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# Public Transport in the Changing South Africa, 1994-2000

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Sunday, April 08, 2001

# Public Transport in the Changing South Africa, 1994-2000

We recall actions of many commuters and transport workers as part of
our resistance and struggle against apartheid. We remember these events
and struggles not just because they were part of our struggle for freedom,
but to remind us that our task today is to build a transport system which
is about meeting needs, and not about using transport as an instrument of
monopolisation or artificial social engineering

(Dullah Omar, Minister of Transport, 13 April 2000, Address to the
National Council of the Provinces presenting the National Land
Transport Transition Bill).

## 1 Introduction

Popular transport struggles in South Africa were at the heart of the struggle for
liberation (Khosa, 1995) as also captured in the words of Dullah Omar, Minister of
Transport, under President Thabo Mbeki, when addressing the National Council of the
Provinces. Described as "a significant milestone on the road to the fundamental
transformation of transport in our country" Omar, 2000a), the passage of the National
Land Transport Transition Act in 2000 marked an important chapter in the history of
South African transport sector.

After more than six years of consultations and negotiations, the National Land
Transport Transition Act, is the first important transport legislation introduced by the
ANC-led government since 1994. However, implementing the National Transport
Transition Act would be arduous and requires overcoming some significant obstacles.
Changing the nature of land-use planning, road space management, planning and
regulation, and subsidy targeting will need agreement on the objectives and strong
political will. In addition, co-ordinating departments across national government and at
all levels become a paramount, and extremely complex, task. The legal framework for
the establishment of transport authorities has now been set. A general principle in terms
of the Act is that land transport planning, which will be the responsibility of transport
authorities, must be integrated with the land development process. The National Land
Transport Transition Act prescribes that transport plans will form an essential part of
integrated development plans (Omar, 2000b).

However, the Act raises more questions than there are answers. This chapter
therefore analyses the changing nature of transport policy since 1994 and public
perceptions of public transport, tarred roads and street drainage service delivery by
comparing the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) surveys, mainly those
conducted in November 1999 and September 2000.

As the eve of the first democratic election in 1994, the African National Congress
(ANC) used a radical programme of reconstruction and development as an election
manifesto, and later proclaimed this programme an instrument of fundamental change
in the new South Africa. However, in less than 24 months after the new government
assumed power, a neo-liberal economic policy was introduced, which in essence
replaced the initial RDP (Bond, 2000). The nature of the new policy caused heated

debates, with the labour movement and some civil society organizations accusing the government of "selling out the people's mandate" to the powerful private sector and the International Monetary Fund. However, the ANC-led government published several statistical figures after 1995, arguing that its social delivery program, especially service delivery, was successful (Bond, 2000).

## 2 Background and Argument

The post-apartheid South Africa inherited a public transport system that is under-performing against its obligation to achieve national reconstruction goals. The RDP goals are generally not met, including basic mobility, basic access, and social integration. Workforce mobility is still restricted, creating friction around national efforts to create employment opportunities. Current spatial distribution still leaves commuters and other residents distant from key services that they need, and the systems overall inefficiency continues to create requirements for transport subsidy, as was in the past.

Several studies have concluded that few households in South Africa have access to a private car, while more than 60% of the 'ultra poor' walk to work (Khosa, 1998). Accessibility of transport services for the poor is limited in the extent and location of services provided, and poorer populations are often required to use more than one mode of transport to reach their destination.

This chapter presents an overview of the evolution of transport policy since 1994, reviews achievements in implementing the RDP, and evaluates public perceptions in the delivery of public transport and tarred roads and drainage. The chapter argues that the poor are not in the majority of those provided with good quality services, such as, public transport, tarred roads and street drainage. In fact it is the middle- and high-income earners who appear to be major beneficiaries of government's service delivery programme. Moreover, urban and metropolitan recipients are also in the majority of service recipients than their rural counterparts.

## 3 Transport Policy Formulation since 1994

The process of policy making has changed dramatically since 1994 in South Africa. Whereas in the past transport policies were imposed on a disenfranchised majority, the new State has embarked upon a consultative and participatory process in policy formulation in the 1990s.

The urban transport policy in South Africa is shaped by dynamic global processes such as deregulation, commercialisation and privatisation on the one hand, and contradictory local processes, such as, segregation and apartheid prior to 1994, and the imperative of inclusive and participatory decision making process after April 1994, on the other. Public transport has changed dramatically since 1994. The aim of this section is to present various landmarks in the transformation of public transport in South Africa.

### 3.1 The National Transport Policy Forum

The National Transport Policy Forum (NTPF) was launched in February 1992 with the aim of bringing together a range of interest groups, which had been excluded from contributing to the formulation of transport policy.

Members of the NTPF included the ANC, the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South (CONTRALESA), the National African Federated Transport Organisation (NAFTO), the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), the Southern African Africans Taxi Association (SABTA) (the first national African taxi organisation) and Transnet (State controlled company which represent the South African Airways, the South African Railways and Harbours, established in 1990), and several organisations representing the private sector.

Through the NTPF, the formulation of transport policy was publicly discussed and debated by 'credible' representatives. In fact, the NTPF described access to transport as a basic human right (National Transport Policy Forum, 1994). After two years of debates and discussion, a 'people-centred' transport policy was published by the NTPF in September 1994 (National Transport Policy Forum, 1994).

The NTPF transport policy document, outlined strategies to overcome fragmentation within the transport sector (National Transport Policy Forum, 1994, pp. 13-14). Transport was recognised by the NTPF as an instrument of social transformation:

> The transport industry should be used as an instrument of transformation. Emphasis should therefore be placed on the creation of new businesses and empowerment as a tool in the economic process (National Transport Policy Forum, 1994, p. 2).

