



Social constructions of the scarcity of small change and conflicts in public transport by minibuses in Abidjan

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Abstract

The mobility of the vast majority of Abidjan's population is provided by public transport operated by private citizens. However, it is important to note that there are recurring situations of discomfort in those vehicles that carry commuters around the city's boroughs and neighbourhoods. The methodology we chose for this paper is essentially based on the qualitative approach. To achieve this, the study required a field work and we used an interview guide and an observation grid, which allowed us to collect the relevant information. The collection of data took place precisely at the minibus stations of Yopougon-Siporex, in Adjamé Texaco, and in Adjamé-Liberté. The research required in-depth interviews with thirty-five (35) social agents likely to provide reliable and relevant information. Three theories of analysis were used to interpret the data collected (Andreas and Conchon, 2015), including the theory of perverse effects (Boudon, 1977; Gosselin, 1998) and the social change theory which were both used in this study to analyse the results. This study presents the results from the field. In the first place, the study shows the manifestation of the phenomenon of the scarcity of small change in such a way that there are demands for the exact change from the customers. Some customers ask fellow passengers for change to help them pay for their fare without argument. Many a time, passengers are associated against their will. Apprentice drivers then hand them a single bank note and require them to share it between themselves. These are factors that explain the conflicts observed on the road. Secondly, the root causes of the scarcity of small change are to be looked for in the coin trafficking, the saving of coins and the collective irresponsibility of the minibus apprentice drivers and the passengers that use public transport. Thirdly, it shows that social construction leads to consequences such as the display of aggressiveness onboard the minibuses. Here we mean verbal and physical aggression as well as theft. Finally, the study proposes solutions to the crucial scarcity of small change in the public transport sector.

Keywords: Social construction, scarcity of change, conflict, public transport, abidjan

Introduction

In the highly populated areas of the largest cities around the world, commuting is generally operated by public transport (Marieu, 1978). The vulnerability of the population in those cities makes their commuting even more complex. In Africa, scores of citizens struggle to afford their own cars to easily move about because they have limited financial means. Facing that reality, many African states opted for networks of buses affected to public transport inner city to help those people.

In Côte d'Ivoire, and particularly in Abidjan, the Ivorian State tasked the bus company named SOTRA ^[1] with transporting the population within the city (Soro and al 2022). But it is clear that the problem with public transport is still acute despite the presence of more than twelve hundred buses operated by SOTRA (Aka, 2006; Olahan, 2007). Indeed, the city's population keeps swelling at a faster rate when compared with the acquisition of new buses. That lack in public transport by bus brought about the use of minibuses belonging to private citizens and which also serve as public transportation means. Their presence in the city of Abidjan seems to be the panacea to the acute problem of mobility across the city (Yai, 2003). Indeed, those vehicles of public transport carry great numbers of people across Abidjan on a daily basis. Because they are in a hurry to move about and to get to their workplaces, or to carry out their daily activities in different places, they have no other option but to travel with the minibuses. Those

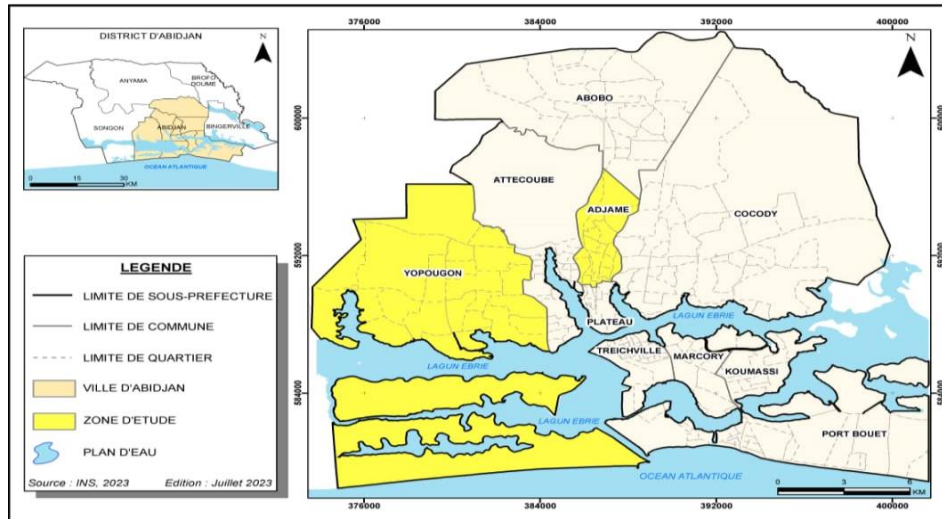
vehicles connect the different municipalities of Abidjan and they are suited to the economic context of passengers in terms of cost and availability.

