
EXPLORING THE SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF MIGRANT DRIVERS IN THE E-HAILING SECTOR

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DECLARATION

I, Kwanele Gama do solemnly declare that this research report is my own original and unaided work and that I have adequately acknowledged and referenced all the sources used. I also certify that thoroughgoing effort has been taken to ensure that the presentation of this work does not infringe academic and ethical regulations governing research protocols established by Witwatersrand's Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical). I further declare that this research report has not been submitted previously for any degree or examination at any other university.

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Abstract

There is a growing body of research documenting the experiences of gig workers; couriers and drivers connecting with clients through apps, across the globe (Webster 2020; Dubbelman 2021; Oatway 2021; Macmillan 2022; Marcano 2018). Displaying that despite its predicted benefits, the rise of technology-based companies has been found to present unexpected forms of precarity for labourers. What has not yet been captured by research are the livelihood experiences of migrants in the transport industry, especially in the highly competitive and often violent public transport industry of South Africa. Another wanting aspect of migration literature is the comparison of international migrants and domestic migrants in a given industry, something which can help shed some much-needed light as xenophobic ideas become institutionalised in the country. Therefore, migrants in South Africa's public transport industry, not only face taxi violence but also xenophobia, and precarity brought forth by app-based employment. Their experiences provide an interesting area of study.

Accordingly, this paper seeks to answer these two questions; "What are the livelihood strategies of e-hailers in Johannesburg?" and "How does migration status affect livelihood outcomes in this industry?". The objective is to highlight how drivers in Johannesburg make a living through Uber/Bolt and the challenges they face in forging a sustainable livelihood. The secondary objective is to find out if international migrants have different livelihood outcomes even in an emerging economy that is neither formal nor informal. This work is done in an environment where migrants are often accused of stealing jobs, literature (Weda and de Villiers 2019) also suggests that they face numerous obstacles in entering the South African labour market. However, there are also indications that migrants may have certain competitive advantages over citizens in the form of entrepreneurial dexterity (Lamb, Kunene, and Dyili 2019). This paper explores these competing claims, giving deeper context to such studies by observing the livelihood strategies of two migrant groups in the same employment type.

Two major observable survival strategies used by drivers involved avoidance out of fear of crime and harassment by taxi operators, and the second being side jobs as e-hailing was not a substantial income stream. International Migrants had better livelihood outcomes than Domestic Migrants as they reported higher earnings and Job Security.

3 Introduction

Labour migration in Southern Africa dates to before the drawing of colonial boundaries (Crush, Williams, and Peberdy 2005). South Africa has been attracting labour since the mid-19th century mainly due to the diamond mines in Kimberly and the discovery of gold mines in the Witwatersrand. The latter event ensued a shift in migration patterns which saw the introduction of recruitment systems that sourced labour through agencies and from every other country in the region. Other major sources of work for migrants were commercial farms, plantations, domestic work, and construction in urban areas. When sending countries obtained independence from colonial rule, many rethought the idea of sending labour to South Africa, mainly Tanzania, Zambia and later Malawi withdrew labour from South African mines (ibid).

This was inspired by a colonial outlook on migration that drew cheap labour into the farming and mining industries (Tati 2008). The decline of this labour migration to the country's mines has been substituted by the influxes of other types of migration including undocumented migration (ibid). Contributing to the growth of the informal sector, a particular contrast to migration laws that prohibit low-skilled migration, this is because many migrants opt to work informally as there are far fewer to no barriers caused by lack of documentation in this kind of work.

The city of gold as it was named in its former glory, is today a densely crowded city with migrants from all over the world settling in it to find better opportunities. South Africa is estimated to have received 1,02 million migrants between 2016 and 2021, with 47,5 % of international migrants settling in Gauteng (Statistics South Africa 2021). These flows coupled with unemployment increasing quarterly in Gauteng (ibid), has created an extraordinary contestation in the marketplace for jobs amongst the predominantly middle and lower-class residents, where the locally-born, foreign-born and domestic migrants compete for scarce work opportunities (Myroniuk and Vearey 2014).

One of the most apparent battles for such opportunities is in the transport industry, which has resulted in the targeted killing and intimidation of many road drivers by the minibus sector (Manyathela 2017; Magwedze 2017; Rahlaga 2018; Zeeman 2023.; eNCA 2023). Even though this phenomenon of violence in the sector is well-reported by journalists and researchers, it continues to abound and go unpunished by authorities (Manyathela 2017). These mafia-style politics have shaped the roads of South Africa, limiting drop-off and

pickup-point access to other forms of public transport. Inevitably limiting e-hailing and bus services' freedom of access to this marketplace, and commuters alike the freedom to choose how they would like to travel (Mlambo 2023).

Violence is unfortunately not only contained to the informal economy in the public transport industry, but it is part and parcel of the South African experience (ISSAfrica.org 2023). The disgruntlement of citizens in South Africa too often leads to public demonstrations which are characterised by the destruction of infrastructure and threats of national shutdown (Mabasa 2023; Reporters 2023; BBC News 2011). For example, the large-scale looting sparked by supporters of former president Jacob Zuma in 2020 left such an alarming aftermath that it was called the worst unrest since apartheid by the presidency (Vhumbunu 2021).

Labour migrants in South Africa are also targets of violence because of growing xenophobia in government and communities. This is because the country's ills like high unemployment, crime and urban decay are blamed on foreign nationals and irregular migration (Crush and Ramachandran 2014; Dewa 2022). Xenophobia in South Africa dates back to 1994 although incidents became widely reported since 2008 when the violence increased in a short period (Misago 2019). Since then, xenophobic attacks on foreigners have increased as hostile beliefs about their presence are more pronounced, as such, perpetrators of this violence are often protected by the state (Landau and Misago 2009). In April 2015 violence erupted against foreign national-owned businesses, reportedly spurred by the comments of the now-late Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini to go back to their countries (Dewa 2022). In response to this Small Business Development Minister Lindiwe Zulu said foreign business owners cannot expect to co-exist with local businesses if they do not share their trade secrets, she further stated that local business owners were more disadvantaged than foreign nationals because of past marginalisation (Magubane 2015). To this effect 2022 saw the formation of Operation Dudula meaning to pushout in isiZulu, an organisation targeting foreigners and harassing them because of their migration status (de Villiers 2022). This is evidence that migrants in the e-hailing sector face risk, even more than the domestic migrant labour workforce. Added to this is precarity which the inception of e-hailing employment platforms like Uber has brought in legal battles relating to employment rights.

This paper aims to assess the kind of labour in the e-hailing sector, although it consists of competitor firms like Bolt, Lyft, DiDi etc, I will be making much reference to Uber as the

company is the largest player in this industry, and it generally sets the tone of how these competitors do business. The first time Uber hit South African shores was in 2013, it recruited drivers in Cape Town by approaching taxis and offering them lucrative cash payments to become drivers (Macmillan 2022). In a 2014 submission to the government Uber claimed that it not only creates more jobs but better paying jobs, as they were able to highly remunerate drivers through outside funding from investors, this was an aggressive incentivisation strategy aimed at building the city's initial supply of drivers (ibid). This is what quickly led, as reported by the Uber files, Johannesburg to become the company's most profitable city just after fourteen months of starting and two years in Cape Town (ibid).

Indeed, the company arrived into a nearly twenty years old democracy, with unequal labour markets characterised by racial division and scarce opportunities (Macmillan 2022). And ibid states that the drivers who were joining the Uber workforce were solely dependent on the income they made on the app... with many having previously left full-time employment to become drivers. According to him, Uber's recruitment strategy was especially devastating to drivers' livelihoods in the country, because over time the company cut back on subsidies, and increased its commission from 20 per cent to 25 per cent at the end of 2015 (ibid).

What the 2022 Uber files leak also revealed was that Uber executives intentionally endangered drivers' livelihoods, as they aggressively pursued taking down "Big Taxi" and beating rivals in cities around the world ("Takeaways from the Uber Files Investigation" 2022). The documents further revealed the company's intent to leverage public sympathy and secure meetings with politicians to regulate its business, through ongoing violence with taxis and Uber drivers (ibid). With this said the safety of Uber drivers is a growing concern. Reports show that in Cape Town as the supply of labour increased, many drivers would risk making pickups in high-crime areas to meet their income targets and pay off vehicles (Macmillan 2022). Similarly in Johannesburg, the concern has been increased crime hotspots and the politicisation of routes around the city (Mlambo 2023). In July 2023 the Soweto United E-hailing Association formed an agreement with the Soweto Taxi Association that ride-hailing drivers would not enter any malls in the township for three months (Illidge 2023). This happened after the service was attacked by taxis in Maponya Mall leaving three people injured and three vehicles burnt (ibid).

Nonetheless, livelihood studies on migrants have demonstrated the incredible resilience of this group (Bragg 2022; Rydzik and Anitha 2020; Tawodzera et al. 2015; Lu 2023;

Gilberthorpe, Agol, and Gegg 2016), showing that instead of displaying expected outcomes such as defeat or collapse, individuals are constantly finding ways to survive and make a livelihood in their settling cities (Jinnah 2010). For this reason, the South African public transport industry provides an interesting case study for the livelihood strategies of migrants.

4 Literature Review

This part of the paper provides a history of the public transport industry, and migration flows into Southern Africa, it assesses the influence of apartheid on both these and in forming a xenophobic society, as forming our understanding of migrant labour into the e-hailing sector and the livelihoods therein. It argues for the importance of political capital through a comparison with the taxi industry.

Migration literature attributes migration flows to push and pull factors (Scholten, Pisarevskaya, and Levy 2022; McDonald and Crush 2002) and South Africa is an important destination for migrants in the SADC region, because of its relative economic and political stability (Yu 2021). The Gauteng Province especially pulls migrants, because it is the most economically prosperous hub of the country; attracting both international and domestic migrants (ibid). It is reported that domestic flows of migration in Gauteng come mostly from the Limpopo province (30.92%) and Kwa Zulu Natal (19.30%) and the Eastern Cape (14.22%), with the general migrant population settling in the three large metros of Ekurhuleni, Tshwane and Johannesburg (ibid).

The pull factors of migration are mostly seen through labour migration and the phenomenon of brain drain where skilled individuals emigrate, causing labour shortages in some industries (King 2013). Push factors are those such as political unrest or disastrous circumstances, forcing people who would have otherwise not wanted; to move out of their home countries (McDonald and Crush 2002). The International Labour Organisation reports that labour migration in Africa often occurs intra-regionally and that the majority of this population enters the informal economy (International Labour Organisation 2019).

This means that regardless of the level of their skills and qualifications, and whether pushed or pulled to migrate, the majority of the international migrant populations are making it through labour in the informal economy instead of the formal workforce (Maharaj 2023). Statistics of the employment status of domestic migrants showed that they were involved in

more skilled occupations, compared to permanent residents. this study also found that migrants who moved intra-provincially were most likely to be formally employed (Yu 2021). With this said, the movement of people as a means to diversify income often leads to the attainment of better working opportunities for those who move rather than those who do not in South Africa, the above study however only compares domestic migrants with those moving around within a province and not the main focus of this study. The findings also do not make any account of migrants in the informal economy, or the rates at which domestic migrants find work in the formal/informal economy, consequently not strongly characterizing domestic migration trends. This is an area in which future research can develop for statistical purposes.

Nonetheless, the abundant literature on migrant livelihoods shows that when migrants come into the city and do not find job opportunities in the formal labour market, they often create their own labour in the informal labour market. (Pardede and Listya, 2013; African Union, 2020; Tawodzera et al. 2015; Banerjee 1983; Atta, Chort, and Senne 2022). The informal economy makes up more than half of the global workforce and over 90 per cent of the micro and small enterprises worldwide (International Labour Organisation 2019). With its low entry barriers, coupled with international migrants' familiarity with the sector in their home countries, the sector has seen huge growth, to the frustration of economists and policymakers who view both informality and migration as problematic phenomena, especially in the developed world.

As mentioned before African migrants coming into South Africa often enter the informal economy (Fauvelle 2014). However, the e-hailing industry for drivers is neither informal nor formal because companies don't recognise them as employees (Nicholls 2021) and their work is not completely off the grid as informality is understood. Because of its expansive nature and close links to traditional formality, it is important to understand some of the schools of thought about the informal economy. The following section discusses scholarly views of the informal sector while simultaneously demonstrating how some views aid in our understanding of the informal public transport industry, It demonstrates the long-winded conceptualization of the informal economy to land on a basic understanding of the emerging Uber economy.

4.1 Theories of The Informal Economy

With formal employment comes job security based on a legal agreement which outlines expectations and rewards. This is a preferred economy in which governments often invest to increase opportunities for their populations, however, the growth of informal employment especially among African migrants warrants a discussion of the literature about the informal economy. Seeing that drivers on e-hailing platforms aren't recognised as formal employees, a look at the literature about the informal economy will aid in our understanding of whether or not e-hailers are informal workers.

