



The Bus Rapid Transit Project in Accra, Ghana: Institutional factors affecting its implementation

BACKGROUND

- Congestion in Cities due to rapid motorization and growing vehicle ownership, inadequate integration of transport and land use planning resulting in longer travel times, diminishing economic productivity (Gakenheimer, 1999)
- Improving urban mobility necessitates a shift in transport mode and policies that promote the use of public transport (Banister, 2008)
- Current major transport initiative in cities - Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems (Hensher, 2007)
- Whilst some cities have been successful, others have experienced difficulties (Filipe and Macário, 2013). Literature on **institutional challenges** is limited.
- Accra embarked on a BRT Project in 2008. Expected project completion was 2012
- Implementation faced challenges despite adequate funding and political commitment. **Why?**
- Project was launched as Quality Bus Service without dedicated lanes in November 2016

CURRENT CONDITIONS

- As at 2007, urban transport in Accra was characterized by poor public transport services, over-reliance on low-capacity passenger vehicles, congestion, inadequate road safety and traffic management measures.
- The sector was generally **self-regulated** by an informal private sector which encountered major quality issues

Institutional Thickness	Sub-Variable	Indicator	Rating		
			Prototype Situation	Original phase	Pilot phase
	Institutional Presence				
		Density	★ ★ ★	★	★ ★
		Commitment	★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★
		Ownership	★ ★ ★	★	★ ★
	Level of interactions among Institutions	Collaboration	★ ★ ★	★ ★	★ ★
		Length of time in operation	★ ★ ★	★	★ ★
	Power relations	Formal competencies	★ ★ ★	★	★ ★
		Local actors' perceptions	★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★
	Sense of Common agenda	Shared local identity	★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★
		Shared local priorities	★ ★ ★	★ ★	★ ★

Key: ★ Low ★ ★ Moderate ★ ★ ★ High

THE PATH TO IMPLEMENTATION

Sub-Variable	Indicator	Prototype Situation (based on theory and best practices)	Support from Literature
Institutional Presence	Density	✓ BRT services are integrated and managed by a single regional authority (cross-jurisdictional) which should be responsible for planning, coordinating, financing and contracting service operators ✓ Activities of existing transport operators formalized and incorporated into BRT systems as a more integrated modal system	Christodoulou and Finger (2012) Lindau, Hidalgo, et al. (2014) Wu and Pojani (2015)
	Commitment	✓ High level of commitment from all stakeholders and provision of institutional support to the project	Coulson and Ferrario (2007)
	Ownership	✓ Public regulatory institution assumes regulatory roles and all existing public transport operators owning shares in BRT operating companies	Allen (2013)
Level of interactions among Institutions	Collaboration	✓ Constant communication with all project stakeholders throughout implementation ✓ Ability and skills of project implementers to effectively coordinate and keep the focus of all actors	Lindau, Hidalgo, et al. (2014) Allen (2013) Wu and Pojani (2015)
	Length of time in operation	✓ Successful negotiation with existing bus operators in the project area ✓ Stakeholders in urban transport collaborated and engaged in urban transport service delivery for several years ✓ No distrust among Stakeholders with regards to the project	Pemberton (2000) and Coulson and Ferrario (2007)
	Power relations	✓ Tasks allocated to institutions which have considerable capacities for BRT ✓ No dominance of any particular stakeholder. Levelled field for all stakeholders to play their respective roles	Finn (2013) Amin and Thrift (1995) Coulson and Ferrario (2007)
Sense of Common agenda	Local actors' perceptions	✓ Actors' perceptions reflect the actual situation about their capacity in BRT and the dominance of some actors	Coulson and Ferrario (2007)
	Shared local identity	✓ All key Stakeholders acknowledge urban transport issues	(Amin and Thrift, 1995, Henry and Pinch, 2001).
	Shared local priorities	✓ All key stakeholders consider BRT as a relevant project for the project area place high priority on it	(Amin and Thrift, 1995, Henry and Pinch, 2001).

NB: The Institutional factors of all indicators combine to determine the level of institutional thickness in the urban transport sector in the project area. The presence and favourable combination of all the factors during BRT execution contributes to successful implementation.

Institutional factor	Indicator	Direction of change over time	State of Implementation	
			Original phase	Pilot phase
Institutional Presence	Density	↑	Formalization of Passenger Transport sector ❖ By-laws were enacted to regulate urban passenger transport and also created UPTUs ❖ Deadlock in project lasted almost two years due to resistance and demonstrations of operators towards the project ❖ Registration for type "A" permit began but faced tough resistance from operators	Formalization of Passenger Transport sector ❖ 90% of transport operators in Accra registered for type "A" permits ❖ Three bus companies were registered for type "B" permits and issued with route licenses for QBS operation ❖ Three different transport associations owned each a bus company ❖ UPTUs transformed into Transport Departments in 2014 and integrated into the national government budget by 2016
	Commitment	→		
	Ownership	↑		
Level of interactions among Institutions	Collaboration	→	Establishment of a Coordinating Institution ❖ Changes in coordinating role from PAO under the DUR to CUT which was established by Act of Parliament	Establishment of a Coordinating Institution ❖ CUT was dissolved and Pre-GAPTE established in 2014 to assume the coordinating role in the project. This body was eventually registered in 2015 as GAPTE to play indefinite cross-jurisdictional and coordinating role
	Length of time in operation	↑		
Power relations	Formal competencies	↑		
	Local actors' perceptions	→		
Sense of Common agenda	Shared local identity	→		Piloting of QBS ❖ Re-scoping of the project to Quality Bus Service (QBS) in 2014 ❖ QBS buses procured through partnerships of GAPTE and Scania Group ❖ QBS was launched in 2016
	Shared local priorities	→		

↑	Low to Moderate	Initial state	Improved State
→	Highly Constant	Initial state	Improved State
→	Moderately Constant	Initial state	New Initiative

- The Accra case showed that executing BRT concurrently with institutional reforms proved to be a risky task
- Future BRT initiative in cities in Ghana should **proceed after the reform and reorganization** of the city's passenger transport sector
- ✓ Establishment of a cross-jurisdictional authority if the BRT is to operate across more than one jurisdiction;
- ✓ Ensuring part or full ownership of BRT scheme by existing transport operators;
- ✓ Building of stakeholders' capacity in BRT prior to actual implementation;
- ✓ Enactment and enforcement of urban transport by-laws.

SOLUTION

- **Formalization** of Passenger Transport Sector in Accra
- Establishment of **Coordinating institution** to plan, regulate and contract out transport routes and services in Accra
- Piloting of BRT services in Accra
- A practical example where these measures worked is **the BRT system in Johannesburg** (South Africa).

FOLLOW UP

Future research on **how other factors** contributed to implementation challenges
Focus on **standardizing measurement** of Institutional Thickness framework indicators
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