WHEELS OF CHANGE: COMMERCIAL MOTOR PARKS AND SOCIO-POLITICAL INCLUSION IN SOUTHERN TIVLAND, CENTRAL NIGERIA, 1959 – 2018

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Commercial Motor Parks, Tivland, Social Awareness, Social Integration, Political Mobilization, Political Participation

Abstract

Research Problem
The fate of commercial motor parks in southern Tivland, Central Nigeria, has remained hanging owing to opposing opinions held against the institution in the area. Whereas some people consider the parks viable avenues capable of engineering transformation in southern Tivland, others find it difficult to envisage the possibility of anything tangible emanating from the parks. To this set of thinkers, the motor parks are simply avenues for the assemblage of hooligans who do not deserve any attention in history. However, it is unfair to dismiss the motor parks and the large number of men and women engaged in daily activities at these locations as inconsequential. This study examines the role of commercial motor parks on socio-political change in southern Tivland.

Method/Theory
The study adopted the qualitative approach, employing the use of archival sources, oral accounts, participatory observations, and documented evidence. Social Network Analysis (SNA) theory anchored the study.

Result/Conclusion
The study has shown that, motor parks in the area played key roles in creating social awareness, social integration, and political mobilization and participation. The study noted that several challenges bedeviled the motor parks during the period of the study. However, the daily congregation of people at these parks had obvious outturns on socio-political inclusion in southern Tivland.

Contribution to Knowledge
The main contribution of this article is the explanation that motor parks were viable agents in the changes that occurred in the socio-political fabric of southern Tivland during the period of this study

Recommendation
The study proposes the need for government authorities to develop and implement better policies to enhance the capacities of motor parks in the study area.

1.0 Introduction

Since the introduction of the gasoline-powered internal combustion engine by Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler in 1885 and 1886 respectively (Faulks, 1977), there has been technological advancement in the manufacture

of sophisticated vehicles that have steadily facilitated socio-economic transformation in human societies. In southern Tivland, the majority of people traditionally relied on trekking to conduct their socio-economic activities until motor vehicles were introduced by the British colonialists in 1926 (NAK, 1926). The vehicles were meant to facilitate the evacuation of raw materials, especially sesame and cotton, from the hinterlands to connect the rail system where such raw materials were conveyed for onward exportation. During this period there were no organized motor parks where travelers could board vehicles.

However, with the increase in the activities of motorists, occasioned by the upsurge in trade, the colonial government began the establishment of motor parks in 1959 to regulate the transport business in the area (Motor Park Laws, 1959). The establishment of motor parks in southern Tivland had obvious out-turns on different facets of society. First, the motor parks engendered economic transformation especially in the areas of job creation, revenue generation, and the growth of periodic markets and trade, also enhancing the participation of women in trade (Kamnan, 2024). The establishment of these motor parks also occasioned socio-political transformation in Tivland. This study focuses on the role of commercial motor parks in relation to the changes that occurred in the socio-political structure of southern Tivland from 1959 to 2018. It has indicated how the establishment of motor parks in the area engineered social inclusion by creating awareness and enhancing political participation. This position has punctured the balloon of falsehood held on the institution of motor parks over the years. Before now, it was common to assume that the motor park community was simply an assemblage of hooligans in society.

1.1 Method and Theoretical Framework

The study made considerable use of oral information obtained through formal and informal interviews from the field. This became necessary given that only few studies relating to motor parks have been undertaken in the area before now. Different informants including government employees, travelers, as well as transporters working at the motor parks, were interviewed. The National Archives Kaduna (NAK) was also visited to source primary data relating to transportation, and specifically, motor parks in the Tiv Division. Within this category of sources are files from the Makurdi Provincial Office, and those from the Northern Provincial Office. Records from federal ministries during the colonial period, as well as Government Gazetteers about Muri Province, were also consulted.

The work also made use of published books, chapters in collective volumes, and journal articles relating to the broad subject of transportation were consulted. Other works on the general history of the study area were also examined. In addition seminar and conference papers, newspapers, and magazines relating to the study area were also utilized. Unpublished works including some thesis that are related to the subject matter of this study were also explored. Every piece of information received in the course of the study was cross-examined to ascertain its viability and potency to the study.

