



RESEARCH ARTICLE

URBAN GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT IN GREATER LOMÉ

Abelim PASSOLI^{1,2*} and Coffi AHOLOU^{1,2}

¹Cities, Environment and Society in Africa Research Laboratory (VESA), 01 PO BOX 1515, Lome 01 University of Lome; ²Regional Center of Excellency on Sustainable Cities in Africa

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***Corresponding author:**

Abelim PASSOLI

ABSTRACT

Urban governance and public transport management in Greater Lomé face significant challenges due to incomplete decentralization and institutional fragmentation. The inefficiency of the transport system stems from a lack of coordination between public and private stakeholders, overlapping responsibilities, and the absence of an integrated strategic vision. This study employs a methodological approach combining document analysis, semi-structured interviews with sector stakeholders, and field observations. The aim is to examine institutional practices, the conditions under which transport infrastructure operates, and the urban governance challenges involved. The findings show that, despite legislative progress, transport governance remains hindered by a lack of resources, organizational weaknesses, and ineffective institutional coordination. The focus on road infrastructure comes at the expense of soft mobility and multimodal solutions, thereby limiting the transition to sustainable mobility. Drawing inspiration from international experiences, the study recommends strengthening inter-institutional coordination, introducing innovative financial mechanisms, and integrating sustainable mobility into strategic plans. This article highlights the urgency of structural reform in transport governance in Lomé. It proposes an integrated and pragmatic approach to enhance the efficiency of the urban transport system and address the growing needs of the population while promoting inclusive and sustainable mobility.

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INTRODUCTION

The management of public transport in major African metropolises presents a significant challenge for urban mobility, environmental sustainability, and the improvement of living conditions for populations (Godard, 2013). In Greater Lomé, where rapid population growth and uncontrolled urban expansion increase pressure on existing infrastructure (Kassi-Djodjo *et al.*, 2021), institutional fragmentation hinders the establishment of an effective and inclusive transport system. Insufficient coordination between public and private stakeholders leads to inefficient planning, overlapping responsibilities, and a mismatch between infrastructure and user needs. Additionally, the heavy reliance on informal transport (motorcycle taxis, shared taxis) complicates the harmonization of urban mobility policies and limits the integration of sustainable transport solutions (Diaz Olvera, Plat & Pochet, 2019). The theoretical framework of urban governance (Pierre & Peters, 2000) and the collaborative governance approach (Ansell & Gash, 2008) provide valuable tools for analyzing these issues by emphasizing inter-institutional cooperation and optimal management of public resources. In Togo, Law No. 2019-006 of June 26, 2019, which amended Law No. 2007-011 of March 13, 2007, on decentralization and local freedoms, aims to strengthen the competencies of local governments in public transport, among other areas. However, the effective implementation of this law is hampered by a lack of resources, overlapping responsibilities, and limited coordination between state and local levels. Despite being assigned new responsibilities, local governments struggle to fully assume their roles due to an insufficiently structured financial and technical framework

(Kouassi, 2020). In response to these challenges, the Togolese government launched the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (PMUD) for Greater Lomé in May 2023, co-financed by the European Union and the Covenant of Mayors for Sub-Saharan Africa. This plan aims to improve urban mobility by reducing road congestion, air pollution, and accident risks. To achieve this, it includes measures such as modernizing the public transport network, developing suitable infrastructure (bike lanes, bus-only lanes), and promoting smart, low-carbon transport solutions (World Bank, 2022). At the international level, experiences such as the public transport reform in Paris through the Syndicat des Transports d'Île-de-France (STIF) or fare integration in Seoul demonstrate that integrated governance promotes consistent and efficient transport management (Baudouin & Leprince, 2013; Kim & Moon, 2012). However, even in decentralized contexts like France, organizational imbalances persist despite the reforms undertaken (Baudouin & Leprince, 2013). This article addresses the dysfunctions of urban governance in the management of public transport in Greater Lomé, analyzing the challenges related to decentralization, the organization of stakeholders, and financial and institutional constraints. Through a comparative approach with other African and international metropolises, it offers recommendations for a more effective and sustainable management of transport in the Togolese capital.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent research on urban governance in Sub-Saharan Africa highlights that mobility systems suffer primarily from institutional fragmentation and weak multi-actor coordination (Meakin, 2022;

