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The Political Economy of Mass Transit Programme in Nigeria: An Evaluation of Government Post- Petroleum Subsidy Intervention

Chukwuemeka Eze Malachy ^α & Fidelia O. Nwobi ^σ

Abstract- This paper investigated the political economy of mass transit programme in Nigeria using federal government post-petroleum subsidy removal intervention as a case study. The primary objective of the study is to determine the impact of the intervention on the socio-economic and mobility hardship that resulted from the removal of the subsidy. With the aid of secondary and primary sources of data collection, the paper observed that contrary to its original aim, the mass transit programme now pursues elites' economic interest. It further observed that the programme became an instrument of political settlement and a capitalist programme for profit maximisation because all the government owned mass transit companies have been commercialised. It observed also that the intervention has no positive impact on the socio-economic and mobility hardship of the people. Thus, the paper recommends a reversal of the commercialisation of mass transit companies, government donation of vehicles to labour unions and government own transport companies.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of modern transportation in Nigeria began with government investments for purely economic reasons and ease of passage. The colonial regime evolved the rail transport system for purposes of evacuating Nigeria's mineral endowments and people as slaves to Europe for their industrial and agricultural use. Shortly after Nigeria's political independence, different regional and city governments began to establish public transport system for economic purposes. These include: the Ibadan City Bus Service, the Kano State Transport Corporation (operating then as Kano Line), Kwara Line and Plateau State Transport Corporations among others. Unfortunately, most of these transport lines collapsed between the second half of 1970s and early 1980s due to mismanagement and fraud [Adeniji, 1983; Barret, 1993].

However, from the mid-1980s, other government owned public transport companies were established in Lagos, Kaduna, Port Harcourt, Kwara, Rivers, Oyo and Edo States. With the exception of Water

Line, Bendel Line, Borno Express, Kaduna State Transport Authority and the Lagos State Transport Corporation (LSTC), these transport corporations also collapsed and were closed down completely (Adesanya, 2002; Barret, 1993). Financial impropriety, inadequate government financial support, lack of qualified staff, political interference, and uncontrolled competition from private transport operators were identified as the reasons for their collapse (Adesanya, 2002; Adeniji, 1983; and Barret, 1986).

The collapse of the public transport system in the late 1980s and the ascendancy of individual or private transport system left the Nigerian transport system at the mercy of private transporters. These transporters operate arbitrarily and increase transport fares without control or regulation (Adesanya, 2002) in pursuit of greater profit, business expansion, and as a mechanism for paying back loans within the shortest period to avoid interest payment.

According to Adeyemi (2001), and Adesanya (1996), the consequences of the above uncontrolled extortion, lack of enough vehicles to meet commuters demand, sub-standard and unorganized operational system led to:

1. Unprecedented socio-economic hardship on the citizens;
2. Steady decline in the level of motorization by 50percent between 1990 and 1998 thereby causing acute shortage of transport services;
3. The use of used and discarded vehicles [a.k.a 'tokumbo'] imported from Europe and America;
4. Environmental pollution; and
5. Perverse scourge of road traffic accident that has continued to claim hundreds of lives.

Consequently, the federal government introduced the policy of Mass Transit Programme in 1988 to lay the foundation for and moderate organized mass transit in Nigeria. With the introduction of this policy, the goal of public mass transit system changed from revenue generation to being government intervention programme aimed at alleviating the socio-economic problems of the citizenry.

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The three tiers of government in Nigeria i.e. the federal, states and local governments in pursuance of the mass transit programme have worked to develop transportation by establishing their respective mass transit companies (Adeyemi, 2001). Characteristically, these companies have administrative structure, better trained staff guided by public service rules, workshops and maintenance facilities which most of the private operators do not have. Unlike private operators, their services are scheduled for definite routes, times and fees or fares (Filani, 2002; Osita et al., 2003).

Paradoxically, the problems of transportation increased in spite of these efforts. Inadequate planning and management, lack of intermodal coordination, traffic congestion, shortage of intra-city transport connectivity, shortages and malfunctioning of transport equipment, lack of professional drivers, inadequate capital, and high cost of transport fares prevailed in the system. Most importantly, this government owned mass transit system has consistently charged the same fares with the private operators. Exacerbating these problems, the federal government under the leadership of President Goodluck Jonathan removed fuel subsidy.