The process through which the NTPF co-ordinated transport policy was developed departs radically from the previous transport policy formulation, as it was a result of debates, consultations and consensus by various stakeholders.

### 3.2 Transport and the ANC's Election Manifesto

Although the ANC was a member of the NTPF, its involvement in the working groups and deliberations was largely insignificant. Actually, the ANC' absence at the launching of the National Transport Policy Forum's policy document in September 1994 was conspicuous.

The liberation movement in general and the ANC in particular, had not prepared a single comprehensive document on transport policy when the first general elections took place in 1994. This was in contrast to health and education sectors. In the well publicised in the RDP document, published four months before the elections in April 1994. Transport was only given scant attention, occupying only three and half pages on the 147-page document.

In the RDP document, the ANC had suggested that the new Government should develop 'an effective publicly owned passenger transport system ... integrating road, rail and air transportation' (African National Congress, 1994, p. 36). In addition, the ANC argued that urban commuters should be encouraged to use public transport, and should be actively discouraged from using cars (via parking, access and fuel levies).

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Effectively, the ANC declared that 'access to transport', as with health, education and housing, was a basic human right largely to be met by the new Government.

> The needs of women, children, and disabled people for affordable and safe transport are important. Adequate public transport at off-peak hours, and security measures on late-night and isolated routes, must be provided. Additional subsidies for scholars, pensioners, and others with limited incomes will be considered (African National Congress, 1994, p.38).

However, evidence suggests that much of the transport section in the RDP document was largely based on rhetoric rather than a rigorous analysis of the transport sector in South Africa.

## 3.3 Public transport under Mandela

The transformation of public transport policy started with the transport review process, the formulation of the Green and White Papers, and the establishment of the National Taxi Task Team. Each of these steps added unique contribution to the changing nature of public transport policy since 1994.

### 3.3.1 The transport policy review

When Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as first president of democratic South Africa in 1994, the transformation of the transport sector, and the development of transport policy have been spearheaded by the 'new' Department of Transport (Department of Transport, 1995).

Early in 1995, director-general, Ketso Ghordan, and the former Minister of Transport, Mac Maharaj, the Department of Transport embarked on a process to review and revise transport policy with a view to formulating a new one. A steering committee, consisting of 13 representatives from the public and private sectors, was established by the Department of Transport to guide the policy review process.

Six sectoral working groups were established to analyse issues within specific transport sectors. These working groups namely, civil aviation, infrastructure, land freight transport, land passenger transport, road traffic management and shipping; each dealt with separate aspects of transport policy. The reports of these sectoral working groups were submitted to the first transport plenary meeting in July 1995 where 300 representatives from the private and public institutions and other transport agencies attended.

In October 1995 the working group focussing on land transport published its draft passenger transport policy framework. The land transport-working group suggested that passenger transport was not sufficiently provided for by legislation, and that where passenger transport legislation exists, various authorities at different levels of Government administered it. The land transport-working group suggested that a single, national Land Transport Act should be drafted to clarify the roles and functions of various levels of Government.

Following the first transport policy plenary meeting and several other seminars held by sectoral working groups, a draft Green Paper on Transport Policy was compiled (South Africa, 1996a). This was further discussed at the second transport policy plenary attended by some 300 public, private and civil society sector representatives in February 1996. The Green Paper on Transport Policy was published in March 1996 (South Africa, 1996a). Further inputs and submissions were incorporated in April and May 1996. The White paper on Transport Policy was finally completed and accepted by Cabinet in September 1996.

### 3.3.2   The White Paper on Transport Policy, 1996

Cabinet accepted the White Paper on National Transport Policy in September 1996. The White Paper on Transport Policy promises to:

> Provide safe, reliable, effective, efficient, and fully integrated transport operations and infrastructure which will best meet the needs of freight and passenger customers at improving levels of service and cost in a fashion which supports Government strategies for economic and social development whilst being environmentally and economically sustainable (South Africa, 1996b, p. 3).

In the past, Government's dominant role has been as a:

> [R] egulator of bureaucratic detail[s], a provider of infrastructure, and a transport operator, but has been weak in policy formulation and in strategic planning (South Africa, 1996b, p. 7).

The Government intended to reverse this legacy and to focus on policy and strategy formulation with its prime role, and regulation, which is its responsibility, with a reduced direct involvement in operations and in the provision of infrastructure and services to allow a 'more competitive environment' (South Africa, 1996b, p. 7).

The new political dispensation in South Africa enshrined in the New Constitution, and the White Paper on Transport Policy introduce radical changes in the history of transport. Schedule 4 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa has allocated concurrent responsibility for public transport and road traffic regulation, and for municipal public transport to the national and provincial Governments. Different tiers of government have been allocated various roles and responsibilities. For example, the Local Government Transition Act, 1993, specifies the powers and duties of Transitional Metropolitan and Local Councils and includes the following functions:

- Metropolitan co-ordination, land usage and transport planning;
- Arterial metropolitan roads and storm water drainage; public transport services; and
- Traffic matters  (Department of Transport, 1995).

Each Province is empowered to legislate on public transport, within a broad national policy framework, and to determine its own transport policies, which should also guide metropolitan and local transport authorities. Although the Constitution allows for concurrent powers, the transfer of the functions of bus subsidy, ports, airports and rail

to Provinces has been delayed to enable the Provinces to establish necessary capacity and institutional arrangement.

The White Paper on Transport Policy promises to offer financial and technical assistance to the minibus taxis in order to 'improve their financial viability' (South Africa, 1996b, p. 24). With regard to rail passenger transport, the White Paper promises to 'end the deficit financing system and replace it with a concession system which will ensure more efficient and effective use of funds' (South Africa, 1996b, p. 25).

