Connivance and coercion *

Melissa Pavlik†

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Abstract

Why do states often fail to enforce their own policies, especially those governing the poor and vulnerable? How do state policies and their enforcement shape coercion by extralegal groups? This paper investigates these questions in the context of modern-day Nigeria, a decades-old democracy which nevertheless features high levels of violence and exploitation. I provide a conceptual framework which shows how enabling such exploitation is functional for democratic states insofar as it empowers non-state allies who benefit from the vulnerability of regulated populations. Diverging from existing approaches, which characterize uneven enforcement against the poor as benevolent, I detail how states 'produce precarity' in vulnerable citizens through uneven enforcement of their own policies. I focus on the role of transport unions in Lagos, Nigeria— extractive actors who exploit drivers, and work as purveyors of electoral violence for the ruling party—in determining state enforcement of a ban on okada motorcycle taxis in the state. First, using evidence from several months fieldwork in Lagos; as well as an original networked dataset of the Lagos transport union, I show how the Lagos State Government's selective enforcement of its ban on motorcycle taxis was preceded by driver threats of secession amidst union extortion. Second, I use original geocoded data on enforcement locations, union territory, and traffic patterns along the Lagos road network to show how the political geography of the ban's enforcement displaces riders into areas controlled by the union. Third and finally, I exploit the timing of a surprising election result to show how a shock to state reliance on the union affects enforcement patterns. This paper not only explores how states can exploit an understudied 'enforcement lever' to usurp democratic institutions and redistribute to their allies, but how powerful—but not necessarily criminal—groups can trade extralegal violence for such redistribution.

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†Yale University, Political Science: melissa.pavlik@yale.edu; www.melissapavlik.com

Why do states often fail to completely enforce their own policies, especially those governing the poor and vulnerable? All over the world, state actors propose, debate, and pass laws targeting informal economies and populations: examples include bans on hawking, squatting, driving an unregistered taxi, or crossing borders without documentation. However, enforcement of these policies often varies significantly over time and space—even from one week to the next, even within a single city. Most scholarship chalks up gaps in policy enforcement to gaps in state capacity; more recent scholarship has advanced alternative explanations for *forbearance*, defined by Holland as "intentional and revocable government leniency towards violations of the law" (Holland, 2016, 233). These explanations show how governments can refuse to enforce policies targeting the poor as a form of redistribution.

However, incomplete enforcement cannot always be attributed either to state failure or to state sympathy with its most vulnerable populations. In many cases, infringing populations are not key to the selectorate: undocumented migrants for example, who cannot vote either for or against the incumbent and have few allies among registered voters. And while forbearance is often described in benevolent terms, incomplete enforcement does not always benefit offenders. When a politician blackmails Romani populations about tax nonpayment in direct exchange for votes—as described by Mares and Young (2019)—the state, alongside the apparent concession, is extending not a favor but a threat. When U.S. police across the Jim Crow South declined to enforce racist laws, only for lawbreakers to be attacked by extrajudicial militias, the state was not *conceding* anything to Black populations.[1]

In this paper, I argue that gaps in enforcement can be strategically used to 'produce precarity' in offenders and enhance opportunities for their exploitation, especially by third parties. I argue that allowing—and even enabling—exploitation in this way is functional for democratic states insofar

[1]One such example occurred during nonviolent sit-ins by Black college students at segregated lunch counters in Nashville, Tennessee in 1960. Several days into the demonstration, on February 27 of that year, the police began to engage—not just with arrests, but by standing aside as violent proxies attacked protesters. One demonstrator Bernard Layfayette noted that on that day "we were told in advance... that they are gonna allow the hoodlums to beat us up, and *then* the police were gonna arrest us." Once the sit-in began, "as predicted, the police held back for the first fifteen minutes," resulting in severe violence against the Black students. For more, see (York, 1999, minutes 0:35:22–0:36:22).

as it empowers non-state allies who benefit from the vulnerability of those being regulated. I refer to this strategy as *connivance*: a coercive, rather than concessional, form of forbearance. I add to existing conceptualizations of forbearance by integrating the concept with theories of repression, and describe how selective enforcement can act as a strategy of political control (Hassan et al., 2021) and consolidate relationships between state agents and extortionate, exploitative, and often violent third-party actors.

I elucidate the concept of connivance against the backdrop of the informal transport industry in Nigeria. Specifically, I analyze the 2022 selective enforcement of a ban on 'okada' motorcycle taxis in Lagos, Africa's largest metropolitan area. Okada riders[2] are usually economic migrants and internally displaced persons from the North of Nigeria, often fleeing climate-induced land scarcity and political violence (Grasse and Pavlik, 2025). While the Lagos okada ban applied to all major roads in the state, it was enforced only across select bridges, intersections, streets, and neighborhoods. Capacity-based explanations do not convincingly explain the ban's uneven enforcement; Lagos streets are heavily policed by at least a half a dozen branches of law enforcement. The ban's passage and partial enforcement also drew outrage from okada riders, calling into question any benevolent motivation by the recalcitrant state.

I use original micro-level geospatial data on enforcement and extortion points on the Lagos roadways, traffic patterns, and informal transport density, as well as qualitative data both from fieldwork and archival news reports, to show that selective enforcement of the okada ban is a strategy of connivance by the Lagos State Government. The ban's incomplete enforcement was not for the purpose of redistribution to vulnerable riders, but to ease their extortion by extralegal violence entrepreneurs—in this case, the Lagos branch of the National Union of Road and Transport Workers (NURTW; heretofore referred to as 'the Union'): a mafia-like organization that behaves as a key source of thugs-for-hire for Lagos's leading political party, the All Progressives Congress (APC). Drawing from participant observation on Lagos roadways and amongst Union members

[2]Here in keeping with local parlance, I refer to the drivers of the motorcycles as 'riders,' and the consumers of the service as 'passengers.'

and okada riders, over 75 stakeholder interviews, and a near-comprehensive collection of local newspaper reports spanning decades of Union activity, I describe how enforcement timing corresponded with okada rider resistance to Union extortion, prompting state intervention. Using a 'randomization inference' simulation-based technique on the Lagos road network, I demonstrate that the political geography of the ban's enforcement served to displace riders into areas of the city controlled by the Union, increasing its ability to exploit riders during this tumultuous period. I show that spatial patterns of ban enforcement does not cleanly vary with other potential explanations, such as geographic variation in state capacity or traffic congestion. Finally, I exploit a surprising election result from the year following the ban, which served as a shock to the state government's perception of the reliability of the Union. Using fine-grained satellite-based measurements of commercial transport presence, I find that when state reliance on the Union is shaken, enforcement diminishes.

This paper contributes to several substantive agendas in the study of politics. I contribute to an increasingly common focus on spatial economics in urban centers of low-income countries (Bryan, Frye and Morten, 2025). More specifically, I add to the growing wealth of literature on the informal transport sector and traffic politics (Agbiboa, 2022; Goodfellow, 2015; Fourchard, 2023) as well as the road networks and their disruptions (Nathan, 2023; Schouten, 2022; Dell, 2015; Sánchez De La Sierra et al., 2024) which characterize so many major cities in the Global South broadly, and on the continent of Africa in particular. While there exist a number of studies examining roads and their construction, including in studies of colonial expansion (Cowen, 2020), conflict dynamics (Zhukov, 2012), and large-scale infrastructure corruption (Williams, 2017), modern laws *governing* the roads get less attention.[3] This is despite the fact that in urban areas worldwide, parking tickets, traffic fines, and checkpoints are among the most frequent ways in which citizens directly interact with the state. In what follows, I show how states can use instruments as seemingly banal as traffic policy enforcement to advance the interests of exploitative third parties and alter a city's political geography. In doing so, I build on work in urban economics and in political science

[3]With notable exceptions: See Su and Buerger (2024) and Ben-Menachem and Morris (2023) for two examples in the U.S. context; and Sánchez De La Sierra et al. (2024) for a detailed dive into the Congo's traffic agency.

by Xu (2023) and others on how spatial externalities foster inequality in such contexts. Moreover, I add to existing work on the role of non-state actors in weakly-institutionalized democracies; bridging the gap between work on civil society groups like unions (Dean, 2022; Hassan, Mattingly and Nugent, 2022) and violence entrepreneurs including gangs, mafias, and political militias (Carey, Mitchell and Scharpf, 2022; Tapscott, 2021; Acemoglu, Robinson and Santos, 2009). Indeed, in this context, they are one and the same.

Most fundamentally, I expand our understanding of the concept of forbearance by exploring how non-enforcement against precarious populations can counterintuitively be a tool of political control, rather than a form of benevolent redistribution. In doing so, I expand both on studies of forbearance and of repression in the context of informality. Most theories of repression and coercion focus on the state's ability to inflict physical violence (Thachil, 2020), maintain high levels of censorship and control over speech (Sullivan and Davenport, 2018), or even actively engage in distribution for coercive purposes (Albertus, Fenner and Slater, 2018; Pan, 2020). Although the study of how states inflict violence has recently expanded to include subtler modes of political control (Hassan, Mattingly and Nugent, 2022), repression is still largely assumed to be a function of a state's capacity to enforce its own repressive policies. As such, studies of repression have incompletely grappled with the coercion produced where the state selectively does *not* engage in enforcement. I show how in some contexts, uneven governance and policing patterns should be interpreted not as lapses in capacity, but as purposeful tactics used to empower extra-state violence entrepreneurs and enable exploitation of the vulnerable. These findings not only elaborate on existing scholarly accounts on policing (Eck, Conrad and Crabtree, 2021) and strategic non-enforcement (Holland, 2017; Cunningham and Owens, 2020; Su and Buerger, 2024), but have significant implications for our understanding of a state's willingness to concede its monopoly on enforcement and violence (Acemoglu, Robinson and Santos, 2009; Carey, Mitchell and Scharpf, 2022). This paper answers a call by Hassan, Mattingly and Nugent (2022) to expand considerations of state repression "beyond capacity to also consider intent" (Hassan, Mattingly and Nugent, 2022, 157).

1 Connivance

When forbearance is coercive

Why do agents of the state enforce certain policies and not others, and what explains vast variation in enforcement across time and space? Most work tends to blame enforcement gaps on a lack of state capacity, a concept at the center of explaining both how states form and how they operate—especially how they utilize and build their coercive power (Tilly et al., 1992). [4] However, the concept of state capacity often bundles distinct qualities of bureaucratic performance and policy implementation, leading to over-generalized theories which do not account for idiosyncratic constraints and incentives (Williams, 2021). In response, scholars have increasingly explored cases where governments are able, but unwilling, to comprehensively enforce a policy—*refusing to use* the capacity they possess. These efforts have resulted in alternative 'agent-based' approaches, which theorize that enforcement will vary not just with state capacity, but with interests. For instance, governments may neglect to enforce violations where non-enforcement is popularly preferred.[5]

These agent-based explanations largely attribute non-enforcement to state incentives to appease the population breaking the law. In other words, when offenders are key allies or members of the selectorate, state agents may refrain from enforcement in order to retain this population's support: a *concessional* logic of non-enforcement. The literature has considered two varieties of this phenomenon. Contingent non-enforcement occurs in exchange for favors from the infringing population, as detailed in the extensive literatures on corrupt and clientelistic exchanges. However

[4] In fact, the concept of state capacity is often defined explicitly in terms of the state's ability to enforce its laws; including by monopolizing coercive power (Weber, 1978) and expending resources to regulate relationships (Migdal, 1988). In a recent review of the concept, (Hanson and Sigman, 2021) define a state's capacity as a function of its power, or in terms of Dahl's pluralist 'first face,' the ability of the state to get its citizens to do things they would not otherwise do—the power to enforce its preferences (Hanson and Sigman, 2021; Dahl, 2007). See Cingolani (2013) for a detailed review of the intellectual history of the concept of state capacity. For a recent example of a study linking capacity with enforcement, see Cook and Fortunato (2023) on state legislative capacity and the enforcement of data provision laws.

[5] One example of this motivation finds that enforcement of traffic violations falls dramatically in the lead-up to sheriff's races in the U.S.(Su and Buerger, 2024).

in her seminal book Holland (2017) shows how politicians decline to *broadly* enforce certain policies targeting the poor in order to purposefully engage in "welfarist" forbearance (Holland, 2016). Specifically in the context of Latin America, Holland (2017) shows how forbearance towards squatting and street-vending violations depends on the importance of poor voters to the ruling party. However, not all forbearance is so benevolent. In a more sobering example, Wilkinson (2006) describes how Hindu politicians in India decline to call in law enforcement to suppress militia violence against Muslim protesters during elections.[6] Forbearance can also be conceptualized in terms of regulatory capture[7] on the *enforcement* lever, rather than the *policymaking* lever.

Building on these existing explanations for selective and incomplete state enforcement, I use the term *connivance* to describe the strategic, selective enforcement of law-breaking through which the state 'produces precarity'[8] in the infringing population and renders it vulnerable to exploitation. Connivance—a coercive form of forbearance—occurs when the state is within its legal right (and obligation) to enforce a law, but instead alters enforcement patterns *for the purpose of* expanding opportunities for offenders' exploitation. With connivance, I offer a framework for integrating the concept of forbearance with the vulnerability imposed on offenders through the selective enforcement of *de jure* policies. A core characteristic of forbearance is that it is revocable; that is, a policy forbids the offending behavior, the state has the right to enforce it, and offenders believe that sanctions are possible (Holland, 2016, 234). In concessional forbearance, revocability solves the credibility problem of non-contingent clientelistic exchanges (Holland, 2016, 236). But this characteristic not only "cements political dependency" to the forbearing politician (Holland, 2016, 236) but exacerbates precarity in the population violating the policy. This precarity is distinctly *not* revocable. And while one of its advantages as a distributive tool is that it is used outside the

[6] In these accounts, the incentives to engage in forbearance are electoral. But concessional forbearance is not exclusively tied to electoral considerations. In a very different context—highly industrialized countries of Western Europe—Dewey and Di Carlo (2022) shows how states engage in 'regulatory' forbearance as a form of industrial policy; declining to enforce firm tax violations as a way to shape markets and favor specific producer groups (rather than groups of voters).

[7] Dal Bó (2006) defines regulatory capture broadly as "the process through which special interests affect state intervention in any of its forms" (Dal Bó, 2006)[203]

[8] Precarity here refers to "a situation lacking in predictability, security or material and social welfare" (A. et al., 2022)

formal lawmaking system (Holland, 2016; Cunningham and Owens, 2020, 236), forbearance in fact requires a policy pass through this system before it is viable strategy. Revoking the precarity produced by non-enforcement therefore requires a shift in policy, not enforcement—meaning this vulnerability is intrinsic to forbearance as a strategy.

Connivance, then, rests on the precarity manufactured by states through the gap between law passage and enforcement. These paired conditions of an existing law and the choice to not enforce it create a dynamic closely captured by Lovett's conceptualization of domination, combining close dependency and the arbitrary wielding of power (Lovett, 2001). It invokes a very specific type of state power beyond its 'first face' (Lukes, 2021) and invites parallels with the concept of coercive control in literature on domestic violence.[9] Mann (1984) distinguishes between the state's power to impose mandates (despotic power) and to penetrate territory and implement policies (infrastructural power) (Mann, 1984, 190). Many studies of repression, even those encompassing 'softer' and subtler forms, reference only the former; indeed Hassan, Mattingly and Nugent (2022) explicitly define political control in terms of this despotic power of the state. The concept of connivance instead focuses on how power is exerted through selective and instrumental use of the state's infrastructural power in the presence of despotic mandates.

Crucially, while forbearance can be coercive in many ways, the concept of connivance requires an intention to produce precarity in the infringing population such that it can be exploited by the state or, in most cases, by its third-party state allies. An extensive literature shows how selective non-enforcement can empower criminal groups (Sobering and Auyero, 2019; Dewey, 2012; Wilkinson, 2006), enable mass inefficiencies (Mahadevan, 2024), and produce negative externalities such as environmental degradation (Dipoppa and Gulzar, 2023; Harding et al., 2024)—or as in the case of state failure to enforce the mafia's dumping of toxic waste across Southern Italy, all

[9]The concept of *coercive control* represents attempt to broaden understandings of domestic abuse beyond those of physical violence, and has been defined by Stark (2007, 228) as combined coercion—"the use of force or threats to compel or dispel a particular response" and control—"structural forms of deprivation, exploitation, and command that compel obedience indirectly" (Stark, 2007, 229) resulting in "a condition of unfreedom" (Stark, 2007, 205) experienced as entrapment.

three (Walters, 2013; D'Alisa et al., 2010). Distinct from these cases, connivance does not simply imply non-enforcement against 'bad' actors or with 'bad' consequences. Instead, it requires that the state purposefully look away, not from its criminal co-conspirators or key constituencies, but from populations in whose vulnerability the state or its allies have a vested interest.

Cui Bono? Third parties as profiteers of precarity

If connivance is used to produce precarity and facilitate predation, understanding its use as a strategy requires answering the question: Predation by whom? Who benefits[10] from this coercive forbearance? The majority of studies of forbearance focus on the relationship between the state and the population being enforced (or not). And while connivance may be used to facilitate exploitation by the state itself,[11] in most cases it requires evaluating the incentives and distributional consequences for more than just the infringing population and the state. I focus on the role of 'third party' actors, other than the state or the population directly affected, who are nevertheless interested in a law's enforcement. One straightforward example is those who profit off the illicit labor of lawbreakers, such as mafias, militias, or exploitative employers.

How can ruling parties effectively foster and maintain relationships with such third parties? Table 1 presents two dimensions along which state support to non-state allies can vary. Rows represent whether the inducement is a positive expenditure (e.g., providing cash or contracts) or a negative withdrawal of resources (e.g., revoking overburdensome regulations). Columns represent the target beneficiary—whether it is an explicit allocation towards the ally in question, or is targeted towards other, related actors such as the ally's competitors, labor pool, or consumers.

A great deal of work in the social sciences focuses on the first column, in particular direct support from the state in the form of bribery or other incentives. However recent work from

[10] 'Cui bono'

[11] Such is the case of 'blackmail' as described by Mares and Young (2019), in which state actors fail to enforce tax nonpayment by traveller populations in Hungary and Romania. While on its face a concession, these same state actors make a point to remind workers of their nonpayment in the lead-up to elections. In this case then, forbearance is not concessional but coercive. Its purpose is not conciliatory, but to foster vulnerability that can be exploited to gain votes.

	Direct beneficiary	*Indirect beneficiary*
Expenditure	**Support** (i.e., clientelism/corruption)	**Burdening** (i.e., regulation of competitors)
Withdrawal	**Leniency** (i.e., concessional forbearance)	**Connivance** (i.e., coercive forbearance)

Table 1: *Types of state assistance for a third party ally.* Columns are beneficiary type, and clarify whether the allocation is targeted towards the ally in question (making them a direct beneficiary), or towards other actors such as the ally's competitors (making them an indirect beneficiary). Rows are inducement type, and represent whether the strategy involves the 'positive' extension of resources (expenditure) or the 'negative' removal of resources (withdrawal).

Holland (2017); Cunningham and Owens (2020); Harding et al. (2024); Wilkinson (2006) and others focus on strategic *leniency*, where state actors support non-state allies by declining to enforce their myriad offenses; respectively poor voters (engaged in squatting), specific sectors and firms (engaged in tax evasion), construction contractors (engaged in deforestation), and communal militias (engaged in electoral violence). With some groups however, states have an incentive to avoid explicit or direct favoritism, especially when these groups are engaged in violence (Carey, Mitchell and Scharpf, 2022). In such instances, the state may opt for indirect forms of support, and avoid traceable resource transfers. A positive but indirect strategy of 'burdening,' may involve targeting of rival groups with excessive regulation or repression. Finally, connivance refers to state assistance characterized by a negative expenditure targeted towards an indirect beneficiary. It is a coercive form of forbearance, where the state facilitates exploitation—through inaction—at the behest of its non-state allies.

By considering the role of these exploitative third parties in enforcement decisions, I expand the population of cases in which forbearance is plausibly purposeful and redistributive; but far from concessional. I contend that connivance becomes an especially viable strategy when there is significant state reliance on a extortionate third party who benefits from the enhanced vulnerability of affected lawbreakers. Four stylized—and necessarily brief—potential examples of connivance are laid out in Table 2.

