

Motocycling Operation in Nigeria: Implication for Good Governance, Socio-Political and Economic Development of Ekiti State. A Case Study of Ado Ekiti Local Government Area

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Abstract: - The activities of commercial motorcyclists popularly known as okada riders in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. The okadas have become the most fastest means of transportation due to most places that cars cannot reach are easily reached. Equally, okada serves as means of employment and of livelihood for its operators. As a result, people gradually accept okada as viable means of conveying goods and persons particularly in Ekiti State.

The study however fund out that this means of transportation has both merits and demerits. The also found out that majority of commercial motorcyclists are mostly graduates from high institutions of learning as a result of high level of unemployment. It is discovered that the system is characterized with evil activities which have become so rampant in most states of the federation. These criminal activities are also found in other states where commercial motorcyclists operate including Ekiti State. Besides, reckless speeding and traffic violation consequent upon taking of alcohols are characteristic features of okada riders. The menace of these motorcycle operators are noticeable in Ekiti State. In view of the above, this study examines the synopsis of impact of commercial motorcycle operators famously known as okada riders in Nigeria with a view to emphasizing the Implication for good governance, socio-economic integration of Ado Ekiti Local Government Area, Ekiti State.

The study adopts both primary and secondary sources of data collection to accomplish its actual goals. The study therefore concludes that the age bracket involved in okada operation are commonly youths as are subjected to being used as political thugs by the politicians.

Keywords: Democracy, Governance, Socio-Economic Integration and Okada riders' operations

I. INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

The activities of commercial motorcyclists popularly known as okada riders in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. In fact, most often than not, the okadas have become the most fastest means of transportation because most places that cars cannot reach are easily reached by okadas. Equally, okada serves as source of employment and means of livelihood for its

operators. As a result, people gradually accept okada as viable means of conveying goods and persons particularly in Ekiti State. However, this means of transportation has both merits and demerits. The merits attributed to it are very great likewise the demerits. It is interesting to note that the majority of commercial motorcyclists are mostly graduates from high institutions of learning as a result of high level of unemployment as the operations of okadas have drastically reduced crimes among others (Ani 2017). According to the State Deputy Chairman, Com. Olusola Isola of Okada Riders Tricycles Association of Nigeria (ORTAN), Ekiti chapter: "We have over 10,000 members in all the 42 branches across the state and 5,000 of these population hold at least NCE, with many of them parading Bachelor degrees. This shows that there is high level of unemployment in Nigeria which the government at all levels must address" (Ani, 2017). Conversely, the system is also characterized with evil activities which have become so rampant in most states of the federation. According to the chairman of the task force Lagos State, Mr. Olayinka Egbeyemi: "There were series of complaints from members of the public on criminal activities perpetuated by some of these motorcycle operators. Complaints by the residents of snatching of bags, phones, wallets and jewellery in Lagos at night are high (The Punch, 2017). These criminal activities are also found in other states where commercial motorcyclists operate including Ekiti State. It should be mentioned that the age bracket involved in okada operation are commonly youths. And are subject to being used as political thugs by the politicians. Not only this, it has been observed that of various crimes so far committed such as causing havoc during elections especially voting-manipulation and stealing of ballot boxes, kidnapping, assassination, rape etc are traceable to okada riders. Besides, reckless speeding and traffic violation consequent upon taking of alcohols are characteristic features of okada riders. The menace of these motorcycle operators are noticeable in Ekiti State. In view of the above, this study examines the political economy of commercial motorcycle operators famously known as okada

riders in Ekiti State with a view to emphasizing the impacts on the people of the state.

It is in respect of the above that the paper sets to pose the following research questions. What are the impacts of okada riders to Ekiti people? Are okada riders instruments in the hands of the politicians to fulfill their selfish interest in Ekiti State? To what extent are crimes associated with the operation of okada in Ekiti state?

