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## **Analysing the impact of taxi violence on commuters in South Africa**

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**Abstract.** Taxi violence in South Africa was the tool that the apartheid regime used to pursue their interest by dividing the people so that they could acquire what they needed (Sekhonyane and Dugard, 2004:15). Taxi violence is one of the most burning issues faced by Department of Transport, Police, commuters and taxi industry in South Africa. This industry plays a vital role in commuting people to and from work or different destinations, and in most cases it is caught in the wrong doing in terms of fighting for routes where many innocent lives are lost due to infighting. The inability by government to regulate taxi industry is a serious problem for taxi operators, taxi associations, commuters and society. The deregulation of taxi industry brought many problems such as conflict, violence and mafia type assassinations in South Africa. This article focus on preventive measures to curb taxi violence in South Africa. This article utilised qualitative, case study based approach and the approach is supported by analysis of primary and secondary sources. The article further draws on the findings from the world on taxi violence and formulate steps to counteract taxi violence in South Africa. The research based key steps leading to the prevention of taxi violence in South Africa. The first process related to regulation of taxi industry, awareness campaigns on taxi operations, the control of routes and multidisciplinary investigation team should be established to overcome taxi violence in South Africa.

**Keywords.** Taxi violence, Taxi industry, Commuters, Law enforcement and South Africa

### **Introduction**

The term “taxi war” is usually used to refer to the turf wars fought between taxi associations and individual taxi drivers since the 1980s (Morapedi, 2017). The taxi wars are still raging even today and now they have escalated to a point where they are out of control. Bearing in mind that taxi violence affects the livelihood of taxi drivers, owners, commuters and the entire society as they transport people from one place to another. This South African informal transport industry, dubbed the minibus taxi industry, is infamous for its frequent spurts of deadly confrontations that are commonly referred to as taxi wars or taxi violence (Ngubane and Olofinbiyi, 2020). The competition between the rail and buses, which was and is subsidised by the government, also played a role because taxis were losing commuters (Molefe 2016). The refusal by the government to grant permits constrained the growth of the taxi industry as it made the operation of most taxis illegal and subjected its operators to prosecutions and confiscation of their vehicles (Molefe, 2016). It is of paramount importance for department of transport to

regulate the taxi industry to avoid taxi violence as this move would bring discipline and application of laws governing taxi industry. The killings between rival taxi associations put everyone at risk as this violence are happening in the community and sometimes in the taxi ranks. The function of the state is to ensure safety and security of the people in the country and this responsibility has been given to the ministry of police, community safety and transport department to ensure the smooth operations of taxi industry. Commuters are no longer safe in the taxis as the violence continue on daily basis across the country and what is disturbing is the industry is not regulated which put the entire business under the control of taxi owners and associations without the involvement of state which create lawlessness in the business. This business plays a vital role in terms of economic activities because without the taxi industry most of the people will not be able to go to work and attend schools, it is of paramount importance to ensure that it is safer to use this modes of transportation. The industry serves about 65% of South Africans who use public transportation and it is a source of Black entrepreneurial activity (Boudreaux, 2006). This industry plays a significant role in the daily lives of majority of the people in the country. All major role players need to come on board and assist in the prevention measures of curbing these killings in the taxi and industry and ensure that all commuters, owners, taxi drivers and all other road users are safe on the road as these killings are happening everywhere. Due to high number of incidence in the industry, commuters in most cases are left stranded without a means of embarking on their journey and also the issue of their safety while using other means of transport. Most of the taxi associations they operate as if they are in charge of commuters, they can dictate how commuters should embark on their journeys which create unnecessary conflicts between taxi operators and commuters. Taxi violence in South Africa was the tool that the apartheid regime used to pursue their interest by dividing the people so that they could acquire what they needed (Sekhonyane and Dugard, 2000:15). The state prevented entrepreneurs from operating kombi taxis by refusing to issue road carrier permits to them. The competition between rail and buses, which was and is subsidised by the government, also played a role because taxis were losing commuters. The aim of this article was to determine the impact of taxi violence on commuters, the causes of taxi violence, collaboration of major stakeholders in the taxi industry and the role of law enforcement agencies in curbing taxi violence in South Africa.

