

***The Trials and Tribulations of University of Johannesburg
Students: Transport as Social Justice for Students***

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Abstract: Scholarship at universities in South Africa tends to focus on access to higher education, fees, decolonisation, and curricula. All these topics are essential and contribute to the literature on South African universities, particularly in post-Apartheid, where the imbalances created by Apartheid had to be explicitly addressed by the post-Apartheid governments within university education, where black people had minimal access to universities. However, this contribution critically discusses an issue that does not appear significant at face value. The article addresses access to safe and affordable transport for students, especially young women, or what is also referred to in this paper as female students residing in working-class areas in Johannesburg. The paper uses in-depth interviews with students to demonstrate that access to safe and reliable transport continues to elude students and young women in university education. Sexual harassment and violence are stories told by interviewees longing for safe and affordable transport as they commute to and from campuses in Johannesburg.

Keywords: Public transport, teaching and learning, students, university

Introduction

The Apartheid regime used transport to enforce racial segregation in the sense that whites had access to public transport that the Apartheid State subsidized and was in the form of trams and buses. On the other hand, Apartheid forced blacks to use overcrowded and expensive transport, and what made it worse was that Blacks needed transport desperately because the Apartheid regime forced them to live in places that were far away from workplaces. The tram system was displaced in the 1960s and replaced by buses, ensuring whites could access a reliable and cheap public bus system (Khosa, 1998; Pirie, 2003).

Between 1955 and 1957, from Alexandra township near the affluent suburb of Sandton in Johannesburg, black residents organised a bus strike called “Azikwela” which means “We will not ride” in English. Nelson Mandela was among those who supported the bus boycott in Alexandra. One of the outcomes of the strike was a slight improvement in the bus system in the township. The boycott forced the Public Utility Transport Corporation (PUTCO) to reduce bus fares in Alexandra (Bonner & Nieftagodien, 2008).

Minibus taxis, or what the article refers to as taxis, were introduced in the 1970s as a response to very poor transport access for blacks who were displaced by the Apartheid regime to faraway places with limited economic opportunities and jobs (Govender 2016). Taxis are a privately owned transport system used by the South African public, mainly from the townships in Johannesburg. This mode of transport is unsafe, violent, expensive, generally unreliable, and overcrowded (Schaefer, 2024).

The democratic government of South Africa was supposed to deliver safe, reliable, and affordable public transport. However, moves towards privatization and austerity measures were introduced by the ANC-led government in the 1990s. It became clear that safe and cheap public transport was not on the horizon. There has been a decline in what a minimal Metro train system and the Bus Rapid Transit System, which the city of Johannesburg introduced in the 2000s to cover minimal areas in Johannesburg, and the Gautrain, a train system moving generally middle-class people from Johannesburg to Pretoria and the OR Tambo International Airport is expensive and inaccessible to working-class commuters (Risimati, et al. 2020; Domingo, 2023).

In 1994, universities and technikons (now called universities of technologies) enrolled 495,000 students (Department of Monitoring and Evaluation, 2014); this number increased by just above 1 million in 2024 (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2024). The 100% increase in the number of students enrolled in public universities had to do with the massification and increased access for black communities and black women in particular. While this was a commendable action by the government in post-Apartheid South Africa, the government never matched access to affordable and safe transport for students from working-class communities and rural communities and women students in particular. Ideally, students should be staying in accommodation near universities; however, South Africa's public universities had a shortage of about half a million beds (Johnson, 2025).

University student transport, particularly those who are young women, is an issue that tends to be ignored by policymakers and academic publications; the focus tends to be on access to university education and fees, and later, it became accommodation (Mzileni & Mkhize, 2019; Langa, 2017; Mhlongo et al., 2021). Therefore, this article fills the gap in the emerging literature on student transport in South Africa (Du Toit, 2013; Mbara et al., 2013; Ofentse & Zuidgeest, 2020). Based on in-depth interviews, the article focuses on young women at the University of Johannesburg. This university generally caters to students from working-class townships and rural areas.

