

The Menace of Garage Boys ‘Agbero’ and Traffic Congestion in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State.

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Lagos State in Nigeria is inundated daily with challenges of smooth vehicular movement due to so many factors and happenings on its roads. The activities of road transport union men popularly called ‘agberos’ in local parlance seem to be one of the factors. The main purpose of the paper is to examine the menace of garage boys ‘agbero’ on traffic congestion in Lagos metropolis with particular reference to Alimosho Local Government Area. This study therefore aims to assess how the activities of garage boys impact vehicular movement in the state.

Theoretical Exploration: The research work was situated within the context of the adopted Social Disorganization Theory by Shaw, C. R., and McKay, H. D. (1942) to explain the nuisance of garage boys ‘agberos’ and traffic congestion. This theory was used explain the role of social structures in the emergence and persistence of the problem. It argued that the presence of area boys, agberos, and touts on the streets of Lagos is a manifestation of social disorganization, where these individuals have been left without adequate social support and guidance.

Practical Implications: The findings provide insights for policymakers, transport authorities, and relevant stakeholders to develop sustainable transportation systems in Lagos State. Thus, the research was able to bring to light the need for governments to invest massively in the transport sector by providing more buses under the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) programme of the state government to reduce the menace of the garage boys and traffic congestion in the metropolis

Methodology: The research adopts a quantitative method using a sample size of 120 respondents drawn from the key stakeholders in the transportation sector including commuters, drivers, law enforcement agencies, and transport authorities. Data for the study was generated using both primary and secondary sources. Questionnaire was the main instrument for data gathering. Data collected were presented and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, percentages and graphs were used in data presentation and analysis while the relevant hypotheses were tested using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient.

Findings: The study reveals that there is a significant association between the activities of ‘agberos’, and traffic congestion in Lagos State. In the same vein, the study shows that the concentration of area boys, agberos, and touts in an area does have a significant impact on the travel time experienced on Lagos roads. Further, the study reveals that a significant relationship exists between the agberos operations and high traffic volume in Lagos State.

Conclusion: The study concluded that the activities agberos has affected the traffic situation in Lagos metropolis and that the activities of informal groups, such as agberos include road blockages, extortion and illegal fees collection which oftentimes disrupt traffic flow, impede the smooth movement of vehicles, and result in longer travel times for motorists in the city.

Recommendations: Based on the research findings, recommendations are proposed. The study highlights the importance of stakeholder collaboration and the need for effective policies and interventions to manage the influence of ‘agberos’ in road traffic management.

Originality/value: The study distinguished itself from prior similar investigation in the extant literature by providing an in-depth knowledge of the menace of garage boys and traffic congestion in Lagos metropolis using

empirical method. No similar studies have employed the methodology adopted in the study and the findings no doubt contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the subject matter of the study.

Keywords: 'agbero', garage-boys, Lagos traffic, road transport unions, road operations, traffic congestion.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Traffic congestion is a phenomenon that is associated with urban environments all over the world. This is because vehicles aid movement from one place to another, especially when trekking is inappropriate. In every developed city globally, traffic congestion is a common phenomenon arising when there is a demand-supply imbalance in the transportation network and poor management (Seid, Zennaro, Pietrosevoli & Manzoni, 2020). It occurs when traffic flow slows down due to roadway capacity based on the volume of vehicles or parking problems (Gülhan, 2023).

Many urban centres in Nigeria suffer from inadequate facilities that could ensure smooth urban movement. This is because the rapid growth of cities anywhere in the world has an impact not only on land use but also on spatial expansion. The increase in commuting distance has an impact on trip attraction, fares paid by commuters and traffic build-up in some land-use areas. It also shows the need for different modes of transportation. Thus, several factors have been found to influence trip generation, attraction and distribution in any urban environment. Some land use types constitute nodes of desires and fulfilment in any urban area. Transport assists to even out the spatial imbalance in needs. Often, coincidence arises from individual commuters' journeys during peak hour periods. This type of coincidence, if not well managed, may lead to a traffic crisis that makes travelling burdensome in addition to wasting man-hours productive time (Choudhary, Gokhale, Kumar, Pradhan & Sahu, 2022; Olorunlomu, 2022).

It is important to state that Area Boys refers to a group of young people who engage in various forms of social vices, including extortion, harassment, and violence. They are often found in urban areas, including Lagos State. 'agberos' on the other hand refers to a group of transport workers who operate in motor parks and bus stops in Lagos State. They collect fees from commercial vehicles and regulate the movement of passengers while the touts can be described as a group of people, who engage in illegal activities, including drug trafficking, prostitution, and theft. They are often associated with the activities of area boys and 'agberos' in Lagos State. It is widely believed that the agberos are strong and they have government backing hence, they remain untouchable (Ojurongbe, 2022). Therefore, they act lawlessly on the way. Several Court injunctions had been made to restrain them to carry out their nefarious activities on Lagos roads. There is a court order by the Federal High Court, Ikoyi. The order has been out since June 24, 2022, yet the agberos carry on their business unperturbed and the commercial bus drivers remain helpless as studies have established that both the agberos and the state have a symbiotic relationship (Agbiboa, 2022)