#### **Design and research methodology**

This article utilised qualitative, case study based approach. The approach is supported by analysis of primary and secondary sources such as documents from department of police, Transport, Community safety, academic books, articles and reports from non-governmental organisations focusing on taxi violence. This article draws on the findings from the world on taxi industry and formulate steps to counteract taxi violence in South Africa. Commuters should play a vital role in protecting themselves by engaging with relevant structures such as police ministry, taxi associations and department of transport to ensure that their safety is prioritised as the taxi violence is rife in South Africa and they are always caught in the violence. This article seeks to produce wide range of methods to curb taxi violence and protection of commuters as many taxi drivers, owners and commuters are being killed during the taxi violence in South Africa and also to check other strategies or measures used in other countries around the world especially on law enforcement, regulation of taxi industry or businesses, collaborations, control of routes and educational safety into taxi industry. The epistemological grounding of the project is rooted in the interpretative methodology as exemplified by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007).

### **Broken window theory**

Broken windows theory, an academic theory proposed by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling in 1982, used broken window as a metaphor for disorder within neighbourhoods (McKee, 2017). Their theory links disorder and incivility within a community to subsequent occurrences of serious crime (McKee, 2017). Many police agencies in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and other nations, currently use broken windows policing as a core crime control strategy and a critical examination of the existing evidence is warranted as it could also be used to address taxi violence offenses (Braga and Welsh, 2016: 6). The general idea of dealing with disorderly conditions to prevent crime is present in myriad police strategies, ranging from “order maintenance” and “zero-tolerance,” where the police attempt to impose order through strict enforcement, to “community” and “problem-oriented policing” strategies, where police attempt to produce order and reduce crime through cooperation with community members and by addressing specific recurring problems (Cordner, 1998; Eck and Maguire, 2006; Skogan, 2006; Skogan *et al.*, 1999).

Taxi violence affects taxi operators, commuters, families and communities negatively, as it brings pain and suffering to the loved one and in most cases, is caused by criminality within the taxi industry as there are many associations which are fighting for routes in the country and due to unregulated business it contributes to havoc and misery on public transport. Wilson and Kelling took a different view, they saw serious crime as the result of a lengthier chain of events, theorising that crime emanated from disorder and that if disorder were eliminated, then serious crimes would not occur. Their theory further posits that the prevalence of disorder creates fear in the minds of citizens who are convinced that the area is unsafe (McKee, 2017).

Disorder causes crime, and crime causes further disorder and crime, McKee (2017). According to this theory more should be done in the law enforcement agencies in order for communities to win the trust of law enforcement officials, as some of them solicit money from taxi operators in exchange of victimizing other taxi associations over permits to operate on the road and this causes a lot of problems for the taxi industry and safety of commuters as other rival operators fight with those who are given preferences by law enforcement agencies. More should be done to regulate the taxi industry and implement legislations governing this business and prioritise the safety of commuters as they are always caught in the crossfire between taxi rivalries. Law enforcement agencies must come up with strategies which could turn around the situation and make the road safer to all taxi operators and commuters because in South Africa there are always a fight between taxi associations over routes and it is of paramount importance to work together and restore peace in all taxi ranks. The obvious advantage of this theory over many of its criminological predecessors, is that it enables initiatives within the realm of the criminal justice policy to effect change, rather than relying on social policy (McKee, 2017), because disorder causes a lot of tension in a country where people disregard the laws of the country, and in this case most taxi violence is caused by non-regulation of the taxi industry as they are controlled by their taxi associations and more should be done to maintain law and order to save lives of the commuters and taxi operators by regulating the business and strengthening law enforcement to ensure successful prosecution of those who violate the rights of others in terms of operating on the road as the broken window theory depicts.