Klopp & Cavoli, 2020). Despite reforms in several metropolitan areas, progress remains constrained by limited institutional capacities and the absence of an integrated vision for public action (UN-Habitat, 2022). In the field of urban transport, publications from the past decade show that modernization depends on institutions' ability to establish coherent governance frameworks (SSATP, 2022; Agyemang, 2023). Experiences from Nairobi, Accra, Lagos, and Kigali demonstrate that successful reforms rely on multimodal planning, clearer responsibilities, and gradual integration of informal transport into regulated formal systems (Schalekamp, 2020; Owuor, 2021; Olvera *et al.*, 2021). Transitioning toward sustainable systems requires a paradigm shift in infrastructure development, redirecting investments toward low-carbon modes and efficient multimodal networks (ITDP, 2023; World Bank, 2022). Studies emphasize the importance of integrating active modes such as walking and cycling, which remain marginalized despite representing the majority of daily trips. Literature also underscores the growing relevance of digital technologies (Gao *et al.*, 2021). Electronic ticketing, intelligent transport systems, and data-driven management improve reliability and strengthen transparency in governance. Finally, the social dimension of mobility policies is central. Women are disproportionately affected by insecurity and limited accessibility (Peters, 2021; UN Women, 2022), making social inclusion a key component of contemporary urban mobility strategies.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection and analysis: The data collection was based on document analysis, semi-structured interviews, field observations, and spatial analyses to examine institutional and operational issues in the management of public transport in Greater Lomé. This approach enabled the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to deliver an in-depth analysis of urban governance and mobility.

Document analysis: An in-depth document analysis was conducted to identify normative frameworks, governance strategies, and existing practices. The sources utilized include legal and regulatory texts such as Law No. 2019-003 on decentralization and its implementing decree, as well as institutional reports like the Master Plan for urban Development (SDAU), the Urban Mobility Plan (PDU), and the Support Program for Governance in the Transport Sector (PAGST). Additionally, scientific publications and comparative studies on similar transport systems in Africa and beyond (Dahou, 2021; Bidou-Zachariassen, 2007; Baron *et al.*, 2016; Kim & Moon, 2012; Adeyemi *et al.*, 2023; Tchamba, 2022) enriched the analysis with global and interdisciplinary perspectives.

Exploratory survey: An exploratory survey was conducted among users to assess their expectations regarding public transport and sustainable mobility. Stratified sampling ensured geographical and sociodemographic representation, allowing for the identification of key challenges encountered (accessibility, cost, and safety).

Semi-structured interviews: The semi-structured interviews, based on a question-and-answer format, provided detailed and nuanced information from a diverse panel of stakeholders, including public authorities (MTRAF, MTPI, municipalities), transport operators (SOTRAL, transport unions), civil society organizations (CSOs, neighborhood committees), and users. Topics covered included the responsibilities assigned to municipalities, coordination between the state and local authorities, as well as obstacles and strategies in public transport governance.

Field observations: Participatory and direct observation allowed for an analysis of the use of transport infrastructure, mobility flows, and interactions between users and operators. This method highlighted phenomena such as the informal management of parking areas, irregular tax collection, and the condition of infrastructure. The organization of transport hubs and road safety conditions were also documented.

Data Processing and Analysis: The collected data was analyzed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Thematic coding, assisted by software tools like NVivo, identified recurring themes such as institutional coordination, financing, and infrastructure. Content analysis was conducted to examine stakeholders' discourse and understand their expectations and priorities, while a comparative analysis contrasted the findings with international case studies (Nairobi, Dakar, Paris, and Lagos) to derive relevant lessons.

