

Press Release

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South African Institute of Race Relations
The power of ideas

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IRR Poll: “Public Perceptions of Taxi Use, Safety and Crime”

Statement by Gareth van Onselen, Head of Politics and Government at the IRR

Today the IRR, in conjunction with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF), releases the findings of a poll into public perceptions of taxi use, safety, crime and related violence.

The full report can be found [here](#), as a special edition of the IRR’s Criterion Report - home to the findings and insights drawn from market research conducted by the IRR into the preferences, attitudes and the nature of South African citizens.

The poll was in the field in December 2018 and comprised a representative national sample of 1 237 respondents over the age of 18, with two supplementary sub-samples for KwaZulu-Natal (sample size: 409) and Gauteng (sample size: 505). A full description of the methodology can be found in the report.

The findings are set out in four sections: Taxi Use, Road Safety, Taxi Safety and Taxi-Related Violence and Crime.

The report is thus designed to give the reader an idea of how many people use taxis, what kind of taxis, and how; of public perceptions of road and taxi safety and of the degree to which taxi users have seen or experienced crime.

A number of the findings are deeply concerning.

It is clear from the report that a huge number of South Africans rely on this mode of transport (82% of all respondents) and that minibus taxi users dominate the market (64% of all taxi-users). There are, however, profound concerns both about taxi-safety and crime, as well as the condition of South African roads.

For example, approximately one in two, or 50%, of all national respondents had witnessed or experienced some taxi-related illegality; 49% of all national respondents (and 46% of minibus taxi users) believe taxi drivers are “very or somewhat aggressive”; 32% of all national respondents believe taxis are “very or somewhat unsafe” and 74% of all respondents (and 70% of minibus taxi users) said they had seen or experienced a taxi driver breaking the rules of the road. It is quite clear that not only are taxi users fearful of the environment in which taxis operate, but of taxis themselves as unroadworthy and taxi drivers as often reckless.

These and a great many other worrisome findings are contained in the report. A summary of the main findings follows below.

The report will also be supplemented by a series of five short video graphics summarising the key findings, the first of which can be found [here](#).

Key Findings

Taxi Use

- 82% of all national respondents made use of some form of taxi service.

- The vast majority of taxi users can be said to be black (85%), young (71% below the age of 44), with an educational level of Grade 12 or below (96%), poor or low income (74% with an average household income of below R8 000) and unemployed (55% looking or not looking for work).
- Of the 82% of national respondents who said they made use of some form of taxi service, the overwhelming majority (64%) made use of minibus taxis.
- The average number of trips is one or more times a week for 52% of taxi users (and 65% of minibus users); 25% use taxis “two or three times a week” (32% for minibus users).
- The average distance travelled on a taxi trip is in excess of 10km for 48% of taxi users (57% for minibus users); 25% of taxi users said their average trip was 10km or less (32% for minibus users).
- The average cost of a taxi trip was between R10 and R50 for 56% of taxi users (73% for minibus users); 39% of taxi users paid R20 or less for a trip (32% of minibus users).

Road Safety

- A small majority of all respondents feel South Africa’s roads are more unsafe (29%) than safe (24%).
- Drunk driving is overwhelmingly identified as the biggest threat to road safety both among all national respondents (53%) and minibus taxi users (56%). It is seen as a particularly big threat in KwaZulu-Natal (64% of all KwaZulu-Natal respondents and 69% of all KwaZulu-Natal minibus taxi users), compared to Gauteng (47% of all Gauteng respondents and 55% of all Gauteng minibus taxi users).

- Drunk driving is followed by potholes (31%), bad or illegal driving (28%) and speeding (26%) as the next biggest threats to road safety.

Taxi Safety

- 32% of all national respondents believe taxis are “very or somewhat unsafe” and 31% believe that taxi drivers are “very or somewhat untrustworthy” with regard to driving safely and responsibly.
- 49% of all national respondents (and 46% of minibus taxi users) believe taxi drivers are “very or somewhat aggressive”. 37% of all national respondents (and 45% of minibus taxi users) are primarily concerned they will be involved in a road accident. 50% of all national respondents (and 50% of minibus taxi users) identify overloading as the biggest problem with taxi safety, along with drunk driving (49% nationally, 55% among minibus taxi users) and not obeying the rules of the road (48% nationally and 43% among minibus taxi users).

Taxi-Related Crime and Violence

- On average, approximately one in two, or 50%, of all national respondents had witnessed or experienced some taxi-related illegality.
- The most common of these infringements was a taxi driver breaking the rules of the road, which 74% of all respondents (and 70% of minibus taxi users) said they had seen or experienced.
- A majority of all respondents (52%) said they had seen or experienced a road accident for which a taxi driver was responsible (48% of minibus taxi users).
- 43% of all respondents said they had witnessed or experienced a taxi driver offering a bribe to avoid a fine (47% of minibus taxi users); 44% said they had witnessed or experienced a taxi driver being unable to produce a driver’s

licence (47% of minibus taxi users) and 45% said they witnessed or experienced taxi-related violence (43% of minibus taxi users).

Ends