therefore,
presented in the thesis that intersectionality is about combating any form of discrimination and subordination of people particularly those who are on the periphery which women are in most cases.

In particular, the women referred to here are mostly those women working in the informal sectors or in what has been termed precarious work, which in this context refers to women taxi drivers who are the most vulnerable group in South Africa. Drawing from Khosa (1997) and Ralushai’s (2003) studies, with regard to reasons for women joining traditionally male-dominated industries, one is bound to ask if these women join the traditionally male-dominated jobs not because it is what they want but due to economic circumstances? This question will be answered later in the section that discusses reasons why women choose to work in traditionally masculine jobs.

After perusing studies on women working in traditionally male-dominated jobs, there exists a theoretical gap. Therefore, in order to get a deeper understanding of the marginalised, such as female taxi drivers, and how the apartheid legacy, gendered socialisation, patriarchy, gender relations, class, and race work together to determine their social position, intersectionality theory will be used as a theoretical lens to examine the experiences of these women.

2.8 Conclusion

Through the empirical data drawn from the literature and theories, the chapter attempted to understand the subordination of women in male-dominated industries. It is clear that women in these masculine spaces face gender inequality and the gendered nature of organisations and organisational culture continue to produce and reproduce gender inequality and women oppression. The intersectionality lens sheds light onto the study by looking at how multiple structures of power or social constructed categories intersect to shape women’s experiences in the workplace. It was argued that gender alone cannot be used as a model to account for and explain women’s experiences particularly when studying black women. In addition, Oyewumi (2002) advises us that the concept of gender needs to be treated with caution because in most African countries, gender was never as important or significant a

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4 Traditionally male-dominated jobs refer to those jobs that were historically considered masculine or reserved for men only.
social marker as it is in Western countries. The following chapter provides the methods that were used for data collection.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The phenomenon of female taxi drivers is relatively new, and thus needs to be explored in the South African taxi industry. As mentioned earlier, the only identified scholarly study that focuses on the female taxi drivers in South Africa is that of Khosa (1997), however, the title of Khosa’s study is misleading: he did not only focus on female taxi drivers but also on male taxi drivers and neglects to give a detailed picture of the livelihood of these women. The present study therefore engaged in an in-depth qualitative examination of the perceptions and experiences of female taxi drivers in Rustenburg, South Africa. The aim was to provide a detailed analysis of the livelihood strategies and daily experiences of these women.

3.2 Aims and objectives of the study

In an attempt to answer the main research question for this study which was: What are the perceptions and experiences of female taxi drivers in Rustenburg? The following objectives were addressed:

- To investigate the challenges female taxi drivers face in the taxi industry.
- To investigate the kind of strategies they employ to cope and survive in the taxi industry.
- To explore how female taxi drivers negotiate their gendered identity within such a male-dominated taxi industry.

3.3 Research site

The selected research site for the study was Rustenburg which is based in the North West Province, South Africa. A brief discussion of the research site will provide a picture of the context in which these female taxi drivers operate. Rustenburg means “Town of Rest” in Afrikaans and is one of the fastest growing cities in Africa due to its platinum production.

Rustenburg is a large town situated at the foot of the Magaliesburg Mountain Range. It was founded in 1851 as an administrative centre with surrounding farming areas.
which produced citrus, tobacco, peanuts, sunflowers seeds, maize, wheat and cattle (www.sahistory.org.za). It is situated some 112 km North West of Johannesburg and is a 90 minute drive from both Johannesburg and Pretoria.

At the time of the last census in 2011, Rustenburg was home to 549 575 people who are mostly between the ages of 15 to 64 years. According to Statistics South Africa (2011) Rustenburg constitutes a small percentage of people under the ages of 15 and over 65 years respectively. With regard to the labour market, Rustenburg has 26.40% of unemployment in general and 34.70% of youth unemployment. Furthermore, Stats SA (2011) reported that 35% of the population have as their highest educational attainment, matric level. Only about 5.4% of the population did not go to school. About 8.90% of the population has Higher Education.

On the household dynamics in Rustenburg, Stats SA (2011) reported that there were about 199 044 households. Out of these, only 26.40% were female-headed households with 68.7% of the population occupying formal dwellings and 31.4% of the inhabitants owning houses. Its key investment opportunities include the development of an airport, Boitekong Mall, extension of the Waterfall Mall and Rustenburg Rapid transport (which is under construction) (www.sahistory.org.za).

As a mining town, it has attracted many men and from neighbouring countries including Lesotho, Botswana, Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. South Africans from different provinces also live there and work in the Rustenburg mines. In addition in recent years, there has been an observable number of female miners in Rustenburg (Benya, 2009). Given the growth in mining and the movement of people from outside the country and from all over the country, there has been an increased demand for transport. As a result the taxi industry in Rustenburg is booming.
3.4 Research Design

The present study was grounded in feminist theory. Stanley and Wise (cited in Sarantakos, 2005: 54) defined feminist research as the research that ‘studies the social conditions of women in a sexist, ‘malestream’ and patriarchal society and enlightens people about taken-for-granted sexist practices and gender-blindness of government and community practices including publications that displaced, ignored and silenced women, led to an unequal and discriminating social order, and held them captive for millennia’. The present project thus attempts to contribute to feminist scholarship in that it captures and presents the voices of female taxi drivers as they narrate the stories of their working experiences in a masculine environment.

A qualitative methodological approach was undertaken in order to answer the research questions. According to Wagner et al. (2012: 126) ‘qualitative research is
concerned with understanding the processes and the social and cultural contexts which shape various behavioural patterns’. The qualitative approach is especially appropriate for research premised on the feminist paradigm. Westmarland (2001: 1) argues ‘that different feminist issues need different research methods, and that as long as they are applied from a feminist perspective there is no need for the dichotomous “us against them”, “quantitative against qualitative” debates’. The same point is made by Sarantakos (2005: 54) that ‘feminist research is a type of inquiry’ that is worth employing ‘not because of the nature of methods it employs or the output it produces but rather because of the manner in which it uses conventional methods, the areas on which it focuses, and the manner in which it employs its findings’.

Therefore, in the context of the present research, the interpretive/phenomenological tradition was the most relevant philosophical position because a qualitative approach was employed which stems from the interpretive tradition. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 28), the advocates of the interpretive/phenomenological tradition argue that all human beings are engaged in the process of making sense of their world. Equally important, they continuously interpret, create and give meaning to, delineate, justify and rationalise their actions. Thus, position is directly in sync with the qualitative research paradigm which amongst other things, endeavours ‘to create a coherent story as it is seen through the eyes of those who are part of that story, to understand and represent their experiences and actions as they encounter, engage with, and live through situations’ (Wagner et al. 2012: 126). An advantage of qualitative research is that the ‘researcher becomes the instrument through which the data is collected, analysed and interpreted’ (Wagner et al. 2012: 126). This gives the researcher the opportunity to put herself in the participants’ shoes and understand their world better. As an instrument of data collection, the researcher was able to learn how female taxi drivers experience and interact with their social world which in this case is the taxi industry and the meaning that their work as drivers has for them.

The reason for using a qualitative methodological approach was two-fold. Firstly, the study was both exploratory and descriptive in nature. On the one hand, the research was exploratory because a study on female taxi drivers in the South African context is relatively new. On the other hand, the study was descriptive because the intention
was to document and describe the perceptions and experiences of female taxi drivers in Rustenburg, South Africa. Secondly, a qualitative research approach was used since the research interest was to capture the subjective lives of female taxi drivers. Through a qualitative approach, it was possible to get a deeper understanding of how female taxi drivers make sense of their world (both at work and home) and the kind of meanings they attach to their actions such as their motives for undertaking a ‘macho’ job like taxi driving and not taking on more ‘feminine jobs’ that society deems appropriate for women.

3.5 Access

Before I could go to the taxi rank to conduct interviews with the women, I had to ask permission from the umbrella body of the Rustenburg Taxi Council which is called Northern Region Taxi Council (NORTACO). Before I delve into details about the process of access, a breakdown of the North West Taxi Industry will be provided. North West taxi industry is made up of five regions including North, South, East, West and Central. Thus, in the case of my study, the focus was on the Northern Region known as NORTACO. NORTACO’s offices are based in a location called Tlhabane which is five minutes away from Rustenburg town/taxi rank. NORTACO is divided into two ‘wings’, the business wing (corporate side of the industry) and the policy wing (deals with all political issues related to the industry). Access was gained through an insider.

On the first day that I was introduced to the chairman, he gave me a very detailed description of the taxi industry in Rustenburg. His information was beneficial and shed light onto the study in two ways. Firstly it broadened my scope and challenged my views about the taxi industry in general. Secondly the information gave me confidence since I had little knowledge about the taxi industry, particularly the NORTACO. This enabled the interview process to run smoothly and efficiently. NORTACO as a point of entrance was very helpful and contributed to the success of data collection.

The management had two approaches in place to help me identify the female taxi drivers and subsequently collect data. Firstly, they agreed among themselves that Mr Sebego who is the chairperson of the policy wing of NORTACO would take me to the taxi rank and introduce me to all the queue marshals of the 22 operating taxi
associations. After being introduced to the queue marshals, the marshals would then introduce me to all female taxi drivers (it is important to highlight here that not all the 22 taxi associations had female taxi drivers). Last, NORTACO management proposed that I get a letter from their offices and take it with me to show the female taxi drivers that I was allowed to conduct research, and that NORTACO was aware of my presence at the taxi rank.

They felt that I should go to the rank alone to get experience and a feel for the environment that female taxi drivers are exposed to on a daily basis. I was told that should the second approach (which was the researcher going to the taxi rank alone and locating the female taxi drivers) not materialise, we would then opt for the first approach (Mr Mandla\(^5\) who is the member of the executive committee of NORTACO was supposed to introduce the researcher to all queue marshals of each taxi association who would then help the researcher to locate the female taxi drivers). I was also informed on my arrival that women drivers were attending a four day First Aid Course which was aimed at empowering all females in the taxi industry. This training took place in a church in Rustenburg. Before I went to the taxi rank, I decided to attend the course with these women. The aim was to get participants for the study. The chairman of NORTACO personally took me to the venue where the course was taking place and introduced me to the NetCare facilitators and the secretary of WOMEN’S DESK. WOMEN’S DESK is an organisation established for women in the taxi industry and a platform for them to discuss all the issues that they struggle to raise in the presence of their male colleagues. The facilitator then introduced me to the women and I was only allowed to speak to them during their tea and lunch breaks. I attended the course for four days which started at 08:00 until 16:00. During the four days I spent there, only four women agreed to participate in the study. The majority of the people who attended the course were young unemployed females and men. Even though I was told that the aim of this training was to empower women, when I arrived for the course, I found that men also attended. Apparently men were encouraged to partake in the course as well, to be informed.

\(^5\) He is heading the policy wing of NORTACO.
3.6 Sampling techniques

A snowball sampling technique was employed to identify female taxi drivers in Rustenburg. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:168), snowball sampling is appropriate when members of a special population (in this case female taxi drivers) are difficult to locate. Babbie and Mouton (2001:168) contend that this procedure is put into practice by collecting data on the few members of the target population you can locate, and then asking those individuals to provide the information needed to locate other members of that population whom they happen to know. Before the data collection process commenced, a female taxi driver was identified who volunteered to participate in the study and help to identify other research participants.

Whilst this was the initial plan, by the time fieldwork was commenced, the woman who had volunteered to be part of the study had stopped working as a driver, because she struggled to balance work and family responsibilities. A different entry point was identified namely NORTACO. A list of all women involved with the taxi industry in Rustenburg was provided. The list comprised of 10 women some of whom were employed as taxi drivers, and others were what they (Rustenburg taxi industry) call ‘owner-drivers’ and women taxi owners.