The White Paper on Transport Policy also recommends 'regulated competition' to the bus operations. Since the 1940s the bus industry has been dominated by a few monopolies in South Africa. For example, PUTCO bus-company has been a recipient of up to 45 per cent of the annual R815 million bus subsidies, with some 35-bus companies sharing the rest (Department of Transport, 1996a). In 1996/7 bus subsidies by the government and local authorities amounted to R967 million, subsidising 20 million-passenger trips (Race Relations Survey, 1998). The White Paper on Transport Policy commits the Government to ending the present subsidy system and replacing it with interim contracts and tender (South Africa, 1996b, p. 24)[1].

Also, the White Paper on Transport Policy suggests that the right to public transport should become the cornerstone in the transport policy of future Governments and that transport planning would thus require a totally new approach.

The central tenet of the White Paper on Transport Policy is that all freight and passenger transport operations should be run on a commercial basis rather than as a social service (South Africa, 1996b). This thrust marked a complete reversal of the ANC's policy position outlined in the RDP document. This sea change in policy is also reflected on other national policies, particularly on the Macro-economic strategy, which was released in June 1996.

One of the dramatic changes to have taken place is within the National Department of Transport (NDoT) itself. The number of people employed in the Department of Transport was reduced from 1400 to just about 250 (Maharaj, 1999). Specialist divisions at arms length were created: these are aviation authority, maritime authority, road authority, and cross boarder agencies. The NDoT is now focused on transport policy development, strategic planning and implementation, and regulation and safety.

### 3.3.3 The National Taxi Task Team

Two other transport policy initiatives ran parallel in with the process, which led to the drafting of the White Paper on Transport Policy. These initiatives were the National Taxi Task Team (consisting of 9 taxi industry representatives, 9 Government representatives, and 9 specialist advisors), which was established in March 1995, and the Task Team on the Restructuring of State Owned Enterprises.

The objectives of the National Taxi Task Team (NTTT) were to investigate problems facing the taxi industry, and to formulate solutions and /or options to ensure the short and long-term sustainability of the industry (South Africa, 1996). In August

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[1] In terms of bus contracts, the replacement of lifelong bus operator permits and subsidies have now been completed, and converted from interim to tendered contracts.

1995, the NTTT embarked on a process of public hearings throughout the country to obtain input on the problems in the taxi industry. Over ninety days of public hearings on the taxi industry in some thirty-two venues in the nine Provinces took place between August and December 1995.

The NTTT submitted a report to the Department of Transport and Cabinet further approved the recommendations in January 1996. Key recommendations from the NTTT included regulation and control of the taxi industry, it's restructuring into more formal business units or co-operatives, and economic assistance through a 'short-term survival package'. Based on the recommendations of the NTTT, each of the nine provinces has now established a provincial taxi office and appointed a taxi registrar. The Government is committed to providing financial assistance to the taxi industry in various forms to facilitate the establishment of taxi co-operatives and training in business skills. Some of the key recommendations from the NTTT have been incorporated into the White Paper on Transport Policy (South Africa, 1996b). During 1997 and 1998 provincial taxi offices and provincial registrars offices were established.

Minibus taxis transport over 65% of public transport user in South Africa. There are 80,000 operators with 127,000 vehicles turning R11 million a day and R12, 6 billion a year. One of the recommendations of the NTTT is a re-capitalisation programme, aimed at transforming the taxi industry over a period of five years. The essence of the project is to replace the current ageing and increasingly dangerous fleet of approximately 126000 taxis with new, locally-assembled 18-35 seater vehicles specifically designed to high quality safety standards required for public passenger transport. Over the next four years the State could provide up to R4 billion in the form of scrapping allowances of up to 30% of the cost of a new vehicle. In terms of the National Land Transport Transition Act 22 of 2000, the government will be able to prescribe the new vehicles only in 2003 (*Pretoria News,* 6 April 2001).'

A task team represented by the Department of Transport, Department of Trade and Industry, Finance and Minerals and Energy developed the re-capitalisation programme. The tender for 18-35 seater vehicles was issued in 1999 and providers have now been whittled down to a short list comprising of Inevo and AMC from South Africa, DaimlerChrysler from Germany, Gaz from Russia, Tata from India, and Kwoonchung from China (*Pretoria News*, 6 April 2001).

The South African Taxi Council – 'the parliament of the taxi industry, which is based on democratic elections', now officially represents the taxi industry in the re-capitalization programme (Omar, 2000a). The South African Taxi Council (SATACO) was born out of a memorandum of understanding entered between government and the taxi industry in 1999 that signalled a new unified structure to represent the taxi industry.


### 3.3.4   Moving South Africa – Maharaji's legacy

The NDoT began the *Moving South Africa* (MSA) project in June 1997. The project encompassed a 14-month process to take the goals of the 1996 White Paper on National Transport Policy and develop a twenty-year strategy to achieve them.

The MSA project with a mandate to develop a strategy to ensure that the transportation system of South Africa meets the needs of South Africa in the 21st Century and therefore contributes to the country's growth and economic development.

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The NDoT charged MSA with responsibility for helping to break new ground in government approaches to long-term strategic issues, and so MSA undertook to identify and clarify the nexus between policy and strategy (Maharaj, 1999). Since the White Paper had already put forth the vision, MSA's mission was to determine how to implement that vision in a way that would be consistent with the key thrusts articulated above - in an environment of limited resources, capacity and time.