The informal concept is used to describe the activities of the unemployed labour reserve (Hart 1973). It was first coined by Keith Hart as he first observed the labour activities of Ghanaians, and since then the following schools of thought have brought perspective to this phenomenon.

The legalistic school of thought attributes the rise of informality to the hostile legal system through which formality is attained (Chen 2016). This stream views the informal sector as consisting of entrepreneurs choosing to operate informally to avoid costs, time, and effort for formal registration (ibid). Viewed as a problematic sector the school suggests that states should simplify bureaucratic procedures to encourage these entrepreneurs to register. The state should also extend the legal rights to property for assets held by informal businesses so that they can capitalise on it, converting their assets to additional value (ibid).

An example of this is seen in how various informal workers in taxi ranks have been allotted stalls for which they are charged rent, this has limited the haphazard growth of informal labour in high-traffic areas (Mndebele and Cabe 2019). In the e-hailing sector, legalism proposes that the biggest challenges facing drivers have their source in legal systems. As such a lot of the violence metred taxis targeted at Uber drivers was because 79% of this labour force did not have permits (Ismail 2022), making them illegal. Indeed, this was a result of administrative backlogs in municipalities, especially in Cape Town. It also came as courts struggled to categorize e-hailing at the beginning, therefore, not being clear on how to treat such labour (ibid). lastly, according to this, Uber drivers decide to drive because of the long and costly process of starting their own enterprises.

The second school in our analysis is Dualism, here the informal economy is autonomous and made up of only small-scale activities which are not related to formality (Chen 2016). This view believes that only poor people are units and benefactors of informality as a result of

their inability to enter the formal sector, the dualist approach stresses macro-level failures such as the imbalance of population growth against available work as fuelling the growth of this economy. Expectedly large flows of migration lead to population growth which results in individuals searching for informal ways to earn a living. Uber creates such opportunities which the government has failed to, by offering easy entry into the sector (Macmillan 2022). We also observe dualism in effect when retrenched labourers from formal work- during COVID-19, were forced to do e-hailing to survive (Dubbelman 2021).

The Structuralist approach identifies mainly factors in the market environment as the most important determining factors; they state that firms across the globe are increasingly preferring to hire undocumented migrants instead of citizens who will demand employment rights, to cut labour costs and maximize their profits (Gordon and Maharaj 2014; Fudge and Tham 2017). Structuralism states that informality is a result of capitalist growth and not a lack of economic decline as dualists propose. They also believe that informal and formal forms of production are interdependent in the following way; factors such as increased competition and market competitiveness, the reaction of formal firms to the increased bargaining power of employees, the strong unionisation of the formal workforce, excessive state regulation, global competition, new methods of competition in the post-modern world are all causes for formal firms to reduce their production costs, especially labour costs (Chen 2016).

Through this school of thought, we can conclude that the e-hailing model of labour acquisition is rooted in capitalism, avoiding the costly traditional employment model. As mentioned above the ease with which e-hailing is accessible draws labour, further providing migrant drivers who have trouble with their documents with a job opportunity they otherwise would not have. Such an opportunity for exploitation is because Uber resists categorizing drivers as employers, due to the large costs associated with benefits and protection which would rightfully belong to drivers should this happen (Dubbelman 2021).

Consequently, Uber has been taken to court in many parts of the world. And drivers in some parts of the world have been granted employment status while others remain independent contractors (Nicholls 2021; Truter 2017; Leskin 2016).

Feige (2016) similarly describes the informal economy as the circumvention of labour market regulations, like; minimum wages, social security, working conditions, unemployment, and disability benefits, this line of thinking is similar to structuralism

however, having a deeper analysis of the activities. To elaborate on this (ibid) proposes that informality is a taxonomy based on non-compliant behaviours, he points out that unobservability and noncompliance are common features in all such economies.

What distinguishes one unobserved economy from the other is a particular rule being violated. To better understand this, three categories are proposed: the *Unreported economy* defined by non-compliance and the circumvention of the fiscal code by tax evasion. An *unrecorded economy* has features of being unethical, done through cash, making it drastically unmeasurable to the national income accounting. An *illegal economy* is the contravention of rules governing the distribution and production of prohibited goods and services. This approach fails to acknowledge that businesses can avoid these costs while still being legal, through creating a complex work relationship guided by technology like Uber.

While e-hailing does not fit the description of an unrecorded, unreported or illegal economy, South Africa's biggest public transport mode does. The taxi industry is *unreported*, as much of its activities go without being taxed, something that has been a major concern for the South African Revenue Services (SARS). It is also unrecorded but not because its revenues are unknown, in fact, the government estimates the annual revenue of the industry is five billion rands (*News24Business* 2021); but because it is a largely cash economy and the estimates remain questionable. Likewise, it is *illegal*, especially in view of how competition and employees are dealt with (as will be discussed in this paper). This goes to show the extent of lack of control the government has over the biggest rival to e-hailing in the country.

The Voluntarist school views micro-environment players as key agents spurring informality, the school believes that individuals willingly operate informally to avoid fiscal, financial, and commercial regulations of the state. Unlike the legalist school voluntarists do not account for the growth of this economy to the complicated bureaucracy of formality, but only to the financial benefits it presents such as evading payroll and social benefits (Chen 2016). In this view, it is interesting that the individuals themselves do not want social security, assumably because they are healthier and are prioritizing goals which must be met immediately or shortly. Based on this view we can speculate that Uber drivers are comfortable with not having formal protections because they enjoy avoiding deductions that come with this.

Voluntarists suggest that governments should bring the informal sector under formal regulations, and sanction informal practices while increasing the tax base as a means to avoid

unfair competition (Chen 2016). Accordingly, the formalisation of the public transport industry is something which has been widely advocated for in South Africa, and is forecasted to have far-reaching economic benefits for drivers; as they will have secure employment and commuters; lower costs of travelling and government; in taxation (Kane 2002; Ntuli and McCaul 2011; Walters 2008).

Chen (2016) emphasises the need for a holistic view of the informal economy, stressing that the above views simplify this rather complicated economy, therefore, offering limited insights. She observes the importance of understanding informal work through *wage employed* and *self-employed* e.g. wage employment describes work for formal/informal firms, with no benefits and no fixed employer. Being self-employed means working in small or unregulated or unincorporated enterprises.

Through these categories by Chen, e-hailers can be said to be wage-employed as they have a relationship with a formal enterprise and can be registered on multiple platforms. In line with this understanding, South Africa classifies Uber drivers as independent contractors; who are contracted for service, and their contract ends upon completion of the task. By definition, if e-hailers are indeed independent contractors, Uber may dictate a specific date by which tasks must be completed, but cannot instruct the contractor regarding what materials must be used and how the job is to be done. All of this does not apply to the relationship e-hailers have with Uber as they do dictate the conditions under which tasks may be completed (such as car models) and do not give a date for tasks to be completed (lending itself to self-employment in a formal enterprise which Chen does not account for in her description). Additionally, unlike true independent contractors e-hailers do not determine their own rates. Such a discussion gives evidence to the idea that even though e-hailing work is not formal but has characteristics of informality, it is not to be described as such.

Chen's proposal of holistic views shifts from a pessimistic view of informality, rather they accepting it as engraved in global economies and as a complicated system. An understanding that as the above discussion has demonstrated, will be continually susceptible to progress as technological developments influence workplaces.

Finally, the informal economy has endured some interesting metaphors from commentators. Hanse Singer in 1970 compared it to a giraffe, because it was difficult to define by usual standards but easy to recognise when you meet one. Lautier (1990) replied to this by saying

the metaphor of the giraffe was altogether insufficient, that this economy should rather be likened to a unicorn “because the literature abounds with definitions, but you will never have the opportunity to meet one, because it does not exist” just like the mythical creature (Dell’Anno 2022). Authors like Mead and Morrisson (1996) note that it is too big for the state to either ignore or remove through policy, thus reappropriating it to an elephant. In keeping with the current growth of technology-based work it is evident that all the above metaphors reflect a certain truth about the informal economy, all of which highlight an appreciation for Chen’s work, which encourages a broader way of understanding this vast economy.

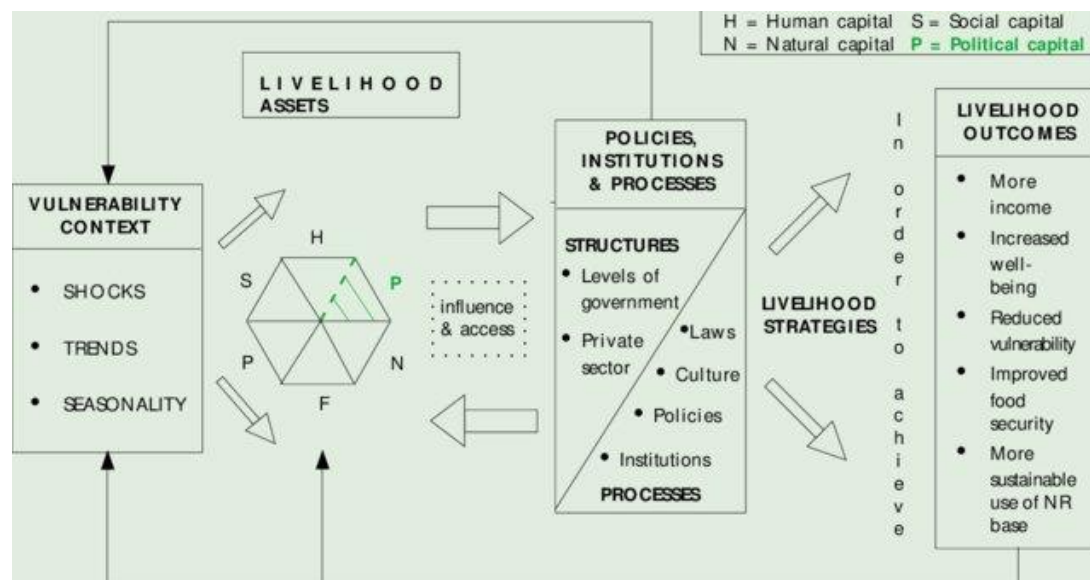
This section has discussed the key theories about the informal economy, demonstrating that simplistic views about it fall short of providing a reliable understanding of its growing activities. It has used these views to bring context to the kind of labour e-hailing platforms produce, drawing attention to the ambiguity of such labour as far as informality and formality are concerned. E-hailing seems to be best defined as a form of in-between economy with some benefits of formality and the freedoms of informality. Although formal labour is traditionally associated with sustainable livelihoods, the state of South Africa's economy means we can expect an even greater shift from formal work. The question of interest then becomes “How do workers in such an environment negotiate their livelihoods?”.

4.2 Theoretical framework.

The livelihoods framework is the foundational perspective of this project and its key elements form the structure of the rest of the literature review. The history of livelihood studies was inspired by the need to understand the causes of poverty and develop policies that would alleviate such conditions. Important to this is an understanding of all the factors which cause poverty, coupled with knowledge of how these interact without collapsing focus onto just a few (Majale 2002). This inevitably calls for a specific understanding of the factors which enrich and deprive the successful lived experiences of any given population. The sustainable livelihoods framework SLF outlines areas for the reduction of poverty, vulnerability and shocks, it also pinpoints areas for increment, such as; environmental sustainability and access to resources which results in sustainable livelihoods (Serrat 2017).

A sustainable livelihood can cope with and recover from shocks and stress, It can also improve and maintain its capabilities and assets in the present and future (Chambers and

Conway 1992). Below is a diagram of the factors which are proposed to work together to produce livelihood outcomes. The very basic accumulation by persons as described by (Bourdieu 2011) is livelihood assets/capital. Capital is collected labour in its manifest form which when applied by individuals enables them to access labour (ibid). Capital or livelihood assets are the underlying regulation of the existing social world, meaning favourable livelihood outcomes are to be achieved to the extent of attainment of these (ibid). The DFID (2000) sustainable livelihoods framework only includes five forms of capital, but through the suggestions of scholars like (Nussbaum 2005; Robeyns 2005; Baumann 2000) political capital was factored in. The authors argue that without this form of capital, the analytical strength of the approach is weakened.



(Baumann and Subir 2009)

The following is a description of the six capitals.

- **Physical capital**: which is infrastructure, running water and electricity access to these makes it easier for individuals to reach their livelihood goals. Factors such as the driver's vehicle and its wear and tear will be considered here. e.g. car ownership is important for Uber drivers' livelihood.
- **Social capital**: the sum of potential resources which are linked to an individual's relationship to a durable network, whether formal or informal. This relationship entitles individuals to various forms of benefits and may range from class, family, tribe, friendships, or school.