The removal of fuel subsidy negatively affected socio-economic activities in Nigeria and generated nationwide unrest particularly among labour unions. Basically, it affected transport fares as motorist tripled transport charges, cost of commodities/goods increased astronomically, movement of people and materials were reduced, and civil servants found it difficult to meet-up with monthly transports bills. According to Ering and Akpan [2012:16],

For instance, people now ride on horse-powered taxis some choose cow-powered land cruisers and even do motorcycle-powered tourist wagon, all in an attempt to avoid the use of petrol and its cost. Increases in transportation always have ripple effects on other social issues. The prices of food stuff also went up.

The removal of fuel subsidy equally increased the cost of haulage of basic building materials such as iron rods, roofing sheets, flouring materials and others. In all, the standard of living became very precarious and portends danger for social unrest or revolution. Consequently, the federal government responded intervened in the transport sector by legalizing the pump prize of fuel to N97.00 and donated 1100 buses to boost the mass transit system. This paper evaluates the political economy of the mass transit intervention in Nigeria's post fuel subsidy removal with a view to assess the impact of the intervention in alleviating the socio-economic hazards associated with it.

The significance of this paper is located in its theoretical and empirical contributions. Theoretically, this work complements available works on mass transit policy, government intervention to alleviate mass poverty

through the transport industry in Nigeria and Africa generally. Thus, it can be relied upon as a source of data for researchers in the field. Secondly, this paper provides information about the implementation of public policy, in this case transport policy, which shall enable relevant organs of governance to develop a new focus/paradigm that will solve the prevailing problems confronting public policy implementation in the state.

Empirically, the paper highlights the major characteristics of federal mass transit system and government intervention to reduce the cost of transportation. It provides an analysis of their operations, and the factor[s] militating against their success. The paper suggests new ways of resolving these problems, which if implemented, shall make government intervention effective and efficient in contributing to socio-economic development improvement in people's standard of living.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is quantitative in nature i.e. its adopted survey method of inquiry for the collection of data/information from the 36 states and Abuja that constitute Nigeria. Basically, the paper employed instruments of structured questionnaire, interview and documentary research in the collection of information from unclassified records that has to do with government assisted mass transit system and intervention. Specifically, records on assets/bus inventory, the booking method of buses and transport routes, revenues and expenditures in various depots studied, yearly fiscal allocation to the companies, purchase of new vehicles, and registration of loaned/hired vehicles were consulted. Issues not covered by the questionnaire and these records, and that bother on daily administration and management of these companies, and their relationship with the Executive organ of governance in their respective states and federal government were investigated through interview.

The study chose the regional offices of the National Union of Road Transport Workers [NURTW], federal ministry of transport and federal assisted mass transit companies [i.e. their administrative staff, account officers, loaders, and drivers] in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria; the state ministries of transport and state owned transport companies were chosen as the population of study as its focus of study. The choice of these three categories of offices i.e. trade union, ministries of transport and government established mass transit companies as our focus of study in the evaluation of the implementation of Mass Transit intervention Policy in Nigeria is informed by two fundamental reasons. First, NURTW is the trade union through which the various level of governance in Nigeria dialogue or interact with transporters. Second, the

federal and state ministries of transport are the government organ that articulated, procured executive approval, and implemented government intervention policy in the transport sector. Thirdly, government established mass transit companies are models of socio-economic instruments for poverty alleviation in Nigeria.

From available records in the administrative units of the five offices mentioned above, the total population of workers, which serves as the population of this study, is 12,065. However, the actual sample size for the study was determined by the use of Yaro Yemari [1962] formula for determining sample size, which is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample size

N = Population of the study

e = margin of error [which stands for 0.05 in this study].

1 = a constant

$$\text{Therefore } n = \frac{12,065}{1 + 12065(0.05)^2} = \frac{12,065}{1 + 12065(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{12,065}{1 + 30.16} = \frac{12,065}{31.16}$$

n = 387.195, which is approximately 387.