Analytical Framework and Limitations: The analytical and conceptual framework utilized is grounded in an urban governance approach (Pierre & Peters, 2000) and incorporates several theoretical concepts such as collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008), the principle of subsidiarity—which examines the distribution of responsibilities across governance levels—and sociotechnical transition theories, which allow for the integration of innovation into transport systems. However, certain limitations are acknowledged, such as restricted access to some governmental data and the representativeness of the results (observations and surveys may not fully capture local realities). Additionally, the temporal scope of the study must be considered, as the collected data reflects a specific moment in time and may evolve with future reforms. This holistic approach ensures an in-depth understanding of the challenges in urban governance and transport management in Greater Lomé.

RESULTS

Barriers to Urban Governance in Greater Lomé: Urban governance in Greater Lomé continues to face a set of structural and institutional constraints that hinder the effectiveness of public policies. Although decentralization reforms have been initiated to reinforce local management, the urban system remains marked by fragmented responsibilities, limited municipal capacities, and persistent coordination challenges among key stakeholders. Understanding these barriers is essential to assess the current functioning of urban institutions and the conditions under which mobility and other services are delivered.

Decentralization in Lomé: Evolving Challenges and Dynamics: The process of decentralization in Lomé has progressed significantly in recent years, particularly with the establishment of elected municipalities and the transfer of new responsibilities to local authorities. However, the transition toward effective local governance is still incomplete. Municipalities operate within a constrained environment characterized by insufficient resources, overlapping mandates, and gaps in the regulatory framework. This section examines the historical trajectory of decentralization, the reforms undertaken, and the challenges that continue to shape local governance in Greater Lomé.

Context of Local Governance before 2019: Before 2019, local governance in Lomé was highly centralized, with management handled by a president of a special delegation overseeing both the city and the Gulf Prefecture. The state held all competencies, resulting in several challenges. This situation prompted the adoption of Law No. 2016-006 on decentralization and its implementing decree in 2019. Based on collected information, these challenges include:

- Conflicts of jurisdiction due to poorly defined prerogatives (overlaps, grey areas);
- The absence of autonomous communities capable of supporting local projects;
- Legal texts deemed obsolete (SDAU, 2017), unsuitable for territorial dynamics, climate challenges, and citizen participation;
- Insufficient financial and human resources for effective management of urban services (notably waste management, mobility, and urban planning).

Territorial organization underwent a major transformation with the first municipal elections held in 2019. Greater Lomé was subdivided into thirteen (13) municipalities, each administered by an elected mayor. These municipalities are grouped within two (02) administrative prefectures: Golfe (07 municipalities) and Agoé-Nyivé (06 municipalities). However, several structural limitations persist, hindering the effective implementation of decentralization. These include:

- **An incomplete regulatory framework:** The absence of certain implementing decrees hinders the operational transfer of responsibilities to municipalities, limiting their initiative capacity and the formulation of effective local strategies (Dahou, 2021; PAGST, 2022);
- **Insufficient human and financial resources:** Municipal budget allocations remain far below the actual needs. This observation is shared by several West African metropolises such as Abidjan (Ouattara, 2018) and Dakar (Baron *et al.*, 2016);
- **Overlapping of responsibilities:** The State maintains a strong presence at all levels of intervention (strategic, tactical, operational). This limits the autonomy of municipalities and causes conflicts of jurisdiction (Koussoube & Soulama, 2022).

Governance of Public Transportation in Lomé: The governance of public transportation in Greater Lomé suffers from institutional fragmentation that limits the effectiveness of implemented policies (Table 1 and figure 1). The lack of coordination between ministries and local authorities, combined with insufficient financial resources, hinders the establishment of a structured and efficient public transport system. Indeed, the municipalities of Greater Lomé have limited budgets, which are largely inadequate to ensure effective management of public transportation and mobility infrastructure. In 2023, budget allocations were highly unequal among the municipalities:

- Golfe 1: 2.6 billion FCFA with 218 employees;
- Agoé-Nyivé 4: 216 million FCFA with 29 employees;
- Golfe 3: 1.9 billion FCFA, but with a minimal share allocated to transport infrastructure.