Researching public transport and students

Established in 2005 as part of the amalgamation of some universities in Johannesburg, UJ has seven faculties and a College of Business and Economics. The university prides itself on having more than 50,000 students, of which 300 are international students from 80 countries. UJ is one of the largest contact universities in South Africa, making transportation critical to its operations (UJ, 2021). I am a social justice researcher employed at the university, and my job is to use scholarship to point out the fault lines as far as social and economic justice issues are concerned. In pursuit of social justice, some scholars, particularly those engaged in the field of social justice, must go against the grain in their scholarship so that the voices of students coming from working-class communities are included in the discourses surrounding social justice and education.

Ten UJ students – seven females and three males – between the ages of 20 and 25, took part in this research. The participants were from various areas, including Soweto, Orange Farm, Alberton, Tembisa, Roodepoort, and Diepsloot. They were interviewed in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown period. All of the participants come from working-class areas within the Gauteng province, which is the biggest economic hub in South Africa, and frequently experience transport challenges. It must be noted that not all students at UJ use taxis; there are those who come from affluent families and are generally doing full-time studies and based on the main campus called Auckland Park Kingsway (APK campus), which is the largest campus (Mbara & Celliers, 2013).

Ethical clearance to conduct the research was obtained from UJ in 2019. Participation was voluntary and written informed consent was obtained before conducting the interviews. Their rights were also read to them beforehand. Furthermore, to ensure the safety and protection of the participants, pseudonyms were used instead of their real names to maintain anonymity. The interviews primarily focused on the journey from the working-class areas to the university, addressing various topics related to this aspect of transportation. For example, the researcher wanted to know: At what time did the preparations for the journey start? What were the experiences and encounters from the students' places of residence to the taxi, inside the taxi, and up to the completion of the journey? For instance, how did transportation impact class attendance? What did you encounter as you were traveling to and from campus? How did transport injustice affect you as a student and as a young woman? The participants' responses were transcribed verbatim, and direct quotes are used to support the study's findings below.

Time management and public transport

The migrant labour system and various laws and practices that led to the removal of black people from places that were for economic activities, such as cities and towns, placed a heavy transportation burden on black workers and black communities. For example, travelling from the outskirts to the city centre is costly from both a financial and time perspective. The scarcity of the morning trains moving from the township to Johannesburg led to overcrowding in the trains and many workers arriving late for work in the inner city and the industrial areas (Pirie 1986). Coming late to class at universities can have devastating consequences. A student may miss a lecture, resulting in poor

performance on tests or examinations. Additionally, their tardiness can disrupt the flow of the class, impacting both the lecturer and fellow students. Ultimately, being consistently late to class has a negative impact on both the academic experience of the student and the overall classroom environment. At Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU), a private university in Lebanon, late arrival incurs a penalty unless the student has a valid excuse. Furthermore, any instance of lateness is treated as an absence, even if it is caused by delays in traffic, which is beyond the control of the students (Malek, 2014).

In the current study, Xu, a female student living in Soweto near Johannesburg, stated that she has to wake up very early to avoid being late for class that starts at 08h00 or 09h00. In this regard, she stated the following:

'... I need to be early to get to campus in order to avoid traffic. So, I wake up at 05h00, and I need to be out of the house at 06h30' (Xu, female student, Soweto).

Likewise, Phira, a male student residing in Diepsloot in the west of Johannesburg, echoes the same sentiment:

'... I am in taxi by 16h00 because around 17h00 I know many people are at the taxi rank and there will be long queues ... I think I get to Diepsloot around 19h00...' (Phira, male student, Diepsloot).

Similarly, Ku, who resides in Orange Farm, a township located in the south of Johannesburg, emphasised the necessity of waking up early in the morning to make sure that she is on time for morning classes. Ku elaborated on this point,

'I usually wake up at, like, 05h30. If I'm late, it's like 06h00, and I need, like, an hour and half to get ready, and then maybe before 08h00 or 07h30, I will be out of the house, and then I will get to campus at, like, 09h00. So, I try to leave campus before 17h00 in winter; I have to make sure I leave campus early so that I don't get home when it's too dark; but in summer I can leave campus at, like, 17h30 ...' (Ku, female student, Orange Farm).

