

Taxi Drivers and the Night Time Economy:  
An Exploratory Study on their Experiences

Matthew R. Huddleston

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## **Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which, to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements

Name:

Signature:

Date:

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## **Abstract**

Taxi drivers perform a significant role in the transport infrastructure of towns and cities around the world. They have become a vital subsidiary industry to the night time business of bars and clubs within central city areas, a term now collectively referred to as the night time economy. However, while catering to these transport needs, overseas evidence suggests that they are at great risk of falling victim to criminal acts such as assault, robbery, and even murder. There is a need then to establish whether these findings are relevant in a New Zealand context and establish how the risk of victimisation interacted with taxi drivers' involvement in the night time economy. This research was conducted using grounded theory methodology with taxi drivers interviewed from Auckland Co-operative Taxis. A total of nine drivers were interviewed in this study. Findings indicated that taxi drivers face a number of issues as a result of their occupation. It was found that the problems drivers face occur across day and night and are only further exacerbated by working within the night time economy. Economic insecurity was a primary motivator for continued involvement within this arena and affected drivers' decisions to accept risky fares. The introduction of a working wage was identified as a potential solution to this problem, freeing drivers to make rational decisions without regard to financial necessity. Future research should investigate the experiences of drivers that operate for the smaller companies as it was put forward that they have more relaxed operating standards than those observed with Auckland Co-operative Taxis.

## **Introduction**

Taxi drivers across the world operate in a mobile environment that challenges the traditional concept of the workplace (Facey, 2010). The taxi industry is a service that is a vital part of a modern day urban setting. They provide a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week transport service that is uniquely tailored to an individual's travel requirements, a feature not supplied by other means of public transport (Schwer, Mejza, & Grun-Rehonne, 2010). Yet while taxis constitute a crucial element of urban transport infrastructure, it is surprising to learn that there is little awareness towards the issues the providers of this service face in the course of their occupation, particularly in a New Zealand context. Using grounded theory methodology the primary research focus sets out to reveal the issues taxi drivers experience through their relationship with the night time economy in New Zealand.

The concept of the night time economy has occupied a significant role in urban policy priorities for many cities around the world (Rowe & Bavinton, 2011). The decline of manufacturing industries during the 1970s led to a focus on the development of cultural capital within city centres, shifting from a focus on production towards one of consumption (Lovatt & O'Connor, 1995). However, the monopolization of these night time leisure spaces by 'alco-leisure' industries has seen a divergence away from the cultural models promoted by early advocates of the 24 hour city (Hadfield, Lister, & Traynor, 2009; Rowe & Bavinton, 2011). These urban spaces have now in many cases become sites of alcohol fuelled violence and disorder (Hobbs, Winlow, Hadfield, & Lister, 2005b). As a service industry that caters to this economy, taxis operate in a volatile environment that may exacerbate the issues inherent to the job. In the context of this study, the term night time economy will refer to the business of bars and clubs on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights between the hours of 10pm and 6am. This

research sets out to investigate how working within the night time economy affects the issues taxi drivers face on a daily basis. There will be an attempt to understand the ways in which taxi drivers protect themselves from harm and thus identify further means by which risk can be managed.

## **1.0 Statement of Research Problem**

The nature of taxi driving is one of constant change. It is a job characterised by accessibility and flexibility, where the driver is obliged to work long hours for often fairly low wages (Facey, 2010). Furthermore, with drivers constantly on the road amongst urban traffic for a sustained period of time, there is the risk that they may become involved in car accidents (Stenning, 1996). Working within such a dynamic environment presents many risks, and challenges that within a New Zealand context have garnered little attention. There is room then to explore the issues taxi drivers face in the course of their occupation in New Zealand. Alongside this, there is a need to investigate how these issues are compounded through taxi drivers' involvement in the night time economy. Taxi drivers perform a strategic role in night time transportation and in managing public disorder (Denscombe, Dingwall, & Hillier, 2009). Performing such a central role in dealing with these problems, however, places these drivers at risk of falling victim to violence, theft, or abuse as an end result of excessive alcohol consumption. This research sets out to explore how the issues taxi drivers face are exacerbated through their involvement in the night time economy along with any further issues that arise as a result of this involvement.

## **1.1 Contextual Background**

The night time economy is a place of un-paralleled hedonism where people are able to shrug off the responsibilities of their day time self and embrace the chaos of the alcohol-fuelled night (Hadfield, 2006). This concept alludes to the notion that after dark, people

are drawn into inner city areas by the allure of alcohol and the attraction it provides in altering the mundane, structured and tedious aspect of life which we are obliged to conform to during daylight hours (Hobbs, Hadfield, Lister, & Winlow, 2005a). The night time economy, as a means of escape, has become a thriving enterprise that has transformed many inner city areas around the world. In the process this has led to the development of a number of ancillary industries that are said to be the reason behind why the night time economy has flourished (Smith, 1996). As one of these subsidiary industries, taxis are important in assembling the atmosphere of city centres at night, linking suburbs to inner city areas (Shaw, 2014). Taxi drivers can therefore be seen as an essential element of the night time economy. By providing the only means of user orientated transportation available 24 hours a day not dictated by timetable or route (Cooper, Mundy, & Nelson, 2010), taxis provide an essential means of dispersal for revellers of the night time economy.

Evidence indicates that there is a problem of violence within the night time economy as a product of the construction and projection of an empowered masculine identity, the rejection of normal social values, and rowdy group drinking (Hobbs et al., 2005b; Tomsen, 1997). For those working within this environment, there is an associated risk in dealing with the consequences of the night time economy around which a substantial amount of taxi work is orientated. It is not surprising to discover taxi driver victimisation has the greatest chance of occurring between 7pm and 6am (Mayhew, 2000b). As an industry vital to the upkeep of the night time economy, taxi drivers operate in a volatile environment where alone and unarmed, they sit in close proximity to complete strangers (Stallwitz, 2012). It has been widely argued that victimisation rates within the night time economy are particularly high, especially in regards to alcohol and violence (Brady, 2005; Carey, 2013; Hadfield et al., 2009; Hobbs et al., 2005a). Research conducted overseas suggests that taxi drivers are one of the most at

risk from occupational victimisation (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006; Hamill & Gambetta, 2006; Mayhew, 2000b; Mayhew & Chappell, 2005; Stenning, 1996). While this research discovered that victimisation rates amongst taxi drivers are high, evidence also indicates that there is a significant degree of under-reporting of victimisation (Barling, 1996; Denscombe et al., 2009; Mayhew, 2000b; Stenning, 1996). It has been proposed that only one in five incidents are reported (Barling, 1996) with evidence from New South Wales, Australia suggesting 90 per cent of incidents involving taxi drivers go unreported to the police (Mayhew, 2000b). The concept of the night time economy is relevant to the context of taxi drivers operating in New Zealand as taxis are a subsidiary industry within the night time economy vital to the continued success of bars and clubs within city centres. In discussing the night time economy in New Zealand I talk specifically about the dangers posed to taxi drivers in operation between the hours of 10pm and 6am in major cities. These dangers include but are not limited to robbery, assault, and murder. There is a need to establish whether overseas trends are applicable in a New Zealand context. Identifying whether these are in fact relevant concerns can help shape the development of policies which aim to promote a safe night time economy in New Zealand.

## **1.2 Policy Background**

The development of the night time economy within cities has been aided by the growth of associated support structures which provide services that help maintain this economy (Hobbs et al., 2005b). The provision of transport to and from these inner city destinations is critical to promoting Auckland as an attractive night time destination. Providing people with an accessible, efficient and inexpensive taxi service has been recognised as a high priority by policy makers and urban planners alike (Stenning, 1996). In the context of the New Zealand night time economy, Auckland Mayor Len Brown has promised to clean up the central business district from alcohol related

problems; a particular reference to better transport options is one of his initiatives to help alleviate this issue (Taylor, 2012). Efficient transport into and out of city centre areas has been identified as a crucial aspect of any strategy attempting to deal with alcohol related crime and disorder (Denscombe et al., 2009). Having an adequate supply of taxis is therefore significant to any effective attempts to implement a city centre clean-up strategy. However, at these times and within these locations, taxi drivers are particularly vulnerable to falling victim to criminal activity (Denscombe et al., 2009). Investigating the impact that putting taxi drivers in these potentially dangerous situations could have is therefore essential in the implementation of any attempt to improve transport efficiency in inner city areas.

This research seeks to identify ways in which driver safety can be improved. Any policy changes that are implemented by the council in 'cleaning up' Auckland's night time economy should address concerns about taxi driver safety. In addition, the effectiveness of the changes implemented by the Land Transport Operator Licensing Rule No.2 (2010), which mandated the use of cameras and a monitored communications system within taxi vehicles, will be established along with how drivers perceive its success.

The appeal of a destination is significantly related to how available and attractive the services within it are, along with the degree of access available (Cooper, Mundy, & Nelson, 2010). Providing an attractive, efficient and economical transport service could thus impact upon the allure of the inner city as a night time destination. At the same time, providing these transport operators with a safe environment to operate in should continue to ensure that there are enough providers to meet demand.

### **1.3 Research Statement**

Internationally, the growth of service industries within inner city areas has been encouraged by local city councils as a result of the economic growth it promotes. The

nightlife within a city is increasingly becoming an advertisement for that city's culture and 'liveability' (Rowe & Bavinton, 2011). These city spaces have in many cases, however, become areas of violence, intoxication, and crime, constituting a considerable drain on police resources. Research overseas has hypothesised that lowering crime rates in inner city areas at night can be achieved through the provision of an efficient transport service into and out of these high risk areas (Denscombe et al., 2009). It is believed that dispersing crowds of intoxicated revellers in a timely manner can help reduce the incidences of crime. However in many cities the availability of public transport diminishes in the early morning. In London for example, the closure of the underground at 12.30am is said to create transport difficulties for those enjoying the city's night life (Hadfield, 2006). Where public transport cannot cater to transport demand or is otherwise unavailable, the requirement for an alternative is apparent. Taxi cabs, as a method of late night transportation can thus be seen to fulfil a crucial role in the management of the night time economy. In order to gain insight into the role of alternative transport between the hours of 10pm and 6am, this research will explore the issues faced by taxi drivers via their involvement in the night time economy.

Drivers operating at all times are faced with the dangers of working in a movable and solitary environment in physical proximity to strangers (Paes-Machado & Nascimento, 2013). Yet it has been found that the risk of victimisation escalates when operating at night, with a greater chance of verbal abuse, physical threats, theft and actual physical harm (Denscombe et al., 2009; Stenning, 1996). In addition, working long hours, late into the night presents further problems that can affect a driver's ability to perform their job; problems such as stress, diminished concentration, and impaired judgement (Facey, 2010; Mayhew, 2000b; Schwer et al., 2010). The aim of this research is thus twofold; firstly to examine how taxi drivers are affected by their participation in the night time economy with a particular focus on victimisation and secondly, to establish the

additional issues taxi drivers face as a result of their involvement in the night time economy, beyond that of victimisation.

This research is an exploratory study into taxi drivers' involvement in the night time economy from a New Zealand perspective. Little is currently known in a local context about the issues these individuals face. The significance of this study goes beyond identifying a phenomenon; rather it is a foundation upon which future research can be developed.

## **1.4 Outline of the Research**

This research will be presented across the following chapters. Firstly in chapter 2, an examination of existing literature from both a New Zealand and International perspective will take place. This will address the concept of the night time economy alongside taxi drivers' role within it. Additionally, research surrounding their experiences of victimisation and methods of risk management will be investigated. Following this in chapter 3, the research methodology and method will be outlined, discussing the reasons for its selection, enable the reliability of the results to be assessed, as well as providing a means of replicating this study. Also within this chapter are ethical considerations alongside the research limitations and challenges.

Across chapters 4, 5, and 6, the results will be revealed in a manner which focuses on the three areas of interest within this study, the dynamic work environment of taxi drivers, their involvement in the night time economy, and methods of risk management available to them. Chapter 7 will assess these findings and provide a comparison to those findings from previous studies. Finally in chapter 8 some concluding remarks will be made.

# **Literature Review**

## **2.0 Introduction**

This literature review was conducted to explore some of the issues faced by taxi drivers as a result of their involvement in the night time economy, within the context of wider scholarship. Firstly, the role of the taxi driver will be examined. Following this the concept of the night time economy will be established alongside the effect alcohol has been suggested to have on violent and aggressive behaviour. Finally, the role of taxi drivers within the scope of the night time economy will be explored together with an investigation of their experiences of victimisation and the methods of risk management they employ.

## **2.1 The Role of the Taxi Driver**

The business of taxi driving involves the delivery of tailored transportation, carrying people from one place to another. It is said that as a taxi driver all you are required to know is how to find your way around a city and be able to drive a car (Gambetta & Hamill, 2005). Be that as it may, it is the only means of localised transportation that operates 24 hours a day, with individually arranged and flexible origins and destinations (Stenning, 1996). As a result, the work environment in which taxi drivers operate can be considered to be dynamic, fluid, and ever-changing. This type of work place is unique with drivers being mobile and moving through and between different physical places (Facey, 2010). As a form of personal transport, taxi drivers meet an incredibly vast array of people. It is estimated that taxi drivers in New York City will have approximately 7,000 new encounters with individuals each year (Hamill & Gambetta, 2006). These factors depict the varied nature of taxi driving. It is an occupation in which an individual is constantly on the move, operating alone with strangers, and in areas that can quite often be unfamiliar, presenting an image of a dynamic work environment.

Dynamic as it may be the industry has been described as a vital element of urban infrastructure (Stenning, 1996). A reflection of this necessity is demonstrated by the number of taxis operating in New Zealand. A 2004 report indicated that there were 8,089 taxis operating for around 190 Approved Taxi Organisations, with over 23,000 passenger endorsement licenses or qualified taxi drivers (Brady, 2005). These numbers have exploded since the deregulation of the taxi industry in 1989. Since then the number of taxis operating in Auckland grew from around 1000 in 1989 to around 5000 at the present time (Cumming, 2014). When there is an excess in the supply of taxis, drivers are often forced to increase their work hours, often into the night and early morning, affecting their vulnerability to illness and traffic accidents (Paes-Machado & Nascimento, 2013). Additionally, competition between drivers fuelled by economic uncertainty is reported as a source of stress due to the creation of antagonistic relationships as well as a reduction of social support between drivers (Facey, 2003). Deregulation of the taxi industry has promoted the growth of the industry in New Zealand. Evidence from overseas reveals that should an over-supply of taxis exist, competition between drivers increases, leading to longer work hours and stress.

Research has suggested that in regards to the average work week taxi drivers work lengthy shifts. A Canadian study by Stenning (1996) reported that compared to the average worker, taxi driver shifts are notoriously long. Two Australian articles reported similar lengthy work hours with an average of around 12 hours for each shift (Mayhew, 2000b; Nielson, 2009). It is reported that much of this time is spent waiting for fares with even the busiest of drivers spending considerable amounts of time between fares (Stenning, 1996).

Working long hours ultimately means that there is going to be at least some degree of driving at night. Mayhew (2000b) believes that driving at night negatively impacts the

body's normal circadian rhythm resulting in decreased concentration capacity, particularly between 2am and 4am. Circadian rhythm is a biological process that is driven by the circadian clock based around 24 hour cycle; this dictates sleep times and when we perform and think optimally (Morrow & Brunner, 2011). For drivers operating at night, the disruption of this cycle and subsequent impairment in concentration presents operating on the road as a significant hazard. Facey (2010) states that road traffic accidents are a leading cause of injury related deaths globally with higher injury rates observed amongst commercial drivers. A study on driver fatigue amongst taxi drivers and the associated risk of vehicle accidents by Dalziel & Job (1997) hypothesised that one of the major causal factors amongst traffic accidents was driver fatigue. Although they were unable to find any evidence of causality, it was suggested any accidents that did occur would not be directly attributed to fatigue by the driver. It was mentioned also that as a result of their experience on the road, taxi drivers are more alert to fatigue and more capable at managing the associated risks (Dalziel & Job, 1997).

In addition to weariness on the roads, a diminished focus restricts the driver's ability to recognise danger and the warning signs of violence (Mayhew, 2000b). Taxi drivers have very little time to decide whether or not to accept a fare, being under severe pressure to decide quickly (Gambetta & Hamill, 2005). Under such pressures, being unable to recognise warning signs can be detrimental to a driver's safety. Working long hours combined with a disruption to an individual's circadian rhythm is proposed by the literature to be a factor that places taxi drivers at an increased risk of harm.

The literature has shown that the business of taxi drivers is characterised by uncertainty, fluidity and lengthy work hours. It is not surprising to find that taxi drivers suffer from a fair amount of work-related stress. A study by Tennant (2001) found that work related

stress impacts upon worker satisfaction and productivity and can lead to complications in physical and mental health. Continuing, he found that occupational stress arose from particular incidents in the workplace, long work hours, job controllability, and a lack of social support amongst other things. Facey (2003) found that taxi driving was an example of precarious employment where workers experience fragile employment relationships, economic insecurity, and have poor working conditions; in turn this has been associated with ill health based on psychosocial factors like stress and anxiety. Furthermore the threat of violence along with violence itself can create debilitating stress amongst drivers that can lead to fear, illness, and isolation with an increased desire to leave the job (Gilbert, 2011). Evidence also indicates that workers occasionally coped with stress by resorting to such behaviours as smoking, alcohol and drug use, and absenteeism (Facey, 2010). The aspects of the role that defines taxi driving are a considerable source of occupational stress. Stress can be seen then to represent a significant issue amongst taxi drivers.

## **2.2 The Night Time Economy**

Cities are for some a place of difference, excitement, and unpredictability involving the coming together of diverse populations who co-exist and interact in uncertain encounters (Crawford & Flint, 2009). Within these cities, the social world found in daylight is at almost every point of reference, completely divorced from the night (Hobbs, Hadfield, Lister, & Winlow, 2003). At night, the city centre is a place of wonder, leisure and merriment; however beneath this hedonistic façade lurks a realm of un-paralleled chaos, illicit activities and the potential for violence.