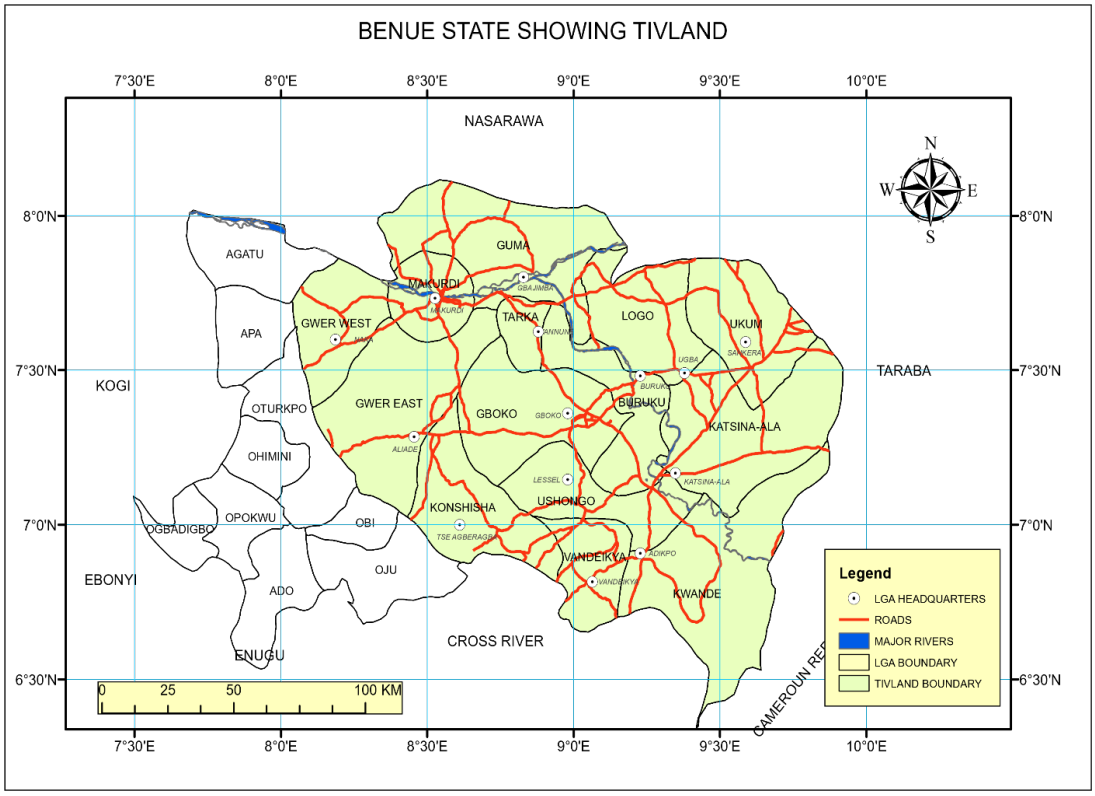
Dwelling on the Social Network Analysis (SNA) framework, with a focus on information flow, trust, and cooperation, which results from the interaction between people as individuals and groups, this study examines how the establishment of motor parks provided support for socio-political turnaround, specifically in the facilitation of social awareness and integration among people of the area and with their neighbors. The study also evaluates the nexus between motor parks and

political activities in Tivland by analyzing the level of impact these motor parks had on political awareness and participation. Finally, the work assesses the challenges faced by motor parks and their operations in Tivland during the period of the study.

2. 0 The Area of the Study

Generally speaking, the Tiv people occupy considerable areas in several states but are majorly found in Benue, Taraba, and Nassarawa states of Nigeria. However, Tivland as conceived in this work refers to the 14 local governments occupied by the Tiv people in present Benue state including Gboko, Makurdi, Katsina-ala, Vandeikya, Konshisha, Kwande, Ushongo, Guma, Logo, Ukum, Buruku, Tarka, Gwer East, and Gwer West. See the following map:

