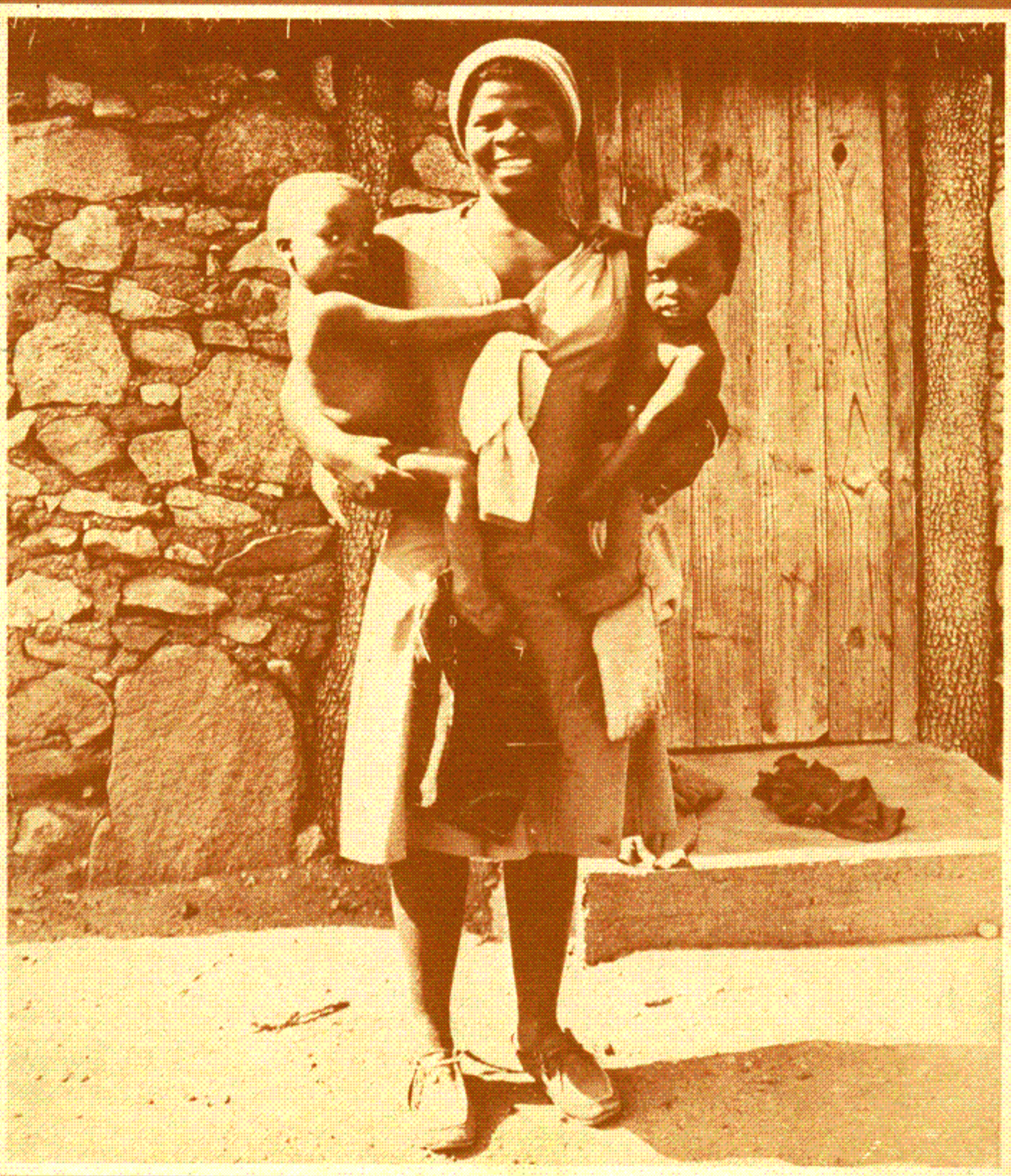


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# INSIGHT

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# Black commuters in South Africa

*Udo Witulski, a researcher at the Africa Institute of South Africa, examines some aspects of public transport in South Africa.*

"Why should we pay more for transport when apartheid forces us to live so far apart?"

The above argument, from both management and workers, was provoked by a warning from the Minister of Constitutional Development that employers should expect to pay more towards subsidies for their workers' transport from the beginning of 1986.<sup>1</sup>

## Group Areas Act

Recently many private organizations, in order to ease social tensions, urgently recommended the phasing out of urban influx control measures affecting South Africa's black citizens. However, the government still seems to favour only a technical modification of this instrument of segregation. Its reluctance to scrap influx control was indicated again in September 1985, when it emphasized its intentions to retain the policy of segregation. This will make any relaxation of influx control unfeasible in practice, forcing black "immigrants" to accommodate their families in spatially restricted and infrastructurally inadequate areas.

The amendment to the Group Areas Act 41 of 1950, which provided for strict implementation of residential segregation, made provision for the clearing of slums and forced removals of non-whites. In 1952 the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act 25 of

1945, was amended to restrict the period that non-residential blacks are able to stay in any "white" urban or prescribed area to 72 hours.

New black townships were subsequently planned to be an "adequate" distance away from the city cores and separated from the white areas by industrial buffer zones. In addition these townships of neighbouring towns were often planned to adjoin each other in order to minimize the number of demarcated black areas.

The location of these new townships affected accessibility to blacks' work places. Blacks now spent more hours travelling because of the increased distances, while places of employment were more difficult to reach by bus because these townships were placed far from trunk-roads.<sup>2</sup>

Where original black living areas were closer than 50 km from any homeland, their expansion was prevented. Instead, black inhabitants were resettled within that particular homeland in order to push black urbanization out of the white areas.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, some of these new towns were sited as far as 80 km from the employment centres in white cities. The new black townships for Bloemfontein, for instance, were sited 60 km away at Thaba Nchu. An estimated 0,7 million black urban residents were

resettled in these dormitory towns that stretch endlessly along the border fences of "independent" homelands such as Bophuthatswana and the Ciskei.

The establishment of these urban resettlements meant the removal of an estimated 3,5 million rural residents in the course of the government's consolidation of the homelands.<sup>4</sup> Until 1970 the number of "white" towns with black components decreased from 233 to 197, causing a decrease of the population in "white" areas.<sup>5</sup> In order to decentralize industrial development, Proclamation 6 of 1968 furthermore labelled all major metropolitan regions as "controlled areas" within which no new industrial development, involving the use of black labour, might be undertaken without the approval of the Minister of Planning.<sup>6</sup>

Through this spatial segregation sufficient accommodation was provided for those working in adjacent urban areas,<sup>7</sup> while at the same time enabling them to retain their family ties. However, job restrictions in the controlled areas and insufficient work opportunities in the black living areas turned these homelands into dumping grounds for the surplus black population.