Students such as Ku are also not able to leave campus late because they do not want to get to their homes when it is dark for safety reasons. Unlike in Europe and other countries of the Global North, students in South Africa are extremely constrained by the lack of public transport in the evenings. That imposes a curfew of a special type, as they

are unable to stay on campus and use study facilities like libraries until very late at night, as their counterparts in Europe and the West are able to do. This finding aligns with a study that investigated student transport in both Berlin and Johannesburg, revealing that students in Johannesburg perceived the city's public transport system as imposing a curfew on them, restricting their mobility in the evenings (Monakali, 2015).

Mode of transport used, challenges, and the impact on students

Taxis typically do not leave their stations until they are full to capacity, leading to delays for university students who rely on this mode of transport. In many cases, they end up missing not just classes but also examinations and tests, even though they have made adequate preparation on their side to avoid arriving late. Avru, who is a female student residing in the west of Johannesburg, elaborates on this point:

'I had an oral exam the other day, so I woke up and I got dressed, and the taxi came early which was fine, and I got to the rank a bit early. Then I had to wait inside the taxi for about an hour before it filled up, and, [in my] mind, I am like "it's not gonna move until it's full." So I realised that, okay, my oral exam will start in about 30 minutes and there were only two of us in the taxi ... it took me to be in that scenario for me to make up another plan so I had to call up – call people – to sort of get transport' (Avru, female student, Roodepoort).

Mpume, a female student who lives in Alberton in the south of Johannesburg, complained about the buses that take longer to travel from Alberton to Johannesburg. She lamented the following:

'... Buses take longer – the trips are longer – and takes little more time because you are in the bus for more like an hour or hour and half. Due to traffic as well, sometimes, but if there is no traffic you can take about an hour, and you need to have time, prepare yourself for class, and if you [are] not in time, you will not have time to look at your books, even though you have studied, but you need more time to prepare yourself ... if you are late, it kind of impact[s] on your energy level, definitely ...' (Mpume, female student, Alberton).

The psychological effects of these delays on the buses are expressed by Mpume when she points out that the delays negatively impact her ability to prepare for classes.

As such, the energy levels become low, and that definitely impacts concentration levels and focus on what is being taught in class. Riding a bus generally leads to anxiety, even in the developed world, because students may fear that the bus might be late or full. However, in the South African context, where there are no viable alternative modes of transport, a bus ride exacerbates anxiety (Gill, 2021).

The national transport survey conducted by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) in 2020 confirms the above-mentioned findings. According to the survey, transport conditions deteriorated between 2013 and 2020. For example, travel time for all modes of transport escalated. However, students using private transport when travelling to universities were not affected by this change. Using private transport, it probably takes about 45 minutes to travel from Orange Farm to the University of Johannesburg. Students using different public transport experienced long travel times in the morning, ranging from 59 minutes to 91 minutes.

StatsSA (2020) further reported that in some cases, students spent almost 66% of their income on public transport in 2020. High transport costs and long distances travelled by students to and from universities negatively affect the participation of students, as they are compelled to use their limited financial resources, originally intended for food and other academic-related items, for transport (cited in Ofentse & Zuidgeest, 2020).

This research also shows that public transport costs to and from UJ are astronomically high. Bhu, a student from Tembisa in Kempton Park (near Johannesburg) who uses taxis, states that, *'Okay, I get allowance from NSFAS [National Student Financial Aid Scheme]. It is R1 500; it was R1 400 [in] 2019 and it increased to R1 500 per month in 2020 and 2021 ... I spend around R1 000 [per month using taxis]'* (Bhu, male student, Tembisa). This shows that two thirds of Bhu's income is spent on public transport, making it the student's largest expense overall.

However, Tso, a female who resides in Soweto, received supplementary income from her mother, resulting in her total income being double to that of Bhu. She said:

'... The one [source of funds], it's obviously from [a] bursary, NSFAS, and the other one, it's from my mother really, that's the source of income, I get allowance ... Combined, it would be like R3 000 ... to travel from home to school [University of Johannesburg]. I will literally maybe put R 1 000 aside to use it for transport' (Tso, female student, Soweto).

One of the findings of research commissioned by the Gauteng government (2020: ii) was that in 2020 about 6 out of 10 households in Johannesburg spent more than 10% of their “household income on public transport”. This was an extremely credible survey because the sample had a population close to 7,000. It appears as if transport costs are becoming an issue in the Gauteng Province. The Gauteng City-Region Observatory, a research organisation supporting the Gauteng government with research, also confirmed that transport costs were in many ways undermining the freedom of movement for residents of Gauteng. In fact, the costs for transport between 2011 and 2023 increased by 17% in some instances.