The strategy had to verify White Paper on National Transport Policy objectives on the basis of hard data, reconcile or choose amongst some of the sometimes-competing objectives articulated in the White Paper, and creates a context for action to achieve those objectives

The vision captured in the MSA is bold, but what differentiates it from the RDP and the White Paper on National Transport Policy is its un-shameful use of the neo-liberal language and its commitment to user charges. Scattered throughout the MSA report is the uncritical replacement of words, such as, "passengers" with "customers" and "clients", a clear market orientated approach to public passenger transport in South Africa. In order to assess progress in the implementation of the transformation of the transport sector, the following section provides an overview of the first RDP policy audit.

## 4 Transport Policy Audit: 1994-1999

One of the most important contributions to the assessment of transformation in South Africa was the commissioning of the RDP policy audit. The RDP policy audit involved assessment of infrastructure and service delivery records based on official documents and in-depth interviews. Official claims in terms of infrastructure and service delivery were assessed using the RDP 'mandates' (Bond and Khosa, 1999). This section of the chapter seeks to use aspects of the RDP policy audit on public transport and a series of HSRC surveys on public perceptions on the delivery of public transport in South Africa.

### 4.1 Expansion of public transport

The RDP emphasized the need to expand affordable public transport options, especially rail. This is captured in various sections of the RDP policy document of 1999:

> 2.9.3 An effective publicly owned passenger transport system must be developed, integrating road, rail and air transportation... A future transport policy must: promote coordinated, safe, affordable, public transport as a public service...
> 2.9.5 As a first priority, rail transport must be extended (African National Congress, 1994).

The Department of Transport's early policy papers—such as *Working Documents for Land Transport Bills and Cross-Boarder Road Transport Bill*—instead reassessed state ownership of transport services and emphasized corporatisation of municipal services, including rail. The *Working Documents* policy targets for transport access were ambitious, and more

detailed than offered in the RDP. Recent policies effectively support private owned transport and restrict the state to regulation and control.

## 4.2 Regulation of private transport

The RDP aimed to disincentivise individual car use by higher taxes and larger public transport subsidies.

> 2.9.5 Commuters should be encouraged to use public transport, and should be actively discouraged from using cars (via parking, access and fuel levies). The funds so raised must be used to directly benefit the provision of public transport...
> 2.9.11 Funding for public transport would come both from central government and from local rates and taxes. The (Metropolitan Transport Authorities) must be empowered to impose such levies and taxes as may be appropriate and the funds thus raised must be used primarily to promote public transport (African National Congress, 1994).

Taxes and constraints to car use were endorsed in the 1995 *Urban Development Strategy*, but subsidies were discouraged (a user-pays principle was recommended).

> Transportation subsidies alone cost the fiscus in excess of R2 billion a year, and are particularly excessive in providing for the inhabitants of far-flung `commuter townships'... As far as possible, infrastructure should be funded through user charges and/or investments by the private sector... Unrestrained car usage and subsidised car parking should be contained through the application of policy instruments including strict parking policies, access restrictions for private cars, higher license fees, road pricing and area licensing... The application of funds to transport improvements should be self-sustaining and replicable. To encourage this, the users of urban transport facilities should pay for all or most of the costs incurred within the limits of affordability (*Urban Development Strategy*, 1995, pp.15, 18-19,24,28)

Formal transport policy was silent on means of affecting an incentive shift. The RDP also mandated stronger regulation of private transport 'All privately-controlled passenger transport must be effectively regulated and controlled (ANC, 1994, section 2.9.3)'
However, policy favored self-regulation, in the words of the National Land Transport Transition Bill:

> The roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders and service providers will be clearly agreed. This will enable government regulation to be kept to a minimum, while the private sector will be able to build and operate within a competitive environment, be socially and environmentally responsible and self-regulating (*Working Documents for Land Transport Bills and Cross-Boarder Road Transport Bill*, 1998, p.6)

However, this new trend is with an exception of taxi transport, which attracted increased state intervention. A *National Road Traffic Act* tightened other transport laws (*National Road Traffic Act*, no. 93, 1996)

## 4.3 Transport planning

The RDP stressed decentralised control of transport planning: 'A future transport policy must: ensure accountability so that the people have control over what is provided ' (ANC, 1994, section 2.9.3). At the same time the RDP called for more comprehensive, integrated planning: 'A future transport policy must: ensure comprehensive land-use/transport planning.' (ANC, 1994, section 2.9.3). Accountability was affirmed in the 1996 *White Paper on National Transport*, as was integrated transport planning in the 1998 document *Moving South Africa*. The RDP proposed a single transport agency to coordinate planning and financing:

> 2.9.9 For all public transport services to be fully integrated their functioning must be coordinated and financed by one organisation. The organisation should be accountable to the public and responsible for the provision, coordination and funding of all public transport and the infrastructure necessary for public transport (in cooperation with the national public works programme). The organisation should specifically address current problems such as uncoordinated tariff structures, duplication of services, and conflict as a result of different forms of ownership. Minimum norms and standards, policy frameworks and the format of transport plans for national, provincial, urban and rural areas should form an integral part of the responsibilities of this organisation (ANC, 1994).

While subsidies to bus and rail remained substantial (R2 billion per year), and while registered use of public rail transport increased by slightly more than the growth in population, the aggregate amounts available declined. Indeed, the transport budget was several billion rand per year short in terms of capital spending (particularly for new roads) due to fiscal constraints. The responsibility to generate additional resources is now placed on public-private partnerships, with the national road transport agency charged with the responsibility to manage, renovate, and maintain the national road network.

Although the National Transport Transition Act, enacted in 2000, does provide a framework for integrated co-ordinated planning, there is recognition that this may take at least 5 years, as the transformation of local government, which also has the responsibility related to transport, still has to take its course.

The need to foster inter-sectoral collaboration within government, in policy formulation, and programme implementation still leaves much to be desired. It appears as if the commitment to speeding up delivery through "sustainable action" is still a long way to be realised.