Furthermore, the term "family

ties" regarding black commuters must be seen in the light of the limited time left for family interaction after commuting. It can be justified only when the commuters' time consumption is compared to that of migrant labourers, who spend up to two years separated from their families. The Transkei, for instance, had more than 350 000 migrants staying more or less permanently in the RSA in 1981, compared to only about 9 000 workers commuting across its borders every day.

### Commuting patterns

Table 1 shows the increase of border commuters from the ten self-governing and national states.

Even though the 1984 figures for commuters from Kwazulu and Bophuthatswana seem to be low in comparison with previous years, these two homelands account for almost two-thirds of the total, in contrast to Transkei, Venda and Gazankulu, which, in spite of large population



Repairs to railway lines cause more people to use busses. (Photo: Pretoria News)

numbers, account for less than 10 000 daily commuters. This can be attributed to the fact that parts of Kwazulu and Bophuthatswana are situated close to "white" metropolitan areas. The spatial distribution of the ten homelands and the main black township areas can be seen in figure 1. By 1970, nearly 50 per cent of

Bophuthatswana's population lived within a 50 km radius of Pretoria.

More than 80 per cent of all commuters from Bophuthatswana live in the eastern districts of Odi and Moreteli. More than 75 000 workers get up early in the morning to start their daily journey into Pretoria, while the nearer industrial areas of Rosslyn, Brits

TABLE 1

### FRONTIER COMMUTERS EMPLOYED IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, 1977-1982

State	1977*	1978*	1979*	1980*	1981*	1982*	1984**
<b>Independent states:</b>							
Transkei	7 100	7 600	8 900	9 000	9 100	8 000	9 200
Bophuthatswana	148 200	151 800	155 400	161 200	162 200	173 000	115 400
Venda	4 500	5 100	5 600	5 600	5 700	6 000	5 700
Ciskei	34 600	36 200	37 100	38 100	38 400	38 000	56 600
<b>National states:</b>							
Kwazulu	291 300	321 700	352 300	363 900	384 200	395 000	282 600
Qwaqwa	2 100	2 000	2 500	6 800	9 500	12 000	3 500
Lebowa	46 600	54 400	57 900	65 800	72 200	76 000	68 300
Gazankulu	6 300	6 700	7 800	8 800	9 700	9 000	6 500
Kangwane	25 200	28 500	33 100	35 600	40 000	44 000	47 700
Kwandebele	1 100	1 300	3 500	5 900	8 700	12 000	22 700
<b>Total</b>	<b>567 000</b>	<b>615 300</b>	<b>664 100</b>	<b>700 700</b>	<b>739 700</b>	<b>773 000</b>	<b>662 200</b>

**Sources:**

\* Benso

\*\* Dept of Co-operation and Development.

and Rustenburg provide jobs for a smaller number.

Ciskei's commuter flow of 38 000 is almost entirely directed towards East London with King William's Town as a minor destination. The districts of Mdantsane and Zwelitsha consequently accommodated 55 per cent of all Ciskeians according to the preliminary 1980 census results.

The most important source of commuter workers is the national state of Kwazulu. Durban/Pinetown, Pieter-

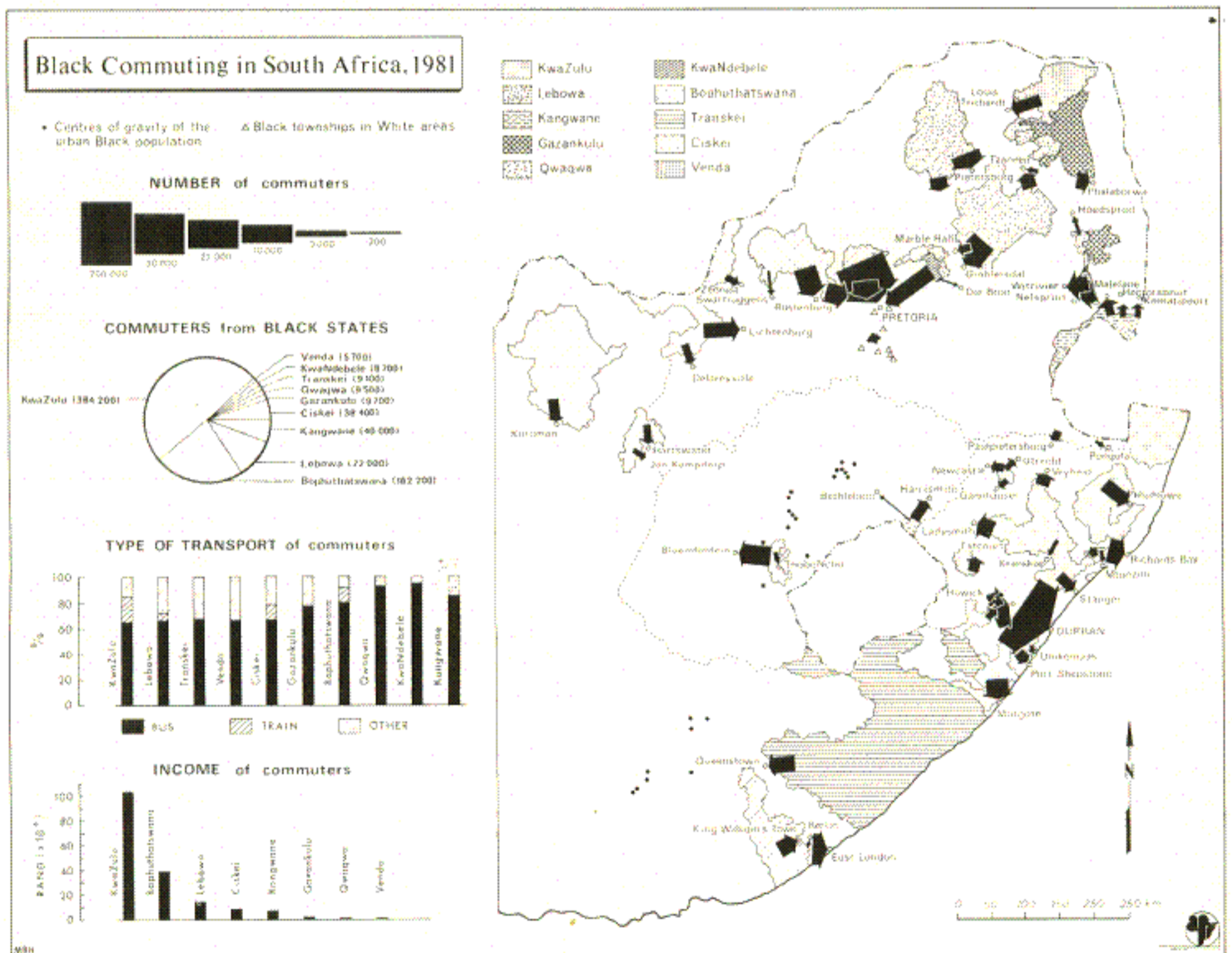
maritzburg, Newcastle and Richards Bay provided jobs for a total number of 250 000 Zulu workers in 1981.