- Natural capital: refers to the land which is the primary source of other capital. changes in the land such as drought and natural disasters have a direct impact on the livelihoods of dwellers. This aspect scarcely applies to Uber drivers and will, therefore, not be included in our discussion of the group's livelihoods.
- Human capital: refers to the sum of labour that persons can get access to, this requires the skill sets and education of persons. Drivers do not need any education besides a valid license to begin work, in a high-crime and violent industry they may need certain language, interpersonal and conflict-resolution skills to survive.
- Financial capital: is the access to financial institutions and the benefits such as savings and investments. access to financial capital is the most important in ensuring persons recover from shocks or such hindrances to their livelihood goals. With Uber the only prospect drivers have to increase earnings is by owning more cars and renting them to others, something which for some migrants can be difficult.
- Political capital: while closely linked to social capital it refers to access to decision-making. Joburg streets are highly political for anyone making money from hailing passengers, therefore making it important for them to have the political power to gain access to a territory and establish themselves in it. Uber understood this because when they first launched, they engaged in negotiations with the taxi industry to get them on board with their app. The talks fell out leaving drivers to fend for themselves in given areas. Thus creating a deficiency in political capital for e-hailers. Baumann (2000) Argues that if politics causes poverty, then it cannot be left out of a framework which seeks to understand poverty.

The diagram continues to point to structures and processes, these are governmental levels, institutions, laws and policies which determine the use and benefit extracted from assets. Permits and the legal classification of drivers exemplify this area.

Chowdhury (2021) argued for the addition of two more capitals namely, freedom and information. He justified this through a qualitative study of the indigenous Bangladesh population. He stated that poor people were negatively affected by a lack of timely information about floods and health alerts and the addition of this would facilitate the sharing of indigenous medicine with government bodies and in that way spread knowledge. (Ibid) describes freedom and the freedom of participation and doing things, he notes that indigenous people do not feel free to do political work in their communities, yet this is

important for them to feel respected and equal. This is backed by the human rights approach (UNDP 2008) which states the importance of human rights which play a critical role in livelihoods.

Information and freedom as new capitals are intrinsically embedded within the social assets in the original framework. freedom to participate and to have rights, echoes the already mentioned need of persons to associate and be recognised in social networks. Information is also an already identified benefit comprised within social networks, for example, a given population can access different kinds of important information which may impact their livelihood through membership to certain groups or subscriptions to platforms. With this said the excessive stance of (Chowdhury 2021) is demonstrated. It is, therefore, the view of this paper that the livelihoods framework scarcely requires expansion, but in-depth appreciation or a breakdown of the existing moderated categories by Baumann and Subir (2009).

4.3 The Public Transport Industry

The main reason behind innovation in transport systems is to increase accessibility to commuting services, affordability, and safe modes of commuting, to decrease poverty, and carbon emissions and to benefit livelihoods (Sohail 2005). This is something which governments globally have been interested in since the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit which highlighted transport systems as the main force driving increased world demand for energy, making the industry central to sustainable world development (UN Habitat, 2010).

Today, South Africa's public transport industry is marred by the shortcoming of consolidating the existing policy with tangible development, resulting in the spread of informal enterprises instead of planned commuting services (Majeke 2003), which favour development like affordability, safety, good service and reliability. For example, the global standard for income spent on travel costs is 10% and South Africans are reported to spend 20% (Statistics South Africa, 2015). This is problematic considering that Statistics South Africa (2021) reports that 4,7 million of the country's population rely on public transport to commute to work, and of this number 80.2% use taxis, which is inherently problematic because they are not as cheap as they seem (BusinessTech 2021; Statistics South Africa 2015).

This section introduces the history of the South African public transport industry into the overall pursuit of understanding e-hailing livelihoods in the South African context. It argues

that the minibus sector is not conducive to the sustainable development of transport in the country because of its informality according to the structuralist school and Feige's (2016) contribution and demonstrates how similar taxi livelihoods are to those in the e-hailing sector.

4.3.1 The inception of informality in the public transport industry

The country's public transport industry is characterised by unequal access as a legacy of apartheid (Jobert 2013). During this time the segregation of the majority black population into crowded spaces intentionally placed them far away from their places of work (ibid), leaving them to make long commutes daily. This spatial planning is what has seen African households spending longer hours in commutes and a large amount of their income on transport even long after the end of apartheid (Kerr 2015). The apartheid government however, subsidized buses and trains to cover the costs associated with these distances, but these systems broke down as the government ran into financial difficulties, this gave way to informal minibus taxis; run by retrenched migrants (Gibbs 2014), who took on the growing service gaps ("The Role of BRT in Post-Pandemic South Africa" 2021).

While minibuses were under strict regulation when they first started, fiscal constraints in bus funding led to the government not only legalising taxis but eventually deregulating the industry (Vegter 2020). The White Paper on Transport in 1987 resulted in a sudden mass issuing of driving permits, the number of these permits rose from 7094 to over 34 000 in Johannesburg alone (Khosa 1992), this essentially meant that the industry was deregulated and left to its demise. Many retrenched individuals applied for permits and over-supplied the industry leading to a decrease in profits for each association from their set routes, this gradually led to violent competition between taxi associations. According to Dugard (2001), this mass issuing of permits was an attempt by the government to create a black middle class and improve its image, however, the consequence from as early as 1992 was the break out of taxi wars, an occurrence the nation is all too familiar with even today (Nyasha 2023).

A closer look at the violence in the industry reveals that it also stems from the mother body associations who had the power to decide which rank each association could use and at what price. These bodies are focused on sourcing maximum capital from routes and in so doing they employ hit men to organise violence and get rid of competing associations (Dugard 2001). When looking at the criminality of the industry, it is important to note the complicated link between police services and taxi owners (ibid), it is estimated in 2003 that

10% of taxi owners worked in the police services, in a series of violent attacks weapons were sourced illegally from these connections (ibid, Vegter 2020).

Deregulation in the industry also meant that vehicles and driver behaviour were not monitored, to such a point that wherever taxis are real-estate value drops, whereas in the developed world properties which are closer to public transport are higher in value (Donaldson 2006). This is no surprise as passengers report high dissatisfaction with facilities in taxi ranks (Statistics South Africa 2021), despite this minibuses are the most used form of public transport, and what this tells us is that the most prevalent form of public transport in South Africa is not so because it is loved by commuters, but that there is an element of coercion as they spread aggressively and competitive modes such as the trains (ibid) and BRT are inefficient (Venter 2016).

The government sustains a huge burden to develop the industry and correct the negative effects of the apartheid regime, and to this end, there have been numerous efforts. One of them is the National Public Transport Strategy of 2007, which lays out two key focuses: accelerated modal upgrading and integrated rapid public networks (IRPTNs). The latter stressed implementing high-quality networks of rail priority corridors and Bus Rapid Transit Corridors. The action plan had the goal of creating a transport system that would be attractive to all (including motorists) thereby reducing congestion (Department of Transport 2007).

This, however, only materialized through the Bus Rapid Transport System (BRT) in just three cities: Tshwane, Cape Town, and Johannesburg. The primary reason for the failure of the strategy, development action plans, and legislature (notwithstanding corruption) is the complex integration of the mini-bus sector into the formalized IRPTN (Browning, 2017). To further understand this, in facilitating the launch of BRT alone, then transport minister Jeff Radebe reiterated the statement “the taxi industry shall be the nucleus of the BRT system” and “there will be no loss of jobs and profits in the implementation of the BRT” a statement which cost the government R184 million per year in contracts (Maistry 2011); largely aimed at avoiding a fallout with taxi associations.

Formalizing minibuses may not be feasible, seeing that the slightest efforts to even remove unroadworthy vehicles aren't adhered to (Simelani 2022). But the rampant violence with which associations claim territories poses a security threat to the nation, something to be taken seriously by authorities. They also pose vital delays to developments which aim to put

the country's transport industry at a global standard, where car users are rewarded for parking their cars and using public transport, reducing traffic and carbon emissions.

In closing, it is clear that developments in South Africa's public transport industry are hindered by key mistakes made at the inception of minibuses during apartheid, which has today grown to become unmanageable and costly. While Venter (2016) argues that the fall of BRT is due to government mismanagement and issues with demand, such a view is incomplete without considering the role that taxis have played in suppressing its development. This study with further demonstrate how the same can be observed with the growth of the e-hailing sector. It is, therefore, conclusive that the development of South Africa's public transport industry to world standards; which on paper are clearly set as favouring the environment and consumers, lies at the mercy of minibuses. Seeing the poor rating of the sector means passengers will continue to strive to own private cars and those who can't afford them are forced to use taxis.

4.4 Migration, Workplaces and Anger

The next section overviews South Africa's migration policy as it transitioned from apartheid to democracy, it argues that exclusionary labour policies concerning migrants create job safety for migrant e-hailers, as entry into the industry will remain unhindered for them. However, this will likewise increase their exposure as xenophobic perpetrators target industries saturated by foreign labour. this is another example of how structures, policies and in the livelihoods framework, interact to create sustainable livelihoods.

The desire for better livelihoods has seen the movement of workers proliferate so that in 2018 the estimated global migrant population was 244 million people (Song 2018), with South Africa being the largest host of international migrants on the continent, as with many other countries which are receiving large numbers of migrants, public debate around migration policy in the country is characterised by two sides, those who are for open borders and those who are for the shutting of borders from foreign nationals. This section reviews the history of migration into the country, how this has led to xenophobia and its impact on e-hailing livelihoods.

Apartheid South Africa- as with the rest of the world accepted labour migrants from poor countries to work in the agricultural and mining industries (Gilberthorpe, Agol, and Gegg 2016). This was part of a global understanding of migration as a development strategy, which normalised the movement of people from underdeveloped third-world countries to first-

world countries to perform undesirable labour in these places. Governments thusly made agreements in this manner to regulate the movement of people for economic benefit (Phillips 2009).

In the United States, this resulted in its agreement with the Caribbean basin states in the early 1900s, to accept immigrants into the US to build the Panama Canal and other projects (ibid). This kind of labour was low-skilled and characterised by hardship, which locals did not prefer to do, producing similar kinds of precarity which are observed in migrant livelihoods today. However, the agreement outlined that the sending state would benefit through remittances, increasing economic activities through the family members left behind (ibid). In this era, the global migration of non-whites was characterised by livelihood results which resembled slavery as numbers of people even (though not legally forced) lived in squatter camps close to industrial firms which were the backbones of those country's economy (ibid).

In South Africa, the approach to migration as a development strategy has led to pervasive xenophobia and anger with foreign nationals who are not poorer than citizens, as a result of the nation's deep-seated trauma from the oppression of apartheid (Landau and Misago 2009). During apartheid, labour for development in unpreferred industries was not only sourced internationally but from black domestic migrants and citizens too. Because white migrants exclusively laboured in the formal economy (OCHR 2021), black migrants were denied settlement in the country, denying them reasonable labour benefits (Phillips 2009). This established their inferiority, something which sparks anger and jealousy when black migrants are seen to have better livelihoods. Black citizens' exposure to apartheid segregation in their own land has also embedded within them an entitlement to opportunities and a preoccupation with who belongs and who does not.

For twenty-eight years after liberation, a key missing element between the then policy and migration practices in democratic South Africa, had been a comprehensive labour migration policy (Steyn 2022; South African Government 2022). While the government had implemented key changes to migration practices, such as open borders to low and high-skilled migrants, and asylum seekers from across the continent (Tati 2008), only in 2022 did it devise the National Labour Migration Policy NLMP (South African Government 2022). The NLMP aims to ensure that labour migration benefits both migrants and citizens (ibid), this means that a quota may be put on labour migrants within a sector, banning them from

employment in a bid to protect the interests of citizens. It also aims to reverse brain drain and initiate brain gain; where skilled citizens who left the country will be incentivised to return (Steyn 2022). Lastly, the policy aims to protect immigrants who work in the country by ending exploitation through the creation of formal work opportunities.

The objective was said by then Minister of Employment and Labour Thembelani Nxesi, to help scale down xenophobia in the country, following the assumption that if more South Africans had first preference in employment opportunities, much like the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act imposed on local businesses, that there would be less resentment amongst citizens towards foreigners. Because labour in the e-hailing sector is neither formal nor informal, such a sector may be excluded from this discrimination since e-hailers aren't running their own business nor are employees of Uber/Bolt. Such ambiguity will be advantageous for migrants in the sector but also be a double-edged sword because as more migrants find success as e-hailers, xenophobic perpetrators will target their work.

Notably, It is unlikely that such laws will effectively deal with the problem of xenophobia in the country. What the NLMP may achieve is rather delaying an upsurge in such demonstrations. This is because similar laws of redress like the BBBEE have neither been an all-catch solution to issues of inequality for black South Africans (Joseph 2023). Indeed, the unprecedented large migration flows of refugees and asylum seekers from neighbouring countries (OCHR 2021), into a new-born democracy, hard at work to redress the past and build towards a brighter future, made the urgency of migration policy fall to the background, something which indeed happened to the detriment of today's politics, which tends to reinforce xenophobia (Landau and Misago 2009).