The municipalities' own resources, mainly derived from local taxes (parking permits, garbage collection fees, property taxes), remain negligible compared to actual needs. The majority of funding comes from state subsidies and allocations from the Togolese Revenue Office (OTR), making municipalities heavily reliant on national transfers. This highlights that the current economic model is predominantly based on state transfers and local taxes, which are insufficient. To ensure more effective funding for public transport, several alternatives can be explored. These alternatives were identified during stakeholder consultations, including:

- Increasing municipalities' own resources through better taxation of parking areas and transport terminals;
- Establishing an urban transport development fund, financed by a specific fuel tax;
- Developing public-private partnerships (PPPs) to modernize collective transport infrastructure and integrate informal transport into a regulated system;
- Creating an integrated pricing mechanism to allocate a portion of revenues generated by urban tolls and operating permits to improving public transportation.

Regarding the issue of coordination between ministries and local authorities and institutional fragmentation, several initiatives have also been identified and can be implemented, including:

- Creating a permanent interministerial committee on urban mobility, led by the MTRAF with the participation of the MTPI, MEF, and local authorities;
- Establishing a single transport regulatory authority to centralize strategic decisions and ensure better distribution of responsibilities;

- Developing a regular consultation framework between municipalities and the state, notably through the creation of an urban mobility observatory tasked with monitoring and evaluating transport policies.

Beyond the identified initiatives, Law No. 2021-033 on public-private partnerships (PPPs) also offers an untapped opportunity for sustainable governance of public transportation in Greater Lomé. Indeed, PPPs can enhance local capacities by diversifying funding sources and improving the efficiency of public services.

Additionally, an exploratory survey conducted among a sample of 1,200 public transport users revealed several key priorities:

- **Improving the frequency and coverage of public transportation:** 78% of respondents consider the supply insufficient, particularly in the suburbs.
- **Reducing transportation costs:** 65% of users spend more than 20% of their income on transportation.
- **Securing journeys and infrastructure:** 72% of women surveyed report feeling unsafe in bus terminals and motorcycle taxis.
- **Developing alternatives to informal transportation:** 57% of users desire better integration of buses and artisanal transport systems.

Leveraging PPP mechanisms could address these challenges by facilitating the financing and modernization of transport infrastructure, optimizing public service management, and ensuring better accessibility and safety for users.

Summary of Issues in Public Transportation Governance in Greater Lomé: Table 2 summarizes the main issues in public transportation governance in Greater Lomé and highlights possible improvement levers.

Towards an Integrated Approach to Infrastructure Development and Urban Mobility: The development and maintenance of paved road networks and related infrastructure (mainly drainage and storm water management) are a priority for serving the residents of Greater Lomé and preventing floods and health crises. These developments, identified as essential prerequisites for mobility improvements, absorb a significant share of financial and human resources. The Master Plan for Development and Urban Planning (SDAU) confirms that "the main challenge is to bridge the infrastructure gap." During a workshop with institutional stakeholders, it was emphasized: "Here, mobility is primarily about infrastructure." This dominant perception reflects the structural reality of the road network. However, this focus on road infrastructure comes at the expense of an integrated and inclusive approach to mobility. As institutional stakeholders have highlighted: "Road infrastructure is the priority, but this marginalizes public transport and soft mobility modes."

Consultation with stakeholders and bibliographic analysis reveal that the main limitations of the current approach lie in:

- **A lack of coherent multimodal planning**, as evidenced by MTRAF and SDAU documents, which do not promote effective coordination between road transport and sustainable mobility.
- **A fragmentation of responsibilities**, hindering optimal management of public transportation, divided between different levels of governance.
- **Insufficient coordination** among the various actors responsible for infrastructure and mobility regulation.