Kwazulu's highly fragmented spatial pattern and its location in relation to important "white" industrial centres stands in strong contrast to the densely populated, but isolated rural areas of Transkei, Venda, Gazankulu, Kwandebele, Qwaqwa and the western parts of Bophuthatswana. Commuters from these regions have to cover vast distances daily, if they have

the time and the money, especially while job-seeking, when they have no wages to fall back on.

Of the remaining urban township residents in "white" areas — 5,3 million urban Africans were estimated to qualify in terms of the section 10 legislation in 1984 — about 1,5 million black workers commute daily into adjacent business districts and industrial areas by means of public transport.<sup>8</sup> The metropolitan areas of Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Pretoria, the southern

Figure 1: Black commuting in South Africa



Sources:  
 C C Mastoroudes 'n *Ondersoek na die ekonomiese voor- en nadele van die grenspendelstelsel in Suid-Afrika met besondere verwysing na die Pretoria-gebied* Pretoria: Benso (1982) pp 414-421.  
 P Smith and J J Booysen *Swart Verstedeliking — proses, patroon en strategie* Pretoria: University of Pretoria (1981) p 54.

**TABLE 2**  
**AVERAGE TRAVELLING TIME AND DISTANCE**

Distance	Total journeys		Average travelling time		Average travelling distance
	Number	%	Total in min	Time in vehicle %	
Short 0-15 km	600 000	29	55	40	10 km
Medium 16-30 km	1 100 000	52	90	50	20 km
Long >30 km	400 000	19	140	60	45 km

**Source:**

President's Council *An urbanization strategy for the Republic of South Africa* March 1985 p 94.

PWV area, the towns of Bloemfontein, Kroonstad, Ermelo, Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom and of the Free State Gold Fields account for about 90 per cent of all township commuters.

Included are also the mining towns of Witbank, Middelburg and Secunda, but here large parts of the surrounding rural areas are also inhabited by a relatively high number of mine workers, who migrated to these regions from the nearby homelands. Since many of them were unable to find accommodation closer to the mines, they consequently have to commute daily to their places of employment.

### Travelling times and distances

During the past few years there has been an appreciable shift to medium-distance and long-distance commuting. In 1985, 400 000 commuters travelled more than 30 km per day. Twenty per cent of all black commuters travel between 3,5 and 7 hours per day, i.e. an average of 4,5 hours, which is more than half of an average working day. The other 80 per cent travel an average of 2,5 hours per day.<sup>9</sup>

Recent studies conducted by the

CSIR's National Institute for Transport and Road Research (NITRR) established that particularly workers from Kwandebele and parts of Bophuthatswana spend up to 7 hours every working day commuting between their homes and work.<sup>10</sup> One NITRR survey of black commuting in the Pretoria area found that in 1980 at least 30 per cent of the respondents travelled for more than two hours, one way, to

reach work.<sup>11</sup> The average total time spent travelling each day varied enormously: from about two hours in Mamelodi, a township east of Pretoria, to 5 hours and 15 minutes in north-west Bophuthatswana, 6 hours and 45 minutes in Kwandebele and 7 hours and 15 minutes in north-east Bophuthatswana. These long-distance commuters had to leave home as early as 04h00 in the morning. In contrast, Mamelodi commuters could stay in their homes until almost 07h00 before they had to leave for work.<sup>12</sup> Travelling times are not only long because of the distance travelled, but also because of the dependence of black commuters on public rather than private transport, and inadequacies in the road and transport infrastructure. On average, half of the travelling time is spent outside the vehicle, walking at the two end points and waiting at bus stops and railway stations.

Distances naturally vary according to geographical location, but it is these travel times which affect the individual commuter most. While in Europe one-way commuting times usually range around 25 to 30 minutes, 85 per cent of interviewed black commuters travelled for longer than 60 minutes and 55 per cent for longer than 90 minutes.<sup>12</sup> This period, however, according to the Department of Co-operation and

Necessity is the mother of invention. (Photo: Pretoria News)



Development, is the upper limit of internationally accepted one-way commuting time. Travel times of up to 60 minutes were generally accepted by black commuters, but two thirds of the respondents were dissatisfied with more than 90 minutes.<sup>13</sup>

However, commuting patterns are extraordinarily complex since most black workers do not work in the town centres. The 1985 NITRR survey established that only one-third of the Pretoria commuters work in the city centre. Figure 2 is a simplification of Pretoria's daily pattern of black commuting movements. It is obviously dif-

ficult for bus and rail operators to provide frequent, convenient and direct services between so many different points of departure and destination.

Furthermore, townships are often large and served by a variety of bus, rail and taxi routes which, owing to various restrictions and historical decisions, are often irrationally and inconveniently planned. In the PWV area only 27 out of 1 000 black citizens owned a car in 1975. Although the number is expected to rise to 144 cars per 1 000 persons by the year 2000, reliance on black public transport is heavy at present.<sup>14</sup> In 1980, for instance, 83 per

cent of all journeys to work from Bophuthatswana converging on the Pretoria metropolitan area were by means of public transport. Table 3 gives an indication of modes of public transport used by all homeland and "white" area township commuters in 1984.