However, anger towards foreigners is not new, but dates to the 1990s through the 'Buyelekhaya' (go back home) campaign in Alexandra township to clean out Malawians, Zimbabweans, and Mozambicans. Recently, the country has seen a similar movement in Operation Dudula (clean up), and what remains clear is the government's tacit compliance with exclusionary politics. For example, in the 2008 xenophobic attacks, by the time then President Thabo Mbeki approved army deployment, 24 people had died and 24,000 were displaced from their settling communities (Monson and Misago 2016). It was not until 342 shops belonging to foreign nationals were looted and 213 burnt down across the country before a provincial disaster was declared in Gauteng (ibid). Community members cited that police were overwhelmed and ill-equipped to respond to the violence, especially as it was

the general will of the people to disrupt foreign-owned property, while others joined in looting shops (ibid). Shortly after the violence started, willing victims were deported while others were charged with illegal migration, an act of assistance which ironically eliminated the prospect of justice for the victims, as 40 per cent of the charges laid against citizens were withdrawn (ibid).

Violence is aimed at foreign labour and businesses as seen in the 2009 evictions of Zimbabwean farm workers which displaced between 1500 to 2500 workers (Ho 2022). Similarly, in 2014 Somali business owners were targeted, leading to their government evacuating them from the country. Since 2021 a growing sentiment of hatred has been neatly directed towards undocumented migrants' labour by Operation Dudula (ibid). This organisation which started in Soweto marched into the streets of Johannesburg targeting firms and restaurants employing undocumented migrants, the group further went door to door in communities looking for victims to hand over to the police (ibid). In such climates, it is easy for anti-migrant groups to target drivers in e-hailing platforms, especially since there is a growing level of precarity surrounding drivers and couriers. Such groups undoubtedly have limited access to formal workplaces, making it important for e-hailing platforms to maintain the integrity of such work, by increasing protection and employee relations where drivers can interact with the platforms to influence change.

4.4.1 Migrant Livelihoods and Resilience

Positive African migrant livelihood outcomes in South Africa is a trend linking movement with increased success. Positive livelihood outcomes, however, are not to be associated with the lack of precarity, because although migrants are more likely to earn a living in South Africa, their experiences are deeply engulfed with risk and difficulty. This section demonstrates the link between migration and success, it also outlines migrant precarity and the role of resilience in creating positive livelihood outcomes.

Notably, migration in the north and south has different results, in the global north, the foreign-born often work in hospitality, domestic care and cleaning sectors- with employment types mainly being temporary (Alberti, Holgate, and Tapia 2013). Myroniuk and Vearey (2014) found that because the population in developed states has relatively stable livelihoods, migrants will be more disadvantaged, whereas, in the global south, with countries having generally poor citizens, migrants stand out for having preferable outcomes. Consistent with this literature is that in South Africa's tuckshop Business, foreign-owned

shops performed better than locally owned as a result of; increased financial knowledge, spatial positioning, clan-based social networks, risk-taking and business acumen which local entrepreneurs scored poorly in (Lamb, Kunene, and Dyili 2019). This study also found that local tuckshops were survivalist in nature, meaning that they were started to meet immediate needs and were not viewed as important business models as foreigners did.

Migrants are also often found in low-paying jobs in unregulated sections of the labour market, where they are segregated from indigenous workers (Milkman 2006; Thornley, Jefferys and Appay 2010; Wills et al. 2010). As a survival strategy, they unionise themselves with little impact. However, when successful can influence government policy, as seen with the Unite movement in the UK, which received government funding to continue to provide key services and education about rights to migrants (Alberti, Holgate, and Tapia 2013). Challenges faced by migrants unionising result from the inability of leaders to recognise their unique identities, which leads to demoralization and migrants opting to cope with precarity instead of working to change it (ibid).

In Zambia, challenges to formalising labour in the mining sector lead to migrants looking into informal and illegal activities for livelihood, with some participants in the study referring to their work as punishment for their pursuit of a good life (Gilberthorpe, Agol, and Gegg 2016). A case in point of what Koerberlein (2003) describes as a non-coping, erosive and inappropriate livelihood strategy in which migrants engage. These strategies lead to what (Theim 2008) terms the creation of “new forms” of poverty as migrants leave precarious homes to endure even more precarity in settling countries.

This is to show the depth of commitment which migrants have to their jobs, where defying the odds is not optional but a necessary part of their livelihoods, as they accept levels of precarity which citizens; in similarly precarious conditions would not.

In as much as the evidence in Rothmann’s (2002; 2008) studies points to the fatal consequences of adversity and discrimination in the workplace, resilience has been shown to play an important role in buffering the precarious experiences of migrants (Jinnah 2010). Recently there has been an emergence of a body of work in psychology which focuses less on pathology and dysfunction but on strength and resilience (Haddadi and Besharat 2010), which are the main tenets of resilience (Lu 2023). From this point of view, personal development not only invokes risks (experiences that increase the likelihood of forming problems) but also involves protective factors (conditions that mitigate outcomes when

exposed to risk). Individual resilience is likely sourced from factors like education opportunities, interpersonal attachments, and personal problem-solving skills (Jenson and Fraser 2015). A fourth pillar as described by (Solà-Sales et al. 2021) is a positive expectation of the future.

From a livelihoods point of view, the above can be understood; that individuals demonstrate resilience in their struggle for better work, due to access to human capital (education/literacy and positive outlook) and social capital (in the form of meaningful quality relationships). A study of migrant children in China (Lu 2023) notes that rural-urban migration is both an empowering and depriving experience. The study of migrant children who were exposed to adversities such as poverty, poor housing health hazards, and lack of parental supervision found that this group did not have significantly different outcomes from local children who were not exposed to such hardships. Migrant children presented fewer depressive symptoms than those in rural areas who did not migrate, all of which is remarkable and may apply to e-hailers seeing that they keep using the app. This finding is particularly interesting as it shows some truth behind the assumption of this project that migration leads to more resilience.

A similar study of migrants, and non-migrants, found that in the presence of trauma, migrants displayed better resilience (Gatt et al. 2020). To this, Solà-Sales et al. (2021) note the need for studies which can differentiate resilience strategies, that is; do migrants have resilience because they walk away from bad work environments or because they can adapt themselves better to adversity?

Accordingly, studies by (Rydzik and Anitha 2020; Katz 2004) found that migrant workers in exploitative workplaces commonly responded with *reworking* strategies sustained through acts of *resilience*. This being day-to-day limited tactics of dealing with employers, co-workers, negative self-perception and depriving experiences. A pure form of *reworking* strategies involved quitting, which was notably rare, together with *resistance* strategies described by reporting unfair treatment and asserting rights, efforts which were often likely unsuccessful.

In the context of gig workers, resilience is drawn from social capital (Oatway 2021). Riders in the city created a WhatsApp group through which they share alerts of trauma-related events like accidents and even celebratory events like the wedding of a member. these participants are said to respond with donations to support the concerned member through a difficult time or celebration. One group had raised R30,000 to repatriate the remains of a

Ugandan courier killed in a crash. This group is a major source of coping for drivers as they cultivate a sense of joy and belonging, members were even said to organize soccer events which drew the attention of locals *Reworking* is also scarcely displayed by riders who express their preference for this kind of informal work due to the freedom to manage their own time and do other jobs.

With this said it is expected that migrant e-hailers in Johannesburg will experience these forms of precarity; with housing, car ownership, and their documentation which all should frustrate their ability to earn a decent living through Uber/Bolt except for resilience. It will be interesting to see if domestic migrants having less precarity, such as segregation and exploitation, still display less positive livelihood outcomes in the same industry.

4.4.2 Xenophobia and Violence

South Africa provides an important case study of how citizens' attitudes and behaviours materially affect the business climate for migrant entrepreneurs, it is then important to understand the history and characteristics of such behaviour within informal labour, which are detailed below.

Negative attitudes between groups based on migration status are common ground for discrimination and violence. Therefore, trying to run a business in the informal economy is an especially hazardous undertaking in South Africa. Further evidence shows that vulnerabilities are caused by police who run protection rackets amidst pervasive xenophobic attacks (Crush and Ramachandran 2014).

The initial wave of xenophobic attacks started in May 2008, which led to 70 people dead, 400 injured and 100,000 internally displaced. Since this time incidents have been more frequent and increased in their element of criminality and organization (Crush and Ramachandran 2014). The second wave in 2015 specifically targeted Somali and Pakistan shop owners and led to the destruction of more than 300 properties (Phiri 2022).

Crush and Ramachandran's (2014) report found that approximately 3.8 million adult-aged citizens were likely to use violence to rid their communities of foreign-born. They found that negative attitudes against migrants were deeply embedded and of these was the belief among locals that international migrants had no rights especially not to run a small business. Such opinions are what have fuelled the pervasive theme that migrants steal locals' jobs spurring more violence and looting.

Results showed that levels of xenophobia are highest among self-employed South Africans and that within the SADC region, migrants from Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland are viewed more positively than those from Zimbabwe and Mozambique. However, migrants from non-neighbouring countries rate even less positively: Nigerians (59% unfavourable), Congolese (51% unfavourable), and Somalis (50% unfavourable) since many informal migrant entrepreneurs come from the sorts of Zimbabweans, Mozambicans, Somalis, and Congolese nationals.

The authors further describe that incidents of collective violence which have been less reported stem from 1994, these acts took place more episodically and have also been targeted against migrant entrepreneurs. Much like xenophobic acts, they are organized perpetrators who distinguish themselves from the targeted victims. the goal of these acts is to control and achieve political, economic, and social objectives. The most recent manifestation of collective violence was organized by the anti-migrant group Operation Dudula, which was formed based on the popular belief among locals that foreign nationals; especially those who are undocumented are the causes of economic failure in the country.

The organization intends to put South Africans first in the competition for scarce resources. (Phiri 2022) notes that for the first time in the history of such incidents, the government's response has become relaxed, quoting President Cyril Ramaphosa saying "Everybody just arrives in our townships and rural areas and sets up businesses without licenses and permits. We are going to bring this to an end" (ibid). The evidence above points to the multiplicity of challenges faced by informal labour migrants in South Africa. It has demonstrated that migrants are not only defending their livelihoods in a troubled e-hailing marketplace; fighting both firms and traditional taxi forms, but they are also defending themselves against increasing xenophobic sentiments. Given the unwillingness of government and technology firms to address these issues, the future of peace in the country is at stake.

4.4.3 Gig Workplaces a Casualty of Technological Development

Technological developments rapidly change traditional organizational structures, and Uber/Bolt provides a good case study of how that happens. In a normal field, the introduction of technology would typically impact the employees' relationship with their work but with Uber, we witness a breakdown of the worker and employer relationship that

has never been seen before. The following captures the main discussions around the relationship between technological development and labour and related spaces.

4.4.3.1 Techno-pessimism vs techno-optimism

The eminent scholarship focused on the impact of platform-based technologies on labour is distinguished between techno-optimism and techno-pessimism. The discussion herein is founded upon understanding whether technological developments should be unleashed or regulated, based on the balance between good and bad (Königs 2022). The refined improvement account of both views stresses the balance between the impact and probability of technology as key factors in defining techno-optimism. In the author's account, a highly favourable impact of technology with only a small assessment of its negative effects encompasses techno-optimism, while techno-pessimism can still have a high regard for technology matched with a relatively high view of its negative impact. Another stream of techno-optimism is by John Danaher, who presents a preponderance view which holds that technology ensures that good prevails over the bad. but it also makes the world a better place (Königs 2022), which *ibid* rejects as having counterintuitive implications especially when applied to individual technology.

The World Bank supposes techno-optimism and states that technology may result in job losses especially due to automation, however, this can be counterbalanced through innovation associated with the platform of digital application software within the gig economy (World Bank 2019). Criticism of this view is that, in practice, it fails to account for prevailing work conditions affected by technological change, therefore, the World Bank ignores growing research that identifies the challenges and risks faced by workers in their struggle for decent work because of technological change. Furthermore, the disproportionate distribution of technology leads to inequality, leading to a growing power imbalance between labour and capital, lastly, while technology may or may not lead to job creation, the quality of these must be considered (Königs 2022).

Unlike the World Bank, the International Labour Organization acknowledges the shortfalls and risks in the gig economy to workers. They highlight the commodification of workers' flexible work structure, below-average pay, and lack of social protection. The ILO's World Employment Social Outlook report (2021) emphasizes these challenges being further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, noting that the danger of "working poverty" is

prevalent in the gig economy because of the need for social protection during economic slowdowns because of Covid-19 restriction.