At the heart of the problem is that transport is privatized and public transport in the form of buses and trains has been eroded. South Africans find it more expensive to get around town. The survey’s population was about 14,000 residents of the province. One of the striking conclusions of the survey is that 16 million residents are spending more money on transport than they did in 2017 (Thorne, 2024).

Other data confirms what is being stated by surveys and individual testimonies. Despite being an economic hub of South Africa, Johannesburg’s transport is expensive, unreliable, violent and chaotic. Disorder is the norm, and this applies to the metro rail system, buses, and taxis. The bus rapid transit system called Re Vaya (we are going) which was launched 16 years ago seems to be going nowhere. According to Mashale, the City of Johannesburg Municipality did not receive a government transport grant worth R313m because the bus system had problems, such as poor management of revenue, low passenger numbers, reduction of the number of operational buses and generalised chaos. The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA, 2022) revealed that “South Africa has an urban access gap of 92%, based on the length of the rapid transit lines per million people”. The DBSA also state that most South Africa rely on informal or private taxis as their mode of transport.

Violent encounters

A study published in 2013, involving a sample size of 508 taxi drivers in Mumbai, shed light on the prevalence of stress and anxiety among taxi drivers. The study found that various factors such as pressure to meet financial targets, traffic congestion, and

interaction with passengers and other road users contributed to the heightened stress levels experienced by the majority of taxi drivers.

According to Eagle and Kwele (2021), UJ students using taxis spoke about accident risks, reckless driving, bullying and abuse between drivers and passengers, crime, sexual harassment, and basic violations of the rights of women. All these deviant acts caused anxiety, stress, and fear among the interviewees. One of the major concerns regarding the taxi industry is the persistently poor working conditions. Taxi drivers frequently vent their anger due to the long working hours and the generalised precariousness of their work (Fobosi, 2021). Students in Johannesburg also face challenges similar to those faced by passengers in Mumbai.

However, the case below indicates that violence in taxis can be extreme, to the extent that young black women who are students are often exposed to gun violence. Bi, who resides in Soweto, has this to say about gun violence:

'... It was on a Saturday, and you know on Saturdays we often write [exams] around 12h00 ... So, I got into a taxi at round 08h00, and the taxi only left around 09h30 or just before 10h00, because it's already after 07h00 so taxis take time to get full. So, this lady paid [taxi fare] with R100. When the taxi got to Mzimhlophe [an area in Soweto], she then asked for her change because we all have paid. So, he [taxi driver] said, "I will give you your change," so this lady kept on going and she's talking to a male taxi driver, and I think they were more or less about the same age. He got angry and actually pulled out a gun and asked, "Do you still want your change?" and she said "no" and that was the end of it. So, she is harassed and she didn't get her change ...' (Bi, male student, Soweto).

In the above incident, the female victim experienced trauma, abuse, and bullying at the hands of a male taxi driver. In addition, the student who was about to write an examination at the university also suffered from fear, anxiety, and stress due to the driver's actions. The incident in the taxi reflects the issue of gender-based violence that women face on a daily basis in South Africa (Eagle and Kwele, 2021).

The cost of living in cities, such as Johannesburg, is extremely high. Transport, food, electricity are expensive in South Africa, and they tend to increase and surplus inflation. Fuel prices are exorbitant and have a negative impact on the affordability of transport. The fact that South Africa does not have what can be regarded as reliable subsidies transport make life extremely difficult, especially those low-income households

(Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice and Dignity Group, 2025). Despite being the dominant mode of transport, taxis are expensive because they are not regulated properly. What makes them to be expensive is that many South Africa are unemployed and those who are working earn low wages. According to Ngubane (2017:1), “The driving behavior of most taxi drivers is usually reckless as they have a habit of breaking most of the rules of the road and taxi fares are not stagnant, but alternate due to peak time and weather. In this industry, there are no strict laws or rules to guide their activity, and as there are issues with government officials owning taxis, regulation is not prioritized”. Taxi drivers, as argued by Fobosi (2019) are precarious workers who work long hours, and their employment is not formalised.