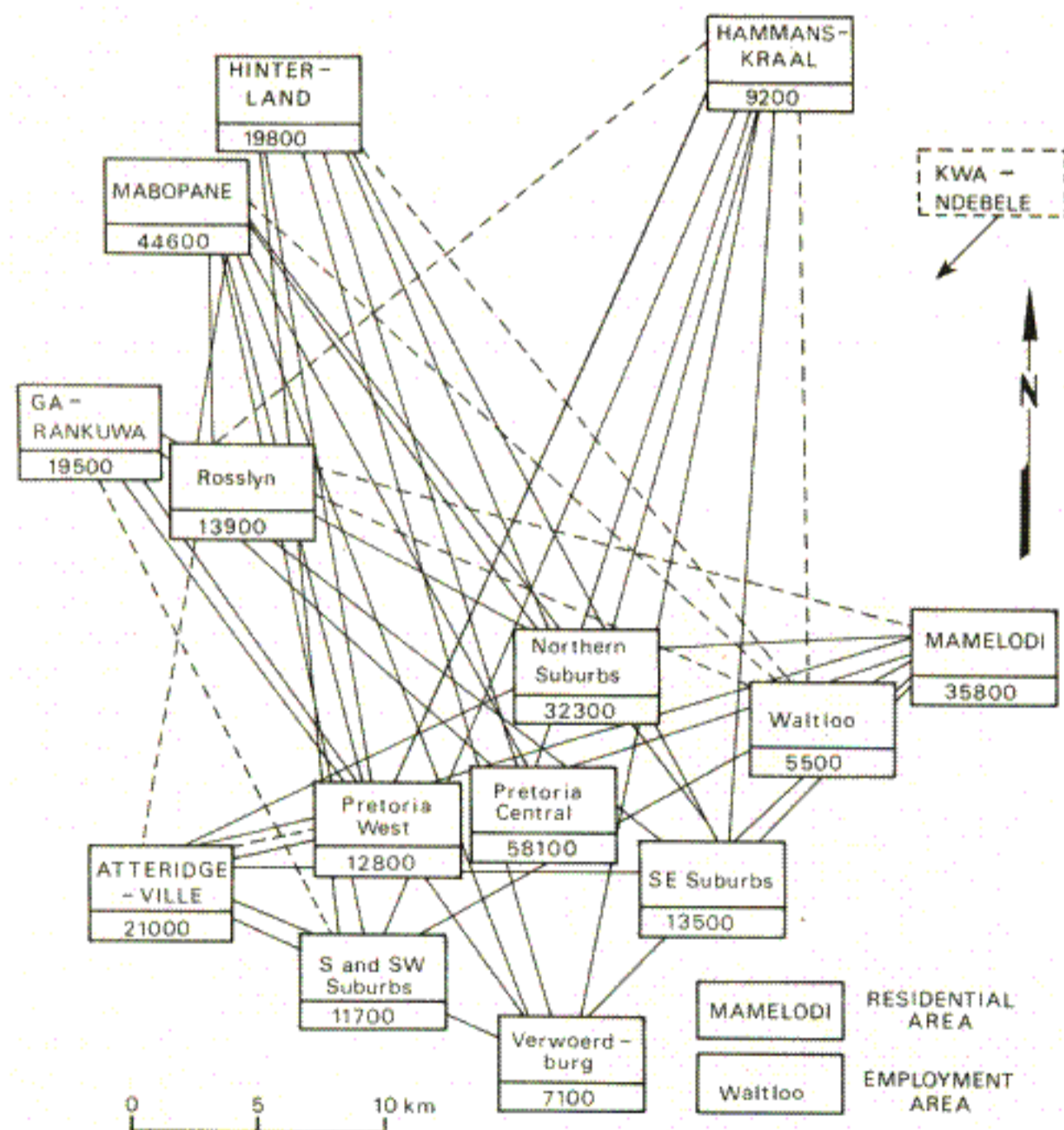
Many of these commuters make use of different transport modes during one journey. They walk long distances to reach their transport, and again cover appreciable distances by foot in order to get to their place of employment. Infrequent and unreliable transport adds to the frustration already experienced through waiting. More transport to reduce crowding is also necessary. As a consequence many commuters leave home very early in order to ensure that they arrive punctually at work to avoid being fined or fired. A study of rail travel in Johannesburg, for instance, in 1978 showed that slack time could easily add 30 to 40 minutes to a journey.<sup>15</sup> Unreliable transport makes it impossible to plan a journey to within 5 to 10 minutes of the desired arrival time.

A further possibility is that Black commuters are resigned to the time spent travelling each day and have not developed the outlook of those white commuters who try to arrive a minute before the time when work starts.<sup>16</sup>

This 1979 NITRR study assumes that black travellers grossly overestimated their waiting times because "even long walks do not seem to loom large as a disutility when compared to waiting"<sup>17</sup> and that as a result the principal cause for faulty estimates of overall journey times by interviewees were not so much the actual travelling time by public transport as the waiting and idle time.

Overcrowding is another cause for dissatisfaction. Respondents rated a 30-minute trip standing as 3 times worse than the same trip sitting.<sup>18</sup> Consequently crowding in transport vehicles was disliked by more than half of all respondents.

Figure 2: Black commuting in Pretoria



Source: N Morris *Commuter transport problems and their consequences for marketers* Pretoria: NITRR(1985) p 2.

### Discretionary time

Both excessive travelling and

TABLE 3

## DISTRIBUTION OF MEANS OF BLACK PUBLIC TRANSPORT

		Rail %	Bus %	Combi-taxi %
Short distance	0-15km	23	61	16
Medium distance	16-30 km	48	47	5
Long distance	>30 km	34	64	2

## Source:

President's Council *An urbanization strategy for the Republic of South Africa* March 1985 p 94.

waiting times — be it as a result of long distances, overcrowding or infrequent services — constitute a reduction of the available rest-time budget. Besides the obvious disadvantages of early departure times — workers who spend so much time travelling, get to work tired — daily activities at home of long-range commuters are equally negatively affected.

The average time spent sleeping for instance is considerably longer for

Mamelodi commuters (8 hours and 38 minutes) than for travellers from north-east Bophuthatswana (6 hours and 49 minutes). As a consequence, preparation time also varies considerably between 51 minutes and 16 minutes respectively.<sup>19</sup> Discretionary time, i.e. free time besides sleeping, working and travelling, also varies between 5 hours and 30 minutes and 2 hours.

According to table 4, no surveyed commuters from Kwandebele and

north-east Bophuthatswana can afford to conduct any personal business or social activities, and only a small minority of respondents did any household chores. Besides the one apparent reason for this behaviour — all long-range commuters were male — most time left to these travellers, however insufficient, had to be used entirely for relaxation.

Some commuters from the distant areas simply come home in the even-

TABLE 4

## DISCRETIONARY ACTIVITIES: PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS AND MEAN TIME SPENT ON ACTIVITIES BY RESIDENTIAL AREA

Activities	Mamelodi (N = 50)		Bophuthatswana NW (N = 29)		Bophuthatswana NE (N = 11)		Kwandebele (N = 10)	
	% participating	Mean time hrs min	% participating	Mean time hrs min	% participating	Mean time hrs min	% participating	Mean time hrs min
Personal care	100	1.01	100	0.56	100	0.46	100	0.51
Household chores	42	0.36	28	0.27	-	-	20	0.38
Social activities	32	1.32	7	1.03	-	-	-	-
Personal business	4	0.28	7	1.58	-	-	-	-
Personal activities	80	1.57	52	1.07	27	0.45	30	0.57
Relaxing	96	1.16	97	1.01	91	0.36	80	0.38

## Source:

L Fourie and N Morris *The effects of a long journey to work on the daily activities of black commuters* NITRR (1985) p 11.