Table 2: Empirical examples of connivance

The Example	*The Policy*	*The Actors*	*Connivance*
In the midst of an ongoing crackdown on undocumented immigrants, the U.S. federal government directed enforcement agencies to selectively pause raids and arrests; specifically targeting the agricultural industry.	A January 20, 2025 Executive Order by President Donald Trump "Protecting the American People Against Invasion" (The White House, 2025); Immigration & Nationality Act (INA).	**Enforcer**: The U.S. federal government; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); local enforcement partners **Infringing population**: Undocumented and unregistered immigrants in the U.S. **Third party**: U.S. agricultural employers	The abrupt shift of the U.S. administration's ongoing mass deportation campaign towards *selective non-enforcement* of undocumented immigrants working on farms was aimed at avoiding "hurting industries...[President Trump] does not want to lose" (Aleaziz and Kanno-Youngs, 2025). President Trump himself acknowledged this in a social media post: "Our great Farmers...have been stating that our very aggressive policy on immigration is taking...workers away from them, with those jobs being almost impossible to replace" (Aleaziz and Kanno-Youngs, 2025). In lobbying for this position, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins reportedly explained that "farmers rely on immigrants to work long hours"(Pager et al., 2025), because they "cannot find Americans willing to do the physically onerous work" (Pager et al., 2025). By exercising forbearance only selectively, against immigrant farmworkers, the Trump administration has engaged in connivance—consolidating the vulnerability of undocumented workers in the interest of agricultural employers who rely on the "cheap and disposable labor" (Ngai, 2014, 3) made possible by these workers' precarious legal position. While enforcement writ large continues, selective non-enforcement was exercised against the populations on whose labor Trump's allies exploit.
Despite laws against settling on public land, officials in Nairobi, Kenya have selectively declined to enforce laws against the habitation of slums and sub-standard shacks and tenement buildings which proliferate in the city's periphery.	Kenya's Land Act of 2017 requires that authorities "shall issue a notice to the unlawful occupiers of public land to vacate the land" and evict tenants (Government of Kenya, 2017, Part VIII Section 64.(1), 2612)	**Enforcer**: Politicians, chiefs, and officials responsible for enforcing land grabs in Nairobi, Kenya **Infringing population**: Informal settlers on Nairobi's public land **Third party**: Well-connected landlords overseeing construction and habitation in these informal slums	Urban land markets in Nairobi are "heavily influenced by what the local government does (or fails to do)...and the extent to which these rules are applied and for whom they are enforced" (Earle and Grant, 2019, 2). Landlords in Nairobi profit enormously from illicit settlements erected on public land: as noted by (Mwau and Sverdlik, 2020, 487), "hazardous informal shelter in Nairobi can be highly lucrative," with up to four times higher returns than middle- and high-income housing. Kenyan authorities selectively engage in a "a lack of approval or enforcement...a "silent" policy of enabling tenement production," (Mwau and Sverdlik, 2020, 495) which enables landlords and structure owners to extract from the city's most vulnerable communities in the form of from informal rent, illicitly collected. Political appointees, including chiefs, have private interests which "can mean some criminal activity is tolerated due to the income it generates" (Price et al., 2016, 15). In addition to corrupt kickbacks, tenants often maintain coercive patronage relationships with structure-owners and landlords in which tenants are expected to support "the political interests of the latter" (Rigon, 2015, 2768). A strategy of connivance by local officials towards residents of informal areas run by their allies benefits these specific landlords and structure-owners, who both pass on profits and votes to (non-)enforcers.

The Example	*The Policy*	*The Actors*	*Connivance*
The Colombian government has failed to consistently enforce artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) of gold along the pacific coast, especially in territory populated by indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations.	Decree 2235 in 2012 instructed police to destroy untitled mining operations, effectively criminalizing long-informal ASM operations (Mindefensa, 2012).	**Enforcer**: Colombian law enforcement agencies **Infringing population**: Informal, small-scale subsistence gold miners (*barequeros*) **Third party**: Armed actors including Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN)	Between 80% and 90% of gold in Colombia comes from seldom-enforced ASM (Massé and Munevar', 2017). This "uneven and insufficient" enforcement (Martínez-Fernández, 2019, 7) is not due to an inability to locate mines, which often operate in full view of authorities (Massé and Munevar', 2017; ABColombia, 2012). Instead, it is a function of the selective complicity of local authorities towards armed groups who extort illicit mining operations for profit (Massé and Munevar', 2017). A common complaint is that "all the world sees [them] coming and going...except public officials" (Translated by author; Massé and Camargo', 2012, 41), and security forces have been accused of withholding protection of miners in order to facilitate their extortion (Massé and Munevar', 2017, 17). Gold has surpassed cocaine as the main source of armed group revenues in Colombia (Berg, Ziemer and Kohan, 2021), and the ELN in particular relies on its highly profitable extortion—not operation—of illegal mines (Massé and Munevar', 2017; Martínez-Fernández, 2019). These Colombian authorities are engaged in connivance: perpetuating, through selective non-enforcement, the vulnerability of local miners in order to enable their exploitation by armed groups in return for kickbacks.
City officials in Madrid, Spain failed to enforce extensive illicit electricity hookups by residents of a specific area of the city: Cañada Real, often called "Europe's largest shantytown" (Gil, 2022), a 15km strip of informal housing on public land to the city's Southeast.	Spain's Criminal Code Chapter VI Subchapter 3 Article 255 prohibits illegal connections to the electrical grid, and provides precise guidelines for penalties and enforcement of the offense (Ministerio de Justicia, 2016)	**Enforcer**: Law enforcement officials in the Autonomous Community of Madrid, Spain **Infringing population**: Residents of Cañada Real informal settlements with illicit connections to the electrical grid (the majority) **Third party**: Commercial real estate developers in Madrid	In 2020, electricity supplier Naturgy cut off electricity supply to Cañada Real, forcing most residents—largely migrants, most of whom are children—to abandon their powerless homes (Jones, 2021). At the time of the shutdown, only 4 out of 1,800 total connections to the electrical grid in the settlement were legal (Duran, 2021). The state's restraint cannot be attributed to lack of capacity (EFE, 2021), popular will or ignorance of the situation (EFE, 2020), ambiguous jurisdiction (Sánchez, 2022) and certainly not a desire to appease the population of the neighborhood (Bradock, 2021; Quesada, 2023). A representative for Cañada Real argued in a complaint that the state's restraint was a form of "direct coercion for the most vulnerable to abandon their homes ... [with the purpose of benefiting] the urban developments of southeast" Madrid (Marín, 2022). The beneficiaries of this state restraint certainly included urban real estate developers, whose sprawling developments in eyesight of the settlement have been continually stalled due to complaints from residents (Montaner, 2021). Benefiting too is Madrid Community President Isabela Dìaz Ayuso's administration, whose reelection campaign proposed ambitious urban development projects and expansions to Madrid's Metro System southeast, in the area surrounding the settlement (Comunidad de Madrid, 2022). In declining to enforce its own policies, her administration engaged in connivance, ultimately passively displacing the population in order to benefit its own political agenda.

It is beyond the scope of this article to lay each case in Table 2 out in its full complexity and detail, but examining key differences and similarities is instructive. First, there is important variation between these cases. These four examples take place across multiple regions of the world, from generally high-capacity and income contexts such as the U.S. and Spain to the middle- and lower-income states of Colombia and Kenya. The third-party actors vary as well; from industrial farms and urban developers in the West, to armed actors in Latin America, and landlords in Africa. The ignored infraction in each case varies widely as well, encompassing illicit electricity hookups, border crossings, informal settlements, and artisanal mining.

What remains consistent however is the nature of the relationships between the three primary actors featured in each case, as summarized in Figure 1. Connivance requires that the enforcing actor actively restrains from enforcement, either in part or in total; this feature it shares with more traditional ideas of forbearance as described by Holland (2016) and others. The key distinguishing feature of connivance is the introduction of a third-party interest, with its own relationships to the enforcer and the infringing population. In a framework of connivance, the third party has some form of alliance with relevant state actors, be it through the provision of votes, bribes, or other forms of support. Moreover, the third party also has exploitative power over the infringing population, and stands to benefit from their precarity. It is this exploitative relationship which makes connivance a potent tool for state actors seeking to strengthen or maintain their alliance with its third-party allies.

There are other commonalities between the cases which help elucidate the advantages of connivance either as a substitute or complement to other strategies of state support (see Table 1). Just as concessional forbearance is cheaper than welfare through official state programs such as social security (Holland, 2017), connivance is cheaper than bribes, physical repression, crackdowns, or evictions. It is also notable that each of these stylized cases take place in more or less democratic contexts. This is not necessarily a strict scope condition, and it is beyond the scope of this article to definitively state democracy's role in enabling connivance as a strategy. However, democracy may

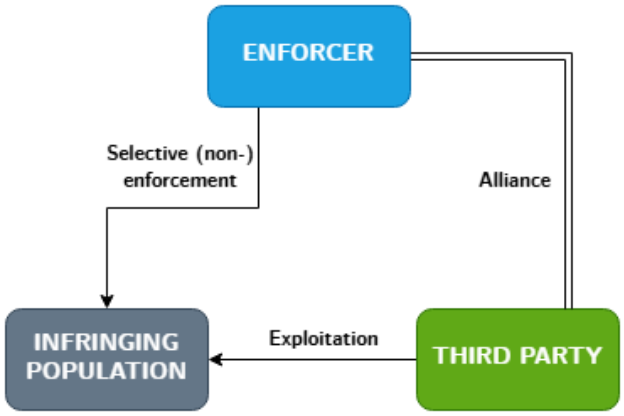


Figure 1: Relationships between key actors in connivance

foster the relationship between the state and third parties which is itself a necessary pre-requisite for connivance. When the state is not all-encompassing or autocratic, parties and politicians may increase their reliance on non-state allies in their quest to gain and maintain power. Moreover, democracy may foster a situation in which state actors are unwilling to be seen as actively favoring specific third parties over others, making connivance—an indirect and 'negative' strategy, as described in Table 1—attractive. This is especially true in contexts where the third party is itself violent or illicit (Carey, Mitchell and Scharpf, 2022).

Another similarity between the cases is the scope, if not the nature, of the infringement for which the state exercises forbearance. All of these are vast informal enterprises which are likely difficult to enforce entirely in the first place. The state's ability to plausibly disguise enforcement variation as a state capacity issue may make it easier for the state to portray these patterns as benign. Just as perceptions of capacity matter for deterrence in a positive sense, perceptions of low state capacity may help states 'get away with' connivance. **?** show that when local governments suspected of Mafia infiltration in Italy are dismissed, the resulting fall in petty crimes is due less to high capacity for enforcement, but to perceptions that the state is more powerful than it is. This mechanism can work in the other direction as well. Finally, when the populations responsible for law violations are an outgroup, or already vulnerable—as is true in every case

described above—connivance can, in a phrase, 'kill two birds with one stone,' and foster increased control over suspect populations, while simultaneously depressing their ability to advocate publicly for themselves. Not only are state actors able to provide assistance to valuable allies, but such vulnerable populations are already collectively weak and often socially ostracized, reducing the likelihood of societal backlash.

The remainder of this article explores a fifth example: the use of connivance by the state government of Lagos, Nigeria through the selective non-enforcement of the state's 2022 ban on okada motorcycle taxis.

2 Connivance in the Lagos transport sector

In what follows, I argue that the state government of Lagos, Nigeria engaged in a strategy of *connivance* in its selective enforcement of a ban on 'okada' motorcycle taxis which began in mid-2022, as illustrated in Figure 2. The state (enforcer) chose to enforce the ban at such a time—and in such a way—so as to increase the vulnerability of okada operators (infringing population) and ease their exploitation by a key ally of the state: The Lagos transport Union (third party). This Union operates a complex system of coerced taxation through controlling motorparks along Lagos roadways, where they extort passing informal commercial transit operators. Around elections, the Union also mobilizes voters and commits violence in support of Lagos's ruling party. With an election six months away, and okada riders in the midst of mobilizing against Union extortion, the state acted. The strategic timing and geography of the ban's enforcement not only dulled the existential threat okada riders posed to the Union, but forced riders into motorpark-laden areas and therefore increased the Union's opportunities to exploit them.

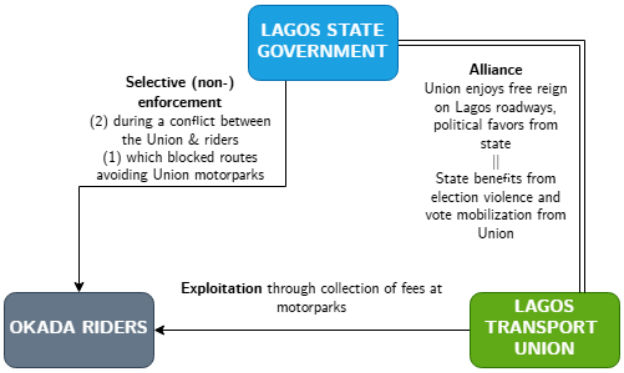


Figure 2: Relationships between key actors in connivance: The case of the Lagos okada ban

'Eko traffic' and the okada ban

Lagos is Nigeria's (and Africa's) largest city, and the center of power in the southwest of the country—almost the furthest southwest you can get without crossing the border into Benin, or wading into the Gulf of Guinea (see Figure 3a and 3b). Lagos houses 10% of the country's massive and rapidly growing population, crammed into only 0.5% of its physical landmass. And though it is no longer the federal capital[12] it remains a crucial economic and social powerhouse, and its state politics consistently reverberate to the federal level.

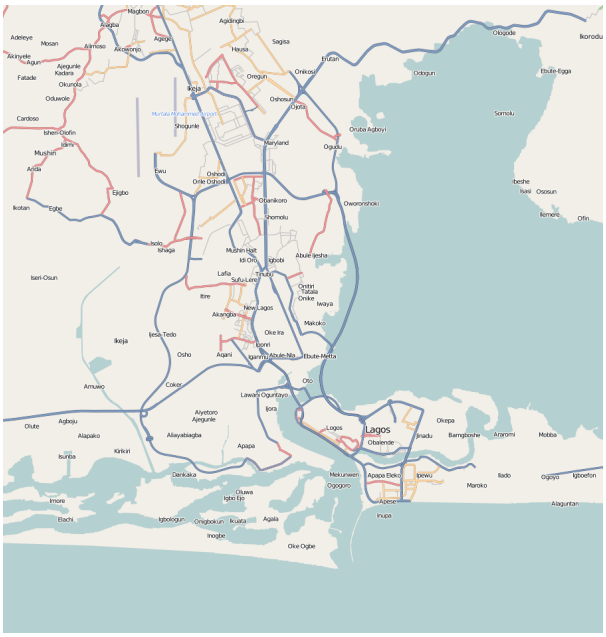
Like the country, there are strong and evident political geographies in Lagos. And like the country, Lagos wealth and (formal) employment is densely concentrated in the south, especially on small islands near the port. Meanwhile the vast majority of residents live on the mainland. The islands have the marina, the beaches, the city's main tourist attractions, the fanciest hotels, and the multinational corporate headquarters. But as in many major cities, the residents of Lagos generally live and work in geographically separate areas.

Lagos's economic geography means that Lagos traffic is infamous; a trip of ten kilometers can easily take two or three hours, and sometimes up to eight.[13] Public transportation options

[12]Negotiations between the country's highly disparate North (the country's most populous and poorest region, largely Muslim and Fulani or Hausa) and South (largely Christian and Igbo in the Southeast, and Yoruba in the Southwest) in the early 1990s moved the capital to the more centrally located and neutral planned city of Abuja

[13]'Eko Traffic' (Lagos Traffic) is the name of a cocktail I enjoyed at three different bars across three different neighborhoods of Lagos in the summer of 2023, it is so ubiquitous of a joke. While the precise recipe differed from

(a) Nigeria, West Africa



(b) (Central) Lagos, Nigeria

Figure 3: Maps of Nigeria and Lagos

are limited and unreliable. Roads are overburdened and not always in good repair. There is a never-ending need for the road transport of millions throughout the city on a daily basis. The result is a multifaceted landscape of informal transit options, and a near-universal reliance on them (Agbiboa, 2020): these include bright yellow mini-buses ('danfo'), tuk-tuk-like tricycles ('keke papep' or 'keke marwa'), and okada motorcycles.

Okada were by all accounts an improvised and spontaneous introduction into the web of transport options available in Lagos, heralding back nearly 70 years to a period of military rule. Until recently, they were one of the most commonly used transport options for many Lagosians. Okada weave in and out of traffic jams with a dangerous deftness. Because of their ability to navigate road congestion, as well as much lower fuel requirements and costs, many thousands okada have generally been in operation across the state, ready to be hailed both from inner residential roads and major highways (see Figure 4).

place to place, its strength did not.

Figure 4: Photo: Okada riders, Lagos. Image sourced from `https://punchng.com/lagos-renews-campaign-against-okada/`

However on May 18, 2022 Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu held a press conference in which he announced that starting on June 1, his administration would begin enforcing a ban on okada motorcycle taxis originally passed in 2018 (Adelagun, 2022; Osazuwa, 2017). The announcement of the ban's enforcement provoked high anxiety across Lagos, as individuals feared its effect on their already intolerably long and expensive commutes (Enimola and Joseph, 2022; Ige, 2022; Mosadioluwa, 2022; Enimola, 2022). However, the state government stood firm; according to Governor Sanwo-Olu and various spokespersons, the ban was necessary for crime prevention (Adelagun, 2022; Reporters, 2022), traffic control (Adekoya, 2022), and for reducing environmental pollution and degradation across the state (Badmus, 2022). But there was one curious aspect of the 2022 Lagos okada ban's enforcement: namely, its selectivity. While the ban being enforced technically applied to all major roads across Lagos State (Lagos State of Nigeria, 2018), the government in 2022 detailed a specific list of areas in which it intended to enforce the ban (Reuters, 2022).[14] This left many parts of Lagos under the letter of the law, but outside the scope of state enforcement.

[14] See SI §section B.4 for more details on the technicalities of this ban, as well as on the history of okada bans within and beyond Lagos.

The okada ban is a prime example of a traffic restriction which maps neatly onto pre-existing socio-political cleavages. Many okada riders are from Muslim and Hausa or Fulani-majority northern states who have traveled to Lagos in search of work, often as a result of conflict and climate change in the country's North. In particular, there exist differences in ethnic group, region, language, and religion between native Lagosians and many okada riders, which adds a communal dimension to the ban's enactment. News reports on the ban tend to be tinged with inter-ethnic suspicion, often conflating okada riders with perpetrators of jihadist violence in the North such as Boko Haram (Odunsi, 2022), as well as crime writ large (Mosadioluwa, 2022; Tribune Online, 2022). Riding an okada is an extremely vulnerable occupation and is viewed with hostility and suspicion by many Nigerians, even as they make daily use of the services these riders offer.

So why did the Lagos government selectively enforce a controversial and restrictive policy such as the okada ban? I argue that understanding selective enforcement of the okada ban requires understanding the interests and incentives of not only the Lagos State Government and okada riders themselves, but additional interested third parties. In particular, I argue that the state selectively enforced the okada ban in order prop up its preferred faction of Lagos's transport unions amidst an internal power struggle, through indirectly increasing the Union's ability to engage in extraction.

The third party: Touts and transit policy in Lagos

In the late 1970s, as the population grew and Lagos traffic steadily became more congested, the burgeoning informal transport industry began to organize. Given the rising transportation needs of the city, the sector became a primary growth industry—but also one where extractive actors stood to make enormous profit and gain enormous power.

Today, transport unions are commonplace: extractors from commercial drivers, rather than representative unions *of* drivers. Transport unions set up shop along the Lagos road network, in areas called 'motorparks,' where they charge every commercial driver that passes a ticket for usage of the road. The money unions collect from drivers does not go towards the improvement of public

infrastructure, or to the state at all, and Lagos drivers and riders see no assistance or benefits from 'their' union. The unions monitor, manipulate, tax, and coerce commercial drivers of all types of vehicles on a daily basis; in this way, it is perhaps as accurate to describe Lagos transport *mafias*, rather than transport unions. It is estimated the unions bring in many billions of naira every year through their extraction from drivers,[15] and over its roughly 50-year existence, these mafias have become some of the most powerful players in Lagos politics. This is in part because ground-level 'bureaucrats' of the unions—also referred to as 'touts,' 'agberos,' 'area boys,'[16] 'thugs,' or 'hoodlums'—are crucial tools for politicians around election time for the purpose of voter intimidation and coercion (Fourchard, 2023). Agbiboa (2022) provides a succinct summary of the most powerful branch of the transport unions:

> "Consider the NURTW branch in Lagos. Founded in 1978, the NURTW constitutes the primary support base for the Lagos state governor during election campaigns. The state is often unwilling or unable to rein in the union's predatory treatment of its workers. The Union routinely engages in patronage politics and voter mobilization to support various parties and candidates in return for permission to levy taxes on informal transport operators in public spaces. 'The NURTW is a law unto itself,' said a danfo driver." (Agbiboa, 2022, 179)

During elections, Union touts—at the behest of their powerful, well-connected chairmen—block voting places, beat voters of the opposition party, participate in rallies, and perform other services for the dominant All Progressives Congress (APC) political party.[17] The rest of the time, they set up fiefdoms in motorparks and adjacent bus terminals, their primary points of extraction, where they collect their daily wares from informal commercial transport operators (see Figure 5). Union

[15] See investigative reports from the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) Nigeria, including Odinaka Anudu's "Money for the boys: How 'agberos' pocket billions of Lagos transport revenue." ICIR. `https://shorturl.at/pho6a`

[16] I use these terms interchangeably for the sake of simplicity; but there are some subtle differences in their local use. In particular, 'agberos' sometimes implies the area boys who have 'made it.'

[17] See SI §B.2 for more on the APC and the political context of Lagos and Nigeria.

touts are a source of constant strife for many commercial transport operators, who find themselves at the whim of these henchmen on a day-to-day basis.

Union-led motorparks are thriving centers of commerce and chaos. They vary in their formality; some are large tracts of land along the side of a road, surrounded by a fence; others are less officially delineated, and seem to consist largely of the people and vehicles stretching across the roads and spilling over the side, as opposed to any physical 'park.' Often, the parks and their personnel (touts, drivers) stretch across multiple lanes of a road, blocking or slowing passage of all passing vehicles, and extracting 'ticket fares' from all commercial drivers who pass. The conglomeration of passengers boarding and alighting, drivers passing through, and touts milling about collecting their dues means that motorparks and their surrounding areas are packed with people. The masses in turn attract street vendors and hawkers, so many motorparks also feature makeshift markets of stalls selling grilled maize, apparel, or gin in small hot sauce-like packets. Representatives of various branches of law enforcement are very often spotted 'hanging out' in the park, chatting to touts, admonishing drivers, or simply surveying the scene.