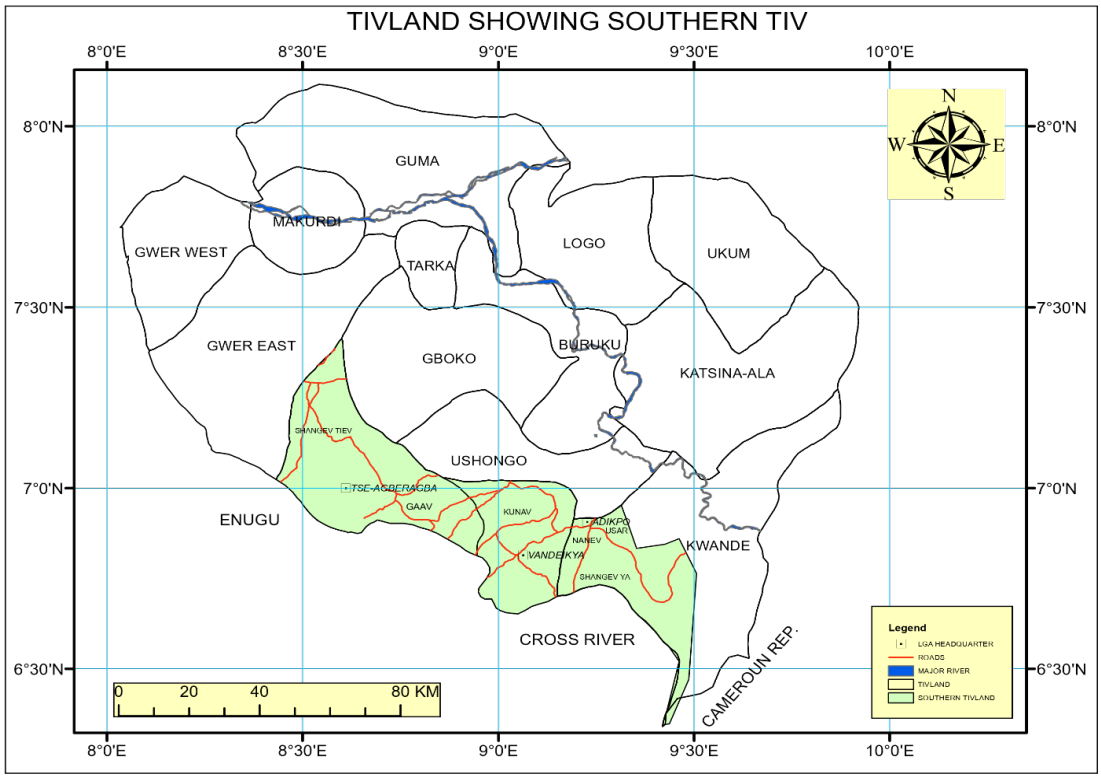
Map 1: Map of Benue State Showing Tivland



Source: Benue State Geographical Information Service

The area marked in the above map is what is conceived in this work as Tivland. It is bounded to the north by Nassarawa state and Cross River state to the south. To the East, the area shares boundary with Taraba state and the Republic of Cameroun. The Idoma nation borders Tivland on the western axis. However, the scope of the study is limited to Vandeikya, Konshisha, and parts of Kwande, which are the local governments, which constitute the southern part of Tivland in Benue state. See map:

Map 2: Map of Tivland Showing Southern Tivland



Source: Benue State Geographical Information Service

It is the area that has been marked and described in the above map as southern Tivland that forms the focus of this study. Specifically, the study focuses on the motor parks within this area. These motor parks are categorized in terms of their sizes/volume of activities. Hence, there are major, medium, and mini motor parks. Emphasis was placed on the major motor parks within the study area – Vandeikya, Ihugh, Tse-Agberagba, and Adikpo; however, attention was equally directed at medium and minor motor parks that played important roles in the history of southern Tivland.

3. 0 Motor Parks and Social Awareness

Motor parks were key stakeholders in the creation of social awareness in southern Tivland. Because of the limited or non-availability of radio network coverage in many parts of Tivland, it was the motor parks that provided one of the most important avenues for the dissemination of information. Direct campaigns were staged at the motor parks to educate the people on critical issues affecting the society. For instance, E. Agber (Personal Communication, November 22, 2022) indicated that with the establishment of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) in 1988, the institution began the staging of awareness campaigns at the motor parks. The campaigns were centered on educating road users on safety measures while plying the routes. Motorists and other road users were educated on such areas as the Highway Code and general discipline relating to road usage. This was important in regulating the activities of motorists in Tivland. Tenong (Personal Communication, September 15, 2025) has also collaborated the centrality of motor parks in social mobilization, arguing that they constituted target audience for sensitization programs by the National Orientation Agency (NOA) on social values, voter apathy, and national values. At the height of the HIV/AIDS scourge in Tivland (1995 - 1999), motor parks served as avenues for outreach where campaigns were staged to create

awareness on the prevention and management of the epidemic. According to Dzer (Personal Communication, June 17, 2022), the parks had large populations, and with the high-risk behaviors among its members, there was every need to reduce the danger through awareness creation. Furthermore, the motor parks were targeted with the hope that their population would help to spread awareness about the scourge. Therefore, outreach was organized quarterly at each of the parks to sensitize the people. The campaigns were usually undertaken by staff of government health facilities within the area as part of community service. Gradually, the message about the prevalence of the scourge began to reach the communities around those parks. Outreaches were also organized at the parks against other outbreaks as well as issues of sanitation and healthy lifestyles.