This organizational complexity is illustrated in Table 3, which summarizes the distribution of responsibilities in the planning, construction, and maintenance of roadways:

Road Safety as a Major Issue: Road safety remains a significant concern. Many citizen associations are mobilized to address this issue; however, the National Road Safety Office (ONSR) falls under

the authority of four different ministries (MTRAF, Ministry of Security and Civil Protection, Ministry of Commerce, and Ministry of Public Works and Infrastructure), complicating the implementation of an effective strategy. To address this situation, better integration of infrastructure and urban mobility policies is necessary. Innovative solutions inspired by models from African and Asian cities (Salon & Gulyani, 2019) could be explored, such as:

- Developing priority public transport corridors;
- Improving governance and simplifying institutional responsibilities;
- Establishing better coordination between motorized transport and active modes (walking, cycling) to promote more inclusive and sustainable mobility.

A paradigm shift is therefore necessary to ensure balanced infrastructure and transport system development, aligned with sustainability and urban inclusion goals.

Marginalization of Alternative Modes of Transport and Insufficient Multimodal Infrastructure: In Greater Lomé, limited investments are primarily focused on the road network, to the detriment of other urban mobility sectors, such as walking and cycling. Despite walking accounting for more than 50% of urban trips (SSATP, 2019), these modes of transport are absent from strategic policies and lack specific planning. Their integration into urban development often depends on the availability of land during road construction. Regarding parking and multimodal hubs (bus terminals, parking lots), municipalities are theoretically responsible, but the lack of financial resources hinders their ability to develop suitable infrastructure. Some initiatives have been launched, such as parking facilities in Golfe 3 through collaborations between the Togolese Revenue Office (OTR) and the Togolese Plate Company (SOTOPLA), but they remain insufficient. Public space parking is often informally managed by unemployed youth, while individuals use private land to offer paid parking or collaborate with transport unions to establish unofficial stations. Additionally, municipalities receive technical support from the Ministry of Road, Air, and Rail Transport (MTRAF) and, in some cases, share management responsibilities with the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection (MSPC), the Société des Transports de Lomé (SOTRAL), or designated operators under long-term concessions. However, the lack of coordinated governance and sustainable funding hinders the development of an efficient and inclusive multimodal network.

Towards Integrated and Operational Urban Mobility Planning: Mobility planning competencies in Greater Lomé are primarily concentrated within the Ministry of Road, Air, and Rail Transport (MTRAF) for mobility matters and the Ministry of Urban Planning, Housing, and Land Reform (MUHRF) for territorial development. However, several institutional actors intervene without effective coordination, weakening the implementation of urban strategies. The Urban Works Implementation Agency (AGETUR) has developed key planning documents, such as the Master Plan for Development and Urban Planning (SDAU) and the Greater Lomé City Development Strategy (CDS). However, the lack of promulgation of these documents limits their effective application, as their implementation primarily depends on the willingness of the various stakeholders. Currently, Greater Lomé is supposed to play a central role in cross-sectional planning, but local initiatives such as Municipal Development Plans (PDCs) remain fragmented and do not include a dedicated mobility component (e.g., Golfe 1 Municipal Development Plan 2022-2026). Moreover, several sectoral studies, including the Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Policy Program (SSATP) on sustainable mobility and the Transport System Management Improvement Program (PAGST) on interurban and informal transport, have been led by MTRAF. However, they lack overall coherence due to the absence of a unifying master document for transport-related actions. The Urban Mobility Plan (PDU) initiative had allowed for a pre-diagnosis and analysis on a bus corridor. However, due to lack of funding and unsuccessful tenders, this initiative remains incomplete. These contracting challenges have not

prevented MTRAF from implementing certain measures, particularly those derived from the SSATP report. This report inspired recent decrees aimed at professionalizing artisanal transport within two years, including the requirement for transporters to establish commercial businesses, licenses for operators, permits for drivers, and authorization for vehicles, as well as the allocation of fixed routes and regulation of passenger pickup points.