'Omo Area' (Area boy), or agbero[18] culture is a distinct Southwestern Nigeria phenomenon, sharing some similarities with gang culture. It connotes the thousands of (mostly young, mostly male) individuals crowding bus stops, stations, and motorparks demanding money from, cajoling, and harassing commercial transportation drivers, often violently—the foot-soldiers of transport unions. Agberos are there to ensure that every commercial transport driver who comes through the park that day buys a ticket.

Lagos transport unions do not fit neatly into the typologies social scientists have offered categorizing non-state, third-party actors in politics. While they are a union in both name and technically in function, using this label may fail to communicate the real behavior and intention of these groups. They are sector-constrained interest groups; they don uniforms, collect dues, and any litigation by or against them is handled by the industrial courts of Nigeria rather than other judicial

[18] *Agberos* comes from Yoruba and the literal translation refers to someone who beckons or herds (agbo) a group of passengers onto a bus (akero).

Figure 5: Example of Lagos motorpark (photo by author, July 10, 2023)

systems. However, they are largely unrepresentative of the workers they claim to represent; and do not engage in collective bargaining with employers on behalf of transport operators. And while violence is certainly not foreign to union activity around the world, their particular relationship with violence and with the political machine of Lagos make them unique. For these reasons, the transport unions also share some similarities with criminal organizations and gangs, most commonly explored in the context of Latin America (Lessing, 2024; Arias, 2017; Blattman et al., 2025; Feldmann and Luna, 2022) as well as the mafias of southern Europe (Dipoppa, 2025; Calderoni, 2011). Namely, Lagos transport unions exert occasional fatal violence and frequent extortive violence over civilian actors, and maintain control over particular industries as well as pockets of urban territory. However, while the transport unions engage in a variety of activities that are not by any means strictly legal; their main source of income is not from protection rackets, drug smuggling, human trafficking, illicit natural resource or mining operations, or any other inherently criminal enterprise. They are formally recognized interest groups whose income

comes from the collection of worker fees and tickets to pass through motorparks—higher and more frequent fees than necessary perhaps, and with limited services offered in return, but nevertheless a legal and legitimate source of income. They also share some commonalities with paramilitary groups and pro-government militias (Carey, Mitchell and Scharpf, 2022; Acemoglu, Robinson and Santos, 2009). Like these groups, Lagos transport unions can and do influence elections through interference and violence, and there certainly exists a symbiotic relationship between politicians and transport unions. However unlike paramilitaries, these groups' primary function is certainly not broad or targeted political violence, and they are not, in fact, 'armed' groups in any sense of the word. It is highly atypical for members to carry firearms, for example.

Argument and hypotheses

My contention is that the selective enforcement of the Lagos okada ban—over both time and space—is an example of *connivance*, and its patterns are motivated by the interests not of the lawbreakers themselves (okada riders) but of exploitative third parties on whom the state relies (Lagos transport unions). The okada ban's incomplete enforcement served to 'produce precarity' in riders whose livelihoods were made illicit by the ban, making it more difficult for the riders to organize in opposition to their exploiters.[19] I contend that *variation* in enforcement of the ban across areas in Lagos served to displace riders to Union-led motorparks, where they do most of their extraction. The state therefore selectively enforced policies aimed at okada riders in order to ease their exploitation by the Union, the state's third-party ally. My principal assertion, then, is that:

Argument The Lagos State Government varies enforcement of the okada ban in order to appease the Lagos transport Union, riders' primary extractors.

With the okada ban, as with many laws, enforcement is not all or nothing: there was neither

[19] SI §E introduces a simple sequential model formalizing this logic. See SI §**??** for a more detailed qualitative analysis of okada rider organization in the lead-up and aftermath of the ban.

a completely absent nor a completely comprehensive enforcement regime. In fact, I contend that there is strategic variation in enforcement which neatly aligns with Union interests. Specifically, my theory predicts that enforcement patterns will vary *spatially* according to where Union extraction takes place, and *temporally* according to the Lagos State Government's reliance on the Union to maintain power. This leads to two more specific hypotheses regarding variation in enforcement:

H1. Enforcement of the okada ban varies *spatially* so as to displace okada into Union-controlled motorparks.

H2. Enforcement of the okada ban varies *temporally* according to state perception of Union reliability.

In what follows, I describe how the state government selectively enforced the okada ban in order to assist the Union's ability to extract from okada drivers, and to address the looming threat these riders posed.

3 Empirical Strategy

I probe these hypotheses across the three subsequent sections. In Section 4, I trace the law's initial enactment and enforcement with data obtained through through participant observation on Lagos motorways and by interviewing Union members, okada riders, and political and law enforcement officials; as well as with original data compiled by consulting archival newspaper reports. I show that okada riders in the leadup to the ban were creating issues for Union leadership, culminating

In Section 5 I address hypothesis 1, or the *spatial* variation of the state's selective enforcement. I use original data collected on ban enforcement locations and motorpark locations, as well as Very High Resolution (VHR) remote sensed imagery to count okada motorbikes on individual road segments across multiple dates both before and after the ban's proposed enforcement. I show that not only did the number of okada (as expected) decrease slightly in enforced areas after June

2022, but increased substantially on road segments featuring union motorparks. I then employ a detailed quantitative analysis of the spatial distribution of Union territory and state enforcement areas to show that okada riders' displacement to motorparks was *uniquely* driven by the particular selective enforcement areas chosen by the state, as compared to other possible enforcement areas. Specifically, I transform maps of the Lagos road system into a connected spatial network. I then simulate 10,000 routes between random points on the network, and show that blocking segments enforced by the state disproportionately drive riders into Union territory. I then collect data on other potential areas where enforcement might have been prioritized, based on Lagos state government statements motivating the ban—including traffic congestion, pollution, income, police presence, and crime—to construct potential *counterfactual* enforcement patterns. Running these same simulated routes under these counterfactual enforcement patterns, I find that none of them have the same effect of pushing okada riders into Union motorparks.

Finally, in Section 6, I address hypothesis 2, or the *temporal* variation in state enforcement. I utilize an unexpected and close election result in the Lagos presidential elections of 2023, in which former Lagos State Governor—and primary Union patron—Bola Tinubu of the APC lost in his home state to upstart challenger Peter Obi of the Labour Party. I argue this close election reduced confidence of the APC and the Lagos State Government in the Union's ability to sway elections on their behalf. While the Union turned this around with rejuvinated efforts during the Gubernatorial election about a month later (which was marked by heavily increased electoral interference, and ultimately an APC victory for the incumbent Lagos governor), I show that this inter-election period was marked by a significant decrease in enforcement by the state, in particular affecting the number of okada present in motorparks according to VHR estimates. I treat the Presidential election as a shock to the state's interest in fostering riders' precarity on behalf of the Unions, and argue that resulting changes in enforcement during the inter-election period were due to perceived Union defection during the Presidential election.

Before turning to this evidence, I briefly detail the original data collection supporting these

efforts.

Geolocated data along the Lagos road network

Locations of ban enforcement

I consult original policy documents to code the areas in which the okada ban was selectively enforced in the period following June 2022. The government announced ahead of time the areas of the state and city that it would actively enforce.

Examples of enforced areas announced by Lagos State Government 2022

```
Agege Motor Road/Oshodi Loop, Oshodi, Ikeja/Mushin Local Government
Mushin/Isolo Link Bridge, Mushin Oshodi Local Government
Dorman Long Bridge Surulere/Lagos Mainland Local Government
Ojuelegba Bridge, Surulere/Lagos Mainland Local Government
National Stadium Flyover, Surulere Local Government
Iganmu/Funsho Williams Bridge Surulere Local Government
```

The ban's (selective) enforcement went into effect on 1 June 2022. The state listed roughly 60 stretches of road, highway, or specific bridges or flyovers; as well as over a dozen local government areas and specific councils and neighborhoods, in which the government would enforce the ban. I hand-code these individually and merge this dataset with geospatial road data in Lagos[20] to get a full universe of areas in which the state could choose to enforce, but with an indicator of where they announced their intention to. I refer to these areas as 'intention to enforce' or ITE areas. This is the primary dataset I use to map cross-sectional state enforcement (see Figure6 for a map of ITE areas, marked with $\times$).

[20]Data available at `https://data.humdata.org/dataset/hotosm_nga_roads?`

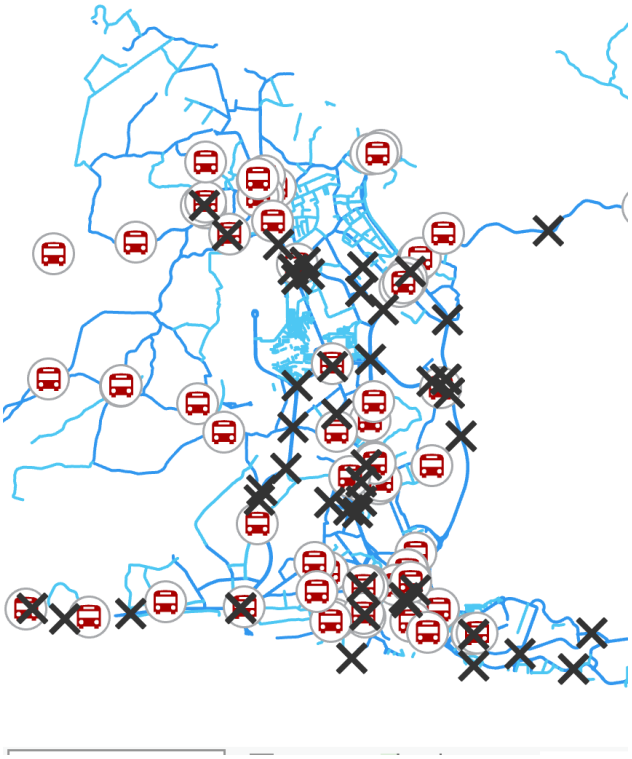


Figure 6: Motorpark and okada ban ITE locations in Lagos, Nigeria (mapped by author). Motorparks are represented by red bus icons; ITE areas are represented by $\times$.

Motorpark locations in Lagos

Measuring the geographic presence of motorpark operations is slightly more complicated; transport unions in Lagos border between state-sanctioned and illicit, and their activities are largely informal. Nevertheless, motorparks are palpably visible (see Figure 5 for an example of a motorpark). They are also mostly permanent; while new parks sometimes do crop up, change hands, or split, the general locations of major parks have mostly stayed the same over the decades.

I utilize a list in an Appendix of a transport statistics report produced by former Lagos Governor Ambode's administration in 2019[21]. This strategy is useful in that it avoids any post-treatment bias, as it was put together in the years before the okada ban's enforcement. I am left with a list of over

[21] See https://mepb.lagosstate.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/sites/29/2022/02/Transport-Statistics-2019.pdf

100 motorparks, which represent the primary locations of Union extortion of okada riders in Lagos state. Figure 6 shows maps these park locations (represented by red bus icons).

Satellite and Streetview-based informal transport density estimates

Where are informal commercial transport operators—particularly okada riders—located? My primary measure of this is constructed through analysis of very high resolution (VHR) remote-sensing imagery. I combine measurements from publicly available Google Earth Historical Imagery and supplementary, commercially available imagery from Airbus and Maxar VHR satellite images, which have a spatial resolution of 30-50cm—meaning each pixel in the resulting geo-located image measures less than half a meter [22]. At this resolution, it is possible to distinguish individual commercial vehicles, including okada motorcycles, and therefore to create measures of okada presence over space and time on the Lagos roadway. I utilize both manual coding and computer vision models to count of the number of motorcycles present per segment of road over time on the Lagos road network. I supplement this with (temporally sparser but more precise) Google Streetview data to establish baseline counts, as well as lower-resolution but more readily available satellite imagery, for which I utilize methods of Bayesian hierarchical spatial disaggregation to infer okada prevalence in images where the resolution is not high enough to visually distinguish them manually, as described in SI §D.1. My VHR data consist of roughly 10 observations between 2021 and 2023, covering a continuous 75km^2 stretch of Lagos; including roughly a quarter of banned areas and motorparks in the state.

[22] See §D.1 for more details

Interviews, participant observation, newspaper archives

Fieldwork and interviews

I spent about 6 months observing the aftermath of the ban while living in Lagos. My fieldwork began in the summer of 2023 and continued in the spring and summer of 2024 and 2025. My fieldwork[23] encompassed participant observation including in motorparks, at stops and intersections, and in transit; as well as semi-structured and unstructured interviews with over 75 stakeholders, ranging from the highest-ranking officials in the Lagos Ministry of Transportation and law enforcement agencies, to well connected Union chairmen and logistics operators, to okada riders themselves.

Participant observation focused on observing the inner workings of the Lagos transportation system as a curious passenger. I conservatively estimate that I took 400 separate trips through Lagos traffic, to all corners of the city, including via taxis and Uber (as well as competitor Bolt), informal transit such as keke, danfo, and okada, and public transit options such as the BRT. Many of my most meaningful conversations were with drivers as we were in transit, whether to the local supermarket or to a far-flung motorpark. I also spent time sitting in or walking through busy bus stops, markets, and motorparks; observing the behavior of informal transport operators, Union touts, and law enforcement officials. My sampling strategy was partly based on convenience—where I believed I could safely go, or had a connection—but purposefully spanned the entire geography of Lagos, from the northern border with Ogun state, to the marina on the Gulf of Guinea, and from Ikorodu in the far northeast of the city to Badagry in the far southwest.

Beyond my participant observation, I also conducted 75 semi-structured interviews with multiple types of relevant stakeholders. Interviews largely took place in person, at locations ranging from government offices, police stations, in abandoned corners of motorparks or unregistered watering holes down the road from them, and in the lobbies of immaculate hotels. Roughly half of these interviews were with okada riders themselves. The other half were divided between Union officials

[23] Approved by Yale Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol #2000035418.

Type	Number
State and law enforcement officials	10
NURTW Union officials (all factions)	17
Okada riders	38
Other transport operators	10
Total	*75*

Table 3: List of interviews. I conducted interviews 75 with stakeholders between June 1, 2023 and the present while based in Lagos, Nigeria. The table denotes the number of interviews conducted across five broad categories of interviewees.

across the organization's complex hierarchy (about half), and the remainder consisted of a roughly even split between high-ranking policy and law enforcement officials, and other informal transit drivers, private operators or logistics business owners and entrepreneurs (see Table 3).

Newspaper and social media archives

Utilizing archives of mostly English-language Nigerian daily newspapers[24] over the past three decades, as well as social media content, official press releases and documents, and other archival and primary material, I create a localized event and network dataset for Lagos, which combines and links information on hundreds of relevant actors, places, and events, covering both recent internal political dynamics of the Union and events such as passage and enforcement of the okada ban, protests by vehicle operators, battles between rival Union factions and political factions, and interpersonal rivalries and relationships. These data allow me to analyze trends in the political dynamics between the Union, the Lagos State Government, and informal commercial transport operators qualitatively [25]

[24] See SI §**??** for a list

[25] In the text, I refer to these data collectively as Transport Operator & Union Tracking (TOUT) data for short. See SI §**??** for more on the specific record-gathering process and other examples.

4 Evidence: The role of the Union in the ban's enactment

My argument requires analyzing the interactions between three actors: the Lagos State Government, the Union, and informal transport operators in Lagos, particularly okada riders. I draw on newspaper and social media ('TOUT') data as well as first-hand participant observation and interviews to investigate whether and how:

Argument The Lagos State Government varies enforcement of the okada ban in response to the interests of the Lagos transport Union, riders' primary extractors.

Politicking with gangsters: Motorparks and the power of a union

Because the Lagos informal transport sector is extremely lucrative, transport unions have over the years developed rigorous hierarchies and distinct organizational cultures (Fourchard, 2023; Agbiboa, 2022). The national level NURTW presides over state-level chapters, themselves affiliated with sub-unions which represent particular types of transport workers. For example, affiliated with NURTW are the Tricycle Owners and Operators Association of Nigeria (TOOAN) which manages tricycle ('keke') riders, and the Motorcycle Operators Association of Lagos (MOALS) which manages okada riders. The precise nature of the relationship between TOOAN, MOALS, and NURTW chapters at the state level has been the source of considerable strife, as I detail in the following section.

The foot soldiers of the Union are the touts working in the motorparks. Touts are there to bring some level of organization to the chaos, mainly via collecting ticket fees from commercial drivers who pass through— fees which have steadily increased in price over the last couple of years.[26] At the time of the ban's enforcement, it seemed to range from around NGN 200 per ticket to nearly NGN 700.[27] Area boys weave in and out of lines of commercial vehicles, often with

[26] Interviews with author, including July 22, 2023

[27] See SI §**??** for an example of a motorpark ticket one okada rider showed me.

hands firmly on doors shouting back and forth with the drivers. Touts operate with remarkable impunity, and often with the visible and tacit acknowledgment of state officials. At one motorpark on the mainland, I was struck when I noticed a small group of Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) agency officials—obvious in their yellow, red-trimmed uniforms—laughing and looking on as a tout, yelling over the chaos of the park, chased after a slow-moving danfo mini-bus, whipping the already-cracked windows with a long wooden rod, a wad of apparently not-enough cash clutched in his other fist. Touts' jobs are violent and often dangerous; though they are also important community members—more than once, an agbero kindly helped direct me when I was lost.[28]

Touts are presided over by 'unit' chairmen who rule over a particular junction, intersection, or park. They in turn are directed by 'area' chairmen, who are directed by zonal chairmen; meanwhile the chairman of the state-level chapter of the union exerts authority over the whole operation. The work of chairmen at all levels is very political, dangerous, and delicate. When I interviewed one unit chairman representing tricycle riders on the mainland, he spent 15 minutes (in Yoruba) at the beginning of the interview interrogating my colleague, a Nigerian, about his background and purpose for being there, in order to make sure that he was not a spy for another faction or for rivals who sought the chairman's coveted position. "Chairman work is very dangerous," he explained to me apologetically afterwards, "we have many enemies".[29] There are often clashes, as rival factions fight over control of particularly hotly contested motorparks.[30]

However, the dangerous political maneuverings of Union leadership only escalate as they ascend the ladder, and as the stakes get correspondingly higher. The chairman of the NURTW Lagos branch (as of 2019) MC Oluomo is a longstanding ally of President (as of 2023) Bola Tinubu, the first governor of Lagos after the fall of military rule. Tinubu has long exercised control

[28] See SI §**??** for social media posts on this particular issue.

[29] Author interview, July 14, 2024

[30] Indeed once, after one long afternoon of chatting to reticent touts in the back of a beat-up minibus parked in a motorpark in the North, a battle for supremacy over the park broke out between loyalists of the park's general chairman and rival foot soldiers in a nearby neighborhood. About twenty minutes after I had vacated the park, the entire stretch of road leading to the roundabout was deserted, as touts battled with guns, cutlasses, bottles and stones.

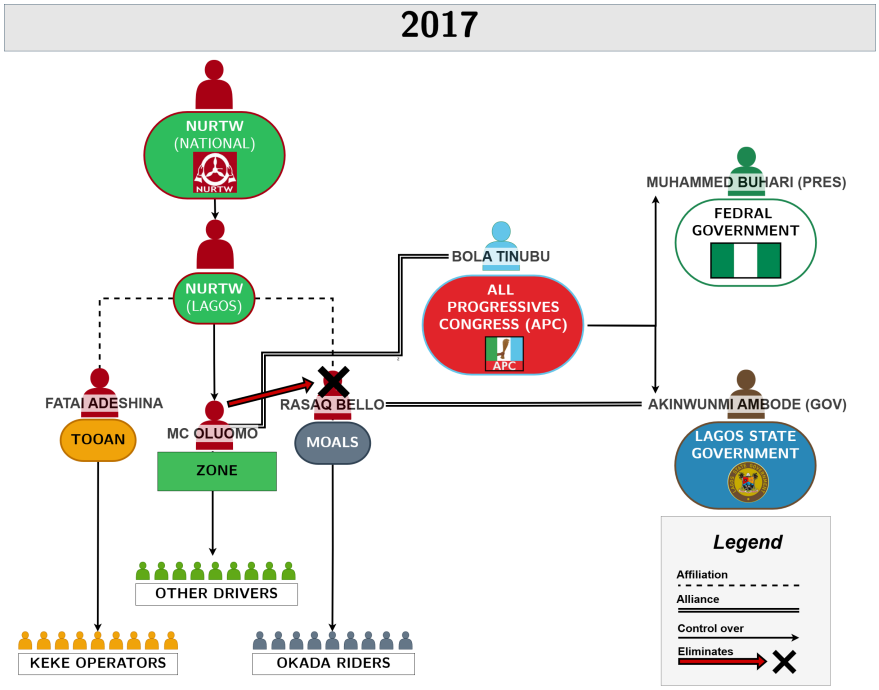
over the state politics of Lagos as a sort of "godfather." Tinubu's unique hold on formal institutions in Lagos has its roots in his earlier life and in his Lagos governorship, in which he cultivated and strengthened ties with informal networks of power such as the Union (Whiteman, 2013). Most relevant for our purposes, Tinubu and MC Oluomo were both reportedly area boys in their youth (Momoh, 2000, 188). During his governorship of Lagos, Tinubu was frequently referred to as the "Area Boy Governor", and is quoted by prominent journalist Kaye Whiteman as saying of the area boys "These are my boys; I care for them." (Whiteman, 2013, 217)

MC Oluomo's rise to power in the Union was riddled with violence and with interference from Tinubu, though this is not to understate his vast and loyal following. In particular, he has historically been in conflict with drivers of keke and okada, and publicly rivals with the leaders of two- and three-wheeler operations. When he took over as Lagos NURTW Chairman in 2019, then leader of TOOAN (tricycle union) Fatai Adeshina[31] was also vying for the top spot in the Lagos NURTW chapter. Reports suggest Bola Tinubu personally called him and demanded he cede the nomination to MC Oluomo (see 7).

