URBAN PLANNING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Urban and transport planning policy and legislation documents play a critical role in determining successful public transportation in African towns and cities. This paper follows a historical approach in examining the role of Urban and Transportation Planning documents in South Africa on Public Transportation from the year 1994 to 2020. The paper also has a narrow focus on Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality (MMM). We followed a qualitative desktop research to understand how public transportation in particular, Minibus Taxi Industry (MTI) has been incorporated in urban planning documents, and the impact of legislation, policies and Acts over the years on public transportation. We identified urban planning and transportation planning and policy documents between 1994 and 2020 to identify the changes over the years and the impact on transport planning approaches, specifically public transportation. During the 25 years, changes in legislation, policies and Acts have influenced Public Transportation Planning approaches. While previous legislation, policies and Acts have brought public transportation where it is today, some of these approaches have caused challenges in the public transport sector. The challenges have led to a shift in transportation planning approaches, focusing more on spatial inequality, social injustice, connectivity of urban areas and the promotion of specific transportation modes. We conclude that, there appears to be a change in course, with legislations and plans moving away from the "displace and replace" approach and rather embracing and engaging with the MTI. This in part is because, a large part of South Africa's population will inevitably continue to use minibus taxi services.

Keywords: Transportation planning, Public transportation, Legislations, Policies, South Africa.

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern-day informal public transport in South Africa started to take shape during the Apartheid era and the Minibus Taxi Industry (MTI), grew rapidly between 1980 and 1990 (Ford, 1989). It was a direct result of industrialisation and segregation (Baloyi, 2012). After the democratic election in 1995, focus shifted to empowering the MTI. However, residents living on urban peripheries continue to travel great distances to their workplaces, social amenities among other services (Boutueil, Lesteven & Nemett, 2020). Paratransit or informal public transport is often the only way for many residents to travel (Boutueil et al., 2020). Thus, there is still a great need to increase the accessibility and mobility of residents, and this depends on the existing legislations, policies and regulations.

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The MTI currently provides a necessary service to nearly 70% of South Africa's population. The government has acknowledged the importance of the MTI and employed different strategies to improve it. Therefore, the question is: Is the MTI part of formal transport planning? What is the role of each level of government? Are there any external role players? Is there any involvement of the public? These questions are linked to Policy Science. Policy Science is the study of the decision-making processes or the evaluation of the relevant available knowledge used to solve a specific challenge (Tribe, 1972). Such studies are linked to particular decisions, based on specific problems or needs (Policy Sciences, 2022). Policy changes and development plans are triggered by politics, economy, society, technology, environmental aspects, legal reasons and public opinion (NPDF, 2020). According to the National Policy Development Framework, stakeholder involvement and public participations is an important step in policy making. With regards to the MTI, three stakeholder groups are involved: the government, associations and communities. Policy changes around the MTI is highly influenced by politics, economy, legal reasons and public opinion.

1.1   Aim of Paper

The aim of this study is to historically examine transport planning in South Africa, specifically analysing how the MTI has been included in planning documents and how has this been successful. The paper also has a narrow focus on Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality (MMM). The study is qualitative and planning documents at different governmental levels were analysed focusing on content, implementation and the involvement of external actors and society. The next section of the paper presents the methodology. The history of the MTI before and after 1994 is briefly noted. Analysis of the planning documents are presented for each level of government. The paper concludes with remarks on policy orientations.

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Public transportation systems are vital components of urban infrastructure worldwide, serving as lifelines for millions of people who rely on them for daily commuting and mobility (Berg & Ihlström, 2019). In the context of African cities, the role of public transportation becomes even more critical due to rapid urbanization, population growth, and socioeconomic dynamics (Govender, 2014). South Africa, with its diverse urban landscape and unique historical trajectory, offers a compelling case study for examining the interplay between urban planning policies and public transportation development.

The evolution of public transportation in South Africa has been shaped by a complex interplay of historical, political, and socioeconomic factors. Prior to the democratic transition in 1994, the country's public transportation system was characterized by segregation and inequality under the apartheid regime (Thomas, 2016). The Group Areas Act of 1950 enforced spatial segregation, resulting in the creation of racially divided residential areas and transportation infrastructure. Non-white communities were marginalized and subjected to inadequate public transportation services, often relegated to overcrowded buses and trains (Thomas, 2016). The legacy of apartheid-era policies continues to influence urban planning and transportation development in post-apartheid South Africa. However, the transition to democracy brought about significant changes in policy and legislation aimed at dismantling segregation and promoting inclusive urban environments. Initiatives such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)

and the National Transport Policy White Paper of 1996 sought to address historical injustices and improve access to public transportation for all citizens.

