CHAPTER ONE

1. **CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION**

Sumation

FIG 1

FIG 2

FIG 3

3. CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The birth of the public transport industry is a direct result of the industrialization period in early South Africa. This period in addition, resulted in the migration of Black South Africans from their traditional homesteads to cities in the pursuit of work (SANTACO, 2008). Due to the lack of infrastructure and state provisions, the taxi industry emerged as the preferred mode of transport for the black populace, as it offered the most economical alternative. From the onset, the industry had to compete with the subsidized bus and train systems, which in later times had a negative impact on the industry, as is made evident by its deregulation and conflict ridden nature (SANTACO, 2008).

The deregulation of the taxi industry in the 80's unleashed uncontrolled growth of the industry and provided fertile grounds for conflicts over route and ranking facilities. During the same period, the industry boomed into an economic strong hold, boasting an urban market share of 65% that soon became unmanageable in the absence of any form of regulatory framework (SANTACO, 2008).

The unity initiatives initiated before 1994 culminated in the establishment of the South African Taxi Council (Sataco). In 2001, under the watchful eye of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), the democratising process was completed when a National Executive Committee was elected under the presidency of Mr. Thomas Muofhe. The organisation, now called the South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO), is formally recognised by government as the legitimate industry representative. (SANTACO, 2008)

The industry today represents the most accessible mode of transport to the largest number of transport 'customers' across a variety of income and need segments. As such, taxis carry 65% of the 2,5 billion annual passenger trips in the urban environment and serve as the base-load public transport carrier, both during peak and off-peak transport times (santaco, 2008). According to the national regulation body, there currently exist approximately 130 000 vehicles operating with legal transport permits. Approximately 95 000 of these vehicles, are used for short and medium distance trips in the urban environment. The remainder of which, are used for rural and inter-city transport. More than a third of the vehicles operate in the Gauteng province alone.(Govender, R:2010)

Theoretical investigation:

Architecture is in essence, the practice of designing the world we live in; therefore, it has the innate ability of playing an important role in defining identity, and molding space in a manner that leads to the creation of social significance. According to the book "identity Theory and Social Identity Theory", by Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burkes', when formulating identity, one has to structure the identifying elements in a manner that is indicative of the entity they are intended to represent. For this reason it is safe to assume that the most appropriate manner in which to elevate the disjointed, renegade (yet efficient) nature of the taxi industry, is through the re-appropriation and re-defining of it's formative, expressive and operational elements. .

"An architecture description is a formal description of a system, organized in a way that supports reasoning about the structural properties of the system. It defines the system components or building blocks and provides a plan from which objectives can be achieved, and systems developed, that will work together to implement the overall system" (wikipidia: 2010). With regard to the systems of the taxi industry, it is conceivable to assume, that one could use Architecture as the apt tool in re-defining and re-interpreting its systems, in a manner, which instills a sense of identity. In essence, from the afore mentioned definition, it is safe to assume that the coherent architectural articulation of the formative parts of any system, give relevance and meaning to any pragmatic system.

It can be argued, that only through the validation of ones identity, be it innate, didactic or socially warranted, that one can begin to express the qualities that enable a group to present a socially appropriate decorum. It is through the acknowledgement of identity that one can begin to express the distinctive attributes of individuals, groups or society that enable them to take their appropriate place with in society. This ideology made evident by former president Thabo Mbeki, in the prelude to the "I am an African" speech examines the role self worth plays in formulating identity.

Design problem:

- The principal problem is how to create an architectural language that gives relevance to two uncelebrated parties, who share a similar interest. The aim is to create an architectural language, that both embraces and instills the formality required for a regulatory body, but yet simultaneously acknowledges and validates the informal nature that encompasses the public transport industry.

- Secondly, how does architecture begin to redefine, re-evaluate and re-appropriate a system, which stems from policies of segregation and disempowerment?

- Thirdly, how does one architecturally create a precinct, which aims to serve as a hybrid edifice for the formal aspect of the public transport system, its operational requirements and its informal users?

Design intention:

The primary design objective extrapolated from the brief is the formulation of an architectural strategy and edifice that through its programmatic constraints methodically helps elevate the perception of the taxi industry. The intention is to do so by following a design methodology that provides the industry with the formal aura it so lacks, whilst incorporating its social informal nature. In essence, the design intention is to create a precinct that becomes the catalyst in the re-interpretation of the taxi industry.

Conceptually formulating an integrated identity for the taxi industry through the cohesive union of formal, informal and social active space