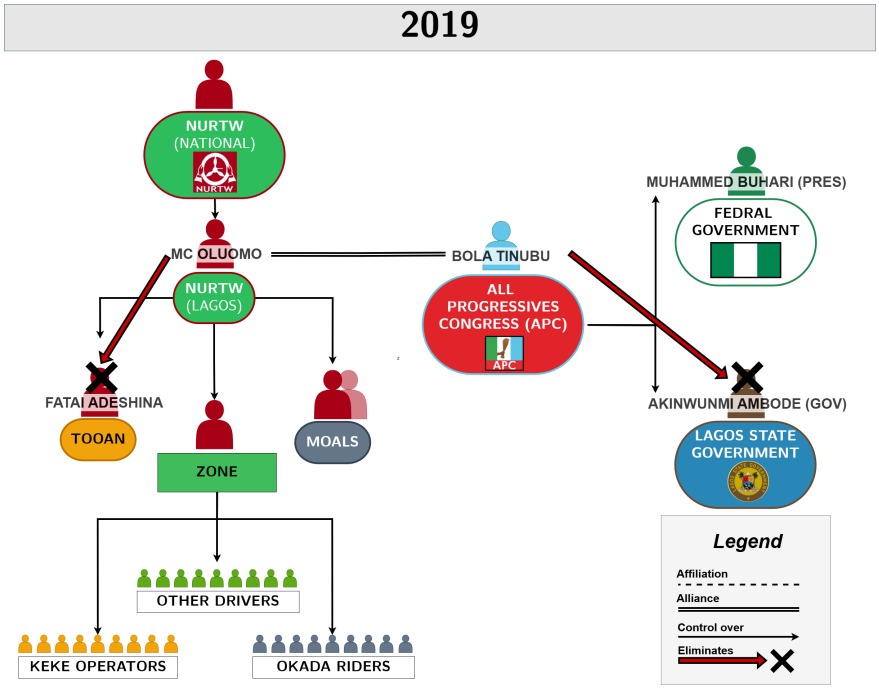
He fared better than his MOALS (okada union) colleague, however, who crossed paths with MC Oluomo two years earlier. Rasaq Bello, who was rumored to support a different APC faction than MC—and who operated in the same neighborhood, Oshodi—was shot to death in 2017, almost certainly by MC's men (Akinkuotu, 2019*a*; Akinsanmi, 2017; Odesola, 2022). The assassination caused then Lagos State Governor Ambode to temporarily suspend NURTW from operating in Lagos (Bankole, 2017; Akinsanmi, 2017), leading to an ambitious transport sector reform law which attempted to regain state control over the industry (Infrastructure News, 2017; Olawoyin, 2017). Shortly thereafter, Tinubu, then leader of the APC, refused to allow the party to nominate Governor Ambode for a second term (Akinsanmi, 2018; Abiodun, 2019), earning public support from MC Oluomo on social media. Ambode's reputation amongst people I spoke with remains one of a man who got too close to disrupting big corruption, and whose second term candidacy

[31] Interviewed by author, July 10, 2023

Figure 7: Recent Union politics



(a) NURTW Lagos politics: 2017



(b) NURTW Lagos politics: 2019

Tinubu halted as a result (Abiodun, 2019). MC Oluomo's role in this rearrangement of Lagos politics—albeit in a way that suited him quite well—is less clear. What is clear is that at least some Ambode supporters connected the dots. During an APC rally for Sanwo-Olu, the *new* nominee for governor to replace Ambode (and Lagos's current governor, reelected in 2023), MC Oluomo was stabbed by an assailant who reportedly blamed him for Ambode's ruined political fortunes (Egbas, 2019). MC's political allies allegedly ensured he got medical treatment abroad (Elezuo, 2019). When MC recovered, Tinubu ushered him into the Union's top spot, over the incumbent chairman, an Ambode loyalist (Akinkuotu, 2019*b*; Inyang, 2019; Oyero, 2022*b*; Society Now, 2019).

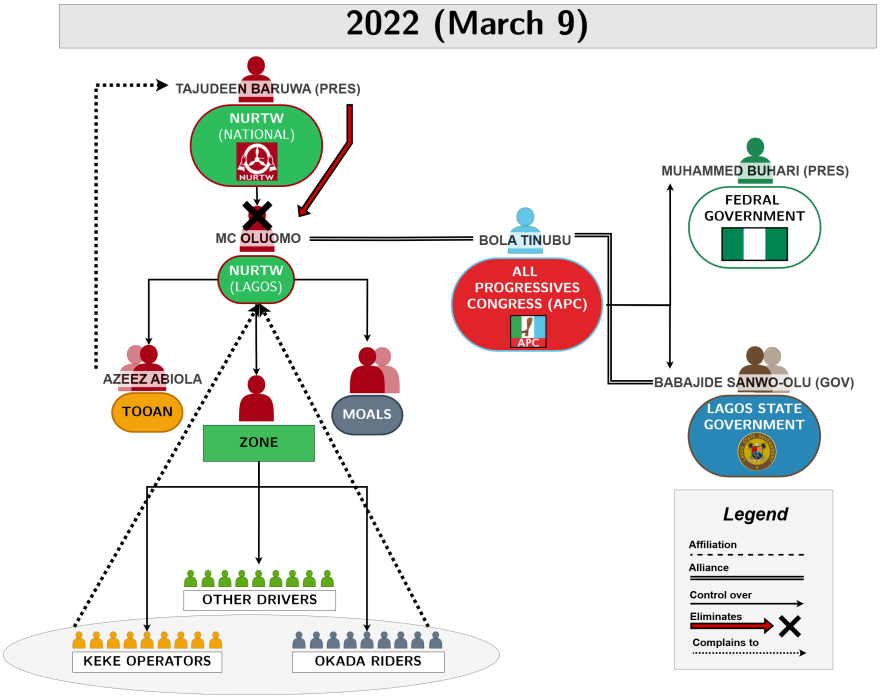
As is evidenced throughout the decades, the relationship between Tinubu's APC and Oluomo's Union has been integral to the success of both. NURTW Lagos is not just thugs on demand for the APC, and the APC is not just the political pawn of the Union. Theirs is a complex and dynamic relationship; the internal politics of the APC are intricately related to the internal politics of the Union, and the political success of particular factions. They have separate but also overlapping goals, and their centers are power depend on each other—and, in the Union's case, on commercial drivers whom they extort for billions.

The lead-up to the ban's enforcement

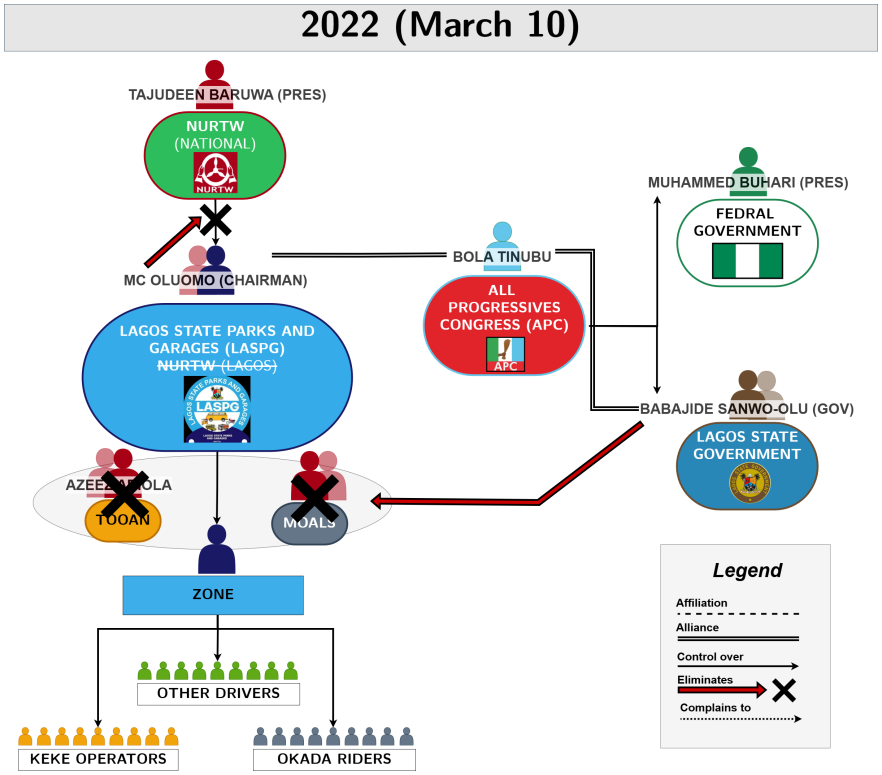
Shortly after MC Oluomo overtook leadership of the Union, he made moves to integrate okada and keke operators directly under his control, usurping their existing unions—which had previously operated independently, if under the same umbrella (Oboagwina, 2022). As a result, okada and keke riders began to publicly complain about the rise in extortion at Lagos motorparks (Daily Trust, 2022*b*; Edema, 2022). In late 2021, this culminated in the then leader of TOOAN[32] announcing that excessive extortion from MC Oluomo's NURTW meant that he was looking to form an alternative union of these operators, outside the purview of NURTW (Premium Times, 2022). He then went over MC Oluomo's head, directly to the national NURTW president, to complain of

[32]Interview with author August 28, 2023

Figure 8: Internal union developments in the lead-up to the okada ban.



(a) NURTW political developments: 9 March 2022



(b) NURTW political developments: 10 March 2022

the extortion from MC's regime (Olaoluwa, 2022). The National President of NURTW demanded MC Oluomo work to prevent extortion of these riders (Olanrewaju, 2022). MC Oluomo refused (Faith, 2022; Balogun, 2022). On March 9, 2022, the National NURTW umbrella suspended MC Oluomo as chairman of the Lagos State NURTW Branch (Olaoluwa, 2022), and appointed in his stead Fatai Adeshina, former TOOAN leader and MC Oluomo rival (**?**).

A rapid series of developments occurred in quick succession—in fact, all on the same day. MC Olumo withdrew his membership from NURTW, and announced that not only was he still head of Lagos State NURTW chapter, but that the chapter was breaking away from the national union entirely (Akoni, 2022). That evening, Lagos Governor Sanwo-Olu announced that all parks and garage management would now be under the purview of MC Oluomo's Union—now to be dubbed Lagos State Parks and Garage Management (LASPG) (Alilyu, 2022; Society Now, 2022; Oyero, 2022*b*). They also announced that it was suspending the activity of the national union, NURTW from the state entirely (Oyero, 2022*a*); leaving MC Oluomo's faction as the only one operating with the state's blessing.

These developments did not unfold without protest. NGOs and rights organizations publicly called out the role of the LSG in manipulating the law over the course of the leadership tussle; one organization claimed that over 1,000 of these operators' vehicles were vandalized by Union members over the course of one week in April (Sahara Reporters, 2022). Multiple motorparks were forcibly overtaken (Oyero, 2022*c*; Daily Trust, 2022*a*), extortion by touts continued (Agha and Aliyu, 2022), and violence erupted between area boys and okada riders that resulted in multiple fatalities (Oyeleke, 2022; Lambo, 2022). And on May 8, a Justice of the Federal High Court in Lagos ruled that MC Oluomo and his Union stop levying fees against riders (Titlola, 2022).

After having promised MC's men that he would "act on [their] grievances" (The Nation, 2022), Governor Sanwo-Olu announced a week later that his government would pursue imminent—and selective—enforcement of an okada ban, originally passed in 2018 (**?**). Okada riders and their tricycle-riding counterparts had long been a thorn in MC's side, and they bore the brunt of the

extortion from a union that they did not feel they were members of. They had begun the protesting excessive extortion in motorparks across the city, and in fact were at the root of MC Oluomo's—one of the most powerful and connected men in Lagos—ongoing beleaguerment.

5 Evidence: The political geography of selective enforcement

My theory requires that selective enforcement of the okada ban will vary in ways that benefit the Union; allowing them to more effectively exert control over (and profit from) okada riders. Therefore we should expect *spatial* variation in the ban's enforcement according to Hypothesis 1:

H1 Enforcement of the okada ban varies *spatially* so as to displace okada into Union-controlled motorparks.

Hypothesis 1 implies two component hypotheses. First, it implies that enforcement along the ban's ITE routes *causes* more okada to be present at motorparks after enforcement commences:

H1a After the ban, the number of okada in motorparks *increases* compared to before the ban.

I test this assertion using a panel of satellite-based measures along road segments before and after the ban. I show that okada density shifted in the aftermath of the ban; and that it shifted differentially for (i) ITE areas vs. non-ITE areas; and (ii) for motorparks vs. non-motorparks.

Second, it implies that this choice of ITE areas is driven, at least in part, *in order to bring about* this result:

H1b Enforcement areas (ITE) will increase okada density in motorparks *more* compared to other possible enforcement areas.

I use randomization inference and simulations on the Lagos road network to not only show that enforcement along ITE areas increase okada presence in motorparks, but that it does so significantly more than other plausible counterfactual enforcement patterns.

These propositions were validated by some news reports (Olasupo, 2022), as well as by many of the conversations I had with okada riders throughout Lagos. When I asked riders specifically whether the Union, allegedly their representatives, were troubled by the ban, I got more than one laugh of derision. One rider in the southwest said:

> "The ban ... did not disturb [the Union] much. Why? Because if you cannot go [on enforced routes], you go to the streets. That is where they collect their dues ... so while you struggle, you still give them their dues." (Okada rider, Badagry, 20 July 2023)

Every rider I spoke to opined about the Union's increased collection, even though what they were collecting on was technically an illegal activity. They often cited the Union's collusion with the state. In Ikorodu, northeast Lagos, one rider stated "... all money they are collecting is illegal ... they know that Lagos state has stopped bike. They stop okada. And they are *still* selling ticket, and Lagos State did not stop them ... they are selling it, and we are buying it."[33]

Other riders confirmed the increased fees and interaction with the Union faced after the ban:

> "The problem is the ticket[s you must buy to pass through the motorparks]. You buy one, 200 naira. You buy another, 200... [Now] you have to buy four, five, six tickets. You cannot now ride bike [without passing a park]...So you have to go more, more, more—but then you pass more and pay more." (Okada rider, Mile 2, 23 June 2023)

Some riders mentioned to me how the okada ban's enforcement shifted how things were done in terms of ticket pricing. Some noted that their Union membership ID card no longer exempted them from paying ticket fees.[34] Moreover, many riders mentioned how many new okada riders had been

[33] Interview with author on June 12, 2023
[34] Interview with author July 27, 2024

crowded into pockets where okada riding was relatively safe from state enforcement, resulting in increased competition and rate depression.[35]

Okada presence before and after the ban

H1(a) After the ban, the number of okada in motorparks *increases* compared to before the ban.

I begin by establishing that the ban was enforced as intended; namely by estimating the ban's differential effect across enforced (ITE) areas, and non-enforced ITE areas. Using the satellite-based measurement strategy described above, I run a standard two-way fixed effects model with two-periods, which estimates the *differential* effect of the ban between ITE and non-ITE areas:

$$\text{Okada}_{it} = \gamma_i + \lambda_t + \tau(\text{ITE}_i \times \text{Post}_t) + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{1}$$

Where Okada_{it} is the number of okada counted in satellite imagery from date t on road segment i. γ_i and λ_t account (respectively) for time-invariant, road segment (Edge ID) specific fixed effects and space-invariant, date-specific fixed effects. Given that each date represents a different satellite image, λ_t also act as controls for image-specific variation such as percentage cloud cover. ITE_i represents whether i road segment is expected to be enforced (1) or not (0), and Post_t whether t is before (0) or after (1) the ban's announced enforcement date. *tau* then represents the *differential* effect of the ban's enforcement on ITE areas compared to non-ITE areas. Errors are clustered by road segment.

Next, I test H1(a) directly I by investigating the ban's differential effect, if any, on motorparks, using the same satellite-based measurement strategy. I investigate the I run the same standard two-way fixed effects model with two-periods as in Equation 1, substituting Motorpark_i for ITE_i.

[35] Interview with author on August 15, 2024

	Num. okada	
Model:	(1)	(2)
Post × ITE	-4.560***	
	(1.677)	
Post × Motorpark		2.991**
		(1.200)
Fixed-effects		
Edge ID	Yes	Yes
Time period	Yes	Yes

Clustered (Edge ID) standard-errors in parentheses

*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Unsurprisingly, and as shown in Model (1) of Table 5, the presence of okada significantly decreases in the aftermath of the okada ban in areas where there is stated enforcement, by about 4 okada per road segment. Meanwhile, and in line with H1(a), the number of okada significantly increase after the ban on road segments which feature motorparks, compared to before (by about 3 okada per road segment). This is consistent with the theory that okada are displaced after the ban's enforcement to areas controlled by the union via motorparks, enabling their increased extortion by the Union.

Randomization on a road network

H1b Enforcement areas (ITE) will increase okada density in motorparks *more* compared to other possible enforcement areas.

Above, I show that the number of okada increased around motorparks after the ban's enforcement.

Next, I contend that this was the result of a purposeful strategy of displacement by the state (H1b). Figure 9 lays out a simplified example of the process by which this may occur.[36] The top panel (a) shows an abstracted road map of a particular neighborhood of Lagos, with two points marked *A* and *B*. Union-run motorparks are marked with red buses. Before the ban, if one attempted to travel via okada from point A to point B along the road network, the quickest route goes straight north and east (marked in green). Notice on this route, no motorparks are passed.

In the bottom panel (b), areas enforced during the okada ban—bridges, streets, and intersections—are denoted with red lines. These represent areas which, after the ban, are untraversable by okada riders. Adapting to avoid the enforced areas, the green line in this bottom panel shows the new shortest route from *A* to *B* riding an okada. Not only is the route longer and more circuitous, but the okada is now forced to pass two motorparks.

This figure represents the type of displacement I suggest occurred on a systematic scale after the okada ban. It demonstrates that while okada can still traverse through many areas, even in a neighborhoods directly affected by the ban's enforcement, the risk of arrest and bike confiscation at key points on the road network forces riders to alter their routes, landing them in the hands of Union touts who can exploit their precarity to extort them.

To investigate whether the chosen enforcement areas have this systematic effect, I built an original *R* package[37] which uses Open Street Maps (OSM) geospatial road data to construct a networked dataset, where roads ('edges') are connected by intersections ('nodes'). This allows me to flexibly simulate travel through the Lagos road network under a variety of circumstances—including before and after the ban took place.[38] This process transformed all Lagos streets and roads—approximately 18,000 km in total—into 304,207 edges separated by 320,460 nodes.

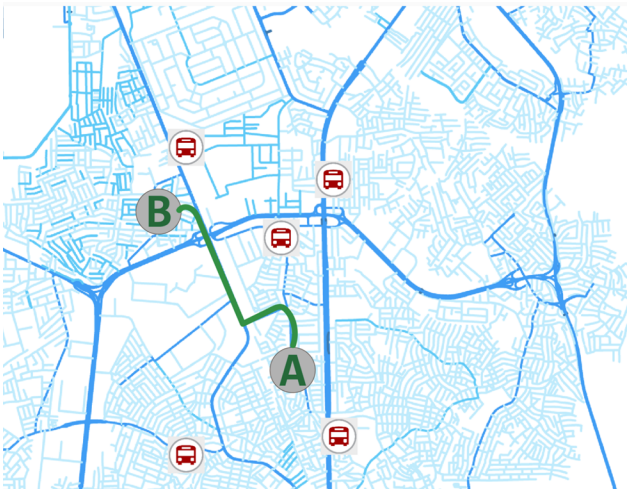
I complete the setup of the road network by merging it with the above-described motorpark locations data, as well as enforcement locations named in the 2022 okada ban. I use this networked

[36] Based, incidentally, on the route I took from my residence (A) to the supermarket (B) during fieldwork.

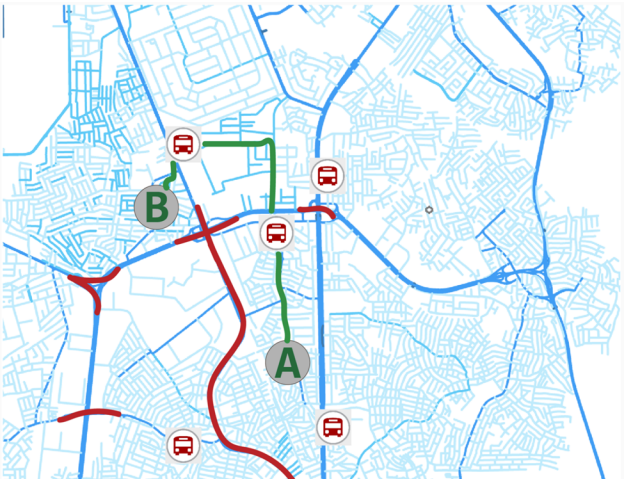
[37] `tRaffic`, forthcoming on GitHub.

