

TITLE: The impact of working as a bus driver on women's health, workplace relationships and family functioning: The experiences of black female bus drivers in Tshwane, South Africa.

BY

FLORENCE KOMANE

28388969

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

SUPERVISOR: Dr Irma du Plessis

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Mini-Dissertation

## DECLARATION

I declare that this is my work and this is the first submission of this paper at the University of Pretoria for a Masters Program. I have acknowledged all the sources that I have used for this particular research study.

Signed at PRETORIA in June 2013

FLORENCE KEITUMETSE KOMANE

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## ABSTRACT

The post-apartheid government of the Republic of South Africa implemented new policies to promote equality in the workplace, in terms of both race and gender. As a result, more women are entering the labour market and working as bus drivers; an environment that is highly dominated by men. However, since occupations are historically sex-segregated, the bus driving industry is dominated by men. This set of circumstances therefore challenge women who choose bus driving as a career, for it is regarded as a male profession. This study focuses on one aspect of public transport in South Africa, with a specific focus on female bus drivers. The aim of the research is to explore the experiences of female bus drivers in Tshwane, South Africa in terms of how they deal with the challenges they are faced within the industry. The primary concern of the study is on the impact of their chosen career on their general well-being which is described as workplace relationships, occupational health and family-work balance. It further looks at the driving forces behind these women's choice to join the bus industry. Since women were traditionally based in the private sphere (family), the study then looks at how these women have adjusted to the working environment outside of their homes. Moreover, it looks at the relationships these women have with their managers, colleagues and passengers.

A total number of sixteen female bus drivers participated in the study. Findings show that the incorporation of women in the bus driving industry has been a challenging one. It has been challenging especially for women as they are prejudged by the majority of people as being incapable of operating buses and as a result, they are faced with hostility. Some of the factors contributing to hostility towards female bus drivers are cultural beliefs, unemployment, competition and age differences. There are also other factors that influenced a shift over time from a negative perception to a more positive perception of female bus drivers over time such as female drivers' abilities and capabilities to drive. Due to the working conditions of bus drivers, female bus drivers reported having psychological, sleeping and muscular-skeletal problems. Additionally, balancing work and family life has proven to be difficult for many female bus drivers.

Key words: South Africa, social construction, socialisation, iological essentialism, sex role, gender, gender role conflict, occupational health, work-family balance, stereotype, double-shifting, road-users.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1. Introduction

In a modern industrial society, public transport is a very necessary social phenomenon. This is the case because the majority of people in such societies rely on public transport to get to work and other places, since not everyone owns a car. Public transport therefore plays a vital role in the labour market because without it workers would find it difficult to travel from one place to another. Public transport is, however, not always 'public' in the sense that whereas in many industrial societies services were provided initially by the state, under neo-liberal regimes many aspects of public transport have been privatised.

In South Africa, public transport has been a central feature of the apartheid-era industrial order; furthermore, people continue to use public transport in the post-apartheid era. However, since 1994 there have been changes to the public transport industry. The post-apartheid government abolished apartheid laws that discriminated against persons based on their race and prevented African, coloured and Asian/Indian people from using the same public transport as white people.

The three types of public transport in South Africa are minibus taxis, buses and trains. It is shown by statistics that 80% of the South African population relies on public transport such as buses, commuter trains and minibus taxis- with 46% relying on minibus taxis, 20% on buses and 13% on trains (Khosa 1997:18). On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2008, it was reported that there were 39 941 registered buses in South Africa and 3.9% of these buses were unlicensed (Arrive alive 2013). It is important to note that the notion of public transport can be confusing, since the taxi industry as well as parts of the bus transportation industry are not state-owned, but state-regulated.

Since the post-apartheid government implemented new policies to promote equality in the workplace, in terms of both race and gender, there are more women entering the labour market and working as bus drivers. However, since occupations are historically sex-segregated, men are the ones dominating the driving industry and bus driving is regarded as a male profession. This assumption then challenges women who choose a career as bus drivers. According to Aronsson and Rissler (1998:122), with all other occupations taken into account, bus driving is an occupation where both male and female bus drivers are exposed to the same

job with the salaries being more or less the equal. This study then focuses on one mode and aspect of public transport in South Africa, with a specific focus on female bus drivers. The aim of the research is to explore the experiences of female bus drivers in a South African city in terms of how they deal with the challenges that they are faced with, since they are new in the bus industry. In this particular provision sector, only 2.5% of the drivers are currently women.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2. Problem statement, aims and rationale of the study

Prior to 1994, apartheid laws restricted black women's access to white urban areas and from participation in the labour market, with the exception of certain sectors such as nursing and domestic work. However, after 1994, these apartheid laws were abolished and the implementation of new labour laws allowed women to actively participate in the labour market. Occupations are often gender-based and bus driving is regarded as an occupation for men, at least in public opinion, given popular arguments that men make better drivers than women. Even though there has been research done in South Africa on female taxi drivers, there has been very little research on female bus drivers (*see Chuchu 2012*)<sup>2</sup> and the impact that working in the bus industry has on their health, families and social or workplace relationships – including relationships with their management, male and female colleagues and passengers.

This topic is therefore of interest, firstly, because it is a recent phenomenon in South Africa and there exists no previous research. Secondly, we have to account for the occupational experiences of black women in post-apartheid South Africa, because as a result of legal impediments to work during apartheid, the existing scholarship on black women and occupations has resulted in a literature focusing exclusively on domestic work, informal work, nursing and teaching. Thirdly, while we have quite a lot of research on family-work balance, both locally and internationally, there is not little research available on the holistic impact of occupation on women's well-being (defined here as good health, positive workplace interactions, family security, well-being and relationships). Fourthly, there exists a need to compare the apartheid and post-apartheid eras to see if there have been improvements

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<sup>1</sup> In order to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of participants, the details of the occupational context will not be disclosed. Participants were interviewed outside of work hours.

<sup>2</sup> This research was conducted at the same time I was completing my study. This reference is included in order to point the reader to studies similar to mine. My study does not engage this work, as it became available only after submitting my work.

regarding the entrance of women in the labour market. The fifth reason is that this study seeks to represent women's own accounts of how they have adapted in the workplace environment. Finally, there is emerging work on the experiences of black women as taxi drivers and this study provides the opportunity for comparative work across these occupations.

### **1.2.1. Aims**

The aims of the research was to find out:

- The broader context of the incorporation process of women into the bus industry;
- The reasons why female bus drivers choose to work as bus drivers;
- The experiences of women in the bus industry (including relations with passengers and management);
- The relationships they have with their colleagues;
- The impact of their occupation on the work-family balance; and
- The impact of their careers on their occupational health.

### **1.3. Research question**

The following question has guided this study: How does working as a municipal or local bus driver impact on female drivers' family functioning, health and workplace relationships? In terms of operationalising the research question, the researcher focused on two bus companies. One is a municipal company and the other is a private company. These two companies are based in Pretoria, South Africa.

### **1.4. Structure of the dissertation**

The focus of the next chapter, chapter two, is on two aspects of the literature on the bus driving industry and specifically the role of women in the bus driving industry including the stereotypes around female drivers.

Chapter three locates the study in a particular framework, in order to understand perspectives surrounding women in the public sector and ideologies around working women. The chapter uses socialisation, social construction, role conflict and gender role conflict as key theoretical

positions. Stereotypes are evolving and they are passed from one generation to the other through interaction. These theories thus shed light on the origins of the stereotypical beliefs about women working in the public sector. Moreover, the chapter defines concepts such as occupational health, work-family conflict and work relationships. These three concepts are interdependent and cannot be understood in isolation since they are like a system. What happens at work might have either a positive or negative impact on one's family relationship and health.

Chapter four offers a detailed discussion on research methods and methodologies and it outlines the processes that occur during the collection of data. Ethical considerations are also discussed in this methods and methodology chapter.

The research findings make up chapter five wherein data is analysed and there are discussions and theory linkages to the findings. This chapter is divided into different sections, namely: the requirements needed to become a bus driver, reasons for becoming bus drivers and the nature of the job.

The second last chapter, chapter six, reports and discusses workplace relationships that deal with relationships female bus drivers have with male or female colleagues, passengers, road users and management. A thorough discussion is provided.

The final chapter, chapter seven, deals with family-work balance. This chapter addresses all the problems that are faced by women as they are playing double roles and all the strategies that women use in order to deal with the challenges faced.

The last part of the dissertation comprises concluding remarks and offers notes towards recommendation section (Appendix A).

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The first part of this section covers the historical background of the emergence of women drivers and how stereotypes of women as good or bad drivers emerged in the United States (US) in particular. This literature is used since there is no literature written in South Africa on women drivers. In addition, American history shaped much of the world after the Second World War. Therefore, it could be argued that the US is totally different from any other country and as a result, using the US experiences is to a certain extent irrelevant. On the other hand, it can be argued that the US is not totally different to any other country since there has been commodification of culture. Yes, it is acknowledged that cultures differ and so does context and it does not necessarily mean that people will experience similar issues, but in this case, issues relating to the emergence of women bus drivers, are the same. As a result, the US experiences are used as a guideline and also offers room for comparison and differentiation between what happened in the US and what is currently happening in South Africa.

The second part of the literature review covers the history of the incorporation of women in the labour market in South Africa and the challenges women have been faced with. Due to traditional gender roles, the division of roles between men and women was thought to make society functional, since the roles taken are complementary. However, due to industrialisation and the end of apartheid, the labour market has opened up spaces for women and thus saw the participation of women in the labour market increasing. Incorporating women into the labour market is a challenging task. However, regardless of this challenge, women are taking roles in the public sphere. The entry of women in the South African labour market is shaped historically not only by gender but also by race. This section also discusses the bus industry in South Africa, with a specific focus on the incorporation of women into this labour market. Finally, this section concludes with an examination of existing research on bus driving as an occupation.

### **2.2. Women drivers and social stereotypes in American scholarship**

Since the occupation of bus driving has only recently opened up for women in South Africa, there has not been much material written or research conducted about women bus drivers in South Africa. Therefore, there are gaps in the literature. The literature around the topic is mainly American dominated and it is American sociological studies that cover this issue both

theoretically and empirically. Yet, an engagement with this scholarship is important for this study.

It is important to firstly understand the origins of the stereotype that women cannot drive or that they make bad drivers in order to understand their experiences in the bus industry. Nothing illustrates the centrality of ideas about women in the driving seat better in the American imagination than the way in which the sociologist Peter Berger addresses the stereotypic opinions that are held regarding women drivers.

The argument presented by Berger (1986:257) was that the ideologies about women being bad drivers, that were generated in the US over the last hundred years, were an attempt made to make sure that women stay in the private space (of the home) and also to prevent them from ‘corruptive forces’ in the society. In questioning what is reported by Berger, who is the US that Berger is referring to? If there were ideologies created about women being bad drivers, how is it that with the research that was conducted in Pennsylvania in 1975 (*see page 10*) most children reported that bus driving is an occupation that should be taken by both men and women? Even though men and women developed careers that adhered closely to traditional roles, the careers chosen required all of them to work outside the private sphere.

In applying the argument about preventing women from ‘corruptive forces’ in the society to the South African context, it can be argued that it is reasonable and applicable. This is due to the fact that South Africa is one of the countries with the highest crime rate and women are also victimised in a form of rape and other forms of violence. Therefore, keeping women in the private sphere would protect them from being exposed to criminal acts outside the private sphere.

Conversely, the argument about keeping women in the private sphere for their wellbeing in the contemporary South Africa is flawed and irrelevant as criminal acts are also perpetrated in the private sphere. The question therefore is, to what extent was the argument genuine and fully considering the wellbeing of women? Was this one of the strategies to restrict women from exploring other options or was it a way to discourage women from entering the labour market as women were perceived as threats to men’s masculinities? The ideological construction further stated that women were not capable of resisting or challenging these external forces, so they needed to be kept in the private sphere as a way of protecting them. As Wachs indicates: “It was believed that the aggressiveness and turmoil of the world of

work—man’s world—should not be permitted to intrude into the peace and tranquillity of home—woman’s sphere and the density, smoke, and filth of the world of commerce should not be allowed to tarnish the warmth, protectiveness, and pleasantness of the home and the best way to achieve this was the increasing separation of home and work in space” (Wachs 2001:100-101).

The above paragraph attempts to present clarity regarding preventing women from entering the labour market. In an attempt to argue around what Wachs has presented, the author poses questions and interacts with the statements given in seeking clarification regarding strategies that were used to either protect women from entering the labour market or preventing women from exploring work options outside the private sphere.

These assumptions further fuelled the belief that women and men were different biologically, understood as their physique and their emotional state. Linked to this was the notion that women are bad decision-makers and therefore, that their place was supposed to be the household where they had to partake in domestic work (Berger 1986:257-260). This belief about women was a traditionalist one and by referring to this, women were deemed incapable of becoming responsible drivers. This is so because when one is on the road, people are supposed to be making quick decisions and as women were regarded to be biologically unsuitable, they would then place other people in danger on the roads. Wachs (2001:106), further stated that the stereotypes were continuously reinforced both by comedians and social commentators who were highly valued by the society, about women being “less proficient, decisive, less aggressive, more flighty, and more unpredictable than men drivers” (Wachs 2001:106).

However, despite stereotypes, women did take up driving. According to Rolls (2010:191), the first female driver was Genevra Mudge from New York in 1899. This then shows that there have been female drivers for over a century, however; there has been limited information about them. Yet, according to Berger (1986:258), even though there were female drivers, they were initially few in number and, as a result, there was no danger posed and there was not any form of social order threat where the society was mainly dominated by men and not women.

Berger (1986:259), therefore stated that prior to the 1910s there were no stereotypes about women drivers, but those women who drove, had to do so in the presence of a male. This



then shows that the society held the belief that women were not capable of driving without supervision. By the social order, Berger refers to the society that is dominated or ruled by patriarchy. Women drivers, being few at the time, did not threaten other men's masculinities. As a result, there were no stereotypes regarding female drivers. Berger (1986:258) further stated that as changes took place in American society, more women started driving and this is when stereotypes were created.

Berger (1986) also stated that there were other reasons that prevented women from driving in the 1910s. This includes the fact that cars were made in such a way that they were not women-friendly. Since it was believed that women are supposed to be feminine and clean or presentable, the cars did not allow for such as Berger (1986:260) stated that women who drove would then arrive to their destination with their hair messed up and dirty.

During the First World War, men were absent as a result of partaking in the war and women were forced to be independent. This was then a turning point as women started operating cars and driving, as well as entering the labour market – in small numbers at first (Berger 1986:258). The First World War thus produced a social shift in gender roles, but a major impact on the number of women driving was also the result of technological advances.

Wachs (2001:101) stated that prior to 1910, the cars that were operative were gasoline cars that were not women friendly, but there was an upgrading of cars as a result of industrialisation. The gasoline cars now had an electric starter and this made it easier for women to operate them because women did not have to work hard and go through the pumping process. As a result of this upgrade, women began driving. The car was suitable for domestic tasks that were supposed to be carried out by women, since these tasks had a circumscribed radius. According to Wachs (2001:102), a gasoline car before the electric starter modification was introduced, was difficult to operate because the engine had to be cranked and this was regarded a job that could not be done by women. According to Berger (1986:258), then 1912 and the 1st World War in 1914 gave women the opportunity of becoming drivers, because the 1912 introduction of the electric starter presented women with the opportunity to learn to drive.

Women could now also make decisions go shopping, ride for pleasure as well as go out to pay debts (Wachs 2001:101-102). There was no longer any need for women to have men as their supervisors or to have men present at all times when they were driving, as was the case

when there were only gasoline cars without electric starters. Before, men believed that if a woman was allowed to drive, then the woman should do so only if a man is around so that they show them how the cars were to be operated.

The Second World War provided the next turning point. Casale (2003:35) stated that the incorporation of women in the labour market was intensified during World War Two. This was the result of high demand for labour due to the war and since men were involved in the war, there was a shortage of staff, and both women and children were incorporated to replace men. Even after the war, women continued working and as a result, “this phenomenon began to discredit the notion that women are only 'secondary' or 'marginal' workers that form a reserve of labour supply, to be called in only when labour is in short supply” (Casale 2003:36).

The reasons for an increased participation of females in the labour market were both related to push and pull factors. “Pull factors are associated with changes on the demand side of the labour market, reflected in the increased job opportunities and earnings available to women in paid employment, which would in turn raise the opportunity cost of not working and push factors derive more from the supply side of the labour market, and are reflected in increased economic need, through for example the fall in the real income available to women in their households” (Casale 2003:43).

Due to an increase in wages, increased household productivity as machines were introduced, declining fertility and changing preferences and attitudes, more women were entering the labour market after the war (Burke & McConnell 2000:62). Contradictory to the change in attitudes and preferences when coming to women’s inclusion in the labour market, Padavic and Resking (2002:24) stated that even the Great Depression war of the 1930s failed to absorb more married American women in the labour market, regardless the record of unemployment amongst American men that was brought by the Great Depression. The reason is because only 7% of married American women were absorbed in the labour market in 1920 (Padavic & Resking 2002:24). According to Padavic and Resking (2002:24), instead of drawing women into the labour market, the labour market absorbed children. It can be argued that this was the case because traditionally, it was believed that men are the heads of the household and their role is to provide for their families.

Nevertheless, in the post-World War Two context, the participation of women in the labour market was encouraged. This shows that there was a move from traditionalist to modern viewpoints. The same pattern could be observed in the United Kingdom. Britain also demonstrated the same attitude in terms of allowing the participation of women in the labour market with the support of their husbands (Joseph 1983:16-17).

It is not surprising then, that Berger (1986:262) noted that it was between 1940 and 1977 that the percentage of women drivers doubled. He argued that this period is marked by the emergence of strong stereotypes about women drivers. One would then argue that it was the double figures that mainly contributed to the stereotypes about women being bad drivers, since it could have been used as a strategy by men to keep women out of the public sphere in the notion that they were taking their jobs.

Central to this study, is the question about the relationship between stereotypes about whether women should become drivers and other sets of social stereotypes in relation to the occupation.

Research was conducted in Pennsylvania in 1975 by Tibbetts on sex-role stereotyping. It was reported that young children held stereotypes regarding the jobs that are supposed to be taken by men and women. According to the findings, men and women choose careers that adhere to traditional sex roles. Research indicated that men and women developed career interests that appear to adhere closely to traditional sex-role stereotypes (Tibbetts 1975:257).

The results showed that the majority of the participants, which were children, agreed that jobs such as lawyers, presidents, astronauts, pilots, judges, farmers, clowns, taxi drivers, veterinarians, fire fighters, law (police) officers, baseball players, train engineers, TV announcers, and band leaders should be filled by men (Tibbetts 1975:257). Furthermore, the results according to Tibbetts (1975:257) showed that the majority also agreed that jobs such as nurses, secretaries, cooks, ballet dancers, baby sitters and house cleaners should be filled by women. However, what was unusual was that the children believed that bus driving should be an occupation filled by both men and women (Tibbetts 1975:257).

When lower grade female students were asked about the occupation of bus driving, out of 21 female participants; 13 (62%) said that both men and women should be bus drivers whereas the other 4 (19%) said bus drivers should be women and another 4 (19%) said it should be

men. It was the same result with boys, since the same number of 5 (24%) said bus driving should be taken by both men and women and 11 (52%) said both men and women should be bus drivers. When referring to this research, it is evident that bus driving was not seen as a profession to be filled by men only (Tibbetts 1975:256).

When analysing this study, it should be noted that it was conducted in 1975. It is clear that these children believed that women are supposed to be playing nurturing roles and also the occupations are less valued and have low salaries or wages as compared to the occupations that are believed to be right for men. What was striking is that there was a division of perspectives regarding driving. The majority of the children believed that taxi driving should be a profession occupied solely by men, whereas, when asked about bus driving, both boy and girl participants believed that men and women should be occupying this profession. The question therefore is, what was it about the American society at the time that would have influenced these perspectives? Buses are huge as compared to taxis and one could then believe that these children could have at least given the same answers as they gave about taxi driving. The article does not critically analyse these results, thus leaving one with questions such as were there already public or private buses that were driven by women that they had witnessed? Or were they only exposed to female school bus drivers? If this was then the case, one could then argue that because these women were driving primary school children, they were also able to take care of them. However, these questions are not posed and covered by the study. There was also no follow up study conducted to see if the children's perspectives about women and men's occupations changed over time or as they grew older, for exposure to the public also plays a role in the ideas held by the society.

### **2.3. Women and the South African labour market with a special focus on bus drivers**

#### **2.3.1. The apartheid labour market**

There is little South African literature on women and driving and the available literature tends to mirror the American stereotypes about women driving private cars. In order for one to understand the South African case of women's entry into the labour market, it is vital to look at the South African labour history. The overview below will of necessity be brief.

South Africa attracted Foreign Direct Investment that boosted the economy after the discovery of minerals and gold. However, South African laws were discriminatory. It should be noted that even before the 1950s, when apartheid policies were implemented in South

Africa by an Afrikaner government that was in power and held an Afrikaner nationalist ideology, a number of preceding governments implemented policies determined aspects of labour relations in South Africa on the basis of race. Apartheid laws excluded people on the basis of race and the government privileged white people at the expense of black people. Acts such as those on job reservations, prevented black people from upward mobility and occupying high skilled and high paying jobs. The black schooling system had poor quality and it was the Bantu Education Act (No.47) that institutionalised the segregation of the white and black schooling systems, thus restricting black people to low paying jobs. Kumleben, Sangweni and Ledger (2003) assert that from the 1950s to the 1990s, black people were subjected to systematic discrimination. In cases where black people held the same positions as white people, they were not paid the same wages or salary.

South Africa's economic growth was experienced throughout the 1960s. However; it was white people who enjoyed the benefits. The labour process was structured in such a way that black people were forced into the labour market through expropriating the black people's land so that they become dependent on selling their labour to white firms and the state. According to van Klaveren, Tijdens, Hughie-Williams and Martin (2009:8), all skilled jobs were only reserved for white people. Even though the South African economy improved and experienced growth in the 1960s, by the 1970s a serious shortage of labour was experienced which affected the economic growth negatively. The solution to this problem, according to some white businessmen, was that job reservation should be scrapped and that there was a need to educate black people so that they can supply their labour (van Klaveren et.al. 2009:9).

It is stated by Kallaway and Bottaro (1987: 565) that between 1976 and 1981, the apartheid government intensified its policy of separate development along racial and ethnic lines by using four homelands, namely Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei, to separate black South Africans (designated as Africans) from white South Africans. This introduced a sharp gender dimension. While black men could access permits to work as migrant labourers in South Africa, the cost of social reproduction of women and children could be borne in the homelands.

Even though there were changes regarding the labour relations legislation from the early 1970s, such as allowing black people to be members of unions and engage in strike activities, racial discrimination persisted. There were job divisions and wage discrimination against African, Coloured and Asian or Indian workers (van Klaveren et. al. 2009:9).

Black ‘empowerment’ was reviewed by P.W. Botha from 1978, as a result of hindrance to economic growth because of jobs being reserved only for white people whose labour was expensive. The job reservation system was then abolished so that the labour market could also be open to black people.

A series of historical events led to a negotiated settlement and the first democratic elections in 1994. As a result, the labour market was opened up and a series of corrective measures were legislated to normalise the labour market in terms of both race and gender.

### **2.3.2. The incorporation of women in the South African labour market**

A gender analysis is also required in order to understand the South African labour market. Casale and Posel (2002:158) argue that the feminisation of women in the labour market has remained undocumented in South Africa as compared to other countries.

According to Casale and Posel (2002:158), 23% of the labour market in 1960 in South Africa was women and this figure excluded domestic workers. The entrance of women in the labour market subsequently increased, as it was reported that by 1970 the share was 32% and 34% in 1995 (van Klaveren et.al. 2009:15-16). According to Mahlwele (2012:23), women only constituted 36% of the labour force in the mid-1990s and women of all races held lower paying jobs as compared to men and they were also paid less in comparable jobs. Likewise, Mahlwele (2012:23) stated that white women occupied positions such as clerks, and positions in service industries. It was only a few white women who held high positions, since the majority of women dominated the domestic workplace.

This shows that labour market issues go beyond racial issues, as they also touch on gender inequalities in the labour market. According to Casale (2004:14), for a large part of the previous century, black women managed agricultural production whereas men continued working in the cities and in the mines. However, when looking at female employment and race, it was stated that both white women and mixed race women had higher chances of employment compared to black women. The reasons given do not only concentrate on the structure of the apartheid policies, but also around issues of African culture since “the culture, beliefs, norms and tradition that a woman’s place is in the kitchen amongst primitive black men was the main cause of such differences” (Mahlwele 2012:46). Another reason presented by Mahlwele (2012:46-47), was that few black women had the opportunity of pursuing their education or even going to university. The few black women that managed to break the

ceiling only studied technical courses with less emphasis on managerial or engineering courses.

In a paper prepared by the ANC Secretariat for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women held in Copenhagen in July 1980 (ANC 1980), the terms in which the African National Congress understood the relation between apartheid labour market policies and gender was explained. The document draws amongst others on census data.

According to the ANC, during the apartheid era, African women suffered a triple oppression. Firstly, Africans were at a disadvantage since their race acted as a definer of their class. Secondly, these women were also restricted by the apartheid legislation which controlled their lives in terms of where they could reside, amongst other things. The third form of oppression was the ideology of being dependent and inferior to men (ANC 1980). African women in the rural areas and urban areas were affected by apartheid policies. The migrant labour system also kept women in the rural areas since it was men who were targeted to become labourers and they were paid low wages. Paying low wages was a strategy used by the apartheid government in making sure that women remain confined in rural areas and only get involved in subsistence farming so that they are able to supply food for their children in the absence of their partners (ANC 1980). During the apartheid era, relying only on land was not ideal or rather did not cater for everyone's needs, thus women also cultivated and prepared mud for hut walls, thatch for roofs and also raised cattle (ANC 1980).

Africans were allowed to reside in urban areas only when they were part of the labour market. In 1970, many Africans were expelled from urban areas as a result of the homeland policies and the majority of these were African women. The argument was that African women did not have any purpose in urban areas.

Even though the apartheid government made attempts to keep women in rural areas or reserved areas, women broke the barrier and entered the labour market. As a result of the inability to continue with subsistence farming due to land conditions, the number of women in the labour market increased. For example, in a document entitled 'Effects of Apartheid on the Status of Women in South Africa', the ANC argued that "of the 1,508,080 women workers who were employed in 1970; the majority were service workers, mainly domestic servants numbering 724,020, or farm workers totalling 655,040" (ANC 1980). Additionally, "the average earnings of African women were less than half of those of African male workers



and amounted to only 8 per cent of the income of white males” (ANC 1980). It was reported in the 1970 census that 716, 700 women were domestic workers compared to 295, 240 men (ANC 1980).

However, the document argued that there had been a drastic change in industrial sectors between the early 1950s and the early 1980s. A pattern emerged whereby a large proportion of white women who were occupying these positions were replaced by semi-skilled and skilled black workers. In 1970, 4% were white female workers in the production industry, 50% coloured women and 31.4% African women (ANC 1980).

According to (Standing et al, as quoted by Casale & Posel 2002:158-159), in 1960, 23% of the labour force in South Africa were women and by 1985; there was a rise to 36%, reaching 41% in 1991. In other words, the participation of women in the labour market had increased. However, the drastic change happened over the period of 1995 to 2001. In 1999, there was an increase of 47% of women in the labour market (Casale 2003:1). This was the post-apartheid period.

A holistic approach, which included legislation by government and the operation of social and market forces, played a noteworthy role in the incorporation of women in the labour market. The interventions made included entrenching gender equality in the constitution, the establishment of the gender commission and the enactment of legislative forms to prevent discrimination and other factors that were preventing women from independence and security (Casale 2003:1).

According to (Standing et al, as quoted by Casale & Posel 2002:159), the increased number of women in the labour market was the result of women being part of the economically active population. This then means that there were a number of women who were employed, of which the majority were domestic workers. Women who were unemployed were constantly seeking employment. Most women, according to me, might have started seeking employment as a result of the impact of the migrant labour system that contributed to the absenteeism of men in the household. There was then a need to financially provide for their families, therefore women started seeking employment. The argument by Casale (2003:v), on the other hand, is that there were programmes and policies that were adapted that presented women with an opportunity to enter the labour market, such as the neo-liberal policy and structural adjustment programmes.



The neo-liberal economy policies presented financial and trade markets liberalisation that led to higher levels of paid labour for females (Mohamed 2008:29). According to Mohamed (2008:29), due to neo-liberal policies, the labour market became feminised in that “there was also transformation of work conditions of paid work such that jobs became casual, irregular, flexible and precarious”. These measures were made so that the working conditions were women-friendly.

However, even though the liberalisation of trade markets increased women’s paid work, there were consequences experienced by women because liberalisation also results in market instability; and since most women are in precarious positions, if there is a financial crisis, they are at risk of losing their jobs compared to men (Mohamed 2008:28-29). Casale’s argument does not address the impact the constitution, with its aim of abolishing apartheid laws and aim for gender equality in the workplace, had on increased participation by women in the labour market. However, the increased participation of women in the labour market was not solely due to a post-apartheid legislative programme aimed at correcting the past; economic factors were crucial.

There are therefore multiple factors that have played a role in the participation of women in the labour market such as legislation that is driven by the belief in equal rights for both men and women. For instance, in South Africa, the legislation promulgated after 1994 prohibited discrimination. According to Casale (2003:50), “the prohibition of 'unfair discrimination' and the implementation of affirmative action policies in the labour market, both features of the Employment Equity Act of 1998, were designed to favour women as one of the previously disadvantaged groups in South Africa, has played an important role in many countries”. The Employment Equity Act of 1998, the Skills Development Act and Black Economic Empowerment accelerated women’s participation in the labour market, since it had programmes such as affirmative action and employment equity; and bolstered the appointment of women in high positions and encouraged education for women and girls so that they have qualifications (Casale 2003:3).

In terms of economic factors, the post-apartheid government in South Africa implemented policies for restructuring the South African economy. The state signed an agreement in 1994 with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) binding the government to lower tariff barriers to the WTO accepted levels and also implemented the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy in 1996, embodying the neo-liberal policy that has been linked to the

incorporation of women in the labour market (Casale 2003:68). According to Casale (2003:59), trade liberalisation and export-led industrialisation has both managed to incorporate women in the labour market – especially in light industries – and also as a result of a capitalist society, women have been incorporated as cheap labour and they are paid less so that the companies reduce costs. Casale (2003:2) further stated that women enter the labour market as a result of the added-worker effect, describing a situation where women are pushed into the labour market as a result of economic need to sustain their families following a fall of income of their partners or unemployment.

In explaining this in detail, Casale and Posel (2002:17) argued that women have been pushed rather than pulled into the labour market, as a result of the inability of men to bring income into the family and this could be a result of unemployment amongst men. Evidence suggests that 1.1 million more people were unemployed in 1999 than in 2005 (Casale & Posel 2002:17). There is also a link between the migrant labour system and the fall of income amongst men, since the result was that more men were susceptible to contracting HIV/AIDS and lose their jobs; there were also instances where migrant labourers stopped sending remittances to their families (Casale & Posel 2002:17).

In conclusion, it is important to keep in mind Cagatay and Ozler's (1995) argument about the fact that, women's formal access to the labour market does not mean that societies necessarily change in terms of gender relations. They argue that it is important to note that countries differ and even though there has been acceptance of women in the labour market, African and Asian countries are still dominated by patriarchal ideologies that are reinforced by both culture and religion. In the same way, it is argued that even though countries may hold ideologies regarding the entry of women in the labour market, economic needs are a catalyst to driving women in the labour market and this is the case in South Africa (Casale 2003:52).