Commuters from Mabopane. (Photo: Pretoria News)

ing, relax until supper is served, eat and go straight to bed afterwards. But also the length of these meals is affected negatively. Whereas the time spent on supper is almost universal and takes between 15 and 20 minutes (hardly anyone helped with the cooking), breakfast, often only a cup of tea, is far more common in Mamelodi (80 per cent of respondents) than in the distant areas (about 25 per cent).<sup>20</sup>

In addition to these long hours

spent on public transport and the subsequent restrictions of discretionary time left for home assignment and relaxation, the cost of daily transport into urban centres is yet another burden.

### Public transport costs

In 1981, one commuter survey conducted by the NITRR in the

Pretoria area established that long journeys were more likely to be undertaken by the less educated, the older and lower income groups.<sup>21</sup> While differences between sexes were less marked, differences in travel time between socio-economic groups were striking. Old and less educated commuters have to travel further afield and accept lower paid jobs. Consequently the largest part of low-income households lives in the hinterland of adjacent homelands, in the "white" rural areas and the outer suburbs. These population groups are therefore obliged to travel relatively long distances to their places of work and other non-work related activities.

Although absolute income figures in table 5 have definitely increased, proportions between the three different categories certainly have not been that much affected. Per capita income of African households in "white" rural areas might still be one-third or less of that in metropolitan areas.

Although public transport tariffs increased less than incomes between 1970 and 1972, the percentage of household expenditure on transport increased considerably from an average of 7 per cent in 1970 to 9 per cent in 1980, and reached a figure well above 10 per cent in 1985.<sup>22</sup> In 1982 proportional costs for Pretoria-bound com-

TABLE 5

### AVERAGE MULTIPLE HOUSEHOLD INCOMES AND PER CAPITA INCOMES OF AFRICANS IN VARIOUS REGIONS IN 1975 (CONSTANT JULY 1984 RAND)

	Average household income (Rand)	Average household income (as % of metropolitan regions)	Average household Size	Per capita income (Rand)	Per capita income (as % of)
Metropolitan regions	5 952		5,5	1 082	
White rural areas	1 977	33,2	6,7	295	27,3
Black states	2 730	45,9	5,5	496	45,9

Source:

M McGrath "Economic growth and the distribution of racial incomes in the South African economy" in 1985 April *S A International* p 228.





Owing to the phasing out of bus services from Mabopane and Soshanguve to Pretoria, trains were being packed beyond capacity. (Photo: Pretoria News)

muters from Kwandebele averaged 17,5 per cent of the workers' total income. Although their households in the homelands usually pay only a marginal rent, if at all, these transport costs still constitute a severe reduction of subsistence levels.<sup>23</sup> Total annual cost of black commuting in 1982 was estimated at R1 624 million. Of the total, about 50 per cent was for transport, 34 per cent for time (at 30c per hour) and 16 per cent for other indirect costs such as accidents, crime and inconvenience. These figures can

be roughly justified by dissatisfaction levels of black public transport commuters.

Almost 60 per cent of respondents in the 1981 NITRR survey were dissatisfied with transport fares. However, dissatisfaction about crowding, infrequency and total travel times was even stronger. The main issues were probably the amount of money spent, coupled with the frustration and dissatisfaction with earning low salaries.

If the above total costs for 1982

are extrapolated to 1984, they amount to almost R2 000 million per year for all black public transport commuting. For the 2,1 million black commuters it therefore means roughly a total cost of R1 000 per year per commuter. On average, 50 per cent of the direct transport costs are subsidized, which leaves the black commuter with about R20 per month in direct, and a further R40 in indirect, costs.<sup>24</sup>

## Subsidies

Subsidization of black public transport started long before the amendment of the Group Areas Act. In 1952 the Bantu Services Levy Act 64 was introduced. It requested employers, who did not supply housing for their workers, to pay 25 cents per week to the Services Levy Fund. Although these funds were used for housing facilities, 5 cents of each 25 cents could be used for subsidizing transport services. This Act was supplemented by the Bantu Transport Services Act 53 of 1957, following a boycott in Alexandra after the Putco transport company was forced to increase its fares in January 1957. This Act made it possible to raise the compulsory contribution from employers by 10 cents per week. This led to an immediate increase of subsidies in Pretoria and Johannesburg paid to

TABLE 6

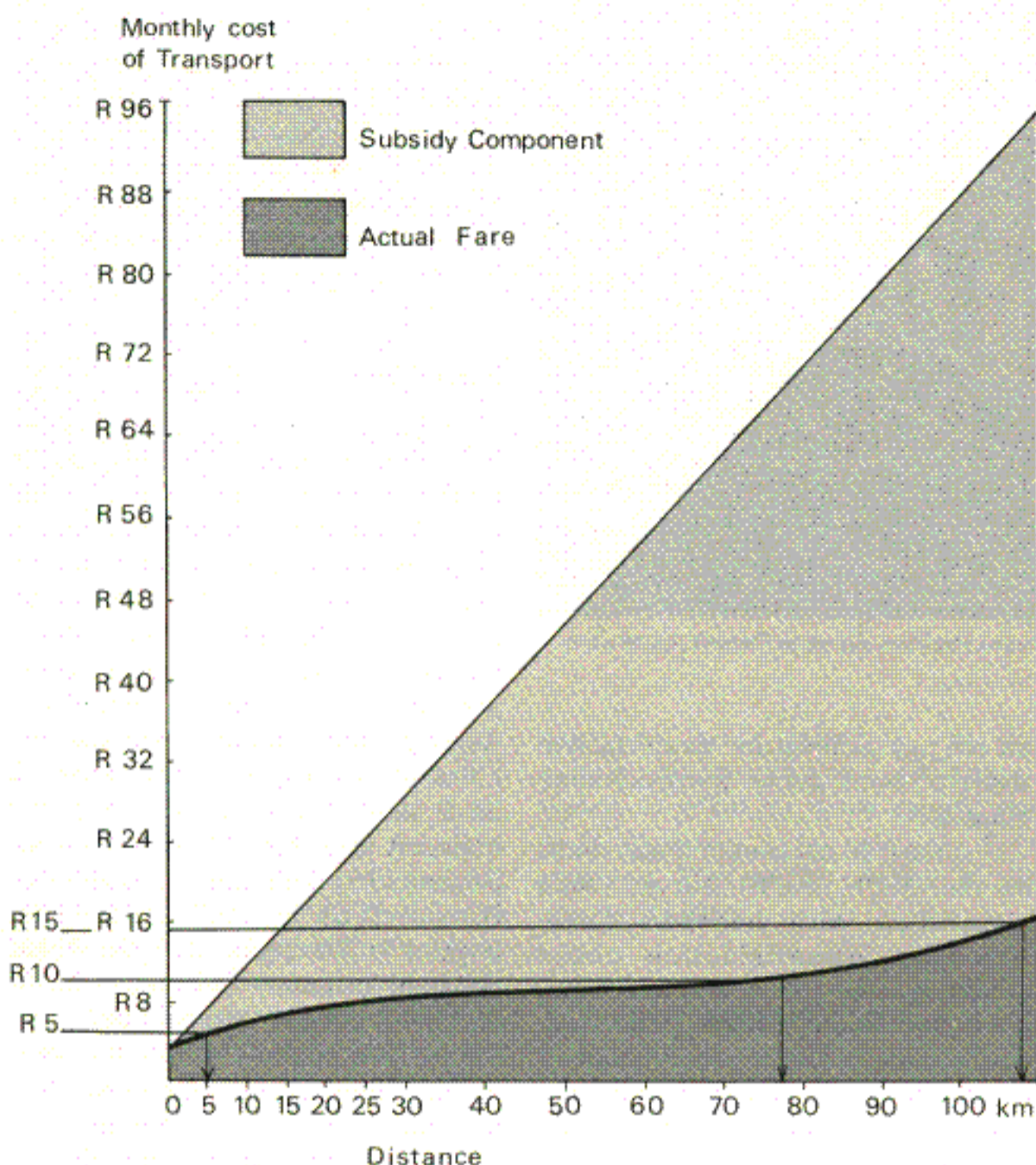
### MAJOR PROBLEMS OF PRETORIA COMMUTERS (N = 1045)