However, the foregoing questions are assessed by study's objectives which are to: determine the impacts of okada riders to Ekiti people; assess the reality of okada riders as instruments in the hands of the politicians to fulfill their selfish interest in Ekiti State; and highlight the extent to which good governance is adversely affected by okada riders' conduct and attitudinal behavior in Ekiti State. Like every other research work, this study is guided by the following basic assumptions: that the impacts of okada riders to Ekiti people are numerous depending on the healthy environment and security for their operations. Secondly, that as long as poverty looms in the society, the okada riders will always be useful instruments in the hands of the politicians to fulfill their selfish interest. Also, that good governance is adversely affected by okada riders' conduct and attitudinal behavior in Ekiti State.

Indeed, this very study is justified because Okada operation is a veritable business venture in contemporary society. The study of this business is justified to the extent that it enhances deep knowledge on its activities to societal development and citizens' awareness about okada operation in Ekiti State. Apart from this, the study is beneficial to scholars and researchers in areas of traffic specialization and good governance as it enhances their understanding and broaden their knowledge on the relevance of okada operation in Ekiti State. Policy makers, scholars, and the citizens will find the work useful because it provides impetus and new insights towards the dynamics and political economy of commercial motorcycle operators popularly called okada riders.

This study adopts primary and secondary sources of data collection to effect its interrogation. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection are employed. The quantitative method employs the use of both structured and semi-structured questionnaires in addition to the use of the existing literature.

II. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The Study Population

The study population shall be drawn from opinion leaders, top decision makers, grass root people to include; market women, artisans, in Ekiti State. The essence of this is for the study to cover a wide spectrum of the population and relevant stakeholders in the state with a view to eliciting required information for the study.

Population Sample

The sample population consists of ordinary Ekiti citizens and some selected stakeholders such as the academics, civil servants in Ekiti State. Traditional rulers and chiefs, political party members, old or elderly citizens, executive members of Okada riders' Associations, market women and their executive members popularly called Iyalaje, Iyalaja, artisans, students, unemployed youths and individuals from all the local government areas selected for this study.

The choice of these groups of citizens and individuals is justified in that the impact of okada operation is always felt by them. Besides, the selected stakeholders and every one mentioned herein will be accomplished through purposive sampling method in order to give room for objectivity in the course of the study.

Sample Size

A sample population size of 120 have been drawn for the administration of questionnaire from relevant individuals and institutions. Twenty (20) respondents each were picked from the following six okada riders' junctions which was selected through purposive sampling method.

The choice of these selected okada riders' packs in Ado Local Government Area was informed by the need to carry out critical and analytical study of the topic in question. The samples cut across all the junctions in Ado Ekiti as shown below: Nova road junction, Federal housing junction, Dalimore junction, Ojumose junction, Post office/ Atikankan junction, Ijigbo junction.

The choice of these okada riders' packs/junctions through purposive sampling method was justified because it provided reliable data upon which validation was established. Not only that, since Ado Ekiti is a town with various packs of okada riders, selecting six notable junctions amounted to equal representation which has afforded to generate testable data capable of providing adequate responses from the selected respondents in those junction/packs within the town. Apart from these, the study was able to cross fertilize ideas and positions of the people about the impact of okada operation to their communities. Indeed, with choice of the packs listed above, the study was able to compare the respondents' opinions of areas with a view to showing the impact of okada operation on people in Ekiti State. Having the foregoing in mind, the reading public must have been sufficiently informed. Be that as it may, the selection of all these packs/areas has afforded the study the opportunity to generate balanced, critical and reliable data worthy of validating in the course of the fieldwork

III. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

In order to have in-depth analysis of the study, Modernization and political economy theories are adopted. Modernization theory is a grand theory encompassing many different disciplines as it seeks to explain how society

progresses, what variables affect that progress, and how societies can react to that progress. (Chaudhary, 2013). Modernization theory focuses specifically on a type of modernization thought that evolved in Europe during the 17th century, which brought social mores and technological achievements into a new epoch. (Chaudhary, 2013). The foundations of modernization theory go back to the Age of Enlightenment, when a number of philosophers began to look at how society changed and progressed. Theories were laid out as to how technological advancement necessarily led to social advancement which in turn led to an examination of how different facets of advancement were connected (Chaudhary, 2013).