[38] For more details on the technical approach of this package and how it is used in this approach, see SI §D.4.

Figure 9: Example of affected route. Illustration of how a okada rider's route may be affected by the okada ban.



(a) Example okada route (in green) from point A to point B, before okada ban enforcement. Union-led motorparks represented by red bus symbols. The route outlined passes no motorparks.



(b) Example okada route (in green) from point A to point B, after okada ban enforcement. Union-led motorparks represented by red bus symbols. The route outlined passes two motorparks.

dataset to calculate features of the paths traversed by riders between multiple points. SI §D.4 contains extensive details of this analysis process.

Results from 10,000 simulations provide suggestive evidence that the specific geography of the okada ban enforcement served the Union's interests by displacing okada routes into areas in which the Union runs motorparks.

To begin with, analysis shows that okada riders face significant curtailing of freedom of movement as a result of ban enforcement in ITE areas. Just over $\frac{1}{3}$ of randomly selected routes become intraversable after the okada ban; that is, the okada ban prohibits passage from point A to point B at all, by any route. Moreover, enforcement in these areas results in a significant increase in cost. If we approximate that 1km of traversing the road costs NGN 100,[39] and each motorpark adds an additional NGN 500,[40] the average route's cost after the ban's enforcement is at least NGN 1,192.48 more than before the ban, either because of added mileage due to circumventing ban enforcement, or because of passing extra motorparks. This is equivalent to nearly 12km extra miles per route, or passing at least two additional motorparks on a given journey. While it is unsurprising that no routes will see a *decrease* in cost,[41] the scale of the impact is significant. Over 75% of routes saw a more than NGN 500 cost increase, and the route with the maximum added cost totals more than NGN 5,500, more than 50% higher than before the ban was enacted.

While it is evident that the okada ban's enforcement resulted in significant costs to okada riders, my primary analysis concerns the degree to which the Union benefited from the displacement of okada riders prompted by this selective enforcement. Indeed, simulations suggest that the Union benefited enormously. The majority of okada routes pass at least one additional motorpark after the okada ban prior to before, with an average of approximately 1 additional motorpark per route. Less than 2% of routes pass fewer motorparks after the ban than before (see Figure **??**).

Importantly, the increase in 'motorparks passed' holds *even* when extending the sample to

[39] Such as for fuel and 'wear and tear' motorbike expenses.

[40] A standard price of a motorpark ticket around the time of the ban, evidenced via fieldwork by author

[41] Mechanically, the shortest route between points A and B after enacting barriers in the form of ban enforcement will either remain unaffected or get longer.

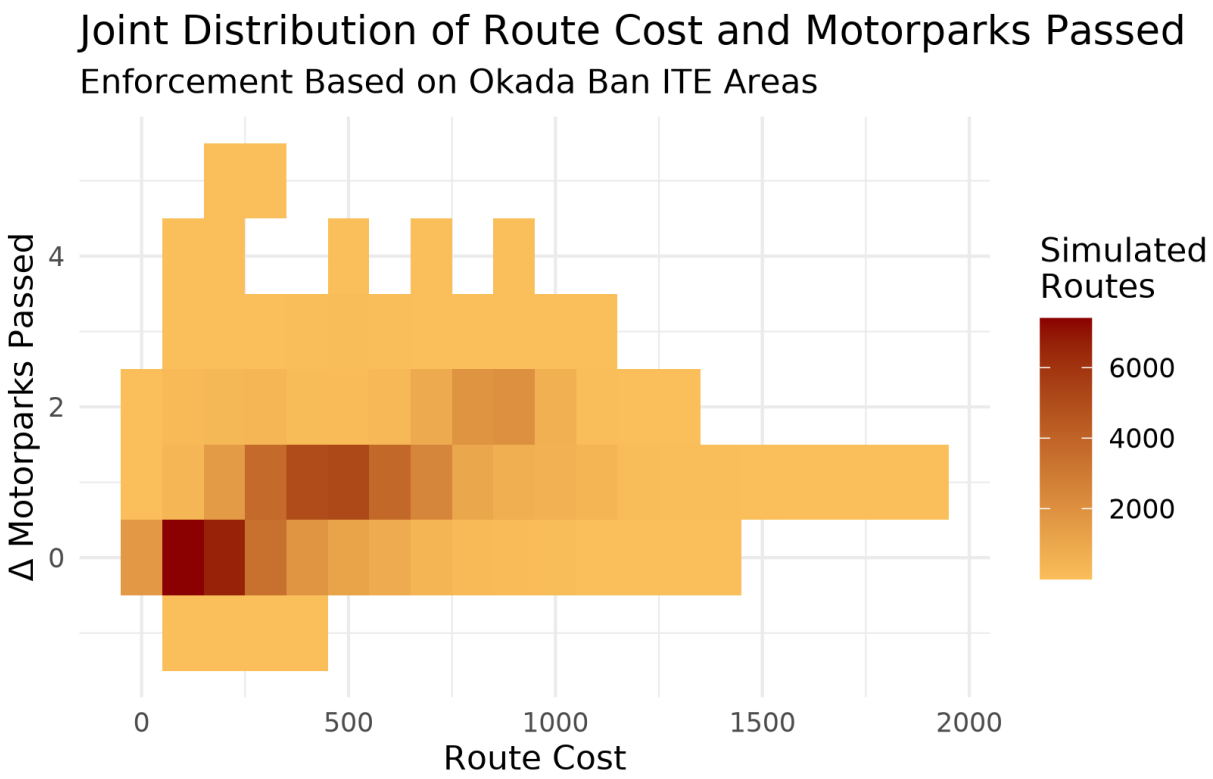


Figure 10: Density plot of 100,000 simulated routes given ITE enforcement areas. The y-axis is the change in the number of motorparks passed on a given route, compared to no ban enforcement/roadway impediments. The x-axis the approximate 'cost' of the route in NGN, determined as described above. The darkness of the shaded area indicates frequency of cost/motorpark combinations. Inspiration for this plot comes from **?**.

all routes traversable in the pre-period. That is to say, even across $\frac{1}{3}$ *fewer* rides, the number of motorparks passed increases nearly 5.5 times after the enforcement of the okada ban on ITE areas. Translating into profit, this means that the Union's profit over 10,000 routes increases over 430%.

The total portion of routes which pass a motorpark before the ban's enforcement is also significantly less. Before okada ban enforcement on ITE areas, only 3% of simulated routes pass motorparks. In contrast, after okada ban enforcement, a majority of the traversable routes, nearly 61%, pass motorparks. This large difference attests to the significant displacement of okada riders into areas where the Union can take advantage of the ban's enforcement to extort from them. This trend holds *even* considering the larger sample of all routes, including those intraversable after the ban; over all simulated routes, less than 10% pass motorparks before the ban is enforced, compared to 36% afterwards.

Are these effects unique?

H1b Enforcement areas (ITE) will increase okada density in motorparks *more* compared to other possible enforcement areas.

The previous analysis makes clear that the ban's enforcement along stated ITE routes serves to displace okada riders into motorpark-laden areas, increasing the power wielded by the Union over these riders. However, this alone does not imply that these ITE routes were chosen (at least in part) in order to produce this effect.

Therefore, I now turn to additional analyses which make use of *counterfactual* ITE areas which could have—given the purported goals of the ban—reasonably been chosen as enforcement locations instead. There are a variety of potential logics which *could* have guided the government's choice of enforcement priorities. These include logics drawn directly from the LSG's stated reasons for the ban in first place; such as easing traffic congestion, preventing road accidents, or reducing pollution. We can also imagine alternative logics less likely to be stated in so many

words by state agents, such as enforcing the 'eyesore' of okada riders in the richest areas of the city, or prioritizing areas where the traffic agencies had the highest pre-existing capacity.

I propose a variety of potential logics which could have reasonably guided enforcement decisions, summarized in Table 4. I then construct *counterfactual* ITE areas based on these logics by selecting approximately 60 areas of the road network chosen from appropriately-weighted distributions. I then re-run the simulations described above, using these hypothetical ITE configurations instead of the actual ITE areas analyzed in the previous section. My goal with this exercise is to determine whether these counterfactual ITE configurations have effects similar to the actual ITE areas chosen by the state. My theory suggests that these alternative hypothetical enforcement logics will have substantively different results than those produced by enforcement along real ITE areas; and especially, that choosing enforcement areas in this way would have benefited the Union substantially *less* than the actual enforcement areas chosen by the state.

The results of this analysis indeed show that the effects of the okada ban's enforcement along ITE routes is substantively unique, especially in its effects on the number of motorparks passed by riders. To take one example: one purported logic behind the okada ban's enforcement was an effort to reduce traffic congestion. One potential enforcement logic is, therefore, to prioritize enforcement in areas with high levels of traffic. I therefore construct a counterfactual ITE area by randomly selecting from a distribution of heavy-traffic areas, measured by an area's mention in pre-ban 96.1FM traffic radio announcements (See SI §D.4 for more details). I then run simulations along the same start- and end-points used in the previous section.

For starters, 'traffic-driven' hypothetical enforcement areas make more routes intraversable to riders. While the ban's *actually* enforced areas prevent $\frac{1}{3}$ of simulated routes from being completed at all, traffic-driven counterfactual enforcement areas on average prevent a much higher percentage of routes from being traversed. Using this hypothetical ITE configuration, okada riders are able to make only 65% of all simulated journeys, significantly and more efficiently curtailing okada use with identical capacity.

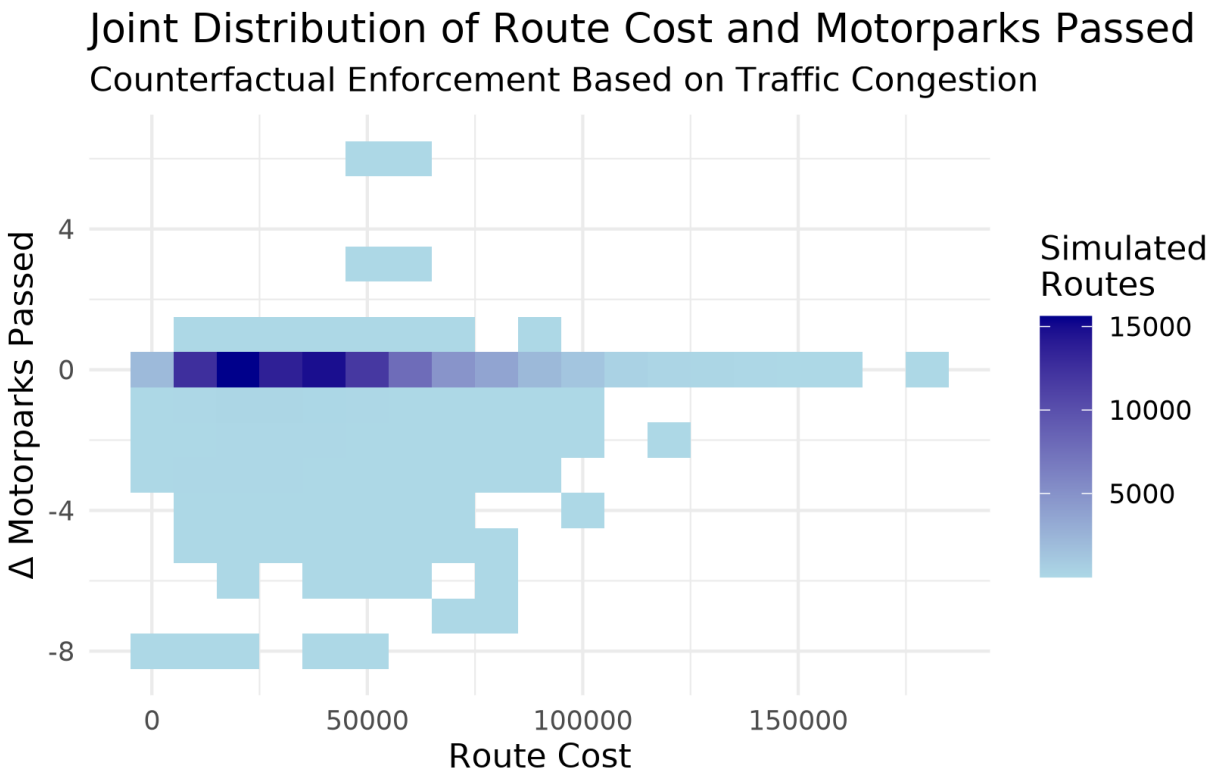


Figure 11: Density plot of 100,000 simulated routes given counterfactual enforcement based on traffic congestion. The y-axis is the change in the number of motorparks passed on a given route, compared to no ban enforcement/roadway impediments. The x-axis the approximate 'cost' of the route in NGN, determined as described above. The darkness of the shaded area indicates frequency of cost/motorpark combinations. Inspiration for this plot comes from **?**.

Most crucially is the difference in the effect on motorparks passed. The 'true' ITE configuration prompts riders to pass roughly one additional motorpark per journey on average. Meanwhile, traffic-driven hypothetical bans have the opposite effect, and in fact *reduce* the number of motorparks okada pass on their routes. Hypothetical bans on average result in a net and per-route loss in the number of motorparks passed on an average route; and the majority of routes pass fewer motorparks under this enforcement logic than without it (see Figure 11). SI §D.4 replicates this analysis for other potential motivators of enforcement areas—such as locations of police stations; locations most commonly associated with okada riding; and most reported accidents—with broadly similar effects. These effects are summarized in Table 4.

This analysis confirms not only that most counterfactual enforcement patterns fail to benefit the Union, but also that the actual enforcement patterns followed by the LSG *uniquely* benefit the Union amidst a variety of plausible alternatives. This lends some credibility to my assertion that the enforcement patterns of the ban were intended, at least in part, to prop up the Union's ability to exert coercive control over rebellious riders—even at the expense of more efficiently reducing okada presence on the roadway.

6 Evidence: Sudden disillusionment as a shock

In previous sections, I described the peculiar political circumstances surrounding the conflict between okada riders and the Lagos Union in the lead-up to an announcement of the ban's enforcement (Section 4), and demonstrate, consistent with H1, that spatial variation in the ban's enforcement served to displace riders into areas where the Union can extort them (Section **??**). I show that this pattern is not replicated when considering counterfactual enforcement areas based on traffic report density, law enforcement presence, or other potential motivations for enforcement configurations (Section 5. I now turn to an analysis of the *temporal* variation of okada ban enforcement, where I predict that:

Enforcement logic	*Justification*	*Operationalization*	*Effects*
Actual ITE areas	Actual LSG enforced areas	Coded from policy announcement	67% routes traversable; 87 more motorparks
High traffic congestion	Ease traffic flow	Highest traffic incident density (via 96.1FM data)	35% routes traversable; 21 fewer motorparks
High state capacity	Utilize existing capacity	Closet to police stations (via OSM)	61% routes traversable; same number of motorparks
High offense areas	Target areas of high-okada density	Highest pre-ban okada level (via Streetview)	55% routes traversable; 4 more motorparks
High income areas	Appease wealthy constituents	Highest nightlight density (via EOG)	91% routes traversable; 8 fewer motorparks
High priority areas	Prioritize public safety	Closest to primary schools	84% routes traversable; 51 fewer motorparks
High crime areas	Target crime-dense areas	Highest level of crime (via LSG)	*Forthcoming*
High violence areas	Target hotbeds of political violence	Highest density of political violence (via ACLED)	81% routes traversable; 44 fewer motorparks
High pollution areas	Reduce pollution by okada	Highest particulate matter density (via NASA)	54% routes traversable; 23 fewer motorparks
Most efficienct areas	Maximize enforcement efficiency	Areas with highest betweenness centrality on Lagos road network	27% routes traversable; 12 more motorparks
Concede to commuters	Minimize disruption to commuters	Areas with *lowest* pre-ban okada density (via Streetview)	*Forthcoming*
Ideal road conditions	Preserve okada availability where popular	Areas with most developed roads	*Forthcoming*

Table 4: Counterfactual enforcement patterns and their effects. Results are based on 10,000 simulated different start and end points randomly chosen from a uniform distribution across the Lagos road network. Number of motorparks passed is per 100 simulated routes, compared to pre-ban counts.

H2 Enforcement of the okada ban varies *temporally* according to state perception of Union reliability.

The evidence for this hypothesis comes from exploiting a shift in the state's reliance on the Union, stemming from a surprising national election result at the state level. The Nigerian Presidential and Gubernatorial elections of 2023, held about six months after enforcement of the ban began, did not happen simultaneously. Federal elections—including for the President—were held on 25 February 2023. Meanwhile Lagos state elections—including for the governor, as well as for seats in the state assembly—were held about a month later, on 18 March 2023.

The national election results were in one sense unsurprising; the incumbent APC's candidate Bola Tinubu was elected against rivals Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), and Peter Obi of the Labour Party (LP), the upstart populist candidate who captivated young Nigerian voters in particular. The APC's stronghold is in the Southwestern Nigeria, especially in Lagos State, where the party has won every election it has ever stood.

Therefore, one unexpected result of the 2023 presidential election was that the people of Lagos state voted on masse not for their former governor Bola Tinibu, but for the charismatic and populist LP candidate Peter Obi. While the Lagos results did not ultimately sway the election in Obi's favor, they nevertheless shocked the political elite of the state, who had been expecting a comfortable APC victory, guaranteed (as usual) by the efforts of the Union. Multiple sources, including a former Lagos commissioner of transport under the APC, told me the national election sent reverberations through the Lagos political system, asking me: "Did you see the election? the Union didn't deliver. Their days are numbered." [42]

I contend that the national election provided a shock to Lagos state leadership's perspective of the Union's reliability in guaranteeing an election victory for the incumbent APC, and therefore a shock to their willingness to cater to Union demands.

Thus, as with H1, H2 can be broken into two component observational implications. First:

[42] Interview with author on June 18, 2023

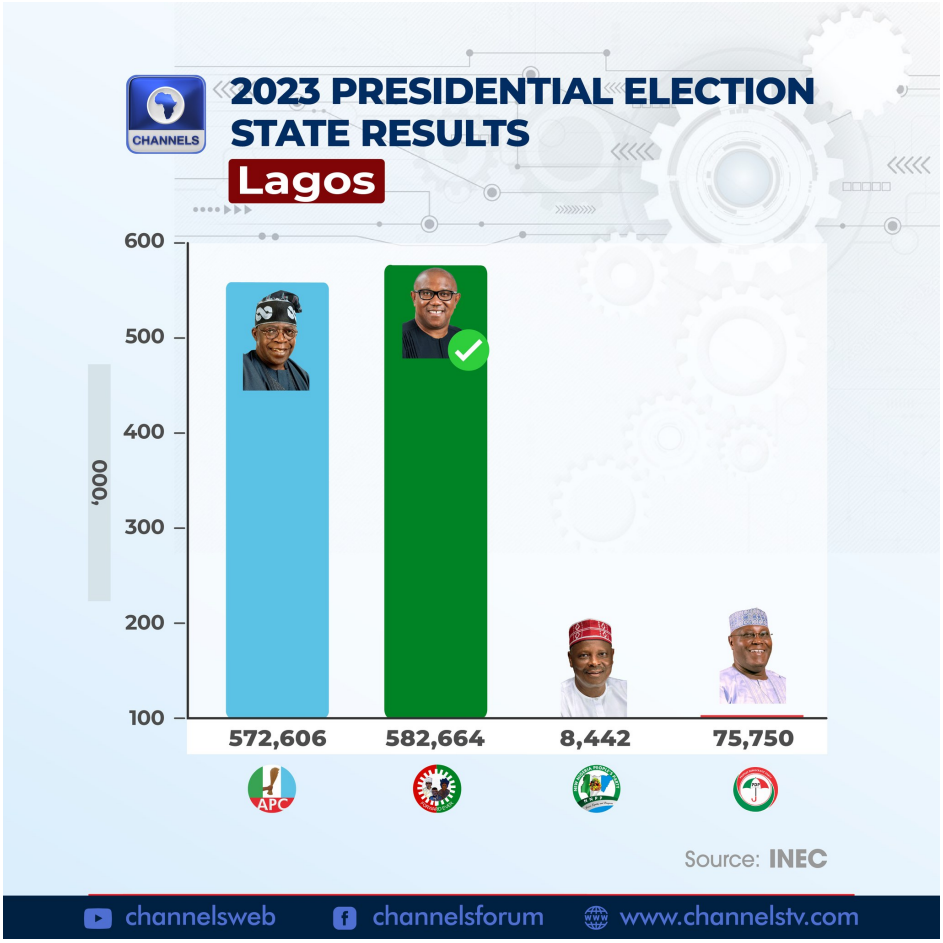


Figure 12: 2023 Nigerian Presidential Election Results for Lagos State. Image sourced from `https://tinyurl.com/ycympm3r`

H2a Okada density *increases* after the Presidential election on previously enforced routes (ITE areas).

H2a Okada density *decreases* after the Presidential election around motorparks.