But despite the mobility of the minibuses that are used in public transport in Abidjan, they are places of increasing situations of discomfort for their passengers. Here we mean altercations between the apprentice drivers and passengers onboard. There are indeed heated arguments even between passengers themselves because of the scarcity of change that should be given to customers leaving the minibuses at their destination. That frequently happens onboard the minibuses commuting between the boroughs of Yopougon and Adjamé. One question stands out at this point: why do we so frequently witness conflicts onboard minibuses because of the apparent lack of small change? Such central issue can be divided into subsidiary questions. What are its root causes? What are its consequences? How can we solve the problem? This study shall try to answer those questions and it will be based on a critical method.

Methodological approach

1. Place of research

This study was carried out in the city of Abidjan, precisely in the boroughs of Yopougon and Adjamé. Collecting data took place from January 15th to February 22nd 2023 at the minibus stations of Yopougon-Siporex, Adjamé Texaco and Adjamé-Liberté.



Source: National Institute of Statistics (2023)

2. Definitional approach

In this research, the notions of social construction, of the scarcity of small change and of conflict will be defined to spare the readers any misunderstanding or confusion. Social construction is a concept that makes it possible to describe the reality produced by the people involved in a thing or situation to analyse their knowledge of the facts and their interpretation of them (Loriol 2012) [2]. In other words, it is a question of describing the social reality shared by the individuals involved. It also shows the way in which reality is constructed by the confrontation between those individuals (Berger and Luckmann, 2012) [3]. The scarcity of change is understood as the lack of small change in every day economic routines.

In this article, social construction of the scarcity of change is used by the apprentice drivers to refuse to hand over small change to their passengers or to give them one bank note which they should share between them rather than getting the right change for each of the passengers involved. And the apprentices do so even if they have coins in their pockets. It is also the fact that some passengers hand over a bank note to the apprentice driver even though they do have small change to pay for their transport fare. These attitudes of making small change unavailable is very often the trigger for conflicts onboard minibuses.

The conflict in general is, however, inevitable in any contemporary society for there is a conflict whenever people pursue opposing interests. Conflict is characterised by thoughts (ideas), emotions (feelings and perceptions) and by people's behaviour. They manifest in forms of strong emotions, sadness, anger and frustration (Fisher and *al.* 2000). We consider conflicts in this article as any action of altercation and of violence that happens before small change is issued onboard minibuses.

3. Nature of the research

We have mobilised the approach that is essentially qualitative in order to carry out this study in a meaningful way. Qualitative research is oriented towards developing the understanding of the subjective experience and of the meaning of people's lives and of the world they live in (Fossey and *al.* (2002) quoted by Vasilachis de Gialdino (2012). Through that approach, we can understand the question of change onboard minibuses in a deeper way.

4. The universe of the respondents and the period of the research

This study was carried out within the city of Abidjan and precisely in the boroughs of Yopougon and Adjamé. Collecting the data took place from January 15th to February 22th 2023. It took place exactly at the bus stations of Yopougon-Siporex, Adjamé Texaco and Adjamé-Liberté. The research required in-depth interviews with people who could provide reliable and relevant information.

In total, for this study, thirty-five (35) social agents were interviewed and surveyed, including (5) trade union members, (10) drivers, (10) apprentice drivers and (15) commuters that face this problem of the scarcity of change on a daily basis. It was done on a totally voluntary basis of the technique of the reasoned choice. The qualitative method requires appropriate techniques of approach that makes the research more robust.

5. Research data collection techniques

The research involved both direct and participant observation. We used public transport that people use to commute from Yopougon-Siporex to Adjamé Liberté in order to observe people's gestures, exchanges of small change and hearing the passengers' language and that of the apprentice drivers.

Data collection also consisted of interviews with individuals from the public transport sector, i.e. the passengers, drivers and their apprentices as well as their trade union members. We have also used the method of direct observation and the literature review and documentary evidence made available to us (Beaud and Weber 1997; Lacombe, 1997; Peretz, 1998; Diaz, 2005; Fenneteau, 2007) [2, 5, 7, 15] on conflicts that have arisen over the lack of small change onboard the minibuses operating as public transportation means. Data collection tools such as the interview guide and the observation grid allowed us to collect relevant information. On top of all that has been mentioned so far, we have used bibliographic search portals (the classical publications in social sciences, revues.org