Despite efforts to reform the public transportation system, South Africa has faced numerous challenges in achieving equitable and efficient mobility for its citizens (Walters, 2013). The proliferation of informal minibus taxi operations, often referred to as the Minibus Taxi Industry (MTI), emerged as a dominant mode of transport in many urban areas (Nelson, 2023). While filling the gaps left by formal public transportation services, the MTI operates largely outside the regulatory framework, leading to issues of safety, reliability, and integration with formal transport networks.

Several studies have documented the socio-economic significance of the MTI in providing mobility for marginalized communities and supporting informal livelihoods (for example, Nelson, 2023; Schalekamp & Klopp, 2018). However, its informal nature has also posed challenges for urban planners and policymakers in integrating it into formal transportation systems. The tension between informal and formal transport sectors reflects broader debates around urban informality, governance, and the role of the state in regulating public services. In recent years, there has been a shift in urban planning approaches towards recognizing the importance of informal transport modes and fostering inclusive mobility strategies (Teffo et al., 2019). Scholars and practitioners have advocated for policy reforms that acknowledge the diverse needs of urban residents and prioritize investments in accessible and sustainable transportation infrastructure (Booysen et al., 2013). Concepts such as Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and Complete Streets have gained traction as frameworks for designing integrated urban spaces that prioritize pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit users (Wood, 2022).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Protocol Development

Prior to conducting the review, a protocol was developed outlining the research objectives, inclusion criteria, search strategy, and data extraction methods. The protocol adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure transparency and reproducibility.

3.2 Identification of Relevant Studies

The study focused on analyzing the history of informal public transport within South Africa, specifically examining the historical events and legislative frameworks that have shaped the Minibus Taxi Industry (MTI). A systematic search of electronic databases, governmental websites, and grey literature repositories was conducted to identify relevant documents and publications. Keywords related to public transportation, minibus taxis, and urban planning were used to filter the search results.

3.3 Screening and Selection Process

Following the identification phase, retrieved documents underwent a two-step screening process. In the first step, titles and abstracts were screened against predefined inclusion criteria to assess their relevance to the study objectives. In the second step, full-text screening was performed on potentially relevant documents to determine their eligibility for inclusion in the review.

3.4   Data Extraction and Analysis

Data extraction was carried out systematically to capture key information from the selected documents. A standardized data extraction form was developed to record details such as publication year, document type, geographic focus, and thematic content related to public transportation, urban planning, and minibus taxis. Extracted data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis techniques to identify recurring themes, trends, and patterns within the literature.

3.5   Synthesis and Interpretation

The synthesized data were organized thematically to provide a comprehensive overview of the historical evolution of the MTI and its integration into urban planning policies and frameworks. Through iterative analysis and interpretation, insights were drawn regarding the role of legislative interventions, stakeholder engagement, and societal dynamics in shaping public transportation planning in South Africa. The findings were contextualized within the broader discourse on urban mobility, informal economies, and governance challenges in African cities.

3.6   Quality Assessment

Given the diverse nature of the retrieved documents, a qualitative assessment of their methodological rigor and credibility was conducted. Quality criteria such as relevance, accuracy, and reliability were considered in evaluating the trustworthiness of the included studies and reports.

3.7   Reporting

The findings of the review were reported in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines, ensuring transparency and completeness in the presentation of results. The methodology, findings, and implications of the study were documented in a structured manner to facilitate dissemination and knowledge exchange among stakeholders in the fields of urban planning, transportation policy, and public administration.