My strategy involves testing whether state enforcement of the ban changed after the national election, in the lead-up to the Gubernatorial election a month later. If the LSG is selectively enforcing the ban in order to produce precarity in okada riders for exploitation by the Union, we should expect a shock to the state's trust in the Union to fundamentally alter this calculus, and shift enforcement patterns accordingly. Interviews, including with okada riders, substantiate this empirical strategy. Several (unprompted) brought up abrupt changes in enforcement during the inter-election period.[43]

I therefore define:

$$\text{InterElec}_t = \text{PresElec}_t - \text{GovElec}_t \tag{2}$$

Here as above, i denotes the road segment and t denotes the date of the measurement. The variable PresElec_t takes the value of 1 when t is after the date of the Nigerian Presidential Election, and GovElec_t when t is after the date of the Lagos Gubernatorial election. Therefore $\text{PresElec}_t - \text{GovElec}_t = 1$ if t denotes a time period between the presidential and gubernatorial elections. I measure the change during the inter-election period because, as I analyze further in SI §D.7), the Union's behavior changed significantly during the gubernatorial election. After the ire from their patron expressed after the Presidential election, the Union increased its election interference and mobilization, meaning that I expect the enforcement dynamic to return to pre-Presidential election patterns after the Gubernatorial election is complete.

I use this variable to estimate two two-way fixed effects linear models:

[43] Interviews with author, including 15 June, 2023

$$\text{Okada}_{it} = \gamma_i + \lambda_t + \tau(\text{ITE}_i \times \text{InterElec}_t) + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{3}$$

$$\text{Okada}_{it} = \gamma_i + \lambda_t + \tau(\text{Motorpark}_i \times \text{InterElec}_t) + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{4}$$

As above, $Okada_{it}$ is the number of okada counted via satellite imagery for i road segment (edge) square at t date. $Motorpark_i$ is a spatially-varying indicator of whether road segment i features a motorpark; while ITE_i is an indicator for whether road segment i is affected by okada ban enforcement. $(\text{ITE}_i \times \text{InterElec}_t)$ denotes whether a given i,t is an observation from an ITE area in the inter-election period.[44]

Results are given in Table 5. Compared to the time before and after the inter-election period, ITE areas saw a dramatic increase in the number of okada per road segment, with nearly 20 additional okada per quarter-kilometer of coded area—suggestive of a temporary drop in enforcement during the inter-election period and an increase in okada in previously-enforced areas. Meanwhile and relatedly, the number of okada in motorparks during the inter-election period decreased substantially. Okada presence varies much as we might expect: Namely, okada presence decreases during this inter-election period in motorparks, and increases across areas where okada presence is usually enforced. These trends lend credence to my theory that the state reacted to the Union's failure to sway the election for the APC by reducing selective enforcement; itself an indication that enforcement patterns were driven by Union interests.

[44] See SI §D.6 for additional specifications; as well as for assessment of assumptions necessary for causal interpretation of these results.

Table 5: Inter-election trends in okada density

	Number of Okada	
	(1)	(2)
Variables		
ITE × (InterElec)	19.18***	
	(6.624)	
Motorpark × (InterElec)		-29.39***
		(10.31)
Fixed-effects		
Edge ID	Yes	Yes
Time period	Yes	Yes

*Significance Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*
Clustered (Edge ID) standard-errors in parentheses

7 Conclusion

In this paper, I argue that states can selectively enforce policies aimed at vulnerable populations in order to ease their exploitation by important third-party groups. I examine the case of uneven enforcement of a ban on specific types of informal commercial transport in Africa's largest city, and provide evidence that uneven enforcement of this ban is in the interest of appeasing powerful transport mafias, political allies of the regime who are relied upon around election time to provide political violence on demand in favor of the ruling party. I demonstrate first, that the period before enforcement was rift with intra-union politics, and specifically unrest from commercial drivers fighting back against their exploitation by the Union. Next, I demonstrate that variation in okada ban ITE areas *systematically* and *uniquely* alters okada rider routes towards Union-led motorparks, where they face increased exploitation and extortion. Finally, I use VHR remote-sensing and Streetview data to count the number of okada motorcycles present in quarter-kilometer squares over time, specifically in the lead-up to and in the immediate aftermath of a shocking Lagos-level result in the Presidential election. I find that okada presence *increases* in areas enforced by the

ban (and decreases in areas with motorparks) in the period after the Presidential and before the Gubernatorial elections, a period of immense tension between the Lagos State Government and the Lagos transport unions.

This project, while focusing on the micro-level dynamics of a single policy enacted in a single city, has implications far beyond the streets of Lagos. My findings underline the necessity of integrating third parties—beyond state agents and directly regulated populations—into our understandings of why states pursue certain policies and their enforcement (Artabe et al., 2023; Albertus, Fenner and Slater, 2018). I build upon prevailing understandings of repression and forbearance by integrating them into a broader framework of how states assist their non-state allies. My focus on *connivance* as a strategy emphasizes how governments may aid allies not only through direct concessions, but through manipulating enforcement to produce vulnerability in populations challenging these allies' power, or whose exploitation underwrites that power—or both. Moreover, my focus on these third-party state allies shows the 'flipside' of a phenomenon of great interest to the study of politics: election violence. I examine the supply-side dynamics of election interference and violence by non-state groups, clarifying the independent motivations, incentive structures, and interests of such groups. Moreover I provide a portrait of the 'day jobs' of election thugs, emphasizing how these actors exist within—and influence— political structures even between elections. In doing so, I emphasize the need for research on the relationships between governments and allied 'violence entrepreneurs' not only around election times, but in the years and months beforehand.

Finally, I contend that even nominally benign policies (and their level of enforcement) are motivated by complex, and often corrupt, political arrangements. Like Holland (2016), I caution against interpreting a particular policy's lack of enforcement as necessarily implying an *inability* to enforce. As I reinforce above, a government's recalcitrance may instead be strategic; and—crucially—is often coercive. Future work should take these lessons to heart, especially in probing why governments tolerate illicit and informal industries; or engage only half-heartedly in enforcing violations such

as irregular migration. As this paper demonstrates, such light-handedness is not always out of benevolence towards policy infringers.

Policy enforcement—like its passage—is highly political with distinct distributive consequences. And indeed, enforcement is often the policy stage in which many citizens first convey their demands and interact with the state, especially in the Global South (Scott, 1969, 1142). This article deepens our understanding of how democracies might use this 'enforcement lever' to contribute to the oppression of vulnerable populations, and to the empowerment of exploitative third parties. In this way it reminds us that non-enforcement is not merely the absence of power, but a method of wielding it; and that examining its patterns may reveal not the limits of the state, but the logic of its alliances.

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Supplemental Information

Table of Contents

A ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering the potential ethical ramifications of this work has been at the forefront throughout the course of this project. There are five primary areas which require additional discussion.

A.1 Positionality

This project entailed going into spaces where I was not only an outsider, but quite an obvious outsider.

A.2 Qualitative data collection: Semi-structured interviews

A.3 Qualitative data collection: Participant observation

A.4 Qualitative data collection: TOUT data and examining social networks

A.5 Quantiative data: High-resolution

B BACKGROUND AND CASE APPENDIX

B.1 List of acronyms

B.2 Primer on Nigerian and Lagos politics

In contrast to other West African countries Guinea, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Senegal, and Togo, no Nigerian chief executive has yet prompted a crisis by attempting to extend their term past constitutionally-protected limits. In contrast to Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad, and Guinea, Nigeria's democracy has not fallen to a coup in the past three years. In contrast to every

Table B.1: List of acronyms

APC	All Progressives' Congress
LASPG	Lagos State Parks and Garages
LSG	Lagos State Government
MOALS	Motorcycle Owners and Operators Association of Lagos State
NGN	Nigerian Naira
NURTW	National Union of Road and Transport Workers
PDP	People's Democratic Party
RTEAN	Road Transport Employers' Association of Nigeria
TOOAN	Tricycle Owners and Operators Association of Nigeria

other country in the region, Nigeria's system is deeply federalist, in which state governments and autonomous communities flourish as powerful centers of government. I illustrate this logic in the empirical context of Nigeria, a federalist, weakly-institutionalized democracy with a long (if frequently interrupted) history of elections.

Compared to many of its neighbors in West Africa and the Sahel, Nigeria's current institutions—formed with the advent of the Fourth Republic in 1999—have withstood considerable pressure. Yet more than quarter-century after its adoption, Nigeria's democracy remains exceptionally violent and corrupt. Beyond the high-profile episodes of violence perpetrated by armed groups, Nigerians also face daily exploitation, coercion, and repression at the hands of non-state actors who use force to exert power and extract profit, permeating everyday life with extortion and violence. In Nigeria, the advent of democratic institutions has not effectively protected the country's most vulnerable from victimization by such groups.—one that saw over 3,000 civilians killed in 2024 by myriad rebel groups, communal and political militias, and the state.[45]

Nigeria is the 6^{th} most populous country on earth, with more than 230 million people who speak over 500 different languages. It is a weakly institutionalized democracy with high inequality and extensive corruption across all levels of government. It features a federal system in which states hold immense power, and in which local-level politics often 'trickle upward,' making salient overlapping regional, ethnic, religious, and linguistic divides. This is especially so between the

[45] Analysis conducted by author using ACLED data, see **?**.

rural, poorer, more populous North—largely Muslim, and Hausa or Fulani—and the richer South, primarily Igbo in the Southeast and Yoruba to the Southwest.[46]

Nigeria has seen long and varied periods of military rule, oscillating with short-lived democracies and brutal civil wars. The current iteration, the Fourth Nigerian Republic, began in 1999. Nevertheless, Nigeria's first President to be voted out of office only stepped down in 2015, when the All Progressives Congress (APC) unseated the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Nigeria's first – and so far only – peaceful transfer of power to an opposition party. The APC, at the time a newly formed coalition merging several opposition parties and PDP defectors, remains in power to this day– led former governor of Lagos Bola Tinubu who was elected president in the most recent 2023 general election. President Tinubu was inaugurated two days before my arrival in Lagos for fieldwork; the 2023 election was the first in the country in which one of the major candidates was *not* a former military ruler.

President Tinubu's reign makes especially evident the key role of Lagos politics in the national political scene. President Bola Tinubu is a native Lagosian, and indeed was born to the family of a traditional leader (chief) of the Yoruba people in Lagos, the *ìyálòrún* (a title his daughter now controversially occupies). Tinubu was governor of Lagos for two terms in the immediate aftermath of the transition to the fourth republic, and it is thought that he amassed most of his significant wealth through his near-total control of the state during this time. He has since played the role of 'kingmaker' or 'godfather' of Lagos politics. Lagos has been firmly in the APC's hands since its founding (in which Tinubu played a part) and Tinubu has hand-selected every governor of the state since his own rule ended. Tinubu's influence on Lagos politics is palatable; Indeed, while in Lagos I lived in an apartment on "Tinubu Rd" on the mainland – one of at least 6 streets I encountered named after the former governor, and current President.

[46]Lagos is both a state and a city; Lagos *state* is broken up into 20 local government areas (LGAs) and 37 local council development areas (LCDAs), while the Lagos metropolitan area encompasses 13 of these LGAs grouped in the center, generally considered the heart of the *city* of Lagos. In keeping with general colloquialisms, and in the interest of parsimony, my references to Lagos are to the state writ large.

B.3 Primer on (Transport) Union Politics in Nigeria

Interest groups—especially organized labor and sociocultural organizations—began to emerge as formidable political players in Nigeria during industrialization in the first half of the 20th century. Unions in particular played a large role in Nigeria's successful bid for independence from the British in 1960 (**??**). In the period between decolonization and the adoption of its current system in 1999, Nigeria oscillated between military rule and short-lived democratic projects. Because of a concerted effort by both the British and by post-independence regimes to repress, reorganize, and split unions among ethnic lines—and because regional divisions overlap significantly with occupational patterns—the landscape of labor and sociocultural organizations in Nigeria is dense and highly localized (**??**). Especially after the advent of presidential federalism in 1978, individual chapters, informal community-based advocacy networks, and breakaway factions established varying levels of presence and power across Nigeria's highly disparate regions. And a perhaps surprising number of these organizations act not only as advocates for their members' interests in bargains with employers and with the state, but also as what we might call 'violence entrepreneurs;' non-state brokers who use and sell violence, extortion, or exploitation to achieve political and economic ends.[47]

The right to a union is one that is protected directly by the Nigerian constitution (TK). Literature on trade union activism in developing democracies largely focuses on the combative and repressive relationship between the government and trade unions (Dean, 2022); or on state infiltration into unions as a form of political control (**?**). While umbrella unions in Nigeria often call general strikes or publicly protest against government policies at the national level, this paper illuminates how localized factions of labor unions can also act as strategic partners to local parties, often in open defiance to parent labor organizations. Given these unions' role as violence entrepreneurs of

[47]For example, the infamous Bakassi boys of Southeast Nigeria, eventually a militia group wanted for mass extrajudicial killings, was originally organized by the Shoemakers Industrial Union as a means of protecting Ariaria Market in Aba from criminal elements (**?**).

the state, I add to a substantial literature detailing how how political militias (Carey, Mitchell and Scharpf, 2022; **?**; Acemoglu, Robinson and Santos, 2009) and criminal groups interact with the state.

The transport unions of Lagos have been powerful political players for half a century, organizations older than Nigeria's current republic. Transportation in Lagos for many years was a public enterprise run by the Lagos State Transport Corporation (LSTC), begun in 1958. In particular, LSTC provided bus coverage across Lagos road networks at the end of the country's First Republic,

There are two broad 'umbrella' unions in the country: the National Labour Congress (NLC) which generally represents *employees* across industries, and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) which generally represents *employers* across industries. As such there are two major transport unions, each affiliated with one of these umbrellas. In general, unions in Nigeria are complex hierarchical structures. The first is the National Union of Transport and Road Workers (NURTW) associated with the NLC, and the second is the Road Transport Employers' Association of Nigeria (RTEAN) associated with the TUC. Both are national unions with state chapters across the country, especially in the southwest, and *especially* in Lagos. NURTW[48] and RTEAN Lagos state chapters coexist, but their operations are not divvied up as might be suggested by their umbrella organization. Their membership pools are rather idiosyncratically assigned; sometimes based on this division, sometimes based on location.

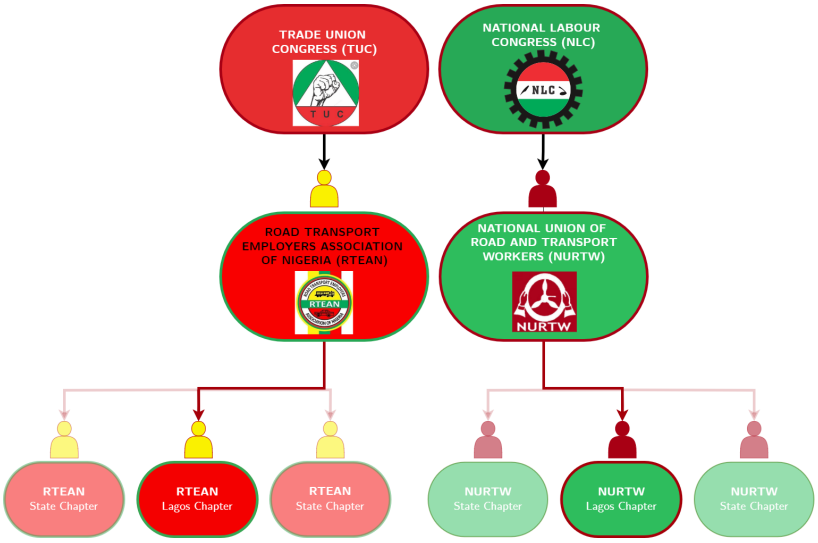
B.4 Okada bans within and beyond Lagos

In the recent 2023 election, it was big news when one newly elected member of the parliament admitted during his campaign that he had at one point been 'an okada man.' Many Lagosians I spoke to claimed that the okada riders are "not even Nigerians," but foreigners from Niger and the Sahel who fled past Nigeria's porous borders to make their way to Lagos.[49] It is all but impossible

[48]The more powerful of these unions tends to be NURTW, and when I say 'the Union,' I refer to the Lagos branch of NURTW.

[49]Interviews with author; including on June 14, 2023

Figure B.1: Transport union organizational chart



to verify this claim. Nevertheless, its omnipresence speaks to the general disdain the riders face from the population they serve. Typically, okada operators do not own the bikes they ride, but instead borrow in exchange for a portion of their daily earnings.

The various fees associated with moving throughout the city mean that okada riders make a meager living, and are offered no social protection or security. In general, their wages by the end of the day will last them only that day.[50]

C QUALITATIVE DATA APPENDIX

C.1 Transport Operators Union Tracking (TOUT) data

Searching online archives of mostly English-language Nigerian daily newspapers (see Table **??** over the past decade, as well as social media content, official press releases and documents, and other archival and primary material; I collect over 2,500 articles and reports regarding the politics of the Union and its allies over the past decade, and hundreds more pieces of primary material

[50]Interviews with author, including July 7, 2023

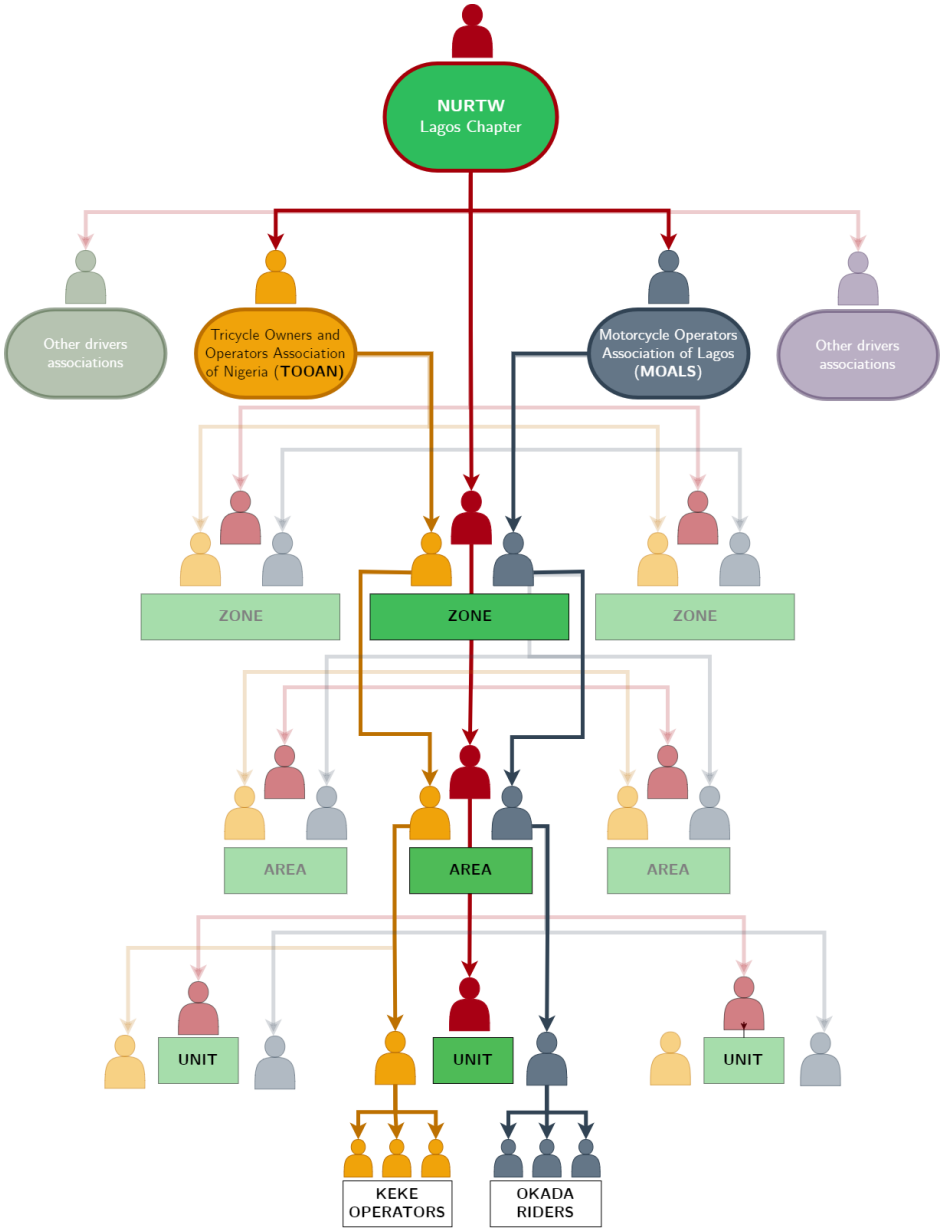


Figure B.2: Union chapter organizational chart. Each Union chapter is led by a chairman, who resides over zonal chairmen of both the parent organization (NURTW) and sub-unions (TOOAN, MOALS). Zonal chairmen exert authority over 'area' chairmen, and area chairmen over 'unit' chairmen, who rule a particular junction, intersection, or park.

2000 Tinubu comes to power, allegedly with the help of electoral interference by the Union.

2013 MC Oluomo first mentioned in Nigerian dailies as rising Union leader.

2017 MOALS (okada union) leader and Ambode supporter Rasaq Bello killed by MC's men.

Figure B.3: Timeline of (selected) pertinent events in Union history

and documentary evidence. Using these sources, I build a localized event and network dataset for Lagos, which combines and links information on hundreds of relevant actors, places, and events, covering both recent internal political dynamics of the union and events such as passage and enforcement of the okada ban, protests by vehicle operators, battles between rival union factions, and interpersonal rivalries and relationships. These data allow me to analyze trends in the political dynamics between the union, the Lagos State Government, and informal commercial transport operators qualitatively. I also utilize I refer to this database as the Transport Operator & Union Tracking (TOUT) dataset.