The women who volunteered to participate in the study were asked if they could assist in identifying other female taxi drivers. However, it is important to note that not everyone on the list provided by NORTACO agreed to participate in the study. Even though the snowball sampling technique was successful in the beginning of data collection, the more time that was spent on the research site, the more complicated it got. Some women who had agreed to participate in the study cancelled at the last hour and even of those who remained, some were reluctant to participate. Despite the effort, time and energy spent in explaining what the study was about, the women were suspicious and reluctant to participate. Some thought I was ‘an investigator from the government.’ Mr Jackson, explained that the female taxi drivers were hesitant to be interviewed, because some had outstanding traffic fines and others were not registered. This meant that another sampling technique had to be employed to identify more female taxi drivers. The purposive sampling technique

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6 She told the researcher that her children were young and that as soon as they are old enough she will resume her work
7 Pseudonym a member of the NORTACO executive committee
was then opted for. All platforms that had female taxi drivers were visited and they were asked if they would participate and be interviewed.

In the end, I managed to interview 13 women, which was above the initial target of 10. In a nutshell, due to the fact that the focal point was in the perceptions and experiences of female taxi drivers, all women working as taxi drivers regardless of their age and marital status were considered.

3.7 Sample

As mentioned in the previous section, a total of 13 female taxi drivers took part in the study. The majority of the females were in their 50s (7). The eldest participant was 62 years old while the youngest participant was 34 years old. Very few females were in their late 40s (3). Out of the total of 13 participants, only one female refused to disclose her age. All of the women who participated in the study were parents. Most of the participants were divorcees (7), a considerable number (5) were single, and one of the participants was a widow. With regard to education status of the participants, some have primary school education and some have high school education. Only one woman has a college certificate. The following sections provide a discussion on the findings and analysis of the results.

This section aims to provide a background for the participants in order to illustrate the distribution of the interviewees by their gender, age, number of children, marital status, job category, highest level of education, and entry date into the taxi industry.

3.8 Qualitative Methods: Semi-structured Interviews and observation

3.8.1 Semi-structured interviews

For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to obtain relevant data to answer the research question. According to Wagner et al. (2012:134) a semi-structured interview is ‘where you will make use of an interview schedule or guide that defines the line of inquiry’. The approach was used to probe and explore more deeply the data emerging from the interviews.

Steinar (1996:125) contends that an interview is ‘an interpersonal situation, that is, a conversation between two partners (interviewer and interviewee) about a theme of mutual interest’ (which in this case will be the perceptions and experiences of
women working as taxi drivers). Steinar’s definition resonates with Wagner et al. (2012:133) who defined an interview as ‘a two-way conversation and a purposive interaction in which the interviewer asks the participant questions in order to collect data about the ideas, experiences, beliefs, views, opinion and behaviours of the participant’. These authors further argue that an interview is a ‘valuable source of information, provided that it is used correctly’. As a result, the aim of an interview is to obtain rich descriptive data that will help the researcher to see the world through the eyes of the participants. In his perspective, Steinar (1996) states that a semi-structured interview has a sequence of themes to be covered with suggested questions. However, there is openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given and the stories told by the subjects (Steinar, 1996). Through semi-structured interviews, it was possible to understand the meaning of female taxi drivers’ experiences and interpretations of their world.

Themes addressed in the interview schedule included the following:

- Female taxi drivers’ everyday activities;
- Working conditions in the taxi industry;
- Social relations and learning in the taxi industry;
- Circumstances that propelled women taxi drivers to join the taxi industry;
- Identity issues (for example, how do female taxi drivers make sense of their work and identity);
- Role conflict;
- Challenges they face in the taxi industry and strategies they use to survive.

Formal semi-structured interviews took place at different places with some being conducted at coffee shops, NORTACO offices, or participants’ homes. Towards the end of data collection, interviews were conducted at the taxi rank in the participants’ taxis during off peak times while they waited for passengers. It was impossible to conduct formal interviews with the women while they were driving, because they could not process the questions as they had to be vigilant on the road. Three formal interviews were also conducted with the men heading NORTACO to get their
perspective about women’s presence in the taxi rank. In addition, since the literature on the taxi industry in South Africa stated that the industry forms part of the informal sector due to limited research on the taxi industry, NORTACO board members (who are men) were interviewed to find out whether they deemed the industry as an informal or formal sector. Information was elicited from these men because they were leaders who had insight into the taxi industry and how it operated. The most beneficial result of these three interviews is that a lot of information about the origins, the ‘formalisations’ and the structure of the taxi industry in Rustenburg was provided. This was of great importance since there is little information on the history of the taxi industry in South Africa. Informal interviews were conducted with men and women playing different roles in the Rustenburg taxi rank (the interviews took place in the main Rustenburg taxi rank) varying from male taxi drivers, male taxi owners, men and women selling food in the rank, and taxi commuters, to obtain their views about the presence of female taxi drivers.

In addition to semi-structured interviews, photographs were taken during observations to add to the data. This was done before the formal interviews with the participants. According to Merriam (2002:5) words and pictures are used to convey what the researcher has learned about the phenomenon (female taxi drivers). The pictures provided a depiction of the context (taxi rank), the participants involved and the activities of interest. The majority of female taxi drivers, taxi commuters and other people selling different commodities at the rank, were not comfortable being photographed. Even though this was the case, the photographs were helpful in the sense that they pictured the kind of environment that these women work in and the remote places they transport people to. Mines in Rustenburg are located in the remote areas of each village, meaning that in order to reach the mines; one has to drive past secluded areas. Thus, these women can be easy hijacked and raped to and from the taxi rank in town.

Informal discussions were also conducted with the female taxi drivers while they transported taxi commuters to different destinations. These were aimed at finding out general things about these women, but it also helped to break the ice and make the participants comfortable and prepared them for formal interviews.
3.8.2 Observation

The first week in the field, I went to the rank for four days with the aim of observing the daily routine in order to gain an idea and feel for the kind of environment that female taxi drivers work in. I also travelled with some of these women when they were transporting taxi commuters. Some days I sat at the back in the taxi to observe the kind of interaction that occurred between the driver and the commuters. I made it a point to be the first one in the taxi so that I could see what commuters’ reactions were to seeing a woman drive a taxi. Observations involve the researcher’s ability to get close to people and making them feel comfortable enough with your presence so that you can observe and record information about their lives. Kelleher (cited in Babbie and Mouton, 2001:295) identified four fundamental advantages of using (participant) observation. Firstly, participant observation affords the researcher the opportunity to know the respondents better. Secondly, through participant observation, one is able to recognise the ‘previously unnoticed/ignored aspects to be seen’. Thirdly, ‘people’s actions are probably more telling than their verbal accounts and observing these are valuable’. Finally, it is unobtrusive and when obstructive, ‘the effect wears off in reasonable time’ Kelleher.

Researchers can choose to either be participants or non-participants, and to do direct or indirect observation. In the context of the present study, non-participant direct observation was used. Since qualitative research advocates studying the participants in their natural setting; the researcher observed the women drivers at their workplace, that is, rank, per se.

Again, I travelled for two days with each identified female taxi driver to observe the interaction between the drivers and commuters. Although commuters were not the focus of this study, there was an opportunity to have brief conversations with them on their view about women working in traditionally male-dominated industries, female taxi drivers in particular. The observation method was thus relevant for this topic as it provided a richer sense of how female taxi drivers experience their everyday lives. Even though I was less of a participant (including driving a taxi) and more of an observer, it was possible to get the sense of these women’s work.
3.9 Data analysis

Analysing data is an essential part of the research process because one is able to summarise the collected data and organise it in a manner that answers the research question of the study. As an integral part of the research process, data analysis helps to assess validity or what qualitative researchers call authenticity of findings. Interviews were recorded through a digital recorder and transcribed. The data was then coded using the open coding technique. According to Neuman (2000: 421) when open coding, the researcher locates and assigns initial codes or labels in a first attempt to condense the mass of data into categories. Open coding was used in an attempt to share insight into the female taxi drivers’ lives. An additional coding technique, colour coding, was used to assist in organising the data. In addition to listening to the audio recorded interviews and reading the field notes, the transcripts were read thoroughly with the aim of looking for critical terms, key events or themes in relation to the aim and objectives of the study. These key terms, events, and themes were coloured to allow for easy identification. Through the use of open and colour coding, all themes and concepts were refined, expanded and fully developed.

Since reflexivity grapples with issues relating to power and hierarchy in research, Hardy and Bryman (2004:141) explain that the same power relations exist in the analysis of data. Since the respondents are absent during data analysis, the researcher holds a powerful position and decision-making about the interpretation of the interviews (Hardy and Bryman, 2004: 141). As a result, the research could become exploitative and unequal. It is argued that the researcher is powerful because of her/his position, ‘that she invests nothing of herself in a project, while expecting other women to speak freely and frankly’ (Hardy and Bryman, 2004: 141).

When analysing data from a feminist perspective, it is fundamental that you ensure that the relationship between the researcher and the researched is non-exploitative. In other words, ‘the voices of the researched should be heard in their own words and ownership and interpretation of narratives should be shared between the [researcher] and participants in an egalitarian manner’ (Grbich, 2006: 67).

Hardy and Bryman (2004: 142) highlighted a few things that researchers undertaking a feminist stance do to minimise unequal and exploitative relationship between the researchers and researched. Researchers need to obtain feedback from the
respondents on the interpretations and analysis of research material. Even though this is ideal, in practice it may be challenging to do. Hardy and Bryman (2004) contend that getting feedback from respondents may be difficult because firstly, the analysis may be too abstract for respondents to comprehend. In the context of the present study, this would be impossible because of two reasons. Firstly, due to the competitive nature of the taxi industry, female participants would not have time to sit down and peruse the data analysis. Secondly, all the interviews were conducted in Setswana because participants were not comfortable speaking English. So for them to peruse the data analysis would be difficult.

A second challenge with involving the participants in data-analysis is the issue of resources and the time-frame of the project. Thirdly another issue that a researcher may face is the disagreement of interpretations and whose views would take precedence (Hardy and Bryman, 2004: 142). These suggestions would be ideal but would be impractical due to factors such as funding, time-frame of projects, language, and nature of the topic like the one investigated in this study where there are high rates of illiteracy, competition, the time factor and issues of trust and openness.

Therefore, since these techniques can be impractical, in an attempt to reduce power inequality between myself and the respondents, I elucidated the nature of my research, clarifying who I was, what my interests in the topic were and what I hoped to do with the data that they voluntarily provided.

3.10 Ethical considerations

According to Neuman (2000: 376) ‘the direct personal involvement of a field researcher in the social lives of other people raises many ethical dilemmas’. It was the researcher’s responsibility to be ethical, that is, to be honest and brief the participants on what the purpose of the study was. This was done using the language that they understand, which in this case, was Setswana. In addition, it was the researcher’s responsibility to be respectful to all the female taxi drivers who agreed to participate in the study. Consequently, the respondents were asked to sign an informed consent form, which delineated what the purpose of the research was. Equally important the informed consent indicated that they could opt out whenever they felt that they did not want to participate in the study any longer. Participants
were guaranteed that confidentiality will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms.

3.11 Self – Reflexivity

Merriam (2002:5) posits that a researcher as an instrument in the research process ‘can expand his or her understanding through nonverbal as well as verbal communication, process immediately, clarify and summarise material, check with respondents for accuracy of interpretation and explore unusual or unanticipated responses’. While the researcher as an instrument has advantages, Merriam (2002:5) makes the point and warns social scientists/researchers of the limitations of a human instrument and biases that might have an impact on the study. She suggests that instead of attempting to eliminate these biases or what she calls “subjectivities”, it is essential to identify and monitor them as to how they may be shaping the collection and interpretation of data (Merriam, 2002: 5). This calls for the researcher adopting a reflexive approach to her analysis.