4.   RESULTS

4.1   History of the Minibus Taxi Industry

4.1.1 Before 1994
The birth of modern informal public transport in South Africa dates back to the early 1970s in response to the inadequate state-subsidised public transport (Baloyi, 2012; Ford, 1989; Venter, 2013; Boudreaux, 2006). This directly related to industrialisation, for black South Africans were travelling from their homesteads to the cities looking for work (Baloyi, 2012). Until the end of the 1970's, minibus taxi service and other entrepreneurial activities by black residents were illegal. Operating during the apartheid era required a willingness to risk incurring fines, jail time, or vehicle confiscation (Boudreaux, 2006). By 1982, the new White Paper on National Transport Policy allowed for the legal operation of minibuses. The minibus taxis quickly became the dominant transport mode, thanks to its convenience, speed and frequency (Venter, 2013). The boycott of bus services further aided the growth during the 1980's (Ahmed, 2004). By the end of the 80's most of the barriers around the MTI were removed (Venter, 2013; Boudreaux, 2006). The MTI was viewed as the resistance response to apartheid, proving that the industry can survive and challenge the

state of authority. Scholars such as Fourie (cited in Venter, 2013), states that the MTI of South Africa is a "showcase of black capitalism."

4.1.2 After 1994

The new government of South Africa formed an understanding of the importance of the MTI (Ahmed, 2004; Vegter, 2020). Many of the challenges experienced around the industry was due to the deregulated state it was operating in (Dugard, 2001; Boudreaux, 2006). A National Taxi Task Team (NTTT) was set up by the government, focusing on state regulation and formalisation of the MTI (Dugard, 2001; Venter, 2013). The government introduced a long term strategy plan, "Moving South Africa" (MSA), in 1998. The MSA suggested the Taxi Recapitalisation Programme (TRP) in 1999 to replace the ageing minibus taxi fleet with reliable and safe vehicles. (DoT, 2008:8-9). The TRP was finally kick-started in 2006 and focused on three different areas; administrative, financial, and industrial (van Schalkwyk, 2011; Ahmed, 2004; Schalekamp & Klopp, 2018).

Administrative formalisation included registering all existing operators, and making it easier to regulate minibus taxi operators with and without permits (Vegter, 2020). This goal was not reached and still holds as a challenge today. The government aimed to recapitalise the MTI as part of the Financial formalisation. All minibus taxi owners were required to turn in their vehicles in exchange for a scrapping allowance as deposits towards the new vehicles (Boudreaux, 2006; van Schalkwyk, 2011; Ahmed, 2004; Vegter, 2020). The government planned on delivering the first new taxis by October 2000. Nevertheless, the "new taxis" was only delivered in 2006 (Bopap, 2006). Industrial relations influenced the formation of the South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO). The aim was to have one body with whom the government would negotiate (Vegter, 2020). Having one representative body was difficult, for different fragments had different opinions, some supporting the TRP and others being against it (Venter, 2013; Vegter, 2020). This attempt at recapitalising the MTI was only partly successful. The Taxi Scrapping Agency failed to meet annual target and by 2009, only 28 318 of the estimated 80 000 had been scraped (Schalekamp et al., 2010; van Schalkwyk, 2011).

The National Department of Transport introduced the Integrated Public Transport Networks (IPTN's), before the start of the 2010 Soccer World Cup (Schalekamp and Klopp, 2018; Vegter, 2020). The first focus of IPTNs was Bus Rapid Transport (BRT), and would incorporate the existing scheduled bus services and MTI (Schalekamp and Klopp, 2018). However, the MTI was largely against the integration (Schalekamp et al., 2010; Venter, 2013; Vegter, 2020). At the end of 2010, the government was still intent on reforming the MTI and introduced a new TRP (Vegter, 2020). Since the official start of the TRP in 2006, the goal of scrapping 80 000 "old taxis" has still not been met. By September 2018 a total of 72 653 "old taxis" had been scraped, with the fleet estimated to consist of 135 894 non-roadworthy minibus taxi vehicles (Vegter, 2020). With the MTI still informal and unsafe, the government decided on a second revised attempt at the TRP. In March 2019, it was announced that the Revised TRP would continue (Vegter, 2020). Over the years, the government neglected the industry's inputs. It was only through the 2020 National Taxi Lekgotla that the government successfully engaged with the MTI without the direct involvement of the National Taxi Alliance. The National Taxi Lekgotla was held in an attempt to find ways in which the MTI can be formalised and empowered.

