

Bodaboda in Dar es Salaam: Towards Sustainable and Secure Livelihoods

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Bodaboda in Dar es Salaam: Towards Sustainable and Secure Livelihoods

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Highlights from the report:

Overview and aims

- This report explores the political economy of Dar es Salaam's moto-taxi sector. The primary aim is to better understand what factors enable—or hinder—both sustainable transport and equitable outcomes for drivers. The report draws evidence from qualitative interview data, a survey of 150 moto-taxi drivers, including 47 women, and a review of relevant academic and grey literature, government reports, and similar.

The political economy of reform

- Moto-taxis emerged in Dar es Salaam as a self-regulating sector in the early 2000s. After the first formal regulations were introduced in 2010, subsequent regulatory and planning efforts have been 'episodic', often failing to deliver on their ambitious goals or to achieve a more lasting impact.
- The latest wave of interventions, which started approximately a year into President Samia's time in office (2021—), has positive elements, including an emphasis on destigmatizing moto-taxis and a would-be participatory regulatory and planning approach.
- However, several challenges persist, including: (1) fragmented governance structures, and a tendency to (re) centralize control; (2) politicization; and (3) overly top-down engagement with drivers' associations. A further, cross-cutting challenge is a persistent emphasis on comprehensive reform and swift enforcement without due attention to the need for context-specific adaptation. This approach risks

overlooking gains made through more incremental—and bottom up—regulation and planning.

Drivers' livelihoods and work conditions

- Moto-taxi work is an important source of urban livelihoods for both men and women drivers, but it remains precarious with notable obstacles limiting accumulation and investment beyond the earning a livelihood day-to-day. Women also face marginalisation and gender-based violence.
- New private sector stakeholders, notably asset-finance and platform companies, have an ambivalent to negative impact on drivers' livelihoods and sustainable urban transport. Some regulations to formalise the moto-taxi sector also risk having an adverse impact.

Key regulatory and planning alternatives include

- Greater institutional coordination and respect for local government autonomy and innovations in planning practice.
- More incremental and participatory formalization and planning processes, which would align national regulation with locally 'negotiated' realities (see also Spooner et al. 2020).
- De-centring larger district- and city-level drivers' associations in favour of more support for organizing through drivers' parking area groups;
- Stricter regulation of emerging private sector stakeholders, especially asset-finance and platform companies.

- Targeted support for women's drivers alongside a review of policy and legislation to protect the rights of informal economy workers, with specific attention to moto-taxi drivers and women.
- More inclusive infrastructure planning that caters for moto-taxis within the wider transport mix while preventing or compensating the (serial) displacement of informal economy workers

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ATGWU	Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
CBD	Central Business District
CCM	Chama Cha Mapinduzi
CHABBOWIKI	Swahili acronym for Kinondoni district moto-taxi drivers' association
CMPD	Chama Cha Madereva na Wamiliki wa Pikipiki Mkoa wa Dar es Salaam
CHAWAPIL	Swahili acronym for Ilala district moto-taxi drivers' association
COTWU-T	Communication and Transport Workers Union – Tanzania
CWBK	Swahili acronym for Association of Motorcycle Owners and Drivers Kilimanjaro Region
DART	Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit Agency
DC	District Commissioner
ICCE	Institute of Continuing Co-operative Education
ITF	International Transport Workers' Federation
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
LATRA	Land Transport Regulatory Authority
LGA	Local Government Authority
MAUPIDA SACCOS	<i>Maafisa wa Usafirishaji wa Pikipiki Dar es Salaam</i> , or Motorcycle Transport Officers Dar es Salaam
MED	Municipal Executive Director
MoCU	Moshi Co-operative University
MoWT	Ministry of Works and Transport
PO-RALG	President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government
RC	Regional Commissioner
SACCOS	Savings and Credit Co-operatives
SHIVYAMAPIDA	<i>Shirikisho la Vyama vya Madereva wa Pikipiki na Bajaj Dar es Salaam</i> , or Federation of Associations of two- and three-wheel motorcycles Dar es Salaam
SUMATRA	Surface and Marine Transport Regulatory Authority
TANROADS	Tanzania National Roads Agency
TARURA	Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency
TCDC	Tanzania Co-operative Development Agency
VICOBA	Village Community Bank
UWAPITE	Swahili acronym for Temeke district moto-taxi drivers' association

Executive Summary

Drawing on qualitative data, a survey of 150 drivers, and desk research, this report explores the political economy of Dar es Salaam's moto-taxi sector. The primary aim is to better understand what factors enable—or hinder—sustainable transport and equitable outcomes for drivers. Rather than treating drivers as a homogenous category, the report also examines differences amongst them, including between leaders and ordinary drivers and between men and women, a small but growing minority in the sector.

Section 2 of the report reviews the political economy of regulatory and planning reforms in Dar es Salaam, tracing them from the sector's early 2000s emergence as a self-regulating industry to the present. After the first formal regulations were introduced in 2010, subsequent regulatory and planning efforts have been 'episodic', often failing to deliver on their ambitious goals. The latest wave of interventions, initiated about year into President Samia's tenure (2021—), has positive elements, such as efforts to destigmatize moto-taxis and—at least in theory—a more participatory regulatory and planning approach. However, several challenges risk undermining reforms, including: (1) fragmented governance and a tendency to (re)centralize control; (2) politicization; and (3) top-down co-optation of drivers' association. A further challenge is a persistent emphasis on comprehensive reform and swift enforcement without due attention to context-specific adaptation. This approach neither acknowledges how similarly sweeping efforts have failed in the past nor recognises important gains made through incremental—and often more bottom up—regulation and planning.

Section 3 shifts focus to drivers' experiences, the understanding being that a clearer perception of their interests can lead to more equitable regulation and improved enforcement. While moto-taxi work provides

essential urban livelihoods for both men and women (section 3.2), it remains precarious, with significant barriers to investment beyond daily earnings (section 3.3). New private-sector players, such as asset-financing firms and ride-hailing apps, claim to offer opportunities but often depress incomes and worsen congestion, highlighting the need for stricter regulation of these companies.

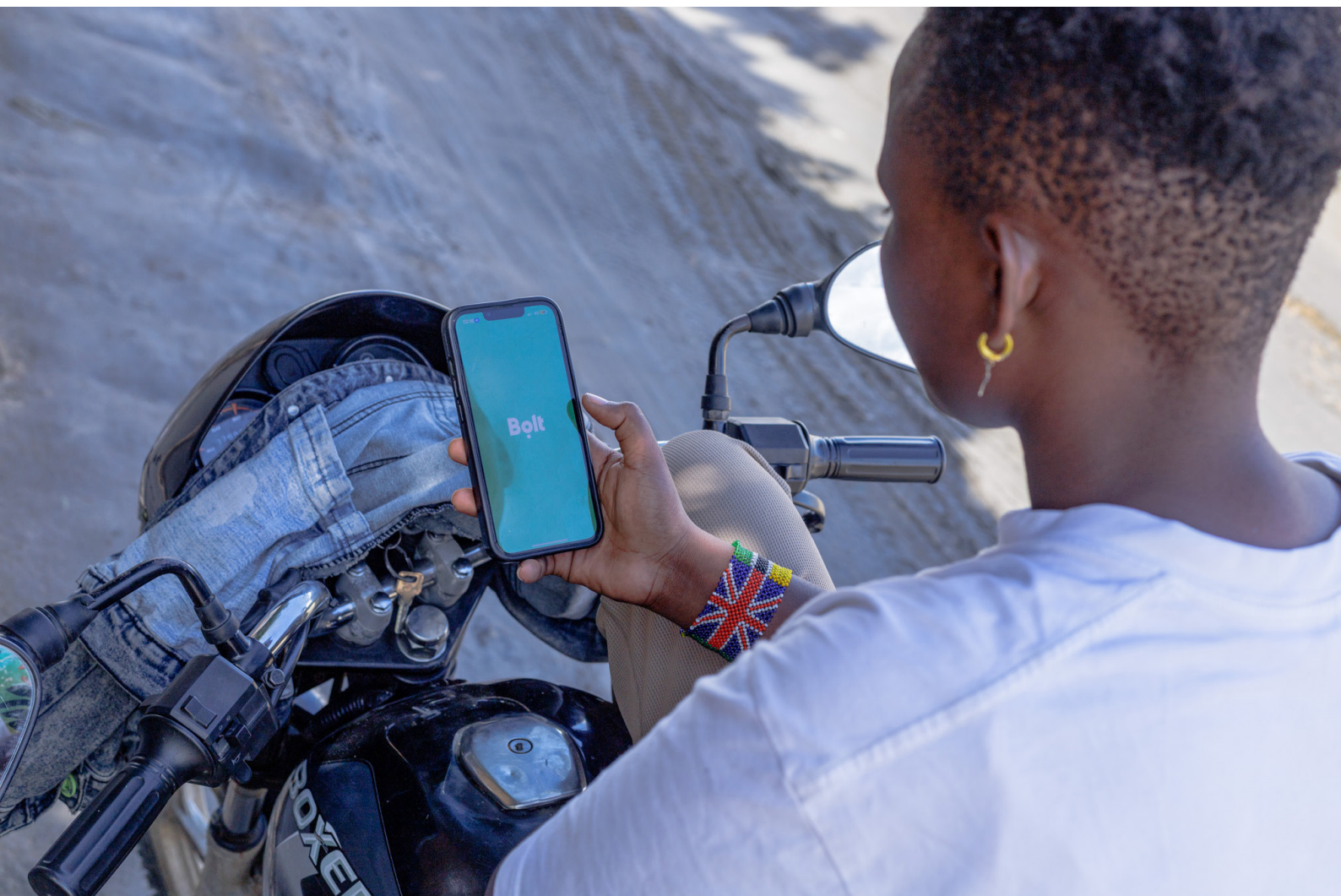
Section 3 goes on to explore alternative regulatory and organizational approaches to improve livelihoods and promote sustainable transport (3.4). It details bottom-up dynamics shaping semi-formal regulation through street governments and municipalities; it also explores how these intersect with top-down regulatory and organising efforts, warning of the risks posed by increasingly politicized and monetized driver associations at district and city levels. The analysis then advocates a more incremental approach to regulating moto-taxis, one that integrates national regulations with local, 'negotiated' planning strategies (see also section 2.4 and 4.3).

Finally, section 3.5 probes the specific challenges confronting women drivers. They are, if anything, more successful than men when it comes to securing a livelihood through moto-taxi work; yet they face various forms of discrimination, which all too often turn into gender-based violence. They are all but absent from larger associations and lack representation, sufficient policy support, or legal protections.

A fourth and final section then **summarises key findings** through a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). This style analysis helps identify possible reform alternatives as well as an 'urban reform coalition' capable of advancing them (Mitlin, 2023). The best way forward may involve, among other initiatives:

- Greater institutional coordination and respect for local government autonomy and innovations in planning practice;
- More *incremental and participatory* formalization and planning processes, which would align national regulation with locally ‘negotiated’ realities (see also Spooner et al. 2020)
- De-centring larger district- and city-level drivers’ associations in favour of more support for organizing through drivers’ parking area groups;
- Stricter regulation of emerging private sector stakeholders, especially asset-finance and platform companies
- Targeted support for women’s organising alongside a review of policy and legislation to protect the rights of informal economy workers, with specific attention to moto-taxi drivers and *women*;
- More inclusive infrastructure planning that caters for moto-taxis within the wider transport mix while preventing or compensating the (serial) displacement of informal economy workers.

The overarching aim, then, remains more sustainable, better integrated transport as well as equitable outcomes for moto-taxi drivers.



1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

Across Africa, the registered number of motorcycles has risen from an estimated 5 million in 2010 to 27 million in 2022, of which 80 percent are used as taxis or for deliveries (Bishop & Courtright, 2022, p. 5). In Tanzania, two- and three-wheeler moto-taxis—popularly known as *boda boda* and *bajaj*—started appearing only two decades ago. Yet as of 2020, there were an estimated 1,493,250 motorcycles operating countrywide (Bishop & Courtright, 2022, p. 108). Although estimates for Dar es Salaam vary, association leaders and local authority officials suggest there are over 200,000 moto-taxis in the city (Key Informant Interviews, 20 November 2023).

Opinions on moto-taxis remain divided. The sector is frequently associated—whether accurately or not—with increased traffic accidents, congestion, criminality, and urban disorder (Kuwanda, 2024; Wangari, 2022). At the same time, it is valued as a source of livelihoods and as a convenient form of transport (Andreasen & Møller-Jensen, 2016; Kinyondo, 2022). Whatever the prevailing view, though, current growth trends in Tanzania seem set to continue. Amidst rapid urbanization, the supply of moto-taxi drivers¹—and the demand for transport—will increase, likely irrespective of public transport projects like Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) (Chiu, 2022; World Population Review, 2024). There is also substantial new capital investment in motorcycles, be it in importation, assembly, finance, or various motorcycle-related

businesses, notably new fintech ventures and platform companies (Collord, 2024a; Fairwork, 2023a; Pollio et al., 2023). In 2022, Tanzania’s motorcycle market reached US\$260 million, and annual growth is projected at four percent in coming years (Tech-Sci, 2023).

The growth of moto-taxi work is, moreover, *not* an isolated phenomenon; rather, it reflects Dar es Salaam’s urban development writ-large, both its dynamism and its difficulties. The city is Tanzania’s commercial capital, accounting in 2017 for 17.3 percent of Tanzania’s total GDP (NBS, 2019). Yet it also faces challenges typical of ‘late urbanisation’, including labour precarity (Fox & Goodfellow, 2022; Gollin et al., 2016). The ‘vast majority’ of Dar’s 8.2 million residents earn a living in the informal economy, which constitutes 22.5 percent of regional GDP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2020, p. xii; World Population Review, 2024). Among informal businesses, 76.6 percent operate from non-permanent premises (United Republic of Tanzania, 2020, p. xii), like say, a moto-taxi stand in the street.

Since the 2010s, the Tanzanian government has sought to regulate moto-taxis as an emerging mode of ‘paratransit’ (Bishop & Amos, 2015).² However, amidst enforcement challenges, intra-government coordination issues, and shifting political priorities, the preferred regulatory approach has changed repeatedly. There are now renewed efforts under President Samia Suluhu Hassan to regulate and formalize moto-taxis, including through closer coordination with drivers’ associations and the introduction of Savings

¹ It is more conventional to refer to moto-taxi *riders*, but we refer to ‘drivers’ throughout this report. For one, in Swahili there is only one word for driver (*dereva*) used no matter what vehicle is being operated. Also, transport workers in Dar frequently refer to a common ‘driving work’ (*kazi ya udereva*) and describe complicated personal trajectories, working first as moto-taxi drivers then bus or truck drivers before sometimes reverting back to moto-taxi driving again. Finally, moto-taxi drivers bristle at the idea that they would be lesser or not included amongst other drivers operating larger vehicles.

² ‘Paratransit’ or sometimes ‘popular’ or ‘informal’ transport includes minibuses and moto-taxis with ‘flexible schedules, stops and routes, low levels of regulation over competition and formal business practices’ (Klopp et al., 2019, p. 2)

and Credit Co-operatives (SACCOS). Donors such as the World Bank and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) are also involved; for instance, JICA is exploring ways to integrate ‘paratransit’ alongside BRT in Dar es Salaam while the World Bank advocates new laws and regulations as part of an ‘integrated and sustainable transport’ project in Dodoma (World Bank, 2023a).

For now, though, one point remains clear; regulation of the fast-growing moto-taxi sector is in flux, raising pressing questions about how it could be managed more sustainably and equitably. Put differently, **how can moto-taxis be part of a ‘just city’ vision?** This question has at least **three subsidiary parts**: (1) How can moto-taxis best contribute to the **livelihoods** of low-income drivers; (2) How can they support an **integrated transport system** with limited adverse impacts, e.g., on road safety or congestion; and (3) What is the **political economy of reform?** Who are the key players influencing the sector, what are potential obstacles to more equitable reforms, and what might help strengthen a reform coalition to deliver better outcomes?

There is a growing body of research that speaks to these questions, including in Dar es Salaam (See for instance Bishop and Amos 2015; Kinyondo 2022; Andreasen and Møller-Jensen 2016; Francis et al. 2023; Sambaiga 2022). This report nevertheless offers additional, up-to-date insights regarding the political economy of reform. At the same time, it centres the question of livelihoods and work conditions, the thinking being that a ‘secure transport systems necessitate a more secure and better remunerated workforce’ (Rizzo, 2017, p. 110). As in, the experience and priorities of drivers can both inform more equitable reforms and improve their enforceability. Relatedly, drivers’ experience underscores—and can help address—inequalities within the sector. There is the challenge of unequally distributed incomes between formal, larger-scale investors and

drivers, operating mostly informally (Collord, 2024a; Diaz Olvera et al., 2020). There are also inequalities *among* drivers, for instance, between association leaders and ordinary drivers or between a majority male workforce and the small but growing number of women drivers (Mukwaya et al., 2022).

The report progresses as follows. After this introduction, the second section explores the history and political economy of the moto-taxi sector in Dar es Salaam. The analysis traces the emergence of moto-taxis as a self-regulating sector, the succession of government regulatory interventions that followed, and evolving forms of driver organising. Overall, it identifies **three key reform obstacles**: (1) **fragmentation** in governance structures, related intra-governmental coordination challenges, and the (re)centralization of control at national level; (2) **politicization**, shaped by the shifting electoral incentives and ideological outlooks of successive presidents and the ruling party, *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (CCM); and (3), despite official interest in participatory planning, a tendency towards **top-down engagement** with drivers’ associations, the aim being to reshape and control drivers’ organising efforts, harnessing them to advance state regulatory and political goals. Combined, these factors fuel ‘episodes’ of intensified enforcement followed by regulatory drift, which undermine the development of a more sustainable and equitable moto-taxi sector.³ Top-down state interventions also encourage an extractive, patronage politics. By contrast, where there have been improvements in moto-taxi regulation, these often emerged from a more *incremental and participatory* regulatory process (see also Spooner et al. 2020).