A reflexive/reflexivity approach has been widely acknowledged in the social sciences. It helps with maintaining the quality of the research and the process thereof. Since the study was grounded in the feminist theory, it was my responsibility to continuously evaluate, criticise, and question how my experiences have or have not influenced the stages of the research process. Mruck and Breuer (2003: 3) and Ortclipp (2008: 695) state that reflexivity is about researchers talking about themselves, that is, one’s presuppositions, choices, experiences and action during the research process. Harrison et al. (cited in Ortclipp, 2008: 695) point out that qualitative research, particularly that which is situated within feminist, critical and poststructuralist paradigms, is ‘presented in a way that makes it clear how the researcher’s own experiences, values, and positions of privilege in various hierarchies have influenced their research interests, the way they choose to do their research, and the ways they choose to represent their research findings’.

Guillemin and Gillam (2004: 275) concur, noting that reflexivity is about a researcher’s reflection on how she/he constructs knowledge from the research process and what sorts of factors influence the researcher’s production of information and how these influences are revealed in the planning, conduct, and writing up of the research. Therefore, the present study was influenced by my own
experience as a taxi commuter when I rode in a taxi driven by a woman in Rustenburg. I was amazed because this was not only my first experience seeing a woman drive a taxi, but also the first time being a passenger of a female taxi driver. In this moment of astonishment, my mind was abruptly filled with numerous questions about this woman and other female taxi drivers in the country.

Having experienced hostility and being cursed by male taxi drivers as a taxi commuter, I began to question how this female taxi driver survives the environment, having to work side-by-side with male taxi drivers (famously known for their arrogance, rudeness and use of vulgar language). Seeing a woman driving a taxi raised curiosity and interest in exploring this woman’s life experiences and other women doing a similar job in the taxi industry. During field work, a journal was kept to express all sorts of feelings that were evoked pertaining to research and the setting as a whole. The feelings ranged from being astonished, curious, excited, scared, nervous, empathy, disappointment, furious and exhausted. Ortclipp (2008: 695) asserts that ‘keeping self-reflective journals is a strategy that can facilitate reflexivity, that is, the researcher is able to examine personal assumptions and goals and clarify individual belief systems and subjectivities’.

According to Grbich (2006: 670), when taking a feminist stance, it is fundamental as a researcher to reveal your position ‘in relation to the position you take on the topic’ (which in this case was female taxi drivers in Rustenburg). This means that one needs to reflect on one’s emotions and values, explaining how they ‘impacted on your view of reality and how this view of reality will be managed in the data gathering, analytical and interpretive phase’ (Grbich, 2006: 670). Thus, the one mistake the researcher made when going into the field was making assumptions about the participants’ workplace. It was based on the fact that I have been a taxi commuter all my life and have had bad encounters with the taxi drivers and all the newspaper articles confirming my views (generally concluded that the industry is a dangerous and harsh world) about the industry and reporting that both public and private transport users complained about the taxi drivers’ behaviour. On the contrary, during fieldwork and based on the participants’ responses, I realised how flawed my assumptions were about these women’s world and that not everything was as black and white as I presumed. The following section discusses the strengths and limitations of the study.
3.12 Strengths and limitations of the study

Even though some feminist researchers have criticised and rejected the conventional research methods because they are androcentric, some feminists use the established methods in a prudent way. They do so by contextualising the methods within a feminist stance. In response to the feminist debate about feminist research methods, Reinharz and Manson (cited in Sarantakos, 2005: 61) contend that ‘there is no research method that is exclusively done for and employed by feminists’.

The common celebrated and acknowledged conventional method by feminists is a qualitative research method. Feminists who advocate the use of this method believe that is brings the researcher closer to the researched and it is best suited to give the accounts of female experiences (Sarantakos, 2005: 61). The existing debates between the social and natural sciences and among the feminists about methods indicate that both methods have advantages and disadvantages.

Therefore, as a researcher, it was vital to highlight the strengths and weakness of the methods used in the study. Since the focus of the study was on the perceptions and experiences of female taxi drivers in Rustenburg, a qualitative research approach made it possible to gain knowledge and insight about the female taxi drivers. It ensured the collection of rich, deep and detailed data about the female taxi drivers’ lives.

Semi-structured interviews were the main tool used to collect data. Observations were used to supplement the main tool. The advantage of using interviews in the context of the present study was that rich and in-depth information about the lives of female taxi drivers was extracted. Probing through the interviews was one of the ways to ensure trustworthiness. Rubin and Rubin (2005: 4) point out that through interviews, ‘the researcher elicits depth and detail about the research topic by following up on answers given by the interviewee during the discussion’. In addition, face-to-face semi-structured interviews are a commonly used method by the feminists because one is able to capture ‘multitude of subjects’ views of a theme’ (Wambui, 2006: 5). It makes it possible to see the respondent’s complex world. The disadvantage about the face-to-face semi-structured interviews is that some participants may have difficulty opening up to you because of your age, gender and education. Some of the respondents struggled to open up when certain questions
were asked because of their age. They felt that I was too young to understand or for them to share certain issues. To get the participants to discuss the sensitive topics, questions were then carefully rephrased. Therefore the use of a qualitative research approach, semi-structured interviews and observations allowed the participants’ voices to come to the fore.

The aims and objectives were not initially understood by the participants. It was difficult to gain their trust as they thought that the researcher was sent by the government, police or taxi council to investigate them. To address this issue, letters from the University of Johannesburg and NORTACO were provided to them and explained in the language they understood.

Observations at the first stage of fieldwork were helpful. Here the researcher opted for a complete observer role. The researcher was able to get a feel for the female taxi driver’s world. However, the non-participant role was not efficient enough to understand the world of female taxi drivers. Trust and knowing the respondents better could have been better established if participant observation was employed. This was not possible because of limited funding and the long procedures that one has to go through before becoming a taxi driver which could have taken longer than two years, getting a license, permit and finding the job as a taxi driver. Due to the nature of the taxi rank, which consists of mostly men, during observations, I was sexually harassed. Men made sexual comments about my body. This made me feel unsafe. Since only two women spoke about sexual harassment, had I employed participant observation, I would have been in a better position to probe and understand exactly what they meant by being sexually harassed. But from the sexual comments that were made about me, it was clear that a lot of women go through the same thing without realising that they are actually being sexually harassed. One of the challenges that I faced was related to my age. It was often challenging to gain information from participants due to my young age. Half of the time participants were reluctant to disclose and discuss sensitive or personal issues.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research methodology that was used in the process of data collection and analysis. Since the topic of female taxi drivers in South Africa is a relatively unexplored phenomenon, a qualitative methodological approach enabled
the extraction of rich and in-depth information from the participants. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and observation using the snowball sampling technique. In the following chapter the findings of the research will be discussed, as well as how these identified themes link with the literature review and answer the research question.
CHAPTER FOUR: THE EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE TAXI DRIVERS

Discussion of Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on the experiences of females working in the taxi industry in Rustenburg, South Africa. Building on Khosa’s (1997: 27) work, the chapter explores a number of critical issues surrounding gender relations in the minibus taxi industry. Through interviews and observations, the study aimed to capture the possible challenges that female taxi drivers face in the minibus taxi industry, the kind of strategies these women employ to cope in their workplace, and the forms of resistance female taxi drivers exhibit in these male-dominated environments. The interviews also explored how the female taxi drivers negotiate their identities within such male-dominated spaces on an everyday basis. Interviews were conducted with women across all three of the job categories within the South African taxi industry, namely taxi operators/owners, taxi owner-drivers and taxi drivers. The majority of the women that were interviewed for this study were taxi operators, followed by owner-female drivers, and lastly the female taxi drivers. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section introduces the reader to the participants regarding their reasons for joining the taxi industry which help us understand or establish whether it is a discriminatory process or not. The second section provides a detailed discussion and analysis of the challenges that female taxi drivers face as they navigate their way in the taxi industry. The third section discusses the strategies that female taxi drivers use to survive the masculine environment that they find themselves in on a daily basis. The final section is a summary of the chapter.

4.2. Motives for entering/joining and working in the minibus taxi industry

Since the taxi industry has been and continues to be a male-dominated industry, one would wonder what propelled these women to seek employment in this industry and how they found out about this occupation. With regard to the latter, most of the female drivers entered the taxi industry through word-of-mouth from their friends who knew that they were looking for a job. These women partly found themselves working in the taxi industry due to a lack of education. Alice is the only one who
entered the minibus taxi industry because she could not meet the requirements for driving a bus. Two more inherited the business from their parents, and one participant joined the taxi industry after divorcing her husband who had a taxi business.

Usually women join male-dominated industries because of the opportunities and benefits (such as career advancement and better wages) that come with the jobs. However, this is not the case for most of the participants of this study. Alice is the only one of the thirteen women who claimed that in addition to providing for her family, she joined the taxi industry to challenge the gender stereotypes, that is, to challenge the view that a woman cannot drive a taxi. Alice is a 52 year old widow, a mother of four children, and owns two minibus taxis. She is also the only woman in the Rustenburg taxi industry who makes long distance trips, primarily to Lesotho and the Eastern Cape. According to Alice, she has always known that she will end up working jobs that were considered to be masculine. From a young age, she specifically had a love for driving. This stems from her childhood experiences of avoiding playing with dolls or playing ‘house’. Instead, she was always playing with her brothers and engaging in activities that would traditionally be labelled as ‘masculine’. For instance, before she was introduced to toy cars made from wire, she used to mimic cars by driving bricks. Members of her community found her very strange because if she was not with the boys, she was climbing trees. Alice said that:

*I have always loved driving from childhood. I was never like you normal girls; I used to play with cars that my brothers had made from wire. So I would drive those cars. And my love for driving continued until I was a young adult and then I asked my parents to take me to driving school. I also wanted to show people that driving is not only for men but also for women.*

Alice said that working in the transport sector was not her first option rather her dream was to become a policewoman. After she completed her matric and she could not get into a police college, she asked her parents to help her get a driving license so that she could drive a bus. She said that she received her driving license in 1984, yet in the following year she could not find a job
anywhere, and was unemployed for the whole of 1985. This was very frustrating for her since:

*I was very frustrated of being unemployed and not making it in the bus sector.*

This did not stop her from looking for a job. Due to lack of the right channels and lack of information in the bus sector, Alice said a man from her village who owned a fleet of taxis offered her a job as a taxi driver. Accepting the job offer meant two things to her. Firstly, it meant leaving her family behind in the small village outside Rustenburg were she grew up. Secondly, this meant she would not have time to go and play soccer on Sundays with her brothers.

*He had taxis in Northam*, they were looking for a driver and this man asked me if that’s fine with me… the thing is I loved soccer and would not miss any match. When my brothers played at the grounds, I used to coach them. So I asked this man who told me that they were looking for a driver if I have to work on Sundays. I didn’t want to miss soccer on Sundays… It took a while before I could accept the job offer which I eventually did.

Although while growing up, she used to hear that driving is supposed to be a man’s job, Alice said that she was convinced that she can drive any car and indeed she worked hard to prove society wrong. Due to her ‘deviant behaviour’ of doing men’s work she was viewed as not a ‘proper girl’ while growing up. Alice mentioned that people from her community used to ask why she behaved like a boy and they would tell her father that it would have been better if she was a boy.