The table below shows representation of women in different industries from 1970 to 2007 in South Africa:<sup>3</sup>

	1970			2000			2007		
	M	F	TOT	M	F	TOT	M	F	TOT
<b>1. Agriculture, fishing etc.</b>	1,593	889	2,482	819	543	1,362	498	272	770
2. Mining	674	7	680	417	14	431	299	24	323
3. Manufacturing	811	215	1,025	1,039	661	1,754	1,304	637	1,941
4. Utilities	45	2	47	67	12	79	61	23	84
5. Construction	464	12	476	652	57	709	959	135	1,093
6. Wholesale and retail trade	513	195	708	1,411	1,484	2,896	1,663	1,747	3,410
7. Transport, storage, commun.	310	28	338	585	100	684	577	157	734
8. Finance, insurance, business	115	75	190	609	412	1,021	842	605	1,447
9. Community, social, personal services.	585	1,011	1,596	883	1,220	2,103	1,062	1,478	2,540
10. Domestic workers				234	1,036	1,297	323	943	1,266
11. Total	5,109	2,433	7,542	6,770	5,566	12,336	7,558	6,020	13,609
12. Total excl. 10 and 11	5,109	2,433	7,542	6,536	4,530	11,039	7,235	5,077	12,343
%services ((6+7+8+ 9) : 12) x 100	30%	54%	38%	53%	71%	61%	57%	78%	66%

<sup>3</sup> The numbers are per 100 000

Source: Van Klaveren et al. 2009. An overview of women's work and employment in South Africa: Decisions for life MPG3 project country report No.3 (pg. 16). [http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Country\\_Report\\_No3-South\\_Africa\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Country_Report_No3-South_Africa_EN.pdf)

The table above demonstrates that even though there has been an increase in the employment of women in different industries, men have always dominated in all of these industries except for the domestic work sector. This is the case because domestic work (cleaning, ironing, and cooking) is believed to be some of the things that women are supposed to do. Even in the transport industry, men have always dominated even though there has been a slight increase of women entering this industry. In 2000, 45.1% of women were employed and in 2007, this dropped to 44.2% (Van Klaveren et al. 2009).

### 2.3.3. Women and the bus industry in South Africa

Key challenges faced by the bus industry in post-apartheid have been (1) competition in the public transport sector; and (2) the incorporation of black South Africans and women into the industry. I will discuss each of these challenges in turn and conclude the section with a brief case study of one of the largest state-regulated private bus industry players, Public Utility Transport Corporation (PUTCO).

The table below shows bus usage in different places:

Areas	Percentages of commuters using buses
Metropolitan areas	18
Urban	18
Rural	43

Source: Advantage Transit Guide (2011: 27-28)

From this table, it is evident that the majority of people from the rural areas are depending on buses, whereas in urban areas a smaller percentage of commuters use buses (Advantage Transit Guide 2011:27-28).

The following table presents percentages of people using buses in different provinces:

<b>Provinces</b>	<b>Percentages of people</b>
Western Cape	4.6
Eastern Cape	3.3
Northern Cape	2.2
Free State	3.3
KwaZulu-Natal	8.7
North West	6.7
Gauteng	3.7
Mpumalanga	8.1
Limpopo	5.6

Source: Advantage Transit Guide (2011:28)

From the table, KwaZulu-Natal (8.7%), Mpumalanga (8.1%) and North West province (6.7%) are the provinces with higher percentages of people using buses as compared to other provinces.

It has been reported in a special report of *Advantage magazine*, called a ‘Media Transit Guide’, that bus services have experienced a downfall in areas such as Ekurhuleni and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipalities; the taxi services on the other hand, have experience an upward adjustment. However, when comparing current bus services to those of 1997, a report by Advantage Transit guide stated that the services have remained constant (Advantage Transit Guide, 2011: 27). Nonetheless, the overall participation increased. It was therefore reported that, there has been a downturn of bus service usage since it dropped from over one million to 850 000 users (Advantage Transit Guide,2011:27). However, it is stated that since there has been road congestion in both metropolitan and urban areas, there have been more

commuters opting for buses. Unfortunately, “in terms of public transport, buses have the second longest travel times” (Advantage Transit Guide 2011:27).

The report stated that 83 % of individuals aged 15 years and older do not use buses because of reasons such as; the buses are infrequent, since they work with different times unlike taxis that are available anytime. Buses were reported to not depart or arrive at appropriate times and finally, long travelling times (Advantage Transit Guide 2011:27). This point shows that there is a concern on public transport reliability. Further reasons that reflected the dissatisfaction of the passengers included: “74 % reporting that they were not using buses due to lack of facilities at bus stops; 54 % stating that buses are overcrowded and 51 % arguing that it is due to low frequency off-peak” (Advantage Transit Guide 2011:28). It is argued that bus services or the bus market has lost out and declined significantly to minibus taxis in the following provinces: Northern Cape, Free State, North West and Mpumalanga. However, even though this is the case, provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and the North West province have the highest bus usage rates (Advantage Transit Guide 2011:29).

In terms of the advancement of women in the bus industry in South Africa, Focus (2011) reports that even though the bus owners’ fraternity has grown significantly, women are still facing challenges regarding incorporation in the labour market of bus industries. According to Focus (2011), the South African Bus Operators Association (SABOA) was launched in 1980 and it has 13 000 buses up to date. SABOA has an objective of transforming the bus industry and making sure that there is equality in the workplace or the bus industry (Walters 2011:1). It was working hand-in-hand with the government since the equity policy stated that there should be equity in the workplace (Focus 2011).

However, the executive owner of SABOA, Eric Cornelius, stated that the entry of women as bus owners in the industry is very slow. He further said that, dating back to history, the bus industry in South Africa and other neighbouring countries has always been dominated by men. This was the case due to the nature of the work itself, such as buses being heavy machines which require physical strength that supposedly women do not have. Strength is required to drive buses and also repair them in cases when the bus breaks down. Turner and Fouracre (1995) mentioned five reasons as to why this is the case that, in the transport sector, women have not been presented with the same opportunities of entering the labour market as men. Turner’s reasons correspond with the arguments by Berger (1995), namely that transport is less friendly to women who tend to suffer from more occupational health

concerns as compared to men; as well as the nature of the transport system, which does not cater for women.

However, according to (Focus 2011), due to an expansion in the industry, there has been a significant evolvement of the bus industry over the past 20 years. If women are slow in becoming owners in the sector, it is evident that women have been entering the profession as drivers and they are employed as an attempt to meet employment equity quotas. *Focus* (2011) stated that currently women are not confined to only managerial or administrative positions as they are also bus drivers and technicians. Also, “the buses used today are sophisticated, with automated transmissions, power steering and comfortable cockpits, making it irrelevant whether the driver is male or female” (Focus 2011).

Other reasons for incorporating women in the bus driver labour market are a result of male drivers becoming sick. It was reported that women are also taking truck driving jobs, due to male drivers having the HIV/AIDS illness. Peggie Odiari, senior transport controller at Rennies, said “we are looking forward to an increase of women in the industry, since, women are reliable and work equally hard and as a result, the aim is to treat them equally and fairly” (Smith 2009). However, there are still some employers who refuse to hire women, because they say that women would inconvenience them by becoming pregnant and thus interfering with the job; but other employers who hire women said that women were less likely to engage in risky behaviour compared to men (Smith 2009).

In challenging the notion of women bus drivers being perfect, it was reported that on the 2nd of May 2006 in South Africa, a female bus driver allegedly assaulted a passenger for telling the driver that talking on the phone while driving is illegal. When referring to this incident, it shows that there are some female bus drivers who are aggressive and they are acting masculine. It could be argued that this is their strategy of sending a message across that they also should be respected (Scholtz 2009).

In conclusion, the researcher has argued that the bus industry is interwoven with South African history and demonstrates the legacy of both the racial and gendered remains of the past. As a result, the incorporation of women into the bus driving industry is difficult. An illustration of this complex history is the case of the Public Utility Transport Corporation (PUTCO), which will be discussed in the section below.

#### **2.3.4. The Public Utility Transport Corporation (PUTCO)**

PUTCO was established in 1945 by Jack Barregar. Due to segregation in the apartheid era, black people did not use the same facilities as white people and this was also the case with PUTCO. PUTCO was mainly regarded as ‘blacks-only’ transport.

As part of a broader resistance movement, PUTCO services were politicised. It was regarded by many people, mostly black, as a symbol of oppression forming part of white people and the white state’s methods of oppression.

For example, in the early 1950s, the majority of people living in Alexandra – outside Johannesburg – began to be active and engaged civil society to start boycotting PUTCO buses. The boycott continued into 1957 and included workers from Johannesburg and Pretoria (South African Democracy Education Trust 2008:15). What sparked this issue was an increase in PUTCO fares by 25% and it was estimated that 70 000 workers were involved in this action (Luckhardt & Wall 1980: 151).

PUTCO reported that the reason behind increasing bus fares was that funds are needed in order to continue serving the people and meeting their needs through provision of transport. It is important to note that this was the first time PUTCO had attempted to increase its fares during a period of 20 years in operation. Regardless of this point, commuters were hostile towards an increase of bus fares (Pirie 1983:68). Moreover, Pirie (1983:69) argued that in order to understand why there was unrest about fare increases, despite it being the first time in 20 years, economic conditions of black people needed to be understood and analysed. Pirie (1983:69) argued that the majority of black people occupied unskilled labour that paid low wages. Therefore, a fare increase was going to impoverish the majority of black households.

In dealing with this problem of fare increase, there was then solidarity amongst Alexandra commuters as they opted to use other forms of transport, such as municipal buses, taxis, and non-motorised transport. The boycotting went on for the first three months of 1957 (Pirie 1983:67). PUTCO showed a great loss since it lost its customers to other forms of transport and as a result of this boycott, PUTCO then decreased their fare prices (Pirie 1983:67).

During the period from the 1990s to 2000, PUTCO experienced more problems as a result of competition with the taxi industry. The introduction of the taxi industry is argued to have impacted negatively on PUTCO. It is reported that during this period, the PUTCO fleet was reduced to 2 500 and it carried 120 million passengers a year (Pisapia 2006). This shows that



PUTCO lost customers to the taxi industry. Even though this is the case, the PUTCO industry has survived the problems as it is still in operation.

Today, commuter PUTCO services are provided in South Africa's Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces. It is also the only public commuter company that is listed on the Johannesburg Securities Exchange SA and besides, it is regarded as the biggest commuter company in South Africa reported in the *General News* (4 September 2007).

It was recently reported by PUTCO Greater Soweto that they have 2 223 drivers, of which 55 are women (PUTCO Greater Soweto 2012). This then demonstrates that women are underrepresented in the bus industry.

### **2.3.5. Bus driving as an occupation**

It should be noted that bus driving, as an occupation, is associated with particular kinds of occupational health issues and work-related stress due to the nature of the job. Well-being may be affected as such issues may spill over to family and work relationships.

There was research done in the United Kingdom on the occupational health of urban bus drivers. It was found that bus drivers are likely to suffer ill health as a result of the nature of their jobs. The stressors that are faced by these bus drivers are a result of physical, psychological and behavioural outcomes. The drivers sometimes have to deal with aggressive passengers and traffic that heightens their stress levels (Tse, Flin & Mearns 2006:89-90).

In support of the argument, (Rydstedt, Evans & Johansson 1998:36) reported that urban public bus operation is very stressful compared to other professions; and that bus drivers all over the world are faced with occupational stressors contributing to the level of absenteeism, disability and higher rates of psychosomatic, cardiovascular, musculoskeletal and gastrointestinal disorders.

Some of these stressors were confirmed by the researcher during observation in the field. Drivers are faced with conflicting demands that intensifies their stress levels. Both the company and the public demand reliable service, such as being punctual and making sure that you drive fast so that people arrive at their destination places on time. The passengers expect them to drive fast and at the same time they expect the operators to drive safely. The drivers are also expected to give information to the passengers regarding routes and also there are cases where they are expected to help elderly and disabled passengers.

The intensification of the stressors is also a result of traffic and hazardous driving conditions (Rydstedt et al, 1998: 36). Aronsson and Rissler (1998:122) further argued that “the reports made by the published studies of urban bus drivers during the past two decades show a consistent pattern of higher rates of absenteeism, occupationally related illness, and early death than those of employees from other occupational groups”. These urban bus drivers are strained as a result of unruly passengers, time pressure and congested traffic.

Research on bus drivers’ occupational health has been done in other developed countries such as the Netherlands, Italy, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Hong Kong. However, the problem with South Africa is that there has not been much, or any research at all, on the impact bus driving has on the health of bus drivers or, with reference to this case, women bus drivers. With the 32 studies that were carried out in different countries, results were comparable regarding bus drivers’ occupational health (Kompier 1996:13). This will be helpful in that there can also be a comparison with the South African study and the other studies conducted in other countries.

According to Kompier (1996:IV), occupational stress is becoming a global phenomenon; therefore all categories of workers in different workplaces are experiencing the same problem of occupational stress. Research was conducted in thirteen countries on the health of bus drivers in comparison with other occupations such as taxi driving; the results illustrate the high risk of bus driving as an occupation and therefore “sickness absenteeism of bus drivers is significantly higher compared to other professional groups” (Kompier 1996:5). The same holds true for the risk of disability. The main conditions leading to disability relate to the back, tendons and joints, mental disorders and cardiovascular diseases (Kompier 1996:2-5).

Due to the demand of working as a bus driver, according to Kompier (1996:5), these are the health problems that are faced by bus drivers that most of the times work early shifts:

“Musculo-skeletal problems (lower part of the back, neck, shoulders, upper part of the back, knees); psychological problems (fatigue, tension, mental overload); stomach and intestinal disorders and sleeping problems” (Kompier 1996:5).

If the drivers are faced with such occupational health problems, then their lives become disrupted. When looking at women bus drivers, occupational health threats might have a negative impact on their relationships with their families because if they are sick, contact and interaction with family members becomes minimal.

On the other hand, there are also physical working conditions of bus drivers that make bus drivers susceptible to illness. Some of the physical factors that were reported as contributing factors to occupational stress or health threats included: the open space exposure due to doors being frequently opened when passengers get in and out; high vibration levels; a seating position that is uncomfortable because the seats lack adjustability; and high levels of light exposure related to night driving, poor weather conditions and neon (Kompier 1996:10).

It should be noted that with all being reported, there are different health implications caused by driving a private car as opposed to driving a bus. This is so because of the differing sizes of private cars and buses. Regardless of the stereotypes that have been reported about women bus drivers, it should be noted that bus driving is stressful and a fairly high risk occupation.

#### **2.4. Women in the driving seat**

This chapter outlines the historical background of the emergence of stereotypes about women being bad drivers. It refers to the American literature in guiding the ideologies about women and the labour market. In this chapter, the researcher has argued that stereotypes about women being in the private sphere are of the American origin and they were also evident in South Africa as people used these stereotypes to reinforce their traditional beliefs. The chapter outlines the idea that it is the increase in number of women bus drivers that unsettled most men. This is so because women were regarded as a threat to men's job security, as women were then competitors of jobs. Men's hostility against the presence of women in the labour market was guided by fear of losing their jobs at the hands of women's presence. In the South African context, it is the post 1994 government that opened opportunities for women to enter the labour market for the government's mission was to accomplish gender equality in the labour market.

Moreover, in order to understand labour incorporation in the apartheid South Africa, it is vital to consider both race and gender since there were a number of white women who were employed. It was mostly black women who were encouraged to become active in the labour industry and explore other jobs given that most black women worked as domestic workers. However, it is not only the post 1994 government that encouraged women to enter the labour market; there were other factors that pushed and pulled women into the labour market. In the absence of men, women were forced to be independent and as a result, women searched for work outside their households. There was also a demand for a labour force and since women

were available, women took the opportunities they were presented with. Finally, the researcher has argued that bus driving as an occupation has its own health-related issues that might make it difficult for women to be in the labour market for a longer period. Driving buses is challenging and also risky compared to driving private cars.

In the following chapter, the researcher outlines the key theoretical and conceptual frameworks that will be developed in the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1. Introduction**

In providing a theoretical and conceptual framework for the study, the researcher first locates the study in terms of theories that explain gender differentiation. Second, the researcher examines the relationship between occupation and well-being from a gender perspective. In doing so, the researcher discusses three concepts central to my understanding of well-being, namely ‘occupational health’, ‘workplace relations’ and ‘work-family relations’. Much of the scholarly writing on work-family relations is derived from the structural-functionalism of Talcott Parsons that will be critiqued in the first part of this chapter in the discussion of sex role theory. As a result, it is argued by the researcher that the theoretical literature on work-family balance with a discussion of changing family structures in the ‘West’ as well as in South Africa and its implications for this debate.

### **3.2. The social construction of gender and biological essentialism**

Since traditionally it is not “normal” for women to occupy jobs that are seen as meant for men, there are several theories that explain these beliefs relating to women who are in occupations that are considered to be suitable for men. The theories that are going to be discussed include social construction theory, socialisation theory, gender role conflict theory and sex role theory.

In examining why gender is defined in terms of the roles that are supposed to be carried out by men and women, it is important to consider both biological reductionist and social constructionist viewpoints regarding the roles that are taken by men and women in the society.

The argument made by biological essentialists is that “the social roles and psychological attributes of females and males in relation to a whole range of behaviours and personality traits” can be reduced to biological difference (Stanley 2002:31). According to the essentialist view, personalities, behaviours and roles taken are a result of biological factors that are still operative. For example, the link between biological essentialism and the portrayal of women as bad drivers is illustrated by Wachs (2001:105) who stated that; if a man is involved in an accident, they attribute it to temperament and if it is a woman, people attribute it to a sex characteristic. Wachs (2001:106) argued that “women do not commonly possess the nervous

imperturbability<sup>4</sup> which is essential to good driving, since they seem always to be a little self-conscious on the road and a little doubtful about their own powers”. Furthermore, “they are too easily worried, too uncertain of their own right of way and too apt to let their emotions affect their manipulation of the steering wheel” Wachs (2001:106).

Nonetheless, biological essentialism is unable to explain differences in gender structures across societies. For example, in understanding gender roles and women who are bus drivers, it should be noted that there are variations between cultures regarding the beliefs about the roles that should be taken by men and women. For example, there are traditionalist and modern industrialised societies. In modern societies, gender is viewed somewhat differently from traditionalist societies where there are strongly held beliefs about the roles that are supposed to be taken by men and women. Stanley (2002:32) argued that gender is complex and that some behaviour may be interpreted differently depending on context. The other argument, related to variations in culture over time, is that cultures do adapt to change and they are not static, but rather dynamic. It could be argued that due to capitalism, there was a need to use cheap labour and as a result, women entered the public domain and they became bus drivers. Capitalism has brought economic and social role changes to men and women (Stanley 2002:32).

This study is therefore located in a social constructivist, rather than biological essentialist tradition. Within social constructivist thinking about gender, there are a number of theoretical schools that try to locate the primary place where the social construction of gender stems from. First I will discuss the sex role theory, which takes the role differentiation between men and women as the outcome of both biological and social processes. What is important about the sex role theory is the idea that role differentiation is essentially good for society. Second, the researcher discusses the socialisation theory which is much stronger on the idea that gender is socially constructed, but which underplays agency. Finally, the researcher argues that the idea of ‘roles’ are still useful to my study, but not roles as a set of relations between men and women. Women may find themselves in a contradictory position where the gender role they play at home and worker differs. For that reason the researcher concludes with a discussion of the gender role conflict theory.

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<sup>4</sup> The “coolness of mind” allowing for clear judgment. Pertaining both to physical nerve centers and mental aspects (Carr, 2001: 129)

### 3.2.1. Sex role theory

The sex role theory postulates that humans learn from the society's institutions to behave in an appropriate way. This theory then assures us that people who conform to the traditional roles will bring harmony amongst men and women; there will be no conflicts between them (Trigiani 1999). With regard to the relations between male and female bus drivers, the sex role theory would then argue that there will be tension or conflict between them if bus driving is understood by a particular society to be part of the male role.

According to Trigiani (1999), the argument against this school of thought is that the sex role theory fails on five accounts. Firstly, it does not address the individuals' behavioural differences in diverse situations; secondly, the sex role theory does not account for the different characteristics amongst men themselves and between women; thirdly, it seems to endorse passive learning; fourthly, it assumes that gender forms the core of a person's identity and lastly, it does not explain why and how certain characteristics become attached to men or women (Trigiani 1999). For the study, I will be focusing on the first four criticisms of the sex role theory.

As mentioned, the first critique of the sex role theory is that it fails to address the individuals' behavioural differences in diverse situations. With regard to female bus drivers, for instance, they may be encountering challenges such as being discriminated against and told that they are too emotional to be drivers. However, this does not take all the control away from them. Since they are the drivers, they are the ones in power and have control. Therefore, they might be considered weak, but when faced with some situations and when they are in a different context, they may act tough.

Secondly, the sex role theory does not account for the different characteristics amongst men themselves and between women (Trigiani 1999). It is evident that driving requirements can also be performed by female drivers and that at least some women are better drivers than some men. This position is supported by (Connell, in Demetriou 2001:338) who states that, the sex role theory's inability to grasp power is closely related to the failure that it has in theorizing the relation between structure and agency; it relies to some extent on biological determinism. "Sex role theory is incapable of grasping the complexity and power relations within genders" (Connell, in Demetriou 2001:339). (Connell, in Demetriou 2001:339) further argued that the sex role theory fails to acknowledge the existence of the multiplicity of femininities and masculinities such that inconsistencies with the normative sex role are then

regarded as deviance. Due to the narrow scope, the sex role theory is unable to understand power resistance and it does not account for change (Connell, in Demetriou 2001:338-339). Since there is social evolution in the history of driving and there are female drivers, it fails to account for these changes in the society.

Thirdly, sex-role theory seems to endorse passive learning of which this is not the case. Even though there may be beliefs about the “appropriate” roles for men and women, it does not necessarily mean that people will just take in information as it is. They are also capable of being active and also actively criticising the information they are given. This is also relevant to my study of women bus drivers. The majority were exposed to the information that there are jobs that are appropriate for men and women and in this instance; bus driving was also one of the occupations that were referred to as male occupations. However, women’s decisions to become bus drivers show that they were active in critically analysing the information they were given.

On the second last point, the sex-role theory also does not account sufficiently for the fact that it is not only gender that is at the core of one’s identity; there are other factors such as race, religion and class. It might be that most women who choose to work as bus drivers are not merely doing it to prove the stereotypes wrong, but because it is what they believe they are capable of doing. There are some women who are working as bus drivers because it brings an income into the family. There are also a lot of women who do not believe in working as bus drivers due to their religious beliefs that might be against a women’s decision to enter the labour market. Therefore in order to understand women in the labour market, it is also important to look at factors such as class, race and gender and how they intertwine.

Therefore, as a result of the above discussion, I am of the opinion that the sex-role theory does not go far in engaging with the current study on female bus drivers; some of the issues pertaining to the decisions of women in entering the labour market are not explained by this theoretical position.

### **3.2.2. Socialisation theory**

(Stanley, as quoted by Jackson 2002:273) defines socialisation as "a process by which children are transformed into social beings that have taken on particular norms and values in guiding them on how they are supposed to behave". The primary socialising agents are the family, church and school. Our society uses other institutions such as families, educational



institutions, religious institutions and “many other social organizations and conventions, ascribes to us certain expectations, imbues us with certain roles and behaviours, ways of dressing, ways of speaking, ways of acting, and even ways of travelling” (Wachs 2001:100). Boys are expected to be strong and rational and girls are expected to be expressive. People hold the cultural gender belief system that is defined as "a set of beliefs about men and women's qualities of masculinity and femininity" (Bernard 2001:692). It was also argued by Bernard (2001:693) that the belief system reinforces stereotypes about men and women. In this case, it also channels men and women to roles they are expected to play in the society. Hare-Mustin (1998:36) argued that the world is organised in gender terms and that meanings that people attach to gender is a result of their culture and history that then spills over from the family to work, whereby the spaces occupied by men and women are gendered.

Berger and Luckman (1966:51-61) mentioned five processes that help us understand the way in which institutions reproduce social forms. The processes are interaction and habituation, transmission and historicity, objectivity, legitimation and social control. It is in families wherein children are socialised through interaction with their parents and the roles that are played in the family become a habit. It is during this stage that children learn their roles in the family. Through interaction, the actions or behaviour is transmitted to the generation that is involved. This is when the generation starts to learn that, as a girl or boy, this is the role that I am supposed to do.

Also in Berger’s explanation, the people involved are treated as objects for it is believed that they will take in all that is given and act in that particular way that the society in general expects from them. However, in order to get people to continue being obedient, there should be reasons as to why they are expected to behave in certain ways and failure to do this might contribute to people acting differently. In using these stages or processes to understand the reasons for women choosing to be bus drivers; it is clear that people may be socialised to act in certain ways, but if there are gaps and no legitimation, people choose to challenge the hegemonic belief. People are not objects who take in everything that is given without evaluating the situation. Female bus drivers may be regarded as mal-socialised since they are not following the traditional gender roles of being in the private sphere and taking care of their families.

Therefore, the researcher’s main concern about the socialisation theory is that it fails to account for agency. Even though people learn from their families, churches and school the

appropriate behaviour, they are not objects and they eventually make decisions based on what they want to do.

Socialization theory therefore, is a one directional relationship. It believes that it is parents and institutions that can shape the lives of their children. However, people are not only restricted to interactions within the family; they also interact with other people outside the family and this might bring new ways of dealing with and understanding matters. However, Kimmel (2007:107) argued that other institutions do reinforce what has been learnt in the family. The evidence about the emergence of female bus drivers shows that families do not socialize their children in the same manner and even if children were told not to act in a certain way, the final decision is theirs.

(Stanley, in Jackson 2002:278) argued that the socialisation model is reificatory because the social system has pre-set demands on how things are supposed to occur; people who are not conforming or who deviate from the expectations are believed to be mistakes and they are considered mal-socialised. This is also the case with regard to female bus drivers who are expected to be at home taking care of their families and not in the public sphere, a domain for men. On the other hand, driving heavy or commercial transport is a job that is associated with men, since it is believed that they make the best and good drivers. These are the stereotypes that are reinforced by social institutions and passed on to the next generation through legitimation.

### **3.2.3. Gender role conflict**

Gender role conflict, is defined by (O’Neil, as quoted by Levant 1995:167) as "a psychological state in which gender roles have negative consequences on an individual or other people and it implies cognitive, emotional, unconscious, or behavioral problems caused by the socialized gender roles learned in sexist and patriarchal societies". Additionally, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985:77) stated that, role conflict is a “simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) sets of pressures such that compliance with one would make more difficult compliance with the other”. It is argued by Stillson, O’Neil and Owen (1991:461) that gender role conflict happens when “socialised gender roles result in personal restriction, devaluation and violation of others or self”. For example, according to Burke and McConnel (2000:9), it is expected of women to be playing an expressive role and men to be instrumentalist; in failing to accomplish these notions, both genders risk devaluation. They might experience gender role strain that refers to the norms that are a social construct considered to be

appropriate for men and women and the society degrades people who fail to conform to the norms (Burke & McConnel 2000:9).

I have now provided an overview and critique of three theoretical perspectives relevant to my study, which explores relationships between gender and work. Even though there are different theoretical frameworks attempting to explain role division in the society, my standpoint is linked to a social constructivist framework, with a strong focus on agency and a concern about sex inequalities. Regardless of what the structure is, I believe that people can work their way out of the restrictive structure by administering agency. This is proven by the increase of women in the labour market. Likewise, I take a standpoint that it is not only role conflict between men and women that should be addressed, but also role conflict emerging from paid and unpaid work and women's double-shifting. In the section below, I explore both these matters.

### **3.3. Occupation and well-being: A gender perspective**

This study is focused on the holistic impact of occupation on women's well-being (defined here as good health, positive workplace interactions, family security, well-being and relationships), with a specific emphasis on women bus drivers. In this section, I therefore discuss relevant literature and theoretical positions in relation to each of these components.

#### **3.3.1. Occupational health**

According to Kane (1999:1), women have always been vulnerable to occupational health hazards in the private sphere. That is, they have always been exposed to risks in the domestic sphere. Therefore, even though there may be arguments about the exposure of women to toxic chemicals outside the private sphere, women have always been exposed to such and their health has always been in danger. Research therefore has failed to look at work done in the household or farms that has placed women in danger. This then shows that domestic work is not regarded as an occupation. In dealing with occupational risks, it should be noted that women have always done most of their work in the domestic sphere even after they were incorporated into the labour market. As a result of undervaluing and under-recording this occupational environment of traditional women, there is not much known about these environmental hazards (Kane 1999:1). When women then started entering the labour market and a new environment, they were faced by different challenges and had to adapt to a different environment. Kane (1999:1) stated that these health hazards may either add to or replace existing occupational exposure. Therefore, in understanding occupational health

hazards that women are exposed to in the workplace, it is important to trace the effects of unpaid domestic work on the health of women and to what extent did they add on to the new occupational hazards they are exposed to in a new environment.

### **3.3.2. Work relationships**

According to Naidu (1997:10), in South Africa social conditioning about women and men's roles is experienced by women in their different workplaces. There is a perception created about women as employees and these perceptions are also applied by employers in the workplace (Naidu 1997:10). Even though the constitution has aimed at promoting equality in the workplace, the argument presented is that in the workplace, there have been other forms of indirect discrimination that are considered subtle and regarded as normal and acceptable by women (Naidu 1997:10). According to Naidu (1997:11), the aim of the anti-apartheid legislation was to outlaw discrimination and achieve equality in the workplace. However, it is clear that equality has not been reached in the workplace. This is the result of broader perceptions about the role of men and women held by the South African society at large.

Despite the South African constitution, the differentiation of roles that are supposed to be carried out by men and women have not been escaped. Even though women were incorporated into the labour market, many in the society and communities of South Africa still share the stereotypes regarding jobs that are supposed to be taken by men and women. It is argued that South Africa is a patriarchal society promoting the idea that men are the heads of the household and therefore, they are expected to provide or protect their families (Naidu 1997:74). As a result of these ideologies, there is reinforcement of the division of labour whereby women are expected to be involved in domestic work in the family context.

Due to these stereotypes, traditionally, women were not involved in paid work as they had to rely on their husbands or partners for money (Naidu 1997:74). However, the patriarchal society has been challenged as women have entered the labour market. The entrance of women in the labour market has been received with hostility by the society in general, because working women have deviated from the social and cultural expectation of women's roles. As a result, women who have entered the labour market are vulnerable to discrimination or hostile treatment by the society at large or in the workplace. However, even though women are active participants in the labour market, this does not necessarily mean they have abandoned their traditional roles. Even though this is the case, society and their

fellow workers still hold the idea that a woman's place is in the kitchen. The entrance of women into the labour market has caused hostility between women and men; men believe that women's entrance into the labour market is a threat to their masculinity.

It is further argued that these stereotypes concerning role divisions between men and women have disadvantaged women and continue to disadvantage them. This is so because the society still holds the idea that women are supposed to be taking care of their families and not engage in paid work. These stereotypes then make women's lives difficult as they are constantly expected to show their capabilities and abilities in the workplace (Naidu 1997:74-75).

Tension between men and women who occupy the same jobs or work in the same industries at different levels are addressed by labour legislation and workplace labour relations. Labour relations deal with people who are involved in a work situation with mutual tasks to be carried out (Bendix 2010:21). In taking work relations into consideration, it should also be acknowledged that these relationships will be influenced by wider societal beliefs and conversely, "the type of labour relations established and the processes emanating from those relationships will impact largely on the society" (Bendix 2010:21). This was discovered in research conducted by (Greenfeld, Greiner & Wood 1980) on the "Feminine Mystique" in Male-Dominated Jobs: A Comparison of Attitudes and Background Factors of Women in Male Dominated versus Female-Dominated Jobs in 1980.

According to Greenfeld et.al (1980:293), there is an image painted and stereotype about women who occupy jobs that are considered to be men's jobs by the society. Women who are occupying these jobs are even named "new" women as they are deviating from the societal norm and since these women are breaking occupational sex barriers (Greenfeld et.al 1980:293). Additionally, the assumption is that women who break sex occupational barriers are strong, "women in male-dominated fields come across as hardworking, determined, single, divorced, and/or childless" (Greenfeld et.al 1980:293). However, in South Africa, it does not necessarily mean that women occupying male dominated jobs are childless, divorced or single.

Greenfeld et.al (1980:294) reports that women in male dominated occupations usually share similar experiences and this includes "the organizational discomfort of being pioneers, the feelings of isolation, the lack of support from male colleagues, loneliness, and sex

discrimination”. It is stated by Bielby (2000:123) that “women who are relatively new to traditionally male-dominated work settings often attract more attention, are evaluated extremely, perceived as different, receive less support, and are more likely to be viewed as a disruptive force in the workplace compared to male co-workers”. Reflecting on research that was conducted by Meshack Khosa, in a journal article entitled ‘Sisters on slippery wheels: women taxi drivers in South Africa’, all female taxi drivers who were interviewed encountered the same problems with their male colleagues (Khosa 1997).