Area Boys, "agberos," and Touts are terms that are commonly used in Nigeria, particularly in Lagos State to refer to individuals who engage in various forms of informal and sometimes illegal activities. While there can be some overlap in their meanings, hence, they are often used interchangeably due to misconception. Although they generally refer to different groups of individuals involved in different activities, a clear illustration is necessary for this paper. "Area Boys" is typically used to describe young men who form informal street gangs or groups in urban areas, particularly in Nigeria. They often operate in specific neighbourhoods or areas and may engage in activities such as extorting money from traders, street vendors, or motorists, enforcing their own "rules" in those areas, or involving themselves in petty crimes. They operate like a community mafia group that often clashes with similar groups in other areas. Area Boys can sometimes become a nuisance or pose a security threat to their local domain. Tout better describes a street urchin whose role is to praise sing or harass people to earn a living. An individual can begin operations as a tout until certain other touts join to form a clique and begin to operate like area boys. However, the focus of this paper is on the *agberos* who could either operate as an individual (agbero) or as a group (agberos) and their operations are carried out in various forms which oftentimes involve force. Other forms include harassment, suasion and intimidation to collect money from commercial road users.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The verve of 'agberos' have greatly posed a threat to the general road users as their disturbing activities do bring unprecedented hardship for the motoring road users in Lagos. Various cities in Nigeria have tried to manage vehicular Traffic congestions which are at times orchestrated by unnecessary infractions and bottlenecks as initiated by the touting activities from the 'agbero' (Olorunlomu, 2022).

This situation is made worse by rapid growth in vehicular movement and with less than corresponding improvement in road construction and network, traffic management techniques and related transport facilities.

While traffic congestion has been managed very well in some developed countries, it has continued to defy solutions in the developing world. The forecast of Global Traffic Volume (GTV) shows that the phenomenon would double in developing countries between 1990 and year 2020 and again by 2050 (Engwitsch, 1992). This type of growth pattern, as envisaged by the end of the year 2020 and 2050, is an indication of what the future congestion portends for people living in urban environments. An average Nigerian who had boarded a commercial vehicle at a motor park in any state, particularly in the urban centres, will readily remember his or her interactions with the men who operate at those parks. They, indeed, play the role of filling the vehicles with passengers, collecting the fares and loading luggage into the vehicles, as well as ensuring that they are dispatched promptly (Ejiogun, Olafioye, Ighomuaye, Onyeka, Ojo, Ojo & Okey, 2023).

According to Ejiogun, et al. (2023) state that most of the time, these men are members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) and Union of Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria, which are largely well-organised and structured bodies registered by the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and affiliated to the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC). Again, to a large extent, members of the NURTW and RTEAN operate responsibly in many states of the federation, but their ilk in Lagos, Taraba and Abia states are a different kettle of fish (Ejiogun, et al. 2023). They go about their activities notoriously and aggressively which can easily escalate to violence with the commuters. These attributes have made residents of the states who depend on commuter vehicles to get around the state regard the members of the bodies as *agbero* which literally implied custodians of the commuters. Contrary to their primary objective, their operations in the aforementioned states have become a menace to commuters (Ejiogun et al., 2023).

In Lagos, commercial vehicle operators have characterised the relationship between them and the state chapter of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), which now operates under the Lagos State Parks and Garages Management Committee, as purely parasitical. They say that the endless extortion which the horde of rank-and-file members of the Lagos NURTW, popularly known as *agbero*, subject them to in the state is inimical to the commercial drivers and their bus conductors on the one hand and the commuters on the other hand (Ejiogun et al., 2023). The immediate effect is that commuters bear the brunt of the horrendous extortions of commuter bus operators by the *agbero*.

The activities of the *agberos* are increasingly recognised as a serious, public concern. Although extensive research has been carried out on traffic problems in Lagos. However, no single study exists which has x-rayed the traffic situation in connection to the operations of the *agberos* in Lagos State. The central thesis of this paper is that problems of road congestion and traffic problem in Lagos State are somehow connected to the activities of the *agberos*. Other specific objectives are; to examine whether relationship exist between the activities of 'agberos' and traffic congestion in Lagos State and also examine the extent to which the activities of the *agberos* impact road safety and traffic flow in Lagos State.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recently traffic congestion has become the research agenda for a growing community of researchers particularly in developed countries. Directly or indirectly it has a relationship with on-street parking management, roadway characters or capacity and can affect people in various ways: Long travel time and high fuel consumption. Consequently, this chapter presents the views, ideas, opinions and thoughts of diverse scholars, authors and theorists on the subject matter of traffic congestion, the character of traffic congestion as well as the impacts of the phenomenon.

The review of the bodies of knowledge that are considered relevant to the subject matter of the research topic would be subdivided into three main segments: conceptual, theoretical and empirical frameworks mentioned are guides to achieve the objectives of the study.