A number of major newspapers, especially Nigerian dailies, were used in the construction of this dataset. These include (but are not limited to): *PM News, This Day, Daily Independent, The Nation, The Will, The Punch, The Nation, Nigerian Trbune, Weekly Trust, International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), Naija News, Daily Post, Times Watch, The Guardian, Sahara Reporters, TBI Africa, The Independent, The Premium Times, Peoples Gazette, Foundation for Investigative Journalism, Vanguard, The Daily Trust, News Agency of Nigeria, The Guild, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)*, and *Echo News*.

Many sources were obtained through targeted boolean searches on LexisNexis from 2022

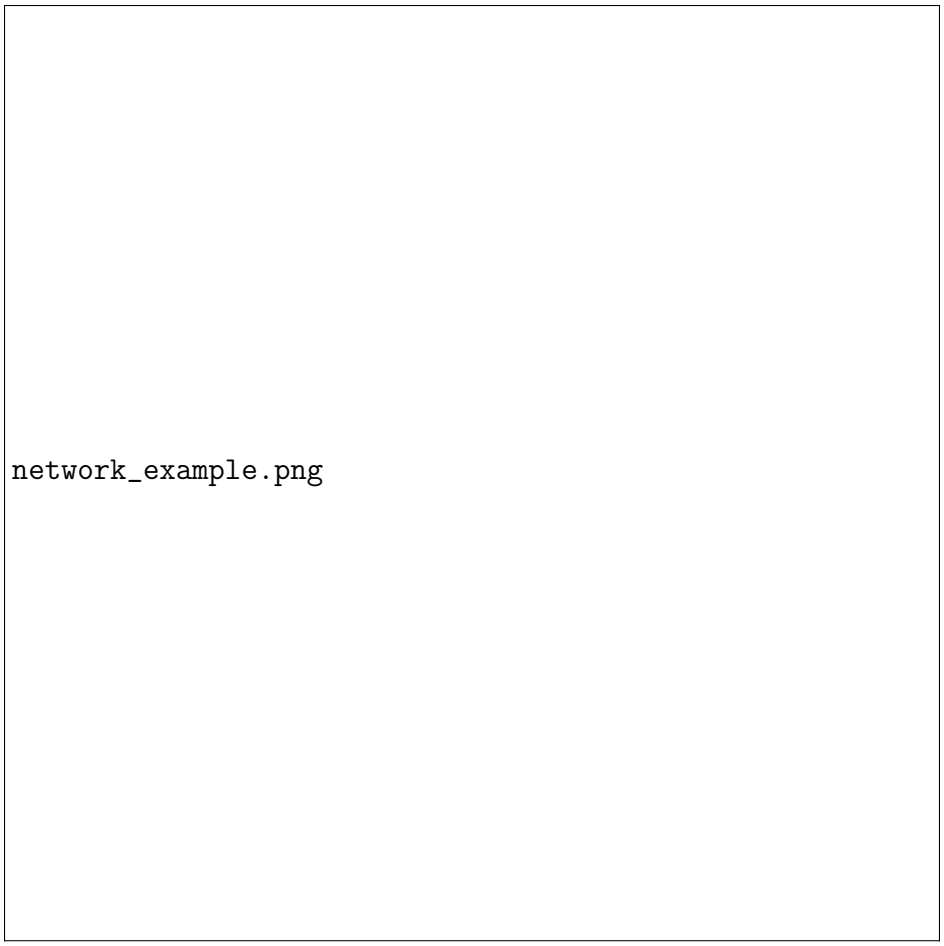


Figure C.1: A section of the networked TOUT dataset. Yellow dots represent events; blue places; red people; and white, groups.

through the present[51]. Others were provided by interview subjects or obtained during fieldwork, such as videos or photographs of Union attacks on transport operators, or tickets provided to operators from the Union. I also obtained some data from social media posts by both the Union's official social media channels and from Union leadership; including through occasional live-streamed meetings and ceremonies for which I was in (virtual) attendance.

The dataset includes (as of February 2025) roughly 200 people, 100 events and 50 organizations, agencies, or groups.

[51] E.g., "lagos" AND "okada" OR "motorbike" OR "motorcycle"

Selected primary source material

Some multimedia sources contributed to the construction of the dataset, including posts from social media and photographs taken during fieldwork. Below, I include a selection of those referenced in the main text.

FORTHCOMING: Appendix In Progress.

C.2 Interviews and selection strategy

FORTHCOMING: Appendix In Progress.

Qualitative interviews about the political geography of Lagos lend sharp focus to the data described above. Beyond that, interviews allow me to ask affected actors directly about their preferences, concerns, and perceptions surrounding the ban and traffic politics in Lagos in general. Interviews come from directly contacting relevant individuals via email, WhatsApp, and other means; as well as from interacting with individuals over the course of their day-to-day life.[52]

My time in Lagos yielded hundreds of anecdotes and observations, as well as informal conversations with scores of individuals affected by the okada ban and transport issues more broadly in Lagos, from commuters at bus stops to traffic enforcement officials at intersections.

C.3 Participant observation; fieldwork sites and details

FORTHCOMING: Appendix In Progress.

Driver and rider collective action and organization

FORTHCOMING: Appendix In Progress.

[52] See SI §**??** for more information on the qualitative data procedure I pursued, its ethical considerations, and its limitations.

D QUANTIATIVE DATA APPENDIX

D.1 Satellite imagery analysis

ONGOING: Appendix In Progress.

Imagery details

I purchased VHR satellite images as listed in Table D.1. Initial analysis areas are mapped in Figure D.1.

Image	Area	Satellite	Date
1	Area 1	WV3	2022-06-13
2	Area 1	WV3	2023-03-24
3	Area 1	PNEO	2023-12-18
4	Area 1	WV3	2022-04-30
5	Area 1	WV3	2021-05-23
6	Area 2	WV2 HD	2023-02-2
7	Area 2	WV3	2023-03-24
8	Area 2	WV3	2023-03-17
9	Area 2	PNEO	2022-06-02
10	Area 2	WV3	2021-05-23
11	Area 2	PNEO	2023-12-13
12	Area 2	PNEO	2023-06-25
13	Area 2	PNEO	2023-04-20

Table D.1: Satellite images obtained (as of 4 September 2024

Manual coding procedure

Counting okada – as discussed in the body of the paper – is difficult. Figure D.2 shows an example of what okada look like on satellite images, with likely okada circled in green. There are several things we can do to make sure that, in initial manual coding, we limit both 'Type I' and 'Type II' errors in identification.

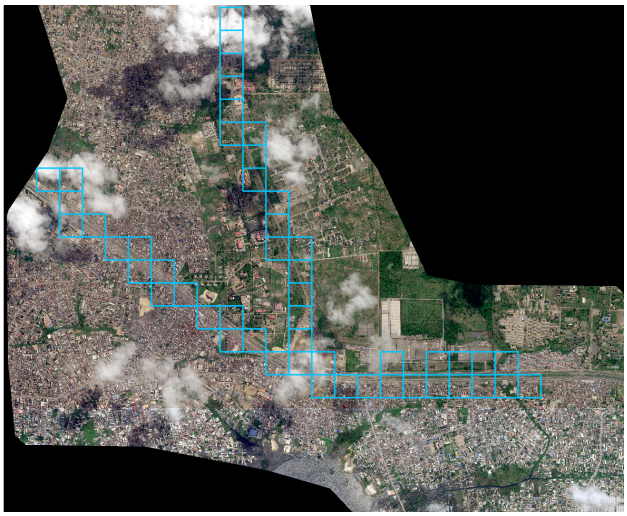


Figure D.1: Map of imagery area

example_okadas.png

Figure D.2: Example of coding okada (over time) manually from satellite imagery.

First, okada are on the roads and just off them, limiting the coding scope to only the selected grid squares (outlined in blue). Moreover, the size of the circled features is key. The typical motorcycle in Nigeria measures measures 2-3m long. Given that the images pictured are 30cm per pixel, the okada objects are roughly 6 pixels long. This distinguishes okada from other 'dots on the road.' Additionally, other vehicles in the motorpark are all larger and more easily identified.[53] The comparison helps clarify which features are indeed okada as opposed to other modes of informal transit potentially located in the same area.

Additionally, fieldwork participant observation provided me with on-the-ground information about how okada riders position themselves around the road network, and where in specific areas the 'okada zone' is. Figure D.3 shows an image taken during fieldwork of okada riders along a road in Lagos. As you can see, they form distinctive 'clumps' in particular areas of the road, including along highway dividers and at intersections. The green-circled features take a similar formation. These qualities help distinguish features that are likely okada during manual coding, from other features likely not okada.

Relatedly, information obtained from Google Streetview data help validate this measurement strategy (see Figure D.4) In particular, combinations between likely okada from VHR satellite imagery are compared to similarly-dated streetview images of the same area. If, for example, a streetview image shows a cluster of okada riders in a specific area, and this matches roughly the cluster shown from above, it is helpful validation. Street-view imagery can also show roughly where okada riders tend to be located in particular areas, and thus help adjudicate difficult cases.

Using these heuristics, I manually code 250 randomly selected[54] 0.5×0.5km grid squares. Selection is via random selection of grid square id numbers which contain some stretch of road or off-road structure. Coding is done three separate times by me; without consulting previous totals or with any knowledge (until the validation stage) of where precisely the grid-square is located or

[53] FORTHCOMING: Particular dimensions and examples of coding these.

[54] with the exception of the first 50 squares, chosen purposefully for variation in the variables of interest and for proof of concept

Figure D.3: (Blurry) photo of okada riders clustered around an intersection

Figure D.4: Example of Google Streetview image showing okada riders.

the value of any relevant independent variables.[55]

In analyses, I drop grid square-dates where there is significant cloud cover. I also perform additional specifications which include additional measures from with Google Maps VHR satellite imagery data.[56]

Computer vision

FORTHCOMING: Appendix In Progress.

I adapt an existing algorithm FORTHCOMING to recognize features as okada automatically based on the training set manually coded above.

Because of the rather complex and context-dependent nature of the coding of okada, there are several restrictions on my ability to utilize computer vision models to code these data. For one, Google Earth Historical imagery is viewable, but not downloadable so all data labelled "historical imagery" was hand-coded by me.

I take my road network dataset, which as described in Section **??** consists of Open Street map data separated into road segments according to junctions in the road. I 'buffer' this line data into polygons, meaning that each road segment 'edge' becomes a polygon which goes five meters out each side. This represents a pre-processing segmentation step, to avoid difficulties that can arise from models incorrectly placing okada on areas that are not roads. Because okada are so small and coding them is such a context-dependent procedure – they look at first glance like ants on the road – this step is necessary for ensuring that other similar shapes in the satellite imagery are not falsely coded as okada despite not being on road segments.

I then overlay these polygons on satellite imagery. Purchased satellite imagery are in 'raster' format, meaning they are detailed geo-coded mosaic images with several 'bands' merged together to create an image. I take these images and split them into smaller individual images, each associated with a specific road segment. These steps are all done in ArcGIS with ArcPy python

[55] Namely; whether the grid square contains a motorpark or is an ITE-area of the okada ban.
[56] FORTHCOMING: Results will be in Tables **??** and **??**

code as well as built-in Esri functions.

Each of these individual images represent then a (literal) snapshot of a particular road segment on the date the satellite image was taken. Using Label Studio, an open-source image annotation software[57], I manually circle okada on a sample of the road segments collected. Image **??** shows an example of this process, which is described further above.

I use this manually coded sample to train a detectron2[58] model to code the rest of the road segment images for that date.

Because each satellite image has different qualities as described in Table **??**, including different times, reflectance, and resolution, images have slightly different qualities which may affect the model's ability to interpret the image. Therefore, I repeat this process for every purchased satellite image, rather than combining them into one fully-trained mode. This means that each individual satellite image listed in table **??** has its own trained model. All satellite analysis includes image/date fixed effects to account for any differences that arise in this regard.

Because of the complex technical nature of this exercise, as well as the 'black-box' processes inherent in machine learning algorithms designed for image recognition, I also code 10km2 by hand, and re-run analyses on this small subsample of images.

D.2 Streetview imagery analysis

I utilize Google Streetview historical and recent imagery to get extremely fine-grained geospaital estimates of a few variables, including commercial transit;

There are advantages and disadvantages to Streetview data as a source. For one, Streetview requires Google staff to drive a car with a camera down every road, recording panorama images as it goes. This requires that Google's vehicle can make it down the road; and that conditions are such that this is reasonably possible. This eliminates some roads nonrandomly from the sample; namely

57

58

those which are smaller, in worse repair, or peripheral. Moreover, in part due to these restrictive scope conditions, Google streetview routes are not recorded often. Most locations in Lagos have TK images associated from them, as much as ten years apart. While the data is rich in terms of spatial granularity; it is sparse temporally.

What Streetview fails to provide in terms of comprehensiveness, it makes up for in the richness of data it can provide at a hyper-granular spatial unit of analysis. Streetview panoramas. Previous research in Political Science has used Streetview data to capture the locations of surveillance cameras in China over time; other disciplines have used it to study TK, TK, TK.

Imagery details

I scrape Google Streetview imagery using Google's own API and streetview.

Manual coding procedure

I begin with manual coding of various particular characteristics

TK Example image one

TK Example image two

OBIA algorithm

D.3 Alternative explanations and specifications for satellite imagery analysis

FORTHCOMING: Appendix In Progress.

D.4 Road network analysis

Constructing the road network

I build and utilize an original R package (`road-networks`) in order to create a road network dataset based on Lagos road data.[59] The package takes data from Open Street Maps (OSM) open source geospatial road data, and transforms these data into a road network. OSM data provide information on the geography of roads of all types – from major highways to tertiary trails and footpaths – in the form of spatial files of polyline data, one line (row) for each road. OSM also provides information about each road, including classifications according to road type (primary, footway, path, motorway, etc.), road name, and other characteristics, including whether the road is a tunnel or a bridge, and whether traffic is bidirectional or one-way.

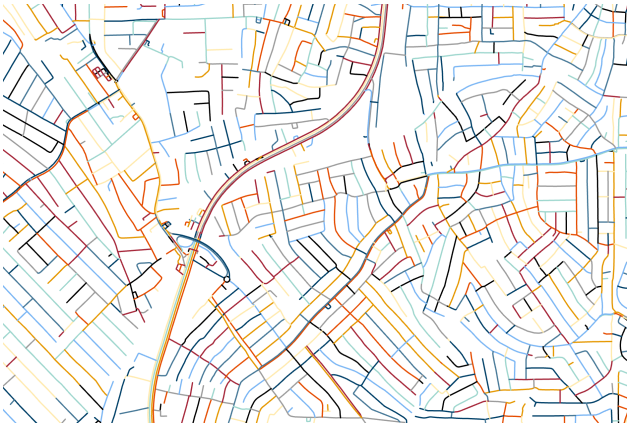
I utilize these latter three characteristics in particular to construct a spatial road network.[60] Namely, I abstract the map of roads in Lagos into a network of edges, representing the roads themselves, which are connected by nodes – in this case, placeholders for intersections and the ends and beginnings of particular streets. The network is determined entirely by geospatial characteristics: that is, the length of a road 'edge' between two intersection 'nodes' is simply the length of the road. Figure D.5 illustrates this process of segmenting the Lagos road network into edges and nodes.

However, the process of transforming OSM data into a network is not straightforward, and requires several discrete steps. Simply taking OSM data as they are and segmenting each road, at every place where they intersect or overlap, is insufficient. To see why, Figure D.6 shows this same 10km^2 OSM data displayed in Figure D.5, overlaid on a graphical representation of this road

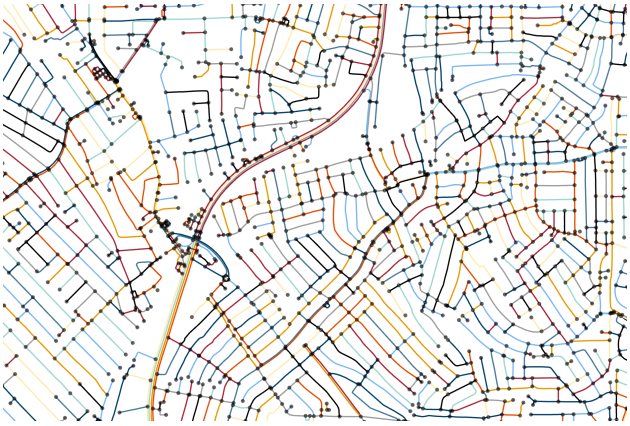
[59] This package is adapted from **?**'s protocol in ArcGIS which creates an arc.py network dataset based on OSM street data.

[60] By 'road network,' I mean an abstraction of the road polylines into 'edges,' connected to each other through 'nodes.' In a traditional network (or 'graph') set-up, nodes are objects of interest – for example, members of a community – and edges are connections between nodes – for example, relationships between community members. Both nodes and edges have characteristics which can be analyzed. For example, the edge between the nodes representing a parent *A* and child *B* might be short, indicating a very close relationship; while the edge between *A* and the local banker *C* might be longer, indicating a more distant connection. Nodes can also be connected to each other through other nodes; that is, the relationship between *A* and a second cousin *D* passes through another node: a shared great grandparent. Of course, networks are not always between people, and in what follows, the network I construct and examine is a spatial one.

(a) Road data, features abstracted, containing a multitude of separate roads connected through intersections.

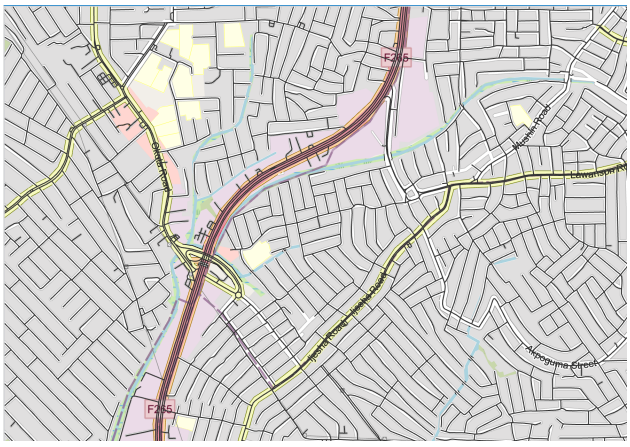


(b) This same road data, where separate roads are differently colored. Each separate road segment represents an 'edge.'



(c) This same road data where 'nodes' are added for each location where edges start, end, or intersect with each other.

Figure D.5: Random selection of OSM road data in Lagos, Nigeria (roughly 10km^2), through the process of being constructed into a road network.



(a) Road data (black lines) over OSM basemap.

Figure D.6: Lagos roads with OSM basemap, zoomed in to one intersection. Each colored line (red, orange, etc.) represents a separate road in OSM data.

network. For the sake of clarity, the second image zooms in further, to one particular intersection in mainland Lagos.

A naive division of the road data into edges and nodes would split roads at every location they intersect with other roads. Figure D.7 shows the results of such a naive division, with nodes drawn in blue. Such a division presents problems for analysis (**?**).

For example, take the node drawn furthest to top the top of the figure, drawn at the intersection between the yellow road and the red road. If abstracted into a network, the creation of this node would artificially create a connection between the red and yellow roads at this point, allowing travel

Figure D.7: Roads marked with where they intersect other roads (marked with blue dots)

on the network directly from the yellow road to the red road at this point; that is, travelling from west to east along the yellow road, this node would allow a traveller along the network to perform a sharp turn to the left to continue travel on the red road from this point. Figure D.8 shows this example, where the black line with arrows demonstrates how a traveller along the network could move between the roads at this node.

The underlying basemap illustrates why this is an issue: namely, despite the fact that the red and yellow roads technically intersect in a 2D space, in reality the yellow road represents a bridge *over* the red road. In reality, a traveller along the network could not pursue the route represented in D.8 without jumping off the yellow bridge, and onto the red road below. This node therefore falsely creates a direct path between these roads when in fact, none exist. In reality, a traveller would have to take a much more roundabout route in order to move from this node on the yellow bridge, to the red road below. Similar mistakes are made at other supposed intersections represented by the other blue nodes. D.9 Xes out such nodes, which are inappropriately created at several points in which a 2D representation of roads results in the creation of intersections which do not actually represent

Figure D.8: Example route if considering all intersections (blue dots) as 'nodes' in the road network

connections between roads.

As such, transforming OSM data into a road network requires differentiating between genuine intersections in which roads are connected to each other, and 'false' intersections, where seemingly overlapping roads in a 2D space are in fact not connected in a way that allows traversing the road network through such a n intersection.

The R package I have created [61] addresses this issue. Specifically, the package separate OSM data according to road classifications as bridges and tunnels. It then transforms each class of road into nodes and edges separately, before combining (based on OSM locally-constructed 'layer' data to ensure only genuine intersections) into one interconnected network dataset, resulting in a network which does not include such 'false intersections.'