Labour economist Guy Standing's work labelled the "precariat" encapsulates some of these challenges well (Standing 2014). He submits that through the neoliberalism development model, standard employment relations expressed in reciprocal rights between worker and employee, have broken down. The accumulation of profits is maximized by the entrenchment of labour market flexibility, a trend which manifests in a population with limited access to social protection and general societal detachment, leading to a "dangerous class in the making". This may be embodied by the class's psychological ill-health, because of a direct link between chronic occupational discrimination and employee sickness (Williams et al. 2008). Such health results are expected to be found among Uber drivers as has been found in occupations like the South African police force, who were dissatisfied with working conditions and company policy (Rothmann 2008; Rothmann and Strijdom 2002).

With this said technological optimism shuns the risks which workers impacted by the development of technology face. The refined improvement view articulates the benefits and risks e-hailers encounter in their work, showing that although favourable in creating scarce job opportunities much is to be done by involved parties to make sure e-hailing companies regulate these opportunities and that they do not produce further precarity for drivers.

In the technology age risk factors commonly arising for employer-employee relations e.g. bullying, and discrimination are replaced with the algorithm, which Webster (2020) found to be the major source of disempowerment for workers in the gig economy. As algorithms are considered trade secrets, workers have no input into how rights and rewards are spread, and no opportunity for redress if they believe they have been treated unfairly.

5 Methods

The following section provides a discussion of the research employed to interrogate the two questions posed by the study. The technique considered the research subjects and the consequences of using such a technique. It concludes with ethical considerations and other observations which were made during the research process.

5.1 Research Design

Based on the two questions it seeks to answer, the nature of this project will be based on a Descriptive Design and Mill's Method of Difference. The tenet of the latter is the

assumption that certain events are related systematically to events of another sort. In this case, we take the position that exposure to violence (xenophobic/taxi-related) is associated with unsustainable/negative livelihood outcomes (meaning failure to make a living off Uber/Bolt), moreover, we assume that international migrants; because of their exposure to xenophobia are more likely to have negative livelihood outcomes compared to domestic migrants who are not exposed to the same.

Mill's Method of Difference will be used to answer the second question of this study which is "Are there notable differences in the livelihood outcomes of domestic and international migrants in the e-hailing business?". This will be interrogated by using the five livelihood capitals; financial, social, political, physical, and human capital, to find out which group has sustainable livelihood outcomes in the industry.

The Descriptive Design will be used to answer the first question; "what are the livelihood strategies of migrants in the e-hailing workforce?". The technique is typically used to obtain information about a phenomenon, which in this case is the livelihood survival of migrants in an unestablished economy and a hostile society. This study seeks to identify trends in the livelihood strategies of such a group.

The study will employ qualitative methods and participants will be interviewed, through semi-structured questions which were devised based on the respective livelihood scale. This is important because of the explorative aspect of this study, participants will be given some freedom in the interviews to discuss their unique survival strategies. On the other hand, there is a need for structured questions which will satisfy the comparative (2nd research question) aspect of the study.

5.2 Livelihood outcome

To measure livelihood outcomes, a semi-structured interview was used. The questions were guided by the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework updated by Baumann and Subir (2009). These enabled the participants to share details on each of the five areas of their livelihoods namely, human capital, financial capital, physical capital, and social capital. An outcome will either be negative or positive depending on a) increased income b) reduced vulnerability- to poverty and violence c) increased well-being in this case job security- which means growth and not fearing they will suddenly lose their job. The following indicators were used;

“Do you think Uber has changed your life for the better/Is this something you expect to do in the next 5 years?” and “Do you think you will have this job as long as you need it?”

5.3 Sample

The sample consisted of two groups; *Domestic Migrants*- 5 participants and *International Migrants*- 5 participants. Both groups were migrants living and working in Johannesburg and over the age of 18 years. Each group had an equal number of men. Women were excluded from the sample given the evidence of their lower participation rate in platform work, because this study also aimed to compare livelihood outcomes it was important to keep each group similar.

5.4 Data Collection

The data collection took place in the city of Johannesburg. Participants were identified as I took Uber/Bolt rides around the city and introduced my study to my drivers, I also asked drivers whom I had interviewed to refer me to other drivers that they knew and even sent out my invitation to the study on their WhatsApp groups. Interviews were done telephonically, during the driver's breaks or while they waited for new requests. This was the best method because of the busy nature of their job, and to make sure the study did not interfere with their ability to make money as we could easily pause the interview until the next time they were available.

Interviews were conducted over 14 days. And because no recordings were made, I wrote notes and transcribed each interview immediately after it ended, so that everything they said would be remembered.

5.5 Data analysis

After each interview, I documented my commentary on how the driver in question felt about his work on the e-hailing platform, optimistic, pessimistic, or complacent. I then sorted the responses according to migrant groups and created a table of the four capitals according to the livelihood framework with their responses, this simplified the results as answers to the main research questions became evident.

5.6 Ethics

This section aims to outline all the measures that were taken to protect all human actors in this research project. The project was determined to be low-risk and participants could be vulnerable members of society due to their documentation as migrants. The nature of the

research project has the potential to cause secondary trauma as I will ask questions relating to xenophobic encounters, violence, and income loss, thus, participants were made aware of their right to not answer certain questions or completely withdraw from the study.

Before starting the interview process participants were given knowledge of what this project intended to achieve. It was explained to them that they could pause the interview to take requests from clients, and that participation in the project has no direct benefits for them but their input would only be used for academic purposes. They were further made aware that the information shared with me during the data collection would be confidential and protected. The information shared will only be seen by myself and my supervisor. Data will be kept in a password-protected USB and written notes kept in a safe space far from public access, I also used pseudonyms from the start of the interviews. This summed up my process of obtaining informed consent.

5.7 Limitations

The study's findings may not be relevant to the entire migrant population of e-hailers in Johannesburg considering the sample size, gender, and the sampling technique where only Uber and Bolt drivers were invited. The study could not do an extensive interrogation into the health of e-hailers, something which is an important aspect of livelihoods in any industry, it is, therefore, suggestable that future research interrogates this. Further investigation of the findings which link the expectation for formal work among citizens should be made, to include local residents, more DM from other Provinces and migrants from further parts of Africa.

The work experiences of e-hailers vary based on the legal structures and policies in regions, as such our previous discussion on permits did not apply to drivers in Johannesburg, as they registered with ease. Notwithstanding, Bolt lite drivers in the city, it is possible that if they were included in the study, findings could be different.

6 Findings

6.1 Strategies

The following is a summary of the strategies which drivers use to survive in the e-hailing industry, it includes a discussion of the livelihood capitals based on each group's responses and concludes with answers to the two research questions.

6.1.1 Avoidance

The biggest strategy that drivers used had to do with ensuring their safety, and this was avoiding high crime and highly contested areas. These included areas such as Hillbrow, Yoeville, Soweto Malls, squatter camps, and townships. Some drivers were more fearful of certain areas than others, like Enoch from Limpopo whom I had met through a request on Uber, he had to switch off his app after dropping me off, as he said he does not work in the inner city at all, during my interview with him he was waiting for a request in a parking lot, this was interesting as the interview went on for about 35 minutes without any disturbance, something which was impossible with other drivers as they were constantly on the move. His decision to avoid hailing in many areas led to him often waiting for clients in quiet areas. With other participants, I either interviewed them while they were driving, running errands, before or after their workday and like Jacob while he was staying away from Uber. What stood out in my conversation with Enoch is that he often referred to his lack of tertiary education as an obstacle to making a better living. He often said “Us people with no education” and followed with a limitation he experienced in his work.

One of the participants Thabiso mentioned that even though he lives in a township himself he tries to stay away from ferrying clients in these areas, he said he would rather drive to Sandton and work there because of how uncertain clients and taxi wars are in his township. Leato a full-time security guard who lives in Soweto said he will not completely stop ferrying clients in the township because it didn't make economic sense, his training in his full-time occupation is what enables him to be courageous and keep safe in such areas. He said as a rule of thumb he will not pick up a crowd of men, or clients who request from strange places like taverns and in the middle of nowhere.

Drivers indicated that they had to take precautions when accepting cash trips, for example, Martin said he does not accept cash rides when he works at night and when clients request from certain areas. Victor was quoted saying “People out there are hungry, and we become easy targets because they know we carry cash”.

Drivers on Bolt mentioned that when they started they would accept requests and ask the clients to cancel the trip, so they could have the full amount without paying commission. However, Bolt started charging customers who did this for cancelling rides.

Drivers who had been on the platform for longer than 4 years recalled that their weekly earnings had dropped significantly since those days like Njabulo who could easily make 10 000 because it was safe, but the increase in crime and taxi wars has made it unsafe.

6.1.2 Side Jobs

IM	Schedule	Other Work	DM	Schedule	Other Work
Gift	part-time	entrepreneur	Leato	full-time	entrepreneur
Jacob	full-time	entrepreneur	Victor	part-time	formal
Martin	full-time	entrepreneur	Njabulo	full-time	entrepreneur
Sizwe	full-time	none	Enoch	full-time	none
Shaun	full-time	entrepreneur	Thokozani	full-time	entrepreneur

Table 1: Labour Schedules

Macmillan (2022) found that drivers in the eh-hailing sector depend on this income stream solely, this might have been the case when Uber was new in the South African market, as earnings were high and people left formal work to become e-hailers which offered more independence. However, this study found otherwise, the sample consisted of three types of labour, those who had full-time jobs and did Uber on the weekends, those who only worked as e-hailers and those who e-hailed on a full-time basis while having a side job. During the interviews, Gift was the only one in the process of acquiring a second car, understandably the only way in this industry to increase earning potential. it was important for the majority of the drivers to have other businesses and not solely depend on e-hailing. only one participant in the DM group had formal employment while the rest were entrepreneurs, which allowed them to spend most of their time on the platforms.

Jacob was not only driving on both Uber and Bolt but also owned a bike which he used to deliver food on Uber Eats. This was especially helpful for him during the pandemic when business came to a halt on e-hailing platforms.

Drivers who were both Bolt and Uber preferred Uber because of its lower commission and vetting of passengers, this made them feel much safer using the app. Leato used his income from Bolt to finance his driving on the Uber app, on days when Uber was a bit quiet, he used Bolt for a few hours. Tow out of ten of the drivers expressed they were satisfied with their work on Uber, Gift said this was because he understood that Uber is not an employer but a company which simply connects him to clients at a time that best suits him, his expectation was therefore capped to this, a result of the classes he attended when Uber launched, something which they no longer do for new drivers.

6.2 Livelihood Capitals

6.2.1 Human Capital and Risk

The most violent attacks reported were from the IM group especially when perpetrators noticed a foreign accent, a point at which taxi operators refused to negotiate a 'fine' for labour in forbidden areas. Jacob from the DRC recalled that after dropping off a client at the airport 4 men entered his car and commanded him to drive to an unknown destination, when they arrived at a plain field they tried to attack him but because of his martial arts and training as a bodyguard, he managed to beat all of them and flee from the scene. Victor from Limpopo had a similar incident, but he arrived with these six men at a taxi rank they demanded money about R1,500, he said one of the men pulled him to the side because he saw he was a rasta and allowed him to pay R200 and walk away. 8 drivers reported a similar experience with taxi operators who demand amounts ranging from R1000 to R2000. On one encounter Leato from Limpopo was asked to pay a fine of R2000 for a pickup at a township mall, he negotiated to R1000 and sent an e-wallet which he later reversed. In the second incident, he paid the amount they demanded because he saw they were "ruthless".

Migrants from KZN were more likely to display confidence in dealing taxi operators with taxi operators, to such an extent that Thokozani a former taxi driver, still entered malls in Soweto. Njabulo recalled an incident where he was similarly taken to a taxi rank and instead of a tense confrontation, he ended up casually chatting with the guys for two hours "because I know how to speak their language and how to appease them", at the end of that conversation he only gave them R50 for cold drink. When asked how he handles such situations he said, 'You must be humble and apologise for trespassing, but you must never be shaky or show that you are scared because you'll end up paying R1,500' which for him was unfathomable. Thokozani who is a former taxi driver also credited his interpersonal and language skills in communicating humaneness with the taxi operators as the main strategy he uses to survive, "it's important to know how to speak to these people". Because of this the highest amount he paid was R60 and that was also just for a cold drink. Martin from Zimbabwe also reported the importance of interpersonal skills, 'one day they will come and ask you for that money but when they start to recognise you, they will leave you sometimes'. In these incidents, foreign nationals paid more in trespassing bribes than domestic migrants, migrants from Limpopo paid more than those from KZN.

Migrants in the IM group indicated that xenophobia affects their work, where clients become unfriendly as soon as they realise that they are foreigners. Like Martin who recalled an incident where he picked up three different men who were going to different destinations, and as he tried to communicate routes with them, they realised he was a foreigner and started accusing him of stealing their jobs and calling him *kwerekwere*. The trips ended with all three refusing to pay. Since then, he has been careful of picking up groups of men especially those from certain tribes like Zulus.