In the case of Sweetness, Lesego, Mavis, Matilda, Felicia, Phinda and Cynthia, they joined the taxi industry because they needed to support their families and since they started off as domestic workers, they expressed that the money was not enough and most of them said that in their former jobs as domestic workers they were discriminated against because they were black. Sweetness is a 62 year old divorced

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8 Northam (where Northam Platinum Limited is based) is a town in the Waterberg District Municipality in the Limpopo province of South Africa.
mother of three, who is one of the few women who began to work in the taxi industry in the early 1970s and currently owns five taxis. She said the following:

*Before I joined the taxi industry; I worked at the drycleaner. Before that I worked as a domestic worker in Gauteng, in the north of Johannesburg. I then realised that I did not have a future if I continued working as a domestic worker especially because I had children. I must say though that I have learned a lot while I working as a domestic worker and I realised that I was not earning enough money to provide for my family particularly my children, I had left them with my mother who was also struggling, working hard on the farm.*

It is clear that female taxi drivers did not generally join the taxi industry having in mind to challenge the gender stereotypes. Komane (2013: 66), who did a study of female bus drivers, also found only a small number of her participants who claimed to have joined the public transport sector because they wanted to challenge the stereotypes about women being bad drivers and the inability of women to drive.

Most of them expressed similar views that as divorced women, they had to take care of their children and coming from impoverished backgrounds, they had to find work and provide for their families. Khosa (1997) found in his study that female taxi drivers joined the industry because they were either retrenched or could not find alternative employment. Khosa (1997: 31) asserts that people in the informal sector (this includes his participants both female and male drivers) are there because of ‘economic circumstances not by choice’. This is similar to the present study. Although women in this study were never retrenched, economic circumstances forced them to join the taxi industry. Chuchu (2011: 58) also found similar reasons that some female bus drivers joined the bus sector to look after their children. Chuchu (2011: 58) said ‘they all are single mothers and wanted employment so as to be able to provide for their children’. She also asked the management what they thought were the reasons for women to work as bus drivers and they reported that it is ‘because of enabling legislation otherwise they would not be employing as many women as they have up to now’. These findings contradict the literature on women employed in male-dominated industries in the formal sector which found that women are attracted to masculine jobs because of the benefits that come with working in
those occupations such as high wages, extensive training, development programmes and promotions (Martin and Barnard, 2013). The economic circumstances that force women to work in male-dominated occupations such as female taxi drivers could be attributed to the high rates of unemployment and female unemployment in South Africa.

4.3 Challenges faced by female taxi drivers.

The findings indicate that female taxi drivers are under-represented and experience gender inequality in the taxi industry. This stands in contradiction to what the Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998 stipulates that ‘no person may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds including race, gender, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth’. Legislation dictates that women are allowed to enter any space, yet evidence to the contrary shows that they do not or they do so to a small extent. Studies on gender and the workplace, particularly those that focus on women employed in male-dominated jobs, confirmed that regardless of initiatives and legislation enacted to incorporate women in the ‘masculine’ jobs, women continue to be under-represented and that gender inequality is persistent (Acker, 1990; Cockburn, 1991; Crompton, 2006; Domenico and Jones, 2006; Halford and Leonard, 2001; Jacobs and Schain, 2006; Khosa, 1997; and Prescott and Bogg, 2011). Past literature thus shows that women are under-represented within gendered spaces dominated by men. Martin and Barnard (2013: 12) argue that even though the South African female labour force has been on the increase as a result of equity legislation and improved education and work opportunities, progress with gender transformation and equity is unsatisfactory. In an attempt to understand why this is the case, a few explanations were provided which includes patriarchy, gender relations, class relations, power dynamics, gendered organisational cultures, dual responsibilities of balancing between work and family responsibilities just to mention a few (see Acker, 1990; Martin and Barnard, 2013; Newman, 1995 and Tshoaedi, 2008). Therefore in the context of the present study, two broad themes were identified as evidence to illuminate whether gender inequality exists in the taxi industry and whether or not men resist equality within this industry. In order to answer the main research
question (which was to investigate what the perceptions and experiences of female taxi drivers are in Rustenburg South Africa), the following broad themes were identified: challenges in striking a balance between working at odd hours and still attending to family responsibilities; lack of facilities (for example restroom facilities) for women; safety issues; bullying on the job; the glass ceiling; men’s fears and contempt for women in the taxi industry; and lack of solidarity. The following section provides a detailed discussion of the above identified themes.

4.3.1 Striking a balance between working odd hours and family responsibilities

Even though both men and women are affected by the challenge of balancing work and family responsibilities, women are considered to be most affected by work-family dilemmas when children come into play. This is because of traditional gender roles where women were confined to the home. Another reason for women to experience ‘multiple role conflict’/work-life balance is the fact that ‘organisations are still structured and function in ways that do not always support women’s career patterns and their need to integrate work with family responsibilities’ (Cha and Frone cited in Martin and Barnard, 2013: 12). According to Tshoaedi (1999: 12) although a large number of women have joined the labour market, they are still responsible for the domestic sphere in the family which results in women being unable to grow in their careers.

So it is not surprising that also in the context of the present study women reported struggling to balance their work and family responsibilities. Striking a balance between working odd hours and family responsibilities for female taxi drivers refers to the struggle to run their homes and also remain committed to their jobs at the same time, which is highly competitive and time consuming. Because of the demanding/extreme hours that these women have to work it is difficult for them to take care of their children, manage their houses, and attend social society activities like stokvels, funerals and church.

Felicia, a divorced mother of six who at the time of the interview was employed as a taxi driver, said the following:

*Eish ausi [sister] as a single [divorced] mother of six children, this job is not easy because even though I knock off at 16:30 for 17:00 I get home*
late because before I drop the taxi off at the owner’s house, I first stop by the garage to fill the petrol tank which helps me in the morning to avoid the long queue at the garage[petrol station], then take it to the owner’1s house and then go and catch two taxis to my house. By the time I get home, the children are sleeping, sometimes they do not eat or they eat bread because I am too tired to cook. And in the morning when I go to work usually they are still sleeping. So it is very difficult. I spend minutes with them. While at work, I ask myself if they bathed thoroughly, if they ate…since I am not there to see them off to school, you wonder if they did go to school or not….It is very sad that my job is so demanding that I cannot be a mother to my children, it is very bad that you do not know about their whereabouts because you are hardly home with them.

Kgomotso, a 58 year old mother of one child who is epileptic and an owner of one taxi, observed that being a mother who drives a taxi is the most difficult thing to do. She said:

When Didi\(^9\) was young, it was difficult to leave her at home. Even though my mother has been supportive, helping me with my child but you worry a lot, asking yourself that what if she gets fits [epileptic seizures] and I am not around. Even if my mother calls me, I cannot run home because I work the opposite route to our home. The job is tiring to the point that you cannot do house chores.

Lerato who is a 56 year old single parent of three children and an owner of two taxis expressed similar feelings in finding a balance between driving a taxi and handling family responsibilities. She pointed out that:

Although I have children who are teenagers and can take care of themselves while I am at work, being a single parent with no relatives around makes it difficult to balance work and home affairs. You must remember that even though I have two taxis of which I drive one, it doesn’t mean that everything is smooth sailing, I have to work the same

\(^9\) Didi refers to Kgomotso’s daughter.
way I was when I was employed to make money and pay the taxis’ instalments.

Pat is a 49 year old single mother of three children who currently works as a secretary at the NORTACO offices and owns one taxi but is no longer a taxi driver. She told the researcher that during her driving years in the taxi industry it was tough for her:

When I was a taxi driver, I didn’t have time for anything, when I knocked off from work, I would find my children sleeping. Since I hardly saw them, during off peaks, I would rush home and see them for couple of minutes......the fact that I could not be a mother to my children because of my work, really was painful but I had to get used to it because my job provided them with food and clothes.

The above narrations indicate that these women struggled and still struggle to balance their work and family responsibilities. Although work-family balance affects all working women in the society, what is unique about these female taxi drivers is the fact that their jobs require them to leave their houses at the crack of dawn and knock off late in the evening. Unlike women that work 08:00 to 16/17:00pm, female taxi drivers do not have this opportunity where they leave their houses when the children are awake and make sure that everything is in order before they head for work and also being able to cook supper for their children when they get home. Work-family balance challenges improve when one has a strong support system, such as receiving help from parents or extended family members (which is a common phenomenon in the black culture), and the age of the children. Some of the participants indicated that it would have not been possible to work in the industry if it was not for the help of their parents. Others said that their children were old enough to take care of themselves which put them at ease. However, Phinda said that even though her children are teenagers, they are still young; they need to be supervised and monitored. Phinda is a 56 year old single parent of three children and a driver-owner of two taxis. She said:

Even though my children are older, they need to be supervised. I mean when I get home, I find the house in a messy state, no water in the house and yet the children are there. So if I am not there to tell them what to do,
they do not do anything. So I usually do all the house chores on Sundays after church.

Khosa (1997) found that work-family balance was a challenge for both female and male taxi drivers. For instance, his female participants complained about their job stating that it made it impossible to spend time with their loved ones. One female taxi driver even regretted that her children were more familiar with their domestic helper than with their own mother. Khosa (1997: 32) argues that driving a taxi for women is ‘daunting’. In addition, he (1997) found that married women were complaining that their work puts a strain on their marriages. This is not the case with the present study because none of the women who participated in this study were married at the time the interviews were conducted. During the interviews, I was only able to explore their perceptions of the challenges of being married and working in the taxi industry. Some of them said that getting married and working as a taxi driver is a bad combination. Lesego mentioned:

*The job is demanding, when do you get time to be a wife...when you are a wife, when your husband comes back from work he is supposed to find a warm plate of food waiting for him...you do not get time to wash your husband's clothes and take care of him.*

This indicates that Lesego has particular normative gender beliefs about the roles of men and women in a marriage. This could also suggest why there are so few female taxi drivers in the taxi industry. The women’s dual role has been used to explain under-representation of women in the workplace. Some of the participants reported not dating their male colleagues because the men do not see them as women or ‘marriage material’ because they are involved in male jobs, that of driving a taxi and in some cases of operating a taxi business. To some it’s a choice not to date male colleagues because of their daily exposure to their sexual and alcohol risky behaviours. During interviews with men, they expressed that having a wife who works in an environment surrounded by so many men is not healthy because it breeds cheating. Furthermore these men mentioned that taxi driving is appropriate for ‘older women’ and not for younger women. The majority of the participants mentioned that they were dating married men and even though reasons for this
behaviour were not explored in-depth, perhaps they do not see themselves fit to be married because of their work. Rita said:

*Who would want to marry a woman like me who spends most of her time at work with men?*

In addition to this, Kgomotso expressed a different view about why they do not date men in the taxi industry was that a lot of people in the taxi industry are sick of HIV/AIDS. She stated:

*My darling, dating here [in the taxi industry] is not good, these people [taxi drivers] are sick…a lot of people here have HIV/AIDS.*

Kgomotso is the only one who raised concerns about HIV/AIDS which is a major challenge in the truck industry. According to Naysmith and Rubicam (2013: 580) South Africa reported a shortage of trained and quality truck drivers and that the industry loses about 3000 drivers per annum. The two major factors affecting the labour shortage is a lack of adequate training and testing programmes and the impact of HIV/AIDS on male truck drivers. The effects of HIV/AIDS in the taxi industry may not be explicit because of the exploitative nature of the taxi industry where employers fire and hire as they wish.

Having said this, things appear to change, however, when women are able to advance their career in the taxi industry. Women operators experience the challenge of balancing work and family differently based on their position in the taxi industry. The achievement of owning more than three taxis and moving up in the taxi industry hierarchy allows for flexibility. As a result, they are able to run their homes better. The following were some of the accounts of female operators who reminisced about how it was when they started and how it is now.

Cynthia is a 52 year old female taxi operator/owner of four taxis. She is a divorced mother of two who had the following to say about how her life in the taxi industry has changed over time:

*When I started as a taxi driver, it was tough, remember I was working for someone, I used to wake up at 1am and knocked off at 20:00 and sometimes 21:00 and then when I got home, children are sleeping…*
would take a bath then go to bed. I didn’t have time to clean my house, do laundry and all these other things women do at their houses. It was tough but I had no choice but to persevere until things were better…but now that I am an owner it’s better, I am my own boss; I can take a leave when I want to and spend time with my children and grandchildren. I have time to attend funerals.