Problem	% dissatisfied
Crowding	87
Infrequent transport	63
Total travel time	62
Cost	59
Unpunctual arrival at work	53
Crime	43

**Source:**

N Morris *Commuter transport problems and their consequences for marketers* (1985) p 5.

**Figure 3: Average monthly cost of bus transport for commuters and the amount of subsidization (Pretoria 1981)**



**Source:**

E M Voges *Accessibility, transport and the spatial structure of S A cities: an historic perspective* (1984) p 38.

Putco and consequently enabled it to revert to the pre-1957 boycott bus fares.

Further amendments were made when the Bantu Transport Services Amendment Act 47 of 1974 was passed. Employers' contributions were then calculated on a monthly basis and subsequently increased in certain areas from 1 November 1982 to R3 per month per black employee. In addition the Department of Co-operation and Development supplements the subsidies for long-range bus commuters from the homelands by using its share

of liquor profits. This amounted to 20 per cent in 1973.<sup>25</sup> (Only the Department of Co-operation and Development has the right to sell liquor in the townships.)

During the 1982/83 financial year an amount of R164,6 million was paid out in bus subsidies, R136,6 million of which was provided by the Treasury and R28 million paid from employers' contributions. These subsidies increased to R191 million during the 1984/85 financial year, of which R50,7 million came from employers' contributions. Higher subsidies are paid for longer

distances: For very short distances the subsidy is less than 50 per cent of the total economic cost, for medium distances about 50 per cent and for long distances as much as 80 per cent (see figure 3).<sup>26</sup>

In addition to these subsidies for black bus transport, an extensive system of subsidized suburban rail transport is provided. The South African Transport Services (SATS) had a deficit in passenger services of R490 million in 1980/81, which increased to a huge amount of R750 million in 1984/85.<sup>27</sup> More than R682 million was credited to SATS and private passenger services as subsidies under the Black Transport Services Account, the Coloured Transport Account and in Voted Funds (R254 million in 1984/85) from the Treasury.<sup>28</sup> The vast deficit in passenger transport, and the R150 million budget hole in cargo transport, was covered by SATS cross-subsidization from more lucrative components such as harbour administration and the oil pipeline service from Durban to the Witwatersrand.

The above-mentioned deficits and subsidies include white first-class and inter-city passengers. In 1982/83 the deficit or subsidy on black third-class passengers was R237 million or 35 per cent.

In November 1983 the Welgemoed Commission released its recommendations to relieve the budget of these high subsidy expenditures. The commission recommended that subsidization of bus transportation should be phased out over a period of time set by a timetable to be drawn up by a parliamentary committee.<sup>29</sup> The argument was used that the passenger's ability to pay should determine his rate of subsidization, although calculated subsidies are paid by the government to the commuter's employer.

It took more than one year before the government finally decided to cut its expected subsidy to SATS for "socio-economic services" for 1985/86 by an enormous R450 million. In 1985 these cuts resulted in increases of 12,5 per cent on bus fares and between 20 per cent and 30 per cent on rail fares.<sup>30</sup>



Black commuters queuing in the rain. (Photo: Pretoria News)

Overall, suburban rail passenger transport, one of the most important linkages to the black townships, ran on a cost coverage of only 24,4 per cent before these subsidization cuts. The resulting fare increases, however, were expected to bring in only an extra R70 million, which increased cost coverage for all passenger services to slightly above 30 per cent.

But even the Welgemoed Commission, at the end of 1983, admitted that

... judged by overseas experience, there are ... few bus services that can continue to exist without subsidisation.<sup>31</sup>

Transport by rail, even more so than by bus, is considered in most countries to serve as one important means to achieve and retain national integration. This objective, for instance, forces the industrialized countries to heavily subsidize their national transport sectors where cost coverage of some transport connections are no higher than 10 per cent. Japan, Germany and Italy for instance had to pay their passenger train services R12 585 million, R6 971 million and R2 320 million respectively as government compensation in 1979/80.<sup>32</sup> The same is found to a great extent with bus services.

However, the South African government is determined to relieve its overburdened national budget of such seemingly unproductive expenditures,

which amounted to R850 million during the 1982/83 financial year.<sup>33</sup> Following the commission's recommendation it decided to phase out subsidy increases — between 1974/75 and 1983/84 bus subsidies increased by an annual average of 14 per cent — and to shift the additional financial burden to the worker's levy. Employers would have to pay their workers enough to enable them to bear their own transport costs, which would render each passenger responsible for the payment of his full fare. The commission's finding against public subsidization were striking in the light of its own report, however, which recorded that

... by far the majority of people and bodies with practical knowledge of the passenger transportation business are of the opinion that it is necessary to subsidize bus passenger transport.<sup>34</sup>

Subsidies to the transport sector, whether they come from employers or government, will remain necessary for 3 reasons:

- high rate of population growth;
- low rate of employment creation in the national and self-governing states; and
- inflation.