4.2   National, Provincial and Municipal Documentation

4.2.1   National Development

4.2.1.1 Moving South Africa (1999)

A long-term strategic plan was introduced towards the end of the 1990s and was set to span over 20 years (from 2000-2020) (Pillay & Seedat, 2007). The aim of the project was to provide safe, reliable, effective and fully integrated transport systems. The project was designed to produce a data-driven program for strategic action that extends the short to medium-term policy formulation into a long-term strategic formulation (DoT, 2008; Pillay & Seedat, 2007). The project's goal was to reduce system costs and improve customer service to meet customer needs and national goals. Furthermore, the project gave way to the TRP, which was introduced in 1999 (DoT, 2008; Pillay & Seedat, 2007).

The government primarily influenced the project to improve communities' livelihoods and ensure economic growth. Regarding the TRP, the government did not officially include associations and operators within the decision-making process. Many associations and operators were against the program and protested against it. While the program has run for 20 years, there is still a need for safe and reliable public transport systems in South Africa. The TRP has also failed to meet its goals and has been revised and implemented multiple times, but without the approval of associations or operators. The MSA project did, however, guide the government to develop short-term plans that form part of long-term strategies, such as the Public Transport Strategy and Action Plan.

4.2.1.2 National Land Transport Strategic Framework (NLTSF) (2006-2011)

While the Transport Deregulations Act 80 of 1988 aimed to dismantle the permit system, the need for regulation was once again introduced within the minibus taxi industry. The NLTSF (2006-2011) noted the need for formalisation, permits and route-based operating licences (DoT, 2006). The Fleet recapitalisation was to be implemented between 2006 and 2012 to replace the MTI with midibuses and minibuses that are purpose-built to safely transport the public (DoT, 2006).

The NLTSF (2006-2012) aimed to formalise, regulated and recapitalised the minibus-taxi fleet (DoT, 2006). However, the MTI remains informal and unsafe. While the attempt has succeeded in recapitalisation, South Africa's roads are still crowded with old and unsafe minibus vehicles. The government and the public influenced the framework. Commuters felt unsafe when travelling and were faced with accidents on a daily, the voices of commuters, operators and other road users pushed the government to look into it. The government noted high numbers of taxi accidents and stepped up to the challenges. The goal of new minibus taxis with safety regulations was to ensure the safety of all commuters, operators and others on the road.

4.2.1.3 Public Transport Strategy and Action Plan (2007-2020)

The Public Transport Strategy and Action Plan aimed to upgrade transport networks and create an integrated rapid public transport network. Integration was to be achieved through upgrading the public transport fleet, facilities, stops and stations, extending operating hours, and integrating feeder systems (Pillay & Seedat, 2007). The Plan was divided into 3 Phases, each stretching over a few years, one following on the other. Phase I: Accelerated recovery and catalytic projects, was to be implemented between 2007-2010. This was followed by Phase II: Promoting and delivering basic networks (2010-2014). Phase III: Advance and sustain accessible networks, run from 2014-2020 and implemented nationally (Pillay & Seedat, 2007).

The government highly influenced the plan and emphasised its importance before the 2010 Soccer World Cup. At the same time, the plan had long-term benefits for entire South Africa; although Taxi Associations and Bus operators were against the integration of the systems. The action plan guided the implementation of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and the upgrading of existing rail networks. BRT was set to be full coverage by the end of 2020; however, in cities where it has been implemented, residential areas are still not serviced. The communities not serviced are voicing their needs and pushing the government to start exploring extensions of the BRT services. While the MTI and BRT are currently serving communities side by side there is still conflict between the two parties. The conflict can influence commuters' choices and future plans and policies that the government may implement.

National Land Transport Act (5 of 2009): The National Land Transport Act (5 of 2009) repealed the National Land Transport Transition Act (22 of 2000). The repeal was driven by the government, with an influence from the public. Since the Act governed aspects of the MTI, Taxi Associations also had an influence. The Act aimed to continue the process of transformation and restructuring of the national land transport system.

Section 49 of the National Land Transport Act addresses permits for operating minibus taxis as well as the recapitalisation of the minibus taxi industry. Section 49 (2) (b) states that minibus taxi operators who have yet to partake in the recapitalisation programme can still partake. These operators can receive a new vehicle in line with their current permit and operating licence. Despite the information outlined in Section 49, there are still illegal minibus taxi operators, unsafe minibus vehicles and operators that are not registered. This shows that Taxi Associations and operators were still unsatisfied with the choices made by the government. If more time was allocated to discussions between the government and Taxi Associations, alternative options could have been implemented. The Act is more than ten years old, and a new TRP has been approved for 2020 onward, and there is a need for revision of the Act.