The final issue I resolve with this package is the taking into account one-way streets. Networks can be either 'directed' or 'undirected': 'Undirected' networks imply that edges between nodes

[61] Adapted from the logic proposed by **?** in their ArcGIS package

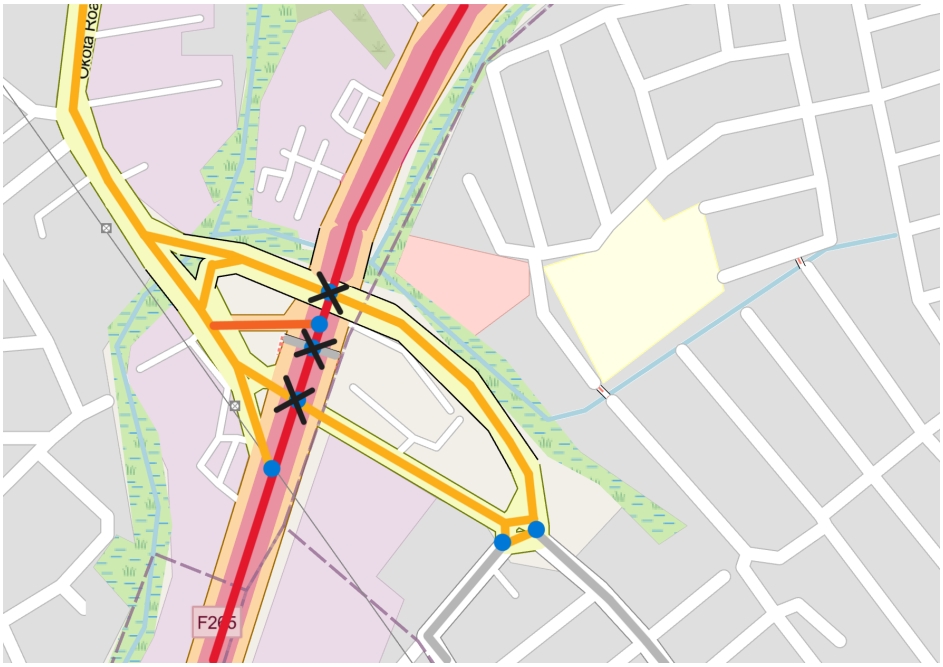


Figure D.9: Intersections (blue dots) *x*ed out if they should not be considered 'nodes' in the road network.

operate in both directions, and that a traveller along the network can move from point A to point B via the same route as from point B to point A, while 'directed' networks imply that each edge has a start node and an end node, and cannot be traversed in the opposite direction. Road networks are by their nature, complex, containing both directed edges (namely, one-way streets) and undirected (two-way). I take this complexity into account by duplicating all edges that represent two-way streets, reversing start and end nodes, allowing for the creation of a 'directed' graph in which bidirectional travel is allowed for two-way roads through the creation of pairs of edges.

Road network randomization

My measurement strategy calculates the change in routes along the road network between pairs of points before and after the okada ban, if simulating shortest distances between those points. I propose that the ban will a) displace riders from non-motorpark areas to motorparks; b) curtail freedom of movement generally; and c) increase the cost of the average ride. I pursue this strategy

in several steps.

The first step is to establish baseline routes undertaken by okada riders before the ban. To this end, I select a random pair of discrete points from a uniform distribution along the road network, simply meaning that every point on the road network has equal chance of being selected.[62] These points represent a potential 'start point' (i) and 'end point' (k) of an okada's journey, between which okada riders may be hired to take passengers. I utilize network analysis tools to evaluate the shortest path[63] that can be taken between each of these start and end points for an okada rider along the road network. I calculate the *cost* of each route, a function of both the length in meters of the route, and the number of motorparks passed, as demonstrated below in Equation (5):

$$\text{Cost}_{i,k}^{pre} = \min_{P \in \mathscr{P}_{i,k}} \left(\sum_{e \in P} \ell(e) \times r + \sum_{e \in P \cap m} f \right) \tag{5}$$

Here, $\text{Cost}_{i,k}$ is the cost of traversing from point i to point k and $\mathscr{P}_{i,k}$ represents the set of all possible paths between point i and point k, where each path $\mathscr{P}$ is made up of multiple edges e. $\ell(e)$ is the length, in meters, of a given edge. Simply, the formula clarifies that the *cost* of a journey from point i to point k on the road network is the path which minimizes the length of the edges traversed. An assumption here is that the cost to an okada rider of a particular route determined by how far they have to travel along the road network. This cost-per-meter is represented by 'rate' variable r. If $e \in m$, this simply means that that edge houses a motorpark. For every edge which passes a motorpark in a given path P, an extra cost is incurred represented by 'fee' variable f. Based on extensive interviews with okada riders, as well as rides on okada, I estimate the approximate cost-per-kilometer travelled r at NGN 100 (₦; as of 23 April 2023 was approximately NGN 1,282.00 to USD 1.00). While the price of tickets f also vary over time, interviews suggest

[62] FORTHCOMING: Additional sets of simulations outlined in section D.4 will relax this uniformity assumption in order to more closely mimic actual traffic and travel throughout Lagos. However, this initial uniform distribution assumption is not necessarily problematic; indeed, one of the points of okada is that they were commonly available all over the city to go all sorts of distances.

[63] Specifically, I use `shortest paths` and `distances` functions from R package `igraph`.

they seem to hover around NGN 500 per motorpark. This allows me to take into account the incentive okada riders have to avoid passage through motorparks, even if they lie on the shortest possible route between points.

The second step of my analysis takes explicit account of the okada ban. I rerun shortest distance calculations between these same random points i and k; however this time I account for areas which are enforced during the course of the ban. Equation (**??**) simply states that in calculating the shortest possible path between points i,k after the ban, I discard paths in which any edges e are in the set b, where b is enforced areas ($e \notin b$).

$$\text{Cost}_{i,k}^{post} = \min_{P \in \mathscr{P}_{i,k}} \left\{ \left(\sum_{e \in P} \ell(e) \times r + \sum_{e \in P \cap m} f \right) : e \notin b \, \forall e \in P \right\} \tag{6}$$

Finally, I count the number of motorparks passed for each route i,k as demonstrated in (7).

$$\text{Count}_{i,k}^{pre(post)}(m) = \min_{P \in \mathscr{P}_{i,k}} \left(\sum_{e \in P \cap m} 1 \right) \tag{7}$$

I conduct the above analysis across 10,000[64] simulated routes between different start and end points on the road network of Lagos, which allows me to compare several telling route characteristics between the period prior to and after the okada ban enforcement. Most simply, I can calculate the cost of the okada ban for riders, represented by (8), by simply taking the difference between the costs after the ban and the costs before the ban. This takes into account both the extra cost of additional motorpark tickets incurred by riders, and the extra mileage required to circumvent enforced areas.

[64] FORTHCOMING: Analysis is ongoing: the simulation count currently is only 1,000 because of the computational intensity required.

$$\text{Cost of Okada Ban} = \sum_{i,k} \left(\text{Cost}_{i,k}^{post} - \text{Cost}_{i,k}^{pre} \right) \tag{8}$$

More precisely related to my hypothesis, I calculate the difference in the number of motorparks passed post-ban from pre-ban (Equation (9)), as well as the share of all shortest routes between all points i,k that pass at least one motorpark before and after the ban enforcement (Equation (10)).

$$\text{Difference in motorparks passed after ban}m = \sum_{i,k} \left(\text{Count}_{i,k}^{post}(m) - \text{Count}_{i,k}^{pre}(m) \right) \tag{9}$$

$$\text{Prop}^{pre(post)} = \frac{\sum_{i,k} \min_{P \in \mathscr{P}_{i,k}} \left(\mathbf{1}_{\{|P \cap m| > 0\}} \right)}{\sum_{i,k} 1} \tag{10}$$

I also provide additional descriptive statistics, including the number of routes displaced entirely by ban enforcement (i.e., a start and end point which one cannot travel between without passing an enforced area), and geographic displacement of riders.

I complete these simulations using the actual locations of the okada ban, allowing me to compute the ultimate effects of selective enforcement on okada rider welfare and union profit. However, these results do not necessarily imply that the areas of okada ban enforcement were selected *in order to* benefit the union; it is possible that any positive results for the union are an incidental consequence of enforcement locations that were chosen for other reasons. Along with other tests for possible alternative explanations, I guard against this possibility by re-running this road network analysis, substituting for actual enforcement areas *hypothetical* possible locations of okada ban enforcement.

More precisely, I select (for each iteration) roughly 50 intersections, streets, bridges, and areas

on the road network in which the okada ban could have been – but was not – enforced. I then re-run the above analysis *as if* these areas were those enforced, in order to see whether other areas of enforcement result in the same effects on okada riders. This allows me to calculate whether the areas in which the ban was *actually* enforced *uniquely* benefit the union, compared to other hypothetical enforcement areas. This approach is analogous to one of 'randomization inference,' in which hypothetical treatment assignments are systematically shuffled among all units in a study to robustly assess the causal impact of the actual treatment. This technique helps in isolating the unique contribution of the treatment by comparing outcomes under real and randomized enforcement scenarios, thereby enhancing the validity of the inferences drawn from the analysis.

I compare the effects on shortest-route distances generated by the actual okada ban to the effects of hypothetical bans on 1,000 sets of roads, intersections, or other potentially enforceable areas. I choose the selection of roads not randomly, but based on 96.1 FM Twitter traffic data. I find the sets of roads in the highest 5% of mentions of features, coded with reference to OSM data, roughly 385 features, all of which are mentioned at least 50 times in the universe of tweets. I then select 50 features (1,000 times) and run the same calculations as above.

Alternative explanations and specifications for road network analysis

FORTHCOMING: Appendix In Progress.

I intend to replicate road network simulations where instead of start-points and end points being generated randomly according to a uniform distribution on the road network, we generate start and end points randomly from a distribution of traffic-dense areas according to Lagos traffic twitter data[65]

I also select from different distributions of road areas for 'hypothetical' enforcement areas which align with other potential reasons to vary enforcement geographically. This analysis is

[65] See Appendix D.4 for more on this process.

aimed at addressing potential alternative explanations, including state capacity (or enforcement power). I then compare hypothetical enforcement areas to actual enforcement areas both on their own and in the context of results from the road network simulations. Table **??** will have these results. The first column *capacity* randomly draws hypothetical ITE areas from roads surrounding police stations[66] If the explanation for okada enforcement is one of limited capacity, it is plausible that enforcement may be selective, and enforcement stronger around centers of law enforcement power. Another capacity-based variation in ITE areas might be enforcement focused on areas where okada are most common. The second column randomly draws hypotetical ITE areas from locations in which, prior to the ban, were associated with a traffic incident involving okada riders[67].

D.5 Additional Twitter analyses and descriptive statistics

FORTHCOMING: Appendix In Progress.

D.6 Alternative measurement strategies and additional analyses

Alternative measures of traffic

FORTHCOMING: Appendix In Progress.

Alternative measure of motorpark locations

ONGOING: Appendix In Progress.

It is possible that official coverage is systematically biased against locations where motorparks operate unofficially. In an attempt to overcome this issue, I utilize lists of motorparks and garages as recorded by the Lagos Waste Management Agency (LAWMA) as part of organizing daily waste collection routes. LAWMA is tasked with the waste and trash removal throughout all of Lagos, and is organized into six divisions (East I/II, West I/II, Central I/II) with mutually exclusive operating

[66] See `www.humdata.org` for data on locations of police stations in Lagos.
[67] See Appendix D.5

routes. Part of the purview of this organization is to collect and remove waste from markets and motorparks – both formal and informal. As such, LAWMA lists – unpublished and internal – do not distinguish between informal and formal motorparks in the state. Their job is to collect waste from both. I have individually obtained lists from each of these six divisions of LAWMA. Tables **??** and **??** will show alternative analyses of political and temporal variation using this revised measurement strategy.

Measures of union power

FORTHCOMING: Appendix In Progress.

My theory essentially requires that selective enforcement patterns are responsive to union power. This is the basis behind the difference-in-differences strategy explored in section **??**. Here, I devise another way to measure union power using engagement with the social media posts of the NURTW Lagos branch leader MC Oluomo. As described in Appendix **??**, social media and related channels are one way in which union officials engage with their members and the world; and MC Oluomo has a particularly active instagram page. Sometimes he posts official statements; more often they are happy birthday wishes to family members, friends, and colleagues. I roughly proxy union 'influence' with the number of likes, shares, or views over time. Figure **??** will show how engagement with this individual's posts wax and wane over time.

D.7 Election analysis

Election results in Nigeria are collated by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The 2023 elections introduced new technology to that data collation process. In particular, INEC introduced a system by which individual polling stations (of which there are only 13,000 in Lagos alone) could upload signed PDFs of the final vote tallies for that polling station, which were read in using OCR and collated automatically.

However, polling unit-level data on Lagos governorship election, which took place on March

18 2023, are more difficult to access comprehensively. While some images appear to have been captured by web crawlers from original uploads, no systematic collection seems to exist. I therefore resort to idiosyncratic collection of governorship election results for those polling units I can find online. This includes collection through internet archives, cached pages, old news reports, and social media for any images portraying polling-unit level results. I find polling unit level results for roughtly 150 polling units , across every local government area in Lagos and almost 70 separate voting wards. I compare these to the polling-unit level results from the Presidential race a month earlier. I add polling station information (and results) to the Lagos road network dataset described above.

E MODEL APPENDIX

My theory relies on three actors: the APC which controls the Lagos state government (S), the Union (U), and okada riders (R).

The APC's main goal is retaining control of Lagos state. Their retention comes from two channels: first, support and/or electoral interference from the Union; as well as some popularity penalty from disenfranchised riders or consumers of okada rides.

I formalize this logic in the form of a simple model, where the players are the State (S), the Union (U) and okada Riders (R). In keeping with the context, riders—being primarily internally displaced persons without access to voting rights in Lagos—are not strategic actors. Their choice is a deterministic response to enforcement.

E.1 Actors and preferences

The game is played as described in the following section, but in short encompasses two stages. In the first $(t = 0)$, the State decides whether or not to pass the ban. If they choose not to, the Union proceeds to decide its level of election violence and the game ends. If they choose instead to pass

the ban, a second stage begins at $t = 1$ in which the State chooses a level of enforcement of the ban, followed by Union decisions about the level of electoral violence to perpetrate. This second stage then infinitely repeats with a common discount rate. Each actor's payoff functions in every time period in the second stage, for all $t \geq 1$ is as follows. For the state:

$$\pi_S^t = V_0 + \alpha v_t - C(e_t)$$

or the total number of votes they get at baseline (V_0), plus the total gain from the election violence perpetrated by the Union in this time period (αv_t), minus whatever they spend on enforcement in this period $C(e_t)$. The Union meanwhile has payoff function:

$$\pi_U^t = x(b, e_t) r^{in}(b, e_t) - K_{v_t}$$

Which is given by the tax rate they charge per ride within their territory, based on ban passage and enforcement in that time period; times the number of rides within their territory taken by Riders in this time period, minus the total amount they spend on election violence in this time period.

Riders, though they are not strategic actors in the game, have the following payoff function:

$$\pi_R^t = p[r_{in}(b, e_t) + r_{out}(b, e_t)] - x(b, e_t) r_{in}(b, e_t)$$

Or the total amount they make per rides within and outside Union territory, minus the tax they pay per ride within Union territory.

E.2 Model setup

Consider a game that proceeds as follows:

1. The state S makes the first move, where it chooses whether or not to pass a law banning

okada riding across Lagos:

$$b \in \{0,1\}$$

where b is the choice of whether or not to ban riders; $b = 0$ means the State does not pass the ban; and $b = 1$ means that it does.

If the state chooses $b = 0$, the game proceeds to the Union's decision on whether or not to engage in election violence $e \in [0,1]$, described in Step 3 below. Otherwise, after the first one-time commitment stage (the State (S) choosing whether or not to implement a ban) the remaining stages of the game are infinitely repeated:

2. If $b = 1$ and the ban is passed, the State then chooses the intensity of its enforcement of the ban:

$$e \in [0,1]$$

where $e = 0$ means the ban is not at all enforced; and $e = 1$ means the ban is fully enforced everywhere (with the full available capacity of the State). If $e = 1$, the number of rides taken by Riders is driven to 0. Where $0 < e < 1$, the State engages in *selective* enforcement of the ban.

3. Once the state chooses either not to pass the ban ($b = 0$) or chooses its level of enforcement once the ban is passed ($b = 1$ and $e \in [0,1]$), the Union chooses its electoral violence effort on behalf of the State:

$$v \in \{0,1\}$$

These stages $2,3$ are infinitely repeated with a common discount factor of $\delta \in (0,1)$. The payoffs for the first period are as follows. For the State (S):

$$\pi_S = V_0 + \alpha v - C(e)$$

where V_0 is the state's baseline votes (assumed for simplicity here to be exogenously determined); $\alpha > 0$ is the marginal vote-gain from the Union (U)'s use of electoral violence $v = 1$, and $C(e)$ is the cost to the State (S) of enforcing the okada ban.

For the Union (U):

$$\pi_U = x(b)r(e) - K_v$$

where, as stated above, $x(b)$ is the per-ride tax on every ride routed through Union (U) territory and $r(e)$ is the number of rides riders take per period given the level of state enforcement e. Here K_v represents the political or economic cost of perpetrating election violence on behalf of the state $(v = 1)$.

For Riders (R):

$$\pi_R = pr(e) - x(b)r(e)$$

where p is the per-ride profit times the number of rides $r(e)$, and $x(b)r(e)$ is the amount of taxes paid by Riders to the Union (U).

E.3 Actor incentive constraints and equilibrium profiles

At $t = 0$, the state chooses whether $(b = 1)$ or not $(b = 0)$ to ban okada by comparing the no-ban path and the ban path.

The Union (U) has an incentive to play $v = 1$ on-path. With cooperation (playing $v = 1$ in every period), the stream of extortion products will be equal to

$$\frac{Xr(e*)}{1-\delta}$$

But if the Union (U) deviates by playing $v = 0$ once, they will gain $Xr(e*)$ in that period, but trigger punishment which will bring their future extortion down to 0. Their incentive constraint

Term	Type	Meaning, Value
$b \in \{0,1\}$	Decision	Ban passage by State (S) in period 0, where $b = 0$ means no
$e_t \in 0, e*, 1$	Decision	Level of enforcement chosen by State (S) in p
$v_t \in \{0,1\}$	Decision	Level of electoral violence perpetrated by Union (U) on beha
$r(b,e)$	Decision (constrained)	Total number of rides taken by riders given ban and e
$***R_{max}$	***	Maximum number of rides which can be taken by Riders (R) in a g
$r^{in}(b,e)$	Decision (constrained)	Number of rides taken by Riders (R) *within* Union territory, give
$r^{out}(b,e)$	Decision (constrained)	Number of rides taken by Riders (R) *outside* Union territory, give
$***r(b,e)$	***	Number of rides taken by riders in a given period given ban
r_0		Baseline total number of rides per rider before g
$x(b,e)$		Per-ride tax levied by the Union (U) on rides routed through Union territ
x_0		Baseline per-ride tax levied by the Union before th
V_0		The baseline level of votes for the State (S), before e
α		The marginal vote gain for the State (S) from election violence p
$C(e)$		The cost to the State (S) of enforcement of
K_v		The cost to the Union (U) of exacting election violence on
p		The per-ride profit to okada Riders (R) of
δ		The common discount factor per-perio

Table E.1: Caption

Case	Number of rides (r)	Per-ride tax by Union (x)
No ban $(b = 0)$	$r(0,0) = r_0$	$x(0,0) = x_0$
Ban, no enforcement $(b = 1, e = 0)$	$r(1,0) = r_0$	$x(1,0) > x_0$
Ban, selective enforcement $(b = 1, e = e*)$	$r(1,e*) > r_0$	$x(1,e*) > x_0$
Ban, full enforcement $(b = 1, e = 1)$	$r(1,1) = 0$	No rides; no tax

Table E.2: Caption

can therefore be formulated as:

$$IC_U : \frac{Xr(e*)}{1-\delta} \geq Xr(e*) + \delta * 0 \Leftrightarrow \delta \geq 0$$

This incentive constraint always holds as long as $\delta > 0$.

The State (S) **has an incentive to play** $b = 1, e = e*$ **on-path.** When they cooperate (by passing the ban and engaging in selective enforcement), the state receives:

$$\frac{V_0 + \alpha - C(e*)}{1-\delta}$$

If the State deviates to no ban $b = 0$ or to some level of enforcement $e \neq e*$ once, it triggers immediate per-period payoff changes where $v = 0$ in every period thereafter, costing α in every single future period. So the precise incentive constraint can be formulated as:

$$\frac{V_0 + \alpha - C(e*)}{1-\delta} \geq [V_0 - C(\hat{e})] + \frac{\delta(V_0 - C(1))}{1-\delta}$$

where $\hat{e}$ is the deviating enforcement and $C(1)$ is the full-enforcement cost in the punishment phase.

Given this set-up, a selective-enforcement equilibrium is sustained by a grim-trigger strategy where in every period:

$$b = 1, e = e* \in (0,1)$$

where $e*$ is chosen to maximize the State's per-period payoff, subject to keeping Riders active so that $r(e*) > 0$ and therefore the Union can still extort

$$e* = \underset{e \in [0,1)}{\operatorname{argmax}} \{V_0 + \alpha - C(e)\}$$

subject to $r(e) > 0$.

If the Union (U) ever plays $v = 0$, the state will revert to full enforcement $e = 1$ forever, meaning the Union's extortion revenue will be driven to 0. If the State (S) ever plays $b = 0$ or picks $e \neq e*$, the Union (U) will refuse to provide election violence ($v = 0$) forever, and the State will lose α (the gains from this electoral violence) at every future period. Therefore:

$$SPNE : (b = 1, e = e*, v = 1) \text{on path (with grim-trigger punishments off-path}$$

E.4 With Grim-Trigger Punishment

As long as $\alpha > C(e*)$ and $K > 0$, Our grim-trigger punishment setup requires that after a deviation by either actor, the other reverts to non-cooperation. For the Union, this means not participating in election violence. For the State, this means not enforcing the ban; the cheapest option