Subsidization is valid only for monthly or weekly 10-trip clip cards. Therefore, domestic workers — many of whom lived within walking distance of their place of employment prior to the implementation of the Group Areas

Act — who are employed in different areas each day, cannot make use of subsidized tickets and consequently have to pay full incidental passenger fares. Women, representing the highest proportion of domestic workers are the most disadvantaged population group in this regard. They have to pay these casual fares, although they earn lower incomes than men and travel longer distances, mostly into the urban areas. Furthermore, non-work trips are also unsubsidized, which results in great expense in obtaining access to, for instance, medical facilities or shopping areas.

The failure to subsidize social and recreational trips is one of the reasons why the present bus transport system is socially ineffective.<sup>35</sup>

These casual fares amount to at least 10 per cent of the total black public transport cost. Since the average subsidy is 54 per cent, these casuals have to pay double the usual amount, which makes the black combi-taxi much more economical.

### Dispute over combi-taxis

Combi-taxis, although presently about 50 per cent more expensive than subsidized bus transport, constitute a fast and fairly reliable link between black townships and "white" urban and suburban centres. Although South Africa's black population in 1984 made

up 72 per cent of the country's total population (including the national and self-governing states), this segment owned only 15 per cent of all cars and other vehicles.<sup>36</sup> Estimates of the number of combi-taxis in use vary considerably, but they average about 35 000 vehicles for all racial groups. Since certain regulatory restrictions were lifted in 1977, about half of these vehicles might be licensed. In August 1982 these combi-taxis accounted for 170 000 commuter journeys and roughly 300 000 feeder journeys per day.<sup>37</sup> Since the inception of this informal taxi industry in 1978, black combi-taxis have offered a flexible, efficient and safe hauler service, reducing an average 3 hour journey by train or bus to less than 1 hour.

However, in 1983 the Welgemoed Commission went as far as to recommend that the carrying capacity of taxis should be limited to 5 persons and that the nine-seater micro busses, popular with the black community, should be regulated as busses. Although, at first the recommendation was welcomed by the government, which sees this R57 million (trunk line service in 1982) taxi industry as a threat to state-owned transport services, the National Transport Commission in May 1984 decided to revise its recommendations as follows:

Taxi and microbus (combi-taxi) services should be regarded as a necessary adjunct to the development of more adequate public transport services in the major urban centres, but the number of permits issued in each centre should continually be reviewed in order to keep these as close to the optimum as possible and to minimize any destructive competition with other transport services.<sup>38</sup>

The revision was due, on the one hand, to the government's recognition that combi-taxis can operate at lower fares than 4-passenger vehicles and offer business opportunities to black entrepreneurs and constitute an element of competition to private bus operators, which might act as a stimulus for more efficient bus services.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, response from the Transport Commission of the Association of Chambers of Commerce was also responsible, saying that the "combi-taxi has developed

precisely because there exists a need for it. It is a self-developed answer to a critical need".<sup>40</sup>

Consequently vehicles with a seating capacity of up to 15 passengers were still permitted to operate as taxis and the provision of subscription services, drawing passengers from a fixed clientele, during peak hour periods, was proposed. However, the government placed legal constraints on its unlicensed private-sector competitors in that, unless permits were issued, existing services would lapse in terms of the Road Transportation Amendment Act of 1983.<sup>41</sup> Two kinds of permit had been accepted, one for specific zones and the other for routes, with permits being issued according to population and corridor volumes respectively.

Although until February 1985 the local authorities had turned a blind eye to contraventions of this Act, these new restrictive regulations and permits strengthened the blacks' image of bus companies as profiteering from residential apartheid and helping to enforce the system. This is particularly so since this Act had been used to break previous bus boycotts, such as the boycott in Ciskei at the beginning of 1985 against a 35 per cent fare increase.<sup>42</sup>

## Transport apartheid

A recent study estimated that interventions in the transport sector might cost South Africa in excess of R1 000 million annually.<sup>43</sup> The greatest proportion of expenses through state intervention, however, might be generated by South Africa's transport apartheid. Duplicated transport services and highest expenditures for subsidies on "white" transport are the result of empty "white" busses and train coaches, while blacks have to travel on overcrowded transport vehicles. Nearly empty "white" busses drive past long queues of waiting black commuters during the day, because they are not allowed to pick up black passengers. In contrast, white passengers have to watch "black"

busses drive past at night, because they are not allowed to pick up white passengers. "White" busses stop running at night because there are too few white passengers to justify a late service.

During 1984/85 Johannesburg City, for instance, lost R15,7 m on its bus services, of which the much better utilized black service was responsible for a loss of only R2 million. Turnover from "black" fares covered between 74 per cent and 80 per cent of expenditures, while the "white" service reached a coverage rate of only 58 per cent.<sup>44</sup> Finally these discrepancies made even the authorities respond positively to suggestions to do away with transport segregation. In September 1984, SATS conducted an experiment of *laissez-faire* on its Johannesburg suburban trains. This "railway diplomacy" — no action was taken against blacks refusing to leave "white" coaches and whites were requested to "endure" the situation — constituted a first positive approach in that no racial incidents occurred during the experiment.<sup>45</sup>

Although the situation soon returned to the accepted practice again and a subsequent suspension of racial segregation on SATS's Johannesburg transport also proved to be restricted to black coaches only, these experiments might be the first light of dawn on the narrow horizon of public transport apartheid. And, who knows, perhaps the exemption by government in the same month of all population groups from specific racial workplace restrictions<sup>46</sup> might prove to be the very beginning of the end of the discriminatory Group Areas Act.

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# Hoekom moet swartes so baie vir vervoer betaal?

*Sake Rapport 4/5/86 15-*

WAAROM moet swartes meer vir vervoer betaal as apartheid hulle dwing om so ver weg van hul werk af te bly? vra mnr. Udo Witulski, 'n navorser by die Afrika-Instituut.

Mnr. Witulski het 'n ontleding van swart pendelaars se probleme in Suid-Afrika gedoen. Sy ontleding verskyn in die jongste uitgawe van Africa Insight.