Motor parks also constituted forums for the sharing of information in Tivland. Information was shared at the motor parks concerning security, the death of community members, and upcoming celebrations. It was common to refer to the passage of information through this medium as "radio u ako a pupuu." At the motor parks, prospective passengers were informed of the security situations from their destinations. It was as a result of this that passengers were always encouraged to board vehicles from the park. At the parks, the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), which received daily briefings from her drivers, was always conversant with the security situation and could give out advice to members of the public intending to travel. Information was also shared at the parks concerning deaths and other celebrations.

4. 0 Motor Parks and Social Integration

In addition to social awareness creation, motor parks were also key institutions in the promotion of social integration (Jeanotte, 2008). In addition to facilitating effective transportation, motor parks also served as central places where people converged daily for other businesses. The congregation of people at the motor parks for business activities, in Tivland, provided a forum for the formation of several associations that were based on equity. These associations in turn played fundamental roles in the integration of people within the area. For instance, after the incorporation of the NURTW in 1978 and her subsequent recognition by the local authorities in Tivland, the union began to establish branches and units across the area. Already, the NURTW had acquired the legal backing and was equally structured to admit a large membership, both at the branches and units levels. Predictably, a lot of people took an interest and began to subscribe to the Union (Agema, T., Personal Communication, July 8, 2020). By 2018 the NURTW had a membership base of more than 20000 in Tivland (Tarnum. M., Personal Communication, July 8, 2020). Meanwhile, apart from developing an attractive welfare package, certain practices were also instituted by the Union to ensure inclusiveness among its members. For instance, equal opportunities were provided for the drivers at the motor parks as vehicles were given loads on a first come basis. Furthermore, a permit was issued to every driver who loaded his vehicle at the motor park. It was the permit that served as evidence of the legitimacy of the passengers who were picked up at the park. This guaranteed such a driver a return load from the motor park of his destination. This was reciprocated at all the motor parks and it became a viable tool for integrating people from different communities (Abeem, D., Personal Communication, May 25, 2020). The cooperative spirit of the NURTW was also important in checkmating cases of destitution among its members. Members were always accorded the needed support anytime they needed it. A member whose vehicle was faulty and does not have the money for repairs could

provide support for another driver to enable him to get "chop money" for the day. In addition, the union members had the privilege of boarding vehicles at the motor parks without payment of any fare. This kind of cooperative spirit was also significant in building the kind of strong ties that existed among the union members.

The daily convergence of people at the motor parks and the attendant activities thereof also resulted in the formation of other unions. Notable among such unions were the Porters Union, Charter Union, Wheelbarrow Pushers Association, and the Food Vendors Association. One striking similarity among all the Union groups and associations that operated at motor parks in Tivland was the commitment with which they addressed issues of welfare and unity among their members. Cooperative societies (share-bam) were usually established to empower members of the motor park community. This was key in fostering unity among people. Equally, smaller schemes were also organized at the motor parks to cater to the welfare needs of members of the community. In Vandeikya Motor Park, for example, Kwaghhembe Zawua Agbo Kpile introduced adashi, a contribution scheme, among food vendors in 1998 (Gondo, M., Personal Communication, April 25, 2019). The target was to foster unity among the female food vendors at the park and empower them as well. The adashi scheme was structured in the form of meetings that were held periodically. At each of the meetings, every member contributed an amount to the member who played host at a particular time. It was also obligatory for every member to reciprocate the other members with the same amount they contributed to them when they played host. From this background, the food vendors were able to form a cooperative society that became registered with the local government authority in 2012. The food vendors also operated a welfare scheme that extended packages to their members both in times of grief and celebration. Usually, members were required to make monetary and/or material contributions in such cases. An important point to emphasize is that the assemblage of the food vendors under the Adashi canopy was able to gradually but steadily develop that spirit of oneness among them. It is to be added that membership of the contribution schemes at the motor parks was not limited to members of the unions alone. Non-members were also allowed to participate the multipurpose cooperative societies. However, all non-union members were required to provide a guarantor from amongst the union members before they were advanced loans.