With this said xenophobia did not play an important role for two participants in the IM group, like Gift who when asked about xenophobic experiences said “What is that? I mean, everywhere you go people will find something about you they hate” he went on to say he doesn’t believe there is such a thing as xenophobia “It’s just a trending word”. Sizwe mentioned that he has had xenophobic experiences, just not in the industry. The response from Gift was certainly surprising and could be interrogated in further studies concerning xenophobia, he mentioned that the last time he had a negative encounter with taxi drivers was only at the beginning of his job but has since managed to avoid both crime and taxis in the last 7 years, this was similar to Sizwe’s career who stated that by the grace of God, he has not had such an experiences. This study concludes that xenophobic discrimination in the public transport industry is perpetuated by language, that drivers’ ability to associate with taxi operators resulted in a) less violence, b) decreased cost in bribes and lastly c) refusal to completely disappear from highly contested areas.

Jacob and Victor both have training as security guards, something to which they credited their safety in this industry, Victor who drives for Bolt said this enabled him to protect himself from criminal acts by clients, and which majority of the interviewees said this was popular on Bolt because of a poor client vetting process. All drivers who used both Bolt and Uber reported a preference for Uber because it is safer and has a lower commission. on the subject of crime, what was also interesting is that women were reported to be used increasingly for criminal acts including those who requested rides and said they did not have money to pay but were offering sex in exchange. This was a serious concern among drivers, that such incidents resulted in a loss of income for which no recourse could be made successfully. Enoch and Victor from Limpopo said women would often dress provocatively and enter his vehicle insisting that he look at them, he felt this was an attack on himself as a man, and on his health because “everyone is sick, and others carry their diseases better than others” and he was only on the platform to make a living. Martin recalled the first time he

was mugged, was by a woman riding with two children something completely unexpected, others, of women arriving at the destination and said their partner would come out and pay for the trip, only for that man to be a robber. This was a major reason drivers stopped working at night although they didn't completely avoid them. This is especially ironic considering the national state of gender-based violence which led to e-hailing platforms offering women-only rides, the idea that while women avoid men, men are increasingly avoiding women.

IM				DM			
Income	Social	Political	Car Owner	Income	Social	Political	Car Owner
R 7 000,00	no	no	yes+	R 4 000,00	no	no	yes
R 4 500,00	no	no	no	R 3 500,00	no	no	yes
R 5 000,00	yes	no	yes	R 1 500,00	yes	no	yes
R 4 500,00	yes	no	no	R 3 000,00	no	no	no
R 4 000,00	yes	no	yes	R 3 500,00	yes	no	yes

Table 2: Four Livelihood Capitals

6.2.2 Financial capital

As shown above, IM earn more than DM, this is the final profit for the car they drive after fuel, commission and car rent are paid. This was often the same around R2500 for all those who were renting cars. This result may be linked to the location where drivers lived, DM often resided in townships while IM in lived in central locations such as the inner city. Another factor was a willingness to risk working through the night/long hours to meet targets, something which DM often refrained from as they were unwilling to risk their lives. DM were also more focused on finding formal work or establishing their side hustles like Njabulo who worked as an events organiser and was off during the weekends (a peak period in the industry), and Leato a student at Unisa who committed a lot of his time to this.

Drivers were also asked “Are you able to save towards retirement or future emergencies through this work?” the majority said that this work only allowed them to eat from hand to mouth so that was not possible for them, they also stated that their earnings contribute to other business ventures and not to any savings.

6.2.3 Political Capital

In September 2023 E-hailing Partners Council EPCO coordinated a two-day strike and presented a series of grievances; many of which were long-standing and had to do with safety and commissions (Leathern 2023). None of the drivers in this study participated in

this strike action even though they were all aware of it. This study found that during periods of strike action as Banda (2022) reports drivers feel coercion into partaking as they unwillingly switch off their apps to avoid harassment from organised e-hailers. None of the drivers in this study were involved in any political organisation relating to e-hailers, none of them were politically active nor did they believe the political actions of others would amount to any changes for them.

On the contrary, the majority of the drivers were unaware of the existence of any associations or the legal battle for them to be recognised as employees. One respondent who was aware reported that it is not useful for Uber to identify him as an employee because that would come with inflexible working hours, taking away the best part of his job which is his freedom. What was also interesting is that the majority of the sample, especially those who were not in WhatsApp groups with other e-hailers, were suspicious of political activities and stated that lies are likely being told in those groups, and as such they insisted that they did not wish to be influenced by anyone. Of particular interest was Leato who had been suspended from university due to involvement in protests, he expressed his regret in this this was determined as an e-hailer to remain uninfluenced by popular narratives but rather focus on building his life.

Victor who is a full-time security guard and only drives Bolt on weekends, stated that he doesn't believe unions have the best interest of their clients because when negotiations fail, they often resort to bribing the other party and selling out. The consensus with the sample was that they were only on the e-hailing platforms as a short-term survival strategy, and this opportunity caused them to eat from hand to mouth, therefore political organisation was not a priority because it would not alleviate their immediate needs. This cynicism was not only limited to their influence in political associations but even when asked what they would talk about if given an opportunity to sit down with Bolt/Uber, it became clear that drivers believed that such businesses put clients above e-hailers, which is why they did not intervene in taxi wars making that made their work more insecure.

For example, Gauteng saw a tumultuous launch of Bolt lite – the Bajaj Qute quadricycle in July 2023 (Bredrode 2023). Leading to a subsequent mass impounding even though Bolt had confirmed approval from the department for these vehicles to hail passengers (Nkosi 2023). The motive behind impounding was clearly based on fear as officers were seen impounding vehicles with proof of licensing displayed (Bredrode 2023). This is because the Bajaj offers

fares as cheap as taxi fares putting them in direct competition with taxis, therefore authorities acted quickly to suppress this competition to avoid taxi violence (Bredrode 2023, Nkosi 2023). Not only were taxis unhappy but other e-hailers also expressed disapproval of the Bajaj Qute, out of fear that they too would be forced out of business as customers would choose this option. They also expressed that such a development would make them stand out to taxi operators and attacks (Bredrode 2023, Mlambo 2023) something which would dismantle their efforts to lay low as an avoidance strategy that is vital to their livelihoods. This demonstrates that developments by firms which seek to expand the customer base often put drivers at risk of lower earnings and attacks.

To further demonstrate the disempowering impact of developments on e-hailing livelihoods- in a statement by EPCO they warned that any partnership between the government and Uber was only a guise for supposed empowerment (“Drivers Fedup With E-hailing Companies” 2023). In an interesting account, Thokozani noted that he will be forced to leave the industry soon because of the deal which Uber made Moove. He said through such an agreement the company earned profits whenever new drivers leased a car through this company, and as such drivers who owned their cars were being given stricter conditions to remove them from the system. He explained that each year the car model conditions increased, not because the car became unroadworthy, but because Uber simply has an agenda to maximize profits through Moove.

All this signifies a mistrust among e-hailers and tech firms and is indicative of political poverty in the e-hailing sector. The disunity among drivers, and constant intimidation from competition and within e-hailing groups, point to a lack of power which is seriously needed to thrive in the public transport industry of South Africa. Something which taxi operators have solicited through criminality, as seen in the 2023 strike action in Cape Town by the South Africa National Taxi Council (SANTACO) which saw the city stand still. (Masson 2023; Al Jazeera 2023; Ludidi 2023) resulting in the survival of their business.

The e-hailing sector on the other hand displays political poverty which if persists may result in the collapse of such a business in Johannesburg, as drivers continue to work in fear of taxi violence, and app developments put them in danger of losing their jobs.

6.2.4 Social Capital

half of the sample was not part of any social media or WhatsApp group, and others relied on radio news and the news they got from the app to keep themselves updated. This was

often an intentional decision to keep themselves away from groupthink beliefs. Leato expressed that life is hard and everyone is going through something they need to survive, being a part of a social media group with other drivers would only cause him to be more discouraged about his goals and his work because whenever he met other drivers on the road, all they did was complain, even though the things they were saying were true he did not want that kind of influence but a positive one. For him, mental health was very important, and he valued having uplifting conversations with clients on the road to keep himself encouraged. his work on Uber helped pay his tuition at Unisa and for him, the goal is to get a formal job after graduating. Two in the DM were part of WhatsApp groups reported that the information shared on the app amounted to a waste of their data bundles. IM were most likely to be part of WhatsApp groups and more than just one, two in this group reported that it was important as they felt encouraged, and the information shared in the groups was important in helping them to not make mistakes. These findings were consistent with the literature which shows that migrants find resilience through social capital. Jacob from the DRC was part of social media groups and indeed believed it was important to associate himself with others, but he noted that other drivers' refusal to communicate in English and their anger when requested to do so, made him start excluding himself.

With this said, isolation was common in the sample interviewed, after interviewing each participant this project requested drivers to refer someone they knew, only three out of ten drivers did this, while others said they would see because they don't meet others. Jacob noted that his foreignness made it harder to find association with others even though he was willing to get involved in important conversations which were mainly through WhatsApp groups. He said the inability of drivers to agree with one another even on social media will hinder any positive changes ever being made in the industry. Notably, some drivers were isolated because for them e-hailing was a side job which they did not wish to get more involved in but just make ends meet.

6.2.5 Physical Capital

Because of his documentation, Jacob struggled to own a vehicle. During the interviews, he had applied for a car through Bolt, a system which he believed was designed to trap desperate migrants like him, because of the exponential total cost of owning that car compared to normal car finance payment plans. He explained that this contract meant that

he would be making double the amount of car payments per month than what someone purchasing from a dealership would.

This is a car ownership model first introduced by Uber called Drive share and later incorporated by Bolt as ...; including a leasing system whereby drivers who lack the means of vehicle ownership can lease their vehicles from third-party operators – known as Drive Partners (Dubbelman 2021). A unique model in the global south offering drivers who cannot afford to purchase their own vehicles access (ibid). In 2021 Uber made an agreement with Moove; a vehicle ownership solution company which was to offer Uber drivers the Toyota Agyasa at the cost of R1,950 every two weeks for 4 years, this deal means that drivers would pay up to R150,000 more for the vehicle (Thukwana 2021). Such a model has the guise of helping drivers but really exploits those who cannot afford to approach normal dealerships because of their credit scores or documents like migrants. What also results from this is pressure for drivers to stay on the platform just to finish paying for their cars.

The study by Dubbelman (2021) of Uber drivers details an even more complex structure of ownership. comprising of the company, a Drive Partner (or Lessor) and the driver. There are three categories under which one may apply to become a Partner, namely: 1. A driver 2. Vehicle owner, driving 3. Vehicle owners, not driving, should they successfully register as a (3) vehicle owner, not driving they will be required to register their driver according to the e-hailer terms and conditions (Uber Requirements for Drivers in South Africa, 2020). Uber, specifically, assists these Partners in finding appropriate drivers for their vehicles by specifying several fleet partners on their website but has no part in providing guidelines for the nature of the contractual relationship between the vehicle owner and the driver (Dubbelman 2021).

This is the only system by which drivers can experience promotion and high earnings and as such one driver in the IM group owned two cars and more drivers in this group wished to do the same because they saw a future in the industry, something which the majority of the drivers in the DM group did not desire. As mentioned above, the DM group were more likely to desire formal employment and e-hailing was something they did to keep busy until they could secure jobs.

Generally, the relationship between the two consisted of the following: The driver leases the vehicle from the Partner at an agreed rate, and pays for fuelling costs, data, and airtime costs. The Partner finances any insurance on the vehicle (an e-hailing requirement for the

vehicle to operate on Uber and Bolt applications) and pays for any servicing costs. This study by Dubbelman established that the relationship between drivers and driver partners lacks formal agreements, making room for various forms of abuse due to a lack of protection. It also found that driver partners' expectations were sometimes unreasonable putting drivers under severe stress to meet impossible targets or else lose their leased vehicles. One driver reported being expected to travel less than 2000km per week to minimise the vehicle's wear and tear, forcing him out of business as he became unable to finance his car.

The main issue with Uber's ownership structures is that drivers in such agreements have no form of recourse when faced with challenges, though the company connects them to third-party providers, Uber is entirely independent of the relations on that level, even though they play a significant role in the livelihoods of drivers. Rydzik and Anitha (2020) found that in the informal economy, labourers are less likely to engage legal bodies which address grievances with their employers, especially because such processes impede workers' access to desperately needed income in sectors where there is an oversupply of labour. Similarly, when faced with challenges with third-party lessors Uber drivers do not make use of their rights to appeal with the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration CCMA (Dubbelman 2021).

The Study by Dubbelman also found that many drivers did not use Uber and Bolt's third-party ownership pathway, but found lessors via social networks and referrals, decreasing precarity because they personally know their lessor but having the potential to drastically increase exploitation because of a lack of legal protection. Similarly, workers in the taxi industry are vastly unprotected by legal bodies, thereby, directing their dependence for income and survival on social networks (Mndebele and Cabe 2019). This shows how similarly precarious e-hailing and taxi livelihoods are, further linking the e-hailing industry to the informal economy.