Tribalism tends to affect relations between passengers, drivers, and taxi driver workers. There exists a perception that Zulu-speaking taxi drivers and taxi rank workers, who dominate the industry in Gauteng, tend to be rude (Ntuli, 2017). Although this issue is beyond the scope of the paper, it is acknowledged as a complex historical matter. However, the research unearthed tribalism and often adversarial relationships in taxis as a mode of transport.

Expanding on this matter, Phu remarked,

‘... This other time, I was at Bree taxi rank [in Johannesburg]. So, I asked this guy where can I get the taxi to Auckland Park; that was my first time so, the guy, he is Zulu [-speaking] and said, “if you want me to help you, you better use Zulu, not English, because here you [are] not at school, you [are] at the taxi rank, use your English where you learnt it. Here we don’t use English ...”’ (Phu, male student, Diepsloot).

The safety of students in general is an issue that affects them throughout their academic lives. Even after being dropped off by a taxi and on their way to a taxi station, they are continuously surrounded by fear and anxiety. There are many painful and distressing stories of students being preyed on by criminal elements in the Braamfontein, Auckland Park, and Doornfontein areas where students have a very strong presence. It has to be noted that UJ has attempted to provide security in places that are near campuses. Despite all these efforts, students are robbed of valuable academic items such as their laptops and smartphones. Phe, who is also a student living in the Bosmont area in the west of Johannesburg, elaborates on this point:

'Even just walking in general in Johannesburg, in that whole Bree [a street in Johannesburg], Bram [Braamfontein in Johannesburg] area, like generally I don't feel safe, but that just makes me more vigilant if anything ... I have heard [a] lot of stories about people getting mugged, and I also got mugged back in PE [Port Elizabeth] ... So, I always say a prayer as I walk ... as soon as I get close to an area where I can see there are those security cars from UJ; if I see one [car], then I will ask them to escort me as I walk to gate 2 ...' (Phe, female student, Bosmont).

Phu had an unpleasant encounter in a taxi, which he recounts as follows:

'Remember this other time, my friend was coming from Pretoria. So, in that taxi, there were two guys in a taxi; when they get to the forest, they stopped the car and said: "Everybody out, we want everything that you have". They took out the guns ...' (Phu, male student, Diepsloot).

The impact of public transport on students

Using public transport is generally stressful for students, and this is exacerbated by the fact that South Africa has a chronic transport crisis. Time is an important resource for students. Spending a lot of time traveling does not only cause stress and anxiety among students but also affects them negatively in other ways. One of the reasons for the poor performance of students is the logistics of transport to and from universities (Schoeman, Van Zyl and Smego, 2015).

With regard to transport-related stress, Ku commented:

'So, I would have to wake up extra early as an undergraduate student, especially in [the] first year. I was always tired. Sometimes I would get home and just drop my bag on the bed and sleep because I am so tired. I would have spent four hours of my day ... commuting and being abused by so many people on the way. So, it's exhausting in undergraduate because we [are] adjusting to school and we [are] also adjusting to transport, and there are other factors that are in the way; so, the productivity is low. Like, for you to get distinctions, you literally have to fight, like physically and emotionally, because of the transport. It adds to the weight that you have to carry as a student' (Ku, female student, Orange Farm).

Ku spent four hours travelling to and from the university, and the journey is often accompanied by abuse and various forms of violence. As shown by the testimony of the interviewee, the productivity of students is undermined by the time delays and encounters on public transport. The emotional and physical burden carried by students is heavy, and it seems as if policymakers and university management have not responded adequately to ease the burden on students.

The stress and anxiety caused by public transport caused Kwa, another student, to conclude:

'Personally, I don't recommend public transport to students. I feel like students should actually use private transport because, you know, there's a lot happening in the taxi industry right – in public transport. Some of the things are very traumatic, you know. Students get robbed, you know; some, they lose their lives ...' (Kwa, male student, Tembisa).