## 4.4 Special transport needs

The RDP mandated additional transport support for people with special needs'

> 2.9.3 A future transport policy must take into account the transport needs of disabled people...
>
> 2.9.13 The needs of women and children for affordable and safe transport are important. Adequate public transport at off-peak hours, and security measures on late-night and isolated routes, must be provided. Additional subsidies for scholars, pensioners and others with limited incomes will be considered (ANC, 1994).

In addition, the RDP placed special attention to rural transport.

> 2.9.2 Rural areas require more frequent public transport and improved facilities, at an affordable cost. There is inadequate access for emergency services in rural areas, inadequate public transport frequencies and route coverage, poor coordination, and other inefficiencies. Indeed, in many rural areas there is no public transport at all (ANC, 1994).

Although changes in transport policy for disabled people, women, children, scholars, and pensioners have not been specified, the commitment to rural areas was repeated in policy documents like the 1996 *Green Paper on National Transport Policy*, *Rural Development Strategy* and *Rural Development Framework* (albeit at a low standard for roads).

Evidence in the preceding section suggests that the significant original proposals in the RDP were fundamentally revised in first term of the ANC-led government. No longer is transport seen as an essential service, but as a commodity in the market place. In the words of Dullar Omar, Minister of Transport:

> We must strive to create a competitive and market based transport environment. This will facilitate and promote greater participation by the private sector in the delivery if transport services, and generate the appropriate market forces to regulate supply and demand pressure. This will affect modal choices as well as the development of truly market-driven inter-modal transport (Omar, 2000a).

These shifts are nevertheless not only unique to transport, but are also evident in other sectors. So far a thorough analysis of the impact of these changes has not yet been adequately understood. The challenge is to use various methods, which might assist in teasing some of the key aspects of service delivery in general, and transport provision, in particular.

## 5    Perceptions of Changes in Service Delivery at Local Level

Since 1994 policy analysts have used various yardsticks to measure progress in terms of service delivery (Khosa, 2000ab). For example, *Mail & Guardian* provides a (largely superficial) report card for each cabinet minister, and *RDP Monitor* produces a monthly report on the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme. This chapter takes as its starting point the results of the HSRC surveys carried out in November 1999 and September 2000.

The survey instrument was a 34-page questionnaire. The questions were arranged around themes and it took respondents between 60 and 90 minutes to complete the questionnaire. A sample of 2 704 respondents was selected throughout South Africa, grouped in clusters of eight and drawn from 338 census enumerator areas (EAs) as delineated for the 1996 census. In order to ensure adequate representation, the sample was stratified by province and lifestyle category.[2] Disproportionately large samples were selected from areas known to be inhabited by the two smallest population groups,[3] namely areas with predominantly Asian (Indian) populations and areas with predominantly Colored populations. The realized samples for the surveys of November 1999, September 2000 and November 1999 were 2 700, 2 611 and 2 700 respectively, only slightly smaller than the intended sample of 2 704.

The first democratic government elected into power in 1994 inherited high levels of unemployment, huge income inequalities, and astronomical backlogs in services. One of the key programmes introduced by the government was the RDP, which sought to address some of the national problems. Meeting social needs and diminishing backlogs were aimed at kick-starting economic growth, which was negative at the time. Critical sectors identified for improvement were running water, affordable housing, electricity, health and education. In just less than 24 months, the ANC-led government abandoned its radical reconstruction and development programme, and replaced it with a new-liberal development programme. This section of the chapter seeks to provide a critical appraisal of the extent to which government — sponsored development was perceived to be effective, especially between November 1999 and September 2000.

## 5.1 Perceptions of public transport

The legacy of apartheid is still reflected in the transport sector. The location of the majority of Africans, coloureds and Asians further away from their work places than Whites resulted in longer travelling distances for the disadvantaged. Under apartheid, road networks were designed primarily to serve the white minority, and as such access and exit routes to outlying impoverished areas were few.

Since 1994 there has been a shift from spending on defence and transport to spending on social services. However, funds were inadequate and ill targeted. As a case in point, the beneficiaries of the transport subsidies, were not the ultra poor, but middle-income earners. In addition, rail transport was the most heavily subsidised means of transport, but continued to carry fewer commuters. People in rural areas were the most disadvantaged race in terms of access to roads and transportation (Khosa, 2000a).

Access to transport has a daily impact on the quality of life of most members of the population. Travelling times and distances also affect am individual's ability to participate in family and community life and leisure activities. Transport affects society's

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2      The HSRC categorised each EA in terms of one of eight dominant lifestyles (called "living standard measures" (LSMs)), based on an analysis of the 1996 census data.

3      Discrimination on the basis of race is outlawed in South Africa. However, the apartheid classification of the population into Africans, Coloureds, Asians and Whites has become deeply entrenched in South African society by virtue of its concurrence with class, residential area, health status and education. Hence this chapter makes use of this classification, but does so without accepting racial discrimination.

involvement in economic processes. Workers have to be able to reach the premises of their employers, and in many instances, they can only do this if there is efficient transport provision. Consumers must be able to get to retail stores without difficulty. In other words, transport must be affordable and efficient if these people's participation in the economic processes of production and consumption is to be maximised. In turn, it is this participation that is ultimately determines their welfare. It is this participation that creates jobs, enhances economic development and promotes growth.

Between November 1999 and September 2000 positive assessment of public transport decreased from 39% to 32% in the same period. Only three in ten respondents felt that the provision of public transport improved in the HSRC September 2000 survey. Less than a third indicated that public transport provision worsened in the September 2000 (Table 1).