Fragmented Governance of Urban Transport: Challenges and Perspectives: The governance of urban transport in Greater Lomé is characterized by institutional fragmentation that hampers the effectiveness of mobility policies. Although some consultative initiatives, such as workshops organized by the Ministry of Road, Air, and Rail Transport (MTRAF), have been implemented, there is still no permanent consultation structure. This situation creates strategic and technical inconsistencies, delaying the modernization of the urban transport system. A persistent division exists between the Ministry of Public Works and Infrastructure (MTPI) and the MTRAF, both of which originated from the former Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MIT). This separation has led to divergent visions and practices, similar to those observed in other African metropolises like Abidjan (Ouattara, 2018). The technical standards imposed by the MTPI do not always integrate the specific needs of public transport, rendering certain infrastructures unsuitable for efficient operations. Engineers at the MTPI often apply UEMOA procurement rules without fully considering the operational constraints related to public transport, signage, soft mobility modes, and taxis. Furthermore, municipalities, while responsible for the operation and maintenance of infrastructures, are not involved in upstream strategic decisions. Their ability to ensure effective management is thus limited by a lack of financial and human resources. For instance, in 2023, the Golfe 1 municipality had a budget of 2.6 billion FCFA and employed 218 people, while Agoé-Nyivé 4 had only 216 million FCFA and 29 employees.

These dysfunctions lead to tangible difficulties, particularly in the management of transport infrastructures. The Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Program (SSATP) highlighted that urban equipment installation manuals were provided in Chinese, rendering them unusable by local technicians. Similarly, some traffic signal-controlled intersections were installed without mastering their programming, forcing municipalities to mobilize significant human resources to resolve these issues. Although the Urban Planning Master Plan (SDAU) and the Urban Mobility Plan (PDU) address the relationship between urban planning and mobility, their implementation remains limited. Urban projects often leave little room for public transport and active modes of mobility. The involvement of the Société des Transports de Lomé (SOTRAL) in planning decisions remains informal. Its general director, acting as the secretary general of MTRAF, can present operational needs at high decision-making levels, but this approach is insufficient for optimal integration of public transport. The creation of the Togolese Transport Observatory in 2021, financed by the European Union, was intended to improve coordination among urban transport stakeholders. However, this project appears to be inoperative today, raising questions about the reasons for its abandonment. At the state level, the coherence of sectoral measures relies on the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Cooperation (MPDC), which validates project feasibility in coordination with different ministries. Similarly, the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) assesses the financial viability of projects concerning the overall state budget. Regarding the professionalization of artisanal transport, significant progress has been made through close cooperation between MTRAF and the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection (MSPC), with the involvement of transport unions. This dialogue has led to better acceptance of recent decrees regulating the sector and increased awareness of mobility issues in Greater Lomé. Greater Lomé is gradually taking on a role as an interface between the State and municipalities. Managed by a mixed council composed equally of State representatives and municipal elected officials, it occasionally participates in consultations with the Ministry of Road, Air, and Rail Transport (MTRAF). The creation of the Division of Urban and

Table 3. 1: Institutional competencies and involved actors

Institution/Actor	Roles and Competencies in Transport	Main Challenges
Ministry of Road, Air, and Rail Transport (MTRAF)	Development of transport policies, management of public transport	Lack of coordination with local communities
Ministry of Public Works and Infrastructure (MTPi)	Planning and construction of road infrastructure	Limited consideration of collective transport needs
Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF)	Budget allocation and infrastructure financing	Low allocation to municipalities for mobility
Greater Lomé (Intercommunal Cooperation)	Coordination of local mobility initiatives	Dependence on state subsidies
Municipalities (Golfe, Agoé-Nyivé, etc.)	Management of bus stations and parking	Limited financial and technical capacities
SOTRAL (Public Transport Operator)	Operation of urban buses	Lack of funding to renew the fleet
Transport Unions (Motorcycle Taxis, Minibuses)	Organization of informal transport	Insufficient regulation and resistance to reforms

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 2. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in Public Transportation Governance in Greater Lomé