Likewise, because of the exploitative nature of Uber and Bolt's car ownership model, drivers were less likely to use this process, and those that did like Jacob was in the process of doing, did so out of desperation. Drivers averted this process to find lessors whom they knew personally like Enoch who leased his car from his sister-in-law and Sizwe who rented from a lady he knew. They both stated their relationship with their lessors was "understanding" and not stressful as Dubbelman found in his assessment of drivers who

used this ownership process. That said, this study did not find high levels of stress and precarity regarding drivers' car ownership as the majority owned their cars. Jacob only started his application as a last resort due to his documentation indicating a risk that migrants face in the business.

6.3 Livelihood Outcome

6.3.1 Job Security

This was measured by asking drivers if they believed their lives were positively impacted by e-hailing if they thought they saw growing potential for themselves in the industry and if they thought they would have their jobs as long as they needed them. Interestingly in the DM group majority were dissatisfied with their work as e-hailers. The high commission and safety concerns were quoted as the main reasons for strongly desiring to leave the job. Stating that if their side hustles earned them better income, they would stop e-hailing immediately.

An issue which often came up when this question was posed was the issue of the algorithm, especially for Bolt drivers, this was a major source of uncertainty for drivers as they understood that various factors outside of their control could hinder their work temporarily. As Oatway (2021) mentions these drivers' employment is dependent upon a robot which kicks them off the Uber platform with no viable avenue for appeal, for reasons such as low customer reviews which aren't investigated in cases where there is a good reason. Ibid argues that "The use of algorithms as a device of unseen control is unparalleled in the history of work," and how "In the case of the food courier, it directs you where to go, how much to charge, and it disconnects you if you don't play according to their particular rules. But you don't know how anything is calculated."

The majority in this group felt trapped in a cycle of e-hailing for a living because their side hustles weren't making enough money. Of the IM group 4/5 reported security with their job, in that they want to continue doing it in the next 5 years and that they plan on expanding their business by owning more cars to increase income. This group was more likely to approach their work based on weekly targets and avail themselves of work in busy seasons such as month end, weekends, and nighttime. Gift who was particularly pleased, said that he joined Uber in 2015 when there were weekly educational classes that drivers had to take before going on the road, this played an important role in him managing his expectations of what the job would be like. "Uber is not my employer like others have, they

simply connect me to clients and I decide when I'm going to work, it's that simple everything is up to me". Nowadays new drivers go through a 4-hour online induction, a lack of knowledge which may contribute to their expectations of a normal job not being met.

Job security in the industry was also linked to a driver's ability to be courageous as seen with Thokozani, a former taxi driver in the DM group, who reported that the war between e-hailers and taxis was for him a sign that they were taking ground in the industry, he mentioned that e-hailing was a good opportunity and would be continuing in the business in as long as it is possible.

Jacob from the DRC has a background in security and martial arts which also gave him courage to continue despite the attacks his foreignness attracted to him. Even though he wanted out of e-hailing, his documentation is a major source of limitation in his career as a pilot, and while he hopes that one day his application for permanent residency will be considered at the Department of Home Affairs e-hailing is his only option. This battle with his documents started when he was robbed of them when he first arrived in the country, because of this e-hailing and courier services are his only option. He often writes motivational letters to Home Affairs describing his community work and livelihood, something which he believes should show that he is not a bad guy, but he believes that the xenophobic views of the government are a major reason why he never hears back from them. Within the industry, his documentation also hindered him from purchasing his car, an important strategy to secure his earnings since he started driving in 2016.

Another aspect of this topic is drivers' trust in Uber to have their best interest. The majority of the drivers expressed that they did not believe that Uber/bolt put policies in place which protected them because the apps cared more for clients than drivers. Other drivers also said that they felt their livelihoods were threatened by the introduction of lower-priced services such as the Bolt Bajaj and the upheaval they caused with taxi violence because of its low prices. This together with despair concerning their plights being heard reflects how insecure many drivers are in the industry.

6.3.2 Income and Vulnerability

IM had higher weekly earnings, and the majority in this group saw a future in the industry and were working towards owning more cars. Higher earnings were also reported even though many did not own their vehicles, such findings are a contrast to the assumption that car ownership should decrease the risk of poverty but IM gave themselves higher financial

targets per week because of their vehicle leasing agreement. This is mind none of the participants in the sample owned homes, but the majority of the IM group lived in house-sharing apartments or homes in the city, while a large portion of the DM group rented back rooms in townships, which is not in and of itself suggestive of risk to poverty but when combined with the inability to save for the future through their work indicates precarity in e-hailing work. Like Jacob who before the lockdown had been renting a house where he lived with his family because his earnings were high, but after the lockdown was forced to send his family back to the DRC and now lives with his pastor.

The ability of IM to earn more resulted in reduced vulnerability to poverty. However, vulnerability was increased for all drivers as going out daily to transport customers was a risk to their lives, the majority noted how they often felt anxious and were constantly on the lookout to protect themselves from car accidents, criminals and harassment by taxi operators. It is important to note however that not all the drivers felt anxious about such incidents as Thokozani who rather expressed thrill because of his street smarts and Gift who was unbothered because he seemed to avoid “all that stuff”. During this study, Enoch became redundant, as his insurance declined to pay for a fault in his car’s engine, which was estimated to cost about R153,000. Jacob took a break from e-hailing as he struggled to buy his own car, something which frustrated his earning potential since he started in 2016 in this industry. What was also interesting was that when he did have a car his weekly profit was still higher than all in the DM group, and this is further evidence of the resilience which migrants have to persist in difficult situations.

6.3.3 Sustainable Work?

Many e-hailing associations have since formed with the agenda of persuading Uber to take serious security measures to protect workers as employees (Leskin 2016; Macmillan 2022). In a 2016 case between Uber South Africa Technological Service (Pty) Ltd vs NUPSAW and SATAWU (Truter 2017) a CCMA Commissioner ruled in favour of UberSA’s plea to be categorized as employees, this decision was however, overturned by the Labour Court which held that the Commissioner erred in distinguishing between Uber BV and UberSA as distinct entities (this followed Uber Netherlands drivers’ court triumph asserting them employee rights). The court found that UberSA operates solely as an administrative function offering support to drivers without a contract (Nicholls 2021). Similar efforts in other parts of the world have ended successfully. In California, the company agreed to pay 8.4 million dollars to settle the class action lawsuit by a set of drivers who claimed to be misclassified. This settlement, however, only applied to this group and all drivers in the State. Similar

incidents have been noted in places like Amsterdam, the United Kingdom, Pennsylvania and France (GroundUp 2022).

Given the large footprint of Uber, these settlements have taken place sparingly, creating inequality in e-hailing work across the globe. Webster (2020) notes that these kinds of lawsuits against e-hailing firms are becoming more popular and are only going to intensify as drivers around the world demand their rights. However, Johnston and Land-Kazlauskas (2019) note that worker's ability to influence power relations is more successful when they are place-based and when change is pursued within a well-established industrial framework. With e-hailing, the lack of a common workplace, the occurring competition between workers and the elevated levels of isolation mean that political organisation is more complex (Dubbelman 2021) and as this study has found some e-hailers are not only weary of organisation but resist it due to meeting short term needs.

The future of e-hailing in Johannesburg belongs to drivers who can communicate humanly with taxi operators. Those who can make a living without entering high crime or forbidden territories. Further, it belongs to drivers who have multiple streams of income and are not solely dependent on e-hailing, who are streetwise, with a background in crime combat or supernaturally able to avoid all kinds of calamity. Even though other drivers in this study were able to avoid the turmoil in the public transport industry, including crime and xenophobia, it is the position of this paper that e-hailing, although it provides a source of income diversification which struggling economies aren't able to substitute, is not a sustainable source of labour which government ought to fund as part of the development of public transport. Much of this precarity is brought by the ambiguity in categorizing this work as formal or informal, the growth of this sector is reliant on e-hailing firms drawing customers through strategies that endanger drivers.

Additionally, the public transport industry is contingent on the grace that taxi operators grant to competition, without this criminal behaviour and extortion increase to subdue territories, a plaguing concern when considering the job security of e-hailers. Such risk is largely contributed to by drivers being un-protected by e-hailing firms a benefit which could be due to them when they become formal employers, a seemingly unlikely path for drivers in South Africa as isolation, conflict and the urgency to meet daily needs cripples unity.

Additionally, when taking into account the WIEGO diagram greater precarity can be expected to be found among female e-hailers. With this said, in an economy where population growth exceeds available jobs, e-hailing may continue to attract more drivers even though it is not a sustainable form of work.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Research Questions

This paper set out to understand labour migration into the public transport industry in Johannesburg and in particular e-hailing. It aimed to assess the sustainability of e-hailing and the livelihoods which it produced, its findings confirmed persistent precarity in varying forms based on each driver's ability to mitigate risk. This being an in-between formal and informal economy meant that those who entered it often did so to supplement their income in the short-term and not remain long-term lending itself to unsustainable work. Additionally, the unruly competitive behaviour in the industry, which goes uncontrolled by government and police, extended the risk which drivers exposed themselves to daily. Finally, older drivers (even when they belonged to the IM group) expressed their desire to leave the industry as the precarity put greater strain on them. All of this is evidence that e-hailing is unsustainable work.

On paper the goals which the government has for the development of the public transport industry are clear, and if implemented can result in a world-class industry which provides sustainable livelihoods for those who labour in it. However, the evidence points to transport livelihoods which are precarious as both taxi drivers and e-hailers face poor employment relationships, a pressing need to have side hustles and a lack of protection. The violence in the largest player in the industry trickles into the livelihoods of other modes including e-hailing and the BRT increasing joblessness as they are forbidden access to what is supposed to be a free market.

The second research question had to do with comparing drivers' livelihoods based on their residency status (domestic and international migrants), to find out which group had better outcomes and why. Consistent with the statistics which show that the two biggest senders in the country are Limpopo and Kwa Zulu Natal, the DM sample consisted of migrants from these Provinces. The findings were also consistent with the literature (Lamb, Kunene, and Dyili 2019; Myroniuk and Vearey 2014) which said IM livelihood are better than DM outcomes as international migrants were found to have more positive livelihood outcomes than domestic migrants. Such literature (Lamb, Kunene, and Dyili 2019) proves that this is due to higher education levels and social capital as entrepreneurs associated with their clan members as they accumulated goods in bulk to sell them more affordably. Contrarily this study did not find a disparity in education levels which favoured IM, in fact, the majority of

the sample had a grade 12 level qualification with one driver in the IM group having a college qualification and Leato who was in his second-year study in Accounting at a University, this participant had formerly been suspended from another University in Pretoria because of his involvement in the FeesMustFall student demonstrations, amounting to a substantial delay in his career journey forcing him to resort to e-hailing in the meantime. This shows that both groups had similar levels of education.

Regarding social capital, this study found that because isolation in the e-hailing business was pervasive, social networks did not play a significant role in success, but entrepreneurial dexterity played a major role in determining who made the most of their e-hailing opportunity, to this effect DM were less zealous about the entrepreneurial character of e-hailing because they said working in e-hailing is like making money for someone else.

The livelihood outcomes assessment was made based on the sustainable livelihood framework where each group was evaluated according to five capitals namely; financial, social, human, political and physical capital. IM were found to be more optimistic about their labour in the e-hailing business and were more likely to expect to grow (beyond car rental and owning a second car) than DM who felt an urgency to leave and find a formal job. This points to a resilience which IM have in coping with precarity that DM may not have. Such results contribute important knowledge to the literature surrounding migrant livelihoods and resilience, by indicating that international migrants' positive livelihoods when compared to other migrants are linked to DM's expectation of formal work, therefore not investing in other types of work. As such even when faced with greater challenges IM produced better outcomes.

Given the pessimism about the industry among DM, it is likely that the industry will in future consist of more international migrants. This will attract xenophobic attacks and the persistent claim of jobs being stolen, as IM often saw opportunities where DM saw obstacles. While the lack of its categorization may benefit them temporarily with policies like the NLMP, it is important for the future of such work that e-hailers possess negotiating power with important players in the industry, especially with the tech firms connecting them to labour. this is because societal conflict in the form of crime, xenophobia and violence in the taxi industry are on the rise, making it necessary for e-hailers to have representation in political discussions and with Uber/Bolt.

7.1.1 Taxi's Trickle-down Effect

The main strategy which all drivers reported was avoiding taxis, a similar characteristic occurring within taxi associations too. The taxi industry is structured by ambiguous kinship networks, where only the strength of a taxi owner's social embeddedness determines survival. Without recognition as a respectable member from other associations and drivers, they become susceptible to attacks from these associations. A result of oversupply in the industry, where owners take it into their own hands to jealously guard against competition and secure routes (Gibbs 2014). This is evidence of how taxis set the tone of insecurity in the entire industry.