**Table 1** 'Since the general election of 1994, how would you say the delivery of [public transport] has changed in the area where you live, if at all?'

| Perception | November 1999 | September 2000 |
|------------|---------------|----------------|
| Improved   | 39            | 32             |
| Same       | 32            | 33             |
| Worsened   | 25            | 31             |
| Uncertain  | 5             | 3              |
| Total      | 100           | 100            |

*Source*: HSRC, 1999, 2000

Evidence suggests that there are more people who experienced public transport service deterioration' in September 2000 than there were in November 1999 (Table 1). This implies that the delivery of transport has been declining in the post apartheid period. Although public transport was the most visible sector where popular struggles were waged against the apartheid regime, there has been limited investment and concerted effort to improve the transport sector since 1994.

### 5.2 Perceptions of public transport by race

Whereas Africans and Whites recorded public transport service deterioration, coloureds and Asians recorded public transport improvements (Table 2). Reasons for white perceptions have more to do with the previous public transport privileges, especially when municipalities still provided basic transport service. Whereas the percentage of Africans who indicated a deterioration increased from 18% to 31%, that of Whites also decreased from 41 % to 30% and that of coloureds from 30% to 23% in the same period (Table 2). Africans were however the major users of public transport with the majority of Whites owning private motorcars (Table 2).

Table 2'Since the general election of 1994, how would you say the delivery of [public transport] has changed in the area where you live, if at all?'

| Percep-Tion | African | | Coloured | | Asian | | White | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Nov. 1999 % | Sept 2000 % | Nov. 1999 % | Sept 2000 % | Nov. 1999 % | Sept 2000 % | Nov. 1999 % | Sept 2000 % |
| Improved | 48 | 37 | 23 | 26 | 23 | 42 | 23 | 11 |
| Stayed the same | 32 | 31 | 42 | 48 | 42 | 33 | 42 | 34 |
| Worsened | 18 | 31 | 30 | 23 | 30 | 21 | 30 | 41 |
| Uncertain | 2 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 15 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

This implies that the major users of transport – who are mainly Africans, the majority who are also poor - indicated reduction in the levels of improvements between November 1999 and September 2000.

### 5.3 Perceptions of public transport by area type

Public transport improvement appears to be more evident in urban and metro areas than in rural areas. Some 40% of rural respondents experienced worsening services compared to only 25% who felt that there was service improvement of public transport. This suggests that public transport improvements largely occurred in urban and metro areas than in rural areas.

Table 3 Comparing perceptions of improvement in the provision of public transport, by area type

| Rating | Metro | Urban | Rural | National Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Improved substantially | 5 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| Improved | 25 | 35 | 23 | 28 |
| Stayed the same | 30 | 36 | 32 | 33 |
| Worsened | 21 | 15 | 27 | 21 |
| Worsened substantially | 13 | 6 | 13 | 10 |
| Uncertain | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 |

Poverty is largely more evident in rural areas, with the majority of residents forced to walk relatively longer distances to access basic services than their urban counterparts. The deterioration of public transport in rural areas is a major blow for them as it is central to accessing services, a link to hubs of commercial concerns. This is yet another

pointer to the differential access to services experienced by rural, urban and metro residents.

## 5.4 Perceptions of public transport by province

Public perceptions on the delivery of public transport also differ by province. Public transport appears to have improved in Mpumalanga, Free State, and North-West between November 1999 and September 2000. In terms of proportions of respondents who experienced public transport deterioration, they are located in the Northern Province, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. As the Northern Province, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape provinces are the poorest provinces in South Africa, this further confirms that improvements in service provisions tended to follow the middle and higher income earners than the poorest in society.

**Table 4 Comparing perceptions of improvement in the provision of public transport, by province**

| Province | Improved | Stayed the same | Worsened | Uncertain |
|----------|----------|-----------------|----------|-----------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Western Cape | 27 | 47 | 20 | 7 |
| Eastern Cape | 31 | 28 | 37 | 4 |
| Northern Cape | 26 | 47 | 21 | 6 |
| Free State | 35 | 30 | 33 | 3 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 30 | 33 | 37 | 1 |
| North-West | 37 | 42 | 16 | 5 |
| Gauteng | 32 | 26 | 38 | 4 |
| Mpumalanga | 55 | 21 | 23 | 2 |
| Northern Province | 28 | 34 | 36 | 2 |
| National Average | 32 | 32 | 31 | 3 |

Comparing perceptions of respondents in Gauteng, slightly more than a third felt service deterioration compared to a third who felt that public transport had improved. The higher proportions of respondents in Gauteng experiencing service deterioration is largely located in African townships, informal settlements and peri-urban areas, rather than in historically white designated suburbs, where the majority of people use private transport.

## 5.5 Perception of public transport service delivery by LSM

Perceptions about the provision of public transport also differ by levels of wealth in society. Those who can afford to pay public transport fares largely use public transport. However, it is far cheaper to use public transport than to use a private car. Evidence from the HSRC September 2000 survey suggests that those who believe that transport had improved are those who fall between LSM4 and LSM6, and the rest claimed to have experienced deterioration in the provision of the service (Table 5).

### Table 5 Perception of public transport delivery by LSM

| Rating | LSM1 | LSM2 | LSM3 | LSM4 | LSM5 | LSM6 | LSM7 | LSM8 | Nat. Ave. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Improved substantially | 2 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Improved | 8 | 19 | 26 | 29 | 41 | 37 | 29 | 15 | 28 |
| Stayed the same | 43 | 32 | 28 | 32 | 30 | 32 | 42 | 31 | 33 |
| Worsened | 37 | 26 | 28 | 22 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 24 | 21 |
| Worsened substantially | 10 | 18 | 14 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 15 | 10 |
| Uncertain | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 14 | 3 |

The HSRC September 2000 survey suggests that the beneficiaries of better service delivery are not the poorest of the poor, but the middle- and rich-income earners who are also able to afford to pay for the services. The findings challenge the mainstream perspective, which suggests that government's programmes are largely benefiting the poor and the marginalized.