Factors	Strengths	weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Governance and coordination	• Presence dedicated institutions (MTRAF, MTPi, municipalities, SOTRAL)	• Institutional fragmentation and lack of coordination	• Creation of a single regulatory authority	• Competency conflicts between institutions
	• Existence of regulatory frameworks	• Limited involvement of local communities	• Development of an urban mobility observatory	• Resistance of informal transport actors to reforms
Financing	• Availability of state transfers and budget allocations	• Insufficient municipal budgets	• Development of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to diversify funding	• Instability of public funding
		• Strong dependence on state subsidies	• Establishment of a dedicated fund for urban transport	• Difficulty in accessing private financing
Infrastructure and services	• Presence of a public operator (SOTRAL)	• Inadequate collective transport infrastructure	• Modernization of the network through PPPs	• Infrastructure degradation due to lack of maintenance
	• Development of road infrastructure	• Low coverage in peripheral areas	• Integration of artisanal transport within a structured framework	• Growing urban congestion
Accessibility and inclusion	• Existence of a public transport network	• High cost of travel (20% of income for 65% of users)	• Development of integrated pricing mechanisms	• Rising costs of fuel and services
	• Strong demand for collective transport	• Safety risks for certain groups (72% of women report risks)	• Strengthening security at stations and in transport	• Potential social exclusion in case of privatization
Social acceptability	• Growing awareness of urban mobility issues	• Weak integration of users and unions in decision-making	• Consultation and participation of local stakeholders	• Opposition of informal transport unions to reforms

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 3. Distribution of Responsibilities in Roadway Management

Type of roadway	Planning & construction.	Entretien
National	MTPi	MTPi planifie, SAFER exécute
Régional	MTPi	MTPi planifie, SAFER exécute
Urban	Municipalities or MUHRF	Communes, SAFER à défaut
Rural (outside national and regional routes)	Ministry of Disenclavement and Rural Tracks	SAFER

Source: MTRAF. 2024

Environmental Studies (DEUE) within the Directorate of Strategic Planning and Urbanism (DPSU) in January 2023 reflects this desire to improve planning. This entity, still under-equipped with only four (04) staff members out of the four hundred (400) employed by Greater Lomé, is tasked with leading forward-looking and strategic studies in the fields of urban planning and the environment. Strengthening interinstitutional coordination remains a major challenge for effective governance of urban transport in Greater Lomé.

Professionalization of Informal Transport as a Financial Capacity Lever: The professionalization of informal transport, facilitated by recent implementing decrees, opens new revenue streams through improved fiscal mechanisms and the introduction of new taxes, such as a tax on transport companies and special permits for drivers, complementing driver's licenses. The effective application of existing mechanisms in 2019 could represent 778 million FCFA per year (based on the SSATP diagnosis), considering circulation taxes, biannual technical inspections, annual vehicle licenses, and applicable taxi taxes. Tricycles will no longer be exempt, and the requirement for operators to form businesses to obtain the right to operate as road transporters will also generate specific taxation. However, this taxation is not necessarily allocated to sustainable urban mobility, and

the implementation of these tax mechanisms also involves significant investments from the State (training centers, exams, enhanced controls, etc.) and may ultimately lead to increased costs for users. Regarding municipal parking, the rise of communal parking projects could represent a complementary source of revenue for municipalities if they are able to enforce pricing and regulate informal settlements. Additionally, the policy of formalizing informal housing will increase State revenue, though primarily allocated to the Ministry of Economy and Finance, responsible for property taxes.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal significant dysfunctions in the governance of public transport in Greater Lomé, particularly in the context of incomplete decentralization. These challenges are far from unique to Togo and are also found in several other African cities and across the globe, especially regarding institutional coordination, infrastructure funding, and local stakeholder participation. For instance, in Dakar, tensions arising from jurisdictional conflicts between local authorities and the central State have led to incoherent urban planning (Baron *et al.*, 2016). Similarly, in Abidjan, despite efforts to modernize public transport, the lack of coordination