Other avenues for social integration at the motor parks were games. In 1996, for example, a group of staff from the Konshisha Local Government headquarters including Musa Vitalis Ioratsor, Mtan Faga, Shawon Mike, and Msugh Akura produced and donated a set of teratar-dar to the Tse-agberagba motor park (Debam, V., Personal Communication, January 3, 2020). Teratar-dar was a common traditional board game among the Tiv people. The board game usually had twelve holes (with six on either side) and forty-eight seeds. It was normally played by two contestants at a time, with the target of winning more seeds than the opponent. The provision of the game created another opportunity for drivers to engage themselves while waiting for their turns to load. Other members of the motor park community and passengers also partook in teratar-dar game. While they converged to play the game, the people also engaged in discussions over a variety of issues bordering on social development in their domains. More so, the continued interaction occasioned by the playing of teratar-dar also provided an avenue for social integration among the people of Tivland.

Furthermore, the motor parks provided an avenue for people to travel and mix with other communities outside of their areas. This was

important in erasing some stereotypes, building a non-discriminative society, as well as instilling the spirit of tolerance among people of the area. Before the introduction of motor vehicles, most Tiv people were usually confined to their immediate environments. Akuva Antyumbe (Personal Communication, January 1, 2020) noted that it was rather difficult for people to travel far distances due to the fear of being attacked by criminals on the roads as well as the stress that was involved in trekking. This denied the people of Tivland the knowledge of groups outside their area. Meanwhile, it was due to the lack of knowledge of some foreign groups that the Tiv people held certain notions against them. For instance, a certain notion was held by the Tiv people that some groups of the Upper Cross River were cannibals. But with the establishment of motor parks and indeed motor transportation, it became easier to travel wide and interact with other communities. The continued interaction with the foreign groups proved fundamental in demystifying some of these stereotypes that affected the social life of people in the area.

5. 0 Motor Parks and Political Activities

Generally, politics involves the processes through which people make, preserve, and amend the rules that guide their societies. According to Heywood (2013), politics in this sense is always a dialogue and not a monologue. In Tivland, during the period of this study, motor parks constituted viable communities with a large membership that was well-recognized in the political history of the area. Though there was no compulsion for members of the unions and associations to participate in partisan politics, the parks provided avenues for mobilization and participation in political activities. The National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), which emerged as a major stakeholder at the motor parks in Tivland in 1978, particularly provided the leadership that was needed for its members to be active in political participation. This prompted members of the union to engage in partisan politics and even seek elective positions. Several members of the union were able to leverage the support of the NURTW to secure political offices. For instance, Clement Azuanongo, a driver at the Tse-agberagba motor park, was appointed the Caretaker Chairman of Konshisha Local Government Area in 2003 (Debam, V., Personal Communication, January 3, 2020). Hon Koko, a serving secretary of the NURTW at Tse-agberagba Motor Park, was also appointed Supervisory Councilor in the Konshisha Local Council. At the Adikpo motor park, Gbangban Kor (chairman chartered) rose through the ranks and became the Benue State Chairman of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) in 1978.

Apart from encouraging members to participate in partisan politics, motor park communities were equally known to be active in driving support for candidates whom they considered to be credible during elections. For instance, Debam (2020) indicated that the Tse-agberagba motor park community was at the heart of ensuring that Mwuese Ubebe became the Konshisha Council Chairman in 2017. According to him, Ubebe had served as a staff and deputy chairman at the local government and was adjudged to be worthy by members of the motor park community. When she contested for the chairmanship position at the local government the people had no doubt concerning her capacity to deliver on her mandate. This prompted a coalition of the various unions at the Tse-agberagba motor park to set up a committee to galvanize support for her. The Committee was steered by Agberagba Ikpegher and Debam Vembe, and had all the logistic support that was needed to deliver on its mandate. Accordingly, Agberagba and Debam were able to coordinate and mobilize support for Ubebe across the 18 motor parks in Konshisha local government.

Drivers at the various parks were rallied to create political awareness while conveying passengers, and specifically engage their passengers in political discussions wherefore they would sell the candidacy of Ubebe to the public. This strategy was effective and eventually, she was elected the Council Chairman. Elsewhere at Adikpo too, the motor park community was always active in drumming support for credible candidates during elections. According to Beer Amengai (Personal Communication, May 25, 2020) members of the motor park community were instrumental in canvassing support for the governorship candidate of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Aper Aku, during the buildup to 1979.The support was predicated on his antecedents during his tenure as the Council Chairman of Kwande Local Government, 1976 – 1978. Aku was adjudged to have performed well and even constructed a standard motor park at Adikpo in 1977. This endeared him to stakeholders at the motor park who in turn accorded him all the support he needed to prosecute his dream. Incidentally, Gbangban Kor, an erstwhile member of the Adikpo motor park, had been appointed State Chairman of NPN in 1978. This placed him in a good position to reward Aku for the good work he did as Chairman. Eventually, Aku won the governorship election in 1979. Other candidates seeking elective positions in Tivland at different points, including Chief Barnabas Gemade, Gabriel Suswam, Bob Tyough, and B. B. Nugwa, also sought and benefited greatly from the support that was garnered from communities at the motor parks.