It is apparent from this account, as well as others, that work as female taxi drivers while having to take care of family responsibilities and the mere nature of the taxi industry often creates numerous challenges. However, it is also apparent that the situation can become better as they progress in the industry. These findings relate to two major topics that have always run through work and gender research, namely traditional female roles and the class issue. For instance, the fact that these women do and did the same job does not mean that they experience the work-family matters the same way. Some scholars have always viewed work and family as independent entities. But the feminists contend that ‘families are neither separate from wider systems of male domination nor automatically solidarity nor altruistic in their own right’ (Ferree, 1990: 866). Having said this, the above accounts indicate that not only are these women suffering from the dual burden of work and care disproportionately because of the above mentioned reason, but also class. The higher you move up the ladder in the taxi industry as a woman, the easier the dual burden of work and care becomes. This means that one is in a position to afford to hire a domestic helper and to take one’s children to after-care centres. This was the case with most of the female operators who reported that running a minibus taxi business was not so much of a challenge because they have domestic help at home. To confirm this, Alice said:

I have a helper at home who looks after the children, she is very good, and I do not know if I was going to cope without her help.

Due to the challenge of balancing work and family responsibilities, it is argued that many African women view and opt for informal sector employment as the only ‘paid work that can provide them with enough flexibility, autonomy, and geographical proximity to home to allow for the combination of paid economic activity and family responsibilities’ (Mokomane, 2004: 2). Mokamane’s (2004) argument that African women opt for the informal sector for employment due to it offering an amount of
flexibility and autonomy, is not true in the case of my study. Based on the findings of this study, I argue that most African women find themselves within the informal sector because of economic circumstances as a result of lack of education qualification, and not because they are seeking jobs that offer flexibility. In the case of the taxi industry, flexibility and autonomy are dependent on whether one is employed as a taxi driver or if one is an owner-driver. Thus, there is less flexibility and autonomy for women employed as taxi drivers while those that are owner-drivers and taxi operators have flexibility and autonomy. Most of the female participants, particularly owner-drivers and taxi operators, remarked that the challenge of balancing work and family responsibilities is lessened once you are your own boss. Again this indicates class relations in the taxi industry, that is, money or affordability empower people and enables them to penetrate and access things that the people at the bottom of the hierarchy cannot access or reach.

4.3.2 Gendered spaces in the taxi industry

The way taxi drivers’ facilities are structured is an indication that it is not a woman’s occupation. The study found that participants face non-female-friendly environments. In particular, participants reported a lack of female-friendly hygienic facilities (such as toilets) and eating facilities. Female taxi drivers especially complained about not having toilets at all in some places, and in some taxi ranks where toilets are available, they are not clean. Men are said to be at an advantage since they can urinate anywhere compared to women. However, the female taxi drivers seem to cope well under these circumstances through the adaptation of male behaviours.

Alice said that:

Toilets can be a challenge especially since I am always going to Lesotho. When I am in Lesotho it is always a mission to go to the toilet, because they need a passport to access the toilets. But me, I am a carefree spirit and the way I am used to the male drivers, when I am pressed, I stand behind my taxi and urinate, the way the men do it and they would ask me what am I doing, I would tell them to leave me alone because they do it as well.
What is worth noting here is that Alice learned to cope with this challenge by ‘being like a man’; she urinates where the men would urinate, in an exposed area. Through this act, it appears that she challenges the gender roles/stereotypes in environments, which is not a self-conscious act but rather a coping strategy, like the taxi industry, men can urinate where they like but women have to look for a proper toilet to do so. Alice’s male colleagues were astonished to see her urinate in front of them and they perceive this behaviour as abnormal, yet if it was a man urinating, it would have been considered normal.

In contrast, Matilda, a 56 year old mother of two and a taxi operator (she was the only female operator in the study who was driving one of her own taxis as she was struggling to find an employee) complained more about the unhygienic environment that they are exposed to on a daily basis and mentioned that:

> Even though there are public toilets at the taxi rank, they are not clean which tells you that women taxi drivers are not catered for, because men do not have to worry about dirty toilets because they stand behind their taxis and pee or anywhere they want and we as women, cannot do that. Imagine if I was to pull up my skirt and pee, what people would say about me as a woman.

Of all the 13 participants, Lebo is the only woman who said that she works very well with her male colleagues in her taxi association. They respect her and she is never bullied. In fact Lebo stated that she is taken care of and they are like a family. For instance, she said that they sometimes eat and play cards together. She is a 57 year old single mother of two adopted children and owner of one taxi. She said the following:

> There are toilets but they are dirty and it’s quite a distance to get to them, if you go, there is a possibility that you will find your taxi being pushed backwards in the queue.

These stories confirm the gendered nature of organisations, as discussed in Chapter Two. None of the female operators complained about the toilets being a challenge to them since they spent most of their time working from home or at the taxi association offices where there are proper facilities available to them. However, those that are
employed as taxi drivers and owner-drivers experience some difficulties with the lack of proper facilities at taxi ranks. The hierarchisation of the taxi industry shapes these women’s experiences differently.

4.3.3 Safety issues

The minibus taxi industry is known to be a dangerous business where people often get harassed, hijacked, and even killed. So, not surprisingly, women in this study mentioned that the lack of safety is a serious concern to them operating in the taxi industry. For them, fears relating to rape and being hijacked are of great significance.

For instance, on one hand Pat said the following about her general sense of physical safety:

Eish ausi [sister] this work is not safe, we are afraid of being raped and hijacked. I have never been raped or hijacked but I have heard so many stories of people being hijacked and killed. There is too much crime in this country. But what can we do? [She had a very sad face when she spoke about this issue].

On the other hand, Kgomotso mentioned that issues of safety for her relate to being sabotaged by her male colleagues:

Darling, taxi industry is not safe; these men burned my taxi in an attempt to get rid of me. There is a lot of theft that takes place at the rank, they steal tyres.

These acts of sabotaging speak to the issues of patriarchy and power dynamics in the taxi industry. The burning of Kgomotso’s taxi was a way of men attempting to mark or make it clear who is the ‘head of the house’. These are some of the practices or means used to get rid of women particularly those who come across as a threat to male power in the taxi industry.

Sweetness is a 62 year old divorced mother of three children who is among the few females who started to drive taxis in the early 1970s and currently owns five taxis. When asked if she has ever felt unsafe at work, she responded:
Well, back then [when she was a taxi driver] things were different, it was safe to be a female taxi driver and male passengers would never attempt to rape you but now eish, since you always hear on the news women being raped all the time, the taxi industry is not safe because you might be raped while at work since in the early hours we transport more men than women who are going to the mines.

This quote shows the differences between South Africa in the past (that is during the apartheid era) and now (post-apartheid) in relation to the vulnerability of women in the country. From Sweetness’s account, one can say that safety was not an issue for female taxi drivers. Currently, with the high rates of crime, safety is one of the major concerns for these women. I argue that even though the above quote could suggest that women were less vulnerable in the past compared to post-apartheid South Africa, the level of vulnerability is different due to the political dimension attached to it. For instance during apartheid, women were more vulnerable firstly for being women, second for being black and because of their geographical spaces.

Lesego also referred to the fear of being raped:

*Even though I have never been a victim of rape, it is scary to drive at night or in the early hours of the morning because of fellow colleagues who have been hijacked and we come across men who are bitter so you will never know when your D day to be raped is.*

These women told me that men are bitter because working with women is like an insult as they have always known a woman’s place to be at home. The bitterness evolves when some of the women outperform their male colleagues.

Lebo also shared the following experience about working late into the evening without proper security:

*My job is not safe, I am afraid of being hijacked; they have hijacked some drivers of my taxi association. When you get hijacked they either kill you or take the taxi or they leave you in the bushes and take the taxi, so imagine if you are a woman, there is a possibility that you might be raped as well.*
Cynthia is the only woman in this study who reported being a victim of an attempted hijacking:

*Driving a taxi is dangerous, we get hijacked especially month end, sometimes they kill the driver and take the taxi. I have been hijacked while I was employed as a taxi driver. This happened at one of the mines (Ntabeni). The man got into the taxi like all the passengers and since he was the last one to get off, he hit me but I fought back, this man struggled, neh, and fortunately the taxi had a remote [alarm button], then I pressed the remote, the alarm went off and then people came to my rescue.*

With regard to the issue of safety, all women reported feeling unsafe at work. This issue was of concern to the female taxi drivers since they are vulnerable and susceptible to of being hijacked and/or raped. However, for female operators, even though they acknowledge high rates of hijacking and rape in the taxi industry, safety is a thing of the past that they reminisced about. The biggest fear they have now, is that their taxis will be stolen and their drivers killed. Rape is one of the pressing challenges that South African women and children face. According to Rape Crisis (www.rapecrisis.org.za) between 2011 and 2012 there were 64514 sexual offences reported and that in South Africa, the official statistic quoted is that ‘a person is sexually assaulted or raped as often as every 8 minutes’. Due to the stigma attached to rape, many incidents of raped go unreported; rape crisis states that the numbers could be higher than the above given figure. Furthermore, lack of safety for female taxi drivers also means having to deal with the risk of being bullied, as the following section will show.

4.3.4 Bullying

One of the challenges that female taxi drivers encounter is bullying. In the taxi industry, particularly at the taxi rank, there is a general trend when you are a new taxi operator/driver to make way for established operators/drivers when queuing for loads. This is a common problem for all new operators/drivers, regardless of their gender, to go through this initiation or orientation phase. In addition, the initiation also includes a specific ritual on the first day of work. New operators/drivers are expected to buy three flavours of cold drinks (varies from one taxi association to the other) and then these flavours are mixed together in one glass which should be
drunk, whereafter one should belch in order to be welcomed into the industry. The newcomer is then also given a nickname (Mavis, 2012). The initiation is short-lived, however, during the fieldwork phase I observed many female taxi drivers who were still stuck in this perpetual orientation/initiation phase. Some of the female participants get assimilated in the orientation phase. For instance some of them no longer use their real names and stick to the nicknames given during the initiation.

When asked about their first day at work, Rita, a 34 year old mother of one child who inherited her father’s taxi business, remarked:

I used to cry a lot when I was new at the taxi rank, I was not coping because these men used to cut load queues, and I was very frustrated.

Another female participant expressed similar views about their first day at work. Felicia declared:

Iyoh! it was not easy for me when I was new in this place, I was afraid and my male colleagues used to cut queues which made me angry and sometimes discouraged because the fewer loads you take, the less money you make, and since we are paid based on performance, that is, the more money you make, the more you get paid.

Pat who is among the few female taxi drivers interviewed who joined the taxi industry in the 1980s, claimed:

When you are new at the taxi rank, they give you a name, mine is Senthaolele (actress’s names). It was tough, I was afraid, I mean I was from the villages, never driven in town. But eventually I got used to driving in town. But the other thing that I could not get used to and was a shock to me was the vulgar language that is spoken at the taxi rank. If you are not clever, male taxi drivers would cut queues, and this made me angry.

Lesego said that:

Men from my taxi association have never liked me from the first day I joined the taxi industry, they made my life a living hell. On my first day, I had mixed feelings, was afraid and excited at the same time because I have always loved driving. But these men made it difficult for me to enjoy
It is apparent that many of the female drivers got stuck in this tradition of orientation/initiation. The cutting of load queues means that women take fewer loads than male drivers. Because of this, their takings are low. Consequently, women operators struggle to grow, or do not grow at all, and thus become stagnant. Growth in the taxi industry business means owning more than five taxis.

This theme links to the subsequent theme which discusses how men feel threatened by working side by side with women.