A third section then shifts focus, centring drivers’ own experience. It examines their current livelihoods and work conditions; it explores how they engage with state and private sector actors; and it probes the relationship between informal self-regulation and formal regulation, bottom-up and top-down

³ For further analysis of ‘episodic’ versus ‘persistent’ strategies of urban planning, regulation, and political control, plus their contrasting implications for urban development outcomes, see Goodfellow and Jackman (2023, pp. 247–249).

organising, as well as how private finance, SACCOS, and other forms of co-operatives are brought in to mediate these interactions. Throughout, the analysis identifies key challenges drivers face, conveys—in so far as possible—their priorities, and points towards possible alternative reform strategies. Crucially, it also draws out differences among drivers, including based on *gender*, and highlights the implications for equitable reform efforts.

A fourth and final section summarises key findings through a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). This style analysis helps identify possible reform alternatives as well as an ‘urban reform coalition’ capable of advancing them (Mitlin, 2023). The best way forward may involve, among other efforts: improved inter-government coordination, including more recognition and learning from local government initiatives; more *incremental and participatory* formalization and planning processes (see also Spooner et al. 2020); more localized support for organizing through drivers parking areas and related groups and less through district- or city-level drivers associations; stricter regulation of emerging private sector stakeholders, especially asset-finance and platform companies; bespoke strategies to support organising by women drivers and to develop policy and legislation to protect the rights of informal workers, with specific provisions for moto-taxi drivers and for *women*; and more inclusive urban infrastructure planning. The overarching aim, then, remains more sustainable, better integrated transport and equitable outcomes for moto-taxi drivers.

1.2 Study methodology

This report draws on qualitative and quantitative data gathered during several periods of fieldwork between August 2022 and April 2025.

Our research includes a survey of 150 moto-taxi drivers. The questionnaire incorpo-

rates both short- and long-answer questions, which provide additional qualitative data. Of our participants, 103 were men and randomly sampled; we interviewed two drivers per parking area and randomly selected parking areas from a mix of high- and low-income neighbourhoods across three of Dar es Salaam’s five municipalities.⁴ We interviewed a further 47 women, to our knowledge the largest sample of female drivers surveyed in Dar es Salaam. The motivation was to better understand gendered differences in drivers’ work conditions and thereby clarify what specific challenges women may face. That said, given women’s underrepresentation in the moto-taxi sector, we had to adjust our methodology and use purposive sampling. While we did encounter some women unplanned at a parking area, we relied primarily on snowballing techniques. We are grateful to the numerous drivers—women and men—who helped us identify and contact their fellow women workers.

In addition to the survey, we conducted qualitative interviews. These included work-life history interviews with drivers, of whom 11 were women. We also conducted semi-structured interviews with officials from local government authorities, the Land Transport Regulatory Authority, the Tanzania Co-operative Development Agency, commercial banks, donor agencies, moto-taxi association leaders, parking area leaders, drivers without leadership positions, and Street Chairpersons, among others. Our research also included participant observation. We spent time around parking areas and in association offices. We also attended a range of meetings, for instance, of drivers’ associations.

Finally, we complimented the original data collection effort with a thorough desk review of relevant secondary and grey literature, government documents, and the like.

⁴ The three municipalities were Ilala, Kinondoni, and Ubungo.

2. The political economy of *boda boda* and *bajaj* in Dar es Salaam: A historical perspective

This section examines the history and political economy of moto-taxis in Dar es Salaam. It retraces the chronology of regulatory, planning, and organizational changes affecting the sector. It further unpacks the actors, interests, and processes shaping this evolution. These actors and interests, moreover, span multiple levels; while our focus remains moto-taxis in Dar es Salaam, national and—in the case of donors—even transnational influences impact city-level developments in transport (Cirolia & Harber, 2022; Croese & Kombe, 2024; Goodfellow, 2022).

Our main findings are as follows. Since 2009, state-led regulatory and planning interventions at both national and city levels have followed an episodic pattern; new measures are introduced, and enforcement strengthened, only to lapse again until the launch of a fresh intervention (see also Goodfellow and Jackman 2023, 247–49). Within Dar es Salaam, incremental gains have been made, e.g., in the registration and regulation of parking areas. Yet, several challenges persist, limiting improvements in regulation and planning. These include: (1) fragmentation across multi-level governance structures and (re)centralization of control; (2) politicization of moto-taxis, especially along party-political lines; and (3) top-down engagement with poorly embedded drivers' associations, which aside other negative consequences, limits their effectiveness as partners in delivering sustainable regulation and planning.

The analysis proceeds in four parts, tracking: the emergence of a new self-regulating sector (2000–2010); the introduction of formal regulations and top-down organising (2010–2015); ongoing politicization, organisational

fragmentation, and regulatory drift (2015–2020); and finally, the latest efforts to re-regulate the sector (2020).

2.1 The arrival of a self-regulating sector (2000–2010)

Moto-taxis arrived in Tanzania after the country's transport sector had already undergone a transformation. Liberalization and privatization in the 1980s and 1990s saw a move from public to private provision of transport, increased congestion, informalization, and new forms of labour precarity and exploitation (Nyamsenda, 2021b; Rizzo, 2017; Sial, 2020). State efforts to reclaim regulatory control intensified in 2001 with the introduction of the Surface and Marine Transport Regulatory Authority (SUMATRA), which in 2019 split to form the Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LATRA) and its marine equivalent. There has also been renewed investment in formal transport planning, including repeat efforts in 2008 and again in 2018 to introduce an urban transport master plan for Dar es Salaam (JICA, 2018). However, both regulatory enforcement and planning implementation remain a challenge (Croese & Miyauchi, 2023; Rizzo, 2017, pp. 45–49).

Meanwhile, moto-taxis made their entrance, and in dramatic fashion. In the early 2000s, the presence of motorcycles in Tanzania was negligible. The number of registered vehicles only started to pick up around 2005 for two-wheelers (*boda boda*) and 2007 for three-wheelers (*bajaj*), after which point both rose rapidly. By the time SUMATRA first introduced moto-taxi regulations in 2010, *boda boda* numbers were already surpass-

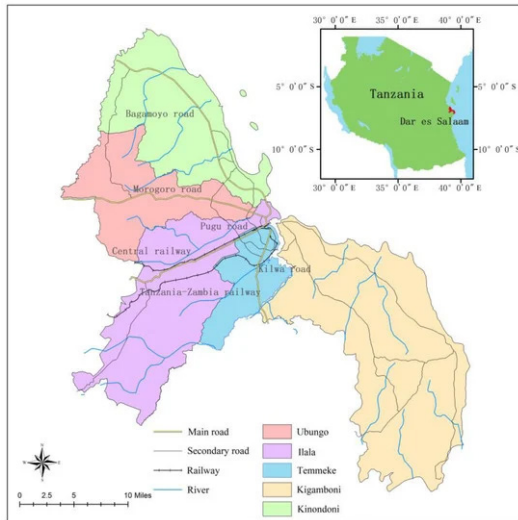


Figure1 - Dar es Salaam's Five Municipalities*

*In 2015, two additional municipalities—Ubungo and Kigamboni—were carved out of the prior three, resulting in the above map of five municipalities, each of which corresponds to a district: Ilala, Temeke, Kinondoni, Ubungo, and Kigamboni. Image source: Yuan et al. (2023).

ing 300,000 while *bajaj*—slower to catch on—were nearing 10,000 (Bishop & Amos, 2015, p. 16). A moderate estimate using data collected by the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) suggests that, by 2020, there were 1,493,250 moto-taxis; higher estimates put the number at closer two million (Bishop & Courtright, 2022, p. 108).⁵

At its inception, and to some extent still today, Tanzania's moto-taxi sector was self-regulating. As was true elsewhere in East Africa (Courtright, 2023; Ibrahim & Bize, 2018), drivers themselves invented the moto-taxi. In Dar es Salaam, some recall the early days when they had to convince would-be passengers to ride a *boda boda*; it was a new idea, and drivers had to work to build up a new culture (Key Informant Interviews, Dar es Salaam, 2023 and 2024). They also recall the gradual process of organising into *vijiwe*, or

parking areas. Some pioneers describe finding a promising location to park their vehicle and then welcoming other drivers and passengers alike. As the supply of drivers and passenger demand increased, these *vijiwe* became the focus of drivers' self-regulating efforts, which gave rise to diverse practices across the city. A common goal was—and is—to control *vijiwe* membership, in terms of both absolute numbers and the character of prospective new joiners. But procedures for exercising this control vary from parking area to parking area as do entrance fees, member identification and safety protocols, leadership structures, the frequency of members' meetings, the extent of group savings efforts, mutual aid, and more (see section 3.4).

2.2 Formal regulations and top-down organising (2010-2015)

Efforts to formally regulate the sector began with a 2009 amendment to the Transport Licensing Act (Cap 317) and, as briefly mentioned above, the 2010 Transport Licensing (Motorcycle and Tricycle) Regulations (SUMATRA, 2010; URT, 2009). The new regulations stipulated that, among other measures, moto-taxi operators had to apply for a road service licence and fulfil all eligibility requirements. These requirements included *joining a registered association*, an element that would prove key. Indeed, as is common elsewhere in Africa (Bähre, 2014; Fourchard, 2011; Goodfellow, 2015), the Tanzanian State has sought to *reshape—and control—drivers' self-regulating and organising efforts*, integrating them into its own regulatory strategy. While similar efforts date back to the one-party era,⁶ the attempt to regulate moto-taxis through associations began with the 2010 Regulations; since then, it has followed

⁵ Data on the supply of vehicles in the moto-taxi sector, and in paratransit more generally, is imprecise. The high levels of informality lead to conflicting figures depending on whether we look at tax records, transport licenses, or similar (Rizzo, 2017, p. 46). Most public bodies in Tanzania, whether LATRA or local authorities, rely on data from TRA. In interviews, however, officials working for Dar es Salaam municipalities suggested that the TRA data they were using likely still underestimated actual numbers or else was already out of date given the market's rapid growth (Key Informant Interview, Dar es Salaam, November 2023).

⁶ Several transport co-ops and associations were prominent under one-party rule (1965-1992). Tanzania Drivers Association (TDA), whose origins date back to the colonial period, was prominent among them. Although it is all but defunct today, its history—and how it was impacted by economic and political liberalization—underscores important continuities and change in state-labour relations within Tanzania's transport sector.

various permutations up to the present, profoundly impacting the moto-taxi organising landscape in the process. The intensity of enforcement efforts has also fluctuated, resulting in an overall ‘episodic’ approach to regulation.

In Dar es Salaam, the emergence of larger-scale, formally registered moto-taxi associations was a direct consequence of state efforts to implement the 2010 Regulations. In contrast to the more bottom-up, largely informal groupings that coalesced around individual parking areas (see also section 3.4), the larger associations were initiated top-down. Their leaders recall how, around 2012, SUMATRA directed that there should be an association in *each district or municipality*, of which there were then three in Dar: Ilala, Temeke and Kinondoni (Key Informant Interviews, Dar es Salaam, 2024) (see Figure 1). Presidentially appointed District Commissioners (DCs) led the process while police convened and oversaw the first elections. Newly elected interim leaders were then called in to speak with SUMATRA officials. They were also instructed on how to register their associations: CHAWAPILA (Ilala), UWAPITE (Temeke), and CHABBOWIKI (Kinondoni). The three associations were formally registered in 2014.

This registration roughly coincided with SUMATRA’s launch of renewed regulatory enforcement efforts. By 2014, the number of SUMATRA road service licenses issued under the 2010 Regulations accounted for ‘only a fraction’ of registered motorcycles in Tanzania. Meanwhile, the number of road traffic accidents involving motorcycles was on the rise. Then, in early September 2014, the SUMATRA Director General announced ‘sweeping measures against *boda boda* owners and riders throughout the country’ (Bishop & Amos, 2015, pp. 24–25). As part of these measures, all drivers were pressured to join a newly formalized district association (Key Informant Interviews, moto-taxi asso-

ciation leaders, Dar es Salaam, 2023 and 2024).⁷ Without association membership, drivers could not get their SUMATRA licence, and thus risked falling afoul of the ‘sweeping’ enforcement (see also drivers’ testimony cited in Bishop and Amos 2015, 31). Associations were meant to help with regulation and planning in other ways too. Working in tandem with the Dar es Salaam Regional Traffic Officer, leaders mobilised drivers to attend road traffic safety trainings (Key Informant Interviews, Dar es Salaam, 2023 and 2024). They were then meant to monitor whether drivers were fulfilling the requirements of a road service licence, for instance, wearing a helmet. They were also meant to participate in the identification and registration of formal parking areas.

2.3 Politicization, organisational fragmentation, and regulatory drift (2015–2020)

Despite what might seem like well-intentioned plans, the enforcement drive—and the involvement of associations—soon faced challenges. Drivers complained of poor transparency and suspected embezzlement by association leaders (Bishop & Amos, 2015, p. 31; Kinyondo, 2022). They also recall repressive treatment at the hands of police (Key Informant Interviews, Dar es Salaam, 2023 and 2024). In Dar es Salaam, a ban on moto-taxis entering the Central Business District (CBD) was a further source of tensions. Finally, leading into the October 2015 general elections, associations and drivers became more politicized. While the district associations in Dar aligned with the ruling party, CCM, many drivers rallied behind the opposition, prompted in part by their recent experience of strict enforcement measures (Key Informant Interviews, Dar es Salaam, November 2023). Even today, drivers remember Jakaya Kikwete’s presidency (2005–2015) as ‘trouble’ (*shida*). In a not unusual testimony, one driver recalled how he was jailed for two weeks after entering the CBD; he then paid Tsh350,000

⁷ On the timing of association registration, CHABBOWIKI’s registration certificate, for instance, is dated 23 October 2024, indicating that registration occurred shortly after the SUMATRA Director General’s announcement. This suggests that the registration was itself expedited as part of the enforcement drive.

to retrieve his confiscated bike, although the receipt he received was for just Tsh50,000 (Key Informant Interview, March 2024).

Amidst this growing politicization and controversy, top-down efforts to organise and regulate moto-taxis took a new turn. According to association leaders, these changes were partly motivated by fears within CCM that—after Dar es Salaam swung to the opposition in 2015—the ruling party needed to rebuild support among drivers (Key Informant Interview, Dar es Salaam, 14 November 2023).⁸ At the same time, these fresh interventions led to fragmentation amongst moto-taxi associations while doing little to improve regulation or planning.

Already in late 2015, only a year since CHABBOWIKI was first registered in Kinondoni, the then Kinondoni District Commissioner, Paul Makonda, arrived at the Makumbusho Bus Terminal, identified the chairman of a parking area there, Michael Massawe, and began working with him. The aim was, first, to register drivers in a new ‘database’, a process with which a private company was also contracted to help. A second objective was to start *another* association in Kinondoni (Key Informant Interviews, Dar es Salaam, 2023 and 2024). In March 2016, when newly elected President, John Pombe Magufuli (2015–2021), appointed Makonda Dar es Salaam Regional Commissioner, Makonda’s *boda boda* organising project also expanded city-wide, matching his new position. By mid-September 2016, the Association of Motorcycle Drivers and Owners Dar es Salaam Region—known by its Swahili acronym, CMPD⁹—was formally registered (on CMPD, see also Kinyondo, 2022, pp. 76–77). A few days later, Makonda mobilised drivers to attend a launch event where he unveiled—amidst much fanfare—the new association

(Global TV Online, 2016). He also launched new uniforms for drivers, each of whom was to be issued with individual drivers’ unique identification number.

CMPD did later help mediate between government and drivers on some issues, for instance, negotiating to reduce the area of the CBD from which drivers were prohibited (Kinyondo, 2022, p. 76). CMPD also became active in various business ventures, partnering with banks to offer loans to drivers ((Key Informant Interviews, 2023 and 2024; Kinyondo, 2022, p. 76). However, other formal regulatory and planning efforts foundered. The new uniforms and identification numbers were never effectively rolled out. The existence of a driver database is also uncertain.

With time, the role of associations as well as their structure became increasingly unclear. In 2017, SUMATRA removed the requirement that drivers join a registered association to access a licence (SUMATRA, 2017); the fear was that *leaders were extorting drivers and discouraging them from applying for licences* (Key Informant Interview, LATRA official, 3 August 2023). Meanwhile, in Dar es Salaam, district-level association leaders reported tensions with the newly introduced CMPD, which seemed to duplicate and overshadow their own activities (Key Informant Interviews, Dar es Salaam, 2023 and 2024). Responding to these concerns, Makonda intervened again in 2018, this time calling on the various associations—including CMPD—to unite in another city-wide organisation, this time a federation (Key Informant Interview, Dar es Salaam, November 2023). SHIVYA-MAPIDA¹⁰—or Shirikisho (Federation) as it is more popularly known—was thus registered, although it only became prominent around 2021, on which more below.

⁸ This analysis accords with the more general observation that CCM views Dar es Salaam as strategically important to its wider economic and political interests (Goodfellow & Jackman, 2023; Nyamsenda & Colford, 2023).

⁹ CMPD stands for *Chama Cha Madereva na Wamiliki wa Pikipiki Mkoa wa Dar es Salaam*.