Female taxi drivers reported that their male colleagues undermined them, criticised their ability to drive, compared their driving to their own and are rude even on the roads. This could be related to issues of insecurity. One of the female taxi drivers reported that some male colleagues would even say that female taxi drivers are taking their jobs (Khosa 1997:27). The participants also mentioned difficulties communicating or interacting with their male colleagues, for the topics that male colleagues are interested in are centred on women. Most of the times, their male colleagues criticise women. However, not all male colleagues are negative as some of them are supportive.

Research conducted by Khosa (1997) then gives insight on the experiences of women in the taxi industry and one can use the scenario to apply to female bus drivers, since research has not been covered on female bus drivers. Some of the reasons men are rude to female bus drivers is because of fear. Men are used to being dominant figures in the public sphere, so most men feel threatened by the presence of women. Since it is reported that men are becoming unemployed, the emergence of female bus drivers also instils fear in men. Khosa’s (1997) research shows that men might be using other strategies in dealing with women who are entering male dominated occupations by excluding women in conversations, using vulgar language and also degrading them.

### **3.3.3. Impact of work on families**

Positive or negative relationships and experiences at work do interact with other aspects of social life. The argument then links occupational health and workplace relationships to work-family relationships. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985:77) argue that what happens at work does spill over to other domains of life, regardless of the nature of spill over. For instance, positive relationships at work may also spill over to other relationships at work and at home. This outcome is also true in the case of negative relationships at work. A negative spill over will affect families negatively; hence contribute to lack of family support or not giving required

attention to family members and might also contribute to the bad health or wellbeing of employees such as high stress or depression levels. However, it does not mean that work and family as institutions cannot be mutually supportive (Greenhaus & Beutell 1985:77).

There are two theoretical models that address family and work balance, namely the work-leisure model and the work-family conflict model. These models are dominant in much of the scholarship about the relationship between gender and work.

### **3.3.3.1. Work-leisure model**

According to the work-leisure model, individuals have the freedom to choose to work or not to work. “Labour supply is treated as an individual’s decision based on a two-way division of time between working hours and leisure hours” (Casale 2003:8). However, due to labour law and policies, the neoclassical model of individual labour supply has been criticised for not acknowledging that workers’ freedom is limited, in terms of making decisions regarding the number of hours they want to work. The model’s relevance therefore has been questioned, as to whether it is applicable to the modern-day labour markets where there are fixed operating hours and employees have to adhere to what the contract says (Casale 2003:9). Moreover, it fails to account for other factors that force women to enter the labour market. I will therefore not be adopting this model in my study.

### **3.3.3.2. Work-family conflict model**

According to Parsons, the nuclear family was a product of the industrial capitalist society and this was applicable to American family structures (Amoateng & Richter 2004:243). The survival of the industrial capitalist order depended on the nuclear family since it provided for the division of labour in the household. Men were involved in the instrumental role, such as working in the public sphere and getting paid, while women were involved in expressive unpaid work in the household. According to Parsons, these roles were complementary and made the society function harmoniously (Amoateng & Richter 2004:243). There is therefore consensus and cooperation between men and women. Families were considered a working unit where there was interdependence between roles taken by wives, husbands and children and this held families together (Skolnick & Skolnick 1996:335). Parsons’ theory is the origin of the gender role theory discussed above.



Yet, feminist scholars have rejected Parsons' theory about a harmoniously balanced division of labour on two grounds. First, they state that tasks performed by men and women are not equitable (Shaw 2007:381). Second, it is evident that Parsons' theory of structural functionalism fails to account for different types of families that have emerged as a result of globalisation (Shaw 2007:381). Globalisation has been argued to have changed the structure of the family, with the emergence of egalitarianism amongst men and women and an increase in the participation of women in the public sector (Shaw 2007:381). This has given rise to an extension of the idea of gender role complementarity between men and women; to the idea that women experience conflict as a result of occupying more than one 'role', i.e. as mother and worker. This is the essence of the work-family conflict model.

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985:77) described work-family conflict as "a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect". It is this conflict that causes strain for many employees. Frone in Quick and Tetrick (2003:145) argued that when measuring the level of conflict, one should consider the frequency of interrole conflict, thus if there are high levels of interrole conflict, then this means that there is no between work-family balance. Moreover, this shows that family-work conflict and work-family conflict should not be treated independently, because work can interfere with family life and family life can interfere with work. There are four forms of work-family conflict. All four forms are particularly relevant to my research, namely time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, role conflict and spill over and gender role conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell 1985:77).

Time-based conflict relates to the hours that employees work a day, per week or per month. These hours might strain the relationships they have with families. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985:77) assert that it is challenging to invest the same amount of effort and time into two different activities. This might be the case with female bus drivers regarding time invested in performing the primary role of being mothers or guardians and also doing their jobs as drivers. This then leads to time-based conflict since it becomes difficult to allocate the same time to paid and unpaid work. According to Kompier (1996:11), working as a bus driver is demanding because at times bus drivers are expected to work during times when other employees are not working. They also have irregular working hours that are inconvenient; this is the case because commuter services and other journeys have different time slots therefore "many bus drivers are working complicated shifts" (Kompier 1996:11).



Strain-based conflict is linked to the idea of having two or more roles. Strain-based conflict is related to the work that people performing double-shifts are experiencing. Stressors have been one of the factors that may “produce strain symptoms such as tension, anxiety, fatigue, depression, apathy, and irritability” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985:80).

It should be acknowledged that there has been research on the impact that performing dual roles has on families, especially on how women manage between their paid and unpaid work. One cannot isolate both paid and unpaid work because they intersect. An increase of women in the labour market has had both positive and negative consequences. It has helped in the empowerment of women, independence, upward social mobility and a move from informal sector to formal sector nevertheless; there are issues of wage disparity. However, even though women are performing the same jobs as men, they are not paid the same (Casale 2003:61-65). On the other hand, women have to play dual-roles.

Therefore, even though there is incorporation of women in the workplace, these women are faced with the dilemma of being workers and also having to take care of their families. Women take care of their families by nurturing their children or playing their household or domestic work roles, even after work. This can be strenuous on mothers and due to this double-shift; women will then have problems affecting them personally and their families. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985:77), having to work double-shifts therefore can cause work-family conflict which is defined as inter-role conflict; there is a spill over of stress from work to the family thus making them mutually incompatible.

In linking the work-family conflict to female bus drivers, one can therefore say that due to the different experiences that they are encountering with their male colleagues, passengers and other people in general, as well as long working hours and occupational health hazards; the state of mind of female bus drivers might be affected and they may relieve stress on their family members. In linking work-family conflict to health issues, it is also argued that “it is well documented that combining personal and occupational roles induces depressive symptoms and physical health complaints among women” (Mokomane 2009:2).

According to (Rotondo, Carlson & Kincaid 2003:276), even though organisations have focused on ways to manage the work-family conflict situation by creating flexible working hours and policies, since these may reduce stress that is associated with work-life conflict, such arrangements are not available to everyone. This is also the case in South Africa, even though it has been said that South Africa has adapted family-friendly policies, these policies are not fully inclusive. The policy focuses on maternity leave and does not account for other factors such as taking time off work in cases where family members are sick; this presents working women with a dilemma. In a study that was conducted by Kirsty-Lee McLellan and Koos-Uys (2009:1-10) on balancing dual roles in self-employed women, it was clear that women were still expected to play their household roles of nurturing; and that caused stress on them since they had to deal with the challenges they are faced with at work and also do unpaid domestic work.

According to Beutell (1982:99), it is women who combine both household work and paid work that are likely to experience inter-role conflict and this might then have an impact on these women's psychological wellbeing. The participants also stressed about the quality of time they were spending with their children and their families. It showed that playing multiple roles was strenuous since they had to come up with strategies to deal with the challenges they were faced with.

A number of critiques have been made of the family-work conflict model. Firstly, research that has been done on work-family conflict fails to account for strategies that women utilise when playing double roles. It only focuses on the negative aspects of working, both unpaid and paid work. For instance, unemployment can also have negative impact on families and it can make families dysfunctional. Even unemployed mothers face problems within the household and they face a dilemma. These women may be taking care of their families every day but the argument would then be, how would one provide financially without a job? Both parents might be present and unemployed and this might place a strain on the family.

Secondly, it underplays the way in which men can reduce some of the strain. In research that was conducted by Beutell in 1982 regarding work-family conflict, the argument presented was that men can also assist in making sure that their partners are not overloaded with work; therefore this might help women to integrate their family lives and their careers. Additionally,

Beutell (1982) argued that this is not as straightforward as it may appear, because there are other factors that should be considered. For instance, if partners' occupation is demanding, then they will not have time to help their wives or partners. According to Beutell (1982:100), if one of the partners is not career oriented, it would be easier to accommodate family and work. However, the argument about husbands who are active in assisting their wives in dealing with both their work and families fails to account for families that are female single-headed. The structure of the family has changed drastically from that of the American nuclear family.

Thirdly, there are also coping strategies that women use in dealing with the stressors associated with double-shift. The strategies that are mentioned by Rotondo et al (2003) that may reduce or minimise stress are direct action and help-seeking, which are behavioural and problem-focused approaches whereby the individual exercises control over their problems. Direct action is when an individual takes control over the situation by making an effort to eliminate the stressor. Help-seeking is when an individual combines their efforts in eliminating stress with seeking social support or the utilisation of external sources such as friends, family members or taking children to pre-school or hiring a domestic worker.

Positive thinking and avoidance or resignation approaches are cognitive and emotional approaches. If an individual uses a positive thinking strategy, they exert control over their stress and try by all means to eliminate stress; while using avoidance or resignation entails ignorance of one's problem or stress (Rotondo et al. 2003:278). The information given above then illustrates that women who are occupying both paid and unpaid work are not completely helpless and they can make use of other approaches in dealing with work-life conflict. It should be noted that these approaches do not suggest that stress will be completely alleviated, but rather the main aim is to reduce the stress level.

Talcott Parsons' theory (see discussion throughout this Chapter) is helpful in making the members of society make sense of society as it is. However, some of the major critiques against his model have been outlined in the first part of the chapter using social construction. In addition, Parson's work is not helpful in explaining modern family structures, given the decline of the nuclear family in the US as well as alternative family forms in other societies. Families can be functional without the presence of one partner and even if both partners are

working, this does not necessarily mean that there will be a clash between them. Below I offer a discussion of both changing family forms in the West as well as in South Africa, and explore the implications thereof for the work-family conflict model.

### **3.4. Contemporary families**

#### **3.4.1. Globalisation and changing family forms in the West**

Skolnick and Skolnick (1996:334) state that there is a contrast between the current form of American and European family life and the past form, which was a traditional nuclear family. Family changes in America have seen the transformation of women's roles, higher divorce rates, and lower marriage and birth rates. There is also a replacement of the 'housewife' or 'breadwinner' form of a family that can be considered as traditional, by the dual-earner family regardless of the presence or absence of children at home (Skolnick & Skolnick 1996:268). There are also high rates of divorce that leave households being single-headed. Skolnick and Skolnick (1996:269) argue that if a nuclear family is defined in terms of the structure that has biological parents having children under the age of 18, then it is valid to say that there is a disintegration of nuclear families. This is so because there is an emergence of other forms of families both in the Northern and Southern parts of the world such as single-headed, child-headed and homosexual-headed families.

Skolnick argued that individuals are liberated by modernisation from restriction within the family. That is why women have now entered the labour market. Modernisation has increased the workload of women (Skolnick & Skolnick 1996:336). According to Skolnick and Skolnick (1996:335), the freedom presented by modernisation has consequences for families since some are left unstable and fragile. The post-industrial family, as stated by Skolnick and Skolnick (1996:273), has been massively affected by the openness the economy has presented to women, since women are now transformed from being housewives to paid labourers outside their homes. And this, according to Jessie Bernard in Skolnick and Skolnick (1996:273), has affected the family negatively. This argument is based on the notion of a harmonious nuclear family where there is a division of roles. The entrance of women in the labour market has disrupted complementary roles that were previously taken by men and women.

Moreover, it is argued that women's participation in the labour market makes them independent and this might affect negatively their relationships with their partners and might lead these women to leave their unhappy marriages (Skolnick & Skolnick 1996:273). However, I argue that the latter argument is conservative, as it fails to take into account the women's side. It only concentrates on the happiness of men. The argument should also be applicable to unemployed women who are stressed by being dependent on their partners.

Since the new economy has drawn women into the labour market, there are also issues relating to shifts that these women work which are considered a threat to family stability. In addition, the authors are concerned about the implications of changing economic practises such as downsizing, an unstable economy and technological changes that do not enable blue-collar workers to own a home and be able to support their families (Skolnick & Skolnick 1996:273).

There seems to be a general understanding that due to the change in family structure, there is work-family conflict. However, I believe that this is much more complex than argued, as family structures are changing. Furthermore, it is true that people have a choice of working or not working, but sometimes people are forced and pushed into the labour market due to issues such as the absence of a provider and financial problems. Therefore from this analysis, I believe that women do find ways to both attend to their paid work and leisure time with their children.

One of the problems with these two models is that they assume a particular kind of family structure, dominated by the US experience. However, family structures take different forms and are changing. In South Africa, family structures have been deeply affected by the aftermath of apartheid, illness and unemployment. The researcher discusses these changes below.

### **3.4.2. Changing family structures in South Africa**

In South Africa, there are families that are single-headed as a result of divorce or partners passing on as well as low marriage rates, so this argument about family-work conflict becomes complicated.

One of the problems with the work-family conflict model is that it sees work as detrimental to family life. In order to maintain and sustain the family, there is a need for employment and

this is one of the reasons women have started working outside their homes to keep their families functional. The argument made by Amoateng and Richter (2004:244) is that resources are also critical in making families function. It is not just about the structure of the nuclear family that makes families function properly, but also issues relating to the availability of resources should be looked at. A man might work, but his salary might not be enough to sustain the family and this might also dissolve family relationships and increase stress levels that might affect families negatively. Skolnick and Skolnick (1996:336) argue that the dependence of the wife and children on the husband might create strain in family relationships. This then shows that when dealing with families, it is important to look at other factors that might make families dysfunctional and it does not mean that women's participation in the labour market would cause conflict as assumed that women might be neglecting their role as mothers.

A second problem with the work-family conflict theory is that it is deeply linked to ideas about Western nuclear families. Up to the 1970s, structural functionalism was the dominant approach used to understand families and it persisted into the 21<sup>st</sup> century throughout different countries, South Africa included as stated by Shaw (2007:381). Thinking about a family in the structural functionalist terms has been dominated by North American sociologists basing their model on North American middle-class, nuclear family that is defined as “a social group characterised by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction” (Shaw 2007:381).

However, it is clear that South Africa has other forms of family structures such as single-headed families, extended families and gay or lesbian families to mention a few. Therefore one cannot just use the functionalist theory to explain the functionality or lack thereof in other family forms. It was in the late 1980s that there was a shift away from understanding families in the South African context by using the Western intellectual tradition on families, partly because of changes in the European nuclear family structure (Amoateng & Richter 2004:247).

Linked to the above, the argument concerning family-work conflict also fails to account for different structures of households and the fact that many households in South Africa and elsewhere consists of family groups that may take the pressure off of mothers. Since it is stated by Amoateng and Richter (2004:250) that extended family households predominate in rural areas, there are high chances that working mothers residing in rural areas have a form of

social support system and this can either be their children's grandparents or any other family members.

A third problem with family-work conflict model is its single focus on gender. Family structures are also racially differentiated as it is stated that the prevalence of extended families is amongst Africans and Coloureds and nuclear family households being identified with Whites, Indians or Asians (Amoateng & Richter 2004:250). Therefore, in looking at issues of family-work conflict, issues relating to race and ethnicity should also be looked at as they may give a broader understanding of how working mothers deal with double-shifting. Even in nuclear families, as a result of the commodification of labour, there is the marketization of childcare and many working mothers use the labour market for the commodification of childcare.

In conclusion, there are implications of changed family structures in South Africa. Due to the absenteeism of men in the household, women were forced to be actively engaged in the labour market so that they can support their families financially. It is not only the migrant labour system that has contributed to men's absenteeism in the households but rather, there are other factors such as death due to illness contributing to families being single-headed and also divorce. The restructuring of families has contributed to women having to work both paid and unpaid work which has proven to be straining for women. Women are then required to work double-shifts that being making sure that their families are well taken care of and also make sure that they are also competitive at work. With the above being said, there are particularities of family-work conflict that explain the strain that women are faced with as a result of fulfilling double roles. Even though the family-work conflict theory fails to account for other forms of support that women get from their partners or their extended families, it does acknowledge that women experience role-strain. From my observation, role-strain is experienced regardless of the structure of the family one belongs to.

### **3.5. Concluding remarks on the conceptual frame of the study**

This chapter discussed various theoretical models in explaining gender differentiation namely (1) Biological essentialism and social construction, (2) Sex role theory, (3) socialisation and (4) gender role conflict. Furthermore, the chapter focused on issues relating to gender and work; well-being; occupational health; workplace relationships and the impact of work on families. As a result of stereotypes about women entering the labour market, there are

theories used in attempting to explain women in the labour market. This study therefore employs a social constructionist theory. Nonetheless, I have showed that Parson's theory of functionalism is still used by scholars and it has some applicability in the South African context, but also has some clear limits. Therefore, Parson's theory can be used as a guideline to understanding work-family related issues; however, it cannot be completely applied to the South African context due to different family structures.

Chapter four, which follows, looks at the research design and research process.



## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the broad theoretical orientation of the study. In conducting this research, the three methods that were used are: (1) document review, (2) semi-structured face-to-face interviews and (3) participant observation. By using three methods, the main aim was to cover for the weaknesses that are found in a single method. There is no perfect method; therefore using a combination of methods opens up space to discover new information that might not have been revealed when another method was used. This section also looks at the selection criteria and ethical dilemmas faced when conducting research.

### 4.1. Idiographic research design

We can distinguish between two kinds of research, nomothetic and idiographic research. According to Babbie (2010:21), nomothetic research “seeks to explain a class of situations or events rather than a single one”. Nomothetic research uses dependent and independent variables to explain causal relationships. Generally, nomothetic research is mainly used by scientists, since they use experiments in order to prove their theories. Their aim is to identify underlying laws and patterns in explaining the world or the behaviour.

Idiographic research, on the other hand, is based on the tendency of specifying as it describes the effort to understand the meaning of subjective phenomena, according to Tsoukas (1989:556). This is an approach where the researcher tries to understand individuals in-depth in view of the fact that people are unique and they might have different ways of understanding similar issues. It also gives the researcher space to completely understand individuals, however, the researcher cannot use one person’s point of view to generalise. With the research on female bus drivers, the researcher interviewed sixteen participants, but the findings will not be used to generalise about all female bus drivers. Since this research is aimed at understanding women’s experiences in the bus industry and the impact that working as bus drivers has on their health and on family life, this then is an idiographic research project. The aim of the research is to uncover the experiences of different women bus drivers in an occupation that is highly dominated by men. Another important factor leading to the location of this research within an idiographic tradition is that the researcher understands these experiences as being diverse, because people cannot simply argue that because the respondents are all women, they will have the same experiences. Other factors, such as age, identity, class and ethnicity, play a vital role in differences amongst women themselves.

This chapter starts with a description of the selection of respondents and the size of the sample. Following this, the researcher provides a descriptive overview of the key demographic characteristics of the respondents. Thereafter, the researcher comments in detail on the two primary data collection methods employed in this study, namely semi-structured interviews and observation.

#### **4.1.1. Selection criteria and sample size**

Initially, the research was required to have a minimum of five female bus drivers from one company. However, the researcher managed to include female bus drivers from two different companies and once in the field, there was also an extension of focus, since the researcher also observed the reactions of passengers with two male drivers from Company 1. In addition, the researcher got permission from Company 2 to interview management, male colleagues and female bus drivers. All the female participants were black drivers who have been working as bus drivers for over a year and they were all full-time employees based in Pretoria. All the female participants had children and some were guardians of a child or children. Age was not a criterion for this study.

A total number of sixteen female bus drivers were interviewed for this research study. The researcher interviewed female bus drivers from a municipal bus company (Company 1) and a private bus company (Company 2). There were six female bus drivers interviewed from the municipal bus company and ten from the private company. The researcher observed six female bus drivers from Company 1 and seven female bus drivers from Company 2. All the female participants were individually interviewed and observed whilst they were on duty. Furthermore, two male drivers from Company 1 were also observed and engaged in an informal interview. The management from the municipal bus company were not interviewed; however, two people in managerial positions from Company 2 were interviewed. The two participants from company 2 in managerial positions were black men and both these participants work specifically and directly with bus drivers.

#### **4.1.2. Overview of research participants and company profiles**

This section is on information about the participants and the profiles of the two companies the participants are working for. The first part describes both companies briefly.

### 4.1.3. Description of companies

Both bus industry companies are based in Pretoria. One is a private company whereas the other is a municipal bus company. These companies employ both male and female bus drivers; however, the percentages of female bus drivers in both companies are low compared to the representation of male bus drivers. Company 1 (municipal company) has a representation of bus drivers from diverse racial groups (black and white) whereas at company 2 (private) all the drivers witnessed are black. Company 2 provides their drivers with sleeping rooms while sleeping rooms or resting areas are not provided at company 1. Company 2 provides sleeping rooms for their drivers because they drive for longer hours and when they are done with their first section, they need to rest before taking on their second section of a shift. Gender difference is considered in sleeping rooms. Female and male bus drivers have their own sleeping place. However, the rooms are not divided. It is just a huge hall, with beds and blankets. Every driver has their own bed to sleep on. There are also bathrooms. The hall is very clean and there are cleaners who make sure that the hall is well taken care of. Both companies have canteens for food purchases.

Another difference between the two companies is that Company 1 has a racially-mixed passenger basis. There are white, including Afrikaner, black and coloured passengers of different ages; whereas with regard to Company two, there are only black people of different ethnic groups. In addition, in terms of the number of passengers for both companies, company 2 buses are always congested.

A commonality between the two bus companies is that in the morning, there are many passengers. This is because in the morning people are going to school and to work as compared to mid-noon, after 11 a.m., wherein people are at work and some are in school. There are also many passengers in the afternoon, given that this is the time when people are returning from school or work and they are heading back home.

Below I provide the respondents' demographic details in table form.

Female Participants' demographic details: Municipal (Company 1) and Private (Company 2).

**(Company 1)**

<b>Race = Total Number of Participants</b>	<b>Years of service = Total number of participants</b>	<b>Dependant's age (range) = Total Number</b>
Black = 6	0-3 years = 0	4-8 years = 3
White = 0	3-6 years = 3	8-12 years = 1
Indian = 0	6-9 years = 1	12-16 years = 1
Coloured = 0	9-12 years = 1	16-20 years = 1
	12-15 years = 1	20-24 years = 2
		24-28 = 2

The above table captures information about Municipal female bus drivers. It is only female bus drivers who were interviewed in this company. The pseudonyms for the participants are: Muni 1, Muni 2, Muni 3, Muni 4, Muni 5 and Muni 6

**(Company 2)**

Management participants: Male

<b>Range number of participants = Total Number participated</b>	<b>Race = Total Number</b>
0-2 = 2	Black = 2

Pseudonyms for the two participants respectively are Priv Manager 1 and Priv Manager 2

### Male participants (Company 2)

<b>Race = Number of participants</b>	<b>Years of service = Total number of participants</b>
Black = 3	8-12 = 0
White = 0	12-16 = 2
Indian = 0	16-20 = 1
Coloured = 0	

Pseudonyms for male participants are: Private Mal 1, Private Mal 2 and Private Mal 3

### Female participants (Company 2)<sup>5</sup>

<b>Race = Total Number of Participants</b>	<b>Years of service = Total Number of Participants</b>	<b>Dependant's age (range) = Total Number</b>
Black = 10	0-5 years = 2 participants	0-5 years = 1
White = 0	5-10 years = 5 participants	5-10 years = 3
Indian = 0	10-15 years = 3 participants	10-15 years = 4
Coloured = 0		15-20 years = 8
		20-25 years = 8
		25-30 years = 4

Pseudonyms for the participants are: Priv Fem 1, Priv Fem 2, Priv Fem 3, Priv Fem 4, Priv Fem 5, Priv Fem 6, Priv Fem 7, Priv Fem 8, Priv Fem 9 and Priv Fem 10

<sup>5</sup> For confidentiality purposes, the children's ages and the workers' years of services are in ranges.

#### 4.1.4. Face-to-face interviews

In collecting data, the researcher used individual interviews that were semi-structured and participant observation (clipping of tickets) methods. The researcher acknowledges that there is no perfect method when collecting data. However, there are also specific advantages to these methodologies. Both individual interviews and participant observation methodologies are qualitative methods. According to Hancock (1998:9), qualitative methods offer the opportunity of interacting with individuals on a one-on-one basis. This was also the case with the researcher and all the participants. However, such data collection methods are time consuming and the scope of data collection is small compared to quantitative methods. Being on the bus almost the whole day consumes time and transcriptions are also time-consuming. On the other hand, using qualitative data collection methods restricts the researcher to local contexts since they require a researcher to be locally-based. This was the case with the research conducted on the experiences of female bus drivers as the focus was on women bus drivers in a certain location. However, there are advantages to using qualitative methods, such as the quality of data and the ability to probe for more answers. In instances where the researcher felt that participants still had a lot to say, they were encouraged to do so, thus the quality of the data was improved.

Individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews with female bus drivers were the primary means for collecting data. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer used both focused and structured methods when collecting data (May 2011:134). Semi-structured interviews present the opportunity to ask open-ended questions that are based on the areas covering the experiences of female bus drivers. “The topic under investigation is well defined by having open-ended questions defining the topic, but provides opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss some topics in more detail” (Hancock 1998:9). This then provides an interviewer with the opportunity to engage in a dialogue with the interviewee; however, not in such a manner that the interviewer will influence the interviewee, as all that the interviewer will be seeking is clarification and understanding the answers given in depth (May 2011:134). By doing this, the interviewee is given the opportunity to talk about their experiences and be actively involved in the process and the interviewee will also be given a chance to share their experiences in a way that the interviewer will learn about the meanings attached to their experiences of working as female bus drivers (May 2011:135). Also, the interviewer is given the opportunity of seeking clarity where there is vagueness and probing for answers. In cases

where the interviewer did not understand some of the answers given, interviewees were asked to elaborate.

Interviews are defined as “a social interaction in which the behaviour of both the interviewer and respondent stems from their attitudes, motives, expectations and perceptions” (Neuman 1997:256). As an interviewer, there are pre-set questions and objectives of the study and from the literature that was read, there were perceptions portrayed about female bus drivers. Therefore, the point was to explore if this is the case with the chosen female bus driver participants. The attitudes, motives, expectations and perceptions of both the interviewer and interviewee will have an impact on the data given. In this study, the broad areas that were explored in the interview were centred on workplace relationships, occupational health and family-work relations.

The advantage of interviews is that “they provide rich insights into people’s biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings” (May 2011:130). In finding data regarding female bus drivers, the researcher was also interested in their biographies, since biographies do tell a story. For example, the researcher explored any occupations that these women bus drivers were in before becoming bus drivers. With regard to experiences, the focus was on both the workplace and balancing work and family life. Regarding attitudes, the main focus was on the relations with passengers, as well as colleagues’ reaction to having women as bus drivers. By conducting individual interviews, these are the issues that could be dealt with.

The respondents were also provided with the opportunity of providing answers on their terms, which is not permitted in standardised interviews. Yet, semi-structured interviews still provide a greater structure for comparability when compared to focused or unstructured interviews (May 2011:135). By comparability, I mean the process whereby the researcher, when analysing data, looks at different responses that were given by the respondents in terms of quality and variation and accounting for the differences. Factors such as the age of the respondents, tradition, and background of the female bus drivers were taken into consideration, given that it is highly unlikely to get the same answers or attitude of respondents regarding their experiences in the bus industry.

One of the factors that might have influenced the quality of information given from the interviewee’s side includes age differences between the respondent and the interviewer, as

well as the degree of openness and attitude towards the interviewer. All the female bus drivers that were interviewed were older than the interviewer and the researcher was considered their child. This came as an advantage to the researcher since participants were very open and there was some level of trust. The participants believed that they can talk about anything and that the researcher was not a threat to them. Fortunately, according to May (2011:135), the interviewer is also provided with greater autonomy in directing the interview to the direction that answers the question at hand. There were instances where some female participants were deviating from the questions asked and the researcher was able to redirect them.

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews, when compared with other forms of collecting data, such as questionnaires, have the highest response rate and they also permit the longest questionnaires – depending on the respondents' eagerness to provide more detailed information. This means that the interviewer has the opportunity to ask all types of complex questions or extensively probe for answers. The interviewer is also able to observe the surroundings. Thus the interviewer is given the advantage of observing non-verbal gestures making the method of face-to-face interviewing more suitable for the research question, seeing as there is "a visual interactional component between interviewer and interviewee" (May 2011:105).

Even though face-to-face semi-structured interviews yield high response rates, this comes at high cost in terms of spending (May 2011:106). In the case of finding out the experiences of female bus drivers in the workplace and the impact of working as a driver on health and family, the researcher travelled with the female bus drivers and also paid bus fare. However, this was not an everyday payment (*see page 59*). The researcher also had to travel to the places where all the different participants requested for interviews. There might also be misunderstandings between the interviewee and interviewer and sometimes there is a possibility where the respondents might lie as a result of embarrassment. There are also unintentional errors by the interviewer, such as misreading questions, omitting questions and misunderstanding the respondent. There is also the possibility that the interviewer might purposefully leave out some answers given. The interviewer might also have difficulties probing and therefore not getting detailed information. Finally, the answers given might be a result of the interviewers' appearance, comments, tone, attitude and the reactions to answers (Neuman 1997:259).



In dealing with the issue of interviewer bias, the researcher made sure that she remained objective and neutral so that the results were not influenced by her attitude towards respondents since “race and ethnicity may affect attitudes and self-reports of behaviour because of social distance, power differences or in-group or out-group relations” (Neuman 1997:260). This then leads one to questions of the outsider-insider effect, i.e. to look at the influence of being an outsider or insider on the respondents. It is sometimes difficult for people to talk to strangers about personal information and in the case of interviewing adult female bus drivers; it could have been difficult to get information from them, due to the issue of age differential.

Though this was not the case, since most female bus drivers were open and free around the researcher. There might have been instances where participants did not inform the researcher about certain things, but all the respondents answered the questions that they were asked. Family relationships are one of the areas that some of the participants might not have given all the information, since it is considered sensitive information to discuss especially with a young female. In dealing with this, the researcher made it clear to the participants the main aim and purpose of the study.

Being an outsider is also a good thing, because it provides space for the researcher to be objective, given that they go into the field without much knowledge about the issues that they will be looking at. On the other hand, there are cases where people are comfortable with sharing their problems with strangers with the belief that they will not be judged. As an outsider, you can look at situations in a different light, seeing as judgment will not be on the basis of prior knowledge.

The appearance or tone of voice of the interviewer may affect the answers provided and question wording might also affect the respondents’ answers (Neuman 1997:253). There are also issues of reactivity where there are chances of respondents providing the answers that they think are needed by the interviewer. There is a problem of reflexivity which is defined as "awareness the researcher has in order to see the contribution they have in the construction of meanings throughout the research" (Nightingale & Cromby 1999:227). It is important that the researcher reflects on the study so that they can understand responses that were given to them by participants.

May (2011:106) draws attention to the fact that it is the interviewers who play the central role in interviews and this might influence the quality of data obtained. Managing interviews is also a challenge because interviewers deal with different people and different personalities. Therefore, in dealing with the issues mentioned, there are roles that are supposed to be taken by interviewers such as identifying the location and securing respondents cooperation; motivation of respondents and guidance through asked questions; and the interviewer should pose questions in such a way that they are easily understood, standardised and concise (May 2011:106).

The researcher built rapport with the participants and at the same time remained objective and neutral; however, this has proved challenging since interviewers are also human and with the knowledge that they have on certain issues, these might affect the data collected. In analysing data, this could have unconsciously happened when there was both reporting findings and data analysis. Neuman (1997:256) asserts that the researcher should also try reducing levels of fear and embarrassment so that the respondents do not feel uncomfortable answering questions. The pace or speed of the interaction must be monitored and avoidance of being judgemental and revelation of opinions regarding questions asked, be it verbally or non-verbally (Neuman 1997:256). This I managed to do.