Therefore the sample size for the study is [387] three hundred and eighty seven respondents wherein 64 respondents were drawn from each of the six states leaving a remainder of 5 [five] respondents that were set aside. Out of the 64 respondents in each state, 12 respondents were drawn from each federal ministry of transport, federal assisted mass transit company; the state ministry of transport, the state owned mass transit company, and the NURTW respectively leaving a balance of 4 respondents that were set aside. Consequently, a total of 360 questionnaires [i.e. 60 X 6] were distributed during the survey.

Stratified cluster sampling wherein study samples were chosen from among clusters of the five offices across the six geo-political centres was adopted for the study. In distributing the questionnaires, the researchers adopted top – down hierarchical approach, which stipulates that distribution starts from the highest ranking officer down the line. For transport operators themselves i.e. the drivers working in the companies, questionnaires were given to them as they enter the depot and pack their vehicle to wait for their loading turn. In selecting the members of management team for interview, those that were interviewed were chosen according to their vital position in the company. Such positions include the Zonal Director, Director of Accounts, Public Relations Officer, Chairman/General Manager, Depot Managers, Loading Officers, and Depot Security Officers.

The instrument used in this work, which is the questionnaire, was first distributed to a sample population that differs from the real sample population of the study to test its reliability and validity. Secondly, the use of Cronbach Alpha reliability test equally ensures the reliability and validity of the instruments of analysis employed in this work. During data collection, the researchers were assisted by twelve field work assistants to distribute questionnaires in the six geo-political areas wherein two assistants were sent to each area. For respondents that do not understanding, read nor write English language, the field work assistants assisted such people by explaining the questions and ticking the answers that such people give in the questionnaire.

During the process of questionnaire distribution and collection, the researchers scheduled interview appointments with the top management of the five offices in each of the six locations studied. Available and unclassified documents in these offices were equally studied after the interview. In addition to the data collected through survey and interview, other sources of data collection include published texts, journal articles, conference and seminar papers, official government publications and gazettes, magazine and newspaper publications as can be accessed on the internet, public and private libraries, and government offices. Arithmetical tools such as % and content analysis were used to analyse the data generated for purposes of inference.

It is important to acknowledge that the data used in this paper are limited only to information generated/collected from the federal ministry of transport, federal assisted mass transit company; the state ministry of transport, the state owned mass transit company, and the NURTW located at the centres of Nigeria's six geo-political zones. Therefore, the paper is limited as follows:

1. It explored planning and management of public mass transit programme in the zones;
2. It explored the operational routines of the public mass transit programme;
3. It investigated the capitalisation or budgetary input into these companies to ensure successful implementation of the mass transit policy;
4. The paper made inquires about ownership, interests and revenue generation in the mass transit programmes;
5. It assessed commuters or customers' satisfaction rating of the mass transit programmes;
6. It made an inquiry into the various problems confronting the programme and there from recommended solutions to the problems observed.

Consequently, the conclusions and or generalizations drawn by this paper are limited only to these areas and locations studied. Application of these

conclusions to other areas of study within and outside Nigeria is only relevant or objective to the extent that similar inquiry is conducted on such studies and locations. However, its geo-cultural and structural spread enabled the paper to draw conclusions that represent realities about the political economy of mass transit in Nigeria, and which facilitated our assessment of the post fuel subsidy removal government intervention in the sector.

III. GAP IN THE EXTANT LITERATURE

a) *The Concept and policy of Mass Transport*

Policy is a set of dynamic ideas, guidelines, goals, aspirations, and vision that guides government actions towards a better society. Generally, it is always a response to the needs of a society (Sumaila, 2008). From this perspective, transport policy is conceptualised in the light of Tolly and Turton (1995) as “the process of regulating and controlling the provision of transport with a view to facilitating the efficient operation of the economic, social and political life of any country at the lowest social cost”. Through transport Policy government set its function in the transport sector with a view to providing a rational, efficient, comfortable, safe, low and cost- effective transport system (Oyesiku, 2004). According to Hodgson (2012), transport policy deal with problems associated with mobility. Hodgson correctly argued that the essence of transport policy is to modify, and or change the pattern of mobility in order to match transport services with the actual peoples’ experiences and transport needs.