¹⁰ SHIVYAMAPIDA stands for *Shirikisho la Vyama vya Madereva wa Pikipiki na Bajaj Dar es Salaam*, or Federation of Associations of two- and three-wheel motorcycles Dar es Salaam.

In brief, a combination of politicization, organizational fragmentation, and poor coordination undercut early efforts to regulate and plan Dar es Salaam's moto-taxi sector. Despite these challenges, some progress was made. Drivers gradually secured more formal recognition for parking areas, notably through bottom-up negotiations with street and municipal authorities (see also section 3.4). CMPD did mediate in drivers' interests on some issues. A subsidized driving and safety training programme was also well received by drivers (Focus Group Discussion, August 2022). Amidst the Covid pandemic and with the 2020 elections looming, drivers welcomed Makonda's decision to lift entirely the ban on moto-taxis entering Dar es Salaam's CBD (Uhuru, 2020). They also celebrated President Magufuli's pledge to reduce motorcycle fines for road traffic offenses from Tsh30,000—the same as for cars—to Tsh10,000 and to limit penalties to one fine per traffic stop instead of cumulative charges (Key Informant Interviews, Dar es Salaam, 2023 and 2024).¹¹

However, the overall regulatory environment remained messy and unpredictable. As one Municipal Business Officer put it, Tanzania's challenge is 'implementation zero, politics plenty' (Key Informant Interview, Dar es Salaam, 6 March 2024).

2.4 A new regulatory strategy, a new planning effort (2020)

Following the 2020 elections and the transition from President Magufuli to President Samia Suluhu Hassan, regulatory changes continued. An initially punitive approach under President Samia later shifted to a now ongoing re-regulation of moto-taxis. This effort included renewed collaboration with

drivers' associations, the registration of new Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOS), and elements of a more participatory approach to parking area planning. Aspects of this new approach *could* inform future best practice; however, persistent political and administrative challenges risk perpetuating the cycle of 'episodic' regulatory interventions, with further changes after the 2025 elections.

2.4.1 Suluhu Hassan's early presidency: From crackdown to conciliation

In March 2021, shortly after being re-elected for a second term, President Magufuli died in office, and his erstwhile Vice President, Samia Suluhu Hassan, succeeded him as President (2021—). This succession very soon brought significant changes for Dar es Salaam's informal economy workers, including moto-taxi drivers.

Over the course of his—often controversial—presidency, Magufuli had adopted an increasingly 'populist' attitude towards *wanyonge*, the poor or downtrodden (Shivji, 2021). His approach included greater tolerance towards street vendors and other informal economy workers (George et al., 2023; Nyamsenda, 2018; Steiler & Nyirenda, 2021). Among drivers, the lifting of the ban on moto-taxis operating in the CBD, the reduction in the cost of fines for traffic offenses, and a reported reduction in the frequency of traffic stops and police harassment all contributed to a perception of Magufuli as relatively 'caring' (Key Informant Interviews, 2023 and 2024; Focus Group Discussions, August 2022).¹² However, larger and more formal business operators were increasingly concerned about congestion and unfair competition (George et

¹¹ President Magufuli announced this change, although given his early death in office, it was implemented under his successor.

¹² Makonda's overtures to drivers also reflected this conciliatory politics. For instance, when addressing drivers at the September 2016 public meeting, he acknowledged how they are pushed into the moto-taxi sector due to 'life's hardships' (*ugumu wa maisha*) (Global TV Online, 2016). He then called on drivers' and government to 'listen to each other', 'encourage each other', 'support each other', and similar. He also insisted that 'laws must align with the environment in which a person works', enabling each individual to get what they deserve and to feel 'proud' when obeying the law. Finally, in a manner typical of RCs, DCs, and other presidential appointees, he emphasised that he had the direct support of the Prime Minister and of President Magufuli.

al., 2023).

After taking office, President Samia soon reversed Magufuli's approach, rebalancing power within CCM, abandoning her predecessor's 'populism', and at city-level, advocating urban renewal and 'cleanup' (Nyamsenda & Collord, 2023). In May 2021, she appointed a new Regional Commissioner for Dar es Salaam, Amos Makalla (Owere, 2021).¹³ Makalla then launched a city-wide—and later country-wide—campaign to evict vendors and other informal workers seen as operating from the street without proper recognition (Nyamsenda, 2021a). A ban on moto-taxi drivers circulating in the Dar es Salaam CBD was also mooted.

However, concerns were rising within CCM regarding the potentially negative political consequences of these measures, particularly amidst an apparent fall in the popularity of Samia's government (Afrobarometer, 2021, 2023). Moto-taxi drivers themselves also protested—marching on the CCM Headquarters in Dar es Salaam—while Shirikisho leaders recall advocating against the renewed prohibition (Key Informant Interviews & Observation, August 2022, January 2025). In April 2022, a CCM MP moved a motion in Parliament to debate moto-taxis, noting, '[...] whenever you go to your constituency, you are welcomed by a group of youths riding *boda bodas* and in other areas, we seriously depend on them.' He then added, 'In Dar es Salaam, however, there has been a lot of uncertainty surrounding this group' (William, 2022). Ultimately, following a ministerial intervention, the moto-taxi ban was dropped.

2.4.2 The new reform agenda: Actors and interests

This change coincided with renewed efforts to formally regulate and plan the moto-taxi sector in Dar es Salaam and across Tanzania. We begin by reviewing the diverse actors and interests involved across different levels of government, highlighting the city's fragmented governance and coordination challenges—a theme revisited later. The following two subsections then assess both the promising and problematic aspects of reform efforts, which remain ongoing as of April 2025.

Among the key actors at **national level**, there are CCM and CCM politicians, who like other incumbents in the region, have identified moto-taxi drivers as an important 'group' to win over, mobilising them especially around elections (Agbiboa, 2022; Goodfellow & Titeca, 2012; Mukwaya et al., 2022). Also at national level, there are a range of concerned ministries and regulatory authorities, most notably the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) and the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT). Under MoWT sits the Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LATRA), which replaced SUMATRA in 2019. LATRA has been especially preoccupied with issuing road service licenses to moto-taxis, a significant source of revenue for the Authority.¹⁴ Also under MoWT sits the Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS) while, following its creation in 2017, the Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (TARURA) sits under PO-RALG. TANROADS manages trunk and regional road networks while TARURA manages district roads, although in practice, the boundary between their respective mandates

¹³ Paul Makonda resigned as RC in July 2020 to contest in the CCM parliamentary primaries, where he was unsuccessful (The Citizen, 2020). Magufuli then appointed Abubakar Kunenge, whom Makalla later replaced.

¹⁴ The number of licenses issued for moto-taxis in FY 2022-2023 constituted 90 percent of all licenses issued by LATRA to private hire vehicles (LATRA, 2024, p. 8). What is more, private hire licenses constituted over 22.5 percent of total issued licenses, meaning that moto-taxi alone accounted for 20 percent of licenses in FY 2022-2023 with significant potential for further improvements in revenue collection. Indeed, the number of licenses issued in FY 2022-2023 was up by 38 percent year-on-year for two-wheelers, an encouraging sign from LATRA's perspective; however, relative to the estimated total fleet of *boda boda* operating in Tanzania, it remained small at only 31,937.

can blur (Kinyondo, 2022; World Bank, 2021, 2023a).

Descending from national to **city-level**, Dar es Salaam Regional and District Commissioners alongside municipal authorities and the police focus on a mix of issues. Key objectives include improving security, reducing congestion, and maximizing revenue collection, notably through municipal parking fees. Alongside these state actors, there are private sector interests—for instance, asset-finance companies and commercial banks—as well as drivers' associations, who are to varying degrees incorporated into ongoing state-led regulatory reforms. Finally, at the most localized or '**street**' level, there is another diverse mix of actors, not least street chairpersons, *polisi wa jamii*, i.e. informal militias, and drivers themselves, their parking areas, and associated groups.

Overall, Dar es Salaam's governance structures are **dominated by national government** (Babeiya, 2015; Nyamsenda & Collord, 2023). As noted earlier, RCs and DCs are presidential appointees, as are Municipal Executive Directors (MEDs), who lead a team of professionals appointed by PO-RALG. Despite—or partly because of—this national dominance, city-level governance structures are also **highly fragmented** (Ibid). Since the abolition of the Dar es Salaam City Council in 2021, there is limited coordination across the five municipalities.¹⁵ When it comes to launching urban reform initiatives, RCs, DCs and MEDs all take their lead from the President's Office but, as we shall see, not necessarily with the same focus or emphasis. Finally, local initiatives may become misaligned with a fast-evolving national agenda. Regarding **Dar's transport governance** specifically, national regulatory agencies—

LATRA, TANROADS, and TARURA—remain 'uncoordinated' and often exacerbate fragmented city-level governance (Cirolia & Harber, 2022; World Bank, 2023a, p. 7). Though plans for a Dar es Salaam Urban Transport Authority (DUTA) exist—intended to improve coordination in transport planning (Kumar & Angarwal, 2013)—they remain unrealised (Cirolia & Harber, 2022, p. 2441).¹⁶ Meanwhile, Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit Agency (DART), established in 2007 to oversee BRT, has a narrow mandate and reports to PO-RALG, reinforcing 'centralized metropolitan governance' (Klopp et al., 2019, p. 22). This leaves an institutional gap in city-level transport planning. One partial solution is the Road Safety Committees (*Baraza la Usalama Barabarani*), which operate at national and regional levels, including Dar es Salaam region. These committees bring together otherwise disparate transport stakeholders—RCs, DCs, MPs, Municipal Executive Directors, police, and regional regulatory agency directors. Historically, they have played a role in paratransit regulation and feature transport association leaders among their members.

A final set of actors—**donors**—are left straddling the national and city levels, although in practice, they reinforce the dominance of the centre (Cirolia & Harber, 2022; Croese & Kombe, 2024). The Japanese International Co-operation Agency (JICA) and World Bank with its large urban development portfolio have been influential in Dar es Salaam's transport development, especially BRT expansion. While they previously overlooked paratransit, especially moto-taxis, this is beginning to change.

¹⁵ Ilala Municipality was elevated to the nominal status of DCC but does not replicate the prior coordinating functions of the old, city-wide DCC, notably in transport planning (Key Informant Interview, Dar es Salaam, 2022; Nyamsenda & Collord, 2023)

¹⁶ There are renewed plans to establish DUTA as part of the World Bank-funded extension of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) (World Bank, 2023b); however, it would sit under PO-RALG and not under DCC, as initially planned in the 2008 Dar es Salaam Transport Master Plan (Cirolia & Harber, 2022, p. 2441; JICA, 2008). This change is in keeping with Tanzania's tendency to centralize political control, a tendency that the World Bank may exacerbate (Croese & Kombe, 2024).

2.4.3 Positive features: A more participatory approach?

Despite institutional fragmentation and coordination challenges, recent regulatory and planning efforts in the moto-taxi sector include several promising developments. Notably, some have emerged through localized experimentation, countering the above-noted tendency towards centralized governance.

Certain improvements are ‘soft’; they do not involve regulatory changes but are notable, nonetheless. State actors, from President Samia on down, have acknowledged and challenged the stigma often associated with moto-taxi work (Key Informant Interviews and Observation, Dar es Salaam, 2023 and 2024). Officials now use new language, referring to drivers as ‘transport officers’ and their parking areas as *vituo* (stations) instead of the colloquial *vijiwe* (literally ‘stones’). They also comment on drivers’ contribution to society—providing popular transport—and to their families as breadwinners.

There are also more tangible signs of this de-stigmatization. Drivers report a decline in excessive police stops and fines (see section 3). Meanwhile, in planning and regulation, state officials are experimenting with a more *participatory approach*, particularly through LATRA and some Dar es Salaam municipalities and DCs’ offices. Improved coordination between LATRA and municipalities has further strengthened these efforts.

In this vein, **Ilala Municipality**—driven largely by the Ilala DC, Edward Mpongolo—started involving drivers in planning new parking areas around 2023. Authorities also increasingly recognized the importance of locating parking areas ‘where there are people,’ rather than in remote locations (Key Informant Interview, 6 March 2023). While top-level Shirikisho leaders advocated this approach, it proceeded through more *bottom-up* consul-

tations involving parking area chairpersons, street and ward officials, municipal business officers, and police. In the CBD, where there were previously few recognised parking areas,¹⁷ this process led to the creation of 37 new *vituo* (stations), most of which formalized previously informal sites.¹⁸

Ilala DC and municipal officials envision a ‘win-win’ arrangement (Key Informant Interviews, Dar es Salaam, 2023 and 2024). For drivers, registration provides a secure workspace, protecting against evictions; confers a sense of respectability as ‘transport officers’; entitles parking area members to register their own associations; and grants access to various loan schemes. The Municipality has also pledged infrastructure improvements, for instance, building shelters over parking areas. In return, the Municipality benefits from more orderly streets and reduced congestion. It also aims to identify ‘legitimate’ drivers—as opposed to would-be ‘criminal’ elements—through a database of all registered parking area members. Finally, it hopes to increase revenue from annual parking fees—Tsh36,000 per moto-taxi. In 2024, Ilala officials estimated that 70,000 moto-taxis were operating in the district; full tax compliance could generate TSh2.52bn annually, or nearly \$1m (Key Informant Interview, Dar es Salaam, 6 March 2024).

LATRA, meanwhile, is experimenting with its own version of a ‘give and take’ regulatory approach (Key Informant Interviews, 2023 and 2024). The Authority is again working through regional- and district-level drivers’ associations; however, its aim is for these associations to register affiliated Savings and Credit Co-operatives (SACCOS). The SACCOS idea is inspired both by local experimentation in one of Tanzania’s secondary cities—Moshi, the capital of Kilimanjaro Region—and by recent regulatory changes in Kenya, (Key Informant Interviews, LATRA, 2023, 2024, and 2025; see also Bwana 2022; Saya 2023;

¹⁷ The exceptions involved parking areas for *bajaj* used by drivers with disabilities. These *bajaj* operate both as private hires and with something akin to *daladala* (city bus) routes between the Kigamboni ferry and Kariakoo.

¹⁸ These approved parking areas did involve some adjustments but minor, e.g., drivers outside a hospital being asked to park not at the gate but along the wide pavement just opposite.

Kenya News Agency 2022; The Co-operator 2024).

LATRA's plan has some appeal, at least in theory. SACCOS are more strictly regulated than associations and, it is thought, could help avoid past abuses. Once registered, drivers' SACCOS will accept tenders from both LATRA and local authorities to collect license and parking fees in exchange for a commission, i.e., 20 percent of the fees collected will go into the SACCOS' own savings. These savings can then be lent to members at low interest rates or be reinvested in other co-operative venture. As one LATRA official put it, 'We are moving from the position of regulator to economic facilitator' (Key Informant Interview, Dar es Salaam, 3 August 2023). Whereas in the past, 'our regulation was in the form of confrontation', where police might arrest drivers to compel them to pay fees, 'now we are trying to find another approach where we can partner with them.' (Ibid). By 'partnering', the hope is that issues of compliance 'will be automatically solved' (Ibid).

In 2023, LATRA amended regulations to allow 'authorized agents,' such as a cooperative society, to issue licenses on its behalf (LATRA, 2023). It then piloted this model in Moshi where, as noted above, the SACCOS idea was part conceived. Understanding this *local context*—detailed in Text Box 1—is key to grasping both the incentives behind the SACCOS model and the factors contributing to the Moshi pilot's qualified success. Citing this success, LATRA is expanding the model countrywide (LATRA News, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c).

In Dar es Salaam, LATRA and the Ilala DC Mpongolo have coordinated with Shirikisho leaders to drive the SACCOS plan forward. In May 2024, with the assistance of an Ilala District Co-operative Officer—who operates under the Tanzania Co-operative Development Commission (TCDC)—leaders began preparing a constitution and elected an interim SACCOS board. In early April 2025, their

new co-op—MAUPIDA SACCOS Ltd.¹⁹—was formally registered. At the time of writing, leaders were on the point of agreeing tenders with LATRA and the Municipality. MAUPIDA will collect LATRA license fees from moto-taxi drivers—retaining 20 percent for their savings—and municipal parking fees, retaining 10 percent.

In sum, there has been a move towards de-stigmatizing drivers and adopting more participatory planning, ideally aligning the interests of municipalities, LATRA, drivers' associations, and drivers. Despite Tanzania's tendency towards more 'centralized governance', recent innovations have relied on the expertise of mid- and local-level officials as well as locally negotiated planning with drivers and their associations (see Text Box 1; on 'negotiated planning', see also Cirolia & Berrisford, 2017).

¹⁹ Maafisa wa Usafirishaji wa Pikipiki Dar es Salaam, or Motorcycle Transport Officers Dar es Salaam.

The Moshi experiment: Negotiating local transport planning (Text Box 1)

The SACCOS idea was initially a response to transport challenges in Moshi town. It also relies on the local embeddedness of the city-level drivers' association as well as LATRA's coordination with other city-level authorities, notably through the Road Safety Committee for Kilimanjaro region.

By the late 2010s, Moshi was experiencing routine clashes between drivers of bajaj (three-wheelers) and daladalas (city buses) after bajaj started to imitate daladalas; rather than waiting for passengers at parking areas, bajaj were following daladala routes, boarding passengers as they went. This practice violates official regulations for bajaj, and LATRA first responded with strict enforcement measures. However, local LATRA officials later observed that bajaj were more popular and were effectively outcompeting dalas, who have all but disappeared in Moshi town. LATRA's attention then turned to regulating bajaj, albeit in a locally 'negotiated' fashion given the inconsistency with official regulations.