In the Netherlands (Keitzer *et al.*, 2008), conducted six field experiments examining the links between disorder and more serious crime and concluded that dealing with disorderly conditions was an important intervention to halt the spread of further crime and disorder. It is also important for taxi operators and taxi associations to be informed about the danger of not following the rules of the road, as it impacts negatively on commuters. Law enforcers should

also enforce the law consistently to prevent disorder in the communities. There are also policy evaluations implemented in other jurisdictions that support the perspective that dealing with disorderly conditions, generates crime control gains. Two separate randomised controlled trials of disorderly policing strategies implemented within a problem-oriented policing framework, found that the strategy resulted in significant reductions in calls for service to the police in Jersey City, New Jersey (Braga and Bond, 2008). Roads policing is a fundamental and irreplaceable activity which plays a key role in saving lives and minimising injury on the road. To do this effectively, roads policing must be given its rightful priority by the government and the Police Service, and be adequately resourced (Amos *et al.*, 2015).

The Police have many priorities, including tackling many forms of violent crime, all of which are extremely important, and therefore they must allocate and prioritise their limited resources to the best possible effect. Hot spots policing is the strategy in which police systematically identify areas within a city that have disproportionate amounts of crime and employ responses in those specific areas. Often, police implement traditional responses in hot spots, such as increased police presence and arrests (Weisburd and Braga, 2006). There has been a significant amount of rigorously applied research on hot spots policing, and the combined results indicate that it contributes to meaningful reductions of both crime and disorder (Braga, 2008; Braga and Bond, 2008; Ratcliffe, Taniguchi, Groff and Wood, 2011; Weisburd and Eck, 2004). Police crackdowns of more temporary applications of hot spots policing have also been shown to work, although primarily on a short-term basis (Scott, 2004; Weisburd and Eck, 2004). When determining the effectiveness of hot spots policing, officials need to consider whether it prevents crime or just moves it to a different area. The level of death and injury caused by poor and often illegal behaviour on the road, far exceeds the number of people killed through any other form of crime. Accordingly, roads policing must be one of the top priorities (Amos *et al.*, 2015). It is of paramount importance to ensure that there is discipline within taxi industry and deploy many law enforcement agencies to hot-spot areas to ensure visibility and protect the lives of commuters and taxi operators.

### **Brief Literature review**

#### **Taxi business in South Africa**

Sekhonyane and Duguard (2004:15) stated that the taxi industry is a primary medium of transport among Africans and the so called coloured people in South Africa. This industry was previously regulated; however, after 1987 it was deregulated leading to an influx of new minibus taxi operators who were keen to render their services for profit at any and all costs. Today, this industry is a multibillion rand industry that ferries over 60% of South Africa's commuters. The industry is highly competitive and has lucrative routes. In an effort to manage the industry, taxi owners formed associations that were based primarily on regions and to a lesser extent routes (Molefe, 2016). Over time, these associations grew very strong and strongly defended their routes and it becomes difficult for other taxi owners to operate in this business. The South Africa minibus taxi industry which is mainly operated using 16-seater minibus taxis is responsible for providing public transport services to a significant number of commuters on a daily basis, (Masela and Machobane, 2020). This business in South Africa is operated by many black people in townships and now it has seen significant increase in the number of areas around towns. It has created lot of opportunities for black people in the country as it employs taxi drivers and que marshals. This business is not subsidised by government but other operators such as trains and buses are given subsidies by government. Baloyi (2013:343) claimed that the birth of the minibus tax industry was a direct result of industrialization, which forced black