On the concept of mass transport, avalanche of literature conceptualized it maximum people access to and movement in terms of quantity of users that encompasses a grid of continuous, direct public transportation channels across metropolitan areas (Mokeya, 2009; Dewar and Uytenbogaardt, 1991). It provides the channel through which people, goods and ideas are adequately moved from one location to another. Mass transport is characterised by three values and principles namely, equity, accessibility and mobility (Chakwizira, 2009). These three values and principles are proactive in improving the service levels of transportation of goods and services in any society at a cheaper rate.

The principles of equity and values inculcates the socio-economic benefits from transport interventions that meets the needs of all segments of the society such as the elderly, youths, children, disabled, women, the poor, those with mobility impairment, and those living in neglected and deprived areas (World Bank, 2008; Chakwizira, 2009]. On its part, mobility refers to physical movement.

b) *Nigeria Transport Policy and System*

The central principle of Nigeria’s transport policy is transportation and transport development is a

national responsibility wherein practices must reflect the entire nation’s needs and resources (FRN, 1965). This 1965 policy led to the establishment of Transport Coordination and Policy Implementation Unit in the Ministry of Transport and Aviation. Practically, in the course of the implementation of this policy, many sub-sectoral policies resulting in fragmented evolution of the transportation system resulted. This led to the 1993 National Transport Policy that focused on achieving adequacy, efficiency and modal development in the transport sector. The policy embarked on diversified funding sources for maintaining and developing the transport industry such as road construction and rehabilitation. This advanced the development of different sub-sectors collectively and individually that heightened the fragmented nature of the transportation system.

In response to this, the federal government brought out another Transport Policy in 2003, which is a major shift that ushered in integrated transport system while retaining the fundamental goals of providing adequate, safe, efficient and pro-people transport system (DETR, 1998). This led to the creation of National Council on Transport for policy implementation. Unfortunately, economic crisis, the pursuit of global best practice, and full liberalisation of the Nigeria’s economic system led to another shift of transport policy in 2008 as the country pursued privatization and deregulation with the goal of a market-driven transport system. Consequently, government transferred its responsibilities in the management of the transport system to the private sector. This reduced and or eliminated government involvement in transport service provision.

The policy pursued a private sector involvement in all aspects of road transport system as the most viable government strategy for developing the industry. Safety and environmental quality and friendliness were uniquely emphasised in the policy. Equally, the Policy specified other economic instruments such as road user charges, port/park charges as sources of funds. Although these rules guided general transport service improvement at modal levels, there are others that were designed to specifically meet the mobility needs of urban and rural dwellers. These include the establishment of Federal Urban Transport Board to solve urban movement problems at any level, the rules and regulations meant to improve traffic discipline, and the integration of urban transport system i.e. buses, rail, water and Para-transit among others, and the provision of adequate interchange points to take care of this integration. The Federal Government has continued to invest substantial of its fiscal operations to the development and viability of the transport sector (Oni and Okanlawon, 2005).

However, evidence and experiences show that these policies have negative impact on the socio-

economic problems which such transport interventions were supposed to resolve. This is due to rapid growth of the population and evolution of more cities (Heraty, 1980; Barret, 1986), lowest level of motorization (Filani, 2002; Kolawole, 2010) and economic recession. Filani (2002) noted that the consequences of this recession include among others:

- i. High cost of new vehicles currency devaluation and the astronomical increase in the prices of spare parts;
- ii. Limited or scarcity of vehicles for transport and inability to maintain available ones;
- iii. Public transport operators increased transport costs or fares; and
- iv. Commuter queues at major transport terminals and routes.
- v. The operations of private and public transport became almost similar;
- vi. Roads and other public transport infrastructure together with transport services have continued to decline (Brain and Knowles, 2000; World Bank, 1996).

Consequently, these problems generated demand for transport services that should be in excess of the short fall of such transport services (Bolade, 1993). In response, the Federal Urban Mass Transit Programme [FUMTP] was established in January 1988 as a panacea for the socio-economic and mobility frustrations and hardships experienced by workers and communities across cities in Nigeria (FUMTP, 1989; Bolade, 1989; Adesanya, 1994).