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Conceptualizing the term "agbero"

Area boys otherwise known as '*agbero*' in Yoruba language refers to a loosely organized youth who are mostly of male gender that operates in the major Nigerian cities including Lagos (Ngwobo, 2004; CBN, 2009 & Heap, 2010: 48–70). More recently, the term *agbero* is used to describe a tout who collects illegal rates and fees around the motor parks and garages (The Nation, 2012 & IRIN, 2005)

Agbero constitute a major issue for the government, road-users and citizens of the state for many years. Despite the various measures put in place to combat their activities, these groups have continued to be a menace to the peace and security of the state (The Editorial Board, 2023, Anudu, 2021). In Lagos state, *agberos* is a term used to refer to groups of young men who engage in various forms of illegal and often violent activities, such as extortion, intimidation, and harassment of motorists, traders, and other citizens. These individuals are often seen as a menace to society and have been a source of concern to the government and the people of Lagos State (Odinaka, 2021). The *agberos* are typically at every bus-stops along major roads or parks and garages demanding money from commercial bus conductors and drivers. Those at the bus stops and in parks and garages are often

employees of the NURTW or RTEAN. Both NURTW and RTEAN are trade unions of commercial bus drivers or taxi operators. They are national in outlook and they collect tolls by all means necessary from all public transporters. *agberos* are non-state actors recognised by the state government. (Odinaka, 2021).

The presence of *agberos*, otherwise known as motor park touts, could be felt in every state of the federation, their activities are, however, fiercer in some states. The word *agberos* is a Yoruba word for motor park men who canvass for passengers for commercial bus drivers at motor parks, have recently expanded their activities by positioning themselves at bus stops, imposing ridiculous levies on both bus drivers and tricycles and motorcycles riders (Nwaneri, 2018).

A typical *agbero* is armed with a cane or stick, and with some ease, a marker with which he marks, for easy identification, the buses whose drivers he had collected money from. In Lagos, where their operations are fiercer, *agberos*, who are often under the influence of alcohol and drugs, always become brutal to commercial bus conductors, who hesitate to part with the money they demand (The Guardian Nigeria, 2017). They are always at bus stops across the metropolis, imposing levies such as: 'Owo weekend, Owo loading,' 'Owoolopa,' 'Owo task force,' 'Owo organizing,' 'Owo traffic,' 'Owo environmental;' to mention but a few. At times, they destroy vehicles and obstruct traffic at will without fear of being challenged by government authority. Agbibo (2022) concluded through the manner of operations of the garage touts that they garage tout draw their unwinding power from the state government. It is hoped that with the introduction of initiatives such as the LSSTF and the LSPWC, the activities of these groups can be curbed and peace restored to the state (Odinaka, 2021; Rotinwa, 2017).

Traffic Congestion as a concept

Owing to its ubiquitous occurrence, especially in cities across the world, various academic disciplines, such as geography, economics, planning, computer applications and engineering have given tremendous attention to the subject of traffic congestion. The greater part of the current literature, however, seems to be concentrated on issues like modelling traffic dynamics (Chevallier, Can, Nadji, & Leclercq, 2009); modelling traffic flow (Choudhary, Gokhale, Kumar, Pradhan & Sahu, 2022), and visual based traffic monitoring system (Wang & Ruskin, 2002).

It has been argued, and rightly so, that 'traffic congestion presents a common if not inevitable activity in a region, particularly in urban areas (Taylor, Woolley & Zito, 2000). Although this phenomenon is human-induced and is seen as an integral element in any transport system all over the world, a unanimous definition has defied scholars. Many factors contribute to traffic congestion in Lagos' metropolis, some of which are obvious to the general public. They went further to state the factors that can cause traffic congestion in Lagos' metropolis and they include social and economic factors, road factors (including design and control), vehicle factors, human factors and lastly, accident factors (Ajala, 2019; Nwaigwe, Amiara, Okwunze & Egege, 2019). Traffic congestion can create opportunities for criminal activities such as robbery, pickpocketing, and kidnapping (Choudhary, Gokhale, Kumar, Pradhan & Sahu, 2022).

Road traffic congestion management and the menace of Agbero

Road traffic congestion management refers to the strategies and measures employed to alleviate or mitigate traffic congestion on road networks. Traffic congestion occurs when there is an imbalance between the demand for transportation and the capacity of the road infrastructure to handle that demand efficiently. It leads to slower travel speeds, increased travel times, and reduced overall traffic flow. To manage road traffic congestion, various approaches can be implemented, both in terms of infrastructure improvements and demand management. The activities of Area Boys, *agberos*, and touts can vary depending on the specific context and region. However, Uyieh (2018) identified some common activities associated with these groups and how this has impacted the traffic management situation in the mega city negatively.