The current literature on the concept of the night time economy is said to have developed from work in the mid 1990s regarding the importance of art and creativity as the drivers of urban change (Roberts, 2006). Florida (as cited in Roberts, 2006)

described the descent of cultural meeting places into the ‘booze sodden destinations’ that now embody urban centres. The first use of the term ‘night time economy’ in an academic source was by Bianchini (1995) who described the development of entertainment venues within urban city centres. The growth of these areas was attributed to a blurring of social and political boundaries with local politicians witnessing a demand for people to go out at night, combined with a rise in the disposable income of youths (Bianchini, 1995). It was imagined that promoting the city centre as a night time destination would double the time at which urban centres were productive (Shaw, 2014). This term was further developed by Hobbs, Hadfield, Lister, and Winlow (2003) in order to describe the explosion of the licensed trade in city centres (Roberts, 2006). It is described as an economy founded upon a commercial ethic reliant upon a dynamic hedonistic experience; a place where individuals are encouraged to escape the structured routines, familiar protocols, and bonds of restraint that characterise daily life (Hobbs et al., 2003).

The decline of manufacturing industries within towns and cities inspired a redevelopment of urban areas designed to attract investment (Burnett, 2011). The concept of the night time economy therefore embodies two distinct changes, firstly an economic shift from industrial production to post-industrial consumerism and secondly a shifting of urban governance from the management of local services towards a focus on economic growth (Hobbs et al., 2005b). Local authorities recognised a need to replace the loss of industry. Subsequently, they have actively encouraged investment in their local night time economy, often achieving this through the relaxation of strict licensing laws (Burnett, 2011; Crawford & Flint, 2009; Hobbs et al., 2003).

The liberalization of licensing laws was an attempt to encourage breweries, entrepreneurs, and leisure corporations to invest in city centres, with a subsequent aim

of attracting customers to enliven the businesses and streets of these areas (Hobbs et al., 2003). This investment by the private sector has established these locales as a site of consumption and leisure (Hobbs et al., 2005a), which at the same time is propagating incivility, disorder, and inter-personal violence (Crawford & Flint, 2009).

In New Zealand there has been a similar liberalization of liquor licensing laws with the Sale of Liquor Act of 1989 said to be a means of competing on the international tourist market (Hutton, 2009). This saw a rapid expansion in the number of liquor licenses with the figure doubling by the mid 1990s to 11,280 and reaching 15,242 in 2004 (Hutton, 2009). It is worth noting, however, that the number of licenses has fallen with only 14,031 licensed facilities in New Zealand in 2012 (Ministry of Justice, 2012).

The resounding success of the night time economy within urban areas has meant that a thriving nightlife is now a statement of progressive development for a city centre (Hobbs et al., 2005b). Night-time entertainment venues have become an essential part of post-industrial prosperity for many towns and cities, attracting an influx of capital investors and new consumers (Crawford & Flint, 2009). In England and Wales the licensed trade employs over one million people and turns over £23 billion per annum, 3% of the GDP for the United Kingdom (Hobbs et al., 2003). Having grown to become such a prolific industry that provides large economic returns is a desirable attraction for city councils. However promoting the consumption of alcohol can present its own risks. A point which is reflected in a statement by Hadfield (2009), who declared that “the night time economy poses the greatest threat to public order in Britain today, featuring as it does levels of violence that are unparalleled outside of military and penal institutions” (p.31). There is a need then for councils to ensure that effective measures are in place to keep these areas from getting out of control.

### **2.3 Alcohol and Violence in the Night Time Economy**

A causal link between alcohol and violence has long been sought, with the relationship between the consumption of alcohol and aggressive behaviour viewed as one of the most important areas of alcohol research (Graham, 1980). Isolating this causality has been difficult to prove (Tomsen, 1997), but it would appear that there is a correlation between consumption of alcohol and violence. Graham (1980) points out that evidence from crime statistics and anthropological studies suggest a ‘greater than chance’ relationship between aggressive behaviour and alcohol consumption. Because of this link between alcohol and crime, we can expect to see an increased rate of violence in night time economies, where Hobbs, Hadfield, Lister, and Winlow (2005) say heavy ‘episodic’ alcohol consumption is the norm. Also known as ‘binge drinking,’ there is currently no standard definition on how many drinks constitutes what is known as a ‘binge.’ However Charles, Valenti, and Miller (2011) use six or more standard drinks at a time to define a period of episodic drinking.

Alcohol is an easy target for politicians, police and media commentators to direct blame for crime and public disorder (Tomsen, 1997). As Hutton (2009) argues, alcohol has been associated with a number of crimes such as violence and disorder with some research suggesting that consumption of alcohol is a mitigating factor in these. A study by Budd (2003) indicated that regularly frequenting licensed premises increased the risk of violent victimisation, posing the notion that there is some link between violence and alcohol, with causality still remaining an unknown factor. Results from the British Crimes Survey of 2008 indicated that victims believed an offender was under the influence of alcohol in 45 per cent of violent offences (Newton & Hirschfield, 2009). In a study by Barton and Husk (2012), males commonly reported higher feelings of aggression when intoxicated. These heightened levels of aggression combined with the ‘disinhibiting’ effect of alcohol often lead consumers to lose their normal constraint and

undertake behaviour that would otherwise be contained (Hobbs et al., 2003). The overwhelming evidence therefore seems to indicate that any interaction within these areas therefore places an individual at a heightened risk of violence due to compounding variables present in the night time economy (Burnett, 2011; Tomsen, 1997).

One aspect of the night time economy that has only recently attracted attention is the concept of ‘pre-loading,’ defined as the consumption of alcohol at a domestic residence before heading out to bars and clubs (Foster & Ferguson, 2014). Barton and Husk (2012) discovered in a study they conducted that people who drank at home, ‘pre-loaders,’ before heading out were two and a half times more likely to have been involved in violence than those who did not. It was found that most offences occurred between 12am and 7am outside pubs or clubs and in other ‘flash points’ such as fast food outlets and taxi ranks (Barton & Husk, 2012). Their study built upon previous findings from Hughes, Anderson, Morello and Belis (2007) which had similar results.

## **2.4 Taxi Drivers and the Night Time Economy**

The night time economy expands beyond the highly visible pub and clubs, encompassing the various forms of night work, criminal activity and the informal economy (Hadfield, 2009). A wide range of ancillary services has developed to cater to the needs of the crowded night-times streets (Hobbs et al., 2003), with the streets crammed with taxi drivers ‘speeding from fare to fare’ (Winlow, 2001). The night time economy is part of a wider cultural and social economy (Lovatt & O’Connor, 1995), against which a variety of subsidiary industries have emerged and facilitated its growth and resilience (Burnett, 2011). Unfortunately, the violent and anti-social behaviour associated with the night time economy is not contained to ‘urban leisure zones,’ but rather is manifested along dispersal routes (Hobbs et al., 2005b). There is a risk then for those operating in the service industries that cater to the night time economy. Burnett

(2011) explains that these industries are often staffed by a flexible workforce consisting largely of employees from minority ethnic communities who work for low wages. Evidence gained from research suggested these workers were at a considerable risk to racist violence (Burnett, 2011). The service industries that support the night time economy perform a vital function in its maintenance and growth, yet those who are employed within them are at risk of falling victim to the violence and anti-social behaviours that are frequent within the night time environment.

Transport performs a significant part in the development and maintenance of the night time economy and is equally impacted upon by the success or failure of night time activities (Cooper et al., 2010). The success of the taxi industry in this regard can be attributed to this. The importance of this service is demonstrated by the greater number of taxis that are said to operate at night compared to during the day (Hobbs et al., 2003). Cooper, Mundy, and Nelson (2010) state that taxi use peaks significantly at night due to a reduction in services by alternative forms of public transport. It is not surprising therefore those drivers prefer to operate at night where a greater number of fares are available, rather than scramble over fares during the day (Hobbs et al., 2003). However, with the comparatively low wages earned by taxi drivers, many accept fares that could put them at great risk in order to meet industry overhead costs (Burnett, 2011). The industry overhead costs referred to here are the fees that drivers pay to a taxi company for administration, marketing, and support costs (Le-Sage, 2000). In a Glasgow survey, 21% of taxi drivers indicated that passenger behaviour affected their decision to drive taxis, rising to 53% of all night time drivers (Cooper et al., 2010). This would imply that passenger behaviour can alter considerably between day and night.

The decision to use taxis at night can be attributed to people avoiding driving after consuming alcohol (Cooper et al., 2010). Statistics however demonstrate that a number

of people fail to make this decision. Figures released by the Ministry of Transport (2013) indicated that alcohol/drugs were a contributing factor in 77 fatal traffic crashes, 360 serious injury crashes and 970 minor injury crashes with a total social cost of about \$685 million in 2011. Additionally, crash statistics for drug and alcohol related crashes revealed that 61% occurred between 10pm and 6am with 77% of these crashes being on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights; coincidentally when most attacks on taxi drivers occur (New Zealand Transport Agency, 2010). Promoting the use of taxi cabs as a method of travel could go a long way to reducing crash statistics for those under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

## **2.5 Crimes against Taxi Drivers**

White collar workers in the course of their occupation have minimal contact with members of the public and show very low incidence rates of verbal abuse and assault, whilst across the industrialised world taxi drivers experience some of the highest levels of these confrontations (Mayhew & Chappell, 2005). Gilbert (2011) points out that the scarcity of research in this area has meant that the reasons behind this violence are not fully understood, hampering efforts that attempt to address the problem.

Research in the United States has shown that taxi drivers were 60 times more likely to be murdered whilst working than the average employee and were also the most likely occupation to be violently victimised behind only the police and security guards (Hamill & Gambetta, 2006). The United States Bureau of Labour Statistics has estimated that taxi drivers are between 9 and 36 times more likely to die from workplace violence than the average worker in America with taxi drivers experiencing the highest rates of homicide over any other occupation, beyond even police officers and security guards (Gilbert, 2011). A similar study conducted in Canada discovered that victimisation rates amongst drivers was 21 times higher than the average Canadian worker and was

estimated to be four to five times higher than police officers (Facey, 2003). In addition to violent assaults, a Canadian study by Stenning (1996) found that from 125 participants, 61% had experienced 'fare evasion' twice or more during the 12 months prior to the survey, whilst 85% of drivers had experienced some form of victimisation other than 'fare evasion' in the same period of time. In New Zealand between January 2000 and February 2010 there were 677 recorded cases of assault against taxi drivers with crimes against them resulting in an estimated annual social cost of \$2.87 million (New Zealand Transport Agency, 2010).

Research has revealed that many taxi drivers who have experienced victimisation refused to report these incidents to police (Denscombe, Dingwall & Hillier, 2009; Stenning, 1996), indicating that overall victimisation may be much higher than revealed by official statistics. Failure to report victimisation was attributed by Stenning (1996) to three reasons. First, victims do not consider the case to be serious enough to report. Second, drivers feel the police would not be able to do anything useful and, finally, there are concerns that the length of time required to co-operate with police will result in lost business for the driver. It was also noted that a reluctance to report victimisation implies that drivers accept this as part of the job (Stenning, 1996). Further research has been identified as being necessary on this particular issue as it would present a significant contribution towards workplace health and safety and public safety within the night time economy (Denscombe et al., 2009).

In addition to a reluctance to report crimes, Stenning (1996) identified that over half of respondents in his survey felt the taxi company for whom they operated did not take seriously the risk of being victimised whilst working. This continues the trend seen in many workplaces with many employers refusing to recognise there is a problem with

crime in their workplace, and as a result will not respond until a tragic event has occurred (Heath, 2009).

The unique environment in which the taxi driver operates is believed to be a mitigating factor in their risk of being victimised. It is a workplace where drivers are in an exposed position once they have accepted a passenger, placing them in a potentially dangerous situation with few witnesses or helping hands available to them (Gambetta & Hamill, 2005). In addition, drivers operate in a small, confined space with strangers whom they often have their back to meaning that it is almost impossible to defend themselves if attacked (Facey, 2010). A study found that of the 280 homicides of taxi drivers in the United States and Canada between 1980 and 1994, 75% had been attacked inside their vehicle (Rathbone as cited by Gambetta & Hamill, 2005). Over other occupations, taxi drivers increase their risk to victimisation through such factors as: working alone and at night, having strangers as customers, younger male passengers, and hail pickups from the street (Facey, 2010; Mayhew, 2000b; Stenning, 1996). The worst types of passengers are described by Cruise (as cited in Mayhew, 2000b) as “the ones who have had three or four beers and think they can take on the whole world” (p.5). Research has suggested that there are difficulties also in dealing with customers, who want to smoke, drink or use drugs inside the vehicle, which often leads to hostility with the potential to escalate to physical violence (Gilbert, 2011).

The literature has indicated that taxi drivers meet an incredibly large number of new people each year, ranging from such types of passenger as “the aggressive drunk, the calculating robber, the deliberate fare evader and the racist thug” (Denscombe et al., 2009, p. 302). With a high turnover of unfamiliar faces, drivers are often unbeknownst to the intentions of their passengers. While police officers frequently deal with the types of people mentioned above, unlike them taxi drivers are not trained to defend

themselves, receive backup quickly, or are in a position where they are ready to face danger (Hamill & Gambetta, 2006).

Ethnic minorities make up a significant proportion of employees that operate the ancillary services associated with the night time economy, with minority migrant populations highly represented amongst taxi drivers (Burnett, 2011; Facey, 2003; Mayhew, 2000b; Nielson, 2009; Stenning, 1996). No New Zealand statistics regarding the ethnic composition of the taxi industry are available. However, statistics from Toronto, where it is estimated that around 80% of taxi operators are of a visible minority (Facey, 2003) give an indication on how minorities are often over-represented amongst the taxi industry. The reason for this is attributed by Burnett (2011) to low start-up costs that have attracted large numbers from migrant communities. Visible minorities have historically been marginalised in the workforce, holding jobs that are usually characterised by poor working conditions, low status and meagre earnings (Facey, 2003). An example of this marginalisation is in Melbourne, where taxi companies are dedicating a considerable effort to recruit international students to work on what is being described as an increasingly dangerous night shift (Nielson, 2009). The decision to become a taxi driver is often the last resort for many, as all other attempts to gain employment have been exhausted (Facey, 2003). Incidences of racism are often downplayed by drivers who feel that an inability to affect change towards this abuse has brought about a feeling of powerlessness and lack of control (Facey, 2003). It is worth noting however that Stenning (1996) discovered no variation in victimisation rates between both ethnicity and language.

The taxi industry operates with a flexible labour force which based on customer demand can be hired or fired at will (Burnett, 2011). A lack of job security combined with a 'racialised' status and absence of an organised form of employee representation has

created an environment of powerlessness for taxi drivers (Facey, 2010). In an industry where low wages are the norm, drivers often accept fares that could potentially put them at great risk in order to meet industry overheads (Burnett, 2011). Economic pressure can force drivers into accepting risky fares. It is believed that economic uncertainty influenced risk taking behaviours amongst taxi operators (Facey, 2003). Stenning (1996) found similar results with economic pressures forcing some drivers to operate in high risk areas at undesirable times. The need to earn a living wage and cover business costs can be seen as a major factor influencing taxi drivers' decisions to take risks.

## **2.6 Risk Management**

The risk taxi drivers face in operating in confined spaces, alone with strangers has been demonstrated by the literature. It is essential then to establish their methods of risk management used, and investigate the means by which taxi drivers identify potential hazards and how they go about avoiding these. It was found that there has been little research regarding this issue from a New Zealand perspective and in fact little is known about how taxi drivers care for their health and safety (Burgel, Gillen, & White, 2012).

A study by Gambetta and Hamill (2005) investigated the 'trust game' between driver and passenger with the driver responsible for identifying whether the passenger is trustworthy, will pay the fare and not harm the driver. Their findings suggested that experience and street wisdom were determining factors in drivers avoiding harm, however to drive a taxi they must trust that the majority of people mean them no harm; constant worrying about risk can make the job unprofitable (Gambetta & Hamill, 2005). Stenning (1996) identified that risk management was a combination of personal characteristics and business practices. He recognised that personal appearance, common sense and trusting instincts along with carrying a limited amount of cash, asking for payment up front, refusing vague destinations and avoiding dimly lit streets were means

by which drivers could reduce the risk of victimisation (Stenning, 1996). Maintaining a clean, tidy and reliable taxi along with the wearing of a uniform was put forward as other means by which drivers can manage risk (Mayhew, 2000b)

Identifying passenger attributes that increase the likelihood of victimisation and avoiding carrying these passengers is one way in which risk can be minimised. According to Gambetta and Hamill (2005) and Mayhew (2000b) these factors include: male, youth, evening or night pickups, multiple passengers, hailed from the street, inner-city pickups, strangers, and aggressive behaviour. Recognising the factors mentioned here are a combination of street wisdom and experience. It is pointed out however that these signs are examples of risk factors and it is up to the driver to assess each individual based on a cluster of these factors combined with common sense (Gambetta & Hamill, 2005).

In Ontario, Canada it is now mandatory for cabs to have security cameras and panic buttons to aid driver safety (Facey, 2010). Similar legislation has recently been passed in New Zealand under the Land Transport Rule: Operator Licensing Amendment no.2 (2010); this mandates that all taxi cabs must be fitted with a camera and communications system monitored from a fixed location. The introduction of cameras is becoming increasingly common across the industrialized world with findings revealing that their use prevents unruly behaviour (Mayhew, 2000a). A nationwide study in the United States, conducted by Menéndez, Amandus, Damadi, Wu, Konda, & Hendricks (2013) found that the introduction of cameras inside taxi cabs reduced the homicide rate by a factor of seven over cities that had neither cameras nor partitions as a mandatory requirement. Additional research has shown a 60% reduction in assaults following the introduction of cameras in vehicles (Pflaum as cited by Mayhew, 2000a).

Another physical means of protection used overseas is the installation of screens behind drivers. Mayhew (2000b) found that injury patterns across drivers from the United States and Australia were consistent with attacks from the rear. Installing screens behind drivers has been linked to a 70% decrease in assaults in Boston, a 56% decrease in Baltimore and a 70% reduction in robberies in New York (Mayhew, 2000a). It would seem that this method has had a significant impact and provides a potential solution to this issue. However it is thought these screens can restrict airflow, limit communication between the two parties and they do not stop assaults from people seated in the front seat (Mayhew, 2000b). In Belfast, to protect themselves drivers carry very little cash, turn up the heat inside the vehicle to induce drowsiness in drunken passengers, and even mask their religious affiliation; whilst drivers in New York use special radio codes to alert their base if they are in trouble (Hamill & Gambetta, 2006).