In this intervention, State-owned mass transit companies were formed in all the states of the federation as target groups for improving the public transport at the State and Local levels. FUMTP offered grant-aided facilities to the states in the form of maintenance; workshop equipments; mobile workshop and tools; traffic improvement measures. The Federal Government equally injected over 2000 Federal Assisted Buses into the public transport service network across the states. About 85% of those buses were given to the state-owned companies under concessionary loan conditions. The remaining 15% of the buses were distributed to Federal Colleges, Universities and other Tertiary Institutions and specialized Agencies as grants (Filani and Abumere, 1993).

The public mass transit system was more organized, have better trained staff and maintenance facilities than most of the private sector operators; their services are often provided on fixed routes, and their fares are relatively cheaper than those provided by private sector operators. They have service schedules, although in practice are rarely followed because of the inadequacy of vehicles, declining fleet utilization rates, growing competition with private operators, poor traffic

management, and congestion especially during peak travel periods (Umar, 2003).

The success recorded by FUMTA and its challenges led to the emergence of another transportation policy in 1993 to strengthen the Mass Transit programme. According to World Bank (1996), the general objectives of the transport policy include; adequacy, economic and financial efficiency, safety, reliability and national self-reliance. However, there was no policy guideline, sanction and deadline for the implementation of the objectives of the 1993 policy. Consequently, the NTP had little or no influence on the government's actions in the transport industry.

Thus, the National Transport Policy failed to achieve sustainable transport system in Nigeria (Mabogunje, 2008) thereby leading to calls for an effective National Transport Policy with functional strategies for implementation (Adesanwo, 2000; Maduaekwe, 2002). In response, the federal government articulated a new transport policy in its National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy [NEEDS] programme. The NEEDS transport policy envisaged a transport development strategy that is private-sector driven with government guaranteed safe environment that addresses the issues of wealth creation, employment generation and poverty reduction (FGN, 2010).

Scholars like Aworemi and Ogunsiji (2004) noted that in spite of all these reforms, the prices of transport facilities, vehicles and spare parts such as tyres, tubes, fuel and lubricants have risen so rapidly over the years that some private public transport companies have to fizzle out while most of the public or government owned transport companies remained 'a ghost' of themselves. The standard of living became worst (Vasconcellos, 2011), car ownership for transport services decreased rapidly in the hands of many (Adesanya, 2011), while transport operators increased fares geometrically with rascality. As the country is going through this experience, the federal government completely deregulated the down stream petroleum sector by removing fuel subsidy in 2012. This exacerbated the declining standard of living and worsened the country's socio-economic problems and hardship, which resulted in high level pressure against government policies, civil unrest, strikes and instability. Responding to this crisis, government introduced many programmes and policies to cushion the effects of subsidy removal. According to Thisdayonline.com of August 9, 2012, government intervened in the transport industry by releasing 1,600 mass transit buses [although only 1,100 buses were released] to strengthen the programme and ease mobility problems. The Federal Government, 36 state governments, 774 local governments, the Central Bank of Nigeria and several commercial banks are involved. No technical or academic research work has evaluated the distribution

of these busses, their impact on the declining mass transit services and the socio-economic problems caused by the fuel subsidy removal. This paper attempts to fill this gap.

c) Theoretical Nexus

This paper adopts customer satisfaction theory as its framework of analysis. According to Oliver (1996), Edvardson (1996), Haglund and Stålhammar (2001), the protagonists of this theory that is also known as theory of “common good”, the theory views public transport as a common good and studies transportation effectiveness from the perspective of transport user’s satisfaction with the service product. Service product refers to a series of services customer expect the various transport companies to fulfil (Edvardson, 1996; Haglund and Stålhammar, 2001). Such service includes; favourable departure and arrival timetable, standard or good vehicles, safety aspects of both the vehicle and the journey, absence long cues of commuters, good transport fares, drivers and conductors’ behaviour, transit routes to destination i.e. absence of handover to another vehicle during the trip on the road. This theory investigates commuters’ satisfaction with these factors in the federal assisted mass transit project with specific emphasis on the post fuel subsidy removal intervention period.