4.2.1.4 National Transport Master Plan (NATMAP 2050)
The Department of Transport pursued a long-term organisation plan for the development of transportation within South Africa in 2016 (Boutueil et al., 2020). NATMAP seeks to achieve a national transport system that is well planned, integrated and aligned across sectors; is well maintained and preserved while offering safe, affordable and accessible options for passengers and is supported through effective policy and regulation (NATMAP, 2016).

The Department of Transport has been investing in upgrading on transport systems. NATMAP also focuses a lot on integrating the various transport systems, such as the BRT and the MTI. The government is aware of the importance of MTI as the primary form of public transport and feeder transport. This time around, Taxi Associations and the BRT organisations were included in the analysis and decision-making process to avoid conflict and find common ground. The Department of Transport still had the final say, but actual on-the-ground data was used to guide decisions. The integration of the MTI with the formal public transport networks has been discussed with all relevant stakeholders. There is still protests from the MTI and Taxi associations around the integration of the industry, with operators claiming that many will lose their jobs and positions on certain routes.

4.2.1.5 Green Transport Strategy for South Africa (2018-2050)

The MTI is a major component of the transport sector and needs to develop its role as an important feeder to the public transport system (Green Transport Strategy for South Africa, 2018). The Department of Transport reaffirmed the issues around sustainability with the Green Transport Strategy for South Africa (2018-2050). In addition to the recapitalisation programme, the strategy has started engaging with the MTI about introducing green initiatives by promoting the use and the uptake of cleaner fuels (Green Transport Strategy for South Africa, 2018).

The government drives the strategy with a strong influence from the public and environmental concerns. This time, the government is aware of the importance of including Taxi Associations and operators in decision-making processes. With the ongoing TRP, introducing a smart fuel vehicle might be possible. It is important for the government to be aware of concerns around the strategy and be open to suggestions from the public and the Taxi Associations.

4.2.1.6 White Paper on National Transport Policy (1996, 2017, 2021)

The first White Paper on Transport Policy was presented in 1996. It was suggested that the MTI be formalised and measured to regulate competition and enhance the economic viability of the MTI (DoT: Taxi Industry Empowerment Model, 2020). The White Paper was influenced by the government to change the face of the MTI. Many operators and Taxi Associations were against the formalisation. As of the start of 2020, the MTI has not been formalised, and the notion has been abandon for some time. The DoT has opted to organise, recapitalise and manage the MTI instead. Taxi Associations are more in favour of the management but are still opposed to the recapitalisation.

The revised 2017 White Paper draft, followed by the revised White Paper on National Transport Policy of 2021, was triggered due to the age of the White paper and the many changes over the years. Regulation of the MTI is to take place in which the authority specifies in detail the service to be provided and can impose a variety of sanctions if this is not met (DoT: White Paper, 2021). The regulation of the MTI has been a challenge for some time, and implementing sanctions might ensure that all operators, owners and consumers comply. With this being said, there is still a lack of compliance with operating licenses and permits. A large percentage of minibus taxi operators do not hold the required operating licences or permits or are operating on routes and areas not authorised by their operating licences or permits. This has led to protests and conflict between Taxi associations, once again endangering commuters.

The White Paper has reintroduced the TRP and calls for an increase in the scrapping allowance (DoT: White Paper, 2021). With the programme being reintroduced after it has run for nearly 15 years without meeting its goals, the new TRP must find ways to engage with Taxi associations on a deeper level. Participation of the Taxi Associations and operators is crucial for the program to succeed.

4.2.2 Free State Province

4.2.2.1 Transport Laws Rationalisation Act (11 of 1996)

The Act was introduced to help deregulate public transportation; this came after the attempt to regulate the MTI. The Act extended the application of the Road Transportation Act (74 of 1977) as well as the Transport Deregulation Act (80 of 1988), within the Free State Province. Regarding the Road Transportation Act (74 of 1977), privately operated vehicles of no more than eight passengers were permitted within selected areas. Section 5

of the Transportation Deregulation Act (80 of 1988) provided for dismantling the permit system. Local governments were still allowed to limit and manage the number of operating licences issued based on the available space on the road and in taxi ranks. Taxi Associations, operators and commuters influenced a change within policy, voicing the importance of the MTI. Certain areas that were not previously serviced, hindered the movement of many residents. The change in policy allowed for more significant movement of commuters, giving them a right to the city.