Under New Zealand law, taxi drivers are required to have appropriate area knowledge for the areas in which they want to operate and be able to communicate effectively in English, demonstrated by the holding of area knowledge certificates (Brady, 2005). Substantial area knowledge is an aspect of comprehensive training. Sufficient training can contribute to a decreased risk of victimisation and should include how to use their equipment, communication and interpersonal skills, operational procedures and police liaison and protocol (Mayhew, 2000a). It is believed that passenger aggression can be alleviated through initial greeting, maintaining eye contact, avoidance of arguments and ensuring sufficient route knowledge (Barton as cited by Mayhew, 2000a). Stenning (1996) warns however that prevention of victimisation through current training measures does little to minimise risk, as much of this victimisation lies outside the capacity of taxi drivers to circumvent. He stresses that more collective involvement from the taxi industry along with the police is needed to understand ways in which the risk taxi drivers face can be minimised (Stenning, 1996).

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The night time economy was a term coined to describe the proliferation of night time entertainment venues within inner city areas. The growth of these destinations has come as result of the encouragement for private investment by local councils alongside the liberalisation of liquor licensing laws. Subsidiary night time industries have flourished due to these entertainment precincts, yet research has indicated that people employed within these face an increased risk of victimisation. This research was a unique opportunity to explore the impact that operating within the night time economy has on taxi drivers. It was immediately apparent that there is a considerable gap in the literature from a New Zealand perspective. Studies from overseas have shown that taxi drivers suffer disproportionately over other occupations to crimes such as murder, assault, and theft. Added to this, the literature suggested that taxi drivers suffer from a high amount of work related stress in a large part due to economic insecurity. There is a clear need then to establish whether overseas findings are relevant in a New Zealand context.

# **Methodology**

## **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter sets out to relate the chosen methodology and methods to the research question of taxi drivers and their involvement in the Night Time Economy. Firstly in section 3.1, the philosophy of grounded theory research methodology will be discussed alongside a consideration of the methodological purpose of this study in section 3.2. The research method employed will be addressed in sections 3.3 and 3.4, outlining the reasons for its selection and enable the reader to assess the reliability of the results along with a solid outline for replication. In addition to this, ethics and design are specifically included in sections 3.5 and 3.6 respectively. Finally in section 3.7 there will be a discussion on the research limitations and challenges faced along with a conclusion.

## **3.1 The Philosophy of Grounded Theory**

This research was conducted based around the methodology of grounded theory, in particular that which was outlined by Glaser (1978), the purpose of which is to generate theory from data gathered during social research. This method provides a path to the development of theory that is tightly integrated with a methodology of social research (Glaser, 1978). In this vein then the development of theory and the conducting of social research are fundamentally tied together. The generation of this theory is dependent on a core category around which other categories are related with the aim of grounded theory being to understand a group's pattern of behaviour. Glaser formed a distinctly different approach to grounded theory from his former collaborator, Anselm Strauss, rejecting the emphases on predetermined processes and substantiation as undermining the method, which Glaser had based on the emergence of concepts and the construction of theory (Charmaz & Bryant, 2008). When placing grounded theory in a philosophical perspective, Annells (1996) argues that Glaser's presentation of the generation of

grounded theory as being in a 'sequential relation' to 'verificational' research that strives toward the building of scientific facts as indicative of a postpositivist methodological view. In addition to this, it is pointed out that Glaser's drive to achieve objectivity, neutrality and reproducibility in conducting grounded theory, hint in fact towards a positivist approach in his methodology (Hallberg, 2006). There is another suggestion that Glaser and Strauss took their own post-positivist ideas of rigorous research and attempted to modify the usual standards of positivist research to fit within this (Denzin and Lincoln as cited in Hallberg, 2006). However, it is worth noting that Glaser (2005) refused to place grounded theory within any ontological or epistemological framework:

The quest for an ontology and epistemology for justifying grounded theory is not necessary. Whether grounded theory takes on the mantle for the moment of pre-positivist, positivist, post-positivist, postmodernism, naturalism, realism, etc., will be dependent on its application to the type of data in a specific research (p. 145).

This serves to demonstrate the flexibility of grounded theory; it is not strictly identified with any ontology or epistemology, rather it varies depending on the nature of the research.

### **3.2 Methodological Purpose**

This research involved an investigation into the issues that affect taxi drivers as a result of their involvement in the night time economy and how they work to protect themselves. Grounded theory was selected as the methodology as it allows data to be analysed before a hypothesis is constructed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As little data currently exists, the researcher set out to explore the issues these individuals face and uncover behaviours they have adopted in order to keep themselves safe. Glaser (1998) states that grounded theory is a method well-suited to discover a problem that affects participants which then works towards generating a theory to account for how they

process this problem. In exploring an issue about which little is known, grounded theory provides a method for understanding this.

### **3.3 The Research Method**

The use of grounded theory ultimately influenced the choice of method being employed in this study. Grounded theory is a method that comprises all steps, from data collection through to the finished writing (Glaser, 1978). Under this method, it is prescribed that a theory is systematically discovered from social research data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The theory is therefore originated inductively by studying the data and finding theoretical explanations for it instead of entering the study with a predetermined theory (Gomm, 2009). Glaser and Strauss (1967) explain that theory generated this way, being ‘grounded in data,’ cannot usually be refuted by more data or replaced by another theory.

A feature of grounded theory is the use of ‘comparative analysis’ which recognises that theory is an ever changing and developing entity and not a perfected product (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In this sense then theory is constantly evolving throughout the research process, adapting to new findings from new data. Termed specifically as the ‘constant comparative method,’ a researcher’s analysis of the data is constantly refined and developed by testing against new data (Gomm, 2009). Evans (2013) describes the constant comparative process as follows:

The constant comparative process involves three types of comparisons: (1) incident to incident for the emergence of concepts, (2) concepts to more incidents for further theoretical elaboration, saturation, and densification of concepts, and (3) concepts to concepts for their emergent theoretical integration and through theoretical coding (p.40).

Under this method, data is continuously compared against other data as the research progresses. From the raw data at the start of data collection codes are elicited through constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1978). The code is said by Glaser (1978) to

conceptualise an underlying pattern of empirical indicators within data and aid the generation of theory through the development of hypothetical relationships between codes.

There are two types of coding used in the grounded theory method: substantive and theoretical. “Substantive codes conceptualize the empirical substance of the area of research...[whilst] theoretical codes conceptualize how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into the theory (Glaser, 1978, p.55). Substantive coding thus occurs first followed by theoretical coding. In substantive coding the data is worked with directly, being fractured and analysed, firstly through open coding and then through selective coding (Evans, 2013). Open coding provides codes that are provisional with the aim of verifying that each code fits; the codes are eventually saturated and placed in relevance amongst other codes (Glaser, 1978). During the open coding process a core variable will emerge though its pervasiveness throughout the data. Identification of this core variable is said to be central in integrating other categories into a conceptual framework with this core category determining and delimiting the theoretical framework (Hallberg, 2006).

Following the identification of this core variable, the researcher moves on to selective coding. In this phase, coding is limited to those variables which relate to the core variable in a sufficiently significant way to be used in a tentative theory; it becomes a guide for further data collection and theoretical sampling (Glaser, 1978). Theoretical sampling refers to the process of gathering data where the collection of codes and analysis of the data occurs together and guides the decision on what data to collect next (Glaser, 1978). Selective coding is thus a gestation of the results of theoretical sampling.

Following this Glaser recommends the use of theoretical coding. Theoretical coding conceptualises “how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into theory” (Glaser, 1978, p.72). They are said to ‘weave’ a fractured story together and are empty abstractions without substantive codes (Glaser, 1978). Theoretical codes thus provide a means of bringing together the data, forming a complete abstraction, albeit must remain grounded in the data.

### **3.4 Reliability of the Methodology**

In conducting grounded theory, the use of the constant comparative method is said to be a strong force in assuring the credibility of the research. Constant verification is achieved through the modifications encouraged by constant comparison with grounded theory being the discovery of what is there and what emerges, nothing is invented (Glaser, 1998). Working within the data provides an assurance of reliability. The joining of standardised procedures with instructions for using the data methodically (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) as a feature of the constant comparative method, assists in this assurance. On top of this, the requirement for the researcher to keep track of their ideas is said to increase the probability that any theory will be tightly integrated and clear due to the need to make theoretical sense of each comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The very nature therefore of the constant comparative method in ensuring that the data is well integrated into the theory aids in achieving a reliable outcome. The necessity for rigour in the process of analysis helps this. Glaser (1998) points out that so long as the researcher has been sufficiently rigorous and adheres to the four criteria of fit, workability, modifiability, and relevance the product should legitimise itself. These four criteria referred to here are essential in gauging the success of grounded theory in its final product. Success can be judged on its relevance to the participants concerned, in how the concepts work to explain behaviour, how concepts fit the data and whether they can be modified as new data emerges (Glaser, 1998).

### **3.5 Ethics**

Ethics approval was granted by the AUT University Ethics committee (13/265, see Appendix A). Due to the involvement of research participants, there was a focus on the ethical issues regarding the identities and roles of prospective participants. In particular, this research was guided by the ethical principles outlined by Dane (1990).

The first principle addressed by Dane (1990) is voluntary participation. In research it is ideal that all involved are willing participants. In particular voluntary participation refers to “the participants’ rights to freely choose to subject themselves to the scrutiny inherent in research” (Dane, 1990, p.39). There are two elements to this principle, coercion and awareness. Coercion refers to the participants right to ‘freely choose’ to participate, free of threats or incentives. In other words, coercion is a limiting of a prospective participants ability to make a rational decision (Dane, 1990). Participants involved in this study received no inducement to participate aside from the knowledge that they would be contributing their story and discussing a topic that is of great personal interest to them, perhaps even working toward affecting change in their industry. The second aspect of voluntary participation is awareness. This refers to prospective participants being aware that they are participating in research and knowing the final output of this. All participants were informed by the researcher that they were participating in research that was working towards the completion of a master’s thesis. They were also informed that they had the right to withdraw at any point, without reason, prior to the writing up of the findings. This information, both addressing the nature of the study and their right to withdraw was provided to participants in an advertisement placed at the Auckland Co-op Taxi’s head office (Appendix B) and in an information sheet (Appendix C) provided to participants prior to the interview.

Closely tied to the principle of voluntary participation is informed consent. This involved providing any potential participant with the information necessary to aid in their decision to participate in the study (Dane, 1990). As already mentioned, participants were provided with an information sheet prior to the commencement of the interview after which it was requested that they sign a consent form (Appendix D). This indicated that they had understood all that was outlined in the information sheet regarding the purpose of the research and their rights as a research participant. Significant time was provided for them to review this. This included an acknowledgment that they would be asked questions about criminal activities against themselves that could potentially elicit psychological harm. Providing protection from psychological harm was another principle outlined by Dane (1990). He stipulated that a researcher had an obligation to protect participants from psychological harm by informing them of any potential psychological impacts that could arise during the research. As mentioned above, participants were informed that some questions could evoke memories of a traumatic experience and they were told they had a right to refuse to answer any questions they felt uncomfortable asking. The researcher also provided in Appendix C information on how to contact an AUT University councillor should they require any assistance in dealing with psychological trauma evoked during the research process.

Anonymity of participants is another ethical principle adhered to during the research process. As outlined by Dane (1990) “anonymity exists when no one, including the researcher can relate a participants identity to any information pertaining to the project” (p.51). Codes were employed by the researcher in the form of numbers to maximise anonymity. These codes were used when participants were referenced within the text of this research. However when a participant requested to be provided with the findings at the end of the study it was necessary to take their contact information to enable

distribution of findings to them. This information was kept locked securely on AUT University premises. In association with the principle of anonymity is the ethical principle of confidentiality. Whilst confidentiality is a similar premise to anonymity, it specifically refers to participants' identities being known only to the researcher, along with a promise not to reveal this information to any other party. All information pertaining to the identity of participants was kept securely and all information will be destroyed after six years as per AUTEK guidelines.

### **3.6 Design of the Research**

The aim of grounded theory is to generate theory that can account for a pattern of behaviour relevant to those involved (Glaser, 1978). Every informant provides their own unique perspective with the aim of the researcher being to raise this perspective to an abstract level of conceptualisation and envisage patterns in the participants' words from a new perspective (Hallberg, 2006). A qualitative method of interviews is therefore necessary to gather these perspectives. Under the direction by Glaser (1978) that 'all is data,' the researcher also utilised their knowledge of other data sources such as books, journals and media reports as a part of the constant comparative method.

To identify possible research participants, initial contact was made with the New Zealand Taxi Federation. This organisation describes themselves on their website as "an incorporated society whose primary objective is the promotion of quality management and service in the passenger service industry throughout New Zealand" (New Zealand Taxi Federation, 2014). With their assistance contact was made with Auckland Co-op Taxis.

There was an active choice to begin the interview process through this company based on the high standards drivers must adhere to. This is a process known as selective sampling, when a population and setting is identified prior to data collection (Draucker,

Martsof, Ross, & Rusk, 2007). The stages of sampling when conducting grounded theory research are described as sequential, whereby the researcher begins with selective sampling, switching to theoretical sampling after concepts begin to emerge (Draucker et al., 2007). During the data collection phase it was decided to maintain the focus on Auckland co-op taxis as there was an interest in investigating the problems taxi drivers face, and this was easier to conceptualise when similar standards were maintained across the research sample. This decision adheres to Glaser's (1978) concept of theoretical sampling as "the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges" (p. 36). The decision to maintain focus on drivers from one company was guided by emerging concepts and ease of interpretation of results.

Through the head office of this company, an advertisement (Appendix B) was distributed to drivers informing them of the research and inviting them to participate in an interview. Unfortunately there was a limited response from this with only two drivers coming forward to be interviewed. Due to this unforeseen circumstance, drivers from Auckland Co-Op were approached during the day around Auckland CBD and interviewed on the spot, if they accepted the offer to be involved.

The sample size itself was not clearly defined at the beginning of the research. Interviews were continued to be carried out until data saturation was established. This is when no new findings emerge and a repetition of outcomes occurs, at which point it is advised that the researcher exit the field (Carey, 2013). In this research 9 participants were interviewed. Participants were limited to taxi drivers who had been operating for more than two years and had at some point operated at night. It was felt after these 9 interviews that data saturation had occurred as no new findings were emerging.

Data was gathered by the means of face to face tape recorded interviews which varied in length depending on the availability of the driver, an issue which will be developed further in section 6.7. For ease of analysis, all interviews were transcribed. Glaser (1998) discourages the taping and transcription of interviews as it slows down the grounded theory tempo and provides too much unnecessary data. However the researcher decided that taping and transcribing would greatly benefit the data analysis process as sometimes multiple interviews were conducted on the same day, making it difficult to accurately construct the field notes recommended by Glaser.

The first two interviews were structured, in depth interviews that set out to explore the nature of taxi driving and identify particular issues relevant to operating taxis at night in Auckland. The results of these interviews then helped frame the questions used in the more semi-structured interviews used further on during the research process. These interviews began with open ended questions such as “What do you enjoy most about driving taxis?” and the antithetical question “What do you enjoy the least about driving taxis?” The purpose of these open ended questions was to avoid researcher bias and pre-conceived ideas that could ultimately influence the direction of the interview. Further questions evolved from the responses to these initial responses.

### **3.7 Research Challenges**

In conducting this research, there were a number of challenges faced by the researcher during the data collection phase. The limited response to the advertisement placed with Auckland Co-op taxis meant it was necessary to recruit participants on the streets around the Auckland CBD. While initial approaches set out to arrange times in which more in-depth interviews could take place, cancellations and a general unwillingness to dedicate the time required frustrated these attempts. This was understandable as during the research it was discovered that in general taxi drivers work rather long shifts. The

decision was therefore made to conduct the interviews in participants' vehicles while they were in between fares. Unfortunately this limited the time available for interviews and forced a more direct questioning approach than would have been desired. Nevertheless the researcher was satisfied with the data saturation and quality. It would be beneficial however in future research, should the time be available, to interview participants in a more in-depth manner.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter the chosen method of grounded theory has been established and outlined along with how this method was applied. With this research being an exploratory study, grounded theory was the ideal choice of method in that theory evolves from the research data. Glaserian grounded theory emphasises the emergence of concepts and construction of theory over the preconceived procedures and verification that is promoted by his former collaborator, Anselm Strauss. Based on the use of this method, semi-structured interviews were identified as an ideal tool in which data can be gathered, relevant to the needs of this study. While there were issues surrounding the recruitment of research participants, it was clear that there was a definite wealth of information given time and patience. Finally, the researcher was also reminded of the need to be ethically sound when conducting the research, particularly as it involved research participants. Over the following chapters the results will be presented.

## **A Presentation of the Findings**

The research took place in and around the Auckland Central Business District between December 2013 and April 2014. Only taxi drivers who had two or more years' experience driving taxis were interviewed to ensure a richness of data and detailed perception of the role taxi drivers' play within the night time economy.

Presented across the next three chapters are the findings from these interviews with the purpose of illustrating the issues taxi drivers face as a result of their occupation and how these relate to the night time economy. Firstly in chapter 4, the dynamic work environment in which taxi drivers operate will be revealed, highlighting the aspects of driving taxis that attract many drivers to the job as well as uncovering the issues that they face. Following on from this in chapter 5, driver's personal encounters with crime and what it is like to operate in the Night Time Economy in Auckland will be demonstrated. Included also is an account of the relationship taxi drivers have with the police. Finally in chapter 6 the methods of risk management drivers employ to protect themselves are explored along with an investigation into the current safety measures that are required by legislation.

## **A Dynamic Work Environment**

### **4.0 Introduction**

Taxi drivers operate in a unique work environment, alone in close proximity to passengers, transporting them to and from various destinations. The literature suggests that it was these dynamic conditions that increase taxi drivers risk to victimisation (Facey, 2010; Gambetta & Hamill, 2005; Mayhew, 2000b; Stenning, 1996). In this chapter drivers' perceptions of this workplace will be revealed. In section 4.1 drivers' interactions with strangers will be investigated along with the knowledge of the Auckland region and how this helps them perform their job. Following this in section 4.2 drivers' experiences of stress will be examined, identifying causality and linking this to the dynamic environment in which taxi drivers operate. Finally in section 4.3 the reasons behind why taxi drivers work long hours will be addressed.

### **4.1 Strangers and Area Knowledge**

Taxi drivers operate in an ever-changing environment, unsure of who they will be transporting next or to where. Having regular encounters with a large variety of strangers in a personal setting, separates the role of taxi drivers from many other occupations. Alongside this, each of these individuals will have a destination specific to their travel requirements. Operating in unfamiliar environments with strangers however has the potential for increasing the risk of workplace victimisation above other occupations, something which is perhaps exacerbated by operating in these conditions at night. Be that as it may, such fluidity of people and place demonstrates the dynamic nature of taxi driving.