South Africans from their traditional homesteads to the cities to look for work. Disputed by author, Masela (2020:40) who in his dissertation, claimed that the birth of the taxi industry is a result of the BANTU ACT imposed by the apartheid government. Baloyi (2013: 343) came back to agree with Masela and Machobane (2020:40) that the urbanization process was intensified by the introduction of the Natives Land Act (No. 27 of 1913), which dispossessed the majority of South African people from their land and forced them into the urban labour market. Post-apartheid regime many black people started to go into this business and start associations at each taxi rank to ensure control of transportation and routes. It is one sector of the economy that is dominated by the black community, which was marginalised during colonialism and apartheid and it is vital that the latest move by government towards formalisation results in an industry that is safe, reliable and viable so that it can keep contributing to the country's economy, (The Conversation, 2020). To operate as a taxi owner, you need to have a permit which must be paid before you can join a taxi association for transport of commuters and if you do not have a permit, then you will not be allowed to operate. There are lot of taxi associations in South Africa in the villages, townships and in the cities around the country which have their own code of conduct in terms of operations. South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO) is the biggest association in South Africa where small associations are affiliated to it and are represented by it when there are disputes or any other matters related to taxi operations in the country. Many routes were created by big associations to transport commuters to and from work and this created a space for other people to buy taxis and join the industry but because of greed many taxi owners bought many taxis and control major routes for profit. It limited other taxi owners for joining major routes as the space is limited, then it created rival taxi associations as they also want to participate in the business and as a result it created conflicts between many associations around the country. The emergence of taxi violence is now rife in the country and many people are now afraid of using taxis as it is not safe to do so. This business generates lot of money for taxi owners and play a critical role in the country as many people are using taxis on a daily basis to and from work. It is of paramount importance for this industry to be protected by rules and regulations to enable it to grow and be safer for all the people involved in it.

### **Factors contributing to taxi violence**

#### **Deregulation of taxi industry**

Dugard (2001) stated that rapid deregulation resulted in the immediate rise in the number of taxi associations, which had used exploitation to build lucrative empires-cum-protection-rackets directly associated with violence from the beginning. Taxi associations are not regulated under the current National Land Transport Act and have become a law unto themselves and this contribute to taxi violence as they fight over the control of major routes in the country. Taxi associations created rights over the routes and the government was confused whether to recognise those rights as its policies promoted conflicts over the routes by creating ambiguities over rights to operate (Boudreaux, 2006:24). When the number of taxi operators entered the taxi business and obtained permits and then they found out that there was no business on routes where they were allowed to operate, they often poached passengers from other routes, (Molefe, 2016). When taxi association had been established their terrain was protected and anyone who wanted to join the taxi industry had to obtain all the legal documents and apply for membership in the ranks as the terrain was secured. Applications were made to a taxi association for consideration and, if the association felt that there were adequate taxis at that rank, the applicant was turned down, Molefe (2016). This created lot of problems for those

who wanted to join the industry as many were turned down by taxi association bosses and this contributed to rival taxi associations as they also want to participate in the business.

### **Fights over money and territorial dominance**

Moloto (2021) stated that the rapid influx in passengers, taxis and taxi owners also meant increased competition, taxi owners identified the need for self-regulation, leading to the establishment of *mother bodies* who used violence, or the threat thereof, as a means of control (especially over the more lucrative routes). Due to increase in the number of taxi associations, this resulted in fighting for control of major routes which make lot of money and many associations want to operate on the routes which could make a profit in order to survive in the business. Taxi associations are not regulated under the current National Land Transport Act and have become a law unto themselves, they collect money from operators and the money which is not accounted for and decide who joins the associations and where they can operate their minibus taxis. This kind of operations or conduct create lot of tensions between taxi associations and taxi operators as some are given routes which are not profitable and others are given preferential routes. Gauteng Transport MEC, Jacob Mamabolo, says there is also a battle for power and dominance. “The vehicles owned by the association and some powerful individuals in the association do not wait for their turn in loading lines. They simply move to the front when they arrive at the taxi rank which causes a lot of resentment from the general membership. The involvement of taxi associations in the business of taxi operations including the different money collection methods makes the incumbent executives resist vacating positions even where they have been voted out of office. In certain instances, monies collected are for the benefit of these executives, Phagane (2021). The leaders of the associations become powerful because of the resources that were invested in the operation of the association; a person in a leadership position would not want to vacate that seat because there were more benefits than operating the taxi (Molefe, 2016). The leaders made sure that they adopted some individuals to enjoy the gains so that it would be difficult for the people who wanted to remove them from their current positions (Dugard, 2001). The violence became about power base and control of resources and no more about the operation of the taxi and the routes.