4.2.2.2 Free State Interim Passenger Transport Amendment Act (6 of 2004)
The Free State Interim Passenger Transport Act (16 of 1998), aims to provide for the regulation of minibus taxis. Section 18 focuses on the registration of taxi associations as well as the registration of members and non-members. All associations, members and non-members must register (Section 18 (1)). The registrar is allowed to deregister associations and members (Section 18 (9)). If an association or member is not registered in terms of the Act, they are not eligible to enjoy the benefits provided by the Act (Section 18 (11)). Taxi Associations favour this, since associations aim to manage and organise routes and operators. This takes away some of the conflict since certain associations are assigned certain routes or areas.

The Act aims to regulate the MTI and, therefore, outlines permits' application. No person is allowed to operate a minibus taxi unless they are the holder of a permit issued by the Registrar (Section 29 (1)). New applicants must also register with a registered association (Section 29 (4)). When registering for a permit, the route or network of operation, along with points along the route and ranks used, must be mentioned. Taxi Associations encourage members and operate to resister for operating licences and permits. This takes some workload off the government while still keeping the MTI organised and managed. There are however still operators who are not registered with an association or the government.

4.2.2.3 Free State Public Transport Act (4 of 2005)
Taxi services in the Free State Province are prohibited in the form of metered taxi services and minibus taxi services. Minibus taxi services may only be provided by minibuses and midibuses under Section 9 of the Free State Public Transport Act (4 of 2005). Furthermore, an operating license may only be granted if the service is in route or network based (unless stated otherwise) (Section 9 (2)). All transport services provided outside of the official planned public transport services must apply for operating licences. Section 57 states that an operating licence must specify the routes and the authorised pick-up and drop-off points. Taxi Associations encourage members and operators to register, making it easier to keep track of the growing industry and the amount of operators on the routes. Operating licences are therefore used to manage serviced routes and keep some form of organisation.

4.2.3 *Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality*

4.2.3.1 A Marriage Between Mangaung Metro and the Minibus Taxi Industry
The MMM broke new ground in 2010 by implementing the Bloemfontein Intermodal Public Transport Facility (BIPTF) (Taxi rank). The development came after the needs of the public were voiced. At the end of 2010, many residents and Greater Bloemfontein Taxi Association (GBTA) were relieved and excited about the development; however, shortly after the opening, minibus taxi operators complained and boycotted the rank (Matebesi, 2018). There were several structural issues, such as narrow pathways and congestion at the entrance and exit. GBTA led protests to voice the concerns of commuters and

operators in hopes that the municipality would listen and act (Matebesi, 2018). The rank has not been used since its construction.

Informal taxi ranks have been catering to the MTI of MMM, with informal ranks located close to shopping centres in Bloemfontein. Taxi Associations and the public has protested the need for dedicated and safe ranks. A lease signing ceremony took place in 2019, where the city signed a 30-year lease agreement with the GBTA to operate the 30 million rands. The agreement did not happen overnight, for there were countless discussions, criticism and protests over the years (MMM News Update, 2019b). The municipality aimed to ensure safety and ease of travel. However, after three years, there is no sign of remodelling (MMM News Update, 2019b). Commuters are concerned about safety while travelling to and from their destination. They often wait long periods to start their journey and struggle to find minibus taxis that travel to their destinations (MMM News Update, 2019b).

4.2.3.2 One-Stop Shop for Transport Issues

Destinations During the October transport month in 2019, the Free State Forum discussed issues of interest within the public transport sector. Transport plays an essential role in an economic city because it bridges the gap between the production and consumer end. It is therefore important for a city to have reliable transport systems. MMM has made progress toward its Integrated Public Transport Networks and has launched the Hauweng rapid bus system (MMM News Update, 2019a). The system will offer a high-quality service to commuters and is claimed to be more convenient and safer than minibus taxis and subsidised busses. The fare rates for the rapid bus system are below the fares of the MTI (MMM, 2020). If this is the case, the MTI might decrease in size, and operators will be left unemployed again. Without a doubt, the MTI was opposed to the development. However, the MMM engaged with Associations from the start and was able to agree.