My job is more dynamic, I could be at Sky City, I could be at the airport, I could be on the road somewhere; I am meeting all sorts of people all the time (Participant 2).

Many drivers specify that the interactions they have with travellers are an aspect of their job which appeals to them most. Unlike occupations like retail for example, that also have a large number of interactions with strangers, taxi drivers are confined with these strangers on a personal level for an often longer period of time. This difference is what some drivers believe helped them choose taxi driving over other professions.

“You are more in contact with people as compared to programming. Most of the time you are talking to a new person who is entirely new, not many jobs can give you that opportunity. So the taxis gave me that, I like that” (Participant 1).

This variety which differentiates taxi driving from other occupations was a common factor encountered in what drivers explained made the job enjoyable.

I like the job; you get to meet many interesting people (Participant 5).

I enjoy getting more knowledge by talking and communicating, getting those skills better and meeting lots of different people (Participant 7).

You get to meet a lot of interesting people you know, different people (Participant 8).

With such regular contact with people unfamiliar to the driver, a wide variety of characters are encountered in the course of a day. These individuals can vary greatly, some want to travel in silence while others share their life stories. There are people who are willing to share their joy whilst others take out their feelings of anger or sorrow on those who are transporting them from one place to another.

We hear lots of stories. Some people, they share their sorrows and their happiness. Mostly I have noticed people who are happy, they try to make us happy and people who are frustrated, they want to rub their frustrations out on us. If they are happy they share with us and everything and if they are frustrated they throw it out (Participant 4)

Frequent encounters with strangers distinguish the role of the taxi driver. It was revealed that on an average day, most drivers would transport between 10 and 20 passengers to any number of different destinations. This could mean that on an average week, based on the 6 day working week most drivers indicated they worked, they would have anywhere up to 120 new encounters with potentially over the course of a year

more than 6,000 different people. It is likely then that during the course of a year there are going to be several encounters with people who want to ‘rub their frustrations out’ on the driver.

Whilst the nature of the taxi industry means that drivers are likely to meet many strangers, it is worth noting that many of these journeys are over short distances, meaning the driver spends very little time with the passenger.

The relationship between me and the customer is 5 to 10 minutes (Participant 4).

The average passenger in the taxi is only in there for 10 to 15 minutes, unless they are going to the airport (Participant 2).

These short journeys are characteristic of the personalised method of transport that taxis offer. However in spending such a short period of time with a stranger, the drivers have very little time in establishing whether their passenger has any malicious intentions.

It is hard to know if your passenger is good or bad, you just have to trust that they are good and will pay the fare at the end of the journey (Participant 5).

It won’t usually show itself until you see the person have to pay the fare, that is when the dispute turns up and unless they want to, it can get a little bit ugly (Participant 2).

Drivers must therefore be adept at spotting danger signs early, which will be discussed further in section 6.1. In operating in close proximity with a large volume of strangers on a regular basis, it is not surprising to find that not all of these people mean well. However, while it has been seen that some passengers can choose to expel their frustrations on the driver, most just want to enjoy their time in the taxi.

The majority of people, they just want to go from A to B nothing else, and enjoy the time while they are in the taxi (Participant 1).

Existing as a form of personalised travel in catering to the different transport needs of a variety of people, drivers are often unaware where their next fare may take them. This distinguishes the nature of taxi driving from public transport, which relies on pre-determined routes and destinations, taxis can travel to any number of destinations along

many different routes. With the potential to end up anywhere within their region of operation, a sound area knowledge is vital to their ability to provide a fast, efficient and punctual service.

To understand the work of a taxi, you have to understand what he does. You pick up a passenger, until they tell you where they want to go; you've really got no idea where you'll end up. Now by saying that, I could start at the airport and end up in the Whangaparoa Peninsula. I could equally end up in Manurewa. So you've really got no idea where you're going to next (Participant 2).

We have to do area knowledge training before we can become a taxi driver so this makes sure we know where we are going. We need this under Land Transport regulations (Participant 5).

For all of the drivers interviewed, operating in unfamiliar environments did not appear to be a major concern. This is perhaps due to the entry requirements that are necessary to obtain a taxi license. However the dangers of moving out of the central city and into the suburbs are pointed out by one driver.

If you feel threatened don't go out of the city, stop before the city limits. Once you are outside of the city people can't come for help as easily (Participant 1).

Based on this statement the dangers of operating alone in unfamiliar environments appear to be based around a lack of witnesses and assistance should anything occur. While there are dangers inherent with operating in these unfamiliar environs, of the taxi drivers interviewed it was felt that the entry requirements to obtaining a taxi license ensured they had sufficient area knowledge.

The nature of taxi driving, operating with strangers in unfamiliar environments, has been demonstrated here. Although most passengers just want to travel to their destination, the driver must be alert to any dangers these passengers travelling in close proximity present. Working with these 'interesting' people is what attracts many to the job and demonstrates the unique nature of taxi driving over most other occupations. As a form of personalised transport as well, drivers must have extensive area knowledge in order to provide an efficient service. Familiarity with an area, whilst not a major issue

encountered, also aids drivers in assessing their risk to danger and the ability to receive help should it be required. Strangers and area knowledge are therefore two aspects that demonstrate the dynamic nature of the taxi industry and relate to the issues that drivers face in the course of their occupation.

## **4.2 Stress**

The nature of the taxi industry has been shown to be dynamic and varied based on the people encountered and the destinations travelled to. Whilst this has been shown to be an aspect of the job that attracts many, it is this dynamism that appears to be a major cause of stress for a number of drivers. The reasons behind this stress vary, but one cause readily identified related to the previously discussed topic of area knowledge. Having sufficient knowledge of Auckland city, or any city rather in which taxi drivers are operating, allows the driver to select the fastest and most economical route for their passenger.

It is a stressful job because every customer is different, sometimes I don't ask the customer which way they want to go, and every customer is different. Say I am coming from New Windsor, some people say take the motorway, other people say take Blockhouse Bay Road and then the motorway, other people say get on the motorway at St Lukes, so it's different and I do ask them (Participant 4).

There are many routes drivers can choose to take in getting to their destination and as demonstrated here passengers can often feel they know the best way to their destination. Unsurprisingly then disagreements over route selection seemed to be a common issue encountered during the research. One driver indicated that customers would sometimes feel that they were being extorted by drivers supposedly taking a longer route to get more money out of them.

Customers are sometimes not happy with the way I go, they think we try to rip them off; we try to keep them happy (Participant 5).

In addition to this, other drivers believed that unforeseen encounters along the route, such as road works or traffic lights could cause delays and passenger frustration, which would sometimes be turned on the driver themselves.

Sometimes people want to hurry and we can't do much because sometimes they are late and there is traffic or red lights and they are panicking, thing like that and they get a little bit frustrated at us and they take their frustrations out on us. We can't do much about it (Participant 9).

It can be seen in this that route selection can sometimes be a contentious issue between passenger and driver. From these disagreements some drivers experience stress. Whilst these disagreements occur however, it was stressed to the interviewer that passenger satisfaction was a high priority for most drivers with many indicating their ultimate concern was keeping their clients happy.

We always try to keep the customers happy, and if they are wanting to go from here to say, Sky City, there are many routes and we always try to go by the cheapest routes. But sometimes people want to go by a different route (Participant 6).

There are arguments...so 98% of the time I try to avoid the arguments, after 10 minutes they are gone and there ends the relationship, so I don't argue (Participant 4)

Arguments over drivers' route selection represent one reason behind drivers' experiences of stress resulting from their occupation. This cause of stress represents yet another issue taxi drivers' face as a consequence of their operating within a dynamic work environment. It seems inevitable that these disagreements over the drivers' choice of route will arise when operating in a city as large and often times congested as Auckland. However we are reminded that for the drivers interviewed, their foremost concern is for passenger satisfaction.

Route selection was identified as just one of a number of causes of stress that drivers indicated as being inherent to their role as a taxi operator. Taxi driving is reliant upon passengers to provide drivers with their source of income. As self-employed owner-

operators, another significant cause of stress identified was related to having an unsecured source of income with drivers not aware of how much they will earn on a week to week basis.

It's my only job \*laughs\* I don't enjoy it honestly...long hours, it is up and down, not guarantee of the income, every day is just luck of the draw...you have your mortgage and bills and the due date is coming up and you still don't know if you are going to meet the requirements of payment or not (Participant 8).

[It is] very stressful. At the moment I have been waiting two hours [for a fare] and nothing (Participant 3).

Sometimes you wait a long time for a customer (Participant 6).

As a self-employed operator of a taxi, drivers rely on passengers to provide their income, and it is not surprising that they feel stressed when they are not receiving many fares. One reason put forth behind why there are long wait times between customers is due to the large number of taxis in operation.

At the moment with taxis there is too much competition so it is quiet a lot of the time. Sometimes I can wait two hours, sometimes one and a half hours (Participant 9).

The abundance of taxi cabs has come as a result of the deregulation of the taxi industry in 1989. A recent New Zealand Herald article revealed that the idea behind deregulation was to increase the supply of taxis with the intent of lowering fares, albeit unsuccessfully (Cumming, 2014). The article continued stating that amongst the taxi industry it is felt that too many taxis are operating in Auckland with many drivers struggling to get work (Cumming, 2014). These findings were reflected in this study with nearly all the drivers interviewed complaining of long wait times between fares. On top of these long wait times, one driver indicated that passengers are sometimes unwilling to pay the metered fare, often leading to arguments.

There are many cases [where they refuse to pay the metered fare]. Yesterday it happened from Sky City here. When we got there, (to the passengers destination), it was \$5.80, he gives me a taxi card and says take \$5. I didn't say anything, he gave me the card and I swiped it through the eftpos and he says 'oh \$5.80, I told you to take \$5 and you accepted it.' I told him that I didn't say

anything and he said “no you accepted it, you have to take \$5.’ It happens all the time (Participant 4).

Disagreements over the fare appear to be a common cause of arguments and reveal a flashpoint of where taxi drivers can face serious problems. As it is revealed here, these arguments can arise anywhere and can be completely unexpected.

It usually won't show itself until you get a dispute about the fare and that is when everything comes to the surface... It can happen in a normal suburban house, not necessarily just in Manurewa, South Auckland to use a generic term, Avondale, Blockhouse Bay, anywhere (Participant 2).

Disagreements over fares are yet another source of stress for drivers. These disputes can evolve quickly and be completely unexpected. With drivers reliant on fares to provide their income it is not surprising to find that arguments over how much their services are worth can be a significant source of stress. Yet whilst these concerns have been mentioned, a couple of drivers felt that the income they received from driving taxis was similar if not more than previous occupations and the level of stress was in fact lower.

I'm a computer programmer, so I used to do programming for about 5-6 years then I have moved my career to driving taxi's...it is less stress, flexible hours, and income what you get is pretty much just the same. You might get more income in programming but the stress level is quite high as well (Participant 1).

I used to be a pharmacist and I get more money now driving taxis, I feel it suits my lifestyle better (Participant 4).

Being self-employed means that taxi drivers are unsure of how much they will earn each week. Receiving enough fares to make a living and meet household expenses was seen to be a significant cause of stress amongst most drivers interviewed. Added to this, customers frequently argue over metered fares. Stress can therefore be seen to be a major issue taxi drivers' face and is in part a result of the dynamic environment in which they operate.

### 4.3 Work Hours

The dynamic nature of taxi driving has in part been demonstrated above. Taxi cabs are a service that operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and as a result there is always a need for taxi drivers to be on the road. Part of the reason for this demand for taxis is a result of a lack of public transport available to people.

New Zealand as such doesn't have a great public transport system as many other countries do and so transport is dependent on taxis (Participant 1).

Taxis compensate for this deficiency in public transport services and as already mentioned provide a personalised service to meet peoples transport needs. Being a service that operates along these lines and by being self-employed therefore means that as a result the hour's drivers operate can be incredibly flexible.

Oh it's flexible, very flexible (Participant 3).

It is our own business so we can choose when we want to work (Participant 6).

There are no fixed times that I have to work; I can decide when I like to work (Participant 9).

When asked what it was about driving taxis that they enjoyed, independence was amongst one of the most common responses. It appeared that drivers liked to think of themselves as 'entrepreneurs,' being essentially small businesses with no boss to dictate work hours. In addition they enjoyed being able to tailor their hours of work around their choice of lifestyle.

The hours are much more flexible, if I don't want to work I don't have to, it suits my lifestyle (Participant 4).

Although drivers felt free to decide their work schedule, the need to earn a living dictated the hours they worked, usually influenced by market demand. This demand is reflected in the times drivers started and finished, varying in accordance to when drivers felt they were likely to earn the most money.

I principally do daylight shifts, which means I am up around 5 o'clock in the morning and I work through till 5 or 6 o'clock at night...I work those hours Monday to Thursday, I start slightly later on a Friday to work into the Friday evening and then Saturday I can start early in the morning, work the full 14 hours or I can start at lunchtime and keep going through till midnight or something like that. It all depends on how I feel and what the market is like (Participant 2).

I work in the dayshift as well as the night shift, usually weekends night shift I work and weekdays in the day time...It is to do with the customers...I don't like to work the weeknights because there is a lack of customers (Participant 1).

Drivers therefore can be seen to make a decision based on when they feel they are likely to earn a greater income. This decision extends to whether they want to work at night in the weekend where the prospects of earning money are greater, but the risks also increase. 8 of the participants interviewed stated that Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights were the busiest, with the opportunity to earn more money. However as will be demonstrated in the following chapter, by operating at night, drivers place themselves at a greater risk of not being paid and also falling victim to more sinister criminal acts. The flexibility around when they decide to work therefore offers the option of whether or not they choose to accept the risk of operating at night.

It was noted during the interviews that taxi drivers work rather long hours. Every driver interviewed worked between 60 and 70 hours per week, with 70 hours being the maximum time they are allowed to legally work. Working these long shifts elicited a mixed result of emotions with some feeling they would work longer if they were legally able to and others stating that the hours are already quite long.

I work around 60-65 hours a week because my expenditures have gone up. I have got a house, a mortgage everything like that. We are legally allowed to work 70 hours so sometimes I do a full shift, it depends. I never used to do it like that, I used to come in and work 6-7 hours, but after buying the house I can't (Participant 4).

After you have done about 12 hours of this job, even though you are allowed to do 14, you could find that you are going into the primary stages of insanity (Participant 2).

I work 13 hours a day, 70 hours a week...those are the legal hours we are allowed to work otherwise I would be working more than that (Participant 8).

Two of the drivers mentioned above felt that even working 70 hours did not allow them to earn enough money each week. It was mentioned earlier that deregulation of the taxi industry has led to a surplus of taxis operating in Auckland. This has meant that drivers' earnings have fallen dramatically based on supply outweighing demand. Working long hours for little money is common theme for taxi drivers around the world and explains why some drivers stated they would work more than 70 hours a week if they were legally allowed to.

The long hours drivers work is a result of the travel demands of the public. It was suggested by drivers that their busiest times were the start and end of business hours and between Thursday and Saturday nights when the business of bars and clubs peaked. Drivers, in order to make a sufficient living, must therefore work when the market is at its busiest. This market demand is demonstrated by one interviewee.

Most of humanity that travel in my taxi move between 6am and 10am...then at about three you have got people going to the airport and returning from the airport and the city comes alive again until about 7 or 8 o'clock. So consequently if you are going to make money you do it early in the morning and then again later in the evening (Participant 2).

For a driver to earn their living from this occupation therefore they are somewhat obliged to operate at these times. However working these long hours presents its own issues. Many drivers reported being constantly tired when working, particularly after doing a night shift.

I am still tired, even if you have your 8 hours sleep you are still tired after Saturday night, it makes it harder to be on the road (Participant 8).

I don't work all night, for instance New Year's Eve. I finished work just after two on New Year's Day and it upset my circadian cycles, bio-rhythm, something like that and I couldn't go to work the following afternoon, which I was allowed to legally, but I thought no it's not worth the risk, I feel too jetlagged (Participant 2).

With an occupation that centres around operating on the road, it can be dangerous for these drivers to be working such long hours to earn their living. Several interviewees commented on the dangers of operating on the roads.

The biggest problem taxi drivers face is running on the streets every day, you know, driving on the road, if you hit somebody, that is the thing I think is a big problem for taxi drivers (Participant 8).

We are in a very risky job driving on the road and we need presence of mind and mental peace, if we are disturbed we might have an accident (Participant 4).

It can get hard driving on the road for a long period of time; it can be dangerous you know (Participant 5).

Anything can happen on the road, you have to be very careful because you can have an accident very easily (Participant 9).

None of the drivers interviewed said they had been involved in a traffic accident while working but their awareness of the issue demonstrated it as a risk they took seriously.

It has been witnessed that the dynamic business of taxi driving allows these self-employed operators of taxis to have flexible work hours which they can tailor to suit their lifestyle. However due to the need to make a living it was found that most drivers worked rather long hours. This was based on market demand and when drivers felt they would be most likely to make money. Added to this, the dangers of operating on the road are exacerbated by tired drivers who face the potential of road accidents on a regular basis.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has highlighted the dynamic environment in which taxi drivers operate and how this presents a number of issues that are unique to the occupation. The taxi vehicle is the drivers' workplace, and it is the drivers' responsibility to ensure that they have adequate knowledge of the area in which they operate. It was found that while drivers felt comfortable in their knowledge, passengers often felt disgruntled that the driver was taking longer routes in order to receive a higher fare. While the drivers in this study

assured the researcher that this was not the case, the point that disagreements can occur with strangers who are sitting in close proximity to drivers demonstrates an area where potential conflict may arise. Avoiding these conflicts was a point made clear by participants, who stated that their paramount concern was keeping the customer happy. Similarly, it was said that customers would frequently argue over the metered fare. With drivers reliant on these fares in order to earn a living, it was not surprising to find that these disagreements could cause a significant amount of stress for the driver.

Economic insecurity was a major theme across many of the interviews. The resulting stress was in part due to the dynamic nature of the job and linked to the idea that taxi drivers are effectively self-employed. Reliant solely on fares, taxi drivers reported incredibly long working weeks with some even indicating that they would work longer if they were legally able to do so. Ultimately it was this need to earn a living that influenced the times at which drivers chose to operate. The dynamic environment that characterises the workplace of taxi drivers has been shown to present a number of issues. While some drivers expressed a positive attitude towards being self-employed and working with a variety of different people on a daily basis, it was obvious that there were significant concerns related to the fluctuating nature of their business. It is believed that these issues are further exacerbated by working within the night time economy. The following chapter will explore taxi drivers' experiences within this arena.