The major thrust or basic premise of this phase of modernization theory was that humans were able to change their society within a generation, and that this change was often facilitated by advancements in technology, production and consumption. In the modern age, modernization theory looks at how new technologies and systems are leading to a more greatly homogenized world. Modernization theory encompasses the world of globalization, where cultural mores and ideas are easily spread throughout the world, leading to a sort of universal culture that serves as a baseline for all cultures. As societies in the world modernize further technologically, it is believed that those cultures will diminish.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_P._Huntington

Indeed, modernization theory is used to explain the process of modernization within societies. According to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_P._Huntington, modernization refers to a model of a progressive transition from a 'pre-modern' or 'traditional' to a 'modern' society. The theory looks at the internal factors of a country while assuming that, 'traditional' countries can be brought to development in the same manner the developed countries did. The theory attempts to identify the social variables that contribute to social progress and development of societies. It therefore seeks to explain the process of social evolution.

Tipps,(1973),www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/.../150422_IA_Comps_Modernization-Theory-Comparative... while corroborating the position of Bernstein, asserts that modernization theory not only stresses the process of change, but also the responses to that change. It looks at internal dynamics while referring to social and cultural structures and the adaptation of new technologies. Tipps,(1973),www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/.../150422_IA_Comps_Modernization-Theory-Comparative... Modernization theory maintains that traditional societies will develop as they adopt more modern practices. Proponents of the theory like Han (2007), claim that modern states are wealthier and more powerful, and that their citizens are freed to enjoy a high standard of living. Tipps,(1973). www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/.../150422_IA_Comps_Modernization-Theory-Comparative... Han further argues that developments such as new data technology and the need to update traditional

methods in transport (like the adoption of okada operation), communication (like the use of handsets etc) and production make modernization necessary. It therefore implies that such developments control the limits of human interaction, and not vice versa. Tipps, (1973), www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/.../150422_IA_Comps_Modernization-Theory-Comparative... It also implies that human agency controls the speed and severity of modernization. Supposedly, instead of being dominated by tradition, societies undergoing the process of modernization typically arrive at forms of governance dictated by abstract principles. Traditional religious beliefs and cultural traits, according to the theory, usually become less important as modernization takes hold (Tipps,1973)

www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/.../150422_IA_Comps_Modernization-Theory-Comparative... Discussing the strength of the theory as related to politics, Tipps (1973) www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/.../150422_IA_Comps_Modernization-Theory-Comparative... contend that the realization of democracy is not based solely on an expressed desire for that form of government, but that democracies are born as a result of the admixture of certain social and cultural conditions. For the foundations of a democracy are born of significant modernization and economic development that result in mass political participation. Another strength of the theory is intricately linked to its impact on education which plays an essential role in society, creating knowledge, transferring it to students and fostering innovation. (Chaudary, 2013:36). Modernization is a process of socio-cultural transformation. It is a thorough process of change involving values, norms, institutions and structures (Chaudary, 2013:36). From sociological perspective, education does not arise in response to individual needs, but it arises out of the needs of the society of which the individual is a member. (Chaudary, 2013:36). In a static society, the main function of the educational system is to transmit the cultural heritage to the new generations. However, in changing society, these keep on changing from generation to generation.

Chaudhary (2013:47) maintains that modernization is usually associated with urban and industrial development in which cities have grown as economics and cultural centres, and new technologies have transformed almost every aspect of life. However, critics have equally raised some fundamental arguments against the relevance of the theory on the following grounds.

On its strength to culture that modernization has encouraged the development of new forms of creative expression, such as film and television. That these forms can be easily exported and viewed all over the world. The critics argue however that a loss of culture may result from modernization. Corroborating this, Engerman and David (2007) argue that the spread of the western culture has caused young people in non-western countries to abandon their traditional customs and values. Even languages begin to

disappear as urbanization encourages people to learn a country's dominant language.

The adoption of modernization theory in this study provides opportunity to focus some scholarly attention on the political economy of okada operation to foster development and generate new ideas in transportation, innovation and insights through its fundamental responsibility of making lives comfortable for people in order to modernize their ways of life. Indeed, the use of okada as a means of transport is a modernizing phenomenon that has come to replace the culture of trekking. Also, the theory is adopted since its main thrust is to institute modernization in every epoch of human development and advancement. Indeed, modernization conjures images of social change in the direction of general improvement over the past. In contemporary social sciences, modernization theory has become so vital to the study of the development of Third World or undeveloped societies.