The MMM signed agreements with Interstate Bus Line, Thalsta Taxi Association that services Thaba Nchu (THALSDTA), Botshabelo Bata Taxi Association (BATA), GBTA, as well as the Motheo District Taxi Council (Mdakane, 2022). This made for easy communication between all stakeholders and decreased the outburst of protests and conflict. With the communication open, a formal company has been registered for the taxi associations (Mdakane, 2022). Mangaung Transit is owned and operated by minibus taxi operators and has been appointed by the city to operate the Mangaung Bus Rapid Transport System (Hauweng) (Mdakane, 2022). There is still some concern from the GBTA, pointing out that BRT has failed in other metros and might also fail within MMM (ITSSA, 2022). The Hauweng system started operating sometime in 2022 officially.

5. DISCUSSION

The historical trajectory of the MTI in South Africa reveals its emergence as a significant mode of transportation, deeply intertwined with the socio-political landscape of the country. Before 1994, the MTI operated informally, serving as a lifeline for black South Africans amidst apartheid-era segregation and inadequate public transportation infrastructure. The post-apartheid period witnessed a shift in government approach, recognizing the MTI's importance and attempting to formalize and regulate it through initiatives like the Taxi Recapitalisation Programme (TRP). However, challenges persisted, including resistance from operators, regulatory hurdles, and delays in implementation. Despite efforts to integrate the MTI into formal transport networks, significant gaps remain, highlighting the complexities of reconciling informal systems with formal regulatory frameworks.

The review of planning documents at various government levels provides insights into the evolving policy landscape shaping public transportation in South Africa. Initiatives such as "Moving South Africa" (MSA) and the National Land Transport Strategic Framework (NLTSF) demonstrate a commitment to modernizing transportation infrastructure and improving service quality. However, the implementation of these plans has been marred by challenges, including inadequate funding, resistance from stakeholders, and shortcomings in regulatory enforcement. The introduction of Integrated Public Transport Networks (IPTNs) and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems reflects efforts to enhance connectivity and promote sustainable transportation options. While these initiatives hold promise for improving mobility and reducing congestion, their success hinges on effective stakeholder engagement and addressing the concerns of informal transport operators like the MTI. The ongoing tensions between formal and informal transport sectors underscore the need for inclusive policy frameworks that balance regulatory requirements with the realities of informal economies.

Policy changes and development plans are triggered by politics, economy, society, technology, environmental aspects, legal reasons and public opinion (NPDF, 2020). The involvement of stakeholders and public participation has not always been viewed as necessary. Three stakeholder groups influence policies and plans in regard to the MTI: government, associations and the communities. This section discusses the part each stakeholder plays and how it can be enhanced.

Government Integration between levels: History, politics and public opinion have mostly influenced national legislation, policies and plans. After 1994, the government needed to find ways to solve challenges left by the Apartheid era. At first, the National government tried to formalise the MTI with little success. The TRP has been revised multiple times, each improving on the last but posing challenges. Decisions were previously made on a macro scale with no involvement of other levels of government. This has changed, and while the final decision still lies with the National Government, there is involvement from the Provincial level as well as the Municipal level of government. The Democratic government gave power to municipalities to contract with transportation operators and to regulate the sector. This ensures a clear understanding of what is happening within the transport system. Development within the two provinces may differ, but they align with the national goal. In other words, the macro and micro plans align, making the overall transport system more integrated and manageable.

The integration is seen within NATMAP, the NLTSF, the Integrated Urban Development Framework, the Green Transport Strategy for South Africa and the 2021 Revised White Paper on National Transport Policy. Moving South Africa of 1999 aimed to provide integrated transport development but did not meet its goal. The project did, however, provide a guide for government to develop short-term plans that form part of long-term strategies, such as the Public Transport Strategy and Action Plan.

Associations, Top-Down or Bottom-Up: Policy making and decision-making have followed a top-down approach for most of South Africa's history. Decentralisation has started to take place, and there has been a shift in how the government plans and manages the country. This is evident when viewing the MTI. The national government made a decision around transport integration and introduced the BRT system. This strategy was to be used to unite the MTI and integrate it into BTR systems. The MTI of South Africa was against the idea and wanted to keep the informal nature of the industry. Many Taxi associations

lead protests and meetings to make the voices of operators and commutes heard. Over the years, the government neglected the inputs of the MTI and disregarded some stockholders.