Trains are not an option

Students were asked why they were not using trains to travel to and from campus. It became clear from their answers that the train was not an option because of overcrowding and security concerns. In this regard, Xu elaborated as follows:

'Ah, trains, no. Trains, no! It's a definite no because trains are not safe. Trains are very, very bad. My grandmother used trains back in Katlehong. She got mugged, I don't know how many times. She got pushed, she once fell and broke her leg, you know? It's like all the people trying to be inside the train. It gets very packed, it's stuffy. You get robbed because now it's packed, there's like a lot of people. You also, like, considering COVID, and I don't think [the] train is the safest place to be' (Xu, male student, Soweto).

However, the situation described above has worsened because many Metrorail lines from the working-class areas outside the city centre of Johannesburg are dysfunctional due to cable and rail theft and vandalism. This has aggravated the chronic road traffic situation, causing an extreme increase in traffic volumes as people move away from rail transport to road transport. According to Williams (2021), the problem dates back to the 1980s when the apartheid regime began privatising the railway system and moving the railway police to the South African Police (SAP). To demonstrate the gravity

of the transport situation, in 2019, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reported that Ramaphosa was stuck in a train for four hours on a journey that was supposed to take 45 minutes (BBC, 2019). Furthermore, overcrowding in the trains makes fighting the COVID-19 pandemic more difficult due to constant overcrowding and the non-existence of physical distancing, as alluded to by Xu at the end of the above excerpt.

It is austerity, privatisation and corruption

Interestingly, Williams (2021) traces part of the transport crisis South Africa is experiencing today back to 1971, when the rail policy was changed to promote the transportation of goods on the road. Following the intervention of private consultants, the South African Railways and Harbours (SARH) was renamed the South African Transport Services (SATS) in 1981. The consultants introduced a neoliberal ideology into the transport system by creating business units that were to make a profit, not to serve the public good. Williams (2021) also highlights the continuity in the privatisation and underinvestment in rail transport from the days of the then State President P.W. Botha and former State President Thabo Mbeki, who served the second democratically elected government. Williams' (2021, 1) comments:

In April 1990, after 80 years of direct government and parliamentary control of the railways, Sats became a limited liability company under the name of Transnet Limited. The National Party administrations of PW Botha and FW de Klerk were in favour of privatisation of major state-owned entities, an approach that was broadly adopted by the first ANC administration under Nelson Mandela. But the push for privatisation in the 1990s was later abandoned by the ANC under President Thabo Mbeki.

The problem is compounded by Metrorail's near collapse due to poor governance, lack of investment, and corruption. Indeed, theft and vandalism are the reasons for the Metrorail trains in Gauteng and the Western Cape not functioning properly. For example, Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula told parliament that 142 train stations in Gauteng did not have electricity – something that is crucial for the functioning of the electric train (Nkosi, 2020). This means that the students are not able to use this mode of transport, as shown by this study. On the other hand, the Rea Vaya bus system, which was established

in Johannesburg and other areas in 2009, is currently facing a crisis primarily due to its limited coverage. Ubisi (2016, iv) also stated other problems: 'Yet, seven years later, the Rea Vaya BRT [Bus Rapid Transit] system has not managed to provide a reliable and accessible alternative mode of public transport. The level of service – particularly the electronic system – appears to be failing many of the respondents, and the low area coverage was seen as a major setback.' Despite attempts to reduce prices for students, not even a single student interviewed uses the Gautrain, a mini-speed train moving middle-class people in some parts of Gauteng (Molosankwe, 2021).

Having discussed the sources of the public transport crisis, the students were asked to come up with proposals to address their transport concerns.

Some proposals and recommendations

Kwa's recommendation that students must refrain from using trains to travel to UJ is disheartening and shows that public transport is in a state of disaster. For example, many Metrorail lines in Gauteng and the Western Cape have been dysfunctional for many years. That is why passengers who would have used Metrorail services are using taxis and buses as an alternative mode of transport. Even when it was still operational, students would avoid using the Metrorail service due to the long delays of up to four hours at a time (Hlatshwayo, 2019). As stated earlier, public transport was part of the first and second industrial revolutions. The first electric train was invented in 1924 in South Africa; Johannesburg had a bus network in the 1940s. Today, in 2023, the state is unable to deliver a safe and reliable transport system to cater to students from working-class families and their working-class parents. Chronic austerity measures and corruption have disabled the state from addressing public transport problems and other social and economic challenges (Munzhedzi, 2016). Du Toit (2013) advised that solutions to transport problems can only come from those using different modes of transport, as they know exactly what is wrong and what is right. Following Du Toit's (2013) counsel, students were asked to make recommendations and proposals to improve their transport.