#### 4.1.5. Observation

Observation is an organised way of describing events, actions and the behaviour of people in a social context; participant observation “is the process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities” (Kawulich 2005:2). Also, it includes the establishment of rapport within a community studied so that one fits in naturally (Kawulich 2005:2). The characteristics of an observer include having conversations with the people studied, observing the participants, having checklists and questionnaires. According to Kawulich (2005:2), the observer is also required to be open about what might be discovered, willing to learn about new things presented, non-judgemental and also a good listener.

Unlike with positivism and nomothetic research, where the researcher designs questions that involves the researcher in the development of ideas, as well as the testing and exploration of these ideas through the use of questionnaires, which are based on assumptions about the topic; “participant observations makes no firm assumptions about what is regarded as important since researchers are encouraged to immerse in day-to-day activities of the people”

(May 2011:163). Thus this is the applicable method as the researchers plan is to understand the experiences of the drivers. Nevertheless, in this study, the method that was used was not a complete participant observation, as the researcher did not drive the bus at all and did not get the experience. However, there was an instance when the researcher deceived the passengers to be their driver and most passengers were shocked and asked if the researcher will be able to drive the bus. The interviewer was one of the passengers and observed passengers' reactions and behaviour. Most passengers know each other and once they realised that there was a new face in the bus, they were attentive and wanted to know who the researcher was. To some extent, this was both beneficial and disadvantageous since in the process of talking to other people, the researcher might have missed crucial information.

Additionally, participant observation is an inductive method in nature (May 2011:163). For the research, the researcher observed the attitudes of both passengers and drivers and such information was used to conclude on the experiences of female bus drivers with passengers, colleagues and management. When using a participant observation method, it is therefore important for the researcher to participate in "social relations and seek to understand actions within the social context of an observed setting because people act and make sense of their world by taking meanings from their environment" (May 2011:164). Participant observation is about the researcher's engagement in the situation researched and experiences of the process and the researcher has the aim of seeking to understand and explain the actions and experiences of the social scene (May 2011:189). The researcher was one of the passengers and sometimes assisted with the clipping of tickets, which was an active role.

According to May (2011:189), if the researcher performs the method of participant observation well, it will be of great assistance to the researcher "in understanding human actions and also brings new ways of viewing the social world given that it is regarded as a systematic and disciplined study" (May 2011:189). The researcher made sure that her presence and her intentions were well known to the female bus drivers and the researcher adopted an overt role informing the participants that they are both the respondents and informants (May 2011:172).

The researcher realised that in order to obtain detailed information or adequacy, it was important to spend more time with the people observed; and to consider the surroundings or settings, because it is important to record what was observed. The researcher should also take into account other characteristics such as status, gender, race and age of the group studied in

order to have a greater understanding of the particular responses given. It is important for the researcher to be familiar with the language (verbal or non-verbal gestures) of the female bus drivers because “the more familiar the researcher is with language of a setting, the more accurate their interpretation of the situation will be” (May 2011:178).

Moreover, in the field, the researcher did spend time with the female bus drivers and travelled with them to all the places that they work; therefore, an understanding of the rhythm of working as a female bus driver was also observed and also how all the participants dealt with passengers from different locations. One of the factors that played a vital role in this study was the researcher’s knowledge and understanding of different languages since the researcher was able to use different languages such as Sepedi, Setswana, Zulu and English in communicating with the participants. Furthermore, the researcher’s understanding of Afrikaans was beneficial in cases where Afrikaans was used by both the drivers and passengers. Since the researcher got to know the drivers, it was simple to detect if they were not in a good mood or whether they were stressed.

The researcher was on the field for approximately 2 months. The numbers of trips taken were approximately 75. The researcher travelled with each participant 5 times. There were some occasions where the researcher did not have to pay for riding the bus since she was offered a temporary identification to use the bus as permission was granted from one of the companies researched. In total, the researcher spent +/- R850 for travelling. The researcher was on the bus only during the day, this is one of the limitations since it cannot be concluded that female drivers’ experiences during the day are similar to what happens in the evening.

Furthermore, the researcher did not always get the bus at the same depot. There were times when the researcher hopped and got buses at bus stops. Another limitation is that of not observing relationships in private spaces as a result, there was no exploration of private life itself. This could have shed more light on relationships of private life to work.

It is crucial for the researcher to be close to the group that is being researched, because the greater the involvement, the more the researcher should understand their behaviour, actions and meanings undertaken by the group. Finally, by having a social consensus, the researcher will then be able to look at to what extent are meanings within cultures employed and shared amongst people (May 2011:179). The researcher spent almost the entire day with the participants and there was also a sense of great involvement; therefore, the researcher was

able to get a deeper understanding to issues of insecurity around the workplace and relativism of the truth depending on race, ethnicity and age.

Participant observation and observation, just like other methods, have advantages and disadvantages. According to May (2011:170), it is personally demanding in terms of time investments and also it is analytically difficult because this is not just about observing (actions between the female bus drivers and the passengers), generally experiencing (the researchers' presence) and taking all that is observed and writing the notes. Moreover, the researcher was required to spend more time in the area of research (bus riding and clipping of tickets); it will also depend on the relationship the researcher has with the participants. The researcher should also be able to develop a rapport with the people they will be interviewing, because interviewees have expectations about the roles that are supposed to be played by an interviewer and failure to measure up to the interviewees' expectation would then lead to a bad rapport or resistance to participate in the study (Berg 1989:75). The researcher was able to develop a rapport with the participants. Sometimes working with people you know has advantages although at times it also has disadvantages, however once there is a close relationship between the participants and the researcher, there are possibilities of having a Hawthorne effect. According to Shuttleworth (2009), the Hawthorne effect is "a process where experimented human participants change or alter their behaviour because they are studied". Even though this effect is argued in the context of experiments, it can also be applicable when interviews and observations are carried out. With regard to the study on female bus drivers, respondents might alter or change the way they relate with the passengers as a result of the researchers presence. The Hawthorne effect, according to Shuttleworth (2009), is "one of the hardest inbuilt biases to eliminate or factor into the design".

As the researcher spent more time with the female drivers, they all started treating her like one of their children and this might also play a role because of feelings of attachments.

It is important for the participant observer to secure and to maintain relationships with the participants. In taking notes however, they may be incurring risks in the field (May 2011:170). The researcher was then be able to experience in person what happens in buses driven by females. The participant observation method is also flexible because if the researcher fails to record everything, the researcher can rely on observation as backup plan. "Fieldwork is a continual process of reflection and alteration of the focus of observations in accordance with analytic developments" (May 2011:173). This is so because the researcher is

able to witness people's actions (passengers and female bus drivers) in a specific place (buses). Berg (1989:80) emphasised that researchers should look at both the ways the participants say things and in what manner it was said because social interpretation in combination with sympathy provide sufficient information. This means that sometimes what is being said is not what the respondent means. Therefore, it is important to consider the context in which answers were given and take into account how answers were provided and the tone that was used when providing answers. Another advantage of observations in fieldwork is that "observations act as a guideline to important questions that should be asked and in combining it with interviews, it helps in the interpretation of what was observed" (May 2011:176).

According to Kawulich (2005:6), participant observation presents the observer with the opportunity of experiencing or accessing covert culture; since the observer is part of the group, detailed descriptions of events are presented and it also improves data collected as well as the way it is interpreted. The disadvantages are that it has been stated that there are some instances where the researchers lose interest in what happens in the public and therefore rely on other informants for information. The other disadvantage is that of representativity. The people or informants are not particularly representing everyone, thus results recorded might be based on erroneous recording of behavioural patterns of the group chosen for the study since the researchers have a tendency of just focusing on what they are interested in. However, there are techniques that participant observers use in alleviating the problem such as having an organised or structured observation (Kawulich 2005:6).

Some authors (Berg 1989:75-76, & Kawulich 2005:6) believe that the conception the interviewee has about the interviewer centres around aspects of appearance and this adds to the limitations of observation because "overt, observable characteristics such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, style of dress class and theoretical realm might affect observation, analysis and interpretation of data. Another problem relates to the researcher's determination of the period they should spend observing the people studied (Kawulich 2005:7).

#### 4.2. Ethics

A researcher is working with people and it is important that ethical issues are accounted for. In accounting for ethical issues, the researcher then can deal with the issues and make sure that the wellbeing of the participants is not affected negatively.

Babbie (2008:61) defines ethics as "typically associated with morality and it deals with morals that can be religious, or pragmatic observations of what is or what is not working when research is conducted". On the other hand Webster's New World Dictionary cited in Babbie (2008:62) defines ethics as "conforming to the standards of conduct of a given profession or group".

Before the interview was conducted, the researcher firstly informed the participants about the study. By informing potential participants about the study, they then got the sense of the purpose of the study so that they could decide whether or not to participate based on the given information. In order to deal with ethical problems, the researcher informed potential participants about the research in detail. The participants participated voluntarily since the researcher explained everything about the study and they were also given the opportunity to ask questions where they needed clarity of which the researcher did. As a researcher, places that could have affected the participant's participation were avoided, for the researcher asked the participants first where they would like to be interviewed. Participants were not coerced to take part and they were also not deceived. An informed consent letter was written and the consent form was explained to the participants using one of the languages they were comfortable with. The participants were required to sign the form. However some of the participants chose not to sign the form because they did not want their signatures to be seen by other people. The researcher did not force or try to convince them to sign because that could have been unethical. They did, however, give their consent verbally.

Participants were also informed that their time commitments in both the participant observation situation and individual interviews were not going to be the same. In an observation context, the participants (being the female bus drivers) were not distracted by the researcher and they were completely focused on their professional job and as a researcher I was only observing the situation. However, with individual interviews, the participants were the ones leading, given that the researcher took the role of only asking questions.

The researcher explained issues relating to anonymity and confidentiality. This was important because some participants were also concerned about information getting into the wrong hands. However, after all was explained, they felt open to participate in the study as they believed that their voices have to be heard. Participants were assured that they will not be identified and there is no way the information can be traced back to them. The researcher made sure that they understand all the steps that could be taken if there was a breach of



agreement between us (the researcher and the participants). Since the topic covers workplace issues, the researcher acknowledges that this might cause problems for the female bus drivers with management, passengers or both male and female colleagues and it might end up threatening their positions and some might even lose their jobs. For that reason, interviews were conducted in one of the rooms that were provided by management in Company 2 and with the other company; interviews were conducted away from the workplace. The researcher was an ordinary, fare-paying passenger, and therefore an unobtrusive participant observer who did not interact with the bus driver during her formal work time. The researcher played an active participant role only when she assisted with the clipping of tickets, not driving.

Babbie (2008:64-65) states that "confidentiality implies that the researcher has the ability to know who has responded, but they are not supposed to give the information discussed to the public". The researcher then assured the participants that their identity is not going to be identified and the information provided will only be known by the interviewer and also can be used for conferences. What is discussed in interviews stays between the interviewer and interviewee. After the conduction of the research, the researcher did not mention the names of the participants, but only used pseudonyms such as Mun, Priv fem, Man and Mal seeing as it would be impossible to trace back who said what in the interviews. In addition, the name of the actual place where the research was conducted as well as details about the bus service itself was not disclosed in the study. Whilst this has some disadvantages, this is the only way to ensure confidentiality and to limit negative repercussions for the respondents.

In dealing with ethical principles, it is important that the researcher is honest, since it is the right of the participants to be informed about the study they are participating in. Information reported by the researcher is valid. The researcher is also aware that there is a need to be objective, in view of the fact that being biased might affect the study negatively. When reporting and analysing data, the researcher was then objective and avoided taking sides and avoided favouritism. The researcher also kept the promises made to all the participants when data was analysed and reported. When analysing data, the researcher was objective and not biased as she wrote the findings the way they were given by the participants since the interviews were recorded.

Conducting interviews requires of the researcher to ask questions that are personal and this invades the respondents' privacy – especially when the participants were asked about their partners and the problems encountered; participants were informed about such questions. The



researcher did not force people to participate, given that they all participated voluntarily. Participants were also informed that if they wanted to withdraw, they should inform the researcher and they will not be forced to continue with the study. However, there were no cases where the participants showed any signs of withdrawal and also withdrawal issues were not discussed with the researcher. All the participants were treated equally with respect and all the answers provided by the respondents are kept confidential by the researcher. It is only the researcher and the assistant (if available) who have information about the participants.

The next chapter, that being chapter five, is on research findings. It is divided into four sections (relationships with passengers, road users, colleagues and management). This chapter addresses the job entry and exit requirements; the reasons respondents cited for entering the occupation; the nature of the job and its occupational health implications as women drivers experience it; and the strategies they are using for either staying in the industry or exiting.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: GETTING INTO AND BEING ON THE JOB - THE EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE BUS DRIVERS**

### **5.1. On the job: Entering the occupation, driving a bus, and future plans**

This chapter focuses on what happens on the job of a female bus driver. The three elements that are discussed in detail below are the job entry requirements, reasons for entering the job and the nature of the job itself.

#### **5.1.1. Job entry requirements**

In order to work as a bus driver, there are processes applicants have to go through and there are requirements that applicants should meet. Failure to meet set requirements and to successfully pass all the stages of testing minimises one's opportunity of working as a bus driver. The requirements for both male and female applicants are the same and people are hired based on their driving abilities and capabilities. Applicants go through a selection process that is conducted by the Human Resource team and Psychometrist(s). They further have to pass the Vienna Dover system. This system assesses psychological, visual or auditory, reaction and the ability of a driver candidate to make decisions on the road. It is also required that bus drivers are in possession of a valid driver's licence known as PrDp, that is a Professional Permit Driving and experience is also essential. Bus drivers are expected to have grade 10 or equivalent qualifications.

Before one can become a driver, they are also supposed to be trained for a period of two to three months during which the bus driver drives on the roads using buses in the presence of a driving instructor. This is a period when bus drivers are taught about the rules of the roads and learn about their schedules and the routes they have to travel. This is known as a practical bus driving assessment. Additionally, since bus drivers are working with commuters, it is vital to have good customer service skills and patience. As a result of such requirements, they are given lessons on how to interact with passengers. One of the important requirements for Company 1 was the use of Afrikaans, since most of the passengers are mainly Afrikaans speakers. Another requirement is for a bus driver to be multi-lingual as they deal with different passengers.

The candidates who are successful in completing both the Vienna Dover System stage and practical driving are then supposed to be medically examined before they can start working as bus drivers. As bus drivers, it is required that they should be in a good physical state with no

underlying medical conditions. This is so because there are medical conditions that might interfere with their work as bus drivers, such as high blood pressure and epilepsy. If bus drivers are diagnosed with illnesses such as epilepsy, their chances of working as drivers are then jeopardised because drivers are responsible for the lives of people who use buses. This is not a proactive measure only to save the lives of bus passengers, but everyone on the road, because if the driver is epileptic and they get a fit whilst they are driving, many lives are put at risk. This can be argued to be a form of control by the management of different companies. One of the factors that cause high blood pressure is high stress levels. Since women are the ones who are reportedly experiencing high stress levels and depression as a result of playing multiple roles, their medical condition might work against them in entering the labour market.

Bus driver's work with people and it is required that their hearing and vision levels are perfect. Good hearing and vision are essential, because they have to make sure that they understand where the commuters are going so that they get the right bus fares from them and in this way, mistakes will be avoided. On the other hand, good vision is important because drivers work on public roads that are crowded by pedestrians and other vehicles on the road. Bad visionary ability might contribute to accidents on the road. Since bus drivers are supposed to clip tickets, their vision should be perfect so that they do not clip the tickets where they are not supposed to.

In conclusion, the processes that one has to go through before becoming a driver include submitting an application so that there is a selection of participants who then go for interviews and when interviews are passed, drivers have to go for medical checking, criminal records checks and driving or training process.

### **5.1.2. Reasons for entering the occupation**

Only two female bus drivers from the sixteen that were interviewed argued that they chose bus driving because they wanted to challenge the stereotypes about women being bad drivers and the inability of women to drive. These two women were reacting to the actions of the majority of people who considered bus driving an occupation that is supposed to be taken by men, as men are argued to be good at driving. The fact that only two women indicated that they entered the profession for this reason, shows that, in a way, it cannot be argued that most female drivers always wanted to become bus drivers. External factors played a vital role in their final decisions to become drivers instead of choosing other different careers.

Nonetheless, the South African constitution also played its role in encouraging women to enter the bus driving industry since this constitution is aimed at achieving equality in the workplace. This then acted as a push factor for women to opt for bus driving. The two female bus drivers argued that there are no jobs that are reserved for men or women and they, as women, are capable of doing the same jobs as men for women are just the same as men.

Muni 3 said:

*“I decided that I also want to see and prove wrong the stereotypes about women’s inability to do what men do. If men can do it, then how can I not do it? I asked myself, why is it that a man can drive a bus but women cannot? Why is it not normal for a woman to also be a good bus driver? Why would it be impossible? Why? This does not make sense because men have two hands, so do women; they have feet, same as women. So we are all the same, so why would the other one not be able to drive a bus? I love challenges and to be challenged. And what I have realised is that as a woman, people tend to undermine you and come to a conclusion that you cannot drive. So to prove people wrong, I chose to become a bus driver. So it was all because of this issue of the stereotype that women cannot drive. Women can drive and my decision was solely based on that. I was open to challenge this stereotype and to prove people wrong”.*

This then demonstrates that this woman was driven by the societal beliefs that were totally against women entering what is regarded a man’s world and doing the same jobs as men.

In explaining her choice of occupation, one of the women focused not primarily on the skill of driving a bus, but more on the social role a bus driver plays. She said that her passion for driving was the result of the role that she has to play in the society, namely, that of helping other people. This participant’s decision was mainly influenced by what she regarded as a cry from other societal members who had problems with the shortage of bus drivers, which strained and destroyed other people’s jobs. Many people depend on buses because they are regarded as affordable. The main aim of the public transport sector, then, is to make sure that people’s needs are met at a reasonable price. This is one of the reasons why buses are priced reasonably. This driver’s recasting of the nature of the job, arguing that it is her responsibility to help other people, may be due to what biological theorists argue about women being good at caring for people. It may also be an outcome of the socialisation process. This driver, then,

reinforces the stereotypes about women being concerned about other people and their tendency to care too much as a way to make her job acceptable to herself and others.

This is what Muni 4 bus driver said:

*“I told myself that if I become a bus driver, I will be doing the society a great favour because I will be helping other people. I chose this career only because I just wanted to help people. So I do not like seeing people stranded, I want for people to get all the help that they can get. I want them to arrive at work on time and fast”.*

The remaining participants indicated that they were forced into the occupation by job unavailability. All fourteen female bus drivers said that initially they did not want to become bus drivers. Some of the drivers even pursued tertiary education in order to access different careers, but after they completed their courses, there were no jobs available.

This was what was reported by Muni 6:

*“Initially I did not want to be a bus driver. I wanted to be an electrician, but aah it was difficult to get that electrician job. I was also targeting the bus industry; I wanted to be an electrician in the bus industry. Then one day there were bus driving posts, then I told myself that oh well I have a license, I have a public license so I do qualify then I decided to apply so that I can get this job”*

Some of the female bus drivers did go to University to become engineers, but they were unable to complete their courses as a result of not passing mathematics so they then decided to go for something different. Another female bus driver was influenced by her mother to join the bus driving industry, as the participant mentioned that her mother was against the idea of her staying home and doing nothing. Even though some female bus drivers did not plan on becoming bus drivers, most of them were attracted to jobs that are considered male jobs and that are dominated by men. Other jobs that some female bus drivers were interested in include welding, becoming mineworkers, engineers, construction workers and electricians. It was only three female bus drivers who were attracted to typically ‘female’ occupations such as becoming nurses, teachers and personal assistants.

### **5.1.3. The nature of the job**

This section looks at the nature of working as drivers at both companies 1 and 2. This ranges from working hours, distance travelled, days worked per week and the effects of working as a driver on one's health. There is also a comparison between the nature of work at both companies. Bus driving is considered a challenging occupation. This is so because, as a driver, you must be able to work with different people, concentrate on the road, deal with other people on the road, relate to and understand many languages, and have good hearing and vision.

When looking at work conditions in both companies, there are differences. Elements to be addressed include job securities, benefits, leave, work schedule, working hours, salaries and benefits. Drivers from both companies' jobs are secured. All the participants are permanent employees and there has not been any case of unfair dismissals or a dismissal. Other drivers choose to retire and join other different industries. The only time people are fired is when they do not do their jobs or commit fraud.

#### **5.1.3.1. Working hours**

All female bus drivers from the municipality's bus company work from 6 a.m. until 4 p.m. or 5 p.m. The drivers' working hours are divided into three portions. They start working at 6 a.m. and they are then given two breaks for breakfast and lunch. They also work five days a week, that being from Monday to Friday. The ones working over the weekends are only working paid overtime. They have an hour break after each and every shift they work. All six female drivers were observed by the researcher as the researcher travelled with the participants for all their shifts. All these female bus drivers transport people around Pretoria.

The shifts of Company 2 bus drivers are also divided into three shifts. They are also given breaks for breakfast and lunch before they work their final shifts of the day. There are some drivers who start working from 5 a.m. in the morning to 12 p.m. in the afternoon. They then take an hour break to prepare for their second shift from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m. After this second shift, a two hour break is taken in preparation for their last shift of the day that starts from 17:30 until 19:30 or 20:00.

Even if all the drivers' shifts are divided into three portions, there are differences between both company 1 and 2. The differences are related to distances being driven, places drivers travel to, hours worked and the number of days worked per week. Even though Company 2

drivers also work around Pretoria, the places they work at are long distance as compared to company 1 female bus drivers. There are also other drivers who transport passengers from Pretoria to Mpumalanga. On the other hand, company 1 drivers' working distances are not long and they only drive around areas that are based in Pretoria. Another difference between company 1 and 2 is that company 1 drivers work from Monday to Friday whereas company 2 drivers work six days per week (Monday to Saturday). Therefore, company 2 drivers only get to rest on Sundays. This means that most drivers work a maximum of 48 hours a week. The days that are worked by company 2 workers are long compared to company 1. Bus drivers are required to either work for 7 hours or more a day. Even though there might be differences regarding hours worked in both companies, all female bus drivers reported the same health related problems they are faced with as a result of working as drivers. Therefore, there are many health related problems linked with working as a driver.

#### **5.1.3.2. Working conditions**

The nature of bus driving as an occupation is that drivers are supposed to transport all the commuters who are using buses and who have bought the tickets or who are willing to pay the bus fare. Bus drivers are supposed to make sure that they drop off and pick up commuters at the right places. As bus drivers, they are also expected to help disabled passengers to get into buses if they are having difficulties with getting into the bus. However, there are disability friendly buses that cater for everyone including disabled people. This decreases the responsibility of bus drivers. All local transit drivers are supposed to follow a fixed schedule of all the routes that they are supposed to work so that commuters are all catered for and they also receive the services that they, as commuters have paid for. As bus drivers, there are duties that are supposed to be carried out such as making sure that the bus is in a good condition so that one does not experience problems on the road. This is applicable to both female and male drivers. The work environment is such that there are times where drivers have to drive in rainy conditions and when it is dark. Furthermore, drivers also have to drive through heavy traffic. These factors also contribute to high stress levels experienced by drivers that might negatively affect their health and the relationships they have at work and at home.

#### **5.1.3.3. Salary and fringe benefits**

Company 1 bus drivers get paid monthly and their salaries ranges from R10 000 to R15 000 per month (R120 000-R180 000 P/A). Bus drivers at this company are provided with benefits

such as house subsidies, medical aid and a pension fund. Company 2 bus drivers get paid in the form of wages. Their wages ranges from R3000 to R4000 a week that is then R12000 to R16000 per month (R144 000-R192 000 P/A). Therefore, company 2 bus drivers get more compared to company 1 bus drivers.

Even though company 2 pays more compared to company 1, there have been cases where both female and male drivers retire from company 2 to join company 1. Both companies offer their workers the same fringe benefits such as medical aids, retirement fund, group life cover, funeral fund and attendance bonus. Regardless of such similarities, company 2 does not offer housing subsidies and their working hours are considered unfriendly compared to company 1. This is one of the reasons why drivers change companies. Income is vital in that it keeps the family functioning and lack of it might cause problems in the family.

#### **5.1.3.4. Occupational Health concerns**

Issues of income and benefits also contribute to the wellbeing of female bus drivers. Not having enough income might contribute to high stress levels, as female bus drivers are also parents and their children expect a lot from them. Failure to meet all or half of their children's needs might cause depression and stress that might in turn negatively affect their job security, since one of the requirements of being a successful bus driver is to make sure that one does not have high blood pressure. Due to feelings of guilt as a result of spending less time at home, most female bus drivers rely heavily on the labour market for commodification of their children's wants and needs. One would then argue that the inability to use money as a way of "paying-back" for the times these women are absent from home will further cause distress. This might affect their work-relationships and family relationships.

In dealing with giving workers resting time, workers are provided with leave days. These leave days could be used by female bus drivers to reunite with their families and form a close relationship with their families. However, even though workers are given leave, all of the female drivers argue that the leave days given are not enough<sup>6</sup>. They have reported that qualifications for leave are dependent on the number of days one has worked. In their respective companies, in a month, every worker qualifies for 2.5 days. If they work for 6 months, then this means that they qualify for 15 days. Another form of leave given is sick leave. Due to not having enough money to go to the doctor for proof of sickness, most bus

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<sup>6</sup> Chapter Seven presents a detailed discussion on family-work balance



drivers said that when they are sick, they come to work so that they are assessed by their respective company's doctors and nurses. Furthermore, it is only with severe illnesses that they are granted sick leave.

The following was reported by Mun 3:

*“I am not satisfied with the number of leave days given because the time I get for leave will not make up for the time I spent away from home. And when I am sick, I cannot spend quality time with my family because I will just be sleeping and nursing my pain”.*

Being on a bus for many hours is reported to be bad for one's health. This is so because drivers do not get to take walks when they are driving, but are just “glued” to their seats until break time. The exhaustion of being seated almost the whole day was also experienced by the observer. When a person remains seated for a long period, both their feet and waist get painful. All the female bus drivers that were interviewed reported that as a result of working as drivers, they have had health-related problems. However others argue that it depends on people since it varies from individual to individual.

Some female participants reported that the time period that one has worked as a driver determines one's vulnerability to bus health-related problems. Therefore, according to them, there is a link between the severities of illness to the time served as bus drivers. A hypothesis would then be drawn that the longer a person works as a driver, the higher the chances of having occupational health-related problems. However, this is not entirely true, since some participants who have worked for longer periods reported that one's body gets used to such working conditions so the body adjusts. There are some female bus drivers who have been in the industry for 4 years and they reported that because this is a new job, they have not experienced problems as yet. While there are some female drivers who have served in the bus driving industry and they present a different argument; they argue that driving a bus for the first time is exhausting and this makes them vulnerable to psychological and muscular-skeletal illnesses as their bodies are not used to such challenges. Health-related problems are then experienced at different times for women participants. Even though this is the case, at the end of the day, all the participants reported that working as a driver is straining. It cannot be concluded that if the first few years of working as a driver do not present drastic health problems, a person is then totally invulnerable to some of health problems associated with

bus driving. The argument is that illnesses tend to build-up slowly and eventually one gets to feel the pains as the years pass by.

One of the respondents reported the following:

*“When I get to 50 years, I will retire. I am going to retire and take a break. I am not going to leave this industry for another industry, but to just stay home and rest. This will be so because I would want for my body to rest. I have realised that if you work as a bus driver until the age of 60, I do not want to lie to you; you will be on pension for two weeks then after that two weeks you will die. This is so because your body would be tired and our bodies need to be rested. They have to be rested” (Endnote 30, Muni 3).*

This proves the extent of the straining conditions of working as a bus driver. Even though one might not be experiencing severe problems, one’s body will eventually feel this pressure and pains.

Some of the respondents reported that they initially had health problems before they worked as drivers, because they were also doing domestic work, which also contributed to their health problems. Some of the health problems reported by female bus drivers include back-pains, bronchitis, chest-pains, eye problems, kidney infections or problems and ear problems. They also reported that their feet get sore, swollen and painful.

Back pains are caused by being in a bus for a long period and some drivers travel long distances and as a result, this affects their backs. Also, the drivers’ seats, according to some drivers, are not comfortable. Bronchitis and chest-pains are argued to have been caused by carbon monoxide coming out of certain buses, because they inhale such air that is not good for their health. Sore, swollen and pain feet is caused by the heat coming out of the buses, being in the buses for long periods and also travelling long distances. A problem relating to the ears is reported to have been caused by the sounds of buses that are not ear-friendly. One female bus driver reported that her ear is not 100 % functional since she cannot hear properly and this began years after she had begun working as a driver.

The problems that most females reported are related to illnesses that they get as a result of continuously opening doors, bus vibrations as well as psychological problems such as fatigue due to lack of movement when driving a bus and sitting for longer periods. The drivers also

gave an account of having a lot on their minds such as problems at home and also pressure at work and as a result, they suffer from insomnia. Some drivers reported that they find it difficult to sleep, because they have a lot on their minds and this unsettles them. On the other hand, as a result of fatigue, some immediately sleep when they get home.

Priv fem 9 said:

*“I always have back-pains and knee problems. I am always tired and working as a driver has made matters worse since I was suffering from back-pains before I worked as a driver; I used to do almost everything at home, from laundry to sweeping the yard”.*

The above statement shows that some female bus drivers have had health-related problems before they started working as drivers. Their health-related problems were worsened by the bus driving working conditions because a bus is big and requires strength when operating it, especially in cases where one is driving one of the big old buses that are not upgraded.

One of the managers interviewed reported that there are buses that have hard steering wheels that would then require the use of force and this is a problem to some female bus drivers as they normally complain about the buses. However, there are some female bus drivers who operate these buses even when they have a hard steering wheel. This might then be the reason for the high fatigue levels of some of the drivers.

When looking at issues relating to occupational health, it is also important to consider the time before women entered the bus driving industry. Doing domestic work is another form of work and it comes with its own health-related issues. Women are then vulnerable to health issues at work done in the public sphere, that of being bus drivers and also vulnerable to health related issues caused by working in the private sphere. Their high levels of fatigue would therefore be related to the dual-roles they perform. It should be acknowledged that it is not only female bus drivers who are vulnerable to health-related problems, because male drivers also reported muscular-skeletal problems. However, the only difference between men and women is the stress levels. Most women are more vulnerable than men to psychological strain on the job<sup>7</sup>, seeing as they are stressed by passengers and other drivers on the road

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<sup>7</sup>Chapter Six provides a detailed explanation on female bus driver’s psychological vulnerability

because of their gender. On the other hand, it is women who work double shifts, in that they have to be both drivers and mothers and wives.

The following was reported by Muni 4:

*“I always have a lot on my mind. I think about my children and my family, at the same time, I have to make sure that I relate well at work with my colleagues and passengers. I have to worry about the reactions that I will get on the road and all the attention that comes with being a female bus driver. I also have to think about difficult passengers and new passengers that might be a problem”.*

#### **5.1.4. Future plans**

All the participants argued that once they became drivers, they eventually liked the job. However, most participants reported that if there were other jobs available, they would leave bus driving as it is a very demanding occupation and as parents, they find it challenging to balance between their work and family.

There are cases where female bus drivers resigned at Company 2 (the private company) as a result of unreasonable working hours and also because of a lack of fringe benefits. However, it is not only female bus drivers who have crossed over to company 1, as men also leave company 2 for company 1.

Some female bus drivers indicated that they use bus driving as an entry strategy, as they target other forms of jobs in the offices such as managers, recruiters, ticket seller, and conflict resolution personnel. Once they get to understand how the system works, they target job opportunities within the bus driving industries and they apply for those. There are five female bus drivers who left bus driving for other office jobs at company 2. This was reported by one of the managers at company 2. Currently, there are three female bus drivers who are studying with other institutions in pursuit of different certificates that they want to use in order to get office positions within their specific companies.