To achieve this end, regional LATRA officials collaborate with the association CWBK,²⁰ first registered in 2013 during the initial LATRA attempt to regulate moto-taxis through their associations (see section 2.2). CWBK oversees the new bajaj routes—or 'zones' as they are called in Moshi. First established in its current form around 2021, the zone system works as follows. CWBK leaders assign bajaj drivers to a particular zone, although there does appear to be some scope for negotiation. In each zone there are 'barriers', points that only drivers in that zone will pass on their way to the outskirts of town. CWBK hires barrier guards to stand by the roadside; these guards (a) keep unauthorized drivers out of the zone while (b) collecting Tsh500 per day from authorised drivers. The money—the weekly accounts for which are taped to the wall of the CWBK offices—is then used to pay the barrier guards and sundry expenses. The rest goes into a mutual aid fund for drivers, who receive support in 'emergencies' (dharura), e.g., accidents or similar.

This system has its disadvantages. It is arguably a top-down imposition; after assuming his post in 2019, the current Kilimanjaro LATRA Regional Director 'broke up' rival groups 'with bad willingness and negative attitude to the sector' while elevating CWBK as a 'platform between [drivers] and government'. Downward accountability is, in turn, a concern. Drivers are not formal 'members' of CWBK, and CWBK leaders allocate mutual aid funds at their discretion, depending on drivers' 'good standing'. According to the accounting for one week-long collection period, only 15 percent of funds collected returned to drivers as mutual aid, albeit largely because pay for barrier guards takes up the lion's share.

Despite potential accountability challenges, the zone system does enjoy a degree of legitimacy among bajaj drivers. While the Tsh500 payment was initially a 'challenge', the system now operates smoothly. Drivers appreciate that they are permitted to operate like dalas without hostile regulatory enforcement, and they cite examples of fellow drivers being helped through CWBK funds. The zone system is also thought to improve security and the overall image of the sector; all drivers are known and, if a passenger loses something or is otherwise abused, it is straightforward to follow up.

The SACCOS idea germinated along with this zone system. CWBK leaders claim that they were looking for additional ways to support drivers, particularly in accessing motorcycle loans. LATRA officials, meanwhile, wanted to issue more road service licenses but without triggering renewed confrontations with drivers; they wanted to work through 'diplomacy' and 'partnership'

20 CWBK is the Swahili acronym for Association of Motorcycle Owners and Drivers Kilimanjaro Region.

rather than ‘enforcement’. LATRA therefore spearheaded a plan to collaborate with CWBK. Some 68 drivers attended a three-week co-operative training course through the Institute for Continuing Co-operative Education (ICCE), one of 13 ICCE branches affiliated with the Moshi Co-operative University (MoCU), a valuable institution rooted in Tanzania’s long history of co-operative organising.²¹ LATRA also used the regional Road Safety Committee to coordinate with city authorities, the police, RC and DC, municipal officials, TRA, MPs, and others.

These efforts led, in 2023, to the registration of a new CWBK-affiliated SACCOS, Kilimanjaro Bajaj and Boda Boda Transporters (Kibabot) SACCOS. In May and August 2024, LATRA and Moshi Municipality authorized Kibabot to collect licence and parking fees. Since then, Kibabot’s ‘licence officers’ have used custom apps for registration with all payments made via mobile money. Funds go directly to LATRA and the Municipality before Kibabot is remitted its 20 percent commission. LATRA officials report a sharp increase in issued licences—about 1,200 in the first 10 months of Kibabot’s operations as an ‘authorized agent’. For its part, Kibabot is still navigating regulatory hurdles to secure a Bank of Tanzania (BoT) license permitting the SACCOS to start lending. However, its tenders from LATRA and the Municipality have allowed it to accumulate savings to meet BoT’s core capital requirements. Once its first audit by the Co-operative Audit and Supervision Corporation (COASCO) is completed around May 2025, it expects to begin lending to drivers.

As of March 2025, Kibabot appears to be operating transparently and with at least the tacit consent of drivers. This may be a promising start. However, the SACCOS’ long-term success remains uncertain. Two key challenges remain.

First, despite ostensibly organising both bajaj and boda boda drivers, CWBK and Kibabot are well-known only among bajaj drivers, and this because of their role overseeing the system of zones and mutual aid contributions. By contrast, most boda boda drivers are not familiar with either organisation, something that association leaders readily acknowledge. Boda boda parking areas in Moshi do have chairpersons who are in touch with CWBK and are called on to attend Kibabot meetings; however, parking area chairpersons themselves do not express strong ties. Moreover, chairpersons argue that, if it wants to build up its co-operative membership, then Kibabot needs to be more present on the ground, routinely sending organisers to talk to and build trust with drivers at their parking areas.²²

More generally, Kibabot needs to strengthen its relationship with members. While its partnership with CWBK has helped recruit Bajaj drivers, member engagement remains low. Kibabot claims to have some 60 members—again, mostly bajaj drivers, but few have purchased the required 50 shares for full membership (Tsh10,000 per share, totalling Tsh500,000). This is not entirely Kibabot’s fault. Many drivers are hesitant to invest in a new SACCOS without guaranteed access to loans while it builds capital. Once licensed by the Bank of Tanzania, however, Kibabot may be able to lend more quickly and generously than typical low-income SACCOS, supported by licensing revenue under LATRA’s envisioned ‘win-win’ model. Nonetheless, Kibabot must also promote democratic governance in line with cooperative principles, ensuring member participation and leadership accountability—a crucial but challenging task, especially given the extractive tendencies of transport associations in other African, including Tanzanian, cities (see sections 2.4.4 and 3.4).

²¹ For more on MoCU and its history, see: https://www.mocu.ac.tz/mocu-4__trashed/about-mocu (Accessed 30 November 2024).

²² Note that this view is consistent with well-established principles of effective community and social movement organising.

Despite the challenges ahead, Kibabot SACCOS remains an interesting experiment. While still shaped by top-down state interventions, it has evolved along with a locally negotiated system for regulating bajaj transport in Moshi. It also affords drivers a degree of security—won through compliance with licencing requirements—and the prospect of low-interest loans. A critical analysis of future developments is needed, but knee-jerk pessimism is not. There is room to appreciate a locally innovated compromise, particularly if Kibabot can leverage ties with bajaj drivers to become a more democratic, engaged co-operative.

Whatever the (qualified) success may be in Moshi, though, important questions remain: Can the Moshi model travel to other cities in Tanzania, including Dar es Salaam? What local adaptations are needed to make it viable across diverse urban contexts?

**Note on sources: This section relies on semi-structured interviews with Kilimanjaro regional LATRA officials, MoCU co-operative trainers, CWBK and Kibabot leaders, the Kibabot secretary, co-operative manager, and license officers, boda boda and bajaj drivers, and barrier supervisors, who oversee bajaj zones day-to-day. Various LATRA, CWBK, and Kibabot documents were also consulted. Data was collected in April 2024 and March 2025.*

2.4.4 Remaining challenges

Despite the potential benefits of recent planning and regulatory efforts, they also face significant challenges, nationally and in Dar es Salaam. As in past regulatory ‘episodes’, potential ‘spoilers’ include: (1) fragmented governance and the trend towards (re)centralization of control; (2) politicization; and (3) top-down engagement with drivers’ associations, and now SACCOS. Another cross-cutting challenge is the tendency to implement reform rapidly and at scale without investing in the gradual, *context-sensitive*, and more genuinely participatory processes needed for lasting change (Spooner et al., 2020).

1. Fragmented governance structures

Fragmented governance and poor coordination at all levels risks exacerbating planning and regulatory inconsistencies (see also Kinondo, 2022, p. 74; Lindell et al., 2019; Lund, 2006). While not exhaustive, we illustrate these coordination challenges through recent examples from national, city, sub-city, and street levels. We then assess donor-funded urban transport initiatives aimed at strengthening moto-taxi regulation and planning. Though not without merit, these efforts risk reinforcing central government dominance; yet, what is needed is more genuine coordination between central authorities and—where successful—locally ‘negotiated’ planning solutions.

At **national level**, coordination issues are already affecting LATRA’s SACCOS plans. Whereas the Authority’s Moshi pilot was tightly coordinated and context-sensitive (see Text Box 1), the same cannot be said of its nationwide expansion. As a result, LATRA’s rationale for promoting SACCOS risks being overshadowed by competing interests while its capacity to implement is also impaired. LATRA has secured support from key national actors, including PO-RALG, which is actively encouraging RCs and DCs to establish boda boda and bajaj SACCOS; however, PO-RALG’s backing appears driven more by pre-election efforts to mobilize drivers—e.g., with promises of no-interest loans—than by long-term transport planning objectives (Observation, July 2024; Key Informant Interviews, November 2024). Meanwhile, LATRA could engage *more* with Tanzania’s co-operative development institutions (see also section 4). Although involved, district-level co-operative development officers have expressed concerns at being asked to register SACCOS quickly (Key Informant Interview, March 2024). Moreover, whereas the Moshi Co-operative University (MoCU), through its Institute for Continuing Co-operative Education (ICCE), provided training for SACCOS leaders and members involved LATRA’s Moshi pilot project (see Text Box 1), SACCOS initiatives in other regions have not received comparable support. There is a branch of the ICCE serving Dar es Salaam, but training so far seems more limited, e.g., a two-day, le-

gally required seminar for ten SACCOS leaders (Key Informant Interview, Dar es Salaam, April 2025).

Within Dar es Salaam, we have already seen how changes in personnel—especially presidentially appointed RCs and DCs—can lead to discontinuities in planning and strategy (see section 2.3-2.4). More recently, RC Makalla (2021-2023) took a keen interest in moto-taxis, helping to revive the city-wide federation—SHIVYAMAPIDA, or Shirikisho—and its district-level member associations. In 2022, Makalla helped orchestrate fresh elections overseen by the police, although many top leaders remained unchanged. In February 2023, he facilitated a ‘fact-finding’ trip for association leaders to Rwanda (Dar es Salaam Region, 2023).^{<?>} However, growing tensions between SHIVYAMAPIDA and CMPD became a challenge,²⁴ and Makalla was removed as RC in May 2023, reportedly in part because of issues relating to moto-taxis (Key Informant Interview, Dodoma, 2023).²⁵ His replacement, Albert Chalamila, signalled his intention to work with all drivers’ associations without preference but, in practice, adopted a more hands-off approach to the moto-taxi sector.

Without effective city-wide governance structures, and without leadership from the RC, regulatory and planning inconsistencies have become pronounced **across Dar es Salaam’s five municipalities**. As noted earlier, the Ilala DC, Mpongolo has championed his own strategies for registering parking areas, again partnering with SHIVYAMAPIDA to mobilise drivers (see section 2.4.4). More recently, Kinondoni has started a new, concerted effort

to register parking areas, starting in Msasani ward and other ‘smart’—i.e. affluent—areas. This initiative is largely a response to local security concerns about theft involving ‘unknown’ boda boda drivers. Concerns like these periodically galvanize formalization efforts, particularly where they affect ‘smart’ or ‘sensitive’ areas, but often do not spread far beyond these.²⁶ Authorities across Dar’s other three municipalities—Temeke, Ubungu, and Kigamboni—have adopted a more passive—if not disinterested—approach. The onus is on drivers to register and formalize their parking areas. They must first satisfy certain criteria and then pay various fees in exchange for registration and an official sign to mark their area (Key Informant Interviews, Dar es Salaam, 2024). Drivers claim that, cumulatively, parking area registration costs Tsh400,000, although at least in Kinondoni, association leaders have negotiated this down to around Tsh130,000 for the parking area plus individual municipal parking fees (Tsh36,000 per driver) (Key Informant Interview, Dar es Salaam, April 2025).

Fragmented governance structures also result in contradictions between the most local, **street-level structures and municipal authorities**. In Dar es Salaam, street chairpersons routinely negotiate with neighbourhood residents and informal workers, including with moto-taxi drivers about the location of their parking areas (Collord, 2023). Where a street chairperson agrees to recognise a parking area, that decision *can* be a first step towards formalization. However, as municipal officials highlight, these street-level decisions often do not align with municipal plans (Key Informant Interview, Dar es Salaam, March

<?> Dar es Salaam local authority officials hold up Rwanda’s regulation of moto-taxis as a ‘best practice’ model, although they quietly add that Tanzania’s ‘politics’ mean that efforts to replicate their neighbour will fail (Key Informant Interviews, 2024). Some scholars also argue that Rwanda over-regulates its moto-taxis, resulting in adverse effects both for affordable and accessible transport as well as for drivers’ livelihoods (Goodfellow, 2015, 2022).

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25 However, the most obvious and immediate trigger was traders strikes in Kariakoo.

26 For more on how registration efforts—as well as de-stigmatization of drivers—maps onto an uneven urban geography, see Collord and Nyamsenda (Forthcoming).

2024).

Ilala Municipality's recent planning efforts around Dar's CBD illustrate this street-level vs. municipality tension, and its damaging consequences. The planning process started at street-level and in a relatively participatory manner, as detailed earlier; however, the district defence and security committee (*Kamati ya Ulinzi na Usalama*)—which includes police, among other district authorities—later intervened to alter key elements (Key Informant Interviews, Dar es Salaam, 2024). Official signs had already been installed to mark newly registered parking areas when authorities abruptly reduced the number of approved drivers per site and removed some signs altogether. This sudden change frustrated drivers, who were not consulted and struggled to determine who would have to leave. The announcement also coincided with a municipal tax collection drive, requiring drivers to pay both their LATRA license and municipal parking fees—Tsh53,000 to Tsh58,000 total—within a single week. Many faced cash flow challenges due to the short deadline.

Although authorities eventually extended the payment period, drivers' trust in the supposedly participatory process was already damaged. They felt unable to meet government demands and feared future crackdowns. As one parking area chairperson lamented, 'The government doesn't have a friendly procedure for us drivers. They have their own targets with their urban planning operation.'

So far, we have examined coordination challenges from national to street level. We conclude with a reflection on current, donor-funded reform efforts. **Donors** active in the urban transport space—especially the World Bank and JICA—have shown growing interest in moto-taxis. Their interventions hold some promise; even so, they risk privileging central authority over more localised, 'negotiated' planning, which may better align with on-the-ground realities (Cirolia & Harber, 2022; Croese & Kombe, 2024). As part of its Dodoma 'integrated and sustainable transport' (DIST) project, the Bank

plans to support 'national level agencies' developing new 'regulations and laws governing moto-taxis' (World Bank, 2023a, p. 13). This could be positive as new regulations are needed; however, the Bank expresses a wholly negative view of moto-taxis, identifying them as a threat to sustainable transport (ibid). Especially given its history of excluding paratransit workers, notably through its approach to BRT in Dar es Salaam (Rizzo, 2017), the Bank's current attitude raises questions about what role it sees for moto-taxis.

The 'national level agencies' with whom the Bank is partnering also do not have a good track record of devising realistic regulations for moto-taxis. TANROADS and TARURA—the DIST implementing agencies—require that all parking areas be at least seven metres from the road; if properly enforced, this rule would eliminate nearly all established parking areas in Dar es Salaam, consigning moto-taxis to inconvenient, economically unviable locations. As things stand, the seven-metre rule has not been well enforced. Some LATRA and municipal officials openly acknowledge that they ignore it. Yet, drivers still see it as adding to their precarity. They 'live politically', in violation of official regulations even where they have gained local recognition (Key Informant Interview, Dar es Salaam, November 2023).

Meanwhile, as part of a 'transit-oriented development' project in Dar es Salaam, JICA has explored using participatory planning to integrate paratransit—both daladala buses and moto-taxis—into the city's BRT expansion. However, since JICA collaborates with DART under MoWT, its limited direct engagement with municipalities and more local initiatives may pose a challenge.

Ultimately, while better coordination between national and city levels is needed, the risk remains that central dominance—long the norm for both donors and the Tanzanian government—will prevail.

2. Politicization

Further complicating the challenge of frag-

mented governance is the parallel issue of politicization. We hinted at this earlier with the example of PO-RALG's politically motivated reappropriation of LATRA's SACCOS plans. There are, however, many more examples.

Larger drivers' associations are invariably CCM-aligned. Personalised ties between politicians and drivers' associations do not feature as prominently in Dar as in some other cities and countries, e.g., Kampala, Uganda, where the ruling NRM party is itself more personalised and factional than CCM (Collord, 2024b; Mukwaya et al., 2022). However, district- and regional-level associations maintain strong connections with ruling party and state *structures*, working closely with relevant officials from both (Observation, Dar es Salaam, Moshi, and Dodoma, 2023 and 2024). These same officials, such as DCs or CCM District Secretaries, often serve as chief guests at association meetings, which also function as CCM campaign events, frequently featuring praise for President Samia.

The consequences of this politicization are multiple. First, it increases pressure to *relax* regulations ahead of the 2025 elections, leading to contradictions across different levels of government. For instance, at a July 2024 rally in Dar es Salaam, the Ilala DC and LATRA officials urged drivers to respect formal regulations; meanwhile, the RC and PO-RALG Minister reassured them that they had nothing to fear from law enforcement and that government was on their side (Observation, Dar es Salaam, 2024).

Electoral pressure also leads to reform initiatives being rushed and repurposed to suit political ends. At the same July 2024 rally, new drivers' uniforms—like those RC Makonda introduced in 2016—were *again* launched. They were distributed as a free handout, ostensibly saving drivers the TSh60,000 cost. However, they lacked the individual identification numbers, an essential element linking the uniform wearer to a new database of registered drivers. Moreover, as of March 2025,

there was no sign that the uniforms would be effectively rolled out. 'Lots of talk, no action', concluded a disgruntled ward-level chairperson of one drivers' association (Key Informant Interview, November 2024).