Kwa spoke about the need to train taxi drivers so that they have better relations with passengers and other road users. In this regard, Kwa commented,

'So, I feel like you should be training – training to be a better driver. There should be education. They should try to teach taxi drivers how to be good drivers. Actually, there should be awareness. They should spread awareness in terms of roads, in terms of how you should treat passengers, how you should drive, and everything' (Kwa, Tembisa).

Bi was extremely concerned about gender issues and general harassment at the taxi ranks and inside taxis. In this regard, Bi articulated the following:

'So, I feel that even before we can try and implement technology within the taxi industry, we need to start addressing gender equality. There's so many issues that we need to deal with before we actually talk about technology in the taxi industry'. (Bi, Soweto)

Ku suggested that the solution is to ensure that students are accommodated near the university so that they do not have to travel long hours to and from universities. In the meantime, Bhu suggested that UJ, the state, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), and the Department of Transport should provide transport services for students living in the townships.

UJ currently provides accommodation to only a very small percentage of its student population on campuses. However, it has been suggested that by accommodating around 80% of the student population, the transport problems faced by the students will be alleviated (Mbara and Celliers, 2013). This view is supported by the White Paper for Post-School Education (DHET, 2013), which already highlighted student accommodation as a pressing issue in 2013. The White Paper argued, "There is a grave shortage of student accommodation in universities, as well as poor living conditions in many of the existing residences. Very low numbers of first-year contact students are accommodated in university residences, which is likely a contributing factor to poor performance in the first year of study' (DHET 2013, 33). Despite making some progress in providing accommodation to certain students, the challenge persists as many continue to reside in townships located far from the university (UJ, 2020). For this reason, the partnership between the university and the state (DHET and the Department of Transport) through the provision of buses and bigger taxis to ferry students between their homes and the university may help ameliorate the transport crisis facing the students. This will provide a safer and more reliable alternative, ensuring that students are no longer reliant on

violent and unreliable modes of transportation to get to their classes. New applications in managing transport demand and supply for student transport to and from UJ campuses may assist in providing transport services to students in the envisioned state and university-run public transportation system in the future. The proposed vehicles could utilise the existing Rea Vaya bus routes to transport the students in the future.

Elected representatives of students at the university should hold workshops and meetings with the students to ensure that female students and other students can provide a critique of the existing crisis pertaining to transport. Students will also need to be provided with ample space to formulate solutions and proposals to ensure that students can access safe and affordable transport that promotes dignity and respect for women and students in general. Safe buses organized by the university and DHET will have to operate to inculcate accountability to students and the Student Representative Council (SRC), representing students who desperately need safe and affordable transportation.

Conclusion

As shown in this paper, all technological revolutions were not just about inventions that changed production and the relations of production. In essence, technological innovation in the form of these revolutions had corresponding changes in the transport systems. On the other hand, debates on transport tend not to recognise the fact that all technological surges also entail the role of new technologies in 'revolutionising' the transport system. Interventions and management of student transport and mobility have to be a joint partnership between the state and universities. In the long term, the South African state has to deal with the public transport crisis (Luke, 2018). Linked to that, many South Africans own cars because public transport is not reliable. Having many cars on the road is the cause of traffic jams that affect students and those interviewed in this study. The findings of this study and others demonstrate that there should be policy and legislation governing student transport because students have very special and specific transport needs (Mokwena & Zuidgeest, 2020). This research has also shown that students are crying out for help. Safer public transport is needed to improve their academic performance and quality of life. Alongside that, the students are proposing that student accommodation near universities is one of the long-term solutions to the student transport problem in South Africa. Indirectly, the students and

the researcher of this article, are imploring academics, intellectuals, and the state to shift their focus away from esoteric debates that have no relevance to the daily challenges experienced by students. South Africa is a country that urgently needs to reverse its deepening underdevelopment trajectory, and this can only be achieved when almost all energies, resources, and intellect are directed at finding solutions to student transport and other developmental needs.

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