The government has since abandoned the goal of formalising the MTI and focuses more on organising, managing and empowering the industry. However, this relies on the involvement of Taxi Associations in decision-making processes. During the 2020 National Taxi Lekgotla, the government successfully engaged with the MTI. Plans regarding the way forward for the MTI is now more focused on empowering, regulating and ensuring safety. Taxi Associations are also involved in decision-making processes. The MMM engaged with Associations from the start of planning the Hauweng rapid bus system. This made for easy communication between all stakeholders and decreased the outburst of protests and conflict.

The Public, Protests or Participation: The public and commuters have made their voice heard over the years by means of protests and boycotts. When concern about the BIPTF was raised, the MMM at first ignored the complaints. Only nine years later, a strategy was announced, and the new strategy has not been implemented. This is time-consuming, and the government ends up spending money on development that is not approved/ in favour of communities. In order to prevent this, public participation should play an essential role in policy making and planning documents. There has been a shift towards public participation, but there are still cases where community input is completely pushed aside. Incorporating public participation into decision-making plans will lower the possibility of protests, and communities will be developed according to the wants and needs of the community.

Overall, the discussion highlights persistent challenges facing urban transport planning in South Africa, including the informal nature of the MTI, safety concerns, and infrastructure deficiencies. The TRP, despite its intentions to modernize the minibus taxi fleet, has faced implementation hurdles and has not fully addressed the industry's safety and operational issues. Furthermore, the integration of BRT systems and IPTNs has encountered resistance from MTI operators, reflecting broader tensions between formal and informal transport modes. However, amidst these challenges lie opportunities for innovation and collaboration. The Green Transport Strategy for South Africa signals a shift towards sustainable transport solutions, including the adoption of cleaner fuels and technologies. The engagement of stakeholders, such as Taxi Associations and operators, in decision-making processes demonstrates a growing recognition of the importance of community involvement in shaping transport policies.

Looking ahead, the future of urban transport planning in South Africa hinges on addressing the underlying structural issues and fostering greater cooperation between formal and informal transport sectors. This requires a holistic approach that prioritizes safety, accessibility, and environmental sustainability while acknowledging the diverse needs of urban residents. Policymakers must continue to engage with stakeholders, including MTI representatives, to develop inclusive and effective transport policies that serve the interests of all citizens. Furthermore, there is a need for robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the impact of policy interventions and ensure accountability in implementation.

6.   CONCLUSION

The historical overview presented in this paper sheds light on the relationship between urban planning policies and the evolution of public transportation in South Africa, with a particular focus on the Minibus Taxi Industry (MTI). The South African government has tried dismantling, recapitalising and formalising the MTI since the 1970's. Legislation changes were mostly influenced by politics, history and associations. Most programmes have followed a top-down model causing significant changed to the MTI. The government has therefore failed to transform the MTI due to a lack of participation. There appears to be a change in course, with legislations and plans moving away from the "displace and replace" approach and rather embracing and engaging with the MTI (Schalekamp & Klopp, 2018). A large part of South Africa's population will continue to use the MTI, it is therefore important to look into integration and public participations. From its emergence as an informal mode of transport during apartheid to contemporary efforts to formalize and integrate it into modern transport networks, the MTI has played a pivotal role in shaping the mobility landscape of the country. Throughout the years, successive government initiatives and planning documents have sought to address the challenges facing public transportation, including inadequate infrastructure, safety concerns, and regulatory issues. However, the journey towards a more sustainable and inclusive transport system has been marked by complexities and tensions between formal and informal transport sectors.

The implementation of programs like the Taxi Recapitalisation Programme (TRP), Integrated Public Transport Networks (IPTNs), and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems has encountered resistance and faced hurdles in achieving their intended goals. Despite these challenges, there have been notable achievements, such as the recognition of the MTI's importance by the government and efforts to engage stakeholders in policy formulation. As South Africa looks towards the future, there are opportunities to build on these achievements and address the remaining gaps in urban transport planning. Collaborative approaches that involve all relevant stakeholders, including MTI representatives, are essential for developing inclusive and effective transport policies. Moreover, there is a need for continued investment in infrastructure, innovation, and sustainability initiatives to create a transport system that meets the needs of all citizens while promoting economic growth and environmental stewardship.

7.   REFERENCES

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