4.3.5 Men’s fear and contempt for women

A great number of studies on women employed in male-dominated industries have shown that men at work are territorial, that is, they struggle and in some cases refuse to accept women as their colleagues (see Benya, 2009, Komane, 2013, Prescott and Bogg, 2007). This urge to defend themselves often results in hostility towards women and the employment of strategies to demoralise women to prevent them to enjoy their work or to work side-by-side with men. This often includes the use of gender stereotypes. Observing female miners in Rustenburg, Benya (2009: 79) found that in the light of women facing gender stereotypes such as ‘women seen as weaker sex and not belonging underground’, ‘they have to work with men that do not want them in their teams’. Benya’s (2009: 79) respondents admitted that they find it very difficult to work with women. They felt that women do not belong underground and that mining is a man’s job, some felt that they slowed the pace of work and bring bad luck and that they were responsible for the falling of rocks underground. The same attitude exists in the taxi industry. The reason for this could relate to Cockburn’s (1991) argument about power, men and organisations. Cockburn (1991: 17) argues that power is concentrated in all organisations and the organisation is ‘precisely and uniquely the means by which power is affected’. In the taxi industry, the same exclusion processes seem to apply.

For instance, Pat spoke about demoralisation within this space:
These men that we work with are very jealous, men do not want to see women [referring to female drivers and operators] progress in life, you become a threat to them, and so they influence each other to make sure that they stop us from progressing.

As a result, Alice, who is the only woman who drives long distance trips, reported a strong sense of mistrust:

Even though men appear to be comfortable working with us as women, I do not trust them, they are hypocrites, and they feel very insecure when women become successful (means purchasing more taxis). In 2007 I bought a minibus and there was a lot of tension between me and my male colleagues.

Exclusion strategies can become very explicit, as Kgomotso reports:

I enjoy spending time with my male colleagues; however we do have hiccups here and there especially when they see that you are making money. But it is not easy to be accepted, men do not want us in the taxi rank. If your taxi is giving you problems, sometimes you struggle to get the mechanics to fix it because they are influenced by male colleagues; they tell them not to help us.

This goes to show that men are intimidated by their female driver colleagues. Women drivers are seen as stepping on their male counterparts’ toes. This is similar to what Benya (2009: 79) found in the mining sector that women are seen as disturbing the male macho mining organisational culture.

Lesego also expressed similar views about men being threatened by women:

They hate me and they are threatened by the fact that I am an independent woman, who is smart, they always ask me where I get the wisdom to run the taxi business independently without a man in my life.

This could suggest that the intelligence to run a taxi business is associated with masculine traits. Men seem to view women as ‘the enemy’. Hence they attempt by all means through different taxi industry practices to block them from progressing. The concept ‘glass ceiling’ applies to women employed in male-dominated
industries, particularly in the formal sector. Even though that is the case, the subsequent theme illustrates that women drivers and operators experience the glass ceiling.

Kagiso made an interesting point which is worth highlighting. It raises the issue of sexual harassment. She said:

> You have to be assertive; there are a lot of challenges. I am a woman and my boss is married and his wife then has a problem with me as a woman working for her husband, she gets intimidated. Another thing is kids here, they think you are the age group they do not respect us and passengers are also a problem. Sometimes silence helps. These men are naughty, he can come and randomly spank my ass or kiss me, touch you. You have to get used to it. It’s normal.

This quote raises four important intersecting factors. First of all is emphasis by women of having to ‘appear strong’ or ‘acting like men’ as a strategy for protecting themselves from being taken advantage of or becoming targets. Secondly, is the dilemma or deep-seated hatred between a female employee and the employers wife. Thirdly is the issue of age. Young male taxi drivers have a tendency for disrespecting female taxi drivers. In such situations, Kagiso says silence is golden. The last issue is the normalisation of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is a universal challenge that women from different parts of the world face, particularly those employed in male-dominated jobs. Even though most of the participants in the study proclaimed that sexual harassment is non-existent in the taxi industry, the above quote confirms that it does exist to some degree. In addition, I, as an outsider researcher experienced sexual harassment during field work. What is interesting about this one participant is that she mentioned that sexual harassment existed in the taxi industry yet a couple of hours later while I accompanied her to transport people to different destinations, a male colleague of hers approached her and began to touch her breasts and when I looked at her, she seemed to be fine with it. Perhaps this is because of a lack of knowledge, or their conceptualisation of sexual harassment is not what the Act defines it to be. To them, sexual harassment could mean being raped. Thus, behaviours such as someone
touching you inappropriately, or unwelcome verbal comments, are deemed normal by these women. Subsequently, this could suggest that they have normalised sexual harassment. It is unfortunate that this theme was not explored further as the participants deemed it a sensitive topic which they would rather not discuss with me due to my young age.

4.3.6 Taxi association dynamics

Before delving further into how female taxi drivers experience the glass ceiling and how it links to the taxi association, a brief overview of the taxi association is provided. As stated in the methodology chapter, North West taxi industry constitutes of five regions, namely North, South, West, East and Central. For the purpose of the study, the focus was on the North region Rustenburg taxi industry, which is known as NORTACO (Northern Region Taxi Council). NORTACO is the umbrella term for twenty-two registered taxi associations. Thus the 13 women who participated in the study were from different taxi associations. When one purchases a taxi/minibus taxi/medium bus taxi, it is required of the buyer to present a letter of recommendation from the relevant taxi association. According to the participants, there is a membership fee that one needs to pay before joining the taxi association which varies from one taxi association to another.

Betty and Cynthia are among the few female operators/owners in Rustenburg each owing four taxis and are both members of Bleskop Taxi Association (one of the 22 taxi associations). They are both divorcées, Betty has three children and holds a matric certificate. Cynthia dropped out of school when she fell pregnant and refused to go back after giving birth. She got married to a taxi owner whom she later divorced and was left with nothing. When Betty was asked how much the taxi association fee is, she claimed it to be R20 000. Cynthia, on the other hand, claims it to be R40 000. Lebo also gave a different amount stating it to be R10 000.

This was interesting and raised a lot of questions. Firstly, some of these women sit on the executive committee of the Bleskop Taxi Association and are very adept, both in their business as taxi operators and members of the same taxi association. One could then argue that the contradiction suggests the fact that the membership fee is not fixed/static or not standardised. Or we could say that it is relative because it varies from one taxi association to another. It moves one to ask the following
questions: What is the basis for different membership fees? Who makes this decision? What impact does it have on those who aspire to become taxi operators? It appears that the taxi association membership fees are one of the strategies that men use to block women from progressing - it relates to the issues of power. One has to be a member of the taxi association in order to obtain a recommendation letter which is required to purchase a taxi. In addition, the high membership fee also serves as a stumbling block because the higher the fee is, the more difficult it is to pay the fee and purchase a taxi at the same time. Therefore, these two elements (membership fees and letter of recommendation), which were emphasised during the interviews, serve as a glass ceiling, that artificial barrier for women drivers and operators to move upward or progress. Although the glass ceiling phenomenon has been given attention within the context of women working in the formal sector amongst black and white women professionals, it is clear from the above accounts that women in the taxi industry from all three job categories are [and have been] experiencing the glass ceiling within the informal sector. Worth noting is that some women are able to convert their glass ceilings into concrete ceilings. This is, however, dependent on your class and success as a woman.

Women’s situation in the taxi industry is exacerbated by the fact that they do not function as a unit. The following theme provides a detailed discussion on women’s lack of solidarity within the industry.

4.3.7 Lack of solidarity

Women stated that the lack of support amongst themselves as drivers and the women that are taxi operators, undermines and devalues those that are employed as taxi drivers. NORTACO has established what they call a ‘women’s desk’ which was intended to serve as a platform for these women, be it female taxi drivers, owner-drivers or operators, to discuss pressing issues that they feel they should be assisted with. In addition, the women’s desk was established for women who are afraid and intimidated by their male colleagues to express their thoughts during taxi association meetings.
Lerato remarked:

*These men do not respect us, when you speak or suggest something at the meeting, they tell you to shut up, you are a woman, you do not know what you are talking about…If you are like me and living in a shack, they undermine you.*

Few women who are employed as taxi drivers claimed that they knew about the ‘women’s desk’. Felicia stated:

*What is women’s desk? I do not know what that is.*

Similarly, Mavis, a 49 year old divorced mother of three children, also stated that she had no idea what the women’s desk was.

The female owner-drivers, on the other hand, said that they knew that the women’s desk existed, but the problem was that the women on the executive committee of the desk are female operators. Apparently these female operators are very selective in disseminating information. If there is some information that can assist them to grow as women in the male-dominated industry, they do not share it with other female colleagues. The fact that there is no support amongst female taxi drivers puts them in a vulnerable position. Kishwar (2002:37) argued that due to the fact that women are assigned less significant portfolios and ‘kept in junior positions and minor ministries because, while each may lobby for herself, they rarely lobby for each other as a group’. Subsequently, as a group, women remain weak and insignificant. This is contrary to what Benya (2009) discovered in her study because she found that women worked together as a team.

One could also argue that the ‘women’s desk’ perpetuates gender inequality and gender stereotypes. It contradicts some of the remarks that were made by men who were asked how they felt having to work side by side with women. Mr Martin mentioned:

*It is good that women have joined the taxi industry and that we work together because they bring dignity to this sector, and help to make sure that things run smooth. There is order when women are around.*
Nevertheless, women in the taxi industry are unable to see or achieve this perceived potential within this sphere. The lack of solidarity amongst women in the industry can, thus, be attested to factors such as class, patriarchy and favouritism.

4.4 Coping strategies employed by female taxi drivers

The above paragraphs painted a grave picture of the experiences of women in the taxi industry. One of these sections discussed the coping strategies that female taxi drivers employ in dealing with the challenges that they encounter in their work environment. It was emphasised that to survive the taxi industry as a woman, certain strategies are vital. In order to survive and thrive in the taxi industry, the participants said that following key strategies included: friendship with male colleagues and adopting masculine traits.

4.4.1 Friendship with male colleagues

Just like the cliché goes; ‘keep your friends close and your enemies closer’, female participants reported that for them to survive and cope, one of the things they do is to befriend their male colleagues.

When Sweetness was asked what she did to survive the daily challenges of being a women driver in the taxi industry, she remarked:

So what you need to do is that you need to be wise when they [men] start feeling intimidated by you, you must make friends with them. Because I wanted to work, I befriend them [men], so I ended up becoming a secretary at the taxi rank, I had to be wise, work close to them, so that they can help me and I observe how things are done, and they were building me.

Sweetness further stated that:

So what really helped me was befriending these men, the closer you were to them, the wiser you became in the business, and they taught me a lot. Mind you when I came to the industry, I was clueless and didn’t know anything about running the taxi business, so befriending the male taxi drivers helped a lot. You find them at the rank.
This account confirms the existing body of literature of women employed in male-dominated industries which showed that one of the coping strategies that women employed was to befriend men. They had to get into the boys’ networks in order to operate. Martin and Barnard (2013) who wrote an article titled ‘the experience of women in male-dominated occupations: A constructivist grounded theory inquiry’ discovered that some of the mechanisms women used to cope included mentorship. According to these authors, women in their study considered mentorship ‘as a legitimate means of gaining support and guidance in the organisation and of achieving career success’ (Martin and Barnard, 2013: 12). Even though mentorship and friendship seem contradictory.

Most of the participants expressed similar views. Alice said:

\[ I \text{ observed how things were done, how people operated taxis, so what I did is that I befriended these men. } \]

This account shows the informal mentorship that women develop as a coping strategy. They befriend their male colleagues so that they can learn from them how one successfully breaks into the taxi industry as a career and business.