Some recent overtures to moto-taxi drivers directly challenge opposition parties and politicians. The language of 'transport officer' gained prominence after a former opposition MP for Arusha town called moto-taxis a 'curse' (Ayo, 2023). While reducing stigma remains positive, the politicization and possibly short-lived nature of these efforts—driven by the electoral cycle—raise concerns.

Ultimately, ordinary drivers have a clear-eyed view of how politicization impacts them. Ahead of elections new initiatives multiply and enforcement relaxes; after elections, crackdowns resume (Key Informant Interviews, Dar es Salaam, 2024). As one pessimistic driver put it, there will be 'chaos'.

3. Top-down engagement with drivers' associations

As noted earlier, state actors first initiated district- and regional-level boda associations. Changes in personnel—for instance, the RC—have since led to their disorderly proliferation, at least in Dar es Salaam (section 2.2-2.3). These associations *may* still serve a productive role, contributing to forms of 'negotiated planning' that improve transport sustainability and drivers' livelihoods. LATRA's engagement with CWBK and Kibabot SACCOS in Moshi is, arguably, one example (see Text Box 1, section 2.4.4). Associations in Dar also periodically advocate on behalf of drivers' (see sections 2.3 and 2.4.4).

There are nevertheless several challenges associated with state actors top-down engagement through drivers' associations. One, it risks undermining association leaders' downward accountability to ordinary drivers. Moreover, reforms that are effectively negotiated in one specific context, e.g. LATRA's Moshi SACCOS, may not achieve their desired aims

if introduced top-down elsewhere.²⁷ Finally, when combined with politicization and other forms of opportunism, top-down engagement with district and regional associations in Dar risks reducing them to pre-election patronage tools or intermediaries for business interests targeting moto-taxi drivers. While sections 3.3 and 3.4 explore these themes further, we offer illustrative examples here.

A key concern is the rollout of LATRA's SACCOS initiative. As noted earlier, following the Moshi pilot project, a new SACCOS was recently registered in Ilala district, albeit ostensibly serving all of Dar es Salaam (see section 2.4.4). A first challenge for this new SACCOS is active engagement of members. To date, 150 drivers have paid the initial entrance fee, although only about 10 have completed purchasing the minimum shares required for full membership (Key Informant Interview, Dar es Salaam, April 2025). Members have not received training in co-operative development, and rather than ordinary drivers, most are SHIVYAMAPIDA leaders at city down to ward level. Drivers who have previously borrowed from CRDB bank through a scheme brokered by SHIVYAMAPIDA have also been encouraged to join, not because they are committed to co-operative principles but because leaders consider them more credit worthy. Finally, unlike in Moshi where the district association and affiliated SACCOS have close ties with bajaj drivers (see Text Box 1, section 2.4.4), Shirikisho in Dar does not have similarly close relations with drivers—either bajaj or boda boda (see section 3.4). Under the circumstances, it is unclear how the new Dar SACCOS will develop more democratic, co-operative structures, short of an organisational overhaul.²⁸

The current make-up of the SACCOS membership poses further risks, especially as LATRA and Ilala Municipality prepare to award it tenders to collect licence and parking fees

in exchange for a commission. While the tenders can help build up a SACCOS capital in ways that could then benefit low-income borrowers (see Text Box 1), these benefits depend on accountable leaders and broad, inclusive membership. In cities like Lagos, similar revenue-collection arrangements have entrenched patronage networks and turned transport unions into mafias (Agbibo, 2022; Fourchard, 2011). In Tanzania, state actors have historically intervened to prevent such dynamics emerging (Key Informant Interviews, Dar es Salaam, 2023 and 2024). LATRA's 2017 decision to cut ties with boda boda associations was driven by extortion concerns (see section 2.), and its insistence on SACCOS collecting license fees via mobile payments reflects ongoing accountability efforts (see section 2.4.4, Text Box 1). Nevertheless, the new Dar SACCOS's fee collection efforts—and what it does with its commission—will need to be closely monitored going forward.

A further concern is that leaders themselves view SACCOS primarily as a tool for leveraging more capital investment or as a stepping stone towards ambitious business ventures. While this ambition is not necessarily inconsistent with a co-operative model, the meaning and value of that model risks getting lost in a search for quick wins. This has already happened once with a boda SACCOS in Dar es Salaam. In 2018, CMPD started the process of establishing a SACCOS for drivers. This initiative apparently helped facilitate an agreement with Equity Bank to provide loans for drivers to purchase motorbikes (Kinyondo, 2022, p. 76); however, the SACCOS itself never formally registered, partly obstructed by leaders who did not want 'development' (Key Informant Interview, Dar es Salaam, April 2025). Fast forward and the leaders of the new Dar SACCOS now envision it helping fund investments in everything from fisheries to a new trucking company, or else, evolving

²⁷ On the tendency for planning implementation and regulation to diverge across African cities, depending on their unique contexts, see Goodfellow (2022) and Cirolia and Barrisford (2017).

²⁸ As ICCE trainers will testify, the top-down approach adopted so far—by cutting short the gradual process of engaging members' and ensuring their commitment—goes against core principles of co-operative development and democracy, jeopardizing both the integrity and survival of new SACCOS (Key Informant Interviews, Moshi, April 2024).

into a fully-fledged bank. They also aspire to partner with other moto-taxi sector stakeholders, including asset-finance companies like Watu Credit and Mo Finance. Given that leaders simultaneously criticize these companies for profiting from drivers, it is unclear how such a partnership would work.

Beyond the specific issues with SACCOS, a broader concern is that both associations and SACCOS, due to their narrow leadership and top-down structures, are vulnerable to being used as channels for pre-election patronage. In Dar es Salaam, the SACCOS has already received significant donations from the Ilala District Commissioner (DC) and religious leaders during a large event marked by a banner displaying photos of the DC and President Samia, and reading: ‘A special prayer conference for bodaboda and bajaj drivers to pray for our country Tanzania this election year.’ At a national level, PO-RALG has also attempted to court boda drivers through their associations by promising cheap loans.

Private sector interests are also involved in politicized mobilisation of drivers via associations, which risk devolving into administrative and marketing tools for these same private companies.²⁹ Enterprising association leaders focus on securing sponsorship deals with everyone from motorcycle retailers to telecom companies, although the chief pre-occupation remains brokering bank loans for motorbikes.

Indeed, these dynamics of politicization, top-down leadership, and corporate marketing converge around loan schemes. SHIVYAMAPIDA, for instance, agreed a deal with CRDB, Tanzania’s largest commercial bank. CRDB has, in turn, sponsored meetings with drivers where it advertises loans and micro-insurance, government officials stress regulatory compliance, and CCM representatives cam-

paign for the ruling party (Observation and Key Informant Interviews, Dar es Salaam, 2023 and 2024). Meanwhile, drivers reportedly pay Tsh200,000 directly to SHIVYAMAPIDA leaders as a commission for helping them secure a CRDB loan. This sum has doubled from Tsh100,000, as revealed by one leader who thought the increase was exploitative and lamented, ‘all the [other] leaders are there for their stomachs’. Admittedly, these bank loans offer more favourable interest rates than many alternatives available to drivers (see Section 3.3); however, the current arrangement is far from ideal.

2.5 Conclusions: The politics of ‘episodic’ regulation and planning

In summary, Tanzania’s moto-taxi sector, particularly in Dar es Salaam, is undergoing new regulatory and planning interventions. Positive developments include efforts to de-stigmatize drivers and experiments in participatory planning. However, three key challenges risk distorting reforms: fragmented governance that favours central control, politicization, and top-down engagement with drivers’ associations and SACCOS. A broader issue is the tendency to rush initiatives, undermining context-sensitive and genuinely participatory approaches. These same challenges have affected reform efforts since 2010, resulting in ‘episodic’ interventions that fail to deliver lasting improvements for both state actors and drivers.

Drivers remain central to the moto-taxi sector’s development. Even as new stakeholders, including new private sector interests, are becoming more involved, a safe and equitable moto-taxi industry depends on securing *drivers’* well-being. Hence, effective regulation and planning—and genuinely *participatory* planning—require a better understanding both of drivers’ needs and of how they organise. Taking on board drivers’ views also

²⁹ State actors at various levels engage the private sector as part of their broader co-optation strategy. There is space here to raise this point only briefly, although it deserves further attention. Also significant is a seemingly misplaced optimism that private capital can compensate for shortfalls in public funds needed to support planning and regulatory initiatives. For instance, the hope was that private sector sponsors would pay for new urban infrastructure—like shelters at motorcycle parking areas—and for new driver uniforms, all in exchange for advertising. However, sponsors have not been forthcoming.

means understanding their *differences*—between association leaders and ordinary drivers in the street, or between male drivers and the growing minority of women in the sector. With these considerations in mind, we now turn to a discussion of drivers, their work conditions, and the challenges they face (section 3).



3. Driving work in Dar

Drawing primarily on our survey findings, this section addresses five key areas: (1) drivers' socio-economic backgrounds, disaggregating across women and men; (2) drivers' income and work conditions; (3) drivers' ability (or not) to accumulate and invest from their work, including what impact new private sector actors like asset-finance and platform companies may have; (4) forms of (self)regulation and organisation, from the individual parking area up to city level; and (5) women drivers and the specific challenges they face. Throughout, we identify obstacles to equitable transport and offer some preliminary reform suggestions, which we explore further in our final section (see section 4).

3.1 Drivers, who are they?

Popular stereotypes imply that moto-taxis offer temporary work to young men with few attachments and a dangerous, risk-taking attitude (Kuwanda, 2024). However, in keeping with other studies (Bishop & Courtright, 2022; Francis et al., 2023; Kinyondo, 2022; Mallett, 2024), our survey results paint a different picture.

Drivers are not especially young. Whereas the median age in Tanzania is 17.2 (UN, 2024), the median age for respondents in our sample is nearly double: 33 for men and 30 for women with the age range stretching from 19 to 59. Moreover, while new drivers regularly join the sector, many invest *long-term*. The average years spent in moto-taxi work was 6.8 for men and 4.2 for women. Again, though, this average hides a huge range from just six months to 26 years. Moreover, 23 percent of male respondents had driven for 10 years or more. The same was true for only one female driver, indicating women's more recent—but accelerating—entry into the sector.

Unsurprisingly, drivers also provide for dependents. Men in our sample averaged five dependents, among whom two were children. Women averaged four, including one child. Respondents clarified that they support both their immediate family in Dar es Salaam as well as poorer relatives in their home regions. Seventy-six percent were born outside of Dar.

Education is a barrier to many drivers seeking alternative, more formal employment. Among male drivers, 39 percent had no secondary education, and a further 39 percent finished only Form 4. Just five percent finished secondary school while a small minority—four percent—reported having a university degree. Eleven percent had some other form of vocational training. Women drivers appear slightly better educated in so far as 67 percent completed secondary education at least up to Form 4. No women reported attending university, though, while two percent had no formal schooling at all.

3.2 Drivers' income and work conditions

Moto-taxi work offers an important source of urban livelihoods, but one with its fair share of challenges.

Most drivers have experienced varied forms of employment before joining the sector. Their past work ranges from farming to small-scale trading to formal employment, be it in retail, manufacturing, or the public sector. An improved income is the primary motivation for leaving this other job—where they are not already unemployed—and taking up driving work (see Figure 2). Most drivers—especially women—do then report an improved income, although others suggest earnings from driving are declining, on which more below (see Figure 3). The level of income aside, some drivers also emphasize the benefits of more *regularity*. Whereas farming

or furniture repair, for example, might bring only seasonal or intermittent reward, driving promises a ‘daily income’.

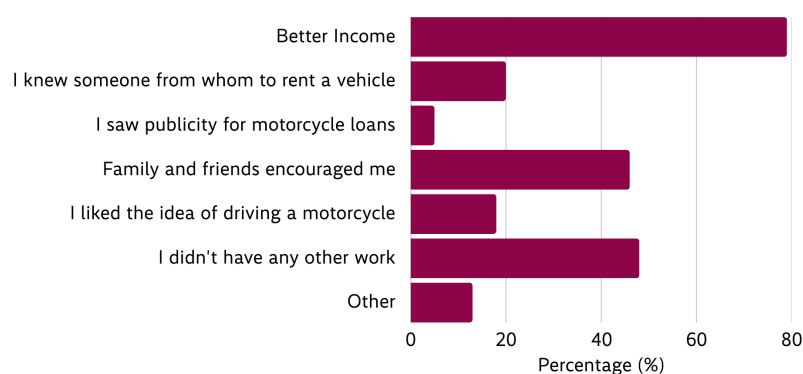


Figure 2 - Reasons for becoming a moto-taxi driver (men & women)

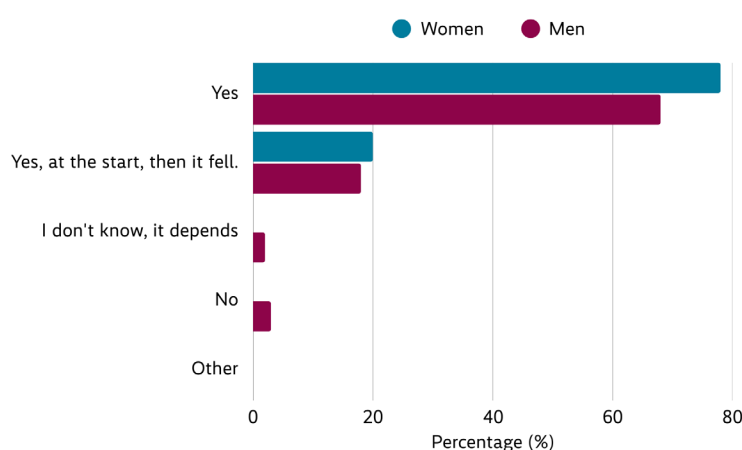


Figure 3 - Income improved due to moto-taxi work

Despite these apparent positives, moto-taxi incomes are still precarious. Yes, average self-reported earnings may constitute an improvement for many drivers, *especially women*, whose earnings appear considerably higher than men's (See Table 1).³⁰ Yet, drivers still describe their income as enough to ‘live only’, not least given the high cost of living in Dar. Moreover, although these figures are consistent with findings in other recent studies (Bishop & Court-right, 2022, p. 102; Kiwango et al., 2020), self-reporting may lead to over-optimistic results (Spooner et al., 2020, pp. 57–59). Incomes also vary significantly. Some drivers reported earning as low as TSh16,000 the previous week despite working seven days, and 87 percent of drivers stated that weekly incomes vary ‘a lot’ (21 percent) or ‘a little’ (66 percent).

Vehicle type	Men	Women
Two-wheeler (<i>bodaboda</i>)	Tsh78,981 (\$29.4)	Tsh106,591 (\$39.6)
Three-wheeler (<i>bajaj</i>)	Tsh107,927 (\$40.1)	Tsh156,789 (\$58.3)

Table 1 - Estimated take-home income the previous week (average by vehicle type)

³⁰ As is true throughout this report, these are rough calculations. Some calculations come with wide standard errors and/or are not statistically significant. They do nevertheless suggest patterns worth exploring further in future survey research, including with a larger sample size.

Drivers' broader working conditions contribute to this sense of precarity. They have long working days and working weeks. For men, the average is 13.4 hours per day and 6.6 days per week. For women, it is slightly lower—likely a reflection of greater care work responsibilities³¹—but still very high at 12.7 hours per day and 6 days per week. Drivers have little to no social protections (see section 3.4), meaning that sickness, bereavement, or similar results automatically in lost income. Various occupation-specific hazards also take their toll. Road traffic accidents are a particular concern for men and women alike, even if their reported frequency varies by gender (see Table 2). Moreover, despite often being portrayed as 'criminals' (Sambaiga, 2022), drivers are themselves vulnerable to various offenses, criminal or otherwise. Fifty-eight percent of women reported having experienced some form of offense and 24 percent for men. The types of offense range from unspecified attacks to violent robbery of vehicles to gender-based violence (see section 3.5). The perpetrators are most often 'unknown persons' and/or passengers. Other drivers—if they are from a different parking area—may occasionally pose a threat, as do vehicle owners, i.e., the 'boss' (*tajiri*).

Have you had an accident?	Men	Women
Yes	44%	24%
No	56%	76%
Did you miss workdays due to injuries?	Men	Women
Yes	17%	17%
No	83%	83%
Number of days missed	Men	Women
Mean	62	84
Median	30	45
Minimum	1	7
Maximum	180	240
Long-term physical harm	Men	Women
Yes	14%	4%
No	86%	96%

Table 2 – Accidents

On this last point, whether drivers own their own vehicle is among the most important variables influencing their income and work conditions. Drivers' *take-home* income appears significantly higher where they are owner-operators, as shown by a comparison of the two rows in Table 3 (see also Mallett, 2024; Spooner et al., 2020). Drivers also appear to work slightly shorter hours when they are owner-operators and, as evidenced by Francis et al. (2023), tend to have fewer accidents (see also section 3.3).

Ownership status	Take-home income – Men	Take-home income – Women
Not owner-operator (all vehicle types)	Tsh62,474 (\$23.22)	Tsh88,636 (\$32.94)
Owner-operator (all vehicle types)	Tsh112,211 (\$41.7)	Tsh144,967 (\$53.87)

Table 3 - Estimated take-home income the previous week (average by ownership status)

³¹ Globally, women provide a greater share of unpaid care work than men, which in turn, restricts the time they can dedicate to paid work (Charmes, 2019; Elias & Rai, 2019). Women in Tanzania are no exception, providing 79 percent of unpaid care work, or 4 hours a day on average (Charmes, 2019, pp. 18, 22). Moreover, while women drivers reported fewer dependents than men, they also discussed extensive caring responsibilities (see section 3.5 for more).

These findings raise key questions regarding paths to ownership and whether moto-taxi work, beyond earning a daily income, can enable drivers to accumulate and invest.