It is made up of a majority of male migrants from KwaZulu Natal, who first made their way to the city of gold during the 1980s and 1990s as blue-collar workers in the mining industry as well as other firms. Similarly, Dubbelman's study found that drivers came from similar employment types such as drivers, and butchers. In this study, drivers came from skilled labour as well such as curtain makers, truck drivers and delivery personnel.

Additionally, taxi owner and taxi driver relations are exceptionally poor; marked by abuse and exploitation, and drivers earn as little as two thousand rands per month ("How South Africa's Minibus Taxi Industry Exploits Its Drivers" 2019). It is reported that taxi drivers can work between 16-20 hours per day, under immense pressure from their bosses to meet high capital targets (Mndebele and Cabe 2019). Uber first introduced work hour limit due to reports of drivers working as long as 24 hours to meet margins,

High daily targets force taxi drivers to look for ways to make extra money "*isokisi*" (ibid). Leading them to look for ways while on the job to earn extra instead of getting a side hustle. This leads to frantic driving and breaking road rules. In a similar fashion e-hailers often search for side jobs which supplement this income

Finally, the behaviour of taxi owners resembles that of tech firms like Uber and Bolt, in disputing protection for drivers which will result in extra costs for them, as such taxi owners are by law required to provide minimum wages for taxi drivers which they ignore. For reference, The Department of Labour has made efforts to regulate this relationship, by updating its minimum wage for taxi drivers from R3 030.61 to R3 218.57 in 2016 (Pela 2016). The same was attempted by the Department of Labour and Employment as they issued a sectoral determination for 1 October 2017 to 30 June 2018 which stipulated that taxi drivers must earn a minimum of R787.73 a week, or R16.41 an hour, income which was

still below the minimum wage. However, when (Mndebele and Cabe 2019) interviewed bosses, they seemed to be unfamiliar with this information and drivers continued to work because they were desperate. One interviewee was quoted saying *“Taxi owners don’t like being taxed; they will see it as a loss. We need to register working hours. If you worked hard, you must earn a living wage, not ‘isokisi’, because we will be accused of stealing,”*.

In this study, participants were asked what they would talk about if given a chance to have a meeting with Uber/Bolt and a majority reported their grievances with high and untransparent commission rates.

7.1.2 Techno-Pessimism or Optimism?

Even though this work is not sustainable, the ability of individuals to manage risk and still make a living in a dangerous sector is the reason why this paper supposes the refined improvement view of techno-optimism. Such an opportunity as provided by technological advancement is good, but the negative implications are high. This as mentioned before is modified to individuals’ human, financial, political, social, and physical capital and cannot be assumed to mean the same thing to all e-hailers. However, with this said, the popularization of labour producing a precariat class must be challenged, in the interest of society and the families which labourers work so hard to sustain. Therefore, vital employee relations should on no occasion be outsourced to technology and artificial intelligence, based on the premise that scarce opportunities which would not exist have been created by such developments.

7.2 Xenophobic Migrants?

By definition, a migrant is someone who moves away from their usual place of residence, either within a country or across a border (*“Who Is a Migrant?”* 2019). This is especially in light of locally born residents because to them a person from Limpopo is just as foreign as someone from Zimbabwe. Crush and Ramachandran (2014) stated that if people find commonality with migrants, they are less likely to engage in xenophobic violence when others around them do, this is because they don’t see them as outsiders but share a common understanding and can relate to them. Unfortunately, this study found that DM are not aware of their disposition as foreigners because they shared xenophobic sentiments.

Therefore, DM were asked “What do you think of your fellow foreign national drivers?” to see if they found commonality with IM as they both decided to leave home, to pursue opportunities in a new city, which they would never be exposed to had they not migrated. 4 out of 5 drivers responded with words such as “mess”, and “ruin” and started talking about

crimes committed by undocumented migrants in the industry. Such responses showed that they did not identify themselves as migrants together with them. While one respondent from Limpopo said “I don’t mind them, a person must have serious reasons for leaving their home” other responses blamed the government for saying South Africa belongs to all who live in it. they blamed them for job scarcity and respondents from KZN said they should go back home so that South Africa can deal with its problems. Another said he doesn’t feel safe around foreigners especially Nigerians because they often own car parts dealerships which they attain through hijacking, he said “We love them but what they are doing is not right”. What stood out from these responses, was an inability to separate foreign nationals who committed crimes from those who made an honest living, signifying an inherent bias.

Because xenophobia has its roots in apartheid segregation, efforts to influence citizens away from it will be difficult. Indeed, as economic decline results in job losses, it is inevitable that citizens want someone to blame and if the government is too far to punish, migrants in informal work are accessible and will become scapegoats of intense anger and frustration. Furthermore, the government’s compliance in fuelling xenophobia through ignorant statements is of concern for the future of peace in the country. The legal action with which civil society responds to this (Monama 2022) is indeed justifiable and should intensify to stress the need for politicians to be educated on such matters. With this said education will play a huge role in mitigating future xenophobic disasters, it is therefore suggestable that media play a role in informative, peace-promoting programmes, similar to those initiatives created when society lacked truthful information on HIV/AIDS.

7.3 Balancing the Scale; Benefits, Risk and Recommendations for Future Studies.

With the ambiguity in categorising e-hailing work, this study found that Guy Standings’ description of the precariat class provides an appropriate understanding for labourers. Having a neo-liberal development of tech firms which produce e-hailers with no employer relations, social benefits and political capital to influence change. He stated that this was a dangerous class in the making due to the psychological and health implications of work discrimination. Indeed, this study found that drivers were unhappy with the commission charged to their earnings yet there was nothing they could do about that or any of the changes they hoped to see. When asked how they avoid crime and taxi operators, many reported the need to be cautious, something which heightened stress and feelings of anxiety when on the road.

South Africa's public transport industry is good a case study for some of the worst-case scenarios, which economists studying the informal economy foresaw. Having illegal, unreported and unrecorded which law enforcement officers are often too afraid and entangled in to resolve. It is then reasonable that traditional scholarship rejected the informal economy and exclusively recommended ways in which it was to be destroyed, through the increase of tax brackets, regulation, and penalisation. bringing important balance into the study of informality is Chen's concept of holistic views, which outlines the benefits of this economy. Therefore, this paper does not seek to argue for the complete formalization or informalization of gig work but rather argues for a balance between these dualities in both e-hailing and minibus sectors.

There must be shared benefits enjoyed by gig workers and tech firms, through the breakdown of barriers in 'employment'-relations. Their current classification as independent contractors is simply imbalanced, largely benefiting Uber/Bolt as drivers do not exercise independence over their rates. Complete formalization is also undesirable, as exclusionary policies like the NLMP will come into effect, leaving many migrants without much-needed opportunities in a sector which many domestic migrants and possibly citizens plan to leave. Therefore, it is increasingly urgent for e-hailers in South Africa to have political influence, to mitigate the anarchy practiced by the minibus operators and influence change within their relationship with Uber/Bolt. Such a relationship should foster the development of a political map for newer drivers who will be alerted of unsafe areas for pick-ups and drop-offs, as drivers experienced more crime when they first started. It will also ensure that commission rates are fair and transparent which will enable drivers to earn enough to save and provide their own social benefits as independent contractors do.

Holistic conceptual models of the informal economy include the "*multi-segmented model of informal employment*" developed by the Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO). Where informal actors are defined by the economic risk of losing earnings based on their authority over establishments.

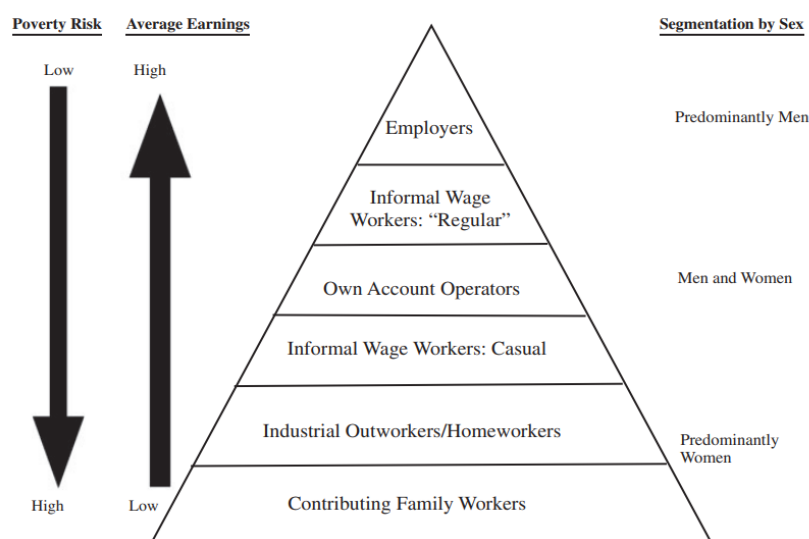


Figure 1: WIEGO Model of Informal Employment: Hierarchy of Earnings & Poverty Risk by Employment Status & Sex. Sourced from (Chen 2016)

The WIEGO proposes a model of the informal economy where the risk to poverty is associated with gender. Employment type is a hierarchy where men are likely to populate the highest and women the lowest ranks, thus exposed to less risk of low earning and poverty than women (Chen 2016). As it stands in the e-hailing sector, less than 4 per cent of Uber drivers in South Africa are female (Makwala 2022), and to support the above model's precept about gender-dependent earnings, Oatway's (2021) study of couriers, found that female workers used cars instead of bikes and only worked during the day out of fear for their safety, factors which effected their ability to earn a decent living from their work.

The WIEGO model points to greater risk associated with female labour in the industry, and again this may be exacerbated by the preeminent masculinities displayed in the taxi industry as Gibbs (2014) describes. If respect is only earned by alpha males, then females are expected to indeed be the most vulnerable in all four livelihood capitals in e-hailing work, and that is something which remains to be proved. In this study 2 of the 3 drivers who rented their cars did so from female third party lessors, possibly making this type of involvement in the e-hailing sector the most preferable for females who want to enter the industry. Thus, warranting further investigation.

In closing, real development in the public transport industry will only begin once authorities negotiate some of this power back from minibus operators and prioritize development goals expressed in the many Public Transport Industry Strategies. Notably, the industry is

resistant to formalisation and government efforts in this regard have consistently failed, Vegter (2020) identifies that these strategies have often been top-down or market based, this means the government has always been at the forefront of devising changing and seeking ways for the taxi associations to change. What has not yet been done is adopting a bottom-up approach where the associations are handed goals such as the development goals and asked to strategize ways in which they can better align with them in return for an incentive when certain marks are reached. This said, the work of reclaiming routes and areas that taxis have asserted sovereignty over is urgent, and could result in violence as associations resist the idea of sharing such places with competitors. The occurrence of such incidents indefinitely questions the sovereignty of the state, in its ability to ensure fair competition and the rights which e-hailers have in a democratic country to do business freely.

The claim made at the governmental level that IM have access to trade secrets which increases their competitive advantage, does not hold ground. In this study, DM owned their cars and still made less than IM who didn't. this work is of an ambiguous economy to which IM have no previous exposure in their home countries, and their decision to become drivers was not based on experience, but on seizing a new opportunity much like DM.

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9 Appendix

9.1 Interview guide

1. How old are you?
2. What province/country are you from?
3. What made you decide to migrate to Gauteng?
4. What kind of work did you do;

Before driving on uber/bolt? Specify which platform you are on
in your home country/province?

5. What is your highest level of education?
6. Do you think your work has affected your health in any way?
7. What kind of accommodation do you live in?
8. When did you start driving for a living?

8.1 What motivated you to become an uber/bolt driver?

8.2 What expectations did you have of the job versus the reality of it?

9. What difficulties did you experience when you first started?
10. Do you own your vehicle? If not, what kind of relationship do you have with the lessor?
11. Do you work as a driver on a full-time basis?
 - 11.1 what else do you do?

12. How much in a week do you make? (after commission fuel and car rent?)

12.1 Are you able to save towards retirement through your work?

13. Are you a member of any union with other drivers?

13.1 Do you think it's important for drivers to become part of a union or social group together?

14. Are you in a WhatsApp group with other drivers?

15. Would you participate in any future demonstrations?
16. Does xenophobia affect your day-to-day life? If so please explain how?
17. Have you ever been exposed to an attack while doing your job?
- 17.1 Do you think taxi industry including metred taxis affects your work?
18. Have you suffered any loss of income (through officials and people demanding bribes) because of your migration status?
19. Do you think the levels of crime affect your work?
20. Do you think enough is being done to make driving on uber/bolt safer for drivers?
21. What do you think about your fellow foreign/national drivers. Migration in the country.
22. If you could have a meeting with Uber/Bolt what sort of things would you want to say to them?
23. Do you think uber has changed your life for the better/ is this something you expect to do in the next 5 years?
24. Do you think you will have this job as long as you need it?