IV. CONCEPT OF POLITICAL ECONOMY CLARIFIED

In discussing the concept of political economy, mention is often made of Adam Smith and David Ricardo, the radical critique of capitalism developed by Karl Marx, the dominant neoclassical school, the 'Keynesian revolution', and the analysis of power and institutions associated with economists like Thorstein Veblen and J.K. Galbraith. After being introduced to these fundamentals, the choice of studying a wide variety of subjects, covering topics such as inequality, development, the history of capitalism, the tension between economic growth and ecological sustainability, economic cycles, neo-liberalism and the role of finance in the economy always arises. Political economy mostly refers to interdisciplinary studies drawing upon economics, political science, law, history, sociology and other disciplines in explaining the crucial role of political factors in determining economic outcomes. (Centre for Social Sciences, 2017). But Nantulya and Reich (2002) observe that vehicle and driver licensing issues are usually undermined by corruption. As Anbarci et al. (2006) note corruption is a major problem in developing countries' transport system which also has a relationship with accidents. Enforcing this test would therefore be difficult under a corrupt enforcement system as is the case in many places (Anbarci et al. (2006) lists some examples and illustrations in the study). The Association, through its State Deputy Chairman, Com. Olusola Isola and Public Relations Officer, Com. Sikirulahi Akindipe, said the body has been able to overcome the challenge of reckless riding through their partnership with the police and other security agencies.

Speaking with journalists in Ado Ekiti on Thursday, Isola said the high number of graduates among commercial motorcyclists in the state accounted for why there was orderliness and good conducts within the body. Isola said: "We have over 10,000 members in all the 42 branches across the state and 5,000 of these population hold at least NCE, with many of them parading Bachelor degrees. This shows that

there is high level of unemployment in Nigeria which the government at all levels must address". The ORTAN boss appealed to federal government to reduce the cost of the machine in Nigeria, saying the least in the market now sells for N320,000, an amount he described as outrageous. (The Punch, 2017)

He said when noticed that many Ekiti indigenes were being daily maimed by reckless riders, that the association quickly set up a Task Force to effect orderliness among members. On how recklessness was curbed, he said: "When you are caught riding recklessly, dressed shabbily or cause accident in town, you will be forced to pay a fine of N5,000. This has helped in checking our people.

"In the past, people just joined us without proper accreditation but before you can ride okada today, you will be properly accredited. You will get the State identity card, association's membership card and get the operational logo." "All these were put in place to authenticate our members and ensure that nobody hides under okada riding to perpetrate ritual killing, rape, robbery or any other criminal tendency" (The Punch, 2017). On the welfare of members, Isola said: "We are presently building a State Secretariat in Ado Ekiti as part of our efforts to develop our dear state, this we are doing through the N50 will pay daily for operational ticket.

"We used to intervene in the personal welfare of our people. If you have a child that is admitted into high institution and you have no money, we will borrow you. Recently, one of us gave birth to a set of triplets and we intervened in taking care of the baby." "We have also intervened in treating our members who had accidents by paying their bills. When we realized that some of our members always dress shabbily, we began a process of buying clothes for them which they pay back instalmentally" (The Punch, 2017) He said it will be difficult to enforce full compliance with the use of tricycle in Ekiti, because of paucity of spare parts, saying introducing this policy will automatically force many of them out of the business.

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“We have also intervened in treating our members who had accidents by paying their bills. When we realized that same of our members always dress shabbily, we began a process of buying clothes for them which they pay back by installment”, he added. He said it will be difficult to enforce full compliance with the use of tricycle in Ekiti, because of paucity of spare parts, saying introducing this policy will automatically force many of them out of the business.

Historically, political economy is found in the works of French Physiocrats, Adam Smith, David Ricardo and Karl Marx, among others. More recent scholars related to the field of Political Economy include Robert Keohane, Robert Gilpin, Peter J. Katzenstein, and Stephen Krasner, aside from a more critical school inspired by Karl Polanyi, Susan Strange and Robert W. Cox in particular. (Centre for Social Sciences, 2017). Political Economy is concerned with the interplay of politics, society and economics and it has a long and distinguished history in the social sciences. (Centre for Social Sciences, 2017).