# **The Night Time Economy**

## **5.0 Introduction**

The previous chapter highlighted the characteristics of taxi driving, demonstrating that taxi drivers operate in an ever changing work environment in close proximity to persons unknown to them and in areas in which they are unfamiliar. Whilst this presents a number of issues that are relevant across day and night, it is believed that at night these issues become more pronounced, especially with the involvement of alcohol. This chapter will reveal findings on taxi drivers' personal experiences within the night time economy in an attempt to answer the research questions are taxi drivers at greater risk of victimisation at night and are they deterred by these risks, should they exist? In section 5.1 drivers' perceptions of how the consumption of alcohol relates to drivers' work experiences within the night time economy will be explored. Following this, in section 5.2, drivers' first hand experiences of crime will be examined along with whether night time experiences have deterred taxi drivers from working. Finally in section 5.3, taxi drivers' perceptions of the police will be investigated to understand whether the police can be more actively involved in addressing the risk of victimisation that drivers face while operating within the night time economy.

## **5.1 Alcohol**

Taxis are believed to be a fundamental aspect of the night time economy. They provide for people's transport needs long after public transport has ceased. However, although they serve a vital function, it is felt that the unpredictability associated with alcohol consumption would increase the risks taxi drivers face at night. Be that as it may, taxis are a service that helps keep intoxicated people off the road.

People go somewhere to drink. Now if they are in an occupation where they cannot afford a conviction, then they take a taxi (Participant 2).

Keeping intoxicated people off New Zealand roads is an important aspect of taxis and public transport. One driver felt that even if public transport was available, the convenience of taxis made them a more appealing choice.

Even if the people are a little bit tipsy or drunk, they're not going to go catch a train or a bus, the taxi is the one they are going to catch most of the time (Participant 1).

While taxis are a service that is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, the weekend business of bars and clubs at night present the busiest times of the week.

It is ephemeral if you like, only on Friday and Saturday night are you going to pick up that group from pubs and clubs...I'm not aware of anybody who goes somewhere at 7 or 8 O'clock on a Saturday night to discuss politics or recite poetry. Whereas if they turn up somewhere at that time, there will usually be a strong element of alcohol consumption (Participant 2).

In weekdays the nights are quiet and especially Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday...on Thursday everything gets really busy and nights also get busy, busier than day because most of the people are enjoying drinking, that's what brings most of the customers (Participant 1).

The business of bars and clubs can therefore be seen as a lucrative market for taxi drivers wishing to earn their living, transporting patrons to and from these venues. The consumption of alcohol often means people are unable or unwilling to drive themselves, and as a result there is a demand for alternative forms of transport. Many drivers are attracted to working at night based on this high demand, the prospect of earning more money from fares, and having a faster turnaround of passengers compared to during the day.

Night is very quick money, they are very quick jobs. We get more hails at night. Daytime if they are businessmen they have credit cards so for example if it is \$50 on the meter and they want to use a credit card we get say \$46 and that \$4 goes to the middle man. But at night time, people tip, like if it is \$45 on the meter they give \$50 (Participant 6).

40% [of my hours] are day time, 60% is the night time, sometimes 70-80% in the festive season, so more likely to work in the night time, my busiest times are at night (Participant 1).

I get many more customers at night and they usually pay cash which is good...they are often quick trips from city to say Ponsonby or city to North Shore (Participant 5).

The potential to earn more money at night appeared to be a major influencing factor in drivers' decisions to work at these times. Unsurprisingly, however, it was discovered there are a number of issues encountered when working at night.

Night shift is more [stressful] than day shift, but day shift there is less [customers] than night shift (Participant 7).

[Night time] is busy, but you know, I don't like that. I'd take waiting [during the day] over dealing with drunk people (Participant 3).

We are like a front line, sort of cops, ambulance, taxis. We are at the receiving end of alcohol and bars and we are going to be seeing the street consequences of alcohol (Participant 1).

Taxi drivers are lured into operating at night by the promise of greater earnings. While for some drivers this presents an alluring opportunity, other drivers stated that the difficulty in dealing with intoxicated passengers has affected their decision to continue to operate at night.

I used to work Friday and Saturday nights...but I stopped. I don't like working with drunk people (Participant 3).

I worked at night for 15 years but now I have stopped because it is really risky (Participant 7).

Four of the drivers interviewed did not work at night, with three of these drivers ceasing to work based on the difficulties they described in working with intoxicated people. Almost all of the drivers interviewed felt that New Zealand had a problem with the excessive consumption of alcohol. Alcohol's capacity to disinhibit people and change their personality was commented on by one participant.

I have seen that's what we get problems with most of the time. It's the same people that if they are not drunk they are nice people, just the alcohol makes them really bad (Participant 1).

The ability for alcohol to change people, remove their self-control, and make them unaware of the consequences of their actions was a common theme addressed by drivers.

They were out of control you know, they don't know what they did. Some of them did it for the fun but they don't understand we do this for a living (Participant 3).

They will be sometimes abusive, violent and at times calm but most of the time I have seen the same percent that I am dropping off will be very different than when I am picking up (Participant 1).

Alcohol facilitates unpredictability in people which presents a major risk for taxi drivers who are forced to make quick decisions when accepting a fare. It was interesting to discover that some drivers accepted this risk as just a part of the job, with one commenting:

For the last 13 years I have been driving it is ok, it is just a part of the job. If someone is an alcoholic we deal with it, we take him to his destination; it is just a part of the job. Sometime you get bad luck but 99.99% of people are not a problem (Participant 6).

In addition to the unpredictability of intoxicated passengers, communicating with these people was another concern recognised by drivers, adding to the issues of route selection and fare payment highlighted in the previous chapter.

I find it difficult to communicate with drunk people, they can be hard to understand, I have many problems with this...finding out where they want to go, they can get abusive (Participant 5).

The reason [it was more stressful] was it was very hard to interact with the people (Participant 3).

Most of these teenagers or students don't have much money...they end up in taxis which is harmful for the driver due to arguments over money (Participant 1).

The difficulty of communicating with intoxicated people is further exacerbated by language barriers. Refusals to pay fares combined with communication barriers were revealed to be a common cause of dispute between drivers and passengers.

I've noticed for instance some of these alarms have gone off, the company has sent a fleet of cars out to this person, and then they have discovered that there is this Indian person whose English probably isn't up to courtroom standard (Participant 2).

Every weekend we have an incident [with people refusing to pay the fare]. There are two issues that pop up. A, the person is drunk and B, the driver does not understand English at all. And that causes big problems...it causes a couple of fights (Participant 1).

When the driver or passenger is unable to effectively communicate due to the effects of alcohol and/or the lack of a common language, it is indicated by drivers that disagreements can easily arise. Confronting passengers in these instances has the potential to further inflame the situation. While issues surrounding communicating with inebriated people are common, the researcher was reminded that a large majority in fact presented no problem at all.

99.9% is safe; there is no problem with people. That 0.01% of all people in all occupations you're going to find a hazard (Participant 1).

90-95% of the passengers are good, 5% makes the difference...that 5% are more prevalent at night (Participant 4).

[The biggest problems are] no paying, behaviour, drunks, drugs, gangs and abusive people, but this is a minority (Participant 7).

The effects of alcohol and its influence on peoples' behaviour represent a major issue to taxi drivers. People that normally would present no problem can lose their self-control and behave in a sometimes threatening and abusive manner. As a result of being on the so called 'front line' of the Night Time Economy taxi drivers face the subsequent risks of operating in an environment fuelled by alcohol.

## **5.2 Crime against Taxi Drivers**

For taxi drivers, operating alone with strangers has been established as an example of the dynamic environment in which they work. While it has been argued that this work environment increases their risk of victimisation, the involvement of alcohol combined with their service to the night time economy, it is believed, further exacerbates this risk. There was a need then to establish whether this was in fact the case. It has already been

mentioned that drivers feel the majority of their passengers mean them no harm, with a small minority being the ones likely to cause trouble. The importance of keeping vigilant to warning signs that can identify this minority is therefore crucial.

Normally I end up the winner but it does happen occasionally that you get taken to the cleaners, and that is the one that you have to watch for and look for (Participant 2).

Because taxi drivers are going to be spending time alone with them when you are travelling, so that is when the hazards occur (Participant 1).

Drivers clearly must be alert to the risks of working at night in order to take measures to avoid harm. It is possible that this awareness is manifested as fear amongst participants, with fear of crime being a commonly reported theme throughout the interviews. One driver in particular stated that:

In the weekend working the nights is like living in fear. Every customer you are going to worry if they are good or bad (Participant 8).

This fear seems reasonable in situations where the diminished self-control caused by intoxication leads to unpredictable behaviour. Drivers find it difficult to identify a passengers intentions, therefore the risk of assault while working within this environment is one that they must be aware of.

The worst type of passenger is dangerous in the back seat, they are abusive talking, you feel threatened and you feel the risk of engagement in a fight with them, it is so easy, it happens very easy and you must be careful about that, I am sure many drivers have a problem in here (Participant 7).

Falling victim to violence is something all drivers must be aware of. Of the drivers interviewed, three had been victims of assault, all instances occurring at night, with most drivers knowing a colleague who had themselves been assaulted.

I was working in Manurewa sitting on the taxi rank and two guys hopped into the back of my cab. One of them took hold of me around the neck like this (motions choking motion from behind) and they punched me and took my taxi (Participant 6).

Once one guy \*pause\* hit me from the back two or three times. I called the police and we dealt with that...I have seen other drivers been hit as well (Participant 1).

I have actually been kicked in the face etc. I didn't follow it up at all because I had already been paid by the young man's sister; he was high on dope and wouldn't remember any bloody thing. I had picked him up and got him home and the next thing I see this foot coming through and I just got pushed away, but it didn't do me any harm or anything (Participant 2).

In addition to physical assault, one driver experienced an incident where the passengers he was transporting tried to rob him:

8 or 9 boys I picked them up from downtown. I used to drive a van and they tried to rob me at knifepoint. At the time there were no cameras or anything. So they wanted to take my money and everything. So I put my car on the gear, start it, and if they try to do something I am going to drive off and that's what I did. And the one guy was hanging on my door and I say 'I am not going to stop for you' so he fell off, I didn't stop (Participant 1).

These instances demonstrate that the fear of physical assault is highly rational for drivers operating at night. However, it was pointed out that the risk of something serious occurring was not high. This relates to findings from other research that suggest the fear of crime is more predominant than crime itself (Henson, Reynolds, & Fisher, 2013). Nevertheless, drivers must be alert to the risk, regardless of the time of day.

Usually violence is not something you need to worry about, you obviously keep it in the back of your mind, because you have to do it just as much during the day as you would during the evening, but at the evening you have to look at where you are going to pick some up and what you are going to be doing (Participant 2).

Awareness of the dangers that operating at night presents along with the associated fear these dangers inspire has ultimately been an influencing factor for a number of drivers to refrain from working at night.

Nobody wants to work night shift any more. There are much greater risks; it is dangerous (Participant 7).

There weren't any instances [that put me off], but it is very rough you know. The language that is used and hear and how they act, that is why I stopped [driving at night] (Participant 3).

I used to work at night but not now, because sometimes it is not safe (Participant 9).

The risk of harm is clearly a deciding factor in drivers' choice to work at night. While some feel the risk of assault is low, awareness towards its potential has caused some to make the decision to no longer work within the night time economy.

While the fear of crime has affected the decisions of a few drivers to continue working at night, the allure of the money has kept others interested in operating at these times.

If you want to stay safe stop working in the night time...but people are not willing to do that because of the money involved (Participant 1).

To some drivers therefore the attraction of greater earning potential outweighs the risks associated with working at night. However, while the opportunity to earn more money exists, the risk of not being paid for their services is much greater at night.

If you are picking people up at 5 or 6 O'clock in the morning then you have to be careful that they have actually got the fare (Participant 2).

At the end of the trip you worry about if they have got the money (Participant 8).

Too many drunk people that kind of thing; people running away without paying (Participant 9).

Not being remunerated for their services is a completely rational fear for drivers who rely on passengers to provide their income. Non-payment of fares was a common concern for drivers with all participants interviewed having experienced passengers fleeing without paying.

I have had several times where people get in the car and they don't pay the fare. They haven't got the money (Participant 2).

The drunk people, you know they run away without paying, they waste your time. If I go from here to the North Shore and they run away without paying they have wasted a lot of my time (Participant 9).

In a year I will get around four or five runners, not in the morning, at night (Participant 4).

Added to the risk of not being paid, arguments over a fare present another issue faced by taxi drivers.

If they don't have a lot of money they can get argumentative about [paying the metered fare]. Mostly at night time this happens (Participant 9).

In addition to this, one driver reported feeling intimidated when it comes time to pay the fare.

They pretend to have problems with [their credit cards] so they bring along other family members and they can't work theirs and they surround you and you start to feel threatened (Participant 7).

The risk of violence and not being reimbursed for their services is a reality taxi drivers face when choosing to operate within the night time economy. The fact that almost half of the drivers interviewed had been assaulted and that most knew someone who had been demonstrates the very real risk they face. On top of this, non-payment of fares was an issue all drivers faced on a regular basis. For those deciding to operate in this environment, therefore it is essential they take measures designed to keep themselves as safe as possible.

### **5.3 The Police**

The police provide a service that performs a significant role in the night time economy. They provide a means for drivers to deal with the problems they face while operating at night and assist should anything serious occur. It was essential, then, to uncover the interactions taxi drivers had with the police and how they perceived the effectiveness of this service. This was necessary as it was felt that an effective relationship between the police and taxi drivers could impact on the risks identified in the previous section. Overall it was noticed that drivers felt confident that should any serious crimes occur against them, the police would be helpful.

Generally speaking I get on very well with them, I have no reason not to...If I got injured, anything of that nature then I definitely would go straight to the police (Participant 2).

"They are helpful when it is an assault that occurs" (Participant 1).

It seemed evident that drivers felt they had the support of the police should they require it. A common issue encountered however was that taxi drivers felt the police were often too busy to deal with their complaints, unless they were of a more serious nature.

Yes I did find them useful [when I was assaulted], but sometimes at night the police are very busy. Sometimes when we are dealing with drunk people and we call the police they take an hour, two hours, they are very busy (Participant 6).

The night time economy involves considerable expenditure of police resources and the fact that they are quite often busy dealing with what are described as more serious issues means that some drivers feel the police are not that helpful.

Nope [I don't find them helpful]. Although I didn't face anything where police were involved, they might be helpful, but for me because I didn't really deal with them no (Participant 3).

[The police] are helpful during the weekdays but not during the weekends, most of the incidents happen during the weekend...so far I haven't reported anything to the police (Participant 4).

The demands of policing the night time economy leaves little time for taxi drivers who, as this research would suggest, feel that police do not care about minor incidents. This perhaps explains why, as one driver mentioned here, things often go unreported. Some drivers revealed that when available, the police would assist in removing difficult passengers from their vehicles and force people to pay for soiling the cab.

This passenger was very drunk and he wouldn't get out of my car so I drove up behind this policeman, \*beep beep\* (sounded his horn) and the policeman came over, "what do you want?" "Can you get him out of my car please...he won't get out of my car and I wasn't sure how else I could contact you." So he picked this fellow up by grabbing a handful of his hair and eventually removed him from the car (Participant 2).

[The police] take the fare, they want to charge the person and they say 'if you pay the fare for soiling and taxi fare we will not charge you.' So yes in that way it is resolved, they are quite good (Participant 1).

This would therefore serve to demonstrate that when police are available they are willing to help. Another issue mentioned by one driver raised an interesting point

Police is nice, they are very good and they help us, but there are not enough laws in place (Participant 1).

It was interesting to discover that in New Zealand it is not a crime to not pay a taxi driver for their services, being rather a civil dispute between the driver and passenger.

Participant 1 elaborated:

When someone is not paying a fare [in Australia]...you call the police, the police straight away come to you and there is a charge of \$100 extra above because of what nuisance you caused and the fare as well...the police doesn't have such laws here (Participant 1).

Without these laws, police are unable to prosecute people who fail to pay. In England there are two laws that exist to protect taxi drivers from non-payment of fares:

If the passenger leaves the vehicle and makes off without paying the fare he commits an offence under Section 3 of the Theft Act 1978 - Making off without payment.

If a person enters the vehicle and has no money in his possession but fails to inform the driver until the journey is complete commits an offence under Section 11 Fraud Act 2006 – Obtaining services dishonestly (Plymouth City Council, 2013).

These laws, while not forcing people to pay, provide taxi drivers with some form of legal protection which acts as a deterrent. With non-payment of fares being such a pervasive issue as indicated by the findings of this research, it seems strange that no such legislation exists in this country. It is perhaps for this reason that drivers do not bother reporting such incidents to the police.

It is not worth [reporting] it for small fares (Participant 3).

By the time I fill out a complaint, which is my time, fill out a report, make a complaint, put down all the details, the chances of them following that up is between, I would say 0% and 5%. Unless they are just totally bored out of their brain I doubt they would follow it up, otherwise I doubt they could be bothered (Participant 2).

I've picked up a fare from town to Albany, \$30 was the fare. Three young university boys ran away. I don't want to follow; I don't have the time for that, reporting to the cops and everything (Participant 1).

I didn't bother reporting runners to the police because there is nothing they can do about it (Participant 9).

One driver reported taking matters into his own hands in pursuing passengers who failed to pay, with one incident mentioned here:

Once I was doing a job, it was a phone job so we have their number. I brought them to Victoria Park, they didn't pay. So the next morning I called them and told them I will call the Police...the next day he came and paid me (Participant 4).

With no legislation in place to assist drivers in securing payment and provide some form of deterrent to people who decide not to pay the metered fare, police have little authority in assisting drivers with these concerns. Whilst drivers feel confident that police will assist them if anything serious occurred, the fact that police are often busy dealing with other issues leaves some feeling as if the police are not concerned about their wellbeing. However, the police were perceived as being very effective in providing drivers with assistance should anything serious occur.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

While it was revealed in chapter 4 that there are a number of issues that arise based on the dynamic work environment in which taxi drivers operate, it was believed that these issues would be further exacerbated working within the night time economy. The ability for alcohol to inhibit an individual's self-control is believed to aggravate the disagreements drivers reported over route selection and payment of the metered fare. Operating within the night time economy places taxi drivers at risk of victimisation based on the threatening, abusive, and sometimes violent behaviour that drivers indicated was commonplace within this alcohol fuelled arena. The researcher was

constantly reminded, however, that the majority of passengers present no problem at all; rather it is a small minority that chose to cause trouble for taxi drivers. Be that as it may, while only a small sample, the fact that almost half of participants had been assaulted and the majority personally knew a driver who was, suggests that the risk of physical harm for drivers operating at night is a significant concern. In addition, non-payment of fares was a pervasive issue and adds to the stress drivers already experience as a result of economic insecurity.