### **Hitmen**

When taxi violence erupted it affected innocent people who were not part of the violence and the hired-gunmen-executed killings did not care about the lives of the commuters and in most cases commuters are caught in the crossfire between rival taxi associations who hired “Inkabi” hitmen to execute the killings on their behalf. Khosa (1991:232) states that some of the people in the association hired hitmen in order to kill the rivals who were contesting with them for the same route. Dugard (2001) states that mother bodies went as far as hiring the hitmen from other neighbouring countries in order to make it difficult for that person to be traced. The hit squad carried out all the assassinations as per the directive from the mother body. Their payments were on a monthly basis or after the execution of job. Allied mother bodies collaborated in the protection against syndicates of hostile vehicle hijackers (Dugard, 2001). These are as a result of power and control over routes in their communities and as well as major routes in the country and because of power that comes with the control of major routes and the profit made, it is easy to find hitmen to kill the rival taxi operators or those who are against them. The power struggle emerged within the mother body, which caused the same members of the association to fight against each other; as the defence was more about association resources than taxi operations (Dugard, 2001). The competition for the control and domination

of routes in the industry resulted in the increase of violent incidents, particular murders by hired guns. There were those busy routes that most of the taxi owners had interest in (Sekhonyane and Dugard, 2004:15); those that already operated in those routes did not allow new people who wanted to join and work with them; and they were protected their territory. Lucrative routes were central to successful taxi operation. Rival owners increasingly resorted to violence to eliminate competition and the assassination of rivals added a sinister dimension to the conflict.

### **Ineffective law enforcement**

According to Parliamentary Monitory Group (1999) during the investigation of taxi violence crimes, the following problems are experienced by the investigating officers:

- ❖ The postponement of cases in court for up to 3 years. During this time witnesses are intimidated or simply disappear.
- ❖ The disturbance of crime scenes by onlookers or members of squads who instruct certain loyal persons to remove evidence, such as cartridges, and other corpus delict from the crime scene.
- ❖ South African Police Service members are intimidated to remove evidence from crime scenes.
- ❖ The witness protection programme is ineffective because, especially in rural areas, witnesses refuse to leave their homes to be relocated in an unknown area for an indefinite period. They are also afraid of losing their work and fear for the safety of their families who are subjected to severe intimidation and are even murdered.
- ❖ Unethical handling of cases by legal representatives and their illegal involvement with taxi associations.
- ❖ Taxi associations not cooperating when mediators convene a meeting in order to solve conflict between them. In certain circumstances only one association attends such a meeting or both decide not to attend.
- ❖ Unwillingness to make statements of occurrences, identify perpetrators and participate in court proceedings due to intimidation.

Government had declared war on taxi violence but instead of helping to eliminate crime and violence a good number of police were known to be undermining the effort by associating with the criminals for financial gain. In cases where a taxi association was fighting with rivals, police were involved directly in shooting as they backed their association against its rival (Dugard, 2001). Police officials in the industry used state resources to fight battles and even kill in favour of the association. Guns and uniforms would be hired out to the mother bodies for criminal activities and returned back to police. Some police officials worked as body guards to senior executives of the mother bodies. The police who were properly investigating the case would find it difficult to get information that led to the conviction of perpetrators because of police being part of the association (Dugard, 2001). The commission of inquiry into taxi violence in Gauteng has lifted the lid on how some law enforcement officials have business interests in the taxi industry, which has been one of the major contributors to the conflict in the sector, the commission was investigating more than 500 cases of taxi violence which were unresolved (Khubeka, 2021). Some of the law enforcement officials are involved in the taxi industry as taxi operators which is against the law and this contribute to ineffective law enforcement as cases of taxi violence are not resolved. In some instances, law enforcement officials are being compromised by taking bribes from taxi operators which make a room for many taxi operators to operate illegally. It is of paramount importance for law enforcement officials to refrain from this business as it is against law so that they can assist the victims of taxi violence without being

bias and ensure resolve cases of taxi violence. Collaborative efforts should be prioritised to end corruption as it disturbs to clean the industry, such a collaborative approach, paired with a commitment to rooting out corruption will allow the industry to contribute towards the vision of "safe, reliable, affordable and law-abiding service for the commuters", under the law of the Republic of South Africa (Moloto, 2021).