This theory is relevant to this paper as it enables the paper to investigate the nature, dynamics and impacts of government intervention within this period with a view to ascertain the nuances of commuters’ satisfaction derived from these service issues raised by the theory. It enables the paper to study the politics, administration and interests that characterise the Mass Transit programme. The primary focus herein are the number and standard of vehicles, transport routes, transport fares, safety, pro-poor services, ownership and elite interest in the programme. These shall enable the paper evaluate government intervention in the mass transport programme during the subsidy travail. It enables the paper to assess the implementation of the objectives for which the mass transit programme was established in Nigeria. Consequently, it is relevant for the study.

d) Findings and Discussions

Various attempts made to contact the Commissioners of Transport in the six states, their Permanent Secretaries and the CEOs of these companies were in vein. Thus, other officers like General Managers, Chairman, Public Relations Officers [PRO] and Secretaries were interviewed. Primary information collected during the study from the five offices studied reveals that the entire federal assisted mass transit scheme and state owned mass transit companies have been leased out to private individuals as at the time of the study. These individuals were mandated to manage these companies and pay specified but agreed amount

of money to either the state or federal government monthly depending on who established them. In return, these new managers fix transport fares unchecked by the government, register other privately owned vehicles as chartered vehicles [CV] or Hired Vehicles [HV] in the companies, buy new vehicles [although in their names], manage and discipline the staff of the companies.

We are limited from making deeper analysis here because of refusal of the various Directors/chairmen or managing directors to release copies of such agreements entered into with respective governments that are involved. However, further investigation through interviews reveals that the Chief Executive Officers (CEO) of these companies are top politicians whose contributions and activities during elections led to their acquisition of the transport companies. The fact that the processes of leasing these transport companies were neither advertised nor thrown open tend to support this information. The CEOs are also party stakeholders in their different domains or locations. It is therefore the position of this paper that government’s intervention during the post-petroleum subsidy crisis was an effort to assuage or whittle-down political pressures from these CEOs to remove the negative consequences of the policy on their business. Although there may be other reasons behind government’s distribution of the greater number of 1100 donated buses during the post-petroleum subsidy crisis to these CEOs, we argue that it was geared towards strengthening their companies. They were distributed to them under agreement to repay the cost of such vehicles within a period of about 8 years. We are limited from stating the precise contents of the agreement because the CEOs remained inaccessible and could not release the documents during inquiry. Apart from being highly insufficient to alleviate the mobility hardship facing over 160 million Nigerians, these vehicles were never used for the benefit of commuters.

According to official documents perused in the offices of the transport companies, they have headquarters in all the locations of our study, and depots in all the major urban areas in the states. Equally, they have all the paraphernalia of civil service with a hierarchical administrative structure headed by a General Manager an active servicing/repair workshop with mechanics, purchase and store departments, depot managers, workers within its employ discharging various duties ranging from drivers, loaders, security, account officers, supervisors, secretary, planning and monitoring unit, and personnel among others.

The General Managers interviewed between August 17, 2013 and October 21, 2013 maintained that their companies do not purchase new vehicles on their own rather they depend on state or federal government to donate vehicles to them. This practice imposed the interests of government or top government officials upon other interests in these companies. Consequently, these

companies operate as normal government parastatal rendering service to the public although they are under private or individual control/management. Data generated from the interview reveals that as a consequence, they do not receive annual subvention or allocation from both the federal and state governments. Thus, the CEOs of these companies opted to register individual private vehicles as Hired Vehicles to enable the company meet up with commuters' demands, generate fund for maintenance of company staff and vehicles, and increase their income.

334 respondents representing 93% maintained that all the mass transit companies operate a pure capitalist programme of profit maximization controlled by interest[s] that are politically defined. For instance, some of these companies operate taxi higher purchase programme wherein they purchase taxis and sale them out to interested individuals on higher purchase price and were given two years to pay-up instalmentally. These companies are interested in routes where the possibility of profit maximisation is higher and not on the alleviation of mobility problems across the country as purportedly pursued by the mass transit programme. An evaluation of the Operations Unit Records on these companies reveals that operations along 649 traffic corridors / routes in the states studied for the companies are predominantly inter states. Their official records show that out of 2,632,928 passengers/commuters that travelled along the traffic corridors / routes between 2006 and 2012, only 510,213 of them were moved in the local routes. Equally, the volume or numbers of inter state operations vary along the route of operations with Lagos, Abuja and Enugu routes dominating all others. The implication thereof is that mass transit programme in Nigeria lacks pro-people convenience agenda and pursues elite profit maximisation only.