Perhaps the most surprising revelation was that there is currently no legislation in place to protect drivers from fare evasion, going a long way towards explaining why drivers felt the police have little concern for their problems. However, should something serious occur, such as physical assault, drivers felt confident that the police will be helpful in dealing with the situation. The night time economy can be seen then to exacerbate the issues drivers face. Yet many drivers are attracted to working at these times based around the promise of greater earning potential, despite the associated risk of victimisation. The following chapter will examine how drivers work towards managing the risks that they face on the job, identify what physical measures are in place for their protection, and investigate whether standards are maintained across the taxi industry.

# **Risk Management**

## **6.0 Introduction**

Taxi drivers have been shown in chapter 4 to operate in an unpredictable environment where they can be unsure of who they will be transporting next or where they may end up. This dynamic environment presents many problems unique to the business of driving taxis. Added to this, the risks taxi drivers face through their involvement in the night time economy has been demonstrated in chapter 5. This chapter will explore the methods that drivers employ to help protect themselves from harm by examining how taxi drivers' identify risk as explored in section 6.1. Section 6.2 will address the physical methods of protection drivers have available to them beyond that of training and experience that was addressed in section 6.1. Finally in section 6.3, the less rigorous standards that are said to be maintained by smaller taxi companies and how this may impact upon their safety will be addressed.

## **6.1 Identification of Risk**

Being able to effectively identify risk can help taxi drivers avoid harmful situations. The nature of the job involves spending an unspecified period of time alone with one or more persons. Drivers are forced to make quick decisions when accepting a fare on whether there are any potential threats to their safety. Being alert to risk factors is an aspect of driving that comes with experience.

When you are driving, with your experience you will definitely know what sort of person you are sitting with (Participant 1).

It all comes with experience, being able to identify who will cause you problems. It is hard to teach that (Participant 5).

I have picked up one of our customers who is a known entrepreneur, he is notoriously famous for doing all sorts of pranks...I stopped one morning and picked him up and he thanked me very much for picking him up. I didn't tell him of course that 99% of us wouldn't, but I knew who he was, violence was not

a part of his thing even though he looked as if he had the proclivity for it and I knew that not paying his bills was not a part of his scene so I knew when I took him that I was definitely going to get paid (Participant 2).

The identifying factors on what to look for when deciding whether or not to accept a fare can be correlated to experience. When drivers were asked for what visual cues they looked for as well as what types of people were the worst passengers, a range of responses were given.

If they are drunk, drunk is a big problem, suspicious behaviour, if they are threatening or abusive then no [I won't give them a ride] (Participant 7).

Teenage boys and girls for sure...if the person is very drunk or has dirty hands or eating or want to smoke (Participant 6).

Teenage females, I think it is an age problem (Participant 3).

If they are hail jobs and they are teenagers or very young then I don't take them. If they are in their 30's or 40's then I feel ok. They are responsible people so such type of people, I take them but young boys and girls no. And if it's a gang, four or five people then no (Participant 4).

Their appearance usually gives them away. Like if you got into a taxi dressed as you are (motions towards the interviewer) it is highly unlikely you are going to incite violence (Participant 2).

Most of these teenager or students don't have much money...if they end up in taxi's [it] is harmful for the driver due to arguments over money (Participant 1).

Drivers have a right to refuse fares if they feel threatened or unsafe. Youth and intoxication appeared to be common identifying factors in drivers' decisions to accept or refuse fares. The decision on accepting or declining a fare seemed to be based almost on a risk versus reward factor.

If they want to be taken somewhere and they don't look dangerous I will take them, because you can wait a long time for a fare (Participant 9).

Another driver expressed a similar lack of concern for being victimised as follows:

I know some people talk about the criminal part, I don't care, I'm just here for the money (Participant 8).

For some drivers, then, it would appear that the need to earn a living can affect their decisions to carry passengers other drivers might refuse.

As a taxi driver, you can choose which jobs to accept when calls come through to the taxi office. This means that drivers can decide the areas in which they want do pickups.

Taxi driving is self-employed so you can refuse any fare you don't want to do. You have got every right if you do not feel safe...you can refuse to work in the area, it is entirely up to the driver (Participant 1).

Refusing to work within an area can be based on personal experiences within that location. Experience within these locations also highlights means by which drivers protect themselves when picking up passengers.

If I am asked to drive somewhere that doesn't look kosher, I'll usually tell the person to come to me. For instance I won't get out of the car at night to go into a house, unless I can see the door from the street (Participant 2).

It is best to not get out of your car while waiting [for the passengers to come]. You can call them [on their phone] to come out and if they don't answer we just drive off (Participant 5).

Although there are risks for drivers when picking people up from addresses, at night most prefer these jobs over the 'hail' jobs they get in the city.

I do mostly the phone jobs to keep myself safe (Participant 4)

All [the people that didn't pay were] from the city. Because it's on the system if it is a phone job, we really only get hailed in the city [at night], I preferred these jobs (Participant 3).

Working for this company you get a lot more phone jobs which is good, I feel safer taking those people because we have their contact details (Participant 5).

Drivers appeared to have a greater sense of safety when doing these phone jobs over hail jobs with the knowledge that the company had those passengers' details. In addition to adopting protection methods when picking up passengers, taxi drivers must be alert to the destinations to which they are transporting people. Being alert to danger when

transporting passengers is an essential element of managing risk, drivers can recognise warning signs based on the destinations passengers specify.

If they are teenagers, drunk, don't really know where they are going, address of dropping off is kind of suspicious [I refuse them]. Sometimes they tell me to drop them off at some school or some clubs (Participant 8).

A Hamilton taxi driver picked up two stropky young fellows. He drove them through the centre of town and they wanted him to drive them down to the river bed to a landing next to the river and he should've known that once he left the main street and went down there, it was a secluded spot and naturally he was going to get assaulted...If [people] want you to do something you are not comfortable with, don't do it (Participant 2).

The destinations requested by passengers are a good indicator to the driver of whether those individuals have good intentions or not. It was identified that passengers who were not very specific about their destination were more likely to not pay their fare. Non-payment of fares was a common issue faced by all taxi drivers interviewed. To combat the risk of not being paid, drivers can request payment upfront.

You do worry about asking for [payment] upfront...I feel that if it is a long fare, like more than \$50...I look at their actions and kinda pick from there if they are good or bad (Participant 8).

If the people do not pay, we can't hold them to pay or anything. Either we do prepay, that would be better, but we can't judge each and every person (Participant 1).

Requesting payment upfront could act as a form of insurance that the driver will receive payment, even if the metered fare is ultimately higher.

It is apparent that there are many warning signs taxi drivers must be alert to when driving taxis. Being adept at identifying risk is an aspect of the job that involves common sense and experience. While the ability to identify this risk affects some operators' decisions to refuse fares, others consider these risks against the need to make money.

## 6.2 Agents of Safety

The findings on how taxi drivers attempt to identify risk have been explored. Beyond visual and behavioural cues towards measuring the chance of harm, there are physical devices that drivers have available to them that act as agents of safety. Current New Zealand legislation requires that all taxi vehicles operating in major towns and cities be equipped with cameras and 24 hour telecommunication systems monitored from a fixed location. With this legislation put in place to improve driver safety, it was necessary to explore how effective these changes have been at protecting taxi drivers from harm. Amongst those interviewed, the introduction of cameras in particular has generated mixed feelings. Most participants felt that the cameras have been successful in improving their safety, acting as a deterrent for any would be offenders.

The cameras have made a huge difference, payment wise, criminal wise, runners and all sorts (Participant 8).

I would say the camera is probably our greatest security...for those who are thinking pretty cavalier or irresponsible, once they know that everything is on film it tends to modify their psychology so to speak (Participant 2).

[The cameras have made] a massive difference, especially with teenage boys and girls, they tend to make the trouble at night, so for them a big difference (Participant 6).

The cameras have done a lot to make us feel safe (Participant 5)

We have the cameras there so we are safe (Participant 4).

It is safe...the camera is there and the people understand because of this they will get caught (Participant 3).

With the camera acting as a major deterrent for passengers who would otherwise consider causing trouble, there seemed to be an improved perception of safety since becoming a mandatory requirement inside vehicles. With the knowledge that all their actions inside the taxi are caught on film, it is thought people are deterred by the increased likelihood of being caught. When asked what made them feel safe while driving their taxi, the camera was the most common response from participants.

However, a couple of drivers felt that cameras have done little to deter those people who have the intention of causing them harm, or those who fail to consider the outcome of their actions.

The people who are going to cause the problems are a minority, and you can't change the minority with a camera (Participant 7).

It's not about our safety; it is about the passengers' safety. They (the drivers) come to the conclusion that they don't believe any more in the cameras because it is not going to protect them...what are you going to do when the person gets killed? You're going to see his photo when you're dead? It is no point. If a person is drunk you don't know what he or she is going to do, so forget about the camera (Participant 1).

While a number of participants perceived that the introduction of cameras has been an effective deterrent for people who intend to harm them, it is necessary to remember that the camera does nothing to physically protect the driver. Those individuals who intend to cause trouble it is believed will do so regardless. Nevertheless, it is apparent that there has been an improvement in many drivers' perception of safety since cameras have become compulsory.

The other mandatory requirement for taxi drivers operating in major towns and cities in New Zealand is a 24 hour telecommunications system that is monitored from a fixed location. This has the purpose of alerting someone should the driver encounter any trouble. Auckland Co-op taxis have installed in their vehicles a panic button system which is connected to their GPS. This feature alerts their office and other vehicles from the same company should they require assistance, relaying their current location.

If you feel [like you are] not safe with a passenger, we press our secret button which is called 'proceed.' We press that, the operator knows straight away, GPS takes over everything, the priority goes to that cab...once they stop there are ten cabs there...surrounding the driver to make sure nothing can happen (Participant 1).

If you push the emergency button the whole car goes live, all the GPS units go off (in other co-op vehicles) and the police are on their way very smartly (Participant 2).

It was interesting to find that drivers failed to mention this safety device when asked what features of their taxi made them feel safe. The two participants who did mention it only did so when asked if there were any additional features that provided them with a sense of safety. For the large majority it was the camera that was the most significant feature. However, as has already been suggested, cameras do little to provide a physical means of protection. In response, the possibility of installing some form of shield was put forward, with a particular emphasis on the area behind them.

We need protection in the back area (motions to indicate a protective screen), see we are not safe in the back...the worst passengers are dangerous in the back...I am sure many drivers have a problem here (Participant 7).

I believe some sort of shield...put at the back of the driver to protect his back and neck because you might be attacked. It happened once and a person got killed, it should not happen again, lives can be saved (Participant 1).

With drivers having a restricted vision of the back seat, they are vulnerable to what is going on behind them. As commented on above, a New Zealand driver was killed in an attack from behind. It was indicated by one driver that a number of countries overseas such as Australia and the United States allow drivers to install a shield or cage as a physical method of protection. Unfortunately for those who would consider installing such a device, under current land transport regulations the camera and GPS monitored alarm specified earlier are the only safety features currently available to drivers.

We are not allowed to do it because if we put in a shield then the government won't pass a certificate of fitness for our taxi...In other countries I have heard their driver is literally in a cage (Participant 1).

Legally you can't have anything else, and it has no fixtures other than the GPS units, so if you do activate the safety switch and the alarm, the GPS units go off straight away and tell us exactly where you are (Participant 2).

I have everything you can have. Maybe you could have pepper spray or something but you cannot legally have that (Participant 5).

Drivers are restricted in what they can do to protect themselves. Overseas research indicated some drivers chose to carry weapons to protect themselves (Stenning, 1996), although no participants in this study indicated that they did this. It was suggested that

installing a cage around the driver could harm the image of New Zealand being a safe country. Absent of these methods of protection, it is advocated that the driver must be skillful in dealing with a situation. A number of participants commented on the notion that the most fundamental aspect of protecting themselves lies in their ability to display patience, communicate, and control themselves when facing problematic passengers.

Patience is very essential as a taxi driver. If somebody runs off without paying then be patient because another customer might give you a big tip (Participant 6).

The best thing you can do is to stay calm and try to keep control of the situation (Participant 5).

The skill of the job, and this is one of the most essential ingredients of the job, is to actually not let the situation get inflamed whereby violence is resorted to. Really it is all about talking, you should be able to keep everybody sane, placid, without resorting to violence (Participant 2).

It is demonstrated through this that drivers must be adept at managing a situation, using their experience in communicating with passengers to avoid harm. There is a suggestion that their ultimate priority should be personal safety, not to worry about losing money if being robbed or having passengers flee without paying.

The government has recognised the risk taxi drivers face as a result of their occupation, and has accordingly introduced legislation designed to protect them. Some, however, feel these measures are not enough to deal with the problems taxi drivers face. It will also be demonstrated in the following section that not all taxi companies follow the strict guidelines set out by Land Transport New Zealand. With alternative safety measures being unavailable, the taxi driver must be adept at dealing with an inflamed situation and do their best to control these through patience and calm dialogue.

### **6.3 Smaller Companies**

There are various means by which taxi drivers can act to protect themselves from harm. As has been demonstrated in the previous sections, these can range from visual cues,

avoidance of certain destinations, and physical additions to the taxi vehicle. However the standards found across the taxi industry have been said to vary greatly in relation to how drivers manage risk. It was suggested by participants that this is due to the deregulation of the taxi industry. Since deregulation in 1989, there has been a proliferation of the number of taxis operating on New Zealand roads. Over 4 years the number of taxis operating in Auckland went from 1000 to 3500 with current estimates by the New Zealand Transport Authority of around 5000 drivers working for 40 firms (Cumming, 2014). This explosion of the number of taxis operating has meant that the taxi industry is no longer dominated by just a small number of firms.

I believe that the taxi industry is relaxed and de-regulated and that's important because people need taxis when it is busy, that's what it does. Before deregulation people used to wait for taxis, after deregulation taxis wait for the people...which is great for the people, they are getting service (Participant 1).

The aim of these changes to the industry as commented on here was to increase competition with the intention of decreasing the cost of travel. It is apparent that the desire to increase the number of taxis on the road has been successful with the evidence supplied by Cumming (2014) in the article mentioned above. However, it was alleged by drivers that these firms operate with varying standards, often lower than some expect of the taxi industry.

They draw a bad picture for the taxi business. They don't have many [repeat] customers, they rely mostly on picking up in the city or from the airport and I have heard so many customers complain, not knowing where they are going, or extra charges on top of their fare (Participant 8).

Because the Land Transport issues many licenses so what people are doing is they are working part time. 5 days they work in an office and on the weekends they come out and they have little shabby cars. They pinch our jobs and our money (Participant 6).

I would like to see drivers having to wear a uniform like us see (motions towards his suit and tie). I think they don't look very professional and they give taxis a bad reputation (Participant 5).

Deregulating the industry means you will find a wide variety of standards, and those standards have got lots of problems (Participant 1).

The quality of the service provided, the degree of professionalism, and the skill of the driver were all issues of discontent amongst the drivers interviewed from Auckland Co-op when referring to smaller, rival taxi companies. Constant failure to comply with industry standards such as the Operator Licensing Rule mentioned in section 2.6, was an issue highlighted by Tim Reddish (2013), former Executive Director of the New Zealand Taxi Federation.

...taxi industry representatives were united in their criticism that current compliance activity is not delivering an even market playing field and that those ATOs and Operators at the lower end of the market were being permitted to operate despite their obvious non-compliance with Operator Licensing Rule requirements (p.3).

Operating outside of the requirements of the Operator Licensing Rule would imply that many vehicles at the 'lower end' of the taxi industry fail to have functioning cameras and the telecommunications systems designed to provide some degree of safety for the driver. By failing to have these systems in place, it is assumed that the risks these drivers face are much higher than those who operate for the larger companies like the one selected for this study. It would appear that the stricter standards mandated for these larger firms serve as somewhat of a deterrent for people who intend to harm drivers.

Because I work for this company the trouble makers don't come to us...they tend to go to the smaller ones (Participant 3).

Before I worked for a smaller company in West Auckland and I had many issues with people then. But since moving to Auckland Co-op I find things much better (Participant 5).

We happen to have a clientele that is attracted to our particular brand and it's a move we make to protect that brand very conscientiously (Participant 2).

I feel comfortable because this company is quite a good company (Participant 8).

Small companies...always deal with those people. For us they think twice because our procedures are quite strict. We press the emergency button; we have

ten cabs standing beside us. So that makes things not safe for the passengers. They feel a little worried because there are ten cabs here to protect us (Participant 1).

One driver felt that the job was harder for drivers operating for smaller firms:

They are small companies and this work is harder for them. Because it is harder they have to work more hours. Still we have a small percentage of problems with them (Participant 7).

The variety of standards found across the industry it is believed, demonstrate the effects of deregulation. The requirements as per legislation are clearly designed to provide some form of safety for drivers. Maintaining high standards as a method of protecting the image of their brand is based in part on the entry requirements, infrastructure and training provided to drivers before they start operating.

The training and equipment which is already set up to support that, so everything is in place and they take it very seriously, our safety...I did work before at Discount Taxis and Affordable taxis; they don't have such things as that, I've only found it at Co-op. I guess companies should [have some form of training], not in small companies, they don't care (Participant 1).

I had to do an English comprehension test ...[with other training consisting of]area knowledge, where the ranks are and protocols (Participant 2).

Being provided with this training is not only a move to protect the image of the brand they operate for but also a means of ensuring driver safety. It was noted that a failure to provide even a small amount of training by the smaller companies could potentially place these drivers at a greater risk of victimisation. Adequate training is therefore an essential element in ensuring driver safety. In addition to training, all drivers interviewed felt the company they worked for took the risks they faced seriously.

Yes of course [the take the risks seriously]...there is a tremendous amount of empathy between the committee, the individual officers, and other people in society for the risks that you face (Participant 2).

The training and the equipment is already set up to support [us]. Everything is in place and they take it very seriously, our safety (Participant 1).

This company is very good at supporting us, if a driver ends up in hospital there are many of his fellow drivers that go to visit and support him (Participant 5).