3.3 Vehicle ownership, asset accumulation, and finance

The informal economy—including moto-taxi driving—is often portrayed as the realm of individual entrepreneurs. It is, however, structured by relations between labour and capital, debtor and creditor, renter and landlord, or more recently in Dar, between worker and platform company (Iazzolino, 2023; Kesar, 2023; Rizzo, 2017; Shivji, 2017; Wood et al., 2018). As new private sector actors enter the moto-taxi market, for instance, offering new forms of asset-finance or ‘gig’ work, they are multiplying the range of economic relations for drivers to navigate. These market entrants *may* bring opportunities, aiding urban mobility as well as drivers’ accumulation and investment; they also, however, risk entrenching inequalities and poor work conditions (Anwar et al., 2023; Cirolia et al., 2023; Collord, 2024a; FES, 2021; Mallett, 2024; Meagher, 2018; Pollio et al., 2023; Spooner et al., 2020).

For drivers, the classic relation is **between drivers and vehicle owners**, unless drivers manage to own their own vehicle, becoming owner-operators. Fifty-six percent of male respondents in our survey and seventy percent of women were owner-operators.³² But there are diverse paths to ownership (or not) (Table 4). There are also diverse *sources* of finance to move drivers along these different paths (Table 5).

	Men	Women
I paid for my vehicle upfront (owner)	25%	52%
I took out a loan and have paid it back (owner)	30%	17%
I took out a loan and am still paying it back (on a path to ownership)	31%	17%
I pay a day rate to the owner (not on a path to ownership)	13%	13%

Table 4 – Paths to ownership

	Men (57)	Women (16)
Private individual	65%	56%
Asset-finance company	23%	25%
Commercial Bank	4%	6%
Municipality	0%	6%
SACCOS/VICOBA/other membership org.	9%	6%
Other	0%	6%

Table 5 – Sources of loans and/or asset-finance for vehicle owners

³² Note this figure for men is higher than that recorded in other recent studies, which found between 44 and 47 percent (Bishop & Courtright, 2022; Francis et al., 2023).

Private individuals' are still the largest source of asset-finance (Table 5), leasing drivers a vehicle, which they then gradually pay for while working.³³ Asset-finance companies are a relatively recent arrival in Tanzania but are fast expanding.³⁴ The most well-known company, Watu Credit, is now competing with Mo Finance, part of the MeTL Group; MeTL also has the monopoly on imports of the popular Boxer motorcycles, which it now prevents Watu Credit from supplying. These companies adopt a similar model to 'private individuals' but on a larger scale. Commercial banks have entered the fray as well, offering loans that, again, use an asset-financing model so that the vehicle itself serves as collateral. Although our data suggests that banks lag behind the other two actors, it is also likely that many of the loans drivers report acquiring via SACCOS, VICOBA, or other associations are, in fact, commercial bank loans; the co-op or association then acts either as guarantor or as intermediary, taking a loan and then lending on (see below). Meanwhile, only one female driver with disabilities reported accessing a no interest municipal loan.³⁵ However, drivers routinely discuss trying to get these types of loan. They even register their parking areas in hopes that they will then become eligible, as is currently happening in anticipation of PO-RALG's latest loan scheme (see section 2.4).

What do drivers think of these various sources of finance? What does this say about more equitable access to finance? The picture is mixed, and these questions invite further

research. We can nevertheless unpack a few key points.

Many drivers refer to challenges regarding **individual 'bosses'**. Drivers either rent from these bosses, paying a day rate—often around Tsh15,000 a day or Tsh105,000 a week,³⁶ or else agree a 'contract'. In the latter instance, drivers return a (slightly higher) day rate (*hesabu*) and assume more responsibility for repairs while gradually paying off the vehicle they operate. Drivers' concerns include lack of clear terms and conditions, abusive contracts, lack of professionalism or accountability, and lack of any legal recourse when relations with a vehicle owner sour. Drivers share stories, for instance, of working to pay off their contract and then getting sick or missing a few payments towards the end, at which point the owner reclaims the vehicle without offering the driver compensation for the payments already made. Although drivers mention this less often, the annual interest rate equivalent they pay to 'bosses' is also high, in the region of 40 percent (Colford, 2023).

But are newer arrivals in the world of moto-taxi finance better? Regarding **asset-finance companies** like Watu and Mo Finance, drivers are decidedly ambivalent. Advantages include relative ease when accessing a vehicle; deposits are comparatively low and administrative procedures fast. Yet interest rates appear even higher than for some private individuals, as high as 58 percent (Colford, 2023), which to quote one driver, causes

³³ 'Private individuals', while one category, nevertheless covers a *wide range* of actors with diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Drivers indicate that their 'bosses' (*matajiri*) can be 'employees' (*waajiriwa*), public servants, 'church people', police, or businesspeople. Others are dockworkers, second-hand clothes sellers, woodworkers, one washes clothes for a living, and others are drivers themselves. Similarly, drivers report that their bosses own anywhere from 1 to 40 motorcycles.

³⁴ Asset-finance companies are much more widespread, for instance, in neighbouring Kenya and Uganda (Chemweno, 2023; Mallett, 2024). Studying the trends in these countries gives some indication of likely future growth in Tanzania's asset-finance sector.

³⁵ If the details the respondent supplied were accurate regarding the routine payments and maturity period, this 'no interest' loan was paid at a staggeringly high interest rate.

³⁶ Unlike in some other cities, e.g. Kampala, where there appears to be a Sunday exemption (Mallett, 2024, p. 115), drivers in Dar report paying their *hesabu* seven days a week. In this vein, survey participants often noted, 'There is no Saturday or Sunday' for moto-taxis. The actual amount paid appears to vary considerably, with some drivers reporting Tsh10,000 per day and others Tsh15,000 or Tsh20,000.

‘severe pain’ (Key Informant Interview, 8 March 2024; see also Mallett, 2024).³⁷ Another driver recalled how when she was still paying for her two-wheeler, ‘you couldn’t rest the entire time, working day and night, week and weekend’ (Key Informant Interview, 21 March 2024). This overwork can have serious consequences. While working longer hours generates higher earnings (Kiwango et al., 2020), it also leads to higher accident rates, notably *among drivers repaying loans* (Francis et al., 2023). Drivers stress this point. ‘The source of many accidents: motorcycle loans’ (see section 3.4 on loans). This heightened accident risk is in addition to other disadvantages for health and wellbeing associated with long-hours and stress.

Meanwhile, **commercial bank loans** have their own trade-offs. Banks tend to charge lower interest rates but require higher initial deposits and often have slower or more cumbersome administrative procedures. Even so, associations, from smaller VICOBA up to district and city-wide groups have struck deals with banks, most often to act as guarantors, first vetting drivers and then helping the bank repossess a vehicle if a driver defaults. Association leaders are clear that ‘we rejected’ the likes of Watu Credit precisely because of high interest rates. Yet, they also express frustrations with commercial banks, again for being slow and for—despite the relative advantage—still charging high interest (Key Informant Interviews, Dar es Salaam, 2023 and 2024). This is another reason why drivers and leaders alike appreciate the *idea* of SACCOS, even if the implementation is currently a challenge (see section 3.4).

Finance aside, another potential ‘opportunity’ for drivers comes with the arrival of digital platform companies, notably **ride-hailing apps**. These platforms market themselves as improving drivers’ income and safety while ensuring flexibility and independence. Available research, however, underscores the ‘contested effects’ of digitization (Martin et al., 2023); rather than a ‘pathway to decent work’, platforms can lead to ‘adverse incorporation’, resulting in new ‘economic pressures from above’ and ‘material disadvantages’ for drivers (Mallett, 2024). Specific challenges to sustainable platform growth in Tanzania include ‘low levels of security (especially for women), income instability, social insecurity, price wars, the lack of specific labour laws (suppressing the rights of platform workers), and general insecurity from robbery to theft and abuse’ (Anwar et al., 2023; Fairwork, 2023a, p. 15).

Among our survey respondents, women drivers were more likely to use ride-hailing apps than men; however, both groups registered high levels of dissatisfaction (see Table 6). Women’s frustration was even greater; sixty-six percent reported they were dissatisfied with their ride-hailing experience while *no* women reported they were ‘very satisfied’. Regarding drivers’ specific complaints, these did not differ markedly by gender. Sixty-two percent of respondents who use platforms said that high commissions—around 25 percent per trip³⁸—depress their earnings. Drivers also lamented the low fares platform companies charge passengers. Other concerns included platform companies’ lack of accountability, and the added expenses incurred maintaining smartphones or buying internet vouchers. Ultimately, 78 percent of drivers—whether users or not—viewed platforms as suppressing incomes *for all drivers*. They also suggested that apps are mainly for drivers who lack their own parking area and are left roaming the street (see section 3.4 for more on parking areas). It should be no surprise then

³⁷ In his study of moto-taxis in Kampala, Uganda, where there is a more established and diversified asset-finance sector, Mallett (2024: 198-199) calculates that hire-purchase costs mean that moto-taxi drivers pay an overall increase relative to the standard price of a new motorcycle of up to 72 percent, the average being 58 percent. The overall increase relative to the average price of a *second-hand* motorcycle, which arguably better reflects the state of a vehicle once a driver completes all their hire-purchase payments, is a staggering 110 percent on average.

³⁸ In 2022, LATRA introduced regulations reducing the maximum commission ride-hailing companies could charge from 33 to 15 percent. However, after Uber left the Tanzanian market and Bolt scaled back its activities, LATRA again raised the maximum commission to 25 percent (Fairwork, 2023a; Sehloho, 2023). See section 4.3 for further discussion.

that, in Dar es Salaam and other cities in East Africa, drivers have developed both individual and collective strategies to resist poor work conditions when using platforms (FES, 2021; Iazzolino, 2023; Okoth, 2024). However, ride-hailing companies, almost without exception, do not recognise or routinely engage with worker associations (Fairwork, 2023a, p. 19, 2024, p. 7).³⁹

Do you use ride-hailing apps?	Men	Women
I have never used ride-hailing apps	43%	30%
I only use ride-hailing apps	5%	4%
I use ride-hailing apps <i>and</i> find customers in the street.	34%	52%
I used ride-hailing apps before but stopped	18%	13%
How satisfied are you with your experience using ride-hailing apps?	Men	Women
I am very satisfied	11%	0%
I am somewhat satisfied	36%	33%
I am not very satisfied	22%	51%
I am not at all satisfied	31%	15%

Table 6 – Drivers’ experience with ride-hailing apps

Despite these difficulties, are drivers able to accumulate or invest thanks to moto-taxi work? What is the longer-term outlook? Vehicle ownership itself remains the first hurdle. Even when drivers manage to own one vehicle, their owner-operator status can be short-lived. Indeed, drivers working more than five years, or more than ten years, have still only ever owned on average around one to two vehicles. They explain that the vehicle broke down, or someone in their family had a medical emergency, so they sold it; then the driver went back to renting or repaying another loan. Wear and tear is also a major issue; the average age of drivers’ vehicles in our survey was just two years, after which point the cost of repairs rises sharply (Spooner et al., 2020). This factor further diminishes the advantages of asset-finance, given that by the time a driver pays back a loan and becomes an owner-operator, the lifespan of the vehicle may be near spent.

Yet, even with these challenges, drivers do accumulate and invest modestly but meaningfully. Mostly, drivers report acquiring household assets, which make a significant difference to everyday lives. Even if a minority, some do then go further, investing in other businesses, acquiring land, or beginning to construct a house. Seventy-six percent of men surveyed and 79 percent of women still rent, which adds significantly to the financial pressures they face; yet, 20 percent of men have used income from driving work to invest in land and a house, even if construction is still ongoing for some. Among women, 13 percent were homeowners. Meanwhile, a minority of drivers rely on, for instance, family for their housing.

In sum, moto-taxi work does offer some opportunities for drivers to accumulate assets. However, attaining and *maintaining* owner-operator status is a significant challenge, thereby limiting drivers’ earnings, accumulation, and investment.

What is more, the status quo is not stable. The moto-taxi sector—and moto-taxi work—is changing all the time, particularly with the entry of new private sector actors like asset-finance companies, commercial banks, and platform companies. These market entrants can

³⁹ Admittedly, recent research on ride-hailing apps and drivers’ individual or collective strategies to navigate and resist these work relations focuses more on automobile rather than moto-taxis, although there are important exceptions (Mallett, 2024).

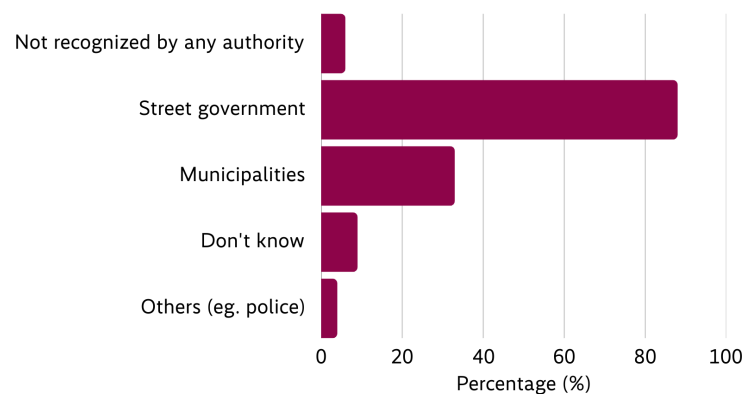


Figure 4 - Parking areas - (Semi)formal recognition status

ostensibly improve drivers' incomes and ownership prospects. They may also promote other aspects of a sustainability agenda, for instance, electrification of vehicles (Martin et al., 2023). However, our research suggests that **the impact on drivers of these new private sector actors is ambivalent, or even negative**. The risk is that, where private companies make a profit, they do so at drivers' expense, charging exorbitant interest rates and depressing incomes.

Aside the welfare of drivers, these companies may also **negatively impact urban mobility**. Asset-finance companies—by making vehicles more readily available, even if at a high cost—risk accelerating the growth of Dar's moto-taxi fleet, leading to increased competition and congestion, among other downsides (Collord, 2024a; Mallett, 2024). Platform companies, meanwhile, entice drivers to acquire new vehicles to take advantage of ride-hailing opportunities (FES, 2021, p. 12), thereby similarly adding to congestion. While there is so far limited evidence of this in Dar es Salaam, they may also gradually erode the system of semi-formal regulation that has grown up around drivers' established parking areas.⁴⁰

One take-away is that **stricter regulation of emerging private sector actors**—perhaps most especially asset-finance and platform companies—is needed (see section

4). But other important questions remain unanswered. Given the limited private sector 'opportunities', what else could improve drivers' livelihoods and, at present, limited accumulation and investment potential? How could this be achieved in ways that also privilege safety and a well-integrated transport system? Alternative forms of regulation and organizing emerge as one answer, and it is to these themes that we now turn.

3.4 Regulation and Organising

Recall that Dar es Salaam's moto-taxi sector was initially self-regulating (see section 2.1), with formal regulatory and planning efforts later building on drivers' organising efforts and self-regulated parking areas. More recently, local authorities and key actors like LATRA have, at least in theory, revived a *participatory* approach (section 2.4.3). This analysis examines the interaction between informal self-regulation and formal regulation, as well as the balance between bottom-up organising and top-down initiatives. It also examines attempts to formalize—and co-opt—moto-taxis through private finance, SACCOS, or other co-operative alternatives (see also section 2.4.3-2.4.4). The goal is to better understand existing regulation and organization in Dar es Salaam, particularly from drivers' perspectives, and to explore ways to improve formal regulation for both safer transport and more secure livelihoods

⁴⁰ For a discussion of this effect in Kampala, see Mallet (2024).

(see Section 4). While this is a broad research area that warrants further study, we highlight key points here.

First, drivers show increasing compliance with regulations and a willingness to improve. For instance, 94 percent of survey respondents initially learning to drive from family or friends, yet 55 percent have since completed formal training and received certification. Women's compliance is even higher. This training then improves road safety and qualifies them for a licence. Moreover, survey and interview data indicate that drivers value training, despite finding the cost—both financial and time-related—a barrier. As noted earlier (see Section 2.3), subsidized training could be highly beneficial. Additionally, stronger oversight of the licensing process is needed, as many drivers report paying bribes to obtain a license even without a training certificate.

A second, fundamental point is that informal or semi-formal regulation still dominates at the level of individual parking areas (see Figure 4) and is likely to persist, especially outside the CBD and other 'smart' areas (see section 2.4.4 and Collord & Nyamsenda, Forthcoming). Parking areas are primarily recognized by street-level governments (*serikali za mitaa*), while only 33 percent of survey respondents reported formal recognition from the municipality.

The relationship between individual parking areas and street-level government, on the other, is also most relevant to drivers' self-regulation and semi-formal recognition. Eighty-two percent of drivers interviewed reported that their parking area had designated leaders and a strategy for regulating membership. While joining fees remain

uncommon in Dar,⁴¹ parking areas generally adopt some form of vetting procedure to monitor which new drivers can join, and how many. These procedures include confirming that a prospective new member has a licence and can provide a letter from the Street Chairperson in the area where said driver is resident. This letter then serves as identification, a character endorsement, and a means to locate the driver if needed. Parking areas recognised at street-level also tend to supply a list of all their members to the Street Chairperson. The police—operating at ward-level—use similar lists for security purposes. Ultimately, this mix of self-regulation and negotiated semi-formality ensures a degree of participatory planning and regulation at the most local, street-level (see also Collord 2023).