Further inquiry into the nature of services provided by the companies to commuters reveals that 89% of our total respondents i.e. 320 noted that these mass transit companies do not charge lesser transport fares than other private transporters. 6.5% while 4.6% argued on the contrary. 96.5% of the respondents acknowledged that these companies operate on fixed transport fares that are easily altered during festive and pressure periods. This practice is similar to that of private transport operators. Equally, 349 respondents i.e. 97% noted that their loaders in their companies charge extra fees for passengers' loads or belongings like private operators. The same number of respondents maintained that their vehicles carry the same number of passengers that private transporters carry per role in the bus and as stipulated by the Federal Road Safety Corps [FRSC]. It is our contention or argument here that there is no difference between the transport fares and comfort provided for commuters by these mass transit companies and that of the private operators, and these

are part of the post-petrol subsidy experiences which mass transit was introduced to cushion.

In addition to the above, 99.5% of our respondents revealed that the mass transit companies under study do not provide safe passage/accommodation for commuters who arrive to their destinations late in the night. Further to this, 84.5% of our respondents equally noted that the companies do not pay any compensation to commuters whose luggage are stolen or damaged or missed in their buses during transit. 15.5% of the respondents refused to give any answer to this question. Equally, 349 respondents i.e. 97% noted that their loaders do not make provision for pregnant women and the physically challenged when loading during rush hours and seasons. These observations are synonymous with commuters' experiences in the hands of individual/private operators.

327 persons representing 91% of our respondents noted that none of these companies monitors their drivers to ensure adherence to national speed limit set by the FRSC. On the other hand, 96.5% of the respondents observed that none of the companies have in operation or is preparing to procure any accident emergency scheme like first aid, ambulance service, or mobile doctor treatment for commuters.

In addition to the above responses, 358 respondents representing 99.4% of our study sample noted that the federal government post-petroleum subsidy intervention in the mass transit programme has not made any change on the sufferings of commuters in the hands of private transport operators across the country because of the subsidy removal. Thus, this paper concludes that Mass Transit programme in Nigeria have not generated substantial socio-economic and mobility alleviation programmes in their operations. The ownership and management of the programme has been politicized that its operations enhance the economy or financial base of political patrons to the detriment of the masses.

e) *Summary of Findings*

In the beginning, this paper was set to evaluate the political economy and impact of federal government post-petroleum subsidy removal intervention policy in the transport industry – specifically in the mass transit programme. Mass transit programme was introduced/established in 1988 to cushion the effects of the introduction of SAP. It has continued to be used by governments in Nigeria at the three levels of governance i.e. federal, state and local governments as economic hardship alleviation programme.

With the aid of both primary and secondary sources of information, the paper observed the followings;

- i. The federal government donated 1600 vehicles although 1100 were released to mass transit

companies and other federal institutions across the six geo-political zones.

- ii. All the government owned mass transit companies have been leased out to private individuals who are top politicians as their CEOs.
- iii. None of the three levels of governance in Nigeria gives annual subvention to the mass transit companies.
- iv. The mass transit companies do not buy new vehicles but resort to the registration of individually owned vehicles in their companies as Hired Vehicles to complement government owned vehicles.
- v. The transport fares being paid by commuters in the companies are fixed, not cheaper than those of private operators and are subject to changes due to seasons and pressure.
- vi. There is no security arrangement for luggage and commuters neither are there any provision for pregnant women and the physically challenged in the operations of the mass transit companies.
- vii. The companies focus on external or inter state routes more than local routes with more interest in Abuja, Lagos and Enugu transport routes.
- viii. Commuters pay fees for luggage like in the private operators' companies.
- ix. None of the companies have implemented any safety programme nor do they pay for damages, losses and stolen luggage of commuters.

This paper therefore recommends that government intervention in the mass transit programme should focus on distributing higher number of vehicles to labour unions and government ministries of transport for effective management and low cost fares that will alleviate the economic hardship of the people particularly the workers. The leasing of government owned mass transit companies to private politicians should be reversed while the transport fare for the mass transit system should be cheaper than those of private operators. Each of the mass transit company should establish a conventional security policy that guarantees commuters and luggage safety.

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