### **Impact of taxi violence on commuters Unsafety of public transport**

Public transportation provides a mobility service to the user, as well as producing a wide impact on the system and consequently, it should be operated in such a way as to achieve an efficient and effective transportation system (Joewono and Kubota, 2006: 87). Public transport plays a critical role in the transportation system as they assist commuters to and from different destination but it has its own challenges such as fighting over routes between taxi associations which put the lives of the commuters at risk as these taxi operators are killing each other on daily basis, it also compromises the jobs of commuters as they are always late at work due to infighting. Fears about crime-related personal safety on public transport can have an important impact on commuters and a range of studies have examined different factors that influence perceptions of crime risk (Delbosc and Currie, 2012). Taxi industry in South Africa is not regulated and is controlled by taxi associations which create major problems for commuters as they fight for positions and territorial dominance in their associations. In most cases hitmen are being hired to kill other rival taxi operators which in turn commuters are caught in crossfire between rival taxi operators. Khosa (1995) states that some of the people in the association hired hitmen in order to kill the rivals who were contesting with them for the same route or positions in the associations as they benefit more from those positions unlike just operating a taxi. Despite the available modes of transportation, South African transport is still plagued with several challenges. These comprise of low ridership, lack of public transport accessibility in rural areas, taxi violence, equity imbalances and congestion (Jennings, 2015). The South African public transport industry is currently under immense enquiry as captive users of these systems face unsafe, unreliable and costly systems (Walters, 2014). Many commuters in rural areas or townships rely on minibus taxis to ferry them to and from work and due to unreliability of the industry, in most cases it put commuters at risk of losing their jobs for always being late at work. Other challenges which in most cases affect women commuters is the issue of sexual harassment at taxi ranks by taxi operators. They harass women who wear short skirts or revealing clothes and which is tantamount to violation of their rights. However, several minibus taxis operate without licenses and, in some cases, they are driven by unlicensed drivers and this has been followed by complaints from commuters, who are affected by the violence associated with this transport mode (Mtizi, 2017). The driving behaviour of most taxi drivers is usually reckless as they have a habit of breaking most of the rules of the road and taxi fares are not stagnant, but alternate due to peak time and weather (Ngubane, 2021). Reckless and negligent driving is common among taxi drivers and it put commuters at risk of losing their lives due to their non-compliance with the rules of the road. Taxis are often seen as unsafe and operating in a way that is abusive to passengers and illegal operators in the industry have contributed to violence in the industry (Arrive Alive, 2021). A study done by the Automobile Association of South Africa recorded an annual total of 70 000 minibus taxi crashes which indicates that taxis in SA amount for double the rate of crashes than all other passenger vehicles (Arrive Alive, 2021).

### **Mistrust between commuters and taxi operators**

Mlamla (2021) stated that the ongoing minibus taxi violence has left several minibus taxi ranks closed for two months, in an effort to bring stability and peace between rival taxi associations, the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata) and Congress of Democratic Taxi Associations (Codeta). This was due to infighting between these associations in relation to control of routes which contributed to instability in Cape Town. The commuters were affected severely as there was no means of transportation to and from different destinations and it also made commuters not to rely on public transport and use other alternative modes of transport which are expensive as compared to prices they pay for taxis. This industry put the lives of the commuters and other road users at risk and even scholar transport drivers were fearing for their lives as they return to transporting learners to and from schools (Mlamla, 2021). Davis (2021) stated that commuters are terrified, with good reason, of being caught in the crossfire as taxi bullets fly. With an estimated 82 people killed in the taxi violence this year alone, taking taxis in certain areas has become a life-threatening business with hitmen ambushing taxi drivers and conducting shoot-outs at taxi ranks (Davis, 2021). This means that commuters were left stranded and not able to go to work as the violence put everyone at risk, even taxi drivers fear for their lives as they do not know whether the people who are in their taxis are commuters or hitmen. The number of innocent people dying is increasing on a daily basis due to the taxi violence and it compromise the future of this business as they need commuters to commute in their taxis but the issue of safety and trustworthiness of taxi operators is a major concern for commuters and other road users. Safety and security is non-existent as innocent people are losing their lives in taxi violence. It is of paramount importance for law enforcement agencies to prioritise the safety and needs of commuters as they are always caught in taxi violence and living in fear in their communities as bullets are the order of the day between rival taxi associations.