1. **Extortion and Intimidation:** Area Boys and Touts are known to engage in extortion by demanding money from individuals, especially street vendors, traders, or motorists. They may use intimidation tactics, threats, or force to extract money or impose their own "taxes" on businesses operating in their areas.
2. **Unregulated Ticket Collection:** *agberos*, particularly in Lagos, Nigeria, are often involved in the informal collection of fares or fees on public transportation. They may operate at bus stops or parks, collecting money from passengers on behalf of bus drivers or conductors. However, some *agberos* engage in corrupt practices, overcharging passengers or pocketing money for personal gain.
3. **Unauthorized Services:** Touts may offer various unauthorized services, such as acting as middlemen for transactions, providing unauthorized parking services, or guiding tourists in exchange for money. These services are typically unregulated and can involve questionable practices or exploitation.
4. **Harassment and Nuisance:** Area Boys, *agberos*, and Touts are sometimes associated with creating a sense of insecurity or being a nuisance in their local communities. They may engage in unruly behaviour, street fights, or disruptive activities that disturb the peace and safety of the area.

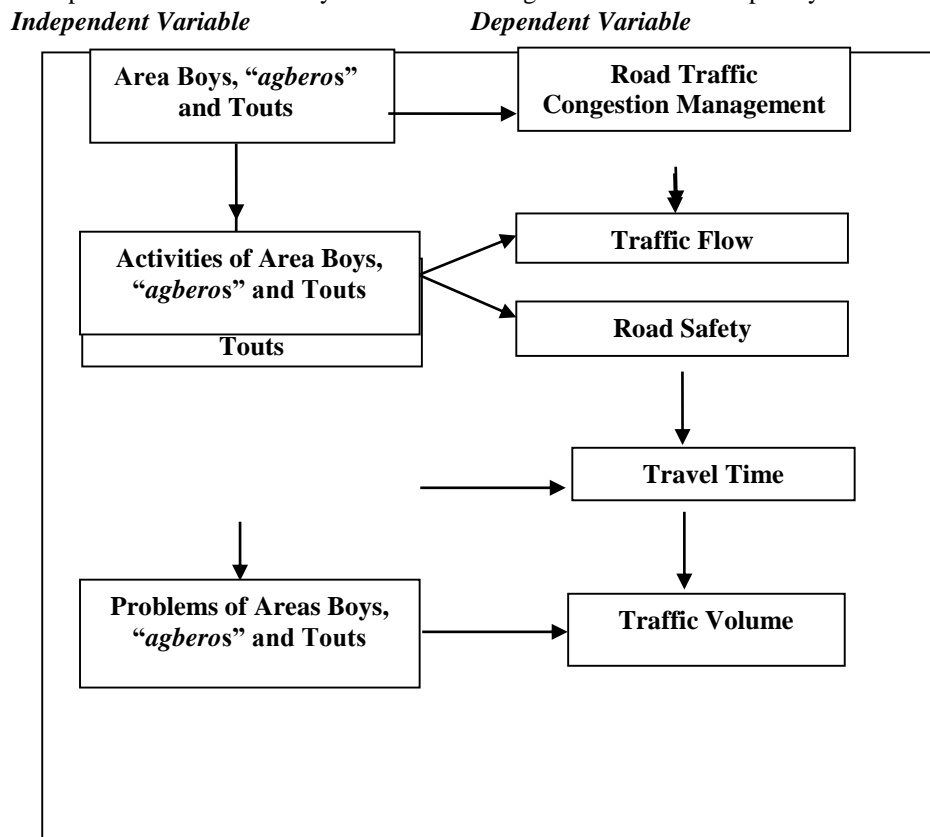
5. Involvement in Criminal Activities: While not representative of all individuals in these groups, some Area Boys, *agberos*, and Touts may be involved in criminal activities such as theft, drug dealing, or gang-related violence. Their presence can contribute to a sense of insecurity and negatively impact the overall safety of an area

Traffic Management in Lagos State

Traffic management in Lagos State is a complex issue due to the high volume of vehicles on the road, limited infrastructure, and a rapidly growing population (Salaam, 2022; Nwaigwe, et al., 2019). Lagos State Government (2021) believes that the Lagos State Government has implemented several initiatives to address traffic congestion in the state. Asiyanbola, Osoba & Adewale (2012) state clearly that some of the measures include road infrastructure development, traffic law enforcement, public transportation system, traffic management technology: education and public awareness. Traffic management in Lagos State is an ongoing challenge due to the high population density, rapid urbanization, and inadequate road infrastructure (Dano, Balogun, Abubakar, & Aina (2020). The Lagos State Government has implemented various strategies and initiatives to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion in the city (Lagos State Government, 2021). According to Adeniji and Okoro, (2019), some additional aspects of traffic management in Lagos State include intelligent traffic management systems, road expansion and construction, traffic diversion and routing, law enforcement and traffic offences monitoring, and public transportation development. Despite these measures, traffic congestion remains a major problem in Lagos State, and there is still a need for further interventions to address the issue.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The conceptual model of this study is shown in the figure below as developed by the researchers.



Source: Developed by the authors (2023).