Examining the defining characteristics of political economy, Collinson (ed) (2003) maintains that: 'Political economy analysis is concerned with the interaction of political and

economic processes within a society: the distribution of power and wealth between different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time.' https://www.soas.ac.uk/cedep-demos/000_P527_PEPP_K3736-Demo/unit1/page_13.htm.

Political economist Frank Stilwell defines it as: “the means whereby goods and services are produced, exchanged, and distributed among the members of society. Incomes and wealth are generated through these processes of production, exchange, and distribution”. (Henderson,2015).

“Economics”, writes Stilwell, “is the discipline that studies these processes”. According to Stilwell, political economy rejects a narrow focus on “pure markets” in favour of a “broader view of economic enquiry, its social purpose and its political application”. (Henderson, 2015). It is an approach that stresses the importance of historical processes, structural forces and institutions in shaping economic outcomes. Political economy also acknowledges the role values play in influencing what economists choose to study, how they conduct their investigations, and the policy implications of their research. Political economy starts by providing you with a firm foundation in the key theoretical approaches to studying the economy. Political Economy provides the tools to understand the issues facing the world and focuses on – and break down – those issues into their important components for analytical skills and knowledge. (Henderson, 2015). It’s not hard to see economics as the critical foundation upon which all social and political life is built, and if so, more critical understanding than that offered by “mainstream” approaches that are patently failing a majority of people at the behest of a minority. (Henderson, 2015) Okada riding is used in cities by business men, civil servants and students to overcome traffic congestion in order to beat time and navigate roads that are inaccessible to automobiles, particularly in villages, suburbs and urban slums. Commercial motorcycle is the use of motorcycle for carrying passengers for a fare. This definition agrees with the understanding about the mode across the world (though naming varies). Junior and Filho (2002, p.1566), calling it “motortaxi”, described commercial motorcycle as “public transport services using motorcycles, operated like taxi”. Guillen and Ishida (2004, p.61) called it “habal-habal”, “a motorcycle used for hire”. Other names by which it is known include Ojek in Thailand, Bend skin in Cameroon, and motorcycle boda-boda in Uganda. Commercial motorcycles have become very popular in these places due to their perceived benefits (Junior and Filho, 2002; Konings, 2006a).

Because they help with the problem of infrastructural gap and serve areas where there are no alternative transport modes, they were described as “not causing any problem in the city and are actually solving mobility issues” (Guillen and Ishida, 2004, p.64). In Brazil, their emergence which dates back to around 1996 is described as an uncovering of a “repressed demand for this type of transportation” (Júnior and Filho,2002, p.1567). Its spread in Brazilian cities is found to

be “due to the lower cost when compared to a normal taxi and the higher average speed and route flexibility when compared to a bus system” (Júnior and Filho, 2002, p.1566).

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Finally, commercial motorcycle is a mode widely acknowledged for many of its benefits. The 2010 report on Urban Mobility for Indonesia notes that commercial motorcycles have the advantage of speed, door to door service and serve narrow roads less accessible to other modes (Giz, 2010). They play an important role in serving the transportation system as gap filler as well as a source of employment for people. Moreover problems such as poorly developed road network, narrow streets, traffic congestions, and poor standard of public transport which are characteristic of many developing countries not only contribute to the rising number of commercial motorcycles but opens up a gap they are fit to fill (Konings 2006a; Junior and Filho, 2002). The benefits adduced to commercial motorcycles in Thailand are similar. Oshima et al. (2007) reports that commercial motorcycles satisfy users demand as a feeder in the narrow-dead-end side-streets that connect residential locations to major streets. Their role in Bangkok was recognized as a major connector in the transport network of that city. In the Philippines, the emergence of commercial motorcycle transport was adjudged a benefit as it provided employment for people as well as serve areas that are not accessible to “ordinary motor mode” (Guillen and Ishida, 2004, p.64).

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