In addition to creating political awareness among their members and serving as a support base for candidates seeking political offices, motor parks in Tivland also provided logistic support for the transportation of electoral materials during election periods. In 2010, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the electoral body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and the NURTW, which was the dominant union at the motor parks. Consequently, vehicles were drafted from the motor parks to support the transportation of electoral materials during elections (Gungul, T., Personal Communication, June 16, 2020). The synergic role of motor parks in the distribution of electoral materials during the 2011 and 2015 general elections was quite effective in ensuring the prompt delivery of electoral materials in Tivland. This happened because the drivers were already conversant with the terrain and familiar with the people. In addition, the use of indigenous vehicles and drivers proved to be a great security strategy in the movement of electoral materials because the indigenous drivers did everything possible to avoid failure since they were also carried along.

6. 0 Challenges of Motor Parks

The above analysis has shown the role of motor parks in the socio-political transformation in the Tiv area of central Nigeria. Motor parks provided avenues for an inclusive society and encouraged people to participate in decision making. Nevertheless, the institution was often confronted hitches that sought to undermine its efforts in bringing about positive change. One of the daring challenges that bedeviled the motor parks in Tivland during the period under review was the leadership tussle (Akintola, S., Personal Communication, January 7, 2020). It is true that individuals and groups played leading roles in the establishment of motor parks in the area. However, as the motor parks continued to grow, there were several instances where contention arose over the control of the parks. The Vandeikya motor park, for instance, was established and managed by freelance workers (yan kamasho) in 1975. Whereas the NURTW had commenced activities and were gaining recognition in Gboko (the Tiv headquarters) such activities were forbidden in Vandeikya. The “yan kamasho” who were considered as

having an understanding with security agencies in Vandeikya, worked assiduously to limit the chances of the Union gaining recognition within their domain. In 1976, a group of young men belonging to the NURTW was arrested by the police for conducting union activities at the Vandeikya motor park. Among them were Emmanuel Gum, Angera Gbabo, Terwase Ajai, Isah Num, and Bem Antion. The five were arraigned before a Magistrate Court in Gboko and remanded in prison for two weeks. It took the efforts of the NURTW Chairman in Gboko for them to be released.

While the transport workers were arrested and charged to court on allegations of involvement in activities of an illegal union, they were not deterred. Immediately after their release from prison custody, members of the emerging union continued with their activities in Vandeikya. However, another huddle soon presented itself to the transport workers. In 1977, motor owners began to agitate that the Vandeikya motor park be left under their control. Their argument was that they owned the vehicles operating at the park and should be in charge of affairs thereof. This challenge too was effectively tackled by the transport workers. Finally, a milestone was achieved in the history of the road transport system in Nigeria in 1978. This was the official inauguration of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW). Soon after the union became legitimized, the Benue state chapter of NURTW immediately proceeded to establish a branch at Vandeikya and appointed Amee Kor as the first chairman. Similar instances were witnessed in most of the motor parks in Tivland. The point of emphasis is that leadership tussles often dislocated activities at the motor parks in Tivland. Whenever it occurred, most programs that were being undertaken by the ousted leadership were jettisoned. Furthermore, most of the leadership struggles became confrontational and affected the relationship between stakeholders at the parks. Even when the NURTW was adopted as the more dominant stakeholder to manage the parks, internal crises dwelling on leadership tussles continued to persist among the union members (Abiem, D., Personal Communication, May 25, 2022). This was what led to the proliferation of other transport unions with attendant consequences in the area.

Poor infrastructure also constituted a challenge to the motor parks in Tivland during the period of the study. Whereas Aper Aku was credited with having built a relatively standard motor park at Adikpo during his tenure as the Council Chairman of Kwande in 1977, authorities of other local government areas in Tivland did not pay adequate attention to the development of infrastructure at most of the parks within their domains. At the Vandeikya motor park, for instance, John Ayem noted that the only notable project that was undertaken by the local government authorities was the construction of two pit toilets. There were no standard storage facilities where traders could store their goods until they were ready for transportation. It is true individuals had made efforts to build shops at the motor parks, however, the shops were grossly inadequate to accommodate the large number of traders that flocked to the Agbo market regularly. This often resulted in the damage of goods, especially during the rainy season. Similarly, there was no installation of electricity at the park during the period covered in this study. This affected the conduct of businesses that relied on electrical power. People who were involved in the sale of drinks, for instance, had to rely on the use of iced blocks to chill their drinks. The additional cost from the buying of the iced block was added on items thereby causing a rise in prices.