There is no doubt that despite the centrality of *agberos* to traffic management in Lagos Mega City, the relationship between the two variables have escaped scholarly attention in the extant literature (Agbiboa, 2018). This explains why this model tries to show the nexus between area boys, *agberos* and touts and road traffic congestion management in Lagos state. It tries to demonstrate the relationship between the activities of area boys otherwise known as *agberos* has impacted the traffic flow and road safety in the metropolis. The model foregrounds the association between the *agberos* and day to day traffic management in the city. Also, the model shows the link between the high concentrations of area boys or *agberos* and the travelling time of both the motorists and commuters in the city due the way they harass and collect illegal fees from public transporters on the Lagos roads. Finally, the model also shows the interrelationship between the problems of *agberos* and traffic

volume in the city. It focuses on the analysis of how vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists navigate the road system, the speed and density of vehicles as well as the overall efficiency of traffic movement whenever the agberos are on the road.

EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

Olaogbebikan, Ikpechukwu, Akinsulire, and Enosko (2013) in their study examine the traffic management problems resulting from traffic congestion in the study area. It also evaluates the opinion of the stakeholders in the transport sector such as the commuters, transport operators and private car owners on the traffic situations and management problems in the study area. The study depended upon the survey research technique to gather relevant data on the respondents, using the questionnaire as the research instrument. The research identified *inter alia* the traffic congestion causative factors as; dependency on small occupancy vehicles, narrow roads, indiscriminate parking, loading and off-loading of goods and passengers on the road, on-street trading, the inability of the traffic management agencies to evacuate crashed or breakdown vehicles on time and ineffective traffic control measure. Aworemi., Abdul-Azeez., Akintunde & Oyerinde (2009), also examines the causes, effects and possible measures of road traffic congestion in some selected areas of Lagos State. According to their study, there are many factors contributing to the traffic chaos in Lagos State, mostly:

i. Social and economic factors: Land use of Lagos is poor, like most offices are concentrated on its Island which affects the travel direction- one or the same direction during the peak hours, and also inadequate public transport system is the main factor.

ii. Road factors (including design and control): From many factors, they stated that the most obvious cause of traffic congestion in Lagos is the condition of the roads and other interrelated elements. Most roads are highly crowded, particularly the feeder, as a result, traffic increases up that build queues from these feeders that use for exits and entrances to the main roads (Olagunju, 2015). This is because roads are too narrow and lack sidewalks that hinder the free movement of vehicles particularly when another vehicle passes from the opposite direction, and pedestrians share traffic lanes.

The situation is aggravated by unregulated on-street parking on the already too-narrow streets. In the view of Cepal & Bull (2003) and Abdul, Gani, & Umaru (2020), the following factors among others were identified too have compounded the chaotic traffic congestion in the metropolis.

i. Vehicle factors: Even if it is expected that the standard of vehicles fits the geometric

ii. Standards stated by law, most motor vehicles' length, width and height are not fit with road standards.

iii. Accident factors: Irresponsive traffic management in removing disabled vehicles immediately and of lack immediate settlement by the parties in the case of more serious accident cause queues in both directions of traffics.

Therefore, the study concluded that poor road conditions, accidents, the absence of an integrated transport system, and inadequate traffic planning were the major causes of traffic congestion in Lagos State. Ayodele, Atere & Bayewu (2013) in their study examined the impact of 'agberos' on the maintenance of social order at Oshodi, Iyana-Iba and Mile 2 bus stops in Lagos state. The study population includes *agberos*, traders, police officers, Lagos residents, etc. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed. The study found a significant positive relationship between the presence of 'agberos' at motor parks and the maintenance of social order. Thus, the activities of 'agberos' have remarkable effects on the socio-economic lives of Lagos people as more than 50% of respondents considered economic hardship an important factor for the invasion of motor parks and bus stops by 'agberos'. For a social disorder to be a thing of the past at motor parks and bus stops in Lagos, the study suggests that federal, state and local governments should partner in making qualitative education available to and accessible for youths as well as create job opportunities that will engage them on graduation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For the purpose of our analysis in this study, Social Disorganization Theory by Shaw, C. R., & McKay, H. D. (1942) was adopted to explain the nuisance of agbero that has become a social menace.

Social disorganization theory is a sociological theory propounded by Shaw, C. R., & McKay, H. D., in 1942 that explains how neighbourhood characteristics such as poverty, high population density, residential mobility, and ethnic heterogeneity can lead to social disorganization, which in turn, increases crime rates and other social problems (Bursik Jr, 1988). According to Wilson and Kelling (2017), this theory argues that social disorganization weakens the social ties and informal social control mechanisms within neighbourhoods, leading to an increase in deviant behaviour and a decrease in social order.