#### **5.1.5. Concluding notes**

Even though bus driving is regarded an occupation for men, women have also entered this profession. The same requirements are expected from both men and women entering the bus industry to become bus drivers. Out of the sixteen people interviewed, most women had not initially planned on becoming bus drivers. However, due to external issues, they were pulled

and pushed into the bus driving industry. This may be the case, but even so, most of the participants were interested in occupying positions that are not regarded typically female occupations. On the job, all female bus drivers started liking their occupation, regardless of problems encountered when working as a driver, such as health-related issues that affect other spheres of their lives. Driving buses is stressful as it was reported by all the participants, men included. However, all respondents are able to cope with all the stressors that they are faced with at work. Women who choose to become bus drivers challenge the societal beliefs about gender roles.

The question therefore is, to what extent do women who enter the profession deliberately want to challenge the existing gender orders?

Sociologically, we know that families are the primary socialising agents and it is argued that once children are taught to behave in a specific manner; children will behave in such a manner so that they are not excluded from the society or marginalised as a result of deviating from the societal norms.

Even though most of the participants are from households that have a male figure, they reported that they never had intense guidance on the jobs that they should take; rather, their parents would mention in passing that they should become nurses or teachers.

At least one female bus driver reported that she was directly influenced by her mother to join bus driving, since her mother is a bus driver. This would seem to prove Kimmel's (2007:107) argument that institutions do reinforce what has been learnt in the family. However, the evidence about the emergence of female bus drivers shows that families do not socialize their children in the same manner and even if children were told not to act in a certain way, the final decision is theirs (Kimmel 2007:107).

As some of them grew older, they opted for bus driving. The question is, why did they do so? In answering this question, from the data collected, there were no other opportunities opening up for them and as a result, they opted for bus driving so that they can be able to supply for their families. Even though joining the bus industry was not what they had planned, these female bus drivers indirectly challenged a "fixed" gender system. This shows a level of agency female bus drivers used by entering and applying for one of the occupations that were and still is regarded an occupation suitable for men. Even though most were "forced" by

other external factors to join bus driving industry, most of the jobs that they wanted to do were the ones that are considered male jobs.

The biological essentialism theory fails to explain the reasons why women choose to enter the bus driving industry even though there are other occupations that most women can choose. The reasons for choosing bus driving as an occupation are mainly related to choice and linked to proving the stereotypes about women being bad drivers wrong. The other contributing factor is the unavailability of other jobs that they were initially interested in, such as becoming an electrician, a mechanic or an engineer (all these occupations are considered to be suitable for men). Most of the participants were pushed and pulled into the bus driving industry, since it was only in this industry that they realised that they will easily be employed. In explaining the incorporation of women in the labour market, especially in the driving industry, there are no reports that link the incorporation of women to cheap labour and the exploitation of women; but rather, reasons for the incorporation of women in the labour market are a result of the post-apartheid constitution that mainly re-emphasised equality in the workplace, on the basis of race and gender. Yet, even though the constitution supports equality in the workplace, women are still underrepresented; in one specific company, out of a rough number of 789 drivers, fewer than 30 are women. Even though there is underrepresentation of women in the bus driving industry, they are treated equally.

The chapter that follows tackles issues that relate to relations at the workplace by incorporating arguments made in literature with the findings.

## CHAPTER SIX: WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS

This chapter deals with the third aspect of female bus drivers' jobs that impact on family and work-life balance. Initially, four such components were addressed in the literature review, namely (1) work conditions; (2) occupational health; (3) workplace relationships, including relations with passengers, co-drivers and management; and (4) family-work relations. The first two aspects were discussed in the previous chapter. The focus of this chapter is workplace relationships. However, after conducting the research, it became clearer that the definition of workplace relationships initially suggested failed to recognise that the nature of bus driving means spending a lot of time on the road, instead of being at depots. Therefore, in addition to relations with passengers, fellow bus drivers and management, the crucial element of workplace relationships that the literature did not cover was the pressure of external social forces which are best described as reactions on the road by other road users. This chapter therefore includes this aspect as one of the work-related problems female bus drivers face as they are driving – both from drivers and pedestrians.

### 6.1. Relations with passengers

Working as a female bus driver is challenging because there are people who still hold traditionalist beliefs that women are supposed to be in the household and not working. All the female bus drivers reported that passengers were problematic, more especially when they were not used to them. What these passengers would do is that they would call the female bus drivers' companies and badmouth them and also demand a new driver. The female bus drivers said that passengers never get satisfied and that they are forever complaining. They are reported to be trying by all means to find a problem so that they can argue with their drivers and if a female bus driver says something to them, they report her. Female bus drivers are not trusted and there are many strategies that are used to get them out of the industry.

For example, one of the passengers was reported to have said the following to Priv fem 10:

*“Why would they give a woman a bus to drive us? Why would they give a woman something this big? A woman will kill us. Where has this woman driven a bus before?” (Endnote 6, Priv fem 10).*

However, the research conducted shows a clear picture of shifts from the initial to the current relationships between female bus drivers and passengers. Initially, there was resistance

shown by passengers in reacting to female bus drivers' presence. However, the initial reaction of resistance eventually changed.

### **6.1.1. Initial responses to women drivers: Passengers refusing to get into the bus**

There were seven female bus drivers who reported that when they first drove a bus, most passengers refused to get into their buses mainly because the bus was driven by a woman, not a man. They also reported that the routes that they were driving were initially driven by men, so as shifts changed, they were given different shifts where the passengers did not welcome them with open arms. All that was done by passengers was to degrade and undermine female bus drivers. Some passengers did get into the bus, regardless of the majority refusing to get in. However, as the bus reached another stopping area, the passengers immediately got off. This shows the low level in trust of female bus drivers. This reaction happened at every stopping area. When the female bus drivers opened the door for the passengers to get in, they looked at the female bus drivers and then the first passengers in the queues walked back and everyone then decided not to get into the bus. This shows that a group of people have an influence on the behaviour of other people.

According to the female drivers, passengers argued that they could not risk their lives. They said that they had families to look after and that getting into a bus that was driven by a woman was like signing away your life. Passengers were reported to have said that a female cannot be able to drive a bus, because they will make mistakes on the road. The passengers claim that the female bus drivers are just too slow to be working with people, especially on a busy road and that women do not have good eye-sight, which is dangerous since they sometimes travel in the dark.

There seems to have been four grounds of objection to female bus drivers. The first was their sex; the second their age, the third their body build and the fourth their race – i.e. that they were black women. The first aspect was discussed briefly above. Below, I look at the interaction of each of the other factors with gender.

#### **6.1.1.1. Young women drivers; younger and older passengers**

Factors that have made it extremely hard for some female bus drivers to have a decent relationship with their passengers include both age and gender. Three of the female drivers stated that they started working as female drivers at a young age and that also made it very difficult. They were mainly disrespected because they appeared to be young and also they



were females in an industry that is thought to be a man's world. Passengers did not show any respect towards female bus drivers. The female bus drivers were questioned about school and why they are working as bus drivers whereas they are supposed to be going to school.

Muni 6 reported the following:

*“I was a bit young so when I get to the bus stop to get people, other people would not come to the bus; they said they do not want to die. A lot of people had a lot to say, criticisms and a lot of comments about me being a driver at that age”.*

This then made it difficult for these female drivers to deal with these passengers. They were disrespected by both males and females. School learners thought that the female bus drivers were their age and questioned them and also asked for their numbers. Sometimes these learners even asked some female bus drivers out on dates.

Muni 6 said:

*“So if I am driving, you would find that what school kids would do is stand next to me and they would ask me questions such as why did I decide to become a bus driver. They even asked about the requirements of being a bus driver. And when I think of it, it is not that they want to know about bus driving and the requirements, they just want to see if I did go to school and until which point”.*

One could then argue that because most men thought that these women are actually doing “their job”, therefore they were in control; these men opted for other strategies so that they can control these female bus drivers. The men would ask the female bus drivers out in order to prove their masculinity and they would also be in control in their relationship, that's if their proposals are accepted. Other female passengers reacted negatively because they did not believe that these females are capable of driving and others argued that a woman is not supposed to be driving a bus. One female bus driver said that some of the female passengers were intimidated by the presence of female bus drivers, as most female passengers made remarks suggesting that female bus drivers are men snatchers and their aim is to take away their husbands from them.

Muni 5 said:

*“These young girls are just out to get our husbands; they have to be taught about our culture and tradition for young girls are supposed to be at school reading books, not studying our husbands” (Endnote 1, Muni 5)<sup>8</sup>.*

These young female bus drivers were regarded to be a threat to the families of most female passengers, thus this made it difficult for some of the passengers to openly accept that a woman can drive a bus.

Muni 3 argued that hurtful comments were made by passengers, such as the following:

*“Why did the municipality bring school kids, dropouts, here to work as drivers?”(Endnote 2, Muni 3).*

These were some of the criticisms faced by female bus drivers as a result of working as drivers. Passengers were using different strategies to intimidate female bus drivers, hoping that they would stop driving buses. However, these female bus drivers showed bravery as they continued working, regardless of how they were treated by these passengers.

However, it is not only the age of the driver that mattered. Passenger responses to women drivers also seem to shift depending on the generation. Older passengers’ attitudes seem to be different when compared with the attitudes of school children. According to the respondents, young school kids never hesitated to get into the buses. The only reaction that they get from young school children is that of excitement. School children show gratitude and appreciation towards female bus drivers.

On one of my field trips in the bus, I overheard one of the young school kids saying:

*“Wow, it’s a woman driving a bus; this is so cool”.*

The above quotation shows that these young school kids were not exposed to female bus drivers, but when they saw a woman driving, they were amazed and appreciated their service. These female bus drivers do treat the kids with care and love. They make sure that all of them are safe and they show concern. This then shows that women drivers demonstrate special concern for younger people and in return are welcomed by the school children. However, women bus drivers also treated older passengers with respect.

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<sup>8</sup>All the interviews that are in footnotes were translated to English and the ones without endnotes were conducted in English

### 6.1.1.2. Black women driving

The passengers for the municipal buses are all mixed, unlike the other bus service where most of the passengers, if not all, are black people. Females from the municipal bus industry reported how issues related to the intersection between race and gender contributed to being mistreated. However, the majority of the female participants argued that they have realised that most of the passengers that had a problem with them were black people. They were almost never underestimated by white or Afrikaner passengers, and in cases where they were underestimated by Afrikaner people; it was done in a subtle manner. All that white or Afrikaner people did was to just enquire about their age and whether they completed school, whereas it was a totally different case when it came to black passengers. Some of the black passengers argued that it was a cultural disgrace for a black woman to be working as a bus driver, because it is a job that is mainly supposed to be taken by their fathers who are unemployed not women.

Priv Mal 1 said the following:

*“Our culture, our tradition does not approve of this. You people should go back to your roots for a black woman is not supposed to be doing this; this is a disgrace to our culture and nation” (Endnote 3, Priv Mal 1).*

Some female bus drivers reported that there were instances where some passengers promised that they will beat them if they come the next day. The passengers threatened to destroy their buses or beat female bus drivers until they are hospitalised. This was also one of the strategies that men used to try to instil fear in these female bus drivers. However, the female participants argued that it was part of their job and shift to go collect the passengers. The female bus drivers did not back off as they continued doing their jobs and these passengers who promised to beat them up never did.

The following quotation was said to Priv Female 3 by a passenger:

*“Make sure that you do not come here tomorrow or else, we will mess your face up” (Endnote 4, Priv Female 3).*

For these men, violence was the only tool to get rid of female bus drivers. However, this never worked as these female bus drivers were ready to work and fight their battle. This then

could be argued to have created further disappointments and outrage towards female bus drivers who are not easily threatened.

### 6.1.1.3. Driving and the body: Petite and feminine drivers

Most of the female bus drivers argued that both personality and being either feminine or masculine in their demeanour play an important role in the passengers' treatment towards female bus drivers. Most female bus drivers with a small body are disadvantaged, as they are mistreated by passengers. The ability to drive, according to passengers, is determined by the external appearance. Two of the female bus drivers that were interviewed have petite bodies and they argued that because of their body structure, the passengers were disrespectful. Passengers concluded that a woman with such petit body and short stature cannot drive a bus because buses are big. Some passengers even suggested that these women should eat more so that they gain weight.

This is one of the remarks made by a passenger to Muni 6:

*“Such a tiny lady driving something this big, do you want to kill us? How are you going to control this bus with these many passengers in the bus?” (Endnote 5, Muni 6).*

Most of the female bus drivers reported that as the bus gets full, it gets heavier and one has to use one's strength when one is turning. This statement then proves that operating a bus full of people can be straining. However, the two tiny women argued that regardless of their tiny bodies or short stature, they can simply and easily operate a bus. They argued that the ability to operate a bus has nothing to do with one's body structure.

Priv fem 2 said:

*“You can be big, but that does not mean you have more strength compared to me, people are different”.*

Female bus drivers are judged on many different levels with extreme critical analysis as compared to males and this is one of the pressurising factors at work. People do not only consider that you are a woman, but also look at issues such as race (black), body structure (height and weight) and age. People do not judge you based on your capability to drive, but look at other factors that have nothing to do with your driving capability.

The following looks at the overall passenger-female driver reaction from the point that passengers were exposed to the presence of a female driver to the point where passengers eventually got used to being driven by female drivers.

### 6.1.2. Changes in attitude towards female drivers

What all the female bus drivers reported was that once the passengers get used to them and their driving, they started respecting them and became their friends, since they could witness that they were capable of operating buses. The only time they would be faced with different reactions is where there is a new passenger using the bus. However, once the passengers get used to them, they work well together with little or no problems encountered. There even comes a point where if these women are not driving the same shift, passengers call their respective companies and plea with them to give these females the same shifts as they enjoy being driven by them.

Muni 6 reported the following:

*“The passengers told themselves that since we have met with this lady and she has been driving us, we have never heard that she made an accident or she was involved in an accident” (Endnote 7, Muni 6).*

This then shows that these female bus drivers were judged based on myths not necessarily facts, seeing as the passengers’ reactions shifted from bad (or worse) to good because their capability to drive buses was witnessed. Female bus drivers were then able to prove the passengers wrong, as they were driving well on the road. Some realised that these female drivers are there to stay, so there was nothing they could do except to accept that they are driven by a woman. Some of the things that improved the relationship between passengers and the female bus drivers were due to the fact that transporting the same passengers contributed to the passengers getting used to the driver. This, however, does not mean that they, as female bus drivers, are no longer encountering problems with passengers. There will always be cases where some passengers are not satisfied or cases where you as a driver are in the wrong. This comes with being human, at the end of the day. However, the female bus drivers stated that negative relations with passenger sat present are not gender-related issues. According to the respondents, passengers are already over the issue of being driven by females as they are now used to them. The only time they encounter problems with passengers is in cases where they are late. However, some reported that such issues of being

late then tend to trigger gender issues. They argue that there is a point where some passengers then bring up the issue that if it were a male, they could not be late at work but because if it is a female; it is bound to happen because they are just slow compared to men. All the respondents confirmed that men do drive faster than them, but as female bus drivers, when they are late, it is usually less than 6 minutes. Sometimes female bus drivers run a bit late in the morning, as some of them have reported that at times they become indecisive about what to wear to work.

Priv fem 8 said:

*“Passengers are not the same; they are not the same mentally. One would tell you that they are getting late for work whereas the other one is not complaining; the others swear at you and others would even threaten that they will beat you up” (Endnote 8, Priv fem 8).*

There have been reported cases regarding passengers’ frustration towards the lateness of a driver and instead of asking why the driver is late; they opt for violence as some passengers wanted to engage in physical fights with female bus drivers.

Priv fem 4 said this is what the passengers say:

*“They tell you that: woman, we are running late so you should be beaten u, and you are disrespectful. This woman, this woman is disrespectful” (Endnote 9, Priv fem 4).*

There is an emphasis on the word woman in the above quotation. This might mean that these men want to emphasise that they are late because it is a woman driving them; they want to be in control. They even say that these women are disrespectful in a context that is not applicable and disrespect has nothing to do with the bus being late. All they want to do is just to make these women’s lives miserable and driving unbearable.

One of the management respondents reported that there are cases where both male and female bus drivers are beaten by passengers and this is not about their driving, but rather issues of the availability of buses. According to the respondents, working with passengers is extremely difficult as female drivers have to deal with many different people and Company 2 buses are always full. In such cases, it is important that the driver is then able to work under pressure or else the driver might break down. The managerial respondent reported that one thing that female bus drivers are unable to do, is to work under pressure, especially in cases where they

have to deal with difficult passengers. There have been cases where some female bus drivers wanted to work a different shift, at a different place, as a result of the inability to contain and control the passengers who are problematic.

Man 2 reported the following:

*“Our drivers know that here, they are here working with dangerous goods. They are working with dangerous goods, which is why their public licence is written GP, which is Passenger and Goods. As long as they are inside, and you can see them, they are classified as goods. This is however a dangerous good because it talks, it provokes and it beats. If they say something and you respond all defensive, they will beat you up; these passengers will beat you up!”(Endnote 10, Man 2).*

In addition, there are times where there are mistakes with the clipping of tickets. In some instances, you would find that the previous driver clipped the ticket where they were not supposed to. As a driver, you are supposed to ask the passenger about the ticket, because if you do not, it might become a problem when the inspector comes. In such situations, where tickets are incorrectly clipped for that day, passengers are supposed to pay. This then becomes a problem as some passengers would argue that they are not the ones clipping tickets, but it is the female bus drivers and their colleagues that clip tickets. Therefore, they argue that the female bus drivers should not make such mistakes their problem and they should not make their incompetence their problem.

The following are some of the things a passenger reportedly said to Priv Fem 1:

*“You drivers are disrespectful, you women are disrespectful; I will not be ordered around by a woman, and I will beat you up. Do not make your incompetence my problem. I bought this ticket and I will use it now, today. I am not paying anything because I do not work to clip tickets, that clipper is in your hands not mine” (Endnote 11, Priv fem 1).*

The respondents reported that it is normal to deal with different people. Sometimes people are just cold and rude to drivers and they reported that this does not only happen to them, it is also happening to their male colleagues. They report that sometimes people are depressed and stressed by their own personal problems and what passengers sometimes do, is that they use a displacement strategy. The passengers basically take out their anger on a driver, not

necessarily because they are females, but because they need a person to displace their anger on so that they feel better.

There has been an incident where two female bus drivers were attacked by passengers and other random people. One of the female participants reported that she was once held at gun-point by two male passengers as they demanded money from her and also attempted to rape her. This female bus driver was working late hours and two passengers were at the back and they were hiding so that she did not realise or suspect anything. As she stopped by the stop sign, she was attacked. This could be argued to be one of the strategies to decrease the number of women in the labour market. Fortunately, she was assisted by other male drivers on the road. On the other hand, it shows that there is a contradiction towards proving ones masculinity on the roads. Some men might be against the presence of women in the bus driving industry and they resort to violence, whereas other men use such situations to play protectors of female bus drivers who might be vulnerable.

However, even though there have been both good and bad relations and experiences with passengers, a manager from one of the companies reported that passengers prefer female bus drivers compared to male drivers, because female bus drivers show more care. In cases where the management gives a specific female driver a different shift, management receives calls from passengers demanding their driver back and if that is not possible, they even ask management for the allocation of another woman. This shows that once passengers get used to a female bus driver and witness their capabilities, they rarely complain. Some female drivers even reported that in some cases other passengers react negatively because they are influenced by some passengers and not necessarily because they have a problem with a female bus driver. These are situations where some passengers are pressurised by other people to act in a specific manner because they want to belong to a group or a crowd and avoid being marginalised.

Women bus drivers have also developed strategies to cope with the demands of difficult passengers. These are discussed below.

### **6.1.3. Strategies employed in dealing with difficult passengers**

Challenges are part of the work environment and it is evident that female bus drivers are faced with challenges. There are many strategies that female bus drivers can use to deal with all the problems that they are faced with in the workplace. The respondents have different



strategies for dealing with difficult passengers. The strategies used are dependent on the personality of female drivers. There are some female drivers who defend themselves and some decide to keep quiet; whereas there are others who make use of their power to control passengers. Strategies mostly used by female bus drivers are (1) silence, (2) speeding or alternating between slow and fast driving and (3) involving the police in problem resolution.

#### **6.1.3.1. Silence as the best medicine**

Four female bus drivers reported that silence works for them in heated situations. They argue that in order to make sure that disagreements are not exacerbated, it is better to keep quiet, even when the passengers are swearing at you and degrading you. They argue that shouting back or arguing with passengers is never a good strategy to use; since these passengers are very dangerous and they might even gang up on female bus drivers and beat you up as a collective. They said that no matter how much it hurts, one has to be a bigger person and not say much or anything at all; sometimes they deal with passengers who are drunk and who just do as they wish. The best way to deal with such people who are not rational is to keep quiet and avoid them. Muni 3 quoted that: “they say in order to avoid noise; one has to avoid a fool”. Therefore, this is what the respondent does when dealing with problematic and troublesome passengers. The respondent further said:

*“Well I am the kind of person that keeps quiet. If there are difficult passengers in the bus, I decide to keep quiet. Silence works for me. I cannot shout. I am unable to do that. I just mind my business and I decide not to entertain passengers. I keep quiet, because they bought those tickets. All that matters at the end of the day is that I get them to the places they want to get to. I am the one who is responsible for the bus and passengers. So I do not have a choice at all” (Endnote 12, Muni 3).*

#### **6.1.3.2. Speeding or driving very slow**

It was reported by some respondents that the only solution to problematic passengers is speeding, since they are well aware that as female bus drivers they are still doubted and not trusted. In situations where they want to avoid troublesome passengers without mentioning anything to them, the only quick solution is to drive faster. This is the time where the passengers know their place in the bus. This is also the time when passengers show signs of fear in their eyes and are concerned for their lives. According to the respondents, this strategy has worked for them, since they no longer encounter problems that are not easy to handle.

There are also times where drivers use the fast-slow technique for different reasons. If the passengers are giving them a negative attitude and they realise that the passengers are running late, what they normally do is drive slower so that these passengers behave and act appropriately; and when they start behaving, they start driving at a faster speed and this also unsettles passengers.

This is what Priv fem 5 reported:

*“Then I told myself that I will leave this place a few minutes late to teach these people a lesson. Then I drove a bit slow. When I was busy driving, I saw other buses departing. Then, when I realised that they are leaving, that is when I used high speed, very high” (Endnote 13, Priv fem 5).*

When they start driving faster the passengers say nothing at all, but rather opt for quietness and they all become very focused on the road and they become scared. This is a way of using one’s position, status and authority to control passengers.

Priv fem 6 reported:

*“I drive high speed to a point where they just keep quiet. They remain silent, they become scared and they just say this is a point where we will die. They say: this is it. This is over” (Endnote 14, Priv fem 6).*

### **6.1.3.3. Driving passengers to the police station**

Some respondents, especially the ones from the private company that does longer distance ferrying, said that in most cases where they come across difficult passengers; silence will never work, no matter how hard one tries to avoid the situation. Passengers do not like being “avoided”. They report that when such passengers are talking to them, shouting and swearing and they do not say anything to them, these passengers become angry. However, when they say something to a driver and the woman driver answers them, they say that the driver is being disrespectful. This shows that there is nothing that satisfies such passengers, as they use anything to make a driver’s life miserable. Sometimes passengers provoke female drivers so that they start fighting them. In such situations, what these drivers do is drive straight to the police station, because they argue that in such situations the police are able to calm down the passengers and make sure that they show respect to female bus drivers.

However, in situations where they are far from police stations, what they try to do is calm the passengers down; but they say it is extremely difficult, since the buses they are driving are always full and controlling these passengers becomes difficult.

There are also situations where female bus drivers are bailed out by some male passengers. These male passengers then work as the female bus drivers' shields and protectors. This reaction reinforces the role of a man.

#### **6.1.4. Relations with passengers: Discussion and Application**

Even though female bus drivers initially experienced problems with their passengers and male colleagues (which will be discussed below), their negative reactions changed after a while. This does not necessarily mean that their beliefs have changed, but it is a tolerant strategy used by most people, because female bus drivers are permanently contracted. It should also not be ignored that there has been a development of trust and respect for female bus drivers' driving capabilities and abilities.

Initially, when the female participants started working as drivers, they all had negative experiences both in the workplace with some male colleagues (see discussion following) and with their passengers. In understanding these negative reactions, one can refer back to the impact of socialisation. People reacted differently because seeing a woman driving a bus was not in their schema of the way in which the world works; it contradicted what they believed in.

Green (1999:72) stated that "it is the influence of ideologies about women, especially women suspected of deviating from traditional norms, that is a crucial component of the reactions taken against women". A few that did not have a problem were probably socialised in a different way, however the majority of their passengers were not used to seeing a woman driving a bus. Green (1999:56) argued that a structural change affecting the society is easily resisted by the society. Therefore, in reasserting power, most men use other forms of threats against female bus drivers. This was the case for two of the participants reported that they were almost raped and robbed or killed by people who pretended to be passengers. This could be other unemployed men who feel that these women have taken their jobs and in reaction to that, they use violence because "men's inability to live up to the expected social roles of being providers undermines their confidence and threatens their masculinity" (Green 1999:60). This shows that many men scapegoat female bus drivers as the source of their

problems (unemployed, low-paying jobs). It is not only men who react negatively to female bus drivers, seeing as there is a majority of female passengers who also react negatively. Women who seem to be in a successful economic sphere are regarded as a threat to both men and women and therefore most people lash out at female bus drivers (Green 1999:64). One of the managers (male) of the bus company reported that most women passengers are jealous of the female bus drivers because they compare themselves to the female bus drivers. These women passengers conclude that female bus drivers are actually getting better paid than they are, as the manager assumes that most of the women passengers using his company's bus service are domestic workers or are in low-paying jobs. Instead of women acting as a collective, there is therefore a division between a "new woman" and a "traditionalist woman"; as well as a class division between women in better paying, stable jobs and those in less secure, underpaid jobs. This shows that solidarity cannot easily be formed only on the basis of gender similarities; other factors such as class can cause and contribute to a division between women.

According to Green (1999:66), dependent women may regard employed women as a threat to both their relationships with men and also taking away their men's jobs; since this might contribute to problems in the family as their partners will be experiencing a crisis of masculinity and this might also contribute to social ills such as abusive husbands. Most women who are economically independent face the penalty of being negatively labelled as uncontrollable or uncontrolled. They are also stigmatised as having more free sexual mores as a result of rejecting the normative role for women (Green 1999:64).

When considering the reactions of female passengers as reported by female bus drivers, there seemed to be a division, as there were instances where they as female bus drivers were accused of taking jobs that are meant for their husbands. These are some of the issues that threaten solidarity between female bus drivers or workers and other women as there are contradicting beliefs between both the new woman and a traditional woman. Traditionalist women still hold the beliefs about women being subordinates and taking care of their families, whilst men are supposed to be working and providing for their families; and as a result "urban women are viewed as a wasted resource, competitors for jobs, and vulnerable to Western influence" (Green 1999:66).

Nevertheless, there is a contradiction here, which challenges Green's analysis; the female passengers are workers themselves, yet they do not apply accusations of mal-socialisation to

their own cases. The only difference between the two groups of women might be that the one group is working in an industry that is regarded suitable for men; whereas the other group are in “righteous” occupations that women are supposed to work in. That this may be a plausible explanation is supported by the fact that even on the road, women bus drivers are sometimes treated badly by other drivers; perhaps because these drivers believe that women bus drivers want to act like men and are thus taking their jobs. Another reason that could be given in order to explain such anxiety and hostility is perhaps that, most people believe that women are the reason why some men have lost their jobs. The men’s masculinities have been challenged in the process, since the entrance of women in the industry threatens the already established gender relations.

There are different mechanisms, as stated by Green (1999:64), which are used by most people to keep women in the private sphere, a place where they are believed to belong. One of the reasons given for such a position is that people believe keeping women in the private sphere is a way of protecting women from negative external social forces such as crime. Whilst violence might not be used against female bus drivers, it can be indirectly used to scare other women in the bus industry. However, even though South Africa has high crime rates, this has not scared female bus drivers, seeing as they are still doing their work as drivers; some of them have worked for 15 years. Green (1999:65) stated that a fear of autonomous women is a result of beliefs that people might have such as these women being “sexually voracious, tricksters, sorceresses or lesbians”.

Yet, regardless of this point made by Green, this does not seem to be the perception that people have about female bus drivers reported in this study. Yet, while some female passengers have accused female bus drivers of being capable of stealing their husbands, all the female drivers interviewed have their own families and they are not lesbians. Tension is presented when there is a threat of changing the existing gender system. Another reason stated by Green (1999:65) is that some men argue that once women get this kind of power, they start disrespecting men, as they become big-headed. This disrespect may be regarded as a threat to men’s superiority. There are female bus drivers who have won the best driver of the year awards and these are some of the things that unsettle other men; as they believe that this might only contribute to being underestimated and disrespected, because they cannot compete with some female bus drivers.

Furthermore, in the presence of the researcher, there were no instances where passengers acted negatively towards a female bus driver in either company 1 and 2. There is an element of closeness with regard to the relationship between company 1 female bus drivers and passengers.

Though, while the relationship between company 2 passengers and female bus drivers is professional, there are no signs of friendship connections. The reasons behind this behaviour or reactions might be a result of many people being carried by these buses; and as drivers, they have to work on time since it is also exhausting clipping so many tickets. Bus drivers use a “present-a-ticket-and-go” strategy; thus passengers hardly talk with them unless when they greet. One of the reasons behind this might also be that there is a sticker on the buses that says “Do not talk to the driver when they are driving”.

The researcher also observed the reactions of passengers with two male drivers from company 1 and the only difference is company 1 female bus drivers are talkative and they have friendships with passengers; whereas it is different with male drivers as they administer the same strategy as company 2 female bus drivers of “present-a-ticket-and-go” strategy. Three male drivers from company 2 were interviewed. There were no instances where there were fights or arguments with female drivers. The reason for this may be that passengers are already used to female bus drivers.

## **6.2. Treatment on the road: Bus drivers and other road users**

The missing ingredient in literature is the relation of bus drivers with other road users; it was not covered when addressing relationships in the workplace. When analysing the reactions and treatment most bus drivers get on the road, there have not been changes regarding how they are treated by other drivers. However, there are patterns regarding race and gender on the road. Most of the respondents from both companies reported that they are the centre of attention on the road and also that other drivers on the road overtake them in a dangerous manner.

In understanding negative reactions by other road users, the following section discusses issues of race and gender of the road users in the treatment of female bus drivers on the road.

### **6.2.1. Race**

Some participants from company 1 reported that most white drivers react negatively to their presence on the road. This has been understood to be the result of most white people not

having assimilated to the changes that have been made in the Post-apartheid South Africa. Respondents reported specifically that they understood such reactions are a result of Afrikaner people's inability to accept that they will not benefit as much as they have in the apartheid South Africa.

However, female bus drivers are not only treated negatively by some white drivers, as there are a lot of black drivers who treat female bus drivers badly on the road. The difference in reaction to female bus drivers, according to the women drivers interviewed, between black and white drivers is mainly about reckless driving. The participants reported that most black drivers are reckless drivers and once they realise that it is a woman behind the wheel, they start driving recklessly on the roads.

What female bus drivers report most white people do on the road, is the refusal to open space or a way for bus drivers if they are asked. However, one cannot solely conclude that because they do not give female bus drivers the way when asked, they are treating them bad. There are other issues that might be contributing to these actions, such as the need to get home fast. The respondents reported that most of the times they are shouted at by white drivers for no reason.

Black drivers too, are reported to be rather rude, disrespectful, and demeaning and are reported to misbehave on the road. One of the respondents reported that she was once hit by a black male driver who never stopped at the stop sign.

According to the participants, it is extremely challenging on the road and only the fittest will survive the conditions. It is reported that one of the ways in which some drivers undermine women drivers on the road, is by speaking to them directly; asking them to exchange cars because driving a bus is straining and also it affects these female drivers' health. This proves how much women are generally thought to be fragile and unable to drive bigger forms of transport. Furthermore, what happens on the road, according the respondents, is that there is not sufficient trust from other drivers. Women bus drivers reported that many drivers argue that female bus drivers are risking people's lives and that, in order to avoid accidents and such cases, female bus drivers should quit their jobs. It seems that most people on the road still believe that women are not capable of driving without causing an accident on the roads.