between local and national authorities has hindered the effectiveness of reforms (Ouattara, 2018). Informal transport systems, prevalent in Greater Lomé with motorbike taxis and minibuses, are also a prominent feature of other major West African cities. For example, in Lagos, the regulation of informal transport played a key role in improving urban mobility by implementing systems such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) (Akinyemi & Olawale, 2015). This experience could inspire Lomé to reform and regulate informal transport modes, integrating them into a more coherent strategy for sustainable urban mobility. The experience of Nairobi is equally enlightening. By integrating public-private partnership (PPP) initiatives to manage transport infrastructure, Nairobi has strengthened its financial and technical capacities, leading to improved urban transport management (Khayesi & Amekudzi, 2011). This approach is particularly relevant for Greater Lomé, where municipalities struggle to mobilize resources for developing transport infrastructure. No PPP has yet been established in the region to initiate public service delegation—a path that could significantly enhance the efficiency of the urban transport system. Despite the governance challenges faced by Lomé, innovative models of urban governance and financing, such as those observed in Seoul, could offer suitable solutions. In Seoul, the implementation of an integrated ticketing system connecting buses and the metro has enabled smoother mobility and better coordination between different modes of transport (Kim & Moon, 2012). This model of integrated transport systems could be beneficial for Lomé, where the various modes of transport (taxis, minibuses, public transport) remain too disconnected from one another. The introduction of integrated mobility systems and the use of smart technologies in urban transport management (Gao *et al.*, 2020) are approaches that could also enhance the performance of Lomé's transport network. Transport management in Greater Lomé could thus benefit from multimodal planning, as recommended by several recent studies on sustainable mobility (Banister, 2021; Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), 2023). These studies highlight the importance of investing in cycling infrastructure, formalizing parking, and improving transport hubs to address the challenges of rapid urbanization and limit the negative impacts of car-centered urbanization (Gwilliam, 2017; Pojani & Stead, 2018). It is clear that the future of decentralization in Lomé will largely depend on the ability to overcome these obstacles, particularly through regulatory clarification, more suitable financing, and the strengthening of local capacities. By drawing on innovative urban governance models and exploring new sources of funding, such as public-private partnerships (PPPs), Greater Lomé could gradually move towards a more autonomous, resilient, and sustainable development dynamic. These initiatives would help overcome current barriers to establishing a modern and efficient public transport system that meets the population's needs and addresses environmental challenges.

CONCLUSION

Improving urban transport in Greater Lomé requires institutional reform and better coordination between public and private stakeholders. Currently, fragmented responsibilities, the absence of a centralized authority, and a lack of resources hinder the system's efficiency. A progressive reform is necessary to address these dysfunctions and build a smoother and more sustainable urban mobility system. In the short term, establishing an interinstitutional coordination unit will strengthen collaboration among stakeholders and help identify bottlenecks. The creation of an urban mobility observatory will contribute to gathering essential data to guide strategic decisions. In the medium term, adopting a regulatory framework for Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) will promote infrastructure financing and the gradual integration of informal transport. Pilot projects, such as the modernization of bus terminals and the implementation of integrated electronic ticketing, will improve connectivity and the interoperability of transport services. In the long term, creating a Unified Urban Transport Regulatory Authority will ensure coherent governance, transparent pricing, and planning tailored to the population's needs. Developing a Sustainable Urban Mobility Master Plan will integrate multimodal solutions,

including public transport, active mobility modes, and suitable infrastructure. The experience of metropolitan cities like Seoul demonstrates the importance of an integrated and digital approach to optimizing mobility. Additionally, strengthening local capacities through training and international cooperation will be a key lever to ensure the success of this transformation. Modernizing public transport in Greater Lomé will require a strategic vision, strong political will, and the commitment of all stakeholders involved. Reforming urban governance and managing public transport in Greater Lomé aligns with a logic of sustainable and inclusive development. It aims not only to improve mobility but also to enhance the quality of life for residents and the region's economic competitiveness.

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