The social disorganization theory was first proposed by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay in the 1940s in their study of juvenile delinquency in Chicago. They observed that neighbourhoods with high levels of poverty, ethnic heterogeneity, and residential mobility had higher rates of delinquency compared to neighbourhoods with more stable and homogenous populations (Shaw & McKay, 1942). The theory has been refined and expanded upon by subsequent researchers and has been applied to various forms of deviant behaviour, including drug use,

violence, and gang involvement. Social disorganization theory has also been used to explain the persistence of urban poverty and its negative impact on social well-being (Shaw & McKay, 1942).

The social disorganization theory suggests that the breakdown of social structures, such as family, community, and institutions, can contribute to the emergence and persistence of social problems such as crime, violence, and disorder (Sampson & Groves, 1989). In the context of the Assessment of Area Boys, *agberos* and Touts Syndromes and Traffic Congestion in Lagos State, the social disorganization theory may help to explain the role of social structures in the emergence and persistence of these problems. For instance, the presence of area boys, *agberos*, and touts on the streets of Lagos may be seen as a manifestation of social disorganization, where these individuals have been left without adequate social support and guidance (Agbibo, 2022). Their activities, which include extortion, harassment, and other forms of criminal behaviour, can contribute to the breakdown of social order and the emergence of disorder on the streets, which in turn can contribute to traffic congestion (Olorunlomu, 2022).

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study design: The study is a quantitative study and it adopted a descriptive survey design using the primary data collection method. The study covers the major and relevant government approved bus stops and principal designated foodstuffs and commodity markets located along the public roads. This study concentrated its effort on the sudden traffic congestion along the Akesan-Igando corridor in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Population and sample: The population of the study consisted of all the areas boys operating at bus stops and garages in Alimosho local government in Lagos state. The mix of all the bus stops and garages in Alimosho helped the researcher in understanding the underpinning issues to all Area Boys, '*agberos*,' and Touts as it affects Traffic Congestion fairly and justifiably. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane sample size determination formula because the population of the study is a finite one. A sample size of two hundred (200) respondents was randomly selected in Alimosho of Lagos state.

Sampling Technique: A proportionate stratified sampling technique was used and the respondents from every subgroup were selected for inclusion in the sample size. The respondents for the study were selected at various bus stops and garages in Iyana Ipaja, Egbeda and Igando in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State. Questionnaires were distributed to the Area Boys, '*agberos*,' and Touts and some of the transporters and the road users at the garages and bus stops.

Research instrument and its administration: The main instrument for data collection for the study was a structured questionnaire. A total of one hundred and fifty (150) copies of structured questionnaires were administered and only one hundred and forty-seven (147) were retrieved which constitutes a 98% rate of return. Questionnaires were distributed to the Area Boys, '*agberos*,' and Touts and some of the transporters and the road users at the garages and bus stops.

Data Quality Control: To ensure validation of the instrument, the draft of the research instrument was given to research specialists and experts in the field of transport management and logistics for content and face validity, who thereafter make amendments and corrections where necessary to the research work. A reliability test was conducted to establish the instrument's reliability. The data generated were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient using Statistical Packages Social Sciences (SPSS) 2.0 and the result indicated a coefficient of 0.86 which is higher than the minimum threshold of 0.7 to prove the consistency of the instrument.

Techniques of Data Analysis:

Data collected for the study were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, percentages and graphs were used for the data presentation and analysis. Also, the formulated hypotheses were analyzed and tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) at a significant level of 0.01 level (2-tailed) with the aid of Statistical Packages Social Sciences (SPSS) 22.0.

Ethical Considerations: This study was carried out in strict compliance with academic research's ethical standards. Every respondent was provided with adequate information about the research before seeking their consent to participate. Additionally, participants were informed of their rights to withdraw their participation at any stage of the process. Rights of privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity were also explained in the study's protocol.

This section has described the methods used in this investigation, an instrument used for data collection and an analytical tool used for hypothesis testing. In the section that follows, the data collected were presented and analysed. Tests were carried out to make statistical conclusions.

IV. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, attempt is made to present and analyse the data using appropriate statistical techniques

Demographic Data of the Respondents

This section offers a descriptive analysis of key variables which relate to the demographic information of respondents on the bases of age, sex, gender, respondents' cadre and educational background.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Characteristics	No of Respondents (n = 147)	
		Freq	%
Age Group	From 21 – 30	33	22
	31 – 40	52	35
	41-50	39	27
	51 and above	23	16
Sex	Male	81	55
	Female	66	45
Marital Status	Single	58	13
	Married	89	83
	Others	nil	4
Participant Cadre/Category	Junior Staff	68	46
	Senior Staff	44	29
	Staff on contract/Third party	35	24
Educational Background of Respondents	NECO/WASSCE	29	20
	OND/NCE	34	23
	HND/BSc	49	33
	M.Sc./MBA	35	24
Total		147	100

Source: Field Survey 2023.

Table 1 presents the demographic information of respondents. From the analysis, most of the respondents were male and fall within the most active age bracket. 35 per cent of the respondents were between the ages of 31-40. However, the most striking information to emerge from the data relates to the qualification of respondents which showed that most of them were educated. The data revealed that almost 80 per cent of the respondents have from OND and above. Hence, the level of education of respondents should elicit objective responses and quality of data.