4.4.2 Adopting masculine traits

Since the taxi industry has historically been structured by men for men, women in the study reported that one of the mechanisms they used was to take on masculine characteristics like shouting; assertiveness; aggression; and cursing. The following were some of the accounts of women responding to the question of what is required for one to survive in the taxi industry. Cynthia claimed:

\[ \text{In the taxi industry, you have to shout and be strong. You change as time goes by. You have to be brave and be smart and wise. They know that I am very assertive.} \]

Rita who joined the taxi industry after her father’s death remarked:

\[ \text{You must be strong and be like that song of Carey Wilson “act like a woman but think like a man”. You have to be strong.} \]
In the same vein, Kgomotso and Mavis also mentioned that for you to gain respect and recognition and not be undervalued by male colleagues; you have to stop being a woman and be a man.

Kgomotso said:

*I am very assertive and I shout all the time, I do not tolerate nonsense…you have to be assertive and strong.*

Mavis pronounced:

*You have to be assertive. Because if you are not, men and boys undermine us, so you have to be cheeky. If you are soft, they make your life difficult and if you are short tempered you end up quitting… You must be assertive or else you would get sick.*

The above accounts raise issues relating to femininity and masculinity. In order to survive in a masculine working environment, women temporarily assume masculine traits. In addition, it also indicated what Prescott and Bogg (2011) called de-gendering. It denotes that in order to cope in these masculine spaces, women are compelled to ‘exchange aspects of their gender identity for a masculine version and forsake their femininity’. Demaiter and Adams (2009) who published an article titled ‘I really didn’t have any problems with male-female thing until… successful women’s experience in IT organisation’ made a similar point that women in male-dominated industries adapt to a masculine workplace culture to fit in and succeed.

Lerato was the only participant who gave a different view:

*The fact that I work here it does not mean that I am bold like these men. Men here are very bold and if they are determined to do/get something they do it, they do as they please knowing very well that they have power and should anyone oppose them, they are willing to fight but with us (me) because we do not have the power and the boldness, you just become passive and do your level best to make money… we need to pick fights, learn to keep calm and quiet.*

This could suggest that this woman implicitly denies the existence of gender inequality in the taxi industry. In Demaiter and Adams (2009: 35) Miller argued that
women ‘avoided sex stereotyping by withholding emotion in the workplace and masked their femininity through their dress and demeanour’. Marshall (1993: 100) asserts that this is a coping mechanism which she called ‘muted’; meaning that women do not view organisational cultures as male-dominated and they ‘deny the salience of gender’ to their work.

4.5 Conclusion

On the whole, in this chapter all the sub-themes were drawn from the main two themes which illuminated the kinds of strategies male counterparts employ to prevent women’s progress in the taxi industry. Findings revealed that women struggle to move past the ‘glass ceiling’ in the taxi industry as a result of organisational culture practices, that is, the rooted beliefs and values found in the industry. Things such as a letter of recommendation, the taxi association membership fee, and initiation are some of the practices (‘how we do things here’) that serve as a barrier for female taxi drivers. Their coping strategies provide evidence and confirm previous findings that for a woman to rise to an occupational position of significance/or become a taxi operator in an organisation, she must divest herself of her feminine qualities and embrace manly attributes. It is clear from the 13 accounts that the taxi industry just like any other sector be it formal or informal, serves as a platform for gender inequalities and the fact that the taxi industry is partly ‘state-regulated’ puts women in a more vulnerable position which results in oppression in the workplace. This is the case because if the state has full control and regulation of the taxi industry, it means that employees within the sector would be protected by the law stipulated in the Labour Relations Act.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: A WOMAN WORKING IN A ‘MAN’S WORLD’

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the women working in a man’s world that is, to explore the perceptions and experiences of female taxi drivers in Rustenburg, South Africa. In order to answer the main research question, the following objectives were identified. Firstly the study investigated the challenges that female taxi drivers face at their work. Secondly, in the midst of the challenges they face, the study investigated the kind of strategies they employed to survive and thrive in the taxi industry. Finally, the study investigated how these women negotiated their gendered identities in these masculine spaces.

Chapter 1 contextualised the study by giving the background of the public transport sector in South Africa, the nature and the existing dynamics thereof. In addition, since the aim was to share the experiences of female taxi drivers including the challenges they face and strategies they employed to deal with the challenges, the study investigated how they negotiate their gendered identities in a masculine environment such as the taxi industry.

Chapter 2 informed the theoretical framework of the study. The study was grounded on the feminist theory. In addition, this section of the research delved further by unpacking the conceptualisation of gender and gender inequality and highlighting some of the factors that maintain and perpetuate gender inequality and other forms of discrimination particularly in the workplace. Literature on women in the workplace was discussed by considering both international and South African perspectives, that is, it focused on women in the labour market particularly those employed in male-dominated industries and the existing disparities. In addition, this section paints a picture of how women have operated in male-dominated work environments. It also highlights the differences between formal and informal work experiences and how these two sectors shape and influence women’s working experiences and their lives as a whole. Finally the intersectionality lens shed light onto the study by looking at how multiple structures of power or socially constructed categories intersect to shape the female taxi drivers’ experiences in the workplace.
In order to answer the main research question, Chapter 3 discussed the tools that were used to collect the data. A qualitative methodological approach was undertaken in order to gain insight into female taxi drivers’ working experiences and life as a whole. Observations and semi-structured interviews were the main tools for collecting data. Due to the scarcity of female taxi drivers, a snowball sampling technique was used. Data was analysed through thematic content analysis and gained in-depth rich meanings that these women attached to their working environment.

5.2 Key findings

The main key findings included striking a balance between working extreme hours and family responsibility, taxi association dynamics, issues of safety, bullying, men’s fear and contempt for women and lack of solidarity. In addition, another key finding is the coping strategies employed by female taxi drivers in their everyday working lives.

5.2.1 Striking a balance between working extreme hours and family responsibility

The women who participated in this study have certain a set of notions about gendered roles and they have family responsibilities and it continues to be a challenge for these women to maintain a balance between their work and family responsibility especially in the absence of men, as their partners are supposed to play the role of providers. Even though women are now incorporated into the workplace, it is clear that it does not necessarily mean that they are free from family responsibilities. Literature states that women find themselves having to work ‘double shifts’. One of the reasons for this ‘double shift’ is because of the traditional gender roles where women are confined to the home (Tshoaedi 2008: 16). In the African context women’s role is to care, cook, wash and clean for their husbands and take care of elderly citizens.

Having said this, most of the women who participated in this study were divorced. Thus, the absence of men in their lives who are ‘supposed to assume’ the role of provider has resulted in them taking both the role of provider and managing their households from a traditional point of view. Although, work-family balance is a common problem for some women who work, unlike some women who work an 08:00 to 17:00 job such as teachers and public servants, working in the taxi industry
requires one to wake up at the crack of dawn and knock off late at night. For women who have younger children, they reported that when they leave for work in the morning, the children are asleep and by the time they finish work, the children are already in bed. Women’s experiences regarding work-family balance varies depending on one’s job category which links to the issues of class. This means that if you own a fleet of taxis which is the highest job category in the minibus taxi industry, your class also rises.

For instance, women who are established as taxi operators reported that balancing work and family responsibility is not a challenge for them because they can afford to hire domestic helper. However, since most of them had grown-up children, hiring domestic helpers was for the maintenance of their houses. Interestingly, when one has reached this level of the ladder in the taxi industry, it is easy to run the business and still manage a household. This is because of the flexibility that comes with being an operator. You do not have to wake up in the early hours of the morning and knock off late like women who are employed as taxi drivers. For most of the female operators who entered the taxi industry during the apartheid era, when they were employed as taxi drivers, balancing work and family was a serious challenge. Because then they could not afford help, they relied on the support of their extent families. Before they could afford to stay in Rustenburg, some of them resided in the rural areas and left their children in their parents’ care. Women who have entered the taxi industry in the post-apartheid era’s experience of work-family balance are bad compared to the female operators.

The issue of the taxi association dynamics indicates the existing organisational culture in the taxi industry. The taxi association membership fee and the recommendation letter forms some part of the practices that are put in place to hamper women’s success in the industry. The dynamics also indicate the so-called ‘glass ceiling’ which is the artificial barrier that prevents women from moving up the career ladder. Recommendation letters and taxi association fees are what men who are in power in the taxi association’s use against women becoming successful operators. Since the concept of glass ceiling is traditionally used in the context of white women employed in the formal sector, I argue that in the taxi industry it manifests differently. Since most of the taxi association executive committees are predominantly male-dominated, the forever changing membership fee is a practice
that is used to exclude and include women. This is all dependent on your class, how well educated you are and whether your family has good networks in the taxi industry (particularly those who inherited their business).

Therefore, it is through these categories that power and domination are exercised in the taxi industry. Consequently, it is through the intersectionality lens that we are able to see how these categories intersect to oppress and marginalise female taxi drivers particularly those who are at the bottom of the strata. Something that is emphasised throughout the report, particularly in the findings chapter, is that these women’s experiences and level or degree of oppression vary due to the job category they occupy. What is worth noting is that men choose to empower some of the women who own taxis by sharing important information and including them in boys-networks. If they see that as a woman you work hard and outperform them, they befriend you so that they can keep an eye on you. Due to the fact that the taxi industry is a highly competitive work environment, this strategy is used to maintain dominance and power in the workplace.

5.2.2 Issues of safety

Due to the nature of the taxi industry and how it is structured, women who participated in the study all reported feeling unsafe at work. They reported that they feared being hijacked and raped while at work. Their work is dangerous because for them to make money and meet their daily targets, they have to wake up at the crack of dawn to transport people to different mining areas. It is during this time of the morning that criminals attack them. Due to high rates of crime in South Africa, these women reported high rates of hijacking particularly at the end of the month. They stated that this problem is a challenge for both women and men working in the taxi industry. But men are less likely to run the risk of being raped which makes women more vulnerable compared to their male colleagues. Even though women expressed safety as a challenge, it is clear that the whole country is affected by crime.

5.2.3 Men’s fear and contempt for women

Working in a masculine space as a woman comes with many challenges. The female participants in this study reported one of the challenges they are faced with was men’s fear and contempt toward them. Studies (see Benya, 2009, Chuchu, 2012,
Komane, 2013, Prescott and Bogg and Ralushai, 2007) conducted on women working in male-dominated jobs also found that women complained a lot about being hated by their male colleagues. In the taxi industry, men’s fear and contempt is a result of a number of factors. This includes the nature of the taxi industry which is highly competitive and because of this there is pressure for both men and women to work hard. When these men see women out-performing them, that is, if they are able to purchase more minibuses in a year, they begin to hate them and use means and practices in a form of organisational culture to hamper women’s progress in the taxi industry. Men in the taxi industry are very territorial about their working environment and because of this, they find it difficult to work side by side with women, who according to them, are supposed to be at home caring for and nurturing the children and taking care of family responsibilities. Men’s hostility towards women also has to do with power relations. They employ practices that make it difficult for women to be entrepreneurs so that power is maintained within their circles. It is this very reason why women are underrepresented in power decision-making positions, managerial positions and any other jobs perceived as a ‘man’s job’. Cohen and Moodley (2012: 323) found that the underrepresentation of women in the workplace, ‘gender stereotyping and discrimination is based on maternity and family responsibilities and difficulties in balancing work and family life’. The constant struggle to move upward on the success ladder in the taxi industry manifests in a form of ‘glass ceiling’. The ‘glass ceiling’ concept usually applies to white women in professional jobs who are faced with an ‘artificial barrier’ to progress in the workplace. Therefore, I argue that although this is the case, women in the taxi industry are faced with a similar challenge however it manifests in a different form.