### **Conclusion and recommended interventions to combat taxi violence in South Africa**

The article has sought out to provide an analysis of the phenomenon of taxi violence in South African with a view of challenges and opportunities that could be exploited to effectively combat the extent and level of taxi violence. To this end, article recognises that taxi associations are the instigators of taxi violence in South Africa due to the control of routes and being gatekeepers of other taxi operators to enter into this business. Since the taxi industry is not regulated by government it is not easy to play a vital role in terms of providing policies/strategies in terms of how they should conduct themselves so that they could overcome incidences of violence. It is of paramount importance for Department of Transport, Police and taxi associations to map a way forward in terms of ensuring safety and overcoming taxi violence in South Africa as it impacts negatively to all the stakeholders.

#### **Regulation of taxi industry**

Department of Transport should regulate the taxi industry so that the industry could have legislations framework and policies to control this sector since the associations are not able to control this business. Due to high rate of taxi violence in South Africa, taxi associations should work with department of transport in formulating legislations and policies governing the industry. They should seek common ground on existing business models, safety and compliance, broader economic empowerment of operators and the issue of subsidies for taxis as other transport modes are subsidised by government. This would help in terms to end the conflict and violence that continues to plague the industry because of competition on routes,

fighting over money and executive positions in the associations as well as territorial dominance. The taxi industry should play an important role in government's ultimate objective of improving the daily experiences of commuters through the establishment of integrated rapid transport service networks in the metros, cities, towns and rural districts and this could be realised by regulating the industry and providing quality services to all the commuters and ensuring their safety as it is of great importance for the industry and department of transport.

### **Awareness campaigns**

Safety awareness campaigns should be promoted by Department of Transport, police, commuters and taxi associations to end taxi violence in South Africa. The primary objective of the campaign should be centred around ending taxi violence and making it to be a safe and reliable mode of transport and to ensure that this sector plays an active role in commuting commuters to and from different destinations across the country. These awareness campaigns should also address the issue of non-compliance by taxi operators in terms of the rules of the road as many passengers are injured or killed by mini-bus taxis. The entire industry is tainted by not following the rules of the road and also being in cahoots with law enforcement officials as some of them are also taxi operators and this compromises the whole fundamental aspect of adherence to the rules of the road. There are high rates of sexual harassment reported from taxi drivers as well as high rates of traffic crimes committed and these reports taint the reputation of the industry. Training of operators and taxi workers across the value chain should be an integral part of the industry development and skilling programme to ensure that they conduct themselves in a professional manner and respect their commuters. More should be done to fix this industry by using road safety campaigns and ensuring that the industry is safe and reliable in terms of catering to the needs of the commuters especially on safety.

### **Control of routes**

Most of the incidences of taxi violence are caused by control of routes between the associations which impact on the safety of commuters and taxi operators as they are being injured or killed. Taxi associations should provide clear guidelines in terms of operations to end violence in the industry and ensure that road users or commuters and taxi operators are safe. Department of Transport and police should be part of the arrangement for control of routes to ensure that associations adhere to allocated routes and this will help to overcome taxi violence in the industry. Associations should conduct themselves in line with their operating licenses in terms of the routes allocated to them and not interfere in other associations' routes as this creates problems for all the affected associations. Law enforcement capacity and deployment should be reviewed and strengthened in the affected areas to ensure enforcement of all laws without fear or favour.

### **Multidisciplinary investigation**

There should be a joint effort between all stakeholders to address corruption and violence that affects the taxi industry and they are compromised by corrupt state officials from the Department of Transport, administrators and traffic officers and yet many are directly complicit in corruption themselves (Moloto, 2021). Multi-disciplinary investigation into the taxi violence should include South African Police Service (SAPS), South African Revenue Service (SARS), the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and National Intelligence Agency (NIA), who should investigate the activities of the warlords, fraud, killings and other crimes so

that they could prosecute criminals within this industry and ensure that the taxi business is safe, reliable, affordable and law-abiding service for the commuters.

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