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS AND ANALYSIS OF RESULT

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to test the research hypotheses.

Hypothesis One

Ho1: There is no relationship between the activities of area boys, *agberos*, and touts and traffic congestion in Lagos State.

Table 2: Pearson product-moment correlation between the activities of 'agberos', and traffic congestion in Lagos state.

		The activities of area boys	Traffic congestion in Lagos State
The activities of area boys	Pearson Correlation	1	.662**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	147	147
Traffic congestion in Lagos State	Pearson Correlation	.662**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	147	147

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Decision & Conclusion: Since the p-value is lesser than a 5% level of significance ($0.000 < 0.05$), therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. In addition, the correlation relationship between accounts receivables management on profitability and growth of business entity is linear, strong, positive and significant ($r = 0.662$). The outcome of this test shows that there is a significant relationship between the activities of area boys, *agberos*, and touts and traffic congestion in Lagos State.

Hypothesis Two

Ho₂: High concentration of area boys, *agberos*, and touts in an area is not related to longer travel time experienced on Lagos roads.

Table 3: High Concentration of *agberos* in an Area is not related to longer travel time experienced on Lagos roads

		High concentration of area boys	Time experienced on Lagos roads
High concentration of area boys	Pearson Correlation	1	.638**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	147	147
Time experienced on Lagos roads	Pearson Correlation	.638**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	147	147

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Decision and conclusion: Since the p-value is lesser than a 5% level of significance ($0.000 < 0.05$), therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. In addition, the correlation relationship between the high concentration of area boys on time experience on Lagos roads is linear, strong, positive and significant ($r = 0.638$). The result, therefore, shows that a high concentration of area boys, *agberos*, and touts in an area is not related to longer travel time experienced on Lagos roads

Hypothesis Three

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between the problem of area boys, *agberos*, and touts and high traffic volume in Lagos State.

Table 4: the relationship between the problem of *agberos*, and high traffic volume in Lagos State

		The problem of area boys	High traffic volume in Lagos State
The problem of area boys	Pearson Correlation	1	.638**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	147	147
High traffic volume in Lagos State	Pearson Correlation	.638**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	147	147

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Decision and conclusion: Since the p-value is lesser than a 5% level of significance ($0.000 < 0.05$), therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. In addition, the correlation relationship between cash disbursement on profitability and growth of business entity is linear, strong, positive and significant ($r = 0.638$). Therefore, a high concentration of *agberos* in an area is not related to longer travel time experienced on Lagos roads

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study sets out to conduct an assessment of the activities of *agberos* and Touts on Road Traffic Management in Lagos State. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this was to establish that an association exists between the activities of *agberos*, and traffic congestion in Lagos State. This finding suggests that, in general, these groups may not contribute significantly to the traffic congestion problem in the area. Whilst it is difficult to explain this result, it might be related to other factors such as inadequate road infrastructure, population growth, indiscriminate parking system or poor traffic management systems could be the primary causes of traffic congestion. Although, the finding negates the earlier proposition that the activities of areas boys contribute majorly to traffic congestion. For instance, Gülhan (2023) reported that indiscriminately is a major

bane affecting motorists. When one considers an earlier report by Ojurongbe (2022) it is possible to perceive an error in the result. Ojurongbe (2022), non-empirically report that agberos sometimes engage in confrontations, fights, or acts of intimidation with drivers or other road users can result in traffic disruptions and contribute to congestion as vehicles may be forced to stop or divert to avoid conflict areas which is a contradiction to the current finding. Admittedly, the position of Ojurongbe (2022) seems valid; it is still not enough to conclude that the activities of the *agberos* on the road significantly lead to traffic congestion.

The second major finding shows that the concentration of *agberos* in an area does have a significant impact on the travel time experienced on Lagos roads. Other factors such as road conditions, traffic signals, or vehicle density may have a more pronounced effect on travel time. The present study confirms previous findings and contributes additional evidence that suggests there are many factors contributing to the traffic chaos in Lagos State (Asaju, Ebo, Nwoye & Shehu, 2021; Aworemi., Abdul-Azeez., Akintunde & Oyerinde, 2009). In contrast to earlier studies (Asaju et al., 2021), this result has not been empirically described. There was no evidence that the menace of *agbero* to the problem of traffic congestion was mentioned.

This is the largest study so far that documents the links between the operations of road union members as one of the contributory factors to the Lagos traffic impasse. The third finding shows that there is a significant relationship between the problem of *agberos*, and high traffic volume in Lagos State. It indicated that the problem of *agberos* does have a significant relationship with high traffic volume in Lagos State.