Women in the taxi industry end up being bullied. As shown in Chapter 4, in the taxi industry, particularly at the taxi rank, there is a general trend when you are a new taxi operator/driver to make way for established operators/drivers when queuing for loads. This is a common problem for all new operators/drivers, regardless of their gender, to go through this initiation or orientation phase. In addition, the initiation also includes a specific ritual on the first day of work. New operators/drivers are expected to buy three flavours of cold drinks (varies from one taxi association to the other) and then these flavours are mixed together in one glass which should be drunk, where after one should belch in order to be welcomed into the industry. The
newcomer is then also given a nickname (Mavis, 2012). The initiation is short-lived, however, during the field work phase I observed many female taxi drivers who were still stuck in this perpetual orientation/initiation phase. Some of the female participants get assimilated in the orientation phase. For instance some of them no longer use their real names and stick to the nicknames given during the initiation. What we see here, is the intersection of a number of variables that are intertwined and shape and influence how female taxi drivers experience the working environment.

5.2.4 Lack of solidarity

One of the major challenges that women raised was the issue of a lack of solidarity among themselves. Women stated that the lack of support amongst themselves as drivers and the women that are taxi operators undermines and devalues those that are employed as taxi drivers. Lack of solidarity within a feminist broader school of thought is seen as a threat to ‘sisterhood’. However, the notion of ‘sisterhood’ has been criticised because some scholars feel ‘that unity between women is impossible given our differences’ (Hooks, 1984: 44). Furthermore, Hooks (1984: 44) elucidates that the ‘shift away from an emphasis on sisterhood has occurred because some feminists felt that sisterhood was seen as a cover-up hiding the fact that many women exploit and oppress other women’. Hooks’ (1984) explanation raises two questions including: are women in the taxi industry not united or lack solidarity because of the vast differences between them? Or is the lack of solidarity a result of patriarchy embedded in the taxi industry? The women who participated in the study reported that they are not united because of the existing hierarchy in the taxi industry. Female operators who are in the highest strata in the taxi industry have more influence and power compared to female owner-drivers and female taxi drivers. Another factor that threatens women’s solidarity in the taxi industry is male operators who select few women operators or the so-called ‘queen bees’ (these men look for women who command respect and exhibit strength, wisdom and assertiveness) and incorporate them into the boys’ club. Some of these women reported that it is better to work with men than women. It is impossible to transform masculine spaces such as the taxi industry as women partly continue to perpetuate patriarchy. To support this argument, Hook (1984: 42) states that sexism just like any other ‘forms of group oppression, is perpetuated by institutional and social structures; by the individuals
who dominate, exploit or oppress; and by victims themselves who are socialised to behave in ways that make them act in complicity with the status quo’.

5.2.5 Coping strategies

The female taxi drivers reported that they employ masculine traits in order to cope in the ‘man’s world’/the taxi industry. They are all acutely aware that they need to adopt certain masculine strategies within the sphere in which work. Another coping mechanism they use is befriending their male colleagues. This is a common amongst women working in male-dominated precarious jobs (see Benya, 2009, Chuchu, 2012, Komane, 2013). Befriending men results in an informal mentorship in the taxi industry, particularly when one is still new or trying to break into the transport business.

When working in the taxi industry, one is required to wake up at the crack of dawn and knock off late. This was one of the biggest challenges that these women face. They fear for their safety that is, being hijacked and being raped. Even though the majority of women in the study reported that they have never been victims of such crimes, except for one woman, they all employed similar strategies or safety measures to protect themselves. Firstly, they mentioned that when they leave their homes, they prayed to God to protect them on the road and listened to their instinct. Some mentioned that if they woke up in the morning and their instinct told them not to leave their home, they listened and waited until the sun arose. Secondly, since their customers in the early hours of the morning are predominately mine workers, they try to collect the same customers every day. They also reported that they avoided stopping on less busy roads.

5.3 Theoretical implications

This study has shown that Western feminist theory needs to be treated with caution when applied in the South African context. Through the empirical findings, it was evident that female taxi drivers experience working in the minibus taxi industry differently because of their gender, class, favouritism and the apartheid legacy. In the context of the study, it became evident that gender was not the main social marker that resulted in women experiencing inequality. As a result thereof, the intersectionality lens was a good tool to supplement the above theories. It allowed
me to look at multiple power dimensions such as how their gender as women working in a male-dominated space intersected with their class and being disadvantaged by the apartheid legacy shaped how they experience the taxi industry and how they understand their world of work. In addition, the fact that these women are not protected by the law, operating in the informal sector makes them more vulnerable. However, this does not suggest that these women lack agency which is manifested in how they deal with their daily challenges and also the fact that some of them are still working and some operating minibus taxis indicates how resilient they are. It is through this lens that the study was able to explore multiple dimensions of power that account for female taxi drivers’ oppressions.

5.4 Recommendations

It is clear from the report that there is a literature gap on female taxi drivers, that is, more studies of a similar nature are required which will then assist the transport sector to fully incorporate women in taxi the industry, not as an afterthought. It is through this study that I show that the minibus taxi industry could be another intervention in mitigating female unemployment in South Africa. This could be done if policies are amended and made female-friendly to attract more women. Thus, the study calls for de-patriarchiasation of the taxi industry. In addition, more research is needed to investigate and explore how the minibus taxi industry can be made a safe space for women to operate in if the government can obtain full regulation of the taxi industry, this might help to protect women by making sure that they have fiscal, social and security benefits such as maternity leave, and a pension fund; just to mention the few.
*Gender and Society*, 4(2): 139-158.


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Sauti, G. 2006. 'Minibus Taxi Drivers: Are They All ‘Children Born From The Same Mother?’ MA dissertation, University of Witwatersrand.


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World Health Organisation. 2002. ‘Integrating Gender Perspectives into the Work of WHO’. Switzerland
Appendix A: Interview schedule

Interview schedule

Time started:

Time ended:

Place of interview:

Date of interview:

A. Biographical questions

Name and Surname:

Age:

Marital status:

Level of education

Class (where do you live urban/rural, space in terms the number of rooms, who you live with, do you have DSTV/TV)

- Reasons for joining the taxi industry (build on to find out what was her former job and how did she get her current job as a taxi driver and how she found out about it)
- Was it a big shift from your previous job and did it take some time getting used to? (yes/no why)
- How long have you been working in the taxi industry
- What is the criteria for driving a taxi (probe further based on this to find out if there is any special license that one needs to have to be able to drive a taxi, how do you go about getting it and challenges she faced in getting it, taxi routes (is it your choice? Do you do long/short distance trips))
- How many hours do you work per week/month (ask about salary, is it the same for men and women)
• Do you have security benefits (pension fund/Leave etc.?)
• Relationship between you and your employer
• Tell me about your experience in the taxi industry
• Tell me about your first day at work (the environment, how did it feel and how long did it take for you to get used to your new job)
• Tell me about your average day at work (what time do you start and finish work, what do you do in between while waiting for people, which places do you transport people to)
• Do you have friends at work (female/male/both, probe further based on this to find out about her relationship with her colleagues, when you have problems at work who do you go to for help)

• Peoples reaction to a female taxi driver (treatment by colleagues and taxi commuters and how do you handle the situation)
• Dress code (do you have to dress a certain way when you go to work, is it their own reasons or is it the taxi industry ask of them)
• Facilities (toilets)
• Can you tell me of an instance where you experienced a pure joy in your day and why? (ask this question towards the end)
• Do you fear for your safety?
• Can you please tell me of an instance where you felt threatened/scared/afraid while at work?
• Is there any flexibility i.e. is there a certain amount of hours you can work to make a certain amount of money?

• What is it that you like and do not like about your work? What is the good and bad about your work
• Are you a member of any taxi union/association? (If yes tell me about it, benefits of being a member of a union/ if not why? Do other taxi drivers listen when a female taxi driver is talking at these meetings, are you treated in the same way as men)
• Do you feel like you fit in (properly) in the taxi industry?
• What do you call your job, would you say it’s a profession or job?
• Do you feel proud about your career
• Who looks after your children when you are at work (applies to respondents with children/)
• Participation in the community (are you member of any organisation, attendance,)
• Do you have enough time for your family (children, partners and extended family, Leisure)
• Do you have support at home i.e. is there a sister/grandmother who helps you out?
• Who is responsible for groceries and payment of bills in your house?
• How are you treated by men at work? (both male drivers and male commuters)
• Do you think taxi industry is a man’s world?
• In your opinion, what will improve your life as a taxi driver?
## Appendix B

### Background information of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>No of children</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Job category</th>
<th>Highest Level of Education</th>
<th>Entry into the taxi industry (year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Taxi Owner</td>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4 taxis)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweetness</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Taxi Owner</td>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(5 taxis)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Taxi Owner</td>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>1986/1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4 taxi)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taxi Owner</td>
<td>Certificate in Criminal Law</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3 taxis) she drives one of the taxis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matilda</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Owner (4 taxis)</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phinda</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Owner-driver</td>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2 taxis)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesego</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Owner-driver</td>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2 taxis)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>Owner-driver</td>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2 taxis)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Owner (1 taxi) but does not drive= she works as the secretary at NORTACO</td>
<td>Grade 12 and short courses</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kgomotso</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Owner-driver</td>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1 taxi)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebo</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Owner-driver</td>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1 taxi)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Educ. Level</td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mavis</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Taxi driver</td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicia</td>
<td>Undisclosed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Taxi driver</td>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C The structure of the North West Minibus Taxi Industry

The Taxi Industry in the North West Province is divided into five regions, namely North; West; South; Central and Eastern Regions. Each region has a policy wing which deals with policy (political) issues and a business wing which is meant for the economic empowerment of the members.

Policy wing (councils)

Provincial taxi council

The Provincial Taxi Council is made up of 12 (twelve) Executive Members. Seven of these are directly elected and the other five represent regions. The portfolios of members of the Provincial Taxi Council are as follows:

Chairperson; Deputy Chairperson; Secretary; Deputy Secretary; Treasurer; Public Relations Officer; Training Officer and five additional members.

Regional council

Each region is governed by a Regional Council with at least eight members each. The portfolios of members of the Regional Councils are as follows: Chairperson; Deputy Chairperson; Secretary; Treasurer; Public Relations Officer; Administrator; Disciplinary Committee Chairperson; Training Officer; Grievance Chairperson and additional members per each region’s requirements.

Management council (MANCO)

Each region including the Province has a Management Council which has an oversight role over the Executive Committee members on the mandate given. At Provincial level, MANCO has 15 members (three from each region) and at Regional level it is composed of two representatives from each Association. The number of members at Regional Level is, therefore, determined by the number of Associations within the specific region.

Women’s desk

Women’s Desk is a forum that was established to take care of women’s needs within the taxi industry. The chairman reported that some women are not comfortable to
raise issues in the midst of their male colleagues. Consequently the desk was established to help them speak freely about any issues related to their work, be it political or business then the women’s representative takes the memorandum to NORTACO to address whatever issues might have surfaced during the meetings. Their meetings are usually held at the NORTACO offices. They do not really have a physical space or an office of their own in which to conduct their meetings.

**Business wing**

With regard to the business wing each of the regions has established a Co-operative which oversees business/economic interests of its members. The Co-operatives are governed by a Board of Directors directly elected by the members. The Co-operatives each own 20% of the Provincial Holding Company called Bokone Holdings (Pty) Ltd. Bokone’s mandate is to negotiate economic interest of the industry at Provincial Level at handover to regions for implementation.
Appendix D: Requirements to drive a minibus taxi

This section is pertinent as it outlines the requirements that one needs to meet to qualify to drive a minibus taxi industry. In addition, it helps us understand and establish whether the process is discriminatory or not. Therefore, in order to drive a taxi on a public road in South Africa transporting passengers you need a professional driving permit (PrDP). According to the participants, the PrDP is only issued in addition to an ordinary driving licence (code 10). According to South Africa Services (2013) in order to obtain a PrDP you need to be 21 years or older and the following criteria must be met:

- Have a valid driving license for the type of vehicle in question (which in this case is code 10)
- Have been certified as medically fit by a doctor
- Do not have criminal record
- Have never had your driving license suspended
- Have never been convicted of a criminal offense or paid on admission-of-guilt fine