## 5.6 Gender and public transport

Perceptions of public transport delivery also differ by gender. Women constitute proportionally more people who experienced public transport service deterioration. Public transport does not always take into consideration the needs and interest of women. For example, women traders in urban and rural areas often travel with heavy and bulky commodities, which ordinary modes of transport do not accommodate. Lack of rural public transport has often added additional indirect costs for women.

Although lip service has been paid to the special needs of women, public transport in South Africa is still a dangerous sector, especially for women at dusk, dawn and at night. Special programmes promised in RDP to provide safe and secure transport for women are still a pipe dream. Given the dominance of the mainstream neo-liberal perspective, only an alternative development agenda might sway government approach, though the prospects of this appear dim. Men continue to be the majority of transport operators and owners of transport, even though the majority of transport users are

women. Efforts at encouraging emerging transport contractors has not been complimented by efforts to ensure that women are more represented in the provision of public transport in South Africa.

## 5.7 Tarred roads and street drainage

Lack of funds impacted on the implementation of road policy in South Africa. In September 1999 the Department of Transport indicated that there was a R43 billion backlog in terms of road maintenance, repair and upgrading. Most of South Africa's road network had exceeded its 20-year lifespan, which could result in hazardous road conditions. Eighty five percent (85%) of roads to rural villages were inadequate, compared to 32% of roads to farming communities. Significant numbers of respondents believed tarred roads and street drainage deteriorated. The HSRC September 2000 survey revealed that only 29% of South Africans indicated an improvement in the provision of tarred roads and street drainage in their areas, compared with four in ten (41%) who discerned a worsening. The percentage of respondents indicating an improvement remained the same at 29% from November 1999 to September 2000. However, there was an increase in the percentage of those indicating deterioration in tarred roads and street drainage from 32% to 41% in the same period (Table 6).

Table 6 'Since the general election of 1994, how would you say [tarred roads and street drainage] have changed in the area where you live, if at all?'

| Perception | November 1999 % | September 2000 % |
|------------|----------------|------------------|
| Improved | 29 | 29 |
| Same | 37 | 32 |
| Worsened | 32 | 41 |
| Uncertain | 2 | 3 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

*Source:* HSRC, 1999, 2000.

## 5.8 Perceptions of tarred roads and street drainage by race

As with other services, perceptions of tarred roads and street drainage differed by race. A higher percentage of Whites and Africans, than coloureds and Asians discerned a deterioration in tarred roads and street drainage. However, the percentage of Whites that noted an improvement increased from 8% to 18% between November 1999 and September 2000. Conversely, the proportion of Whites indicating deterioration in tarred roads and street drainage decreased marginally from 44% to 40% in the same period (Table 7).

Table 7 'Since the general election of 1994, how would you say [tarred roads and street drainage] have changed in the area where you live, if at all?' by race

| Percep- | Africans | | Coloured | | Asian | | White | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tion | Nov. 1999 | Sept 2000 | Nov. 1999 | Sept 2000 | Nov. 1999 | Sept 2000 | Nov. 1999 | Sept 2000 |
| Improved | 33 | 24 | 33 | 25 | 27 | 54 | 8 | 18 |
| Stayed the same | 34 | 29 | 43 | 48 | 61 | 30 | 46 | 41 |
| Worsened | 31 | 44 | 20 | 25 | 10 | 13 | 44 | 40 |
| Uncertain | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

A noticeable change is the drop in the proportion of Africans and coloureds who felt that tarred roads and street drainage had improved between November 1999 and September 2000. The results suggest widespread feelings of dissatisfaction with government's service delivery programmes, which the poor and those who were historically disenfranchised currently have (Khosa, 2001).

### 5.9 Perceptions of tarred roads, and street drainage by gender

Public perceptions of tarred roads, and street drainage differ by gender. For those who feel service improvements, more men than women indicated that that tarred roads and street drainage had improved. On the contrary, more women indicated service deterioration than men.

Moreover, the majority of road contractors are men, and men also constitute the majority of those who work in road construction projects. The majority of community-access roads built in the post 1994 period under the community-based public works programmes were destroyed in the floods of 1999 and 2000. Several bridges were washed away especially in rural areas in the Eastern Cape, and the Northern Province. Proportionally more women more affected by this as they were unable to bring water and wood due to disruption of rural road networks and bridges. Access to basic services was also severely affected.

### 5.10 Perceptions of tarred roads, and street drainage by province

Perceptions of improvement of tarred roads and drainage also differ by province. Five provinces had below national average respondents indicating improvements in tarred roads and street drainage. However, the most affected provinces with significantly more respondents experiencing service deterioration were located in the Northern Province, North-West, Free-State and Northern Cape. These provinces also indicate the least proportions of respondents indicating service improvements. Although Mpumalanga is often seen as a scandal-ridden province, with an ineffective government, perceptions of

service improvements in both public transport, and tarred roads and street drainage are high, and bear no resemblance to public views aired largely in the media.