Regarding other forms of organising, including mutual aid or co-operative-like groups,⁴² drivers are again most involved within their parking areas. Sixty-five percent reported making irregular contributions to assist fellow drivers with accidents, vehicle repairs, or similar needs. Another 22 percent belonged to parking-area groups that collected regular contributions for savings, loans, or cooperative investments—such as jointly owned vehicles operated by members. While these initiatives face challenges, including mismanagement and embezzlement, 81 percent of drivers claimed to be satisfied with their group management, among whom 60 percent were 'very satisfied'.

Now what about district-level or city-wide associations or trade unions (see also section 2.4)? Many drivers were either unaware of organizations like SHIVYAMAPIDA and CMPD or not involved with them. Those with some awareness had mixed views. Some

⁴¹ Only 17 percent of drivers said they had to pay an entry fee to join their parking area, a practice that is much more widespread in other cities (for instance Dodoma) or other countries. On Uganda, specifically Kampala, see Mukwaya et al. (2022). The practice is becoming more common in Dar es Salaam as well, notably around highly desirable parking areas and as the numbers of drivers have multiplied. Drivers raise concerns about how their fees are then used, and the lack of transparency where they have not also integrated a parking area co-op or similar membership organisation. For now, it appears that the relative rarity of joining fees in Dar es Salaam is no bad thing.

⁴² These groups are rarely if ever registered as formal co-operatives regulated by the Tanzania Cooperative Development Commission. If registered, they are generally associations under the Ministry of Home Affairs. For more on co-operative alternatives, see section 4.

had accessed loans or other services through these associations—CHABBOWIKI offices, for instance, are often busy with drivers seeking loan assistance. Certain association leaders have built reputations by helping drivers, such as when they have an accident or their vehicle is seized by police (Key Informant Interviews and Observations, Dar es Salaam, 2023–2024). More generally, where there is a conflict between drivers and various state actors (most often involving the police), leaders from the larger associations sometimes mediate, but these efforts rely on a small number of active individuals who do not represent broader leadership. Indeed, some of the most active leaders express routine concerns about the integrity of their fellow leaders, alleging corruption (for more, see section 2.4.4).

Drivers do not see themselves as genuine *members* of these groups. They may obtain a ‘membership card,’ hoping it strengthens their claim to park in unrecognized areas, but they have no democratic influence over association decisions. These associations do not collect regular dues or hold member meetings, and many top leaders have remained in power since their founding. Some, like CMPD, now function as private businesses, forming partnerships with banks and aspiring to establish a microfinance bank of its own.⁴³ When asked about these associations, drivers reply that they are ‘under the government’ or ‘government people’, that association leaders ‘have money’, but that drivers have not seen ‘their value’.

Regarding ‘money’, a primary way that these associations have maintained their relevance to ordinary drivers is through the loan schemes they broker with banks, extracting their own cut in the process (see section 2.4.4). As noted earlier, Dar es Salaam’s

RC, DCs, and municipalities also use them to mobilize drivers for meetings, regulatory activities, and political campaigning (see Section 2.4). LATRA’s SACCOS plans risk following this same pattern, at least in Dar (section 2.4.4). The danger is that a kind of ‘trickle-up’ economy emerges, which as in cities like Cape Town, relies on ‘mutualities’ within associations ‘to allocate cash to the state, private companies, and taxi association leaders’ (Bähre, 2014, p. 590). In extreme cases, these ‘trickle-up’ economies are reinforced through violence (Agbiboa, 2022; Bähre, 2014; Fourchard, 2011; Goodfellow, 2017).

Ultimately, reviewing the broader organizational landscape—from street-level to city-wide associations—raises concerns about how these groups operate, their integration into state regulatory strategies, and the increasing monetization of their activities. Large associations have been central to state-driven, top-down regulatory efforts, particularly the push for swift and comprehensive planning and enforcement. Yet as discussed earlier, these ambitions—modelled on the perceived successes of countries like Rwanda⁴⁴—have prompted ‘episodic’ attempts to achieve wholesale registration, compile exhaustive driver datasets, introduce unique identification numbers, and the like, but without a lasting impact.

What regulatory approach might be more effective? Instead of importing regulatory models from elsewhere, especially given the differing political contexts, Tanzania could develop its own *middle way* in Dar es Salaam. This home-grown model could also align with official interest in participatory approaches. While larger associations—or trade unions⁴⁵—could play a modest role, greater emphasis should be placed on existing incre-

⁴³ Some of these business ventures have drawn negative attention. CMPD’s former Secretary was accused of embezzlement in 2019 and suspended from the association (Kinyondo, 2022, p. 77).

⁴⁴ For more on the Rwanda comparison, see page 18 and footnote 16.

⁴⁵ In Kampala, for instance, the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers’ Union (ATGWU) has unionized drivers, partly via their parking areas. In Dar es Salaam, some smaller-scale efforts have been made to achieve the same through the Communication and Transport Workers Union – Tanzania (COTWU-T) (Kinyondo, 2022).

mental and bottom-up organising (Spooner et al., 2020). This bottom-up practice has enabled a degree of planning and regulation at street level, which helps address congestion and safety concerns (see section 2.4; Collord, 2023). It has also facilitated forms of social protection and co-operative ownership for drivers (see also Kinyondo 2022). Even without additional top-down organising, extending the gradual recognising parking areas, guiding this effort with *realistic* national planning regulations,⁴⁶ and maintaining existing recognition would enhance drivers' job security and organizing capacity. Indeed, 79 percent of survey respondents identified parking area recognition as a top priority. Again, while rapid reforms may seem appealing, political and practical challenges have often led to setbacks. It may be that there are no shortcuts to sustainable progress.

The concluding section explores alternative regulatory and planning measures aligned with this moderate approach. But first, we turn to an often-overlooked group, women, and where they might fit in this regulatory and organising vision.

3.5 Women in a men's world

Understanding the conditions of women in the moto-taxi sector requires an understanding of the conditions of drivers in general, hence why the discussion so far has integrated an analysis of women and men together. Now we turn specifically to women's experiences and the challenges they face.

Before addressing our own findings, we briefly reflect on women within the wider urban informal economy. They tend to be both overrepresented among informal workers and undervalued (Chen, 2001; ILO, 2018; Kinyanjui, 2014). These tendencies result, in turn, from the gendered demarcation of urban

space and economic opportunities. Women are often confined to the 'least lucrative spaces in the city', such as 'peri-urban settings, informal settlements, and city council markets' (Kinyanjui, 2014, p. 7; Nnkya, 2006). In Dar es Salaam, they are 'underrepresented in the industries with higher financial gain like... transport' (URT, 2020, pp. 12, 14).

Regarding transport specifically, its association with men and 'masculinity' also derives from its promise of mobility and autonomy (Chowdhury, 2021); by contrast, women's mobility and independent economic activity have been labelled 'immoral' and equated with 'prostitution' (Fischer, 2018; Kinyanjui, 2014). The conflation of women's work with sex work—alongside the stigmatization of prostitution—is partly a legacy of colonial-era targeting of feminized labour (Fischer, 2018; Fourchard, 2006; Kinyanjui, 2014). However, some contemporary state interventions still encourage this association and negative view of women workers.⁴⁷

Where then does this leave Dar es Salaam's women moto-taxi drivers? The picture is mixed. They are defying gendered norms and economic expectations, yet they remain vulnerable to stigma, abuse, and marginalisation. Like all moto-taxi workers, they also face economic precarity.

3.5.1 The benefits of driving work for women

Beginning with the more positive story, our survey data shows that women drivers can and, indeed, are making inroads into an overwhelmingly male dominated sector. Beyond their mere presence, they are also making a success of it, outperforming men across several metrics. More women report incomes gains after joining the sector (see Figure 2), report higher take-home incomes than men

⁴⁶ Clearly, planning regulations are needed here, but as noted in section 2.4.5, they need to be workable. For instance, LATRA and municipal officials as well as drivers view TANROADS and TARURA requirement that parking areas be a minimum of seven metres from the road as unrealistic and unhelpful.

⁴⁷ For instance, in June 2024, the Ubungu DC instigated the arrest and *unlawful* five-day detention of 36 women, some of whom may have been sex workers, some of whom were street vendors, caterers, and the like (Mapunda & Simtowe, 2024).

(see Table 1), make marginally more use of asset-finance schemes (Table 5), and appear to have fewer accidents (Table 2).

In our work-life history interviews, women drivers further emphasised the advantages of driving. A recurring theme was the desire for autonomy, which in this case, meant challenging gender segregation in the labour force. For instance, several interviewees came to Dar es Salaam from their home regions to work as ‘house girls’, a classic form of feminized labour; yet, to quote one woman, ‘You can’t have your own life’ as a domestic servant. ‘You stay in someone else’s house looking after their kids rather than your own.’ Others reported abusive employers and a sense of being trapped. All these experiences then made driving work an attractive, more liberating alternative. For a sub-set of women with disabilities, driving three-wheel moto-taxis had a further appeal as it enabled them to overcome their personal mobility challenges. Meanwhile, several younger women viewed transport work as a long-term ambition. One driver called it her ‘dream,’ adding, ‘One day I will drive a truck.’

At present, the specific women ready to take on the challenge of a male-dominated sector *tend*, gender aside, to have certain socio-economic advantages relative to male drivers. More women have at least a Form 4 education, twice as many paid for their vehicles upfront (Table 5), and more are owner-operators. However, as ever, averages should not mask the important diversity among women; some of the most disadvantaged drivers—those, for instance, with no formal education—are also women. Moreover, regardless of background, women drivers routinely emphasised the need for ‘courage’ (*ujasiri*) to do their work.

3.5.2 Gendered challenges of driving work

This brings us to the challenges women face

in a male-dominated sector, including: (1) bias against women drivers; (2) sexist harassment and gender-based violence; and (3) under-representation in organising efforts.

First, gender bias is a significant but not insurmountable challenge. While some male drivers are hostile, as discussed more below, women still join male-dominated parking areas. Meanwhile, most male drivers claim they are open to women joining the sector (see Figure 5), though social desirability bias may have influenced their responses, especially since both interviewers were women. Still, when asked to elaborate, their explanations for why women drivers are (or aren’t) acceptable reveal both common prejudices and more progressive views.

Male drivers who were against women joining the sector stressed that female drivers could not succeed, that they would bring more competition, that it was too physically tough for women, that no one would want to marry a woman driver, or at the very least, that women should take up driving cars as motorcycles are too dangerous. By contrast, drivers who said they would welcome women listed a range of benefits: women would get job opportunities; it would be positive for women to have more financial autonomy; moto-taxis would be *better respected* with more women drivers;⁴⁸ and perhaps in the most common response, more women drivers would help bring equality (*usawa*). ‘Life is hard,’ observed one man. ‘But this way we will all reduce life’s hardships.’ Several women drivers also reported how male drivers were the first to teach them how to drive and to welcome them to the sector. ‘*Vijana* (young guys), they like me’, said a middle-aged female driver. ‘They give me a lot of support.’

There is, then, at least an openness among male drivers to more women joining. As for passengers, some turn women drivers down,

⁴⁸ This assertion underscores the ambivalent consequences of moto-taxi transport being coded ‘masculine’ or being associated with ‘young men’ (Chowdhury, 2021). Yes, the mobility aspect connotes greater autonomy and helps make the sector a male domain; however, *male* moto-taxi drivers are also stigmatized as risk-takers, dangerous, and hooligans (*wahuni*), all would-be masculine characteristics less frequently associated with women.

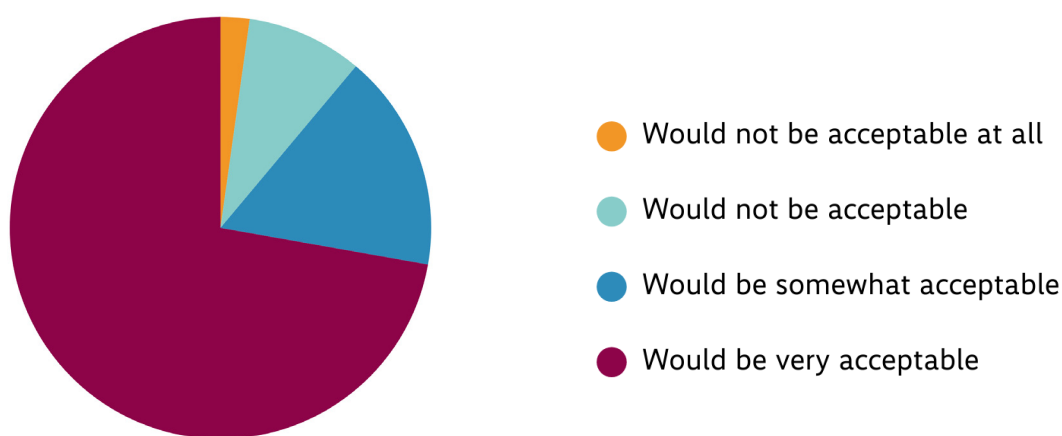


Figure 5 - More women becoming drivers

some refuse to pay them the full fare, and some are a threat (see below). But there is potential here too. Both female and male drivers suggest that *women* passengers will often choose a fellow woman driver when given the choice.

We elaborate this optimistic picture partly to underscore the potential for progress. However, coming now to our second key point, harassment and gender-based violence remain serious issues. When asked, ‘Have you ever been the victim of a criminal offense or harassment while working?’, 25 of 47 women in our survey reported experiencing gender or sexual harassment (*unyanyasaji wa kijinsia/kingono*),⁴⁹ often ‘several’ or ‘many’ times. Incidents ranged from insults to physical assault, including slaps from police, forceful kissing and hugging, attempted rape, and rape, with male passengers as the most common perpetrators. Women also face the assumption—linked to earlier discussions—that female drivers must be prostitutes. Given these realities, it is unsurprising that women rank sexual harassment and violence among their top concerns. They also emphasise gendered discrimination and social stigma. One woman concluded that ‘society hasn’t yet accepted women in this sector’. Another recalled a passenger telling her that she ‘shouldn’t be in the street as a woman’.

This brings us to our third and final issue. When it comes to advancing women’s interests, their marginalization within existing collective organising efforts is a further challenge. No women hold leadership positions in district or city-wide moto-taxi associations. We encountered one woman serving as a ward-level committee member, but the ward chairperson framed her role as a gesture toward gender sensitivity, suggesting tokenism. The only other women involved held secretarial roles.⁵⁰ Most women drivers do not see themselves as members of these associations—though in this, they resemble male drivers.

Women do report joining groups at their parking areas and contributing to emergency (*dharura*) fundraising efforts. However, dynamics within parking areas can also be fraught with some women reporting harassment. One woman recalled being harassed by male drivers until a woman Bolt driver intervened. In response to this show of female solidarity, male drivers then chained her motorcycle for several hours. That day, she recalled, ‘I learned who were my friends’—‘very few, maybe three or four who defended me’—and who were ‘my enemies’.

Such experiences help motivate women to organise more among themselves. Some

⁴⁹ When directly prompted to discuss sexual harassment, the question being, ‘Have you ever witnessed or experienced sexual harassment while working as a driver?’, 70 percent of women answered yes.

⁵⁰ Researcher on women drivers in Kampala uncovered a similar pattern (Mukwaya et al., 2022).

have formed groups with other women at their parking areas. For instance, there is a group uniting some 22 women with disabilities operating *bajaj* near the Kigamboni Ferry. The group runs a saving scheme to which members contribute in exchange for small loans. However, they too face challenges, including the risk of eviction due to a planned BRT extension and redevelopment of the area. At the time of our interviews, they had been told to expect relocation but had no details on when or where. This threat—it is worth emphasising—recalls how women’s concerns are often not gender-specific. Rather, the potential Ferry evictions reflect a broader pattern of infrastructure projects displacing informal workers—often repeatedly and without compensation—contradicting prior urban planning efforts intended to support them (Brown, Msoka, et al., 2015; Haas, 2023; Kironde, 2016; Makaro, 2024; Rizzo, 2017). Women workers are then among the victims of these evictions.

Returning to the question of organising, the Ferry parking area group—whatever its challenges—is an exception. Most women drivers are scattered across the city with few or no other women working nearby. Some connect through Whatsapp chats, which may offer a basic support network. Again, though, this strategy remains unreliable. Not all women drivers have smart phones. Even among those who do, one said that after her phone was stolen, she lost all her contacts. What then can be done? How do women drivers want their concerns addressed?

3.5.3 Improving driving work for women

First, it is worth examining approaches to gender inclusion in transport that do not necessarily achieve their intended goals.

Platform companies, for example, market themselves as empowering women, but there are no simple ‘techo-solutions’ to gender inequalities (Anwar, 2022; Fairwork, 2023b). In Tanzania and elsewhere in Africa, platforms have widened gender pay gaps while doing little to protect drivers from safety risks or gender-based violence (Ibid; Fairwork, 2023a; see also section 3.3). Although women in our survey were open to using apps, they did not rely on them exclusively nor were their reviews particularly positive (see Table 6, section 3.3). ‘We are robbed blind by the owners of Uber and Bolt’, concluded one respondent. ‘You work hard’, added another, ‘but the work you do pays the platform bosses.’ Some women drivers also noted that because of low fares and high commissions, using the apps required working longer hours, which their greater caring responsibilities prevented them from doing.⁵¹

‘Techno-solutions’ aside, another popular approach—adopted by NGOs, state actors, and faith groups—involves distributing motorcycles to women, ostensibly to encourage their participation in the moto-taxi sector. There have been some efforts under President Samia to distribute *bajaj*. However, these initiatives are small scale, involving only a handful of vehicles (7sevenmediatz, 2025; Focus Digito TV, 2025). Moreover, simply distributing vehicles to women—especially when tied to costly loans—creates additional challenges.⁵² A more holistic strategy is needed,

⁵¹ See footnote 22 for more on gendered inequalities in unpaid care work and the implications for time spent in paid driving work.