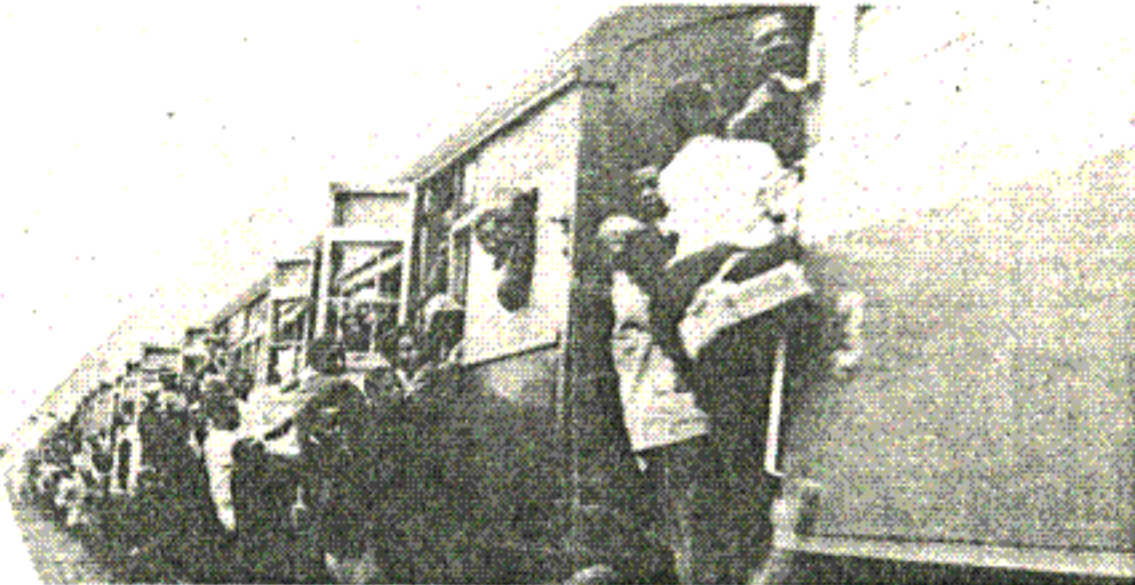
Die wysiging aan die Groepsgebiedewet van 1950, wat daarvoor voorsiening gemaak het dat woongebiede streng apart bly, het meegebring dat plakkerskampe ontruim en swartes onder dwang verskuif is.

Nuwe swart woongebiede is gestig. Daar is egter seker gemaak dat dit "skaflik" ver weg van wit woongebiede en stede af is. Verder is die beplanning van die woongebiede dikwels so gedoen dat hulle aangrensend is. Sodoende is verseker dat die minimum-afbakening bestaan.

Die ligging van die woongebiede het egter die swartes se toeganklikheid tot hul werk baie beperk. Swartes moes nou veel verder en langer ure op die pad bestee. Dit is ook veel moeiliker om per bus te reis aangesien baie van die woongebiede ver van deurpaaië is.

Verlede jaar moes meer as 400 000 pendelaars sowat 30 km per dag reis. Sowat 20 persent van alle pendelaars bestee tussen 3,5 en 7

State	1977*	1978*	1979*	1980*	1981*	1982*	1984**
<b>Onafhanklike state</b>							
Transkei	7 100	7 600	8 900	9 000	9 100	8 000	9 200
Bophuthatswana	148 200	151 800	155 400	161 200	162 200	173 000	115 400
Venda	4 500	5 100	5 600	5 600	5 700	6 000	5 700
Ciskei	34 600	36 200	37 100	38 100	38 400	38 000	56 600
<b>Nasionale state</b>							
KwaZulu	291 300	321 700	352 300	363 900	384 200	395 000	282 600
QwaQwa	2 100	2 000	2 500	6 800	9 500	12 000	3 500
Lebowa	46 600	54 400	57 900	65 800	72 200	76 000	68 300
Gazankulu	6 300	6 700	7 800	8 800	9 700	9 000	6 500
Kangwane	25 200	28 500	33 100	35 600	40 000	44 000	47 700
Kwandebele	1 100	1 300	3 500	5 900	8 700	12 000	22 700
<b>Totaal</b>	<b>567 000</b>	<b>615 300</b>	<b>664 100</b>	<b>700 700</b>	<b>739 700</b>	<b>773 000</b>	<b>662 200</b>



APARTHEID dwing swartes om ver van die werkplek te bly en daarom kos dit hulle baie en neem baie van hul tyd in beslag om daagliks by die werk te kom, sê 'n navorser van die Afrika-Instituut.

uur per dag op die pad. Gemiddeld is dit 4,5 uur, wat meer as die helfte van 'n gewone werkdag verteenwoordig.

Die ander 80 persent reis sowat 2,5 uur per dag. (Sien tabel).

Swart woongebiede is groot en word bedien deur 'n verskeidenheid vervoermiddels soos busse, taxi's en treine. Weens beperkings en besluite wat jare gelede geneem is, is baie van die vervoermiddels se gebruik ongerieflik beplan

en soms totaal irrasioneel.

In 1975 het 27 uit elke 1 000 swartes in die PWV-gebied 'n motor besit. Daar word verwag dat 144 swartes uit elke 1 000 in die jaar 2000 'n motor sal besit. Dus bly swartes baie afhanklik van openbare vervoergeriewe.

In 1980 het 83 persent van alle ritte tussen Bophuthatswana en die Pretoria-stadsgebied by wyse van openbare vervoergeriewe plaasge-

vind.

'n Peiling gedoen deur die Nasionale Instituut vir Vervoer en Padnavorsing toon dat sowat 60 persent van alle pendelaars uiters ongelukkig is oor vervoerkoste.

Hoewel openbare vervoertariewe tussen 1970 en 1972 minder as inkomme gestyg het, het die persentasie van huishoudelike besteding op vervoer gestyg van gemiddeld 7 persent in 1970 tot 9 persent in 1980. Verlede jaar het die persenta-

sie tot 10 persent gestyg.

In 1982 was swart pendelaars se totale vervoerkoste R1 624 miljoen. Sowat 50 persent daarvan was regstreekse vervoerkoste, 34 persent vir die tyd wat op die pad bestee is (teen 30 sent per uur), en 16 persent vir onregstreekse vervoerkoste soos ongerieflikheid, ongelukke en misdaad.

Die grootste bron van ongelukkigheid is egter die ongereeldheid van die vervoergeriewe, die lang ure op die pad en die stampvol busse en treine.

Word 1982 se syfer vir 1984 verwerk, styg die totale koste vir ongerief na R2 000 miljoen. Die totale koste vir 2,1 miljoen swart pendelaars werk dus uit op sowat R1 000 per jaar per pendelaar.

Neem egter in ag dat sowat 50 persent van die regstreekse vervoerkoste gesubsidieer word. Dus betaal die pendelaar R20 per maand aan regstreekse koste en 'n verdere R40 per maand aan onregstreekse vervoerkoste, sê mnr. Witulski.