Elsewhere at the Agbeede Motor Park, it was noted that the only projects undertaken by the local government authority during the period 1968 – 2018 were the construction of a gate and one pit toilet (Akpena, A., Personal

Communication, June 18, 2020). These projects were undertaken in 2003 by Clement Iorngi Azuanongo while he served as the transitional Chairman of Konshisha local government. Aside from these projects, the presence of the government was not visible. There were no good roads leading to the park and no standard storage facilities where traders could store their goods pending their transportation. Similarly, there was no electricity at the park. The lack of electricity supply at the park also affected some businesses. The effect of the low level of organizational structures and facilities needed for the operation of the motor parks in Tivland was always felt by the communities. There was a low level of hygiene around the parks. The people often resort to open defecation due to the lack of decent toilets within the motor parks. Mbakan Achigbe also lamented that on several occasions her goods were destroyed by rain due to her inability to secure a good storage facility where she could keep her goods.

Another challenge that equally affected the smooth running of the motor parks in Tivland during this period was indiscriminate taxes. Statutorily, it was the local government authorities that collected taxes at the parks through their revenue agents. Such taxes were in the form of permits, fines, rent, and licenses. The various unions that operated at the motor parks also collected dues from their members. However, beginning in 2012 the motor parks witnessed an invasion by groups that were previously unknown. Indiscriminate taxes were demanded from motorists and passengers. In Adikpo for instance, there were such taxes as "produce" and "marchers", which were charged from traders and other individuals boarding vehicles from the park (Amengai, B., Personal Communication, May 25, 2022). At the Vandeikya motor park, motorists and passengers were exploited under different guises including produce, Mbakaange Youth, Agbo family, Tor Kasua, 7-man committee, and marchers' taxes (Gaando. D., Personal Communication, May 24, 2022). The effect of the indiscriminate taxes at the motor parks was multifaceted. First was the gradual decline in the inflow of passengers at the motor parks. Similarly, the incessant taxes began to push prospective passengers to seek alternative ways to board vehicles. This resulted in a rise in street loading. By 2018, therefore, the parks were becoming less attractive as motorists and passengers became more attracted to the vehicles on the street loading activities.

The sale of alcohol, as well as narcotics at the motor parks, was also a challenge during this period. Though there was no ban on alcohol, its sale was relatively low during the early years of motor parks in the area. However, beginning in 2000 the incidence began to rise. At the Tse-agberagba motor park, for instance, the trend became very common. There were several shops that were dedicated to the sale of either beer, spirits, or local gin. Debam (Personal Communication, January 3, 2022) has argued that the trend did not constitute any challenge since drivers were not allowed to drink on duty. According to him, if any driver was found to be under the influence of alcohol, he was not allowed to embark on any journey. His vehicle was either trans-loaded or handed to another driver to convey the passengers. However, the non-availability of any alcoholic testing device at the motor parks during this period raised doubts about the capacity of the management to determine if a driver was under the influence of alcohol or not. More so, Charles Ude (Personal Communication, June 18, 2023) has observed that some of the drivers bought sachets of alcoholic drinks at the parks only to take them in the course of their journeys. Though there is no empirical evidence to show how the consumption of alcohol affected the performance of the drivers, it is also difficult to argue that it had no negative effect on their jobs. There were cases of careless driving/speeding which sometimes resulted in

accidents. Furthermore, the sale of alcoholic drinks at the motor parks often attracted criminal elements who ordinarily would have no business at the parks. Beer parlors were in some cases used by criminals to relax and spy on travelers before transmitting information for their possible attacks (Musa, V., Personal Communication, June 12, 2020). This was in addition to the nuisance that the so-called joints constituted to the motor parks. There were cases where people became intoxicated with alcohol and disturbed the peace of other members of the motor park community. Korgba (Personal Communication, June 12, 2029) has narrated how a passenger who was under the influence of alcohol attempted to drag the steering in one of his journeys from Tse-agberagba to Gboko. It took the intervention of other passengers in the car to prevent the drunk from dragging the vehicle off the road. The sale of alcohol at the motor parks also promoted such social vices as vulgarity, hooliganism, vagrancy, and prostitution at the motor parks.