This understanding contributes to a deeper knowledge of the dynamics between formal and informal actors in urban transportation systems. It revealed the potential economic and social costs associated with their activities, such as bribery, extortion, and disruption of traffic flow.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis of the activities of *agberos* on road traffic management in Lagos State reveals that these groups have a significant impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of traffic management in the region. While there may be limited scholarly research specifically focused on this topic, general studies on the influence of informal activities and informal transportation operators provide some insights. It is obvious from the extant literature that the menace of *agberos* constitute a serious threat to public peace and safety and the economy of Lagos state in general (Nairaland, 2023). This study is significant because it has gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of the detrimental activities of the *agberos* on commuters as well as other road users in Lagos State. This combination of findings provides some support for the conceptual premise that the activities of the *agberos* are extraneous to the issues of congestion on Lagos roads.

This study has demonstrated that the activities of informal groups, such as *agberos* significantly demonstrated that the activities of the *agberos* may include road blockages, extortion, illegal collection of fees, and disturbances, can disrupt traffic flow, impede the smooth movement of vehicles, and result in longer travel times for motorists in some cases. However, these events cannot be held responsible for the perpetuity of road congestion experienced daily on Lagos roads. Additionally, these groups may contribute to challenges in maintaining order, enforcing traffic regulations, and ensuring the safety of road users. Their presence and activities can lead to a lack of adherence to traffic rules, traffic signal violations, and unruly behaviour, further exacerbating traffic congestion and compromising road safety.

Although the study has successfully provided a comprehensive analysis of their activities, motivations, and impact on traffic flow in Lagos State. This understanding contributes to a deeper knowledge of the dynamics between formal and informal actors in urban transportation systems. It revealed the potential economic and social costs associated with their activities, such as bribery, extortion, and disruption of traffic flow. It is important to note that an arguable weakness of this study is the arbitrariness in our definition of *agbero*. This stems from the fact that while this paper portrays the Motor Park boys otherwise known as *agberos* are largely research has therefore thrown up many questions in need of further investigation in this regard.

Based on uneducated, notorious and riotous, they perceive themselves as a professional union with the legal backing to do what they are doing (Olasupo, 2023). They, therefore, consider every road user as their member as long as the road user uses his vehicle for commercial purposes. This the findings of this study, there is a need for government to enhance the capacity of law enforcement agencies to effectively and decisively tackle the activities of the *Agberos* who are sometimes seen as "areas-boys". It is therefore necessary for the government to ensure that existing laws on the activities of *agberos* are properly implemented.

Government and other stakeholders most especially in the transport sector should as a matter of urgency ensure that the menace of *agberos* is checkmated in Lagos metropolis to allow for free flow of traffic in the city. This can only be achieved if the government can intensify her efforts in the area of youth empowerment, creation of employment opportunities, and the government needs to conduct extensive public awareness campaigns and enlightenment programmes to educate the general public, including motorists and pedestrians, about the negative consequences of supporting or tolerating the activities of '*agberos*', promote responsible citizenship and emphasize the importance of adhering to traffic regulations for maintaining smooth traffic flow and road safety.

Moreso, Lagos State Government needs to enhance urban planning practices to discourage the concentration of *agberos* in specific areas. Government must designate appropriate zones for informal activities, such as marketplaces, while ensuring that these zones do not disrupt traffic flow or pose safety hazards.

Importantly, more information on the activities of the *agberos* would help us to establish a greater degree of accuracy on this matter. Hence, it is important to monitor and control the operations of the garage boys, otherwise known as *agbero* in major city centres. Overall, these results indicate that the Lagos State government is due to establish a robust data gathering and monitoring system to track the activities of *agberos* and evaluate the effectiveness to be able to identify areas of intervention. This will provide valuable insights into emerging trends, hotspots, and the impact of implemented measures, facilitating evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement of road traffic management strategies.

POLICY IMPLICATION OF THIS STUDY

This study has provided valuable insights into the road activities of the *agberos*, and the impact of their activities on traffic congestion in Lagos State. The study has provided information that can assist the government as well as policymakers to develop policy initiative that can address the issue. The paper x-rays the dynamics of the activities of the *agberos* and offer some guidance to implementing appropriate interventions to improve traffic management in Lagos State.

Majorly, the finding has generated the need for the development and implementation of policies and strategies relating to traffic management, urban transportation, and public safety. Public administrators can utilize the knowledge generated from the study to design evidence-based policies that specifically target the activities of *agberos*, to reduce traffic congestion and improve overall public administration in the context of transportation. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of engaging with various stakeholders, including community leaders, transport unions, law enforcement agencies, and civil society organizations, to address the issue of traffic congestion caused by *agberos*. Public administrators can use this knowledge to foster collaborative partnerships, facilitate dialogue, and build consensus among stakeholders, leading to more effective and sustainable solutions. On a final note, the significance of this research lies in its potential to inform decision-making, improve traffic management strategies, and enhance the daily experiences of road users, businesses, and commuters in Lagos State. It is worthy of note to point out that the Nigerian Transport Policy is still in incubation till date. As noted by Salaam (2022). there is the need for government and individual to alter their perception of looking down on transport workers and toad practitioners and workers. The Ministry of Transport should professionalise the transport Union and regulate road activities.

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