⁵² For instance, in Dar es Salaam, three-wheelers were distributed to women in President Samia’s name and in partnership with a prominent church and a commercial bank, which issued the vehicles in the form of a loan. Women we interviewed driving these distinctive *bajaj*—pink and white with ‘empowering women’ emblazoned across the side—complained of the long repayment period, two-years after which the driver will have paid roughly 28 percent more than the original value for a now used vehicle. Other women drivers we met were merely renting from the woman who first received the vehicle but was unable or uninterested in driving it herself. As one interviewee pointed out, she was paying dear—Tsh20,000 per day—to a woman who could save while also repaying the Tsh15,000 a day to the bank. ‘What hurts most’, explained the woman driver, ‘is that in the end, she [the loan recipient] will own the vehicle, and I will have nothing’. Efforts elsewhere to distribute motorcycles to women have led to similarly unintended consequences. For instance, a campaign by the organization ‘Pink Power’ in Sierra Leone saw women selling or loaning their vehicles to men. For a period, men driving pink three-wheelers originally meant for women was a common sight

encompassing training, vehicle, access, and broader support.

Women research participants articulated several priorities that can inform such an approach. Many of their concerns were shared by men, including the need for more affordable training opportunities to qualify for a commercial drivers' license. Both women and men also expressed a desire for higher-level certification, enabling them to drive buses or trucks, and for no- or low-interest motorcycle loans.

Women survey participants further emphasized the need for legal protections and enforcement measures to protect women workers—in the transport sector and across the informal economy. Others stressed the importance of women's participation in 'high-level decision-making', especially women working in the informal economy. Strengthening women's organizing efforts and committing to inclusive urban planning—while preventing or compensating for the displacement of informal workers—are also crucial.

In sum, contrary to gendered norms and sexist assumptions, women drivers are making inroads into the moto-taxi sector, earning *relatively* well, and gaining greater autonomy. However, they face the same precarity and low incomes as men, along with additional challenges such as discrimination, gender-based violence, and lack of representation in organizing efforts. While targeted support for women in transport is necessary, such measures may be most effective when integrated into broader efforts to improve working conditions for all drivers (see section 4).



around Freetown (Kawa, 2023). We are grateful to Dr. Laura Martin for drawing our attention to this example.

4. Conclusion - What reforms? What reform coalition?

4.1 Report summary

Drawing on qualitative data, a survey of 150 drivers, and desk research, this report explores the political economy of Dar es Salaam's moto-taxi sector. The primary aim is to better understand what factors enable—or hinder—sustainable transport and equitable outcomes for drivers. Rather than treating drivers as a homogenous category, the report also examines differences amongst them, including between leaders and ordinary drivers and between men and *women*, a small but growing minority in the sector.

Section 2 of the report reviews the political economy of regulatory and planning reforms in Dar es Salaam, tracing them from the sector's early 2000s emergence as a self-regulating industry to the present. After the first formal regulations were introduced in 2010, subsequent regulatory and planning efforts have been 'episodic', often failing to deliver on their ambitious goals. The latest wave of interventions, initiated about year into President Samia's tenure (2021—), has positive elements, such as efforts to destigmatize moto-taxis and—at least in theory—a more participatory regulatory and planning approach. However, several challenges risk undermining reforms, including: (1) fragmented governance and a tendency to (re)centralize control; (2) politicization; and (3) top-down co-optation of drivers' association. A further challenge is a persistent emphasis on comprehensive reform and swift enforcement without due attention to context-specific adaptation. This approach neither acknowledges how similarly sweeping efforts have failed in the past nor recognises important gains made through incremental—and often more bottom up—regulation and planning.

Section 3 shifts focus to drivers' experiences, the understanding being that a clearer perception of their interests can lead to

more equitable regulation and improved enforcement. While moto-taxi work provides essential urban livelihoods for both men and women (section 3.2), it remains precarious, with significant barriers to investment beyond daily earnings (section 3.3). New private-sector players, such as asset-financing firms and ride-hailing apps, claim to offer opportunities but often depress incomes and worsen congestion, highlighting the need for stricter regulation of these companies. Section 3 goes on to explore alternative regulatory and organizational approaches to improve livelihoods and promote sustainable transport (3.4). It details bottom-up dynamics shaping semi-formal regulation through street governments and municipalities; it also explores how these intersect with top-down regulatory and organising efforts, warning of the risks posed by increasingly politicized and monetized driver associations at district and city levels. The analysis then advocates a more incremental approach to regulating moto-taxis, one that integrates national regulations with local, 'negotiated' planning strategies (see also section 2.4 and 4.3).

Finally, section 3.5 probes the specific challenges confronting women drivers. They are, if anything, more successful than men when it comes to securing a livelihood through moto-taxi work; yet they face various forms of discrimination, which all too often turn into gender-based violence. They are all but absent from larger associations and lack representation, sufficient policy support, or legal protections.

In this concluding section, we first conduct a SWOT analysis to summarise enduring obstacles to reform as well as opportunities. Second, we present more detailed recommendations as well as reflections on a possible 'reform coalition', identifying key stakeholders invested in a more sustainable sector.

4.2 SWOT analysis

The table below summarises key findings and their implications for possible future reforms.

Table 7. SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>While there are shortcomings, moto-taxis do contribute to transport connectivity in Dar es Salaam and are an important source of urban livelihoods, including for women drivers (sections 3.1, 3.2, and 3.5).</p> <p>Local Government Authorities, particularly Ilala Municipality, have experimented with a more bottom-up participatory process when planning parking areas, notably in the CBD. The aim is to ensure parking areas are both well-located and accommodate existing drivers, thereby improving enforcement and collection of parking fees (see section 2.4).</p> <p>LATRA is also experimenting with a more participatory, ‘partnership’ approach to compensate for previous challenges in enforcing moto-taxi regulations and in collecting road service licences (section 2.4).</p> <p>There is improved coordination between LATRA and LGAs, who are pursuing their planning and regulatory efforts in tandem (section 2.4).</p> <p>Planning and regulation at the level of individual parking areas has led to widespread semi-formal regulation involving parking-area groups and street governments (sections 2.3, 2.4, and 3.4). These efforts have resulted in incremental improvements across Dar es Salaam, affording greater security to drivers, improving safety, and decreasing congestion.</p>	<p>Successive attempts to introduce new regulation and planning in the moto-taxi sector have often proved ambitious but short-lived (section 2).</p> <p>Recent LGA participatory planning of parking areas has been inconsistent, with bottom-up efforts contradicted by subsequent, more top-down interventions and with new initiatives (e.g. uniforms, etc.) seemingly rolled out prematurely for political reasons (section 2.4).</p> <p>There is a risk that new guidelines being drawn up by PO-RALG contradict recent efforts by LGAs in Dar. Donor interventions, notably by the World Bank, may also support a re-centralization of regulation and planning through national agencies that risk overlooking the incremental, more participatory planning of local authorities (section 2.4)</p> <p>Coordination across Dar es Salaam’s five municipalities is limited, with Ilala and to a lesser extent Kinondoni more attentive to the moto-taxi sector than the other three (section 2.4).</p> <p>Plans for SACCOS, linked to LATRA’s more participatory approach, risk becoming overly focused on district-level without meaningful inclusion of drivers beyond top leaders (section 2.4). Whereas there are institutions, like ICCE, that could offer additional training to SACCOS members, these resources are not currently being leveraged.</p> <p>There are currently no or limited provisions specifically tailored to support women drivers, who face sometimes extreme forms of GBV (section 3.5).</p> <p>There is limited regulation of private sectors actors such as asset-finance and platform companies, who have recently entered and are now rapidly expanding in the moto-taxi sector (section 3.3).</p> <p>Major urban infrastructure projects, like BRT, continue to displace informal workers, including where these same workers were previously directly encouraged to relocate and invest in the area from which they are then displaced (section 3.5)</p>

OPPORTUNITIES

There is currently increased reform momentum, including a growing government emphasis on de-stigmatizing moto-taxi work and increased attention paid by some state actors and donors—specifically JICA—to integrating paratransit, including moto-taxis, alongside formal public transport (section 2.4).

LATRA's SACCOS plans have involved some productive engagement with the Moshi Co-operative University (MoCU) to help train drivers (see section 2.4.4, Text Box 1). Tanzania is unique in having strong co-operative development and regulatory institutions overseen at national level by TCDC, by an Assistant Co-operative Registrar at regional level, by Co-operative Development Officers at district level, and by social welfare officers at ward level. Dar es Salaam also hosts one of MoCU's practical training branches, part of its Institute of Continuing Co-operative Education (ICCE).⁵³ This institutional infrastructure is already involved in SACCOS plans, but with a light touch approach to training of leaders and members, for instance, without engagement of ICCE. As such, it could be used leveraged more effectively.

Drivers organise mutual aid and co-operative-like groups at the level of individual parking areas. These groups are already partly engaged in local-level semi-formal regulatory arrangements with street governments (section 3.4), but they could be further strengthened as part of a more incremental reform initiative, including by receiving more support from co-operative development institutions (see above).

Private sector actors now joining the moto-taxi market *may* play a positive role, e.g. start-ups supporting electrification of the moto-taxi fleet (section 3.3).

THREATS

Despite improved co-operation between LGAs and LATRA, fragmented governance structures, poor intra-governmental coordination, and a tendency to re-centralize control—even where this risks undercutting local gains—remain persistent challenges (section 2.4.4).

At city-level, there is no strong institutional mechanism for coordinating across Dar es Salaam. Reform efforts are often championed by particular RCs or DCs and frequent changes in personnel due to new appointments and transfers leads to discontinuities in reforms. Donors risk further exacerbating centralizing tendencies (section 2.4).

Politicization, particularly around electoral cycles, risks perpetuating the pattern of more 'episodic' reforms. These involve crackdowns followed by renewed regulatory interventions, regulatory drift, and then renewed crackdowns (section 2.2-2.4). This pattern is damaging to drivers and their livelihoods while failing to provide improvements in transport planning.

The risk of deeper politicization of moto-taxi associations is high. Plans to have moto-taxi SACCOS, organised at district or city level, collect government revenue raises further risks (sections 2.4.4 and 3.4).

Private sector actors may also play a disruptive role, e.g., providing a stimulus to rapid growth in the moto-taxi sector through more importation and asset-financing but with negative consequences for drivers' livelihoods and congestion (section 3.3).

⁵³ For more on the ICCE, see here: <https://www.mocu.ac.tz/institute-of-continuing-co-operative-education-icce> (Accessed 1 December 2024).

4.3 An alternative regulatory and planning approach

Drawing on the analysis outlined here, we make several recommendations, both about possible reforms and an ‘urban reform coalition’ (Mitlin, 2023).

(1) Improved institutional co-ordination and respect for local government autonomy and innovation in planning.

While various state actors have led promising reform initiatives, better intra-governmental coordination on moto-taxi regulation and planning is needed at all levels (see section 2.4.2). This includes enhanced inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordination nationally. But national regulatory authorities and donors should also learn from and work with local authorities.

Within Dar es Salaam, improved city-wide coordination is essential. Ilala Municipality currently doubles as the Dar es Salaam City Council since the latter was disbanded in 2021; however, its coordination role remains limited. The current Ilala DC has taken an interest in the moto-taxi sector, spearheading various initiatives. Even so, city-wide coordination is difficult, and future DCs may not maintain this focus on moto-taxis.

While an institution like the Dar es Salaam Urban Transport Authority (DUTA)—long advocated by donors—might be a solution, it has yet to be established (section 2.4.3). Meanwhile, the Dar es Salaam Road Safety Committee offers one provisional coordinating mechanism for state actors with a stake in paratransit, including moto-taxis.

(2) More incremental and participatory formalization and planning processes, which would align national regulation with locally ‘negotiated’ realities.

Ambitious regulatory and planning interventions—aimed at swift, comprehensive reform—have encountered numerous challenges, resulting in repeated, often disruptive efforts that fall short of their goals. By contrast, there have been incremental, bot-

tom-up improvements in moto-taxi regulation and planning.

These outcomes suggest the need for a compromise approach, which better integrates national regulatory ambition with more localized, bottom-up initiatives. National-level regulators like LATRA, TANROADS, and TARURA could learn from the more participatory approach of some LGAs; they could then adapt national regulations to match local best practice, ensuring realistic, enforceable standards, for instance, regarding the planning of parking areas (section 2.4.3–2.4.4). Meanwhile, LGAs also need consistency in their approach; clear commitments with less backtracking would help build and maintain drivers’ trust and co-operation (see section 2.4.4).

(3) De-centring larger district- and city-level drivers’ associations, re-centring more localized organising efforts.

District- and regional-level drivers’ associations and SACCOS may play a productive role in smaller cities like Moshi (Text Box 1), where a new LATRA strategy of regulating moto-taxis through SACCOS was first piloted. In Dar es Salaam too, these large organisations periodically advocate for drivers’ interests. However, they can also be problematic, lacking accountability to ordinary drivers while privileging leaders. This dynamic may prove especially challenging in the case of LATRA’s SACCOS plans and the newly established MAUPIDA SACCOS, which require close monitoring (sections 2.4.4 and 3.4).

If there is an interest in co-operative development, a more promising alternative strategy may involve engaging at ward or street level with drivers’ bottom-up organising. An eco-system of self-regulating groups already exists around drivers’ parking areas, some operating as co-operative-like organisations, even if not formally registered (section 3.4). These groups could benefit from more recognition and support through Tanzania’s existing co-operative development and community welfare institutions, i.e., district-level co-operative officers, ward-level community development officers, and the local branch

of the Institute for Continuing Co-operative Education.

Further research could also explore effective forms of transport co-operative *beyond* the now dominant SACCOS model. For instance, informal co-ops at the level of individual parking areas have purchased vehicles for their members to operate. They then use additional revenues sometimes to lend to each other, but also to invest in further co-operative ventures or to buy land for members. Additional institutional support, as outlined above, might help drivers' scale up this model.

(4) Stricter regulation of emerging private sector stakeholders, especially asset-finance and platform companies.

Private sector actors entering the moto-taxi sector can have both positive and negative impacts (see section 3.3). Yet, while regulatory efforts frequently target moto-taxi *drivers*, growing asset-finance and platform companies remain under-regulated (Collord, 2024a; Fairwork, 2023a; Mallett, 2024). Policymakers and regulators should address these gaps. **Asset-finance companies** and new fintech ventures are not subject to the same regulatory oversight as more established financial institutions, e.g., commercial banks, and often lend at very high interest rates, which adversely affect road safety and drivers' incomes. Regulators should strengthen oversight, including by curbing high interest rates and misinformation of drivers.

Regarding **platform companies**, LATRA introduced stricter regulations of ride-hailing *automobile* taxis in 2022 but relaxed them again following pressure from international companies, Uber and Bolt. Meanwhile, riding-hailing *moto-taxis*, food delivery, and e-commerce platforms remain largely unregulated employing thousands of platform workers (Fairwork, 2022, pp. 29–30, 2023a, pp. 28–29). Policymakers should develop measures ensuring living pay standards, social protections, worker association engagement, and ethical data protection. They

should also address misclassification of drivers as 'independent contractors' instead of workers with more legal protections (Fairwork, 2023a, pp. 29–30; FES, 2021).

(5) Support for women drivers

Many women drivers' priorities mirror men's (see section 3.5). Women would welcome cheaper training opportunities and hope to progress within the transport sector. **Subsidized training programmes** would help all drivers—particularly women—obtain commercial driver's licenses, including upgrading to operate larger vehicles and access better-paying forms of transport work.

Women also desire **low or no-interest motorcycle loans**. Both LGAs and national government can build on existing strategies to support women among other 'special groups', although current initiatives have limited reach. Any scheme to provide these no or low-interest loans for women drivers specifically should integrate training opportunities to ensure the loan recipients are willing and prepared to take up transport work.

For women seeking to progress further in transport, future research and pilot programmes could explore ways **of encouraging bus and logistics companies to hire more women**. This Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) could, for instance, partner with employers to offer subsidized training to women who are then matched with employers after qualifying for the appropriate commercial driver's license. This approach could increase women's representation and help normalize their presence in the transport sector.

Women participants in our research also expressed an interest in **tailored policies protecting informal economy workers**, with specific provisions for moto-taxi drivers and women. Strategies for tackling gender-based violence were a particularly emphasized, perhaps along similar lines as the 'GBV Guidelines for Public Spaces' adopted by the

Ministry of Community Development.⁵⁴

Additional priorities include support for **women's organisation** through existing associations or by expanding women-only groups. This would likely involve consolidating networks among women drivers rather than a more place-based approach targeting parking areas. Trade unions like COTWU-T might play a supporting role here.

(6) Inclusive infrastructure planning

Drivers should be consulted and accommodated in new urban infrastructure projects, for instance, through the addition of shelters around parking areas and modified road design such as dedicated lanes on large arterial roads. New infrastructure plans should also include a longer-term vision, avoiding the repeated displacement of informal workers, even from locations to which they were previously relocated (see section 3.5).

(7) Assembling a reform coalition

A range of state, civil society, and donor actors are committed to more participatory transport planning. LATRA and many LGAs embrace aspects of a participatory vision, despite certain challenges. TCDC, with its expertise and personnel, could contribute at multiple levels of government. Donor agencies like JICA have encouraged integration of paratransit with BRT. Various NGOs and advocacy organisations also focus on improving road safety issues and informal economy livelihoods, including of women. These actors could convene, alongside drivers' groups, to develop a shared vision and advocacy strategy.

⁵⁴ The guidelines are available here (accessed 31 March 2025): <https://efg.or.tz/gbv-guideline-for-public-spaces/>

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