Apart from the aforementioned, there was also the problem of lack of adequate security that militated against the smooth operation of the motor parks in Tivland. According to Zaki Gowon, government authorities during this period were not favorably disposed to the provision of security at the motor parks (Zaki, G., Personal Communication, June 18, 2020). It was not customary for personnel of any conventional security agencies to be assigned to the parks. No reason was adduced to this other than the low attention of the government to the plight of motor parks in the area. As a result of what might be considered negligence on the part of the government, shop owners and members of the NURTW organized and made efforts to secure motor parks within their domains. Night guards were hired to provide security at night. They were paid monthly stipends from the proceeds of the daily dues collected from drivers and contributions from shop owners. In 2018, the average amount that was paid to a night guard for each month was ₦10,000.00. In the daytime, members of the motor park communities watched each other's back. However, stealing was highly prohibited at the motor parks. Any member of the community found guilty of stealing was expelled from the park.

Notwithstanding the efforts that were made to ensure security at the motor parks, the non-availability of conventional security personnel often created holes for security breaches. For instance, two persons purported to be criminals were lynched at the Adikpo motor park in 1992. Similarly, a Gboko-bound passenger was trailed and robbed of his money at the Tse-agberagba motor park in September 1998. In all cases, it was blamed on the inability of the government to station security personnel at the motor parks. There were also instances where criminal elements disguised themselves as travelers only to rob other passengers in the course of their journey. One such incident occurred in 2001 when some Makurdi-bound passengers from Tse-agberagba Motor Park were robbed by co-travelers at Kyoor. This could have been averted if there had been a proper screening of passengers by security agents before takeoff at the motor park.

As challenging as the above could be imagined, another daring threat began to confront the motor parks in Tivland, beginning in 2015. This was the practice of street loading which was beginning to gain momentum among young drivers. This practice commenced in 2007 but was being managed. However, the practice kept growing as the number of vehicles continued to increase at the motor parks. According to Agema (Personal Communication, July 8, 2020), the lack of willingness to pay for booking and percentages was part of the reasons that some of the young drivers avoided loading at the parks. As the charges continued to rise, young drivers began to avoid the parks. Passengers

were also beginning to avoid the growing taxes on goods. Most travelers became weary of what they considered exploitation and preferred to board vehicles along the roadside where they could avoid some of the taxes.

While drivers and passengers considered street loading as a relief from the incessant charges that were gradually becoming a norm at the motor parks, there were dire consequences that soon began to manifest from the practice. First, criminal elements in society took advantage of street loading by adopting the "one chance" strategy to rob unsuspecting passengers. Under this strategy, a group of criminals pretending to be travelers would reserve a space in the car to stop by the road and pick up a passenger only to turn around and rob him/her. According to Tarnum (Personal Communication, July 8, 2020), many people fall prey to this strategy. Unfortunately, it was usually difficult to trace the vehicles since they were not registered at the park. Another danger was that those who forgot their luggage in vehicles that were boarded on the streets found it difficult to recover them.

To tackle the menace of street loading, patrol teams were regularly sent out by the National NURTW to arrest drivers who were engaged in street loading. Such drivers were required to pay certain fines and in some cases, their vehicles were impounded for a period that varied. However, the efforts that were made by the union appeared to be inadequate in arresting the menace of street loading. The practice of street loading continued unabated without any serious sanction from government authorities. By 2018, street loading had eaten deep into the road transport system in Tivland such that it became difficult to control. This resulted in a decline in the fortunes of the motor parks.

7. 0 Conclusion

The study analyzed the extent motor parks contributed to social and political transformation in Tivland. It has been noted that the motor parks were central places where people congregated for a variety of activities. While there were challenges that bedeviled the parks during the period of the study, the congregation of people at these central places proved useful in setting modalities to foster a stable relationship among people of the area on the one hand, and with their neighbors on the other hand. Different union groups and associations were formed to unite people and cater to their welfare. This became an effective tool in setting the stage for social integration. Aside from integrating the people, the motor parks also served as avenues for the creation of political awareness. It was the awareness that was created at the motor parks that gingered some members of the community to venture into active politics and seek elective positions. Even where members of the motor park communities did not contest for elective positions, the large membership of the parks provided support for candidates that were considered to be credible. Unfortunately, the active participation of members of the motor park community in politics did not fetch the parks as an institution commiserate gains. This is because not much was done by government authorities, especially, in the area of infrastructural development at the motor parks across Tivland.

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