According to the female respondents, they are accused by some male drivers of being responsible for the high incidents of accidents on the roads. In contradiction to what some



male drivers are insinuating, one of the respondents from management reported that women are generally better drivers and they are extra careful on the roads. Furthermore, there are no reports of their female bus drivers being involved in accidents or causing accidents. The only cases that have been reported were related to minor scratches, which were caused by other drivers on the road. Most of the times it was not these female drivers' fault but rather, the other road users' fault. People from management even said that if companies had women only as their bus drivers, there would be no reports of accidents as most of the times it is mainly male drivers who are involved in tragic accidents. Some of the remarks made by some of the drivers on the roads were related to the belief that buses are supposed to be driven by older men, not a young lady.

Men on the road have difficulties when they realise that a woman is driving a bus and this contributes to reckless driving. All the respondents reported that most of the times, it is mini bus (taxi) drivers who drive recklessly on the road; they overtake even in instances where it does not seem doable. Even in cases where it is the female bus drivers' turn to drive, the mini bus drivers do not care; they go in first, because all they want to prove is their capability to drive. This is one of the strategies used by most black male drivers on the road, more especially mini-bus drivers. The reason for such actions could be related the beliefs that are held by some men; that women are taking the jobs that are supposed to be for men and also that women have entered the public sphere – a sphere that is reserved for men.

In dealing with the male mini-bus drivers' rudeness and coldness on the road, most female bus drivers choose not to react to the initial actions of other male drivers, because they are avoiding conflict on the road. It is also reported that most male drivers are also encouraged by their passengers to drive in such a manner that will unsettle female bus drivers on the road. Once the passengers realise that a woman is driving, they become very influential towards drivers as they tell the drivers that they cannot be outdone by a female driver. For many drivers, it is the showing off on the roads that proves that they are good in what they do. Most drivers compete with women on the road as a way to show that they are the bosses of the roads. Some male drivers of private cars and mini-buses also ask for these female bus drivers' phone number on the road; although one would hardly report cases where a woman asks a male driver for his number on the road. This is the attention that all interviewed respondents are faced with on the road. It shows that what most male drivers see is just a woman who they



should propose to on the roads, but not someone who is currently at work trying to make money so that they can sustain their families.

Driving a bus and being a female requires one to be strong and ready to work under pressure; one must also be able to handle all the challenges they are faced with. The inability to do so will only lead to an early resignation, because of the intimidation on the road. However, if one is able to stand their ground, then they will be able to survive the harsh working conditions. There are some female drivers who reported that if fellow road users are driving recklessly, they also react; that seems to them like the only way to survive on the public roads.

Nonetheless, other female respondents reported that it is better to back-off in order to avoid fights and accidents on the roads since men are violent. Most male drivers are undermining women on the road, seemingly believing that these female bus drivers do not stand a chance against them if they were to get involved in a physical fight. They then use their physical ability to intimidate most female bus drivers. There was an instance on the road that was witnessed by the researcher wherein one mini bus driver wanted a female driver to make way for him. However, the female bus driver continued driving and the male driver said: “You have Satan’s heart”. This suggested that this specific bus driver was cold-hearted and did not have humanity. However, when these male drivers react in similar ways on the road, they do not regard themselves as cold-hearted; but rather as the best drivers. Therefore, the same standards are not applied to female and male drivers.

Female bus drivers have been reported to be slow on the road, which is why men drive the way they do. Some of the participants said that they are considered to be slow, but this is not the case, since all they do is abide by the rules of the road. It is as though most male drivers do not drive the normal speed on the road and this is done to make female drivers look incompetent. It is only male drivers who have a problem with female bus drivers, since female bus drivers get different treatment from other female drivers. An explanation for a good relationship with other female drivers on the road might be a result of having something in common; that being the minority group against the majority of male drivers who are working against female drivers and also passengers of different sexes and age. Therefore, in order to survive on the road, there is a need to stick together and work as a group. To show that people are not yet used to seeing women behind a big wheel, when some drivers realise that it is a woman driving a bus, all they do is wave and show excitement. Even though

women have been incorporated in the industry for a long period now, it is still something new to most people.

Most male drivers on the road seem to want to prove a point to female bus drivers and to be indirectly competing with female drivers. Even though male drivers still have a problem with seeing a woman behind the wheel, it does not bother most of the female bus drivers. Female bus drivers are only concerned in cases where reckless driving might cause an accident that may then end the lives of their passengers.

One of the management respondent reported that women are always careful on the road. This is because they care about the lives of people. When these women are driving, their concentration levels are high because they try by all means to avoid getting involved in accidents and killing people. According to the respondents, women are responsible drivers; they avoid everything that might end their careers because as women, they know that they have to think for their children.

Man 1, one of the managers, made the following statement:

*“Unlike men, women are very responsible; they care too much about their lives and the lives of the passengers. They never abandon their role of thinking about the well-being of both their passengers and their lives because they know that the passengers have families to support and take care of”*. This could then be argued to be one of the reasons why almost all women would rather allow men to drive reckless without reacting. Muni 4 said:

*“It is our responsibility to make sure that these people arrive safely, for we are the ones responsible for them. Furthermore, remember that the bus carries people from different places, all different corners in the world; therefore, the lives of parents, babies and passengers are in your hands. This is your responsibility as a driver and you need to keep that in mind. These people are your responsibility”*. (Endnote 15, Muni 4)

### **6.2.2. Discussion and Application**

During the apartheid era, it was argued by many (see Cock 1980; ANC, 1980) that women suffered triple oppression because they were black, female and poor. In other words, gender can be argued to have been a condition that reproduced capitalism because (Marx, as quoted by Green 1999:55) argued that in order for capitalism to survive, it needs patriarchy. The

post-apartheid South Africa, however, presented women with different opportunities to join the labour market. This could be argued to be a threat to the survival of capitalism, given that it relies on both reproduction and production. The logic is that women are supposed to be staying at home so that they reproduce for their husbands and also socialise their children in such a way that they become labourers. Therefore, the post-apartheid shift in the labour system that removed the barrier of race might be some of the reasons for the negative reactions of some white or white Afrikaner drivers on the road. There might be difficulties experienced regarding the shift of power to black people (of the idea of triple oppression); this also explains some of the reasons why black male passengers and road users feel threatened now that the labour market is open to women.

Bielby (2000:123) reported that “women who are relatively new to traditionally male-dominated work settings often attract more attention, are evaluated extremely, perceived as different, receive less support and are more likely to be viewed as a disruptive force in the workplace as compared to male co-workers”. Some of the elements argued by Bielby (2000) are evident with female drivers. They get attention when they are on the road, people even point at them and even ask to get into the bus to just get a feeling of being driven by a female; most male drivers even ask for their numbers. This shows that people are still not used to female bus drivers, even though some have been in the industry for long periods of time.

Nonetheless, management evaluates both male and female bus drivers the same; no one gets special treatment from management. On the roads female bus drivers are however evaluated extremely by other drivers; even a small mistake gets attention, but this is never the case with other male drivers who make mistakes on the road most of the time. Whilst the researcher was observing, there was an instance where a female bus driver forgot that the indicator was still on that she was going left whereas she was going straight; she was shouted at by a male driver in a private car for confusing him. In dealing with such an incident, the female bus driver apologised and continued driving. The findings prove that female bus drivers normally do not get support from other drivers on the road, but rather they are exposed to reckless driving and they are also not encouraged to stick to driving.

Biological essentialism is applicable to some of the findings explaining women’s ability to drive. According to Wachs (2001:106), women do not possess the nervous imperturbability (*see footnote 3*) essential for good driving. However, the findings dispute some aspects of such a statement because there have been no cases where female bus drivers have been

involved in accidents; it is only male drivers who have been reported to have been the ones who were involved in accidents. Therefore the statement in this case should be the other way round and state that; it is men that do not possess nervous imperturbability since it is their driving capabilities that should be measured in terms of accidents they have had on the road.

On the other hand, some of the elements in statements made by Wachs (2001:106) and Berger (1986:261) were proven to be correct. Most female bus drivers reported that they become worried on the road since they know that many male drivers are reckless, driving high speed. Furthermore, female bus drivers seem to be a little self-conscious on the road. This was witnessed by the researcher as they are cautious of everything happening around them. Even in cases when they have a right of way, they hesitate a bit and in other cases this is because of what they have reported about other male drivers not respecting them on the road.

Women have been reported to be good drivers and some are better drivers compared to male drivers. This was proven by competitions such as the best bus driver's competitions, which have been won by several women. Therefore, if the sex role theory argues that there are roles that are supposed to be done by men, which men are argued to be good at; then it does not explain the abilities some female bus drivers have as bus drivers.

Biological essentialists argued that due to female and males' different hormones, there are differences relating to levels of consciousness and insecurities on the road. The results shows that female bus drivers tend to be more careful on the roads and they avoid making mistakes at all cost, because they are very concerned about the lives of the passengers. Most female bus drivers are unsettled by the speeding of some of the drivers on the road, as Wachs (2001:106) reported that women are easily unsettled on the road. Only two women reported using their powers as drivers to also show other drivers that they are also capable of driving; whereas some women reported that they rather make way for people who are speeding on the road than react. This is one of the things that contribute to the continuous negative behaviour they experience on the road from other drivers.

In summing up the challenges that women face as a result of working as bus drivers, the quotation below is detailed. It underlines the challenges women are faced with on the road, namely disrespect from other drivers, humiliation and underestimation. It also covers some techniques that women use to get most drivers off their backs.

Muni 4 reported as follows:

*“What those in private cars do is that by the time he sees that it is a woman driving, he adjusts his seat so that he can sit comfortably and leans back then he looks at me and points his middle finger up. So when he is doing this on the road, what does he mean; what is it that he expects me to do? So they also get me angry, then I also drive them the way they are driving me -reckless. Then I can show them that I am also capable of driving them the same way they are driving me. Then when you do that, all they say is that this woman is cheeky. When you are a woman they just do as they please on the road. Honestly, on the road, they are still not respecting us. They would say to me, hey mamazala (mother) where did you buy it? Where did you buy your licence? Did you get it at Shoprite? This is provocative and then I say to them; get off from that car, I will reverse this bus and get you shocked. I will reverse this bus, this bus, not a mini taxi. A mini taxi is pre-school kids’ toy. Then I tell them that this one is old people’s or men’s toy. Then I tell them that, “come, let us have a challenge” as we both reverse this bus. Then I simply win it by not even showing him how it is done. Then the person would then drive off. They are still bitter because they have code 10 whereas we have code 14 and some of them do not even have licenses to start with” (Endnote 16, Muni 4).*

### **6.3. Relationships with colleagues**

This section addresses workplace relations by looking at the relationships between male colleagues and female bus drivers; this will explain in detail three factors that contributed to a relationship strain between male bus drivers and female colleagues. The other part addresses the relationship between female bus drivers and the last part is on the relationship that management has with female bus drivers.

#### **6.3.1. Relationships with male colleagues**

A quotation by Priv fem 4:

*“At first, men did not want us, they never wanted us. I am telling the truth or am I not? That is the truth. They did not want us; they had this look on their faces, but they eventually got used to us because they realised that we work just like them” (Endnote 19, Priv fem 4).*

This quotation serves as a director for the next discussion on the initial and current relationships between men and women in the workplace. There are factors that contributed to

men's reaction to the presence of women as bus drivers, such as (1) race, (2) ethnicity and (3) competitive relations and the threat of female achievement.

When analysing company 1, there is racial variation. The company has both white Afrikaners and black drivers. However, it is a totally different case in company 2 as most, if not all the drivers are black. Due to racial differences at Company 1, the following discussion looks at the relationships between white Afrikaner and black female bus drivers. When it came to white Afrikaner bus drivers, female bus drivers argued that there is hostility. This level of unfriendliness, according to some respondents makes it hard to form any relationship with white Afrikaner bus drivers. Furthermore, in explaining the level of friendliness, some female bus drivers reported that this hostility is not related to gender; but rather, it is a racial issue. Seemingly, the main factor that determines the reactions of white Afrikaner drivers' actions is primarily based on skin colour.

White Afrikaner drivers are seemingly finding it challenging to adjust to changes. This is so because it is race and gender that has held class in place. Due to the incorporation of women in the labour market, a challenge is then posed to the "fixed" structure guiding power relations between people of different racial groups. Previously, it was white Afrikaners who benefited from the apartheid system, more especially white Afrikaner men. Thus, this privilege contributed to some white Afrikaner's upward class mobility. The respondents argued that white Afrikaner drivers normally demand to be respected. The issue pertaining to respect might be both gender and racially analysed. During the apartheid era, white Afrikaners were superior to other races and as a result, they demanded respect. With regard to gender, black women only occupied low paying jobs. There is however, a turnover as there are black women in occupations that are skilled and considered male jobs. It was also reported by some female drivers that the interactions between them and white Afrikaner bus drivers are not good, because they normally do not talk to them. This then shows that most white Afrikaner male drivers do not care about gender related issues, but rather race-related issues since it is argued that they seem to have a good relationship with white female drivers.

Muni 2 reported the following:

*"It is surprising because the white male drivers have good relationships with other white female bus drivers. They talk and share stories, but they do not do the same with us"*

The South African society has been shaped by its history. This history placed race at the centre of understanding the South African society. For some people, race is also part of their identity. With the above stated, race is both a historical and social concept. Furthermore, race is also biological, to the extent that it is based on the physical body. When the researcher interviewed the participants, racial differences were continuously brought up; the respondents believed that skin colour differences also make it hard for the drivers to relate and to get along well. Racial difference is one of the factors that have caused a division amongst white Afrikaner bus drivers and black female bus drivers. One of the participants argued that it is not easy for people of different races to get together, more especially if both parties find it hard to forget about the past; and also if there are people who are acting in such a manner that is similar to the way people of different skin colour were acting in the past. The reactions and behavioural attitudes are argued to be a constant reminder of the apartheid South Africa which makes it difficult for people to relate easily.

Muni 6 stated that:

*“Afrikaners have not made peace with the changes that we are faced with in this century. They still believe that they have been robbed of their righteous positions in South Africa; therefore, they find it difficult to easily welcome us because our skin colour is a continuous reminder of the past”.*

The above quotation emphasises the impact of the apartheid regime as it is still an issue in the post-apartheid South Africa. Being a woman and also black on the other hand has been one of the factors, according to some respondents, that make it difficult for some white Afrikaner drivers to be open to the presentation of women as drivers in the bus industry. During the apartheid era, black women were underrepresented in the labour market; however this was not the case with white women to the same extent. If black women were present in the labour market, it was only in low-paying jobs such as domestic work. Post-apartheid South Africa has presented women with the opportunity to enter the labour market and also, they are given an opportunity to challenge occupations that are regarded to be suitable for men.

As a result, it is as though the reason for the distance relations of white Afrikaner male drivers to black female bus drivers might be linked to the transition; they now have to adjust to a black female entering a male suitable occupation, thus threatening their job security and producing increasing competition. One of the female participants reported that even though



the actions of their fellow white Afrikaner bus drivers are not overt, it is easy to analyse situations; most of the Afrikaner bus drivers like grouping themselves and also they isolate themselves from other workers.

Muni 5 reported:

*“These drivers make it difficult for some of us to relate to them and also make friends. You hardly talk to them and also on the road; we do not greet each other unlike with male black drivers where we also make jokes”.*

Most of the female respondents from Company 1 stated that they were then able to form work networks with black male drivers as compared to white Afrikaner male drivers, because relating with Afrikaners is challenging and difficult. However, is it fair to only “blame” white Afrikaner drivers for a “non-existing” work relationship with black female bus drivers? Is race the sole factor contributing to a non-existing or cold work relationship? What is it that black female bus drivers have done to improve the relationship with white Afrikaner bus drivers? It could be that white Afrikaner drivers are reluctant to form closer relations due to fear of rejection. This fear of rejection might be the result of the constant reminder of the apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, are female bus drivers open to having open, good workplace relationships with white Afrikaner bus drivers? In addressing this, it is important to look at both sides.<sup>9</sup>

In accordance with the questions raised above, some of the respondents reported that they do not mind the distant relationship between them and white Afrikaner male drivers since this prevents unwanted racial conflict. According to some of the participants, this is the best way of dealing with racial issues. Some of the participants reported that what they have in common is working for the same company and what matters is that everyone does their job. Making friends, according to the respondents, was not necessary as Muni 4 reported:

*“Black and white people are different; we do not have similarities except for only being South Africans and working for the same company. It is better to stay out of one another’s way so that we do not engage in fights due to our differences” (Endnote 20, Muni 4).*

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<sup>9</sup>Since the research main focus was on female bus drivers, the study did not explore reasons around the matter in detail



However, if making friends was conceived to be unnecessary, why is it that it is the same female bus drivers who are making friends with other black female and male bus drivers? The above quotation proves that some female bus drivers do not have a problem with inactive workplace relationships with white Afrikaner bus drivers.

Even though black female drivers had problems with being accepted by white Afrikaner bus drivers, the shift is to the relationships female bus drivers have with black male bus drivers. According to these female bus drivers, relating with black male colleagues was not as difficult as forming a good relationship with white Afrikaner bus drivers. This however, does not mean that relationships with black male colleagues were easily formed; there are other male colleagues who are still having problems with the presence of women in the labour market. The following part addresses issues that might have played a role in achieving solidarity and or divisions amongst black female and male bus drivers based on race, culture, ethnicity and gender. Furthermore, competency and employment factors either strengthened or divided some black male drivers from female drivers.

Even though race was a division factor between white Afrikaner and black female bus drivers, it acted as a strengthening and solidarity factor in the relationship between black female and male bus drivers. Some respondents reported that race was also beneficial in improving their relationships with black male drivers. The respondents said that as black drivers, they were reacting to the initial actions of other white Afrikaner bus drivers, seeing as they grouped themselves. So instead of trying to point out the problem of groupings and the consequences of cliques in the workplace, they as black drivers also formed their own groups. Therefore, this made it easier for them as female bus drivers to fit in, given that cohesion was mainly a result of racial similarities and gender was not considered one of the important factors in such situations.

Another factor that played a vital role in some women being accepted in a “man’s field” is their ethnicity. However, initially most male drivers did not react well to seeing a woman working as a driver, but by the time they realised that they spoke the same language; there was change of actions as friendship ties were formed. As a result of cultural similarities, there was a form of protection of female bus drivers against other male drivers of different cultural groups. This also caused a division between black male drivers. Therefore, instead of being gender conscious, there was a shift from gender to cultural consciousness.

Some black female bus drivers mentioned that one of the things that made it easier for black female bus drivers to relate with black male drivers was ethnicity. The argument was that they all worked in groups and this was a way of staying in touch with their culture and also getting to communicate in their home languages instead of using English all the time. Therefore, to some extent, cohesion and black solidarity was triggered by ethnic similarities. Some respondents reported that it was not ethnic similarities that improved the relationship they had with fellow black male colleagues, but rather ethnic differences because male bus drivers wanted to learn new languages and learn about different cultures.

Priv fem 8 said:

*“I am friends with most male drivers who are Zulu because we understand each other; we have the same morals, values and beliefs and we also keep our roots intact”.*

This quotation highlights the importance of ethnicity and culture in creating cohesion between other black male and female colleagues.

However, ethnical or cultural similarities are not the only factors that managed to work in favour of some female respondents having a good relationship with some of their male colleagues. In other cases, it was ethnical and cultural differences that played a vital role in an improved workplace relationship between black male and female drivers. This was as a result of some male bus drivers being keen to learn about other cultures. In order to do that, male drivers needed to spend most of their times with female bus drivers.

Mal 3 said the following:

*“We like learning about other cultures and women are patient, so we related well with them and we have become friends”*

In some cases, ethnical and cultural differences and similarities did not promote good outcomes for women. Some respondents reported that they had a problem with male drivers of the same ethnic group. In their case, ethnic similarities brought nothing but conflict amongst them. The reason behind this reaction was related to issues of cultural beliefs that seemed to be clashing. Ethnicity and culture on the other hand caused a division rather than solidarity between male and female bus drivers.

Priv fem 9 said this was what she was told by one of her colleagues from the same ethnic group:

*“This is cultural taboo, you know well that in our culture, you are supposed to be home taking care of the family not trying to be a breadwinner; this is something that we as men are supposed to do. Coming here and working just gives the whole society the idea that men are incompetent and unreliable because they cannot provide for their families. You women make men look bad” (Endnote 21, Priv fem 9).*

In support of the argument mentioned above, another female bus driver, when asked about the initial and current relationship she has with her fellow black male colleagues, she said that there are some men from specific ethnic groups that are resistant to change. As a result, this makes it difficult to work with them. These men still hold cultural beliefs that women are supposed to be taking care of their families indoors, not working in sectors that are supposed to be occupied by men.

Muni 5 said:

*“I am Tsonga and what I can tell you is that Tsonga, Pedi, Venda, Yooo (Sigh) and Zulu, they just do not believe in this thing of having to see a woman doing what they regard as a job for men. They still do not believe that we as women can do what they are doing. They still are abiding by the old beliefs and rules” (Endnote 22, Muni 5.).*

It is not only race and ethnicity or culture that either strengthened or caused division amongst female and male colleagues. In this instance, it was an issue relating to the “righteous person for the job”. This was because most men believed that these women are in the industry to take away jobs that are rightfully men’s jobs and this contributed to the negative attitude towards female bus drivers. Salaries, competition and degradation are some of the factors that require attention.

Some female bus drivers argued that it is the fear that male drivers had that caused a division. It is reported by some female bus drivers that most men fear being outdone by women in one industry that they are believed to be experts. Also, they fear losing their jobs as a result of more women entering the driving industry. This is linked to the belief about women being less paid as compared to men. Men’s fear could be a result of believing that because women offer cheap labour or they are not paid the same as they are, this might contribute to

management retrenching them in cases where the economy is not doing well. However, this is not applicable to every person who works as a driver, because there are new male bus drivers who get low salaries compared to female drivers who have been serving these particular industry for longer periods. Issues of salaries might also contribute to conflict between male and female bus drivers in this driving industry. There are new drivers who believe that they should be getting better salaries as compared to female bus drivers because this is their industry.

Male 2 bus driver said:

*“I hate it when a woman gets more money than I do. I am a perfect driver compared to them and this is men’s industry so it is only fair that I get paid more than females in this industry” (Endnote 23, Male 2).*

Salary issues can be indirectly linked to employment and unemployment issues. This is so because, without employment, there is no salary. Most female bus drivers argued that, it is not only traditional beliefs about women being in their “righteous” position that contributes to mistreatment. This was proven by some of the statements that were made by some male drivers.

Priv Mal 2 said the following:

*“These women are supposed to make way for other men; the spaces that they are taking are supposed to be taken by men. These jobs are created for us”.*

In accordance with the above quotation, women are blamed for high unemployment rates amongst men because some of the drivers believe that female bus drivers should be making way for other unemployed men; some were speaking on behalf of their unemployed family members.

However, it is not every male driver who has negative attitudes towards female bus drivers. Some male drivers welcomed women into the industry and they also gave credit where it is due; but most male drivers are said to be undermining women’s capabilities and abilities to drive buses. To show that there is underestimation taking place, one of the respondents reported that there were times when one of her male colleagues offered to drive a bus for her because he did not think that this female bus driver will be able to drive. Another respondent reported that when she started working as a bus driver, male bus drivers used to call them by

names such as “Chipere”, meaning a junior who cannot hold a nail clipper. This was an indirect statement that means a female bus driver who cannot drive well.

The following discussion addresses the factor of competency in either dividing bus drivers or creating cohesion.

An improvement of workplace relationships between male and female bus drivers, according to some female bus drivers, was a result of women’s competency. Most women proved that they were good at what they do and they refused to be intimidated by their insecure male colleagues. It is important to note that it was mostly black men with an improved relationship with female bus drivers. There are female bus drivers who won the regional and national bus drivers of the year awards. Bus driver competitions are entered by both male and female bus drivers and they compete against each other. Firstly, it is localised, wherein they start competing with bus drivers from the same place then; it becomes regional and from the regional stage, it becomes national. Female bus drivers also take part in these competitions and they have won such competitions by defeating other male drivers. This was confirmed by one of the management respondents as he stated that female bus drivers are capable of driving buses and also doing it far better than some male bus drivers. One of the interviewed female respondents was one of the winners; she even participated in the international bus driver of the year competition where she got position two. This proves that female bus drivers should not be taken for granted and underestimated since it is their actions at work; their driving actions prove their level of competence.

Muni 4 said:

*“I have won the regional, national and international driver of the year awards. I came out position three locally, two in the national competition then finally, came out number two in the international bus driver competition”.*

This was a competition in which both male and female bus drivers took part. However, to some male drivers, instead of this achievement proving that these women are good at the job they do; it rather unsettles them because most male drivers do not want to be outdone and outclassed by women in one of the jobs they deem they are perfect at. This is so because most men reported that if they are outdone by a woman in what they are supposed to be excellent at, then this will give the society the wrong impression. This, according to most male drivers,

would then contribute to issues of disrespect by their fellow male colleagues, female colleagues and management in general.

Priv Mal 1 said:

*“Competing with women and having to be defeated by them brings nothing but underestimation of our driving abilities; this unsettles us as people will start teasing us for being outclassed by a weak woman” (Endnote 26, Priv Mal 1).*

Most of the male respondents stated that women are weak compared to men and driving a bus should be less challenging to men than it is for women. However, when these men lose in competitions against women, this stresses them and it causes a division. Most male drivers argued that it is not about being jealous, but rather such instances threaten their masculinities in the workplace.

There were a few men who reported that their actions changed from negative to positive when most female bus drivers proved that they were extremely good at what they do on the road. Some have also reported that they have been driven by female bus drivers and they never came across as incompetent as they know how to operate buses.

Mal 3 reports:

*“These female bus drivers are impressive. I have been driven by most of them and the way they are good drivers, I tend to fall asleep in the bus” (Endnote 24, Male 3).*

Due to lack of trust in female bus drivers, most passengers were unsettled in the buses when they started driving; they feared losing their lives as a result of being driven by a female bus driver. This was not different when it comes to male bus drivers. Most male drivers were unsettled by the idea of being driven by a female bus driver, since they believed that they were not good drivers. They reported that their heartbeats were at a faster rate because it was a woman driving and there were times when they would even sit next to female drivers to “secretively” monitor these female bus drivers’ driving. Their reactions caused conflict between them and some female bus drivers as there were female bus drivers who noticed that most male drivers are there in the bus to monitor them and also try to control them on how to operate the bus.

Priv fem 3:

*“Some male drivers use our buses to keep their hawk eyes open and that annoyed me to a point where I ended up having a heated argument with one of my male colleagues; this affected the relationship that we had drastically” (Endnote 25, Priv fem 3).*

There have always been issues of mistrust, degradation, threat and underestimation shown by male colleagues towards female bus drivers. This was mainly the result of problems experienced when adjusting to the presence of female bus drivers in the industry. In order to maintain their supremacy, most male drivers resorted to other strategies such as making women feel incompetent as drivers. This then affected their relationships negatively. Competition amongst drivers also caused division and made it difficult for male and female drivers to get along easily. However, in cases where male drivers get positive feedback from both the management and their passengers, they hardly have problems with female bus drivers.

Priv Mal 1 said:

*“I am the best driver; no woman would match my driving capability so I do not mind having them around as they are no threat to me nor my job”.*

The above quotation shows that it is only in cases where there is no threat from female bus drivers where most male drivers do not encounter any problems with them. In instances where they know that they are “better” compared to other if not all female drivers, they do not have a problem with having female drivers in the industry. They can use their best driving ability to boost their ego and make female bus drivers look incompetent when they are compared to them.

### **6.3.2. Current relationships with fellow colleagues**

Regardless of the initial negative reactions from most of their black male colleagues, there was change of attitude from their black male colleagues. This was the result of getting to know each other. One of the other factors that made male drivers to accept women in this industry was due to the women being competent. Due to a seemingly non-existent relationship with white Afrikaner male bus drivers, one cannot give a detailed analysis of current behavioural patterns since the relationship is still the same. Regardless of the

challenges female bus drivers faced, women did not quit bus driving; they dealt with the challenges in their own ways.

Most female bus drivers have been in the bus industry for over a period of four to fourteen years. They are used to the driving industry and most male drivers are also used to their presence. Even though that is the case, not all male drivers have accepted the presence of women in the industry. Some have just accepted female bus drivers' presence because they are already hired and they are not going anywhere anytime soon. There are some men who even accuse their fellow female colleagues of having romantic relationships with some of the managers so that they get special treatment in terms of the shifts they are allocated. Most men reported that they do not mind these women's presence because they know that most women will retire before they do. What they do not realise is that when there are some women retiring, the company will hire other women and therefore this will be a cycle.

It is reported that most male drivers are currently having good work relationships with their fellow female colleagues and some have become close friends. The only ones who are still resisting the presence of women in the industry are hard-core traditionalists. In cases where race is involved, most female drivers from Company 1 reported that there is a small number of fellow Afrikaner male colleagues who are making an effort to relate with them regardless of their gender. However, they argue that the conditions have not changed at all because there is still a division in the workplace because of racial rather than gender issues. Due to low percentages of women in the industry, most female bus drivers reported that they relate well with male drivers as they spend most of their free time with them. There are also cases where there has been a development of romantic relationships between bus drivers as they become partners. A few bus drivers reported being in relationships with some of the male bus drivers. In some instances, developing such relationships contributes to problems between the involved people in cases of break-ups; the male drivers tend to have negative attitudes towards all female bus drivers as a result of the differences they have had with one partner.

Priv fem 8 said:

*“Some men mistreat us not because we are incompetent, but because they were not successful in pursuing romantic relationships with some of the female bus drivers”.*



According to such statements, some male drivers cannot take rejection well and as a result, they employ other strategies to show some women that they can still be in control. On the other hand, there are some drivers who treat each other like family members and they also look out for one another. There are others that even report that working with a woman is far much better than working with men, because women understand all life dynamics; whereas some male drivers are difficult to work with. In contradiction, other male drivers argue that women bring nothing but complications in the workplace because they make every minor issue big. According to some of the male respondents, there were instances where they exchanged unpleasant words with women.

Priv Mal 2 reported the following:

*“Women are nothing like men; they like arguments and attention. There was an instance where I was shouted at by a woman who said I gossiped about her, of which it never happened”.*

These are some of the issues that are reported in the workplace. There are other cases where both male and female colleagues have formed a foundation for supporting one another in cases of depression. They offer advice to each other and they have good relations. The foundation comprises of colleagues of different age groups, services and mixed gender. This shows that there is a form of cohesiveness amongst some of the bus drivers.

There are some issues that other women reported regarding the relationships they have with some of the male colleagues. These issues are related to buses, as most women reported that the only times they have arguments with their colleagues is in cases where other male colleagues take their buses without informing them in times where they also have to do their shifts.

During observation, a similar incident happened and it caused conflict amongst drivers. As a result of misunderstandings and other male drivers reporting to another female driver that one of the male drivers took her bus without informing her, there was an argument amongst drivers.

Other male drivers reported the things that one specific female bus driver said about another male driver who took the bus without informing her. In analysing the event, these men were using this specific female bus driver as “glue” to keep male drivers as a team. They used the

story to cause conflict between a male and female bus driver; and the male bus driver ended up not talking to his female colleague. Instead of some male drivers keeping the news between them, they reported the female bus driver to another male driver. This did not solve any problem, but rather caused problems. Instead of advising one specific female driver on how to handle the problem, they made matters worse. This shows that other male drivers use every little opportunity presented to unsettle women in the bus driving industry.

This is what was said by one of the male bus drivers who reportedly reported a female driver:

*“This woman bus driver insulted another male driver and that was uncalled for. I am not saying I reported her to anyone, but she was not supposed to swear in the absence of that driver and also in the presence of some of us who are older than her, that is total disrespect” (Priv Mal 2).*

Regardless of some of the issues contributing to conflict in the workplace, some of the female respondents reported that they are satisfied with the relationships that they have with fellow male colleagues. They support each other and they work as a team because they are doing the same job. In cases where they encounter problems with their fellow male colleagues, they firstly inform their male colleagues about the problem and if it is not resolved, that is when they involve a third party or management to assist them in solving the problem.

Some of the female bus drivers reported that they hardly had problems with their fellow colleagues. This was because some of the respondents had served at specific companies for four years; therefore, it means that most men were used to working with women since the oldest women who served in one specific company has been serving for fifteen years.

