**Conflicting rationalities and okada riding business in Lagos: Lessons for an inclusive policy framework**

**Abstract**

Okada riding (motorcycle taxi) business provides a prominent commuter service in Lagos. It is, however, an activity that has been subject to restrictions and outright bans in recent years. This paper focuses on differences in perspectives among city stakeholders towards the government’s restrictions on okada and their enforcement. These differences are profound, with the government imposing outright bans in more and more parts of Lagos while citizens continue to use okada. Thus, ‘conflicting rationalities’ around the bans and their disregard are inevitable, given the diversity of city stakeholders, from okada riders and their unions, the government imposing bans, state agents enforcing bans, and categories of citizens (the elites, the working poor, and everyone in between), with differing views about the merits of the bans and the logics underlying them. This conflict is seen with okada riders, on the one hand, trying to earn a living through the provision of commuter services (claiming the right to the city), with state agents and the elites trying to sanitise the city and eliminate crimes and associated menace in the city. This has turned out to be a conflict between survival, the right to the city, effective governance, and modernisation, which has resulted in protests, arrests, the seizure and destruction of motorbikes, court cases against the bans, etc.

Viewing these conflicts through the lens of rational choice theory, we argue that the city authority’s decision to restrict okada business, and reactions to the ban, are informed by an analysis of associated risks and rewards. We collected rich data via multiple and unique methods between Sept 2021 and August 2022: 6 focus-group interviews conducted with stakeholders (i.e., government ministries, informal economy workers and their representatives, and FIWON); a follow-up workshop with stakeholders; and an in-depth survey conducted in all 20 Local Government Areas of Lagos State, yielding 1736 responses from citizens. Our findings show that the thoughts and experiences of the government and okada riders on the business are at variance; and that stakeholder engagement in the formulation of the law that restricted okada business was inadequate and ineffective. Our results provide important insights into the consequences and gaps arising from conflicting rationalities in the management of the okada riding business in Lagos. This offers valuable lessons for developing an inclusive policy framework.

Keywords: **Conflicting Rationalities, Informal Economy, Lagos, Okada Riding, Policy, Rational Choice**