In providing a degree of support and adequate training to effectively perform the job and keep them safe, it is supposed that drivers reduce the risks they face on the job. It is possible then that smaller companies which fail to provide such measures are at greater risk of falling victim.

The researcher noted during the collection of data that a number of drivers operating for the 'smaller' firms had a significantly lesser ability to communicate in English compared to drivers approached from the larger firms such as Auckland Co-op and Alert Taxis. One driver also revealed that drivers operating for these small firms were more likely to be aggressive towards passengers.

The small companies...they are the ones that are really rough with the passengers, I've heard of one driver who did punch [a passenger] a couple of times...he was telling him the joke, you know, "I don't have any money to pay you," so straight away [the driver] slapped him and here he go, the money comes straight out...Omani's, Somalian' and Iranians, they are the roughest drivers I have seen (Participant 1).

It would appear based on this evidence that where strict operating standards are not enforced by Approved Taxi Operators (ATOs) such as Auckland Co-op and Alert Taxis for example, there is a chance that drivers could become more confrontational with passengers. This could imply that there is a risk not only for the drivers that operate for these smaller firms in terms of their own personal safety, but a risk for passengers choosing to travel with them. This response must, however, be taken in the context that this may be a racist view on behalf of the participant.

This research has indicated that taxi drivers operating for smaller firms are not bound by the strict regulations required for those operating at larger companies. Failing to meet industry standards along with a lack of support and training it is suggested places these drivers at a greater risk of victimisation while driving taxis.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

The ability for taxi drivers to personally manage risk was revealed as being in part due to on the job experience. This experience was said to help drivers manage potentially volatile situations, with dialogue being identified as perhaps one of the most important skills of the job. While identifying risk was attributed to common sense, many drivers often considered these risks alongside the need to make money. This highlights the impact that economic insecurity has on drivers' decisions to accept risk. While legislation has been put in place to introduce controls across the industry that provide measures to help protect drivers, some participants felt that these were not a significant enough deterrent for passengers who intend to harm them. Current regulations restrict what drivers can use to protect themselves, meaning drivers do not have the option of installing a partition, for example, to protect them from passengers in the backseat, the area from which the greatest threat to driver safety is posed (Mayhew, 2000b).

The introduction of cameras has to some extent improved drivers' perception of safety as suggested by participants in this study. It was indicated, however, that many operators of taxis for smaller companies fail to abide by the regulations that have been introduced. In addition, these companies are said to not provide the same levels of support and training that are provided by the larger firms, such as the one focused upon in this study. It is thought that this could increase the risk drivers operating for these firms face while negatively impacting upon the image of the taxi industry. In summary then, it was important to understand how drivers manage risk as this information could be useful in improving the safety of others within the industry. Failing to provide drivers with adequate training alongside a relaxed approach to the enforcement of operator licensing requirements it is believed may place taxi drivers at a greater risk of victimisation.



## **Discussion**

### **7.0 Introduction**

This research set out to answer the research question: what are the issues that affect taxi drivers as a result of their involvement in the night time economy? It was believed that operating in an environment fuelled by alcohol and with numerous instances of violence and aggression, taxi drivers would experience greater problems than during the day. Overseas research has shown that taxi drivers face a higher risk of homicide over most other occupations and can suffer high levels of victimisation (Gambetta & Hamill, 2005; Stenning, 1996). This guided the notion that chief amongst taxi driver concerns would be the results of operating within the night time economy. It was quickly established, however, that the business of driving taxis carries with it a number of concerns for the drivers other than the risks of operating at night.

This chapter begins by addressing the three main areas of enquiry as set out across chapters 4, 5, and 6. Section 7.1 will compare findings of the work experiences of taxi drivers from this study, against those of other research. Following this there will be an investigation on the similarities and differences between the literature and findings from this research for drivers' experiences within the night time economy and how they attempt to manage risk across sections 7.2 and 7.3 respectively. Section 7.4 will propose a potential solution to one of the major issues discovered while conducting this research. Finally, the limitations of this study will be addressed in section 7.5 along with recommendations for future research in section 7.6.

### **7.1 Work Experiences**

This research has suggested that there is great importance in understanding the work experiences of taxi drivers to conceptualise their involvement in the night time

economy. Gambetta and Hamill (2005) portray the role of the taxi driver as one where drivers pass their day searching for fares, negotiating traffic, and occasionally meeting interesting people, following which they go home after a long, tiring shift. Whilst this has been described as a mundane existence (Denscombe et al., 2009), most participants in this study felt the varied nature of their job, never being sure who they will take next or to where, was the most enjoyable aspect of their occupation. Interviewees commented on the variety of passengers they carried, and the number of interesting people they meet on a regular basis. It was recognised, however, that a small minority of passengers do cause issues for them. There was no mention in the reviewed literature regarding drivers' enjoyment of the varied nature of their work. It was referenced that the large numbers of new encounters they have, increase their risk of victimisation (Denscombe et al., 2009). However, in a New Zealand context, drivers appeared unconcerned about this possibility, presenting these encounters instead as an aspect of enjoyment.

The flexibility allowed by being an owner-operator was another feature of the role that was a source of enjoyment. This discovery matches that of Facey (1999) who found that drivers enjoyed the entrepreneurial side of their job and the independence afforded to them. Yet while drivers were free to decide the hours they worked, all of those interviewed worked between 60 and 70 hours a week. Taxi drivers have been found in a number of studies to work notoriously long shifts (Facey, 2003; Mayhew, 2000b; Nielson, 2009; Stenning, 1996). The reason behind this has been attributed to the need to mitigate the effects of economic uncertainty (Facey, 2003) which would appear in the context of this study to be correct. Several participants mentioned economic insecurity as a primary concern and stipulated that should the legal barrier to working longer shifts not be in place, they would work longer than 70 hours per week. It seems reasonable to suggest that while drivers feel they have a flexible working schedule, the need to earn a

living dictates the hours that they work, which as mentioned by one driver, is dictated by market demand. According to this research, market demand peaks due to three reasons, people travelling to and from work and providing transport services to the night time economy.

Economic insecurity and the subsequent need to work long hours reflect, in the researcher's opinion, why drivers continue their involvement in the night time economy. While some drivers refused to work at night, those that did referred to the greater earning potential available to them, in contrast to working during the day. Some attributed this to a lack of public transport available to patrons of the night time economy. The promise of greater earnings can be seen to be a motivating factor in drivers continued involvement in the night time economy despite perceived dangers. Evidence from other sources suggests that taxi drivers experience a great deal of financial stress. In a New Zealand Herald article, one driver said that "drivers were under emotional stress from working long shifts for little pay...people say the fares are quite high, but if you only do three fares when you are working 13 hour shifts...we have to work that long to get three fares if we are lucky" (Tait, 2014). Financial pressures are seen then to be a major issue that affects drivers working in the night time economy. A solution to this issue could be the introduction of a working wage. This could go a long way towards improving the safety of taxi drivers as it could impact on their decisions to accept risk based on financial necessity. Additionally, this could help address the stress drivers experience as a result of financial insecurity. This solution will be further addressed in section 7.4.

It is thought that economic insecurity and financial based stress comes as a result of the consequences following the deregulation of the taxi industry in 1989. It was mentioned in section 4.2 that the numbers of taxis operating in New Zealand have increased

dramatically since this time. Such an increase has garnered a degree of dissatisfaction among many drivers who feel that there is currently an oversupply of taxis operating in the study area. The findings from this study mirror those of overseas studies that discovered an over-supply of taxis creates competition between drivers for fares which can in turn result in stress and longer work hours (Facey, 2010; Schaller, 2007). The proliferation of taxis operating in Auckland has become a serious issue. A New Zealand Herald investigation by Cumming (2014) referred to a comment made by one driver: “There are so many drivers that there’s not enough work...ten years ago I made about \$150 a day...now I earn more like \$60 or \$70 for eight hours. I blame the NZTA (New Zealand Transport Agency) for allowing too many drivers” This reflects on the findings from this research in which a number of drivers spoke out against the NZTA issuing too many taxi licenses. While the intention was to decrease the cost of travelling in a taxi, it would appear that deregulation has subsequently increased stress levels amongst drivers and resulted in longer shifts due to lower earnings.

It was referenced in chapter 2 that certain factors of a job are a source of occupational stress. Most participants remarked that the job of driving taxis is stressful. The reasons behind this as indicated by the findings of this study match those of Tennant (2001) in regards to arguments with passengers over fares and route selection, economic uncertainty and long hours. For some this did impact upon job satisfaction. However, it was recognised that amongst the drivers working for Auckland Co-op taxis there was a large degree of social support and drivers felt their concerns were taken seriously by this company. It was mentioned in the literature that occupational stress can result in an increased desire to leave the job. To some extent the findings from this study seem to contradict this statement. Only one driver expressed any desire to leave their job with one other discussing their dissatisfaction with no apparent intentions to quit. With drivers appearing to accept the stress inherent to their occupation, it is possible that this

can be related to the high degree of social support available to them through their involvement with Auckland Co-op taxis.

With such long work hours, it was not a surprise to discover that several drivers reported feeling constantly tired at work. An occupation based on the road, taxi driving is inherently risky especially when their driving is impaired by tiredness. Research shows that being tired can increase the chance of vehicle accidents (Dalziel & Job, 1997; Facey, 2010). Although in accordance with the findings from these studies, no taxi drivers reported any vehicle accidents, although many were accurately aware of the risk. This confirms findings from Dalziel and Job (1997) who felt that by being alert to the risks of driving whilst fatigued, taxi drivers are more adept at managing this risk. Further to the risk of accidents, fatigue has been suggested to impact upon decision making ability, increasing driver risk by diminishing their ability to recognise danger (Mayhew, 2000b). This did not appear to be a major factor in this study, all drivers were aware of the risks associated with carrying passengers at night and all seemed confident in their ability to recognise risk. The decision to accept risk it appeared was based more around the need to make money rather than a failure to identify such issues.

Identifying the issues taxi drivers face that are mutually exclusive across day and night is essential in understanding how these are impacted by their involvement in the night time economy. Many of the findings from this research match those of studies conducted overseas (Facey, 2003, 2010; Gambetta & Hamill, 2005; Stenning, 1996). There were a number of interesting discoveries, however, that departed from the current literature on the subject. The issues taxi drivers face range from economic uncertainty, tiredness, and stress. Economic uncertainty can be said to increase a drivers' desire to work at night and often is a motivating factor in this decision. In part due to an oversupply of taxis, drivers work long hours to meet their financial needs and therefore

decide to accept the risks they face whilst working at night. Working these hours also leaves drivers feeling tired and fatigued which can impair their ability to operate safely on the road, along with their ability to recognise risk. There was also a high reporting of stress associated with all of these issues. It can be argued therefore that the issues associated with the job impact on drivers' decisions to work at night and accept the risks they face.

## **7.2 Experiences within the Night Time Economy.**

There is no doubt that taxis perform a crucial service in society, in particular towards providing for the transport requirements of the night time economy (Cooper et al., 2010; Shaw, 2014). Results in this study support this idea. As a stakeholder in the provision of transport needs to those enjoying the nightlife of the city, taxi drivers' can be said to be on the frontline of the night time economy, playing a crucial role in minimising crime and disorder (Denscombe et al., 2009). They achieve this through breaking the 'boundary' between the suburbs and the city centre, dispersing the revellers that crowd the streets as venues close (Shaw, 2014). Removing these crowds quickly can help prevent crime by removing the intoxicated people that are likely to cause trouble (Shaw, 2014). However, studies would suggest that operating on this frontline means taxi drivers increase their risk to victimisation (Facey, 2010; Gambetta & Hamill, 2005; Mayhew, 2000b; Stenning, 1996). It is estimated that over a ten year period from 2000, there have been 3,700 violent offences against taxi drivers when allowing for non-reporting (New Zealand Transport Agency, 2010). This research, while using a small sample due to its exploratory purpose, found that three of the nine participants had been physically assaulted with all participants having experienced fare evasion. Participants barely mentioned verbal abuse and those who did attributed it to people just being intoxicated. With the majority of incidences being said to have occurred at night, it was not surprising to discover that a number of drivers refused to work at these times, this

refusal being attributed to a fear for personal safety and the difficulties in dealing with inebriated passengers. Fear of crime in this instance demonstrated to the researcher the threat that drivers perceive they face when working at night; as a vital part of the night time economies infrastructure the researcher identified a definite need to highlight this issue.

Understanding this risk and its underlying causes appeared to be readily identifiable, prior to the commencement of this research. While a link between alcohol and violence has been long sought after and proven difficult to isolate (Graham, 1980; Tomsen, 1997), taxi drivers in this study frequently remarked on the ability of alcohol to change an individual's personality and affect their self-control. A common response from drivers when asked about experiences with intoxicated passengers involved the phrase, 'they did not know what they are doing' or something similar. Some studies would agree with this idea that alcohol diminishes an individual's self-control (Parker & McCaffree, 2013), in contrast, Tomsen (1997) felt that rule breaking, violence and disorderly behaviour were gestures of 'good fun' that is associated with a rejection of normal middle class values when drinking alcohol. Although to blame disorder solely on alcohol consumption disregards other factors that may be a contributing influence towards these behaviours (Parker & McCaffree, 2013). This is evidenced by the fact that participants clearly stated that the majority of their passengers present no problem at all. A fact stipulated in the literature (Parker & McCaffree, 2013; Tomsen, 1997). Nevertheless, as the data from this study would suggest, for taxi drivers operating in an environment characterised by heavy alcohol consumption, those passengers that do represent a risk can be difficult to identify based on the unpredictability of their behaviour if intoxicated.

The problems associated with carrying intoxicated passengers arise as “the bound-up capacity for affect in the agitated drunken body is shifted to the (confined) space of the driver’s vehicle...these passengers were most likely to be problematic when in the back of the cab” (Shaw, 2014, p.93). This study witnessed similar responses with drivers allaying their concerns about passengers in the backseat presenting the greatest threat to their safety. The three drivers who reported being assaulted in this study had all been attacked from behind demonstrating this risk. These instances along with one of a driver being threatened with robbery, all occurred at night, which would indicate that taxi drivers face the greatest risk of assault at night. The literature would agree with these findings where risk to violence is increased by working alone and at night (Facey, 2010; Mayhew, 2000b; Stenning, 1996). Interpersonal violence has been suggested to be the leading cause of stress for drivers (Gilbert, 2011), findings here have found that while a number of drivers are concerned about the threat of violence, the leading cause of stress appeared to be based more around economic insecurity. The parallels between New Zealand taxi driver experiences of violence at night and those of other drivers overseas have been witnessed in this study. Based on the evidence gathered here taxi drivers perceived a greater threat at night and actual assaults were all a direct result of night time work.

Drivers’ experiences of economic insecurity have been previously established and are believed to be a causal factor in many drivers’ decisions to operate at night. There is an increase in the demand for taxis at night due to a number of factors. The attraction of city centre areas as locations of consumption and leisure (Crawford & Flint, 2009; Hobbs et al., 2003; Hobbs et al., 2005b), has meant that there is a massive influx of people into these areas on Friday and Saturday nights. Combined with this, public transport is less readily available at these times (Denscombe et al., 2009; Stenning, 1996), and as findings would suggest, is a less attractive prospect than the convenience

of taxis. A fast turnaround of fares at night, in contrast to the two or three hour waits experienced during the day, were revealed to be an attractive proposition for drivers searching to mitigate the effects of economic insecurity. Further to this, drivers overseas were found to accept fares that could be considered 'risky' in order to earn a living (Burnett, 2011) which matched the findings of this study. It could be assumed then that economic pressures force drivers into working at night, regardless of whether they feel safe or not. This could also indicate why many drivers accept the problems they face as just a part of the job.

Carrying on with the theme of economic insecurity, non-payment of fares was a major issue encountered during the research. As already mentioned, all of the drivers in this study had experienced multiple instances of fare evasion and is perhaps one of the most pervasive problems taxi drivers deal with on a regular basis. Most drivers indicated they had around 4 or 5 'runners' each year and industry estimates suggest that the total cost of evaded fares per annum is around \$350 on average per driver (New Zealand Transport Agency, 2010). With taxi drivers reliant on fares to pay their income, fare evasion exacerbates the problems of economic insecurity already experienced. Unfortunately for taxi drivers in New Zealand however, there is no current legislation that enables the prosecution of those who decide to not pay these fares. It is believed that this is a key reason behind why taxi drivers fail to report instances of fare evasion to the police. No driver in this study reported having done so with the overwhelming suggestion being that the police are too busy to deal with such things. Other studies have found that drivers fail to report instances of assault and theft based on feelings that these actions are just a part of their job or alternatively the belief that assailants will fail to be prosecuted by police (Denscombe et al., 2009; Stenning, 1996). It is not surprising then, with no legislation in place to enable prosecution and a common belief that the

police are too busy to assist them that taxi drivers appear to accept fare evasion as just a part of the job.

The crucial role that taxis perform within the night time economy demonstrates the need for identifying the issues taxi drivers face whilst operating in this environment. Evidence showed that drivers perceived the risks they face as being greater at night when compared to during the day. While a causal link between alcohol and violence has proved difficult to isolate in other studies, findings here show that the diminished self-control provided by consuming alcohol is a major factor in many of the problems taxi drivers face; violence, verbal abuse and non-payment of fares as examples of these. The dangers that drivers face from passengers in the back seat was an issue raised by a number of drivers and matches the assault patterns of those who had been victimised as found in this research. It seems possible, then, to suggest that taxi drivers increase their risk to victimisation as a result of being alone in a confined space with intoxicated passengers. To understand why drivers who feel the fear of victimisation continue their involvement in the night time economy, it was necessary to understand the issues that are relevant across day and night. Economic insecurity has forced a number of drivers to continue their involvement in the night time economy based on the promise of faster, more lucrative cash fares at night. Perhaps one of the most pervasive issues taxi drivers face impacts upon this idea of economic insecurity. Non-payment of fares was an issue suffered by all drivers on a fairly regular basis and without any legislation in place to enable prosecution; it is not surprising these instances go unreported to the police.