Below is what was said by one of the respondents (Muni 3):

*“Well they were never surprised; they said they were used to us. However, there were other male colleagues who had a problem with me; I cannot really say what caused the problem, but I managed to control the situation. I can handle anyone, I am a woman and I am just like any driver. I told them not to act surprised; as if it is the first time they see a female bus driver” (Endnote 27, Muni 3).*

Women are now able to deal with situations where they have a problem with their fellow colleagues. They have realised that they are just the same as every driver in the industry; therefore, if they encounter problems, the only way to solve problems is to inform the person

that has wronged them so that they can sort out their differences. Female bus drivers have gained confidence since some of them reported that initially it was difficult approaching most male drivers and informing them about certain issues; because sometimes if they try to address certain issues, most male drivers used to tell them to keep quiet because they are in the wrong company. The following quote said by Priv Mal 1 reemphasises some of the things that some male bus drivers said when other female bus drivers aim at addressing them:

*“What is it that these women will say or tell us? What is it that they are going to say? What for? I will not be addressed by a woman, never!”(Endnote 28, Priv Mal 1).*

These are the politics in the workplace relating to power dimensions, cultural beliefs and also values. Most men are traditionalists and their culture does not support being addressed by women because to some of the male bus drivers, this shows some level of disrespect. Other men do not believe in working in the same company with women and doing the same job, because men and women are supposed to be separated in order to avoid polygamous relationships. Most men argued that the incorporation of women in the bus industry will be one of the factors that will destroy families because some drivers get involved with married colleagues.

In one of the interviews conducted with some of the respondents, cases of unfaithfulness were reported to an extent where female bus drivers’ partners even took the matter to management. According to some of the participants, if women were separated from men, then there would be no temptations and families would still be together.

*“Opposites attract and sometimes it is difficult not to react. We are easily tempted as we spent most of the time here at work” (Mal 3).*

There was however a contradiction when management was interviewed regarding the relationships between male and female bus drivers. Some of the respondents reported that both the initial and current relationships amongst drivers have always been good. This is a total contradiction to the reports by both female and male drivers; they reported difficulties adjusting to the presence of women in the bus driving industry. Management respondents further reported that as an industry, they have created a balanced platform and one that also gives men surety that these women are good bus drivers; and it is through the platform of participating in the bus driver of the year competitions. However, what management failed to

see was that in some instances, instead of bringing the workers together it has rather separated them and contributed to a division amongst workers, this is the unintended consequence. The system has had both positive and negative results. For some male drivers, if the results favour them, their relationships with female bus drivers improves; but if it an inverse, they start hating other female bus drivers. However, for some bus drivers it is not the same case as all they care about is competency; therefore, the ability of women to win competitions contributes to the openness and acceptance of women in the bus driving industry. It is only in cases where the performance of female bus drivers threatens male drivers' masculinity that problems are encountered.

Man 2 reported that:

*“Let me start by talking about working here. The women and men drivers who work in this industry and company treat each other the same. It is like between them there are no men or women; they are doing the same thing and they are all bus drivers. They call themselves drivers; they do not even discriminate because they are doing the same job and they are working the same”.*

Furthermore, they also reported that most, if not all drivers always treated women with respect. These female bus drivers were reportedly treated like glasses; this then is a contradiction to the above quotation which suggests that there was an equal treatment for both male and female bus drivers by other colleagues.

The quotation below was what Man 1 said:

*“Eehh (Sigh) I could say women were always treated like glasses, then you know. Men will always feel pity for them, because whenever they ask to get on to the road and they realise that it is a women driver eehh (Sigh); they say let me give her a way. They make way for them because women might get frightened and then cause accidents”.*

This proves the lack of confidence and trust most male drivers have of female bus drivers. This shows that female bus drivers are treated like babies on the road, thus needing care and guidance so that they do not get involved in accidents. This proves Wachs' (2001:100-101) argument that women were prevented from working in the public sphere, so that they are prevented them from external forces and in this case, external forces being involvements in accidents on the road.

However, the argument about treating women like glasses on the road is not entirely true when coming to other drivers on the road. Even some of their male colleagues do not give their fellow female colleagues special treatment on the road because they are all drivers; there is no male or female bus driver but drivers. This was also observed by the researcher (during the field work) as they are not given special treatment on the road; even in cases where there is traffic and they ask to be let in, their male colleagues do not make way for them. However, one cannot negatively judge their male colleagues based on what happens on the road, because they do not treat them negatively, but everyone on the road does their own job and they have to make sure that they arrive at other places on time. It is then important to be able to differentiate between male colleagues being cold-hearted and merely doing their job.

In using the Sex role theory to explain relations in the workplace, the findings are supported by this theory as it states that; as a result of women entering a man's world, there is bound to be conflict amongst them (Trigiani 1999). This was evident in the findings as there were other men who did not accept the presence of women in the labour market, because they regarded women as a threat in that they are there to take their jobs. According to Hirsch and Erenberg (1996:252) women were hired into new offices so that they are used as cheap labour. However, this was not the case in the bus driving industry since there were no instances where a man was fired at any company and those who were fired were not fired because of the presence of women, but rather stealing from the company.

The Sex role theory does not explain what contributes to an improved relationship between men and women as they continue working with each other. Therefore, it takes for granted the role of factors such as race differences, ethnicity similarities or differences in seizing conflict between male and female colleagues.

However, competitive relations at work are not only between men and women; there is also competition amongst women, which is why there is an inclusion of female-female workplace relationships.

### **6.3.3. Relationships with female colleagues**

Since there are few female bus drivers in a male dominated field, the aim was to also look at the relationship amongst female bus drivers. It is evident that their differences are not about working as female bus drivers, but rather personal fights that have nothing to do with women being bus drivers. Most of the female bus drivers have had differences, mostly the ones who

work at company 2 (private). The differences in the relations between women in company 1 and 2 is due to the fact that with Company 1, women do not get time to spend together since they are not working long hours. Whereas in company 2, as a result of long distance trips, they are offered a place to sleep, bath and eat thus presenting them with the opportunity to spend a lot of much time together. Most of the time, disagreements are a result of being in each other's company for a longer period. It is difficult to see a sense of unity amongst female drivers as some female bus drivers at company 2 group themselves together. There are cliques and divisions within female bus drivers' groups. There seems to be good relations between females who belong to the same group, but differences arise when there is conflicting ideas amongst females in different groups as this causes division amongst female bus drivers. Female bus drivers group themselves according to similarities in terms of behaviour, ethnicity and age. One's personality is a determiner of one's belonging to a group.

All females from company 1 reported that they are satisfied with the relationships they have with their fellow female colleagues because they work well together. But there seems to be no solidarity between white female bus drivers and black female drivers, since the female bus drivers at Company 1 did not comment much on the relationships they have with them. It seemed as though white female bus drivers, like most black female drivers, spend most of their times with other white Afrikaner drivers. This shows that even though there are gender similarities, race is a factor in cohesion between black and white female bus drivers. Therefore, women are not only gendered, they are racialised and classed.

Since Company 1 female bus drivers had reported that they have good relations with their fellow female colleagues, this may be due to culture, gender, racial and class similarities. Therefore, it is these factors that might be keeping them close as one of the female bus drivers said it is easier to understand women of the same race. There is no one in Company 1 who reported having a bad relationship with their fellow female colleagues. Another reason could be that these female drivers normally do not get to see each other for more than an hour and also even if they work the same shifts, they work at different places. The only time they get to be together is during breaks; however this does not happen all the time since some of them have breaks at different times. On the other hand, there is a small number of female bus driver in company 1 and as a result, most female drivers spend most of their times with fellow male colleagues instead of female colleagues. Even in cases where there are four women on a break, most women prefer spending their lunch hour with male colleagues.

There were rare instances where women sat together around the table and had lunch together. Mostly, during lunch, female drivers were with male colleagues. This could be an avoidance strategy that most women used in avoiding arguments and conflict with other female drivers.

Even though there were no instances of conflict or fights reported by women in one of the companies, this was not the case with female drivers in company 2 as they have experienced conflict as a result of badmouthing each other. Some female bus drivers reported that female species are totally different from male species as they solve problems differently and most of their fights are solely about matters of no relevance or significance. One female bus driver reported that there is an element of jealousy amongst female drivers at work. She reported that female bus drivers have a tendency of not wanting to see another female bus driver making progress and getting awards and rewards. It is also reported that jealousy is the sole cause of problems amongst female bus drivers because instead of using similarities, that of being women, they are letting jealousy divide them; which then gives men more power since male colleagues rejoice when there is a division amongst female bus drivers. According to some of the female bus drivers, women are supposed to use other female colleague's achievements as a tool to keep them together, not divide them. However, other female's achievements are a dividing tool.

Priv fem 5 said the following:

*“If one of the female bus drivers wins an award, as women we should rejoice with her, not make funny remarks about another woman's achievement. We have to learn to stick together as women and stand together. This bitterness causes nothing but chaos amongst us as women and we end up fighting”*(Endnote 17, Pri fem 5).

Most female bus drivers regard differences and disagreements normal seeing that they are women and after all, women are bound to experience such unsettling encounters with other women. Women, unlike men, are talkative and most of the times they do not rationalise the things they say, which might cause fights between them. In cases where there are fights experienced, there are strategies employed in dealing with the problems such as pretending ignorance or confrontation. The pretence of ignorance or confrontation strategies are mostly used by individuals who have been wronged; whereas resistance or apologetic strategies are used by individuals who are in the wrong. Most of the female bus drivers who have been wronged reported that in such instances, they wait for a face-to-face encounter with the same



person that has humiliated them in front of other fellow colleagues and demand an apology and an explanation. In such cases, there are people who are stubborn and who refuse to either apologise or give an explanation, thus a resistance strategy used. This strategy then causes a division amongst workers to such an extent that they may even spend years without talking to each other.

In avoiding a situation where there is continuation of conflict, both confrontation and apologetic strategies are used by both parties. If one of the people wronged approaches the wrong-doer and confronts them, they get an apology from the person who has wronged them. This is an ideal strategy that works and would further improve the relationships amongst women. The ignorance strategy could either work or fail because there were instances where people who were wronged never brought the matter forth; and this left them scarred to a point where they held grudges. Some female bus drivers unintentionally hurt other fellow colleagues and unless it is brought to their attention, they might continue doing the same actions that might continue hurting another driver emotionally. There are some who have used ignorance strategies and it has worked for them. They reported that what they do is use the stay-away approach, where they distance themselves from people who might upset them.

In solving their differences, there are instances where female bus drivers report their differences to management. From the reports, management has had good results where they have managed to peacefully solve fights amongst female bus drivers.

Man 2 reported:

*“There was once a case where two of our women drivers were not speaking to each other and they came to me and managed to solve their problem. Even now, they are best of friends. Initially they were not talking to each other totally and they were working for the same depot. There was a point where it almost got physical. But they brought it forth; I looked at all the details and found out that the main cause of the problem was a rumour that could not be proven true”.*

Both management respondents reported that women fight over minor issues. Women tease each other and there are also instances where women have conflict due to a rumour involving badmouthing each other and spreading lies about each other.



This is what Man 2 reported:

*“There are many reasons for these fights. Some fight or argue around issues of clothes. Some have even reported that their fellow women colleague even said the other one was wearing plastic shoes. Those kinds of weird things; and also some even say the other one buys her clothes at pep store. They say you are a bus driver, but you are still buying at pep store” (Endnote 18, Man 2).*

These are some of the issues that contribute to fights between women in the workplace; and as a result of such remarks and comments, female bus drivers might find it difficult to forgive the people who humiliate them in front of other people. According to one of the management respondents, it is a good thing that there are a few female bus drivers in the industry, because this makes it easy for management to solve the issues. If the number of women was the same as men, keeping order was going to be extremely difficult as women always fight over minor issues.

However, female bus drivers' differences do not affect their work at any level. They are able to separate these personal conflicts from work. They might be having fights with some of their colleagues, but because they do not use the same bus or sleep on the same bed, then this does not affect their work. One should however not rule out the impact such personal fights might have on these women's jobs. Female bus drivers work with passengers and there is a possibility that they might displace their anger or frustrations on other passengers, since the fights might negatively affect their mood. This would then be considered a spill-over-effect where what happens at work between their colleagues negatively affect the relationships they have with passengers or any person around them.

Company 2 experiences issues of fights amongst workers as a result of spending too much time around each other; whereas company 1 did not report any cases where they have had differences with their fellow female colleagues. Having a resting place and not having it might have a negative or positive impact on the relationships women have in the workplace. Having resting places might contribute to either unity or division. Company 2's resting place has had both negative and positive outcomes in that, there are women who have formed groups and they get along very well; and on the other hand, it has created division because there are several cliques at work.

On the other hand, the absence of resting rooms for women in Company 1 might be a good strategy in that women do not get to spend too much time together, thus avoiding conflict. This has been the case, because none of the women interviewed from Company 1 reported having fights with their fellow female colleagues. However, this might also be a disadvantage since these women are not presented with the opportunity to learn more about their fellow colleagues and also learn from the older ones who have been in the industry for longer periods. Even though this could be argued, there seems to be good relationships between women in Company 1 even though they do not spend time together. These women from Company 1 are unified by social networks seeing as the usage of social networks has worked for them.

#### **6.3.4. Discussion**

The introduction of women in the bus driving industry has been a challenging one to female drivers themselves, colleagues (both male and female) and other road users. Due to differences in culture, introducing women in the labour market has been a difficult issue to deal with by most men who are still holding the belief that women are not supposed to be in the driving industry. These “fixed” ideologies make it difficult and challenging for other men to accept women in the bus driving industry. It is therefore important to also understand the cultural background of other drivers in order to be able to understand their reactions and resistance to the presence of women in the bus driving industry. It is also important to understand the state of the labour market in South Africa and address unemployment, because unavailability of jobs also contributes to the resistance of women’s presence in the labour market. Even though it has been reported that there has been change of attitude towards the presence of female bus drivers, there are still male drivers who are against women working as drivers. The question therefore should be; why is it that the majority of passengers have accepted women as bus drivers, but most male drivers, including their colleagues, are still hostile regardless of spending much time with them? The answer to this could be related to job security.

Furthermore, passengers have nothing to lose, whereas male colleagues are threatened by the presence of female bus drivers as they are exposed to competing with them. Even on the road, there has not been a change, seeing as female bus drivers are still maltreated by most men on the road. This is so because female bus drivers are exposed to different road users on a daily basis, thus other people using the road are not used to them. However, there is a form of

solidarity amongst female drivers on the road despite racial differences. One would expect female bus drivers to have cohesion at the workplace, but this is not always the case as there are other factors that might contribute to division amongst female bus drivers, such as gossiping and badmouthing other female colleagues. Conflict in the workplace is normal; however, it should be managed appropriately. In dealing with conflict in the workplace, management has taken an active role in solving conflict issues.

#### **6.4. Relationship with management**

According to all of the participants interviewed, they have a good relationship with management, since the management treats everyone the same regardless of race, ethnicity or gender. Most of the managers in Company 1 are white Afrikaner males, whereas most of the managers in company 2 are black males.

Some of the participants reported that when they started working at company 1, there were elements of unequal treatment from the management. However, this was not only directed at female bus drivers, but rather it was more of a racial issue than that of gender. They reported that management gave the same treatment to both male and female bus drivers, however the difference was when race was involved. Company 1's management tended to give white bus drivers an exceptional treatment compared to black drivers. It was stated that in cases where both black and white bus drivers make the same mistake, it was black workers who were yelled at for making such mistakes; whereas white drivers would easily get away with it. This was one of the reasons that caused a division between management and their employees. However, the majority reported that management has always been supportive and it treated everyone equally regardless of their gender. Management even encourages them to stick to driving since they are an investment and also that they contribute to the company's good reputation.

Even though it was the 1994 constitution of equality in the workplace that contributed to the entrance of women in the labour market, not solely the company's initial plan; management relates well with women and they also aim at having equal numbers of female and male bus drivers in the driving industry. However, some of the people from management reported that achieving equality in terms of numbers in the workplace is going to be challenging and highly impossible, because there are a small number of women showing interest in becoming bus drivers. On the other hand, some women who initially start as bus drivers eventually move up to other positions. They use bus driving as their entry into the company and once

they have been in the company for a certain period, they present their qualifications for different jobs in the company. There are some female bus drivers who have been moved to offices as a result of their inability to handle pressure, both on the road and with difficult passengers.

Regardless of the above mentioned cases, there is a good relationship between management and their colleagues. Management plays its role in making sure that everyone gets the same treatment and that everyone is satisfied. They are also provided with conflict managers who solve the problems amongst workers in such a way that no special treatment is given to anyone.

Some of the respondents reported that not everyone in managerial positions like seeing women in the industry, but only a few would have a problem because it is their job to recruit women and failure to do such means that a person is not doing their job. Management, according to the participants, understands in cases where family issues are involved; it is argued that a flexible management allows workers to negotiate their shifts. In cases where one thinks that they will be unable to work a specific late shift, they bring the matter to management and most of the times they give them other shifts. This does not happen often. This is so because in the labour market, people should be treated equally, both men and women. If men are working late shifts, this should also be applicable to women; no one is supposed to get special treatment because treating both women and men differently might cause further division between male and female bus drivers.

This is what Priv fem 2 said:

*“Our relationship is right because there are instances where they understand that we are parents, we are mothers. Although there are others who just say to us that: you wanted this job, a male’s job, so then you have to work. You are the one who came here and said you wanted a job” (Endnote 29, Priv fem 2)*

A couple of female drivers from Company 2 reported that sometimes it depends on the kind of relationship one has with the management given that people are different. This then contradicts equal treatment in the workplace, since some benefited from having a special relationship with management. However, in general, most respondents are happy with the way they are treated by their management and the management is also satisfied with the services given by female bus drivers. Man 1 reported that there have been no cases where

female bus drivers have pocketed the money they make; while it is a totally different story with many male drivers as they have stolen from the company and in such cases, these male drivers were fired. This shows that there is a sense of trust between female bus drivers and management. It is their actions and reactions that determine the treatment that they will receive from management. Some of the things mentioned by both the management and respondents that are promoting a good relationship are the level of trust, honesty, coming to work and doing one's duty. This is applicable to both management and the respondents.

#### **6.4.1. Discussion and Application**

Management considers the availability of female bus drivers a good thing, since it dilutes a place that is overpopulated by men; and also women are a form of competition to other men, hence contributing to these male drivers' improvement at work. Casale (2003:61-65) reported that there is however a disparity in that, even though women are performing the same jobs as men, they are not paid the same. Most female bus drivers reported that they get the same wages as male drivers. The only thing that makes their wages different is the period these drivers have served, not because they are men. Some female bus drivers, who have also served fewer years, argued that there are also other female colleagues who get more wages. There are other men who get low wages compared to women who have been in the industry for longer periods.

Naidu (1997:10) argued that there has been an extension of the social conditioning about women and men's roles in the societal or familial context, into their different workplaces. However, this is not applicable to female bus drivers, since they are doing the jobs that they are hired for, that being bus drivers. Even though Naidu (1997:74) argued that South Africa is a patriarchal society where there is a division of roles in the workplace between men and women, this is not applicable to bus drivers as females are also hired as bus drivers. There are no men who are driving these buses for women, because everyone is allocated their shifts.

#### **6.5. Workplace relations – Concluding notes**

Workplace context is one of the contexts that brings people of different racial groups, gender, age, class, ethnicity and culture together. Due to these differences, there is bound to be conflicting ideologies and beliefs that contribute to divisions in the workplace. It is clear that once passengers get used to being driven by a female bus driver, their initial negative reactions eventually change as they get used to the drivers regardless of the drivers gender; this is a result of getting to witness these female bus drivers' ability behind the wheel. People

who are exposed to female bus drivers for the first time are critical and sceptical about the presence of a female bus driver as they have trust issues and also question the abilities and capabilities of female bus drivers. There are other road users who have not been exposed to female bus drivers on the road; hence their reactions to the presence of women in the driving industry have not changed. The majority, especially men, are still acting surprised and perplexed by female bus drivers. It is not only drivers who still act shocked by seeing a female bus driver, as this is also the case when it comes to pedestrians. Female drivers, regardless of the period they have been in the industry, are still a new element in the driving sector. Management, on the other hand, has good relationships with both male and female colleagues and the same treatment is argued to be given by management to their employees regardless of gender differences.

The next chapter concludes with an assessment of the impact of work conditions, occupational health concerns and workplace relations on work-family relations and balance.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: FAMILY-WORK BALANCE AND CHALLENGES

### 7.1. Balancing work and family

In this chapter, the researcher argues that female bus drivers do experience work-family conflict that is defined as “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (Greenhaus & Beutell 1985:77).

The following quotation by Muni 3 shapes the focus of the chapter:

*“Women are melala ya malapa<sup>10</sup> (neck of the household) even in public. As women, even on the road, we have to think about the wellbeing of our families”.*

Female bus drivers, according to some of the respondents are still acting as *melala ya malapa* which means the neck of the household even in public. These female bus drivers do not have to be in their houses to play some of the roles that are believed to be meant for women. Even on the road, they know that they have their own families that need them and their income. They play double roles, that of a mother and also a female bus driver.

Most female bus drivers reported that there are instances where there is (1) role conflict and therefore, a spill over effect from work to their families and from their families to work. They reported that there are instances where what happens at home might positively or negatively affect their moods and this might affect both their colleagues and passengers. On the other hand, what happens at work might also affect their mood negatively or positively and this might cause a problem when they go home in a bad mood.

In addition, all female bus drivers experience (2) time-based conflict because of the hours they work. They hardly spend time with their families since most of their time is spent at work. They only go home late or at night and also leave for work early in the morning. Most of the time when they get home, some of their children are asleep and some are planning to go to bed. Therefore, they do not get enough time to sit together as they are also tired, most of the time.

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<sup>10</sup>This is a saying directly linked to the saying that men are the heads of the households. The logic is that if the argument is that men are the heads, they need the necks to function. The argument shows interdependence between men and women by using human anatomy (head and neck).

In terms of (3) gender role conflict, female bus drivers reported that it is impossible to invest the same time for their paid and unpaid work – the latter includes the expressive role of mothering and the unpaid work of social reproduction (cooking and cleaning). The drivers start work at 5a.m. in the morning until 5p.m. in the afternoon and only get to spend roughly three hours daily with their families.

Finally, another conflict experienced is that of (4) strain-based conflict. Female bus drivers are playing double roles and this is evident in cases where female bus drivers reported that most of the times, they are tired, depressed and easily become irritated.

In the section below, I describe the family setups of the women drivers interviewed, before reviewing each of the forms of conflict listed above.

#### **7.1.1. Women bus drivers and family life**

Historically, also in South Africa to a certain extent after industrialisation, women were largely working in the private sphere; because that was the only place they were supposed to be whereas men on the other hand had to fulfil the role of being providers and also take care of their families. However, as outlined in the opening chapters of this study, major changes have taken place in the last two decades in relation to the political system that prevented women, especially black, Indian and Coloured women, from fully participating in the capitalist labour market. This research is mainly focused on black South African female bus drivers who are guardians to children or who are mothers.

Most of the participants have been in the industry for four to fifteen years and all of the respondents have families and children. There are some who have older children while others have young children who still need their care and presence.

Of the 16 female bus drivers that were interviewed, all reported that they have partners. Some of the participants are married, others are cohabitating and some are staying alone while their partners are working outside the provinces in which they are situated. Only two of the respondents reported that their partners were not working, whereas the rest said that their partners were employed. Some of the respondents' partners are employees in the same industry. Therefore, this means that most of the female bus drivers have at least a dual-income family set up.



There are problems faced by female participants as a result of difficulties balancing between work and their families. They are unable to give equal attention to both their work and their families. As a result, female bus drivers are faced with a dilemma. Their jobs are a source of their income and since they have signed the contracts, they have to abide by the terms of the contract or they might be dismissed. Their dismissals will impact on their families negatively as it is their families that survive on their incomes combined with the income of their partners. Due to this situation, female bus drivers sacrifice time spent with their families for work.

However, while female bus drivers may be experiencing problems of balancing between family life and work, they report that their families do function appropriately. Working provides the family with a source of income and they are able to sustain their families as they are also helping their partners. In the small number of cases where women drivers had partners who are unemployed (two cases), these female drivers reported that when they retire, their families will not function appropriately due to financial problems. On the other hand, their families suffer because of their jobs as bus drivers. Some reported that they even separated from their partners because of conflicting beliefs about working as female bus drivers. Even though two have reported this, one of the respondents later stated that eventually she reunited with her partner and the second respondent said that even though she and her partner were unable to reunite, she managed to get a new partner. She reported that her new partner might have a problem with her working status, but that is not going to break them up. Conversely, none of the women reported that working as a female bus driver was the sole reason for the separation; rather, they argue that this issue merely triggered the separation. One of the issues that might have strained their relationships is levels of independence gained after getting jobs as they became less reliant on their partners.

#### **7.1.1.1. Time-based conflict**

Drivers from both companies work seven to eight hours a day. However, the conditions differ depending on which company the driver works for. There are some drivers, specifically those working for the private bus service, who start working at 5 a.m. until as late as 8 p.m. with breaks in between. This shows that workers from company 2 hardly spend their time at home, since they get home around 9 p.m. depending on where they live. However, it is a different case with company 1 bus drivers as they knock off earlier compared to company 2 employees. Most of the participants from company 1 start to work at 6 a.m. and knock off at

4 p.m. or 6 p.m. These are normal hours for these women, since they are able to arrive home earlier.

Nonetheless, even though participants from company 1 knock off early, not all of them are managing a healthy balance between their work and families. Out of 6 female bus drivers interviewed, all argued that they are always tired when they get home and that all they want to do is eat and go to bed. Two of the female participants have children who are respectively 6 years old and 4 years old. Children need their attention and leaving home early for work and also coming back after they have arrived from school is a problem. These two female participants said that they normally rely on other family members or caretakers to take care of their children whilst they are still at work. Some of them reported that a mother-child bond is easily lost in such cases, because one is hardly home and the child gets used to the caretaker in the place of their mother. Respondents who had older children reported that when they started working as drivers, their children were not yet older and they also struggled balancing between their work and families. They had to make other plans to make sure that their children were safe in cases when they went to work. Most of the participants took their children to pre-school and also hired someone to collect them from school later on to keep them company until they arrive back from work. However; since their children are older now, they are able to take care of each other in the absence of their parents.

Priv fem 3 reported that:

*“When I get home I just take a bath, eat and watch a bit of television then go to sleep; because when I get there, all is ready, my children have cooked and dished up for me” (Endnote 31, priv fem 3).*

Those drivers who have older children, reported that they do not encounter problems that are encountered by other female bus drivers with young children and some reported that even when they get back from work, their children expect them to play with them and also talk with them. It is difficult for most of the participants since they get home tired and exhausted. In order to make their children happy, they try to play with them for a few minutes, listen to all the stories that they have to tell them about what happened at school and also assist them with their schoolwork. For example, Muni 6 reports as follows:

*“I help my daughter with her schoolwork when I arrive at home and when we are done with her school work, we talk. She would just tell me about all that*

*happened at school, throughout the day. She would tell you from A to Z of what happened throughout the day, but most of the times I am able to spend time with her over the weekend”.*  
(Muni 6)

Therefore, Company 1 female drivers argued that they are able to spend their undivided time with their families on weekends since they work until Friday. They use weekends to take their children out for movies or lunch so that they can make up for the time lost with them; and also buy their children clothes.

With regard to female bus drivers from Company 2, it is extremely difficult to make time for their families, since the hours that they work are not flexible. They work until late and some work until 4 p.m. depending on their shifts. Late shifts make it difficult for female bus drivers to allocate the same time worked to their families. When they arrive, they are always tired and they do not have enough time to spend with their children or partners. Some of the female bus drivers arrive home to find everyone already asleep – therefore they do not even get an opportunity to talk to them, since they have to leave for work early the next morning. This disrupts the families.

Yet, most of them reported that their families do understand that spending time with them without working will not bring money or food to the table, therefore they are used to it. Their partners might be working, but one can never have enough money since the cost of living is high. The drivers who work at company 2 hardly spend time with their children, because they work Saturdays as well and it is only on Sundays that they get a day off. Their work has been argued to have made a drastic change in their lives, as some of them reported that they are no longer going to church, because they do their house chores on Sundays.

#### **7.1.1.2. Gender role conflict and double-shifting**

According to Levant (1981:166), gender role conflict is defined as “a psychological state in which socialised gender roles have negative consequences on the person or others”. There are specific roles that are considered female and male roles; however, in understanding role differentiations, race; class; gender; culture and age should also be taken into account as gender role conflict is a complex term. People who do not abide by cultural expectations and gender roles are then devaluated by others or self as a result of deviating from the majority belief. From the findings, female bus drivers do not devalue themselves regardless of playing a role that is argued to be played by men. Conversely, they are proud of working as bus

drivers. On the other hand, they are devalued and violated by other people who are still holding the belief that women are not supposed to be in the labour market or driving buses.

Furthermore, women are expected to play double roles, thus they experience the double burden of having to work double-shifts. They are mothers or wives at home and female bus drivers at work. Even though they are faced with challenges of balancing the two, it is very difficult since some of the female bus drivers are not given enough time to rest; they are only rested one day per week. Female bus drivers might be experiencing a double burden, but they do have other forms of support as they rely on other women to assist with household chores and taking care of their children.

Some female bus drivers rely on the support they get from their family members and others rely on caregivers. Other participants reported the inability to hire a caretaker because the salaries they are getting is not enough to cover all the expenses and this contributes to stress experienced by some of the bus drivers.

This shows that there are some women who are able to get support from their families. Most of the time, it is their older children who cook, do laundry and clean in their absence. Caregivers are also employed to reduce stress levels. Most of the participants reported that they mostly depend on their extended family members for assistance since they are unable to afford to pay a domestic worker or a caregiver. Even though these caretakers clean the house, their main duty is to look after the children in the absence of their mothers. However, since most of the female bus drivers have older people, they normally rely on their older children to take care of their siblings.

It was only two participants who reported having hired a caretaker. The difference between employing a domestic worker and getting assistance from their extended family members is wages or salaries. Family members do not expect to be paid, rather just to be thanked in a form of a token such as being bought clothes or food; whereas on the other hand, domestic workers expect to be paid. The dilemma of female bus drivers to get domestic workers presents an opportunity to other females to be employed as domestic workers. This then means that there are other female bus drivers who turn to cheap labour through hiring a domestic worker (female) to deal with double roles they are faced with. This also shows that there is gender network where women rely on other women, be it family members or other women from the outside for assistance. This is another form of support.

### 7.1.1.3. Role conflict and spill overs

Some respondents reported that it is sometimes hard to separate problems that they are faced with at home from work. This is so because even though one can say it is important to separate what happens at work from what happens at home; at the end of the day, it is the same person who goes through such challenges. The participants have argued that they try to separate work and family problems, but there are times when what happens at home spills over to work and vice versa. Stress is natural and cannot be ignored and it affects their relationships with both passengers and colleagues negatively. However, the participants have reported that they do not let their stress take total control, because working as a driver requires attention and concentration; you have to work with different people, clip tickets and make sure that you do stop at every bus stop.

Moreover, there are many cars on the road and it is important that as drivers they do not lose focus as they can easily get involved in accidents or drive through red traffic lights unconsciously or delay their departure when the traffic light turns green. When the researcher was doing fieldwork, I observed cases where some of the respondents delayed their departure when traffic lights were green and also instances where some female drivers drove through red traffic lights. Luckily these did not result in an accident as there were no cars approaching.

Stress is not an everyday phenomenon though, because most of the times, the women drivers are in a good mood because of their family members. Therefore, families also have a positive impact on women drivers' ability to cope at work and therefore play an important role in the relationships these female bus drivers have with their colleagues or passengers.

Even though stress is not an everyday phenomenon, family members can contribute to stress. This is so because the presence of women in a gender-integrated workplace might contribute to conflict at home. The question therefore is: To what extent are intimate partners worried about their female partners working in a gender-integrated workplace? From the findings and interviews, one of the managers reported that there was an instance where one of the female driver's husbands called and reported that his partner is having intimate relations with other men in the workplace. This, to some extent shows that there may be other cases where most men are not comfortable with their partners working in a gender-integrated workplace. Other men might fear the unknown since they may believe that their partners are exposed to different men and they might have love affairs with them. These are some of the factors that

might contribute to fights between partners due to insecurities. Furthermore, such fights cause tension in the house and this might negatively affect families.

On the other hand, there was one bus driver who reported that there are instances where there are love affairs between colleagues, but it is just to pass time. Regardless of passing time, this is a dangerous practice because they are endangering the wellness of their families. However, one thing that should be alluded to is that there are men everywhere and that working in a gender-integrated workplace does not necessarily mean that there will be romantic relations between workers. Furthermore, the workplace does not force people to be romantically involved, but rather to cooperate well. It is the individuals' decisions to either get romantically involved or not.

There is also a spill-over effect from work to their families. Passengers and colleagues also have the power to negatively or positively affect drivers' state of mind and mood. When most females started working as drivers, reported the drivers interviewed, they had difficulties as their moods were affected negatively by passengers, male colleagues and other drivers on the road. Negative reactions contribute to bad moods and some of them reported that this has affected their relations with their families. There were instances where they displaced their anger onto their children and partners and sometimes they chose not to talk to their family members as a result of workplace issues. This, then, caused problems in the house since the children would either distance themselves from their mothers or decide to stand-up for each other and gang up on their mothers for not being fair. Sometimes such behaviour causes a problem between parents as the father might be disappointed with the manner in which his partner deals with the children. These are some of the things that might negatively affect the relationship one has with their family members.

Sometimes what happens at work might positively affect your mood state. Passengers also play a role in improving the female drivers' moods. There are passengers who would make jokes and that also brightens up one's mood and there are passengers that show their gratitude by buying female bus drivers gifts as a token of appreciation for the good relationship they have with them. Sometimes their moods are brightened by what happens on the road. For example, on one of the routes the researcher travelled with a driver, there are people who normally dance on the road and that improves their moods as when they get home they also share such experiences with their families.

#### **7.1.1.4. Strain-based conflict**

According to Rotondo et al (2003:277), strain-based conflict is when what one role's demands intrude and interfere with participation in other roles. This is applicable to female bus drivers as they have to play two roles that are not complementary- that of being mothers and also drivers. All the female bus drivers have reported coming back home exhausted and as a result, they are unable to emotionally bond with their families as they are sometimes detached due to fatigue. As a result, they are forced to rest so that they can be physically, mentally and emotionally be ready to go back to work and play their roles as bus drivers. This fatigue impacts negatively on the roles they have to play as parents (mothers). Their roles as mothers are not effectively fulfilled at home. This then contributes to the high stress levels that most female bus drivers have reported being faced with. However, even though there are challenges experienced, these female bus drivers are putting effort so that they can spend any little time they have with their family members.

There are some female bus drivers who are assisted by their partners with house chores, but it is a minority of male partners who are willing to assist with house chores. Most of the participants' partners expect to be taken care of, in other words, for their wives to cook for them and also do their laundry. This puts strain on women at the end of the day as they have to take care of both the children and their husbands.

#### **7.2. Managing work-family conflict: Possibilities for restructuring the job?**

A key aspect to consider when looking at the strategies female bus drivers could adopt to deal with work-family conflict is the matter of flexibility. Flexibility differs across the bus industry. For example, Company 2 female bus drivers have less flexibility when compared to Company 1 working hours. Moreover, even though one of the managers at Company 2 reported that women are presented with paid maternity leave, this does not solve the dilemma women are faced with of being equally involved with their families and their work.

In dealing with the conflict experienced by female bus drivers of playing double-roles as workers and mothers, there has been a suggestion for women to work flexible hours so that they can easily balance between the two. For example, female drivers from Company 2 suggested that it would be helpful if management changed their hours so that they can get home on time, since as mothers they are supposed to do chores at home. They stated that this might then improve the relationships they have with their family members and their children; there would be no need to hire other people to do their laundry or take care of their children



since they would be available. This would also save them money, because paying caretakers is expensive and also taking a child to pre-school at a young age is expensive. To some female drivers, issues such as having to pay caretakers and taking children to pre-school at a young age is stressful because it is expensive to pay such forms of support systems.

However, this strategy does not seem viable. In considering such strategies, it needs to be noted that this would be regarded as a discriminatory technique used by management, disadvantaging male colleagues as they believe in equal treatment. Management respondents reported that they are always open for discussions with some of the women who ask for their shifts to be changed. However, they consider this only in cases where drivers have valid reasons, not when female bus drivers want to knock off early so that they get home earlier. The reason behind this is that contracts were signed and rules were explained to female colleagues of which they did not have a problem with. Therefore, management argues, it is not fair of women drivers to ask management to cut their working hours or to give them early shifts; whereas male drivers are supposed to work late shifts.

In instances where some female employees negotiate with management to be allocated flexible hours, management therefore considers the reasons given before giving these women different shifts. A manager from company 2 reported that all employees are supposed to be treated equally and that giving women flexible hours when compared to male colleagues might be problematic. The only time a reshuffle of shifts is considered is when there is a serious problem experienced by a female bus driver such as the illness of some of their family members. The other manager interviewed argued that they also give male colleagues the same treatment.

Yet, according to management respondents, there are rare instances where male employees ask for a reshuffle of shifts compared to women. This shows that it is women who are strained as they have to play dual-roles and they employ tactics to be able to balance between the two uncomplimentary roles.

Even though there are some partners who help their wives or partners with household chores, it is only a few of them; most women reported that their partners expect them to take care of them. On the other hand, fourteen out of sixteen partners to female bus drivers are also employed. This might be argued to be a reason for not helping with chores. However, if this is the case, one can then pose this question: how is it that female bus drivers are able to



balance or try to balance between working and also doing household chores? Since they are expected by their partners to take care of them, assisting in the household or not is then a choice taken by male partners based on their beliefs and what is regarded as appropriate and “normal” behaviour. There are also some of the participants who do not reside with their partners, because their partners work at different places and they are career-orientated. As a result, getting assistance from their absent partners is impossible.

Even though it is evident that female bus drivers are experiencing a dilemma in balancing between their work and families, they are not totally helpless; they employ a range of strategies in dealing with the work-family conflict. On the other hand, when considering work-family conflict, there are other factors that should be considered such as the ages of the children, working hours, forms of support and also the distance of the working place. Most of the female drivers that stay far from their workplaces are the ones who hardly spend time with their families; while it is totally different with the employees staying nearer to their workplace as they get home earlier.

### **7.3. Discussion and integration of theory**

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985:77) stated that role conflict is a “simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) sets of pressures such that compliance with one would make more difficult compliance with the other”. From the findings, all female bus drivers are experiencing role conflict as they are mothers or wives and on the other hand; they are workers, that being bus drivers. These roles are incompatible because they are carried out at different places.

Literature suggests that most female drivers are at risk of being devalued by most of the societal members, in cases where they are unable to carry out their gender expected roles such as taking care of their families. Yet, this is not the way female bus drivers see it. They argue that their work as bus drivers contributes to their expressive roles. Their argument is that without money, they cannot take care of their children or their families and that would be failure; therefore, they would then be devalued by other people as a result of their inability to provide for their families. Nonetheless, most female bus drivers experience role strain because they are expected to both work at home and also at work.

It should be noted, that despite this research being carried out in a South African setting, which is different from the North American setting where the functionalist family theory emerged; most drivers reported that they live in nuclear families where there are dependents

and where they are married with partners. Parsons' theory<sup>11</sup> can be used to explain this family structure; yet, some of his arguments may be disputed by the findings.

Even though most women interviewed are from nuclear families and are still belonging to nuclear families, they have entered the bus driving industry nonetheless. There is no fixed division of roles where bus drivers are concerned; this means that bus drivers do the same job regardless of their gender. In addition, some female bus drivers have male partners who are doing paid work and not helping with the household chores, but there are other partners who also play both instrumental and expressive roles. This shows that there are other men who are willing to adapt to changes and help their female partners in the house. Having women and men both involved in both instrumental and expressive role does not mean that there will be conflict or that the society or the families with such structures will not function harmoniously. There are women in the labour market and the society is functioning well.

According to Skolnick and Skolnick (1996:335), the division of roles between men and women contributed to the consideration of families as a working unit where there was interdependence between roles taken by wives, husbands and children and this held families together. However, even though women are working as bus drivers, there is a working unit between them and their children and also some of their partners.

Parsons' theory<sup>12</sup> seems out-dated in terms of the contemporary workplace and social phenomena. For example, there are some female drivers who stay alone, but they have partners who work away from home - therefore, Parsons' theory is not applicable since it only considers nuclear families. Also, there is a new form of family structure, that of cohabitation. In cases where there is only a woman, they are required to work in order to take care of their families.

Talcott Parson's theory focuses mainly on nuclear family structure in order for the society to be functioning harmoniously. However, this form of a family structure is not completely applicable when considering African countries. Even though many of the female participants had partners, there are some who do not reside with their partners due to working at different locations. Thus Parson's theory does not account for such family structures. On the other hand, Parson's theory seems to function on the basis that men are supposed to be working;

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<sup>11</sup> See discussion under Chapter 3 on Parsons' theory

<sup>12</sup> Since this is a discussion, for detailed information on Parsons' theory, revisit chapter 3

but when considering this research's findings, there are other male partners that are unemployed regardless of being in a nuclear family. Yes, women's presence in the labour market has contributed to role conflict as women are playing two roles; but there are other forms of support that female bus drivers get from their partners, other women including their extended family members and their children.

Additionally, Work-family conflict only pays attention to the negative side of women entering the labour market, thus failing to account for other strategies that these women might use to deal with role conflict. Yes, due to playing double roles, women are pressurised and they are also stressed; and as a result, this stress and pressure might affect their families and work negatively. However, the work-family conflict model does not consider that these female bus drivers' occupation might also impact positively on their families. For instance, some female bus drivers have reported that their mood conditions are sometimes changed by the passengers and pedestrians. Furthermore, families do not always fight due to the work being done by female bus drivers. In some instances, it is these female bus drivers' families that make them happy.

In order to understand African families, a new model is needed. Rural areas have been argued to be predominated by extended family structures and it was initially mentioned that most of the participants might reside in the rural areas; thus they may be able to get support from their extended family members. Even though findings are that all the participants reside in urban areas, they still rely on their extended family members for support.

The above discussion mainly focuses on women's shift from private roles to the public sphere. However, even though women in South Africa, after industrialisation (19<sup>th</sup> century onwards) were to some extent excluded from paid work and public employment as a result of an understanding that women belong to the private domain; this should not be the only focus of the discussion. When considering the South African labour market, the main focus is on the double exclusion of women from the labour market based both on race and gender. The issue of the exclusion of women in the labour market is complex and focusing only on the private role does not completely give a detailed outline on the exclusion of women in the South African labour market. During the apartheid era, white Afrikaner women were incorporated in the labour market. This shows that the reason for the exclusion of some black women in the labour market was not solely based on gender, but rather race played a part. Therefore the question is: were most women, except white Afrikaners, excluded from the

labour market due to their skin colour? The only difference between white Afrikaner women and other races was skin colour (race), not gender. It can then be argued that the exclusion, to some extent, was not solely based on gender, but rather on race. Therefore, being women and being black disadvantaged many black women. On the other hand, why is it that most black men were employed and some black women excluded from the labour market? Was the black men's race not considered, while the black women's race was taken into consideration for employment?

In addition, in order to understand the incorporation of black women in the labour market, it is important to note that there were other factors, for example, migrant labour system contributing to the absence of men in the household. The migrant labour system, and the family fragmentation caused, sometimes forms of paid work. Furthermore, there were racial and the gender barriers to occupation shift substantially after 1994; thereby opening new opportunities for paid employment for black women. Thus, there are an increased number of women in the labour market.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

### 8.1. Conclusion: Challenging the structures amidst stereotypes living on

This is the final chapter of the research paper consisting of a conclusion based on the literature reviewed and the research findings.

The stereotype that women were bad drivers only emerged in the US when women became a serious presence on the road. The US thus played a vital role in strengthening the belief that women make bad bus drivers as compared to male drivers. The presence of women on the road was then a threat to many male drivers. When considering the South African context, this means that some of the gender-based conflict around female bus drivers may be fuelled by the fact that many men are not employed. Thus people replace and displace their anger on female bus drivers.

As a result, female bus drivers have experienced challenges and continue to experience problems in the workplace due to working in a sphere that is regarded to be rightfully for men. Furthermore, they continue to face a dilemma of balancing both paid and unpaid work. Even though there are other forms of social support that all these female drivers can rely on, they cannot be afforded by all female bus drivers. It is very important to note that it is not only the nature of the job that has an impact on female drivers, but also the conditions of work – i.e. the benefits and working hours at Company 1 is much better than Company 2. Therefore, based on the findings, it is clear that it is not only the nature of the occupation, but the conditions of work also matter.

Regardless of the long period females have served as drivers, they are still treated with hostility by the society and it is just a small number of people who tolerate the “breaching” of females into a man’s sphere. Stereotypes about the division of labour contribute to the negative reactions most females got from passengers, male colleagues and other societal members when they joined the industry. Women might have worked as drivers for 7 to 15 years; yet, there are people who are still holding the beliefs that a woman’s place is in the private sphere.

Some people might still be hostile about the presence of women in the bus driving industry; however, it is clear that from the findings that there seems to be a good relationship between female bus drivers and management. They are not prejudged, but rather, they are supported by management. One of the goals of post-1994 was to integrate and incorporate women into

the labour market. It seems as even though there is an attempt from management to integrate women into the labour market, they will be faced with challenges. Management can only do so much to integrate women, but it is also important for the society and other institutions to be willing to work hand in hand with management's goals and mission.

Female bus drivers are still vulnerable to occupational health problems and health issues are worsened by also doing domestic work at home. Domestic work is a form of unpaid work that also has health issues related to it such as exposure to dust, cleaning and doing laundry that might also cause back pains.

Regardless of all the challenges female bus drivers have been faced with, most participants reported that working as bus drivers has been one of their best experiences, except for being mistreated by passengers or other male colleagues. They explained that as a driver, one learns to deal with people from different backgrounds and also you are able to control them, since you are the driver. Bus driving has also empowered them and they have also gained respect.

From the accounts of drivers as well as my own observation, there seems to be many people who still regard bus driving as an occupation that should be taken by men, not women. People do not change their cultural beliefs about roles that are supposed to be taken by both men and women, but rather they "just accept" women's presence in the labour market. The question then is, what about children? Are they also capable of making such an observation and independently make decisions? Children may be influenced by other people to not follow the career choices thought to be inappropriate for women. However, as they grow older, they are capable of making their own choices.

On the other hand, what the majority of the society deems inappropriate may attract other children. Even though Stanley (2002:32) acknowledges the impact of a shift from traditional to a modern society in changing the stereotypes about roles that are supposed to be carried out by women and men; Stanley's theory fails to account for the resistance of change of beliefs by some traditionalists regardless of there being changes in the society. Therefore, Stanley's theory on the impact of shift from traditional to a modern society fails to account for reasons behind many people, what seems to be the majority, still adhering to traditional beliefs about driving as an occupation for men. Since the interviewed people were not the majority, one cannot generalise and argue that this is what the majority believe in. Furthermore, not every society or culture has been modernised. People are not just objects to

be changed easily. If people believe that a change will negatively impact on their culture, they act as a collective and become resistant to change. For instance, if there are women working in the house and getting paid more than their male partners, to some men it might be a problem since there are some that hold the belief that men should be the providers. Also, if there is a man unemployed and a woman employed in the house, this might be a problem for some men.

Even though the majority might still be holding traditionalist beliefs, the research demonstrates that female bus drivers decided to challenge the structure that aims to discriminate against them as they administer their sense of agency (Connell, in Demetriou 2001:338). This is one of the critiques of the sex-role theory, for it fails to account for the powers that are used by most female bus drivers in challenging the structure that aims at marginalising them from the driving industry. So, while societies seem to be resistant to change, societies are not static; they change as they are made up of people. The post-apartheid government contributed to changes that are currently witnessed in South Africa such as the entry of black women into the labour market.

Yet, the study also found that some female drivers also said that they think bus driving is not supposed to be done by females, but it is a job for males. Their reasons were that bus driving is straining and this will affect their health severely before they get to the age of 60.

When these women informed their families about wanting to become bus drivers, their family members reacted differently; there were some who did not mind and others made teasing remarks. The reasons for non-judgement by other family members could be because for some of these women, there were no other jobs available; so instead of sitting at home and doing nothing, the only viable option was that of becoming a bus driver.

However it was a totally different case with women who chose to become bus drivers because they wanted to prove the society wrong. When they informed people about their plans, most people teased them about the idea of being female bus drivers and jokes were made of their decisions to become bus drivers. This is a result of the influence that society, as an institution, has in shaping people's beliefs and ideas. In explaining these behavioural patterns, the socialisation theory is applicable in that there are still people who hold beliefs that women are not supposed to be working and providing for their families; that this is a role

that is supposed to be taken by men. What most people fail to account for, however, is that not all family households have a male figure.

However, socialisation fails to explain why some females, regardless of the societal forces and beliefs, chose to become drivers. On the other hand, there are some female drivers who were encouraged by their family members to become drivers; they were mainly encouraged by their mothers. Their mothers are also employees in the bus driving industry. It can be argued that socialisation varies from family to family, as the current female bus drivers were socialised in a different way from what the majority believes, in terms of bus driving being mainly a job for males not females.

Institutions such as families and the society play a role in reinforcing stereotypes about females being bad drivers as compared to males. Therefore, when people take buses, the picture is already drawn in their heads and a contradiction to what they already know will only be treated with hostility. This is also applicable with female bus drivers, for when they started working as bus drivers; they were treated negatively by most passengers. All female bus drivers reported that when they started working as bus drivers, the passengers were very hard on them; they were ill-treated by their passengers because of the fact that they were females. Passengers could not come to terms with being driven by females for they feared that their lives were in danger and that they will be involved in accidents because passengers believed that the female species is unable to drive a big bus.

Women's level of bravery is undermined as people hold the idea that men are braver than women on the road. As a result, the notion is that females will not be able to deal with all the challenges that they are faced with on the road, since these roads are extremely busy and there is also traffic. Passengers had the notion that women will then struggle in this public space where they will be driving next to different drivers on the road. And according to most passengers, only the brave will survive the cruelty of the public sphere and in their minds, it is the male specie that will survive such brutal conditions.

However, these female bus drivers have proved that they are capable of handling pressure and also argue that passengers are different, because there are some passengers who are respectful towards them and do not undermine them. Some passengers are just quiet and there are no problems encountered with such passengers.



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## Appendix A: Notes towards recommendations

Based on this research, the researcher presents below a couple of recommendations when dealing with women in the labour market, especially the bus driving industry. The recommendations are for issues relating to occupational health issues and work-family conflict.

- Since there is a need to treat all employees equally in the labour market, both men and women should work equal hours; but not having to work on weekends might be preferable since drivers can use the weekend to spend time with their families. However, it should be acknowledged that this will cause a conflict between essential service provision, commercial interests and social wellbeing. In dealing with this conflict, it is advisable that working hours should be flexible, where shifts are changed. For example, working from 5 a.m. until 15:00, then the other shift starts at 13:00 to 20:00 so that there is a reasonable resting period for bus drivers.
- To protect women from all sorts of violence and physical attacks, there is a need to have enclosed boxes that protect the driver from any other person. The new buses are designed in such a way that the driver is exposed and they are not protected.
- In dealing with occupational health related issues, improving the bus conditions will be beneficial; there should be comfortable seats and air-conditioners so that bus drivers' health is not affected negatively.
- On the issue of passengers, one cannot force people to change their attitudes, because change cannot be forced. However, there should be laws protecting women against uncontrollable passengers or people on the road who drive recklessly, for they put other people's lives in danger as they want to prove a point. Furthermore, it is important to educate passengers through posters and brochures about the changing nature of the market and to have a broader understanding about female bus drivers. Passengers should also know the consequences of being abusive to female bus drivers.
- In some cases, difficulties are due to the road and accompanying infrastructure. The City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality needs to widen some roads in order to facilitate the bus transport system. There are places where roads are not wide enough for cars and this is one of the factors that contribute to some drivers running late. This is an infrastructural issue, because if the roads travelled on are not wide or maintained

then this will negatively affect the job of those who utilise the roads. As the researcher was in a bus, there was a point where there was a huge truck on the road whereby other cars were not able to either overtake the truck or drive on the sides. This contributed to the driver being five minutes late. These are the issues that have to be addressed as they contribute to hiccups on the roads.

- Sometimes drivers run late as a result of not being allocated buses on time and this contributes to the conflicts they have with passengers. There are instances where drivers have been beaten up by passengers, because there was no bus and they had to go to work. This is then something that should be looked at by management.
- On the other hand, in order to prevent unpunctuality, wearing a uniform should be compulsory or a must for all the drivers, because most of the times female bus drivers run late due to confusion regarding the outfit to be worn. Furthermore, personal conflicts between female drivers will be easily dealt with through this mechanism; as they will not be presented with an opportunity of teasing other female drivers about their clothing brands. Management should monitor every driver who comes to work and check if they are in their uniform. This is a pro-active approach that could be taken to avoid unnecessary conflicts.
- Companies also need to emphasise the importance of attending employee wellness workshops and if there are not in place, it is crucial for Companies to practise. Management should also encourage cohesion and social interaction amongst the drivers.

Companies should also make sure that every driver is given their bus prior to their shifts to avoid disagreements about buses amongst drivers and other drivers taking buses that are not theirs.

## Appendix B: Translated transcriptions/see Endnotes

1. Banyana ba ba banyane ba no nyaka go re tseela banna, ba tshwanetse go rutiwa ka setso tradition ya rona, banyana ba bannyane ba tshwanetse gonna sekolong, ba bale dibuka eseng go ithuta banna ba rona (Endnote 1, Muni 5)
2. Goreng municipality o tliša bana ba sekolo mo, ba tlogetseng sekolo bat lo bereka as di driver (Endnote 2, Muni 3)
3. Setso sa rona, tradition ya rona ga e dumelane le dilo tse, lona batho le tshwanetse go boela medung ya lona, mosadi o moso ga a tshwanela go dira so, ntho e ke lenyatso mosetsong le nageng ya rona (Endnote 3, Priv Mal 1)
4. Dira gore ga otle mo ka boshigo goba retlo go senya sefatlhego (Endnote 4, Priv Female 3)
5. Le lady la mmele nyana o monnyane so a reila selo se se golo so, o batla gore bolaya? Uzo controller i bus ka njani with ama passenger a ma nini kanje in the bus (Endnote 5, Muni 6)
6. Goreng b aka nigeza umfazi a bus to drive us? Why ba fa mosadi ntho e kgolo so? Umfazi uzozibulala. Mosadi o o reitse bese kae before? (Endnote 6, Priv fem 10)
7. Ba namedi ba ipuditse gore ge sele ba hlakana le mosadi o and kgale a re reila, a so re utlwi gore o irile accident or sele ale involved mokotsing (Endnote 7, Muni 6)
8. Passengers ga di Tshwane, ga ba Tshwane ka hlaloganyoo mongwe o tla no botsa a re ba latelwa ko mmerekong ba bangwe ga ba bale bale, ba ba ngwe ba go roga and others ba no threatener ba go tshepisa gore ba tlo betha (Endnote 8, Priv fem 8)

9. Ba go botsa bare: mosadi, ra latelwa, o tshwanetse ke go bethiwa, and ga ona hlompfo. Mosadi o, mosadi o ga a na hlompfo (Endnote 9, Priv fem 4)
  
10. Bakganni ba rona baitsi gore fa, ba bereka ka dangerous goods, babereka ka dangerous goods ka ke foo public licence ya bona e kwadilwe GP, which is Passenger and Goods. Fa e le gore b aka fog are, gomme o kgona go ba bona, re ba bitsa di goods. Mara ke goods e kotsi go bane ya bua, ya tshwenya and ya betha. Ge ba ka bua selo gomme wa ba araba ka goba defensive, ba tlo go betha, ba namedi batlo go betha! (Endnote, 10, Man 2)
  
11. Lona di driver ga lena tlhompho, lona basadi le tlhoka tlhompho. Ga ke tlo isiwa kwa le kwa ke mosadi, and ke tlo go betha. O seke wa dira go pallwa ga gago bothata baka. Ke rekile ticket ye and ke go go i berekisa gona bjanong, lehono and ga ke patele sepe. Ga ke bereke go clipper di ticket, clipper e e matsogong a gago eseng a me (Endnote 11, Priv fem 1)
  
12. Well nna ke motho wa go itidimalla, ge go na le di passenger tsa go sokodisa ka buseng, ke tsea tshoetso ya go homola. Kgomolo ya mperekela. A ke kgone go omanya. Ke no itebellela ditaba tsa ka and ga ke tlo kgatlhisana le di passengers. Ka homola because ba rekile di tickets. Seo se tshwenyang ge letsatsi le fela ke gore ke ba isa mo ba nyakang. Ke nna o tshwanetseng go tsea maikarabelo for bus le di passenger. So akena choice at all (Endnote 12, Muni 3)
  
13. Then ka ipotsa gore ke tlo tloga lefelong lena metsotso nyana late go ba ruta molao. Then ka reila ka bonnyane. Ge kesa le busy ke reila, ka bona di bus tse dingwe di tloga. Then ge ke bona gore dia tloga, ke ka moo ke ileng ka reila speed se se high (Endnote 13, Priv fem 5)

14. Ke reila ka lebelo go fitlha ba homotse. Ba no re tuu, ba thoma go tshoga and ba no ipotsa gore ke nako e bay o tlhokofalang ka yona. Bare: ke mafelong. go fedile (Endnote 14, Priv fem 6)
15. Ke maikarabelo a rena gore batho b aba fitlhe ba le safe, gape re responsible for bona. Gape, gopola gore bus e nametsa batho ba batswang different places, di khutlo tse fapaneng molefatsheng and ka fao, maphelo a batswadi, a bana le ba namedi a mo matsogong a rona. Ke maikarabelo a di driver and o tshwanetse go keepa that in mind. Batho ba ke responsibility ya gao (Endnote 15, Muni 4)
16. Ntho e e dirang ke b aba di private cars ke gore ka nako e ba boning gore ke mosadi a reilang, ba lukisa di seat tsa bona gore ba dula pila a itheke then ba ntebelle ba ntshetse monwana o ma gareng ba go ise godimo. So ge a etsa so motseleng o ra goring, ona gana gore ke ireng? So ba nkwatisa, so lenna ke ba reila ka mokgwa o ba ndrivanng, reckless. Then ka ba bontsha gore lenna ka kgona go reila ka mokgwa o ba nthailang. Then ge o dira so, ba re o na le cheke. Ge ole mosadi, ba ira ka mokgwa o ba ratang motseleng, go bolela nnete, motseleng ga ba re tlhomphe. Ba re mo gonna, mamazala, o e rekile kae? oe rekile kae licence eo? Oe kereile ko shoprite? E e provocative, then ke ba botsa kere, fologa koloi ya gao, ko reverser bese ye and ke go tshose. Ko reverse bese ye eseng taxi ennyane. Taxi tse nnyane ke di toy tsa ban aba crèche. Then k aba botsa e yona key a batho ba bagolo/ya banna. Then k aba botsa gore “woza, let us have a challenge”. Re reverse bese ye. Ke no wina without go mmontsha gore e dirwa bjang. Ba sa le bitter ka gobane bana le code 10 mo ba bangwe ba senang le di licence tseo to start with (Endnote 16, Muni 4)
17. Ge o mong wa di driver a wina award, ge rele basadi re tshwantse go thaba le yena eseng re dira di remarks tsa go tshegisa ka tswelopele ya mosadi o mong. Re tshwantse gore re sticke bo botlhe kage rele basadi and stand together. Bo swele bona bo causer mathata fela gare ga basadi and re felletsa re lwa (Endnote 17, Pri fem 5)

18. Gona le mabaka a mantshi for dintwa tse. Ba bangwe ba lwa or ba ngangisana ka taba tsa diaparo. Ba bangwe ba reptile gore babereki ka bona ba basadi even said o mongwe o apere dieta tsa di plastic. Tsona dilo tse weird tse and ba bangwe ba re o mongwe o reka diaparo tsa gae ko pep store. Bare o bus driver mara o sa reka diaparo ko pep store (Endnote 18, Man 2)
19. Mathomong banna ba ne bas a renyake, ne ba sa re nyake. Ke go botsa thereshe or am i not? Ke thereshe. Ne basa renyake, ne bana le this look mo difatlhegong tsa bona, ba ile ba re tlwaela mafellong because ba bone gore re bereka go tshwana le bona (Endnote 19, Priv fem 4)
20. Batho b aba sweu le baba ntsho ba fapana, g arena di similarities except gore re ma South Africans and re bereka mo companing e 1. Go betere go stayer out of ditsela tsa one another gore re sa lwa ka baka la phapano gareng ga rona (Endnote 21, Muni 4)
21. E yona ke meleko ya setso, le tseba gantle gore mosetsong sa rona o tshwantse go nna gae o hlokometse family eseng oleka goba breadwinner ntho e ke selo se rona banna re tshwanetseng go seira. Gotla mo and o bereka just efa society so so tlhe kgopolo ya gore banna ga ba kgone and ga ba tshepege go bane ga ba kgone go tlhokomela malapa a bona. Lona basadi le dira gore banna ba lebege bad. (Endnote 21, Priv fem 9)
22. Ke motsonga, ntho e nka go botsang ke gore ma Tsonga, Pedi, Venda, yooo le mazulu, ga ba believe mo nthong tse tsa go bona mosadi ba dira ntho e ba e naganelang gore ke mmereko wa banna.sentse bas a tshepe gore rona as basadi re ka dira se ba se etsang. Sentse ba tshwere melao ela ya kgale (Endnote 22, Muni 5)



23. Ke tlhoile ge mosadi a kereya chelete e nchi go mphetisa. Ke driver e ntswembu compared to bona and this ke industry ya bana so e fair gore ke kereye gofetisa basadi ka mo industrying e (Endnote 23, Male 2)
24. Basadi b aba di driver ba kgahlisa, keile ka reilwa ke bongata ba bona and ka mokgwa o baling moja, ke no robala ka buseng (Endnote 24, Male 3)
25. Ba bangwe ba di driver tsa banna ba berekisa di bus tsa rona go bula matlho a marubishi and taba ye ya ntlapela go fitlha ke ba le kgogano e bosula le o mongwe wa di male colleague and ntho e e amile relationship entse rena le yona thata (Endnote 25, Priv fem 3)
26. Go compete le basadi and ba o tlhole e tliša sepe mara lenyatso ka bokgoni ba rona ba go reila, ntho ena ga e nnise batho sharp k age batho ba yo thoma gore re tshwenya for go phalwa ke basadi b aba weak (Endnote 26, Priv Mal 1)
27. Well ga zanke b aba surprised, barile setse ba re tlwaetse. Mara ne gona le banna ba bangwe ba ntse bana le mathata le nna mara nka se go botse pila pila gore e causitse ke eng mara ke kgonne go controller situation ya teng. Ke ba buditse gore ba satlo acter like ba surprised like ke the first time ba bona mosadi wa reilang bus (Endnote 27, Muni 3)
28. Ke eng e basadi b aba tlo re botsang yona? Ba tlo re botsa eng? For eng? Ake tlo botswa ke mosadi, angege! (Endnote 28, Priv Mal 1)
29. Relationship ya rona e sharp gobane go na le matsatsi a mangwe mo ba tlhologanyang gore si a bazali, a bazali besfazani. Kodwa gona le ba bangwe ba nothi be ufuni umsebenzi lo, umsibenzi wa madoda then ufanele kuthi u sebenze. Nguwe o chusile umsebenzi lo, otlile mo wa re u funa umseenzi (Endnote 29, Priv fem 2)

30. Ge ke ba le 50 years, nna ko tlogela. Ko tlogela ke tsee break. Ko tswa mo industrying e mara a keye ko another industry mara ko nno nna gae and ke ikhutse. Ntho yonna so because ke tlebe ke nyaka gore mmele wa me o ikhutse. Ke lemogile gore if wa bereka as bus driver until o fitlha ko 60, a ke battle go go yakela, o tlo no bam o pension for di beke tse 2 then wa swa. E ka mokgwa o because mmele wa gao tlebe o lapile and mmele ya rona e batla go ikhutsa. They have to be rested (Endnote 30, Muni 3)
31. Ge ke fitlha gae ke no tlhapa, ka ja, ka labella tv ga nnyane then ka yo robala because g eke fitlha tso tsothle di ready, bana ba ka ebe ba apeile and ba ntsholetse (Endnote 31, priv fem 3)