Table 8 'Since the general election of 1994, how would you say [tarred roads and street drainage] have changed in the area where you live, if at all?', by province

| Province | Improved | Stayed the same | Worsened | Uncertain |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Western Cape | 34 | 49 | 16 | 1 |
| Eastern Cape | 21 | 30 | 49 | 0 |
| Northern Cape | 3 | 33 | 45 | 3 |
| Free State | 19 | 26 | 51 | 3 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 30 | 57 | 13 | 1 |
| North-West | 17 | 32 | 44 | 7 |
| Gauteng | 27 | 35 | 22 | 6 |
| Mpumalanga | 32 | 37 | 28 | 3 |
| Northern Province | 10 | 21 | 66 | 3 |
| National Average | 25 | 32 | 41 | 3 |

The higher proportion of respondents in the Eastern Cape and the Northern Province indicating service deterioration confirms the continued marginalisation of these provinces, even though official government policy suggests than poverty stricken areas are being targeted for improved service delivery. In KwaZulu-Natal, the perceived improvements in the provision of tarred roads and street drainage are to some extent attributable to the high profile road projects, which are currently champion by the Minister of Transport in KwaZulu-Natal, S'bu Ndebele. In general, there are more people perceiving service deterioration than those who indicated service improvement at national level. As public transport, tarred roads and street drainage services are provided at provincial and local government, the findings in this chapter are a wake up call, and these spheres of government are not performing optimally. Carefully crafted policy documents at national level still remain rhetoric, bearing little resemblance to service delivery at local level.

## 5.11 Perceptions of tarred roads, and street drainage by area type

Overall more people indicated that tarred roads and street drainage had deteriorated (41%) than those who indicated improvements (25%) in September 2000. When analysing the data by type of area, and focusing on those who indicated substantial service improvement or improvements, proportionally more urban and metropolitan respondents experienced service improvements than their rural counterparts.

Of the 41% who indicated that tarred roads and street drainage have worsened, the majority are rural residents. The dissatisfaction with service delivery in rural areas is

largely attributable to the failure of the service delivery machinery to prioritise rural areas. After seven years since the democratic government was elected an integrated development rural strategy has not been implemented. Although initially mentioned in the RDP, and a draft framework circulated in 1995, the rural development strategy is still subject to debate and controversy. As such, rural households continue to be marginalized, and excluded from benefiting from the fruits of the newly found social and material benefits.

### 5.12 Perception of tarred roads, and street drainage by LSM

Perceptions of tarred roads and street drainage also differ by levels of wealth. Of those who indicated significant service improvements, the majority are located within LSM5 and LSM6 – representing the bulk of the middle-class (Table 9).

**Table 9 Perception of tarred roads, and street drainage by LSM**

| Rating | LSM1 | LSM2 | LSM3 | LSM4 | LSM5 | LSM6 | LSM7 | LSM8 | Nat. Ave. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Improved substantially | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Improved | 1 | 8 | 15 | 21 | 28 | 30 | 31 | 20 | 22 |
| Stayed the same | 41 | 26 | 28 | 27 | 32 | 31 | 38 | 41 | 32 |
| Worsened | 29 | 33 | 31 | 29 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 25 |
| Worsened substantially | 21 | 28 | 22 | 19 | 14 | 10 | 6 | 12 | 16 |
| Uncertain | 7 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 |

These results suggest that the lower the LSM the less improvement in tarred roads and street drainage services. Lower LSMs tend to have proportionally more people who experienced deterioration of tarred roads and street drainage services. These findings further point out that lower income-households are often missed out by new national service and developmental programmes. It is largely the middle- and upper-income households who are largely beneficiaries of such programmes.

## 6 Conclusion

The South African passenger transport system was designed largely to transport people between dormitory townships and their workplaces. Because of the spatial distances resulting from apartheid planning, the working poor spends a large amount of time and money on transport. However, ttransport policy formulation dramatically changed from

1994 from exclusion to inclusion, from being drawn by a few technocrats to consultative processes where interests of civil society stakeholders are at least considered.

This chapter suggests that the significant original proposals in the RDP were fundamentally revised in the first term of the ANC-led government. These shifts are nevertheless not only unique to transport, but are also evident in other sectors. So far a thorough analysis of the impact of these changes has not yet been adequately understood.

After assessing several HSRC surveys on public perceptions of public transport and tarred roads, and street drainage, a number of observations can be teased out. First, positive ratings of public transport, tarred roads and street drainage declined between November 1999 and September 20000.

Second, the worst areas affected by the decline in public transport, tarred roads and street drainage are rural areas. Virtually all services, rural residents indicated negative ratings, indicating that services in their areas have worsened One may side the high profile admission by S'bu Ndebele, Minister of Transport in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, in March 2001, during a budget speech that 60% of roads in KwaZulu Natal are considered to be in a very poor condition.

Third, the majority of public transport, tarred roads and street drainage service improvements appear to have occurred in metro and urban areas rather than in rural areas where the majority of the poor live. Rural residents constitute the majority of those who are most dissatisfied with the delivery of services, whereas the majority of metro and urban residents are proportionally in the majority of those who are satisfied with the delivery of services.

Fourth, levels of wealth appear to be a critical aspect in the delivery of services. The poorest of the poor do not appear to be the major beneficiaries of service delivery. In fact, it is the middle and high-income earners who appear to constitute a number of most satisfied, and happy recipients of service delivery. These findings suggest a need to review the current delivery mechanisms to ensure that the poor are the primary beneficiaries.

The assessment of the current neo-liberal approach to development suggests that nothing short of a fundamental review of the current mainstream framework to service and infrastructure delivery will significantly benefit the poor. Although the rhetoric of government suggests a commitment to efficient and effective transport, the *ad hoc* nature of this is approach does not bode well for the South African poor. Evidence in the first term of government suggests that the poor have always been at the margins of economic and social landscape, and the future does not appear bright. The Mbeki regime will ignore this to its peril, as there has been a continuous radicalization of the trade union movement and organs of civil society discontented at the poor quality of services provided, and government's newly found zeal to promote outsourcing, privatization and deregulation of economic activities.

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