### **7.3 How Drivers Manage Risk**

This study investigated the methods taxi drivers employed to protect themselves while working. There was a particular focus on how they managed risk working within the night time economy. It was readily identified that drivers felt the ability to recognise

danger, warning signs, and risk factors came down to experience, a point which conforms with findings from the literature (Mayhew, 2000a) with drivers in another study stating that driver safety cannot be adequately taught in the classroom, rather it can only be learned on the job (Stenning, 1996). Passengers that were known to drivers to be responsible passengers, irrespective of their looks or behaviour, were identified as an example of this experience. While some drivers might refuse them, those who knew those people would carry them every time. It has been commented on that “the strongest sign of trustworthiness a customer can give is to be known, either as a good previous customer or as a friendly local person” (Gambetta & Hamill, 2005, p.80). In addition, sufficient area knowledge has been found to have a diminishing association with risk, along with avoidance of certain areas (Gambetta & Hamill, 2005; Mayhew, 2000b; Paes-Machado & Nascimento, 2013; Stenning, 1996). However in this study, while drivers did identify certain areas that could be considered ‘risky,’ they indicated that victimisation can occur anywhere. Police statistics support this claim demonstrating that total crime levels across Auckland are spread fairly evenly (New Zealand Police, 2013). The highest total crime rate, per 10,000 population in 2013, was Auckland Central Business District at 977.9, followed by Counties Manukau at 821.2 and lastly Waitemata at 561.2 (New Zealand Police, 2013). Yet while victimisation could occur anywhere, it was pointed out that drivers should never do anything they do not feel comfortable with. All of these factors can be attributed to driver experience and demonstrate the importance of drivers disseminating information amongst themselves and help new drivers identify potential risks.

Aside from learned work experience, a number of visual cues were identified through this study that drivers employ to determine whether to accept or reject a fare, particularly when approached on the street. Drivers are believed to assess passengers across a number of signs rather than any one thing in particular (Gambetta & Hamill,

2005). While some drivers in this study indicated intoxication, youths, and males were visual cues that drivers would try to avoid, most drivers felt that as long as the person did not look dangerous they would take them. Again this appeared to be based on economic insecurity as it was iterated that 'you can wait a long time for a fare.' From these statements it seems reasonable to suggest that drivers use instinct when accepting or rejecting potential passengers and also highlights that pressure to earn a living can lead drivers to accept risk. The answer here it seems would be to provide taxi drivers with a working wage to supplement their income from fares. Instinct has been shown to be a common factor in drivers' decisions to accept a fare (G. Barton, 1996; Gambetta & Hamill, 2005; Mayhew, 2000a; Stenning, 1996), with data also indicating that drivers focus more on dealing with situations as they arise, rather than being significantly bothered with prior screening (Gambetta & Hamill, 2005). Evidence from this study would in part support this, with drivers accepting risk as an example of this; however several drivers also stated that they try to avoid taking hail jobs as much as possible, as phone jobs provide the company with the passengers contact details, thus reducing the risk to the driver.

Under current New Zealand legislation, the only physical means of protection taxi drivers have available are cameras and a monitored telecommunications system. Overall it was discovered amongst those involved in the study that cameras have improved perceptions of safety, and reduced instances of assault, fare evasion, and general trouble making. While there is no statistical evidence to confirm these findings, the simple fact that perceptions of safety have improved demonstrates the success these devices are having. While cameras have been linked to a reduction in assaults against taxi drivers (Mayhew, 2000a), several participants in this study felt cameras did little to protect them from someone who intended to cause them harm. It was suggested that a better alternative be to install a screen to protect drivers from backseat passengers who present

the greatest threat to their safety. It was found that 68% of drivers in New York had partitions in their vehicles and preferred this to cameras (Gambetta & Hamill, 2005) while a Baltimore study found drivers without shields were five times more likely to be assaulted (Stone & Stevens, 1999) Findings from overseas demonstrate that partitions or protective screens are the most effective physical means available to taxi drivers. Unfortunately, current legislation prevents drivers from installing these. While drivers' perceptions of safety have improved, there is still a feeling amongst many that there are not enough protective measures in place.

It was strongly affirmed to the researcher that the most effective means of protection taxi drivers have available is the skill of controlling a situation, to talk to an individual to diffuse conflict. Drivers in New York are said to avoid trouble as much as possible, advocating being calm, patient, and acquiescent in order to appease customers (Gambetta & Hamill, 2005). Similar responses were found in this research with drivers advocating calm, patience, and dialogue when feeling threatened, situations should never be allowed to become inflamed to the point of violence. It is believed that greeting passengers and maintaining eye contact when the passenger enters the cab and throughout the journey can diminish passenger aggression (Mayhew, 2000a). The training provided to drivers operating for Auckland Co-op taxis it was believed help provide the information necessary to manage these situations. An adequate level of training is therefore seen as a vital aspect of ensuring drivers safety.

The smaller taxi companies were frequently referenced as having lower standards which reflected badly on the industry. It is believed that these standards have come about as a result of the deregulation of the industry which promoted a massive growth in the number of taxi cabs on New Zealand roads. In a number of instances around the world, and New Zealand, "oversupply has resulted in fare revenues being spread too thinly

among cab drivers to support quality vehicles, acceptable driver incomes and industry accountability for service” (Schaller, 2007, p. 494). Findings here suggested smaller companies that often consist of part time drivers who operate solely within the night time economy were less likely to adhere to the strict standards required by the New Zealand Transport Agency when issuing taxi licenses. It is important to point out here that this suggestion is based purely on the information provided by drivers operating for Auckland Co-op taxis so there is potential for bias. Large companies tend to have a competitive advantage over their smaller rivals which leads to market power and an uncompetitive telephone order market (Schaller, 2007). This forces the smaller companies to rely on hail jobs on the street which have been pointed out to be the fares that carry the greatest risk. It seems plausible to suggest, then, that drivers from smaller companies face greater threats to their safety over those working for larger organisations due to lower operating standards and an inability to compete within the lucrative telephone market.

#### **7.4 Addressing the Problem**

The need to earn a living is believed to influence drivers’ decisions to take risks (Burnett, 2011; Facey, 2003; Stenning, 1996). Drivers involved in this study frequently commented on the fact that the deregulation of the taxi industry in New Zealand has created an oversupply of taxis. The proliferation of taxis creates a system where fare revenue is spread too thinly across the taxi industry (Schaller, 2007). Drivers are forced to work long hours , to earn enough money to address the problem of economic insecurity. In addition, drivers must pay industry overhead costs to the company under whose name they operate. Research has suggested that these payments contribute to the low net income and long work hours that are found within the taxi industry (City of Portland Revenue Bureau, 2012). While the driver and company are of mutual benefit to each other (Schaller, 2007), lower payments to these companies has been attributed to

fairer wages and shorter working hours for the driver (City of Portland Revenue Bureau, 2012). It would therefore seem apparent, that reducing the cost of this payment could positively influence drivers' decisions to accept risk. While this initiative could see an impact of drivers' financial security, additional regulation would be required to limit the number of taxicabs in operation. This is necessary as the persistence of oversupply within the taxi industry has been recognised as being partially a result of low entry costs (Schaller, 2007).

Findings from this study suggest that many drivers feel the risk of victimisation while working at night is outweighed by the opportunity to earn more money than day time shifts. It would seem then that drivers are unfairly influenced by the need to earn a living. If industry costs are to be maintained, perhaps an alternative is to introduce a working wage for drivers. Long hours and low wages have been attributed to poor customer service, unsafe driving, an increase in the number of traffic accidents, a negative impact on driver health and family life, along with increased costs to the community (City of Portland Revenue Bureau, 2012). While as it currently stands taxi drivers are effectively self-employed owner-operators, if some form of retainer could be provided to drivers, this may positively impact upon victimisation rates, based on drivers' decisions to currently accept risk in order to feel financially secure. In addition, this could help reduce the high level of stress reported by drivers and perhaps even improve drivers' relationships with the community.

## **7.5 Limitations of the Study**

This was an exploratory study aimed at identifying whether an overseas issue was relevant in a New Zealand context. As an exploratory piece of research, a small sample size with a total of 9 participants was used and care must therefore be taken in attempting to generalise the findings of this research. This study has helped identify that

there is need for concern around the occupational experiences of taxi drivers and a larger study would therefore be beneficial.

While it was felt that sufficient data had been gathered for the purposes of this study, the difficulty in recruiting participants limited the length of time available for interviews. In limiting the length of time with interviewees it is possible that some information may have been missed. The information gathered was deemed satisfactory for this study. However, future studies should seek to increase the number of participants along with the time of interviews to ensure the accuracy of the findings.

This study is also limited by the focus on a single taxi company. Whilst this was an active decision made prior to commencing the research, the findings are purely limited to a company that maintains high standards across its fleet. Therefore, as an effective measure for the issues that are affecting taxi drivers for larger firms, these issues may vary when strict standards are not in place. The findings of this study must be taken in regards to this.

## **7.6 Recommendations for Future Research**

There was a clear need recognised in this study to investigate the issues faced by drivers of smaller taxi companies. These individuals were an issue of discontent amongst the drivers interviewed who stipulated that the standards of these taxis portrayed a bad image on the industry as a whole. It was revealed in an industry magazine that the safety features required under current Land Transport legislation are often absent or not functioning in many of the vehicles making up the lower end of the taxi market. It is theorised that these drivers are more at risk of victimisation than those drivers who operate for large organisations based on these lower standards. Furthermore, it was suggested by some participants that these drivers were also more confrontational with passengers that goes against suggestions that the best way to avoid harm is to avoid

conflict with passengers. Investigating customers' experiences with these taxi drivers could therefore provide an alternative perspective on the taxi industry within the night time economy.

Future research is also required to quantitatively establish whether the introduction of cameras has indeed had a positive impact on taxi driver victimisation rates. While many drivers' perceptions of safety had improved since the mandatory introduction of these devices, many drivers also felt that they do little to physically protect them from harm. Investigating if they have been effective will highlight whether there is a further need to introduce additional means of protection such as a shield or partition into vehicles. Such shields have overseas been shown to be incredibly effective in reducing assaults; therefore there should be an attempt to establish whether these are necessary in a New Zealand context.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

Recognising warning signs and instances that place drivers at greater risk was attributed to experience in this research. Visual cues were identified as being a key factor in many drivers' decisions on whether to accept or refuse fares and the importance of recognising risk was also highlighted. The influence of economic insecurity demonstrated that many drivers will not turn down fares if the person does not look to be risky. This would seemingly suggest that drivers are less concerned about prior screening and would rather deal with a situation as it arose. The most important skill drivers can have therefore is the ability to verbally control a situation and not let it escalate into violence. The introduction of cameras has shown to have a positive impact on drivers' perception of safety. Yet these cameras, it was suggested, have done little to physically protect drivers from assault. Research overseas has shown that partitions or screens have had a noticeable impact on assault and homicide rates against taxi drivers.

Unfortunately, however, current regulations do not allow these to be installed in vehicles. It was revealed that smaller taxi companies often fail to have vehicles in compliance with current transport regulations and little is done to prevent these drivers from operating on the roads. It is believed that the lower standards found amongst these drivers in fact places them at greater risk of victimisation.

While a solution to the problem of economic insecurity that is believed to influence drivers' decision to accept risky fares has been put forth, it is evident that future research is necessary. This study has taken an exploratory approach towards an issue about which little is known from a New Zealand context. There would be a significant benefit in conducting a larger study to further understand the issues uncovered during this research and work towards affecting a positive change for taxi drivers' safety in New Zealand.

## **Conclusion**

It has been recognised in conducting this research that the issues affecting taxi drivers are relevant across day and night. Prior to commencing this study, it was assumed that the issues relevant to the night time economy were independent of those experienced during the day. However, as typical with grounded theory research, the focus of concern evolved as the study progressed. It was quickly realised that drivers concerns are mutually exclusive across day and night, with the inhibitions inspired by the consumption of alcohol and drugs within the night time economy exacerbating the problems and issues taxi drivers face. A stressful job characterised by economic insecurity, fatigue, and boredom is further made worse by the fear of victimisation inspired by the hedonistic excesses of the night time economy. Taxi drivers perform a vital service in catering to the transport needs of those revelling in inner city areas at night, at a time when public transport is unavailable. Yet while providing for these transport needs they are at great risk of falling victim to criminal acts such as robbery, assault, and potentially murder.

With a number of participants of this study having been assaulted, and most drivers knowing of someone who had been assaulted, the risks they face as taxi drivers are very real. It was perhaps not surprising to find that these instances all occurred at night, and overwhelmingly it was reported that the chance of being victimised was greater at night. Yet while drivers feel the police take this risk seriously, and are helpful when dealing with a serious situation, there is a feeling that the police are too busy to assist them if their problem is not of a serious nature. In particular, there is a need to look at changes to legislation that protect drivers from people who fail to pay the fare, matching countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia who currently have such legislation in place. While the risks drivers face are perceived as being greater at night, most

drivers are not deterred by this risk based on the opportunities of greater earnings associated with faster, shorter fares with cash payments. A potential solution to the high rates of taxi driver victimisation that was identified in this study could be the reduction of industry overhead costs or alternatively the introduction of a working wage for drivers. It is felt that this would decrease drivers' decisions to accept risky fares as it could alleviate the financial pressures most drivers reported facing.

For drivers managing the risks that they face, identifying risky passengers was based on visual cues and the specified destination with drivers adopting somewhat of a risk versus reward attitude towards this decision. The ability to identify risk it is said comes with experience on the job, this experience as well in dealing with passengers and being able to control a situation is said to be the most fundamental aspect of protection for taxi drivers. This is in part due to any physical barriers of protection being unavailable to drivers under current regulations. The recent introduction of mandatory camera systems has also been shown to have had a significant effect on drivers' perception of safety.

This research has shown that taxi drivers have a risky occupation and more is needed to be done to identify means by which the risks they face can be reduced. Occupying a fundamental role in the transport industry, protecting these individuals is essential in maintaining a vibrant, alluring, and safe nightlife within the city centres of this country.

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## Appendix A: Ethics Approval Form



A U T E C  
S E C R E T A R I A T

18 October 2013

John Buttle

Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear John

Re Ethics Application: **13/265 The issues faced by taxi drivers as part of their occupation.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the AUT University Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 17 October 2016.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 17 October 2016;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 17 October 2016 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence.

AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this. If your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply there.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz).

All the very best with your research,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K O'Connor', written in a cursive style.

Kate O'Connor

Executive Secretary

**Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee**

## Appendix B: Recruitment Advertisement

12 November 2013



To Whom It May Concern

My name is Matt Huddleston and I am currently working towards completion of my thesis for my Master's Degree in Criminology at AUT University.

I am investigating the issues that affect taxi drivers as part of their occupation.

Over the following months I will be interviewing participants to uncover these issues and work towards identifying ways in which these can be resolved.

For this I need your help. If you are interested in participating in this research and have been working as a taxi driver for two or more years, please feel free to contact me via email at [matt.huddleston26@gmail.com](mailto:matt.huddleston26@gmail.com) or via phone on 021-207-4759 to organise an interview time. I expect the interviews will take between 60 – 90 minutes of your time.

I very much appreciate your consideration on this matter and look forward to working with you soon.

Many Thanks

Matt Huddleston.

## Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet

# Participant Information Sheet



### **Project Title**

The issues faced by taxi drivers as part of their occupation.

### **An Invitation**

My name is Matt Huddleston and I am currently studying towards my Master of Arts in Social Sciences under the supervision of Dr John Buttle.

Evidence from overseas countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia has indicated that Taxi Drivers are one of the most at risk occupations when it comes to workplace crime and violence. I am therefore interested in exploring whether these findings are similar in New Zealand. I also seek to investigate any other issues that you as a Taxi Driver may face in the course of your daily role.

I would like to examine how crimes affect yourself and your colleagues and how this impedes your ability to perform your role effectively.

Each driver that participates in this study will help me develop a more concise understanding of the issues you face and help to identify ways in which risk can be minimised.

I would like you to be a part of my research. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time if you choose to

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

The purpose of this research is to understand whether your occupation places you at a greater risk to criminal activity and highlight any other issues that you feel affect your ability to perform your job effectively. The end result will be a thesis for the completion of my Master's Degree with the potential also to be published in an academic journal.

### **How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You have been selected to participate because you are a Taxi Driver in New Zealand.

### **What will happen in this research?**

For this research I will be collecting information in the form of interviews.

I will be asking a number of drivers to take part in semi-structured interviews. The purpose of these interviews is to understand your perspective on this topic. The interviews will be recorded onto audio tape, which will be kept confidential. Only I and my supervisor will have access to the tape and will transcribe the conversation so I can analyse the results. Your name will not be linked to the information. Everything talked about in the interview is to be kept completely confidential.

### **What are the discomforts and risks?**

Some of the questions I will ask are about circumstances where you may have experienced stress, discomfort or even physical harm. You may feel uncomfortable answering some of these questions. It may remind you of negative experiences or bring up some negative emotions.

### **How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

If you do feel uncomfortable about any of the questions, you can choose to pull out of the study at any time. Your participation in this study is **completely voluntary**. You may decide to withdraw at any time. If the study affects you in a negative way, and you would like to talk to someone about this, I can help you to find a counsellor or someone else to listen to you and help you.

### **What are the benefits?**

This research will seek to identify ways in which any risks can be minimised through firstly identifying them and secondly examining procedures that can be implemented to achieve this goal. The findings will be distributed in order to benefit all taxi drivers.

### **How will my privacy be protected?**

All of the information I get from the study will not be linked to you. You will be assigned an ID number and pseudonym, and the forms that connect the ID number to your name will be stored away securely. If I use any of your words or comments in the final report it will not be linked to you.

### **What are the costs of participating in this research?**

It will not cost you any money to participate in this research, but it will take up some of your time. The interviews will take approximately 60-90 minutes.

### **How do I agree to participate in this research?**

If you wish to participate in this research then please complete the attached consent form.

### **Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

Yes. A summary of this study will be provided for distribution by the New Zealand Taxi Federation to its members.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr John Buttle, [john.buttle@aut.ac.nz](mailto:john.buttle@aut.ac.nz), +64 9 921 9999 extension 8964

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Researcher: Matt Huddleston, [matt.huddleston26@gmail.com](mailto:matt.huddleston26@gmail.com)

Primary Supervisor: Dr John Buttle, [john.buttle@aut.ac.nz](mailto:john.buttle@aut.ac.nz), +64 9 921 9999 extension 8964

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *18/10/2013*, AUTEK Reference number *13/265*

## Appendix D: Participant Consent Form

# Participant Consent Form



*Project title:* The issues faced by taxi drivers as part of their occupation.

*Project Supervisor:* Dr John Buttle

*Researcher:* Matt Huddleston

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 10 August 2013
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one):  
Yes  No

Participants Signature:.....

Participants Name :.....

Participants Contact Details (if appropriate):.....

Date:.....

*Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 18/10/2013*

*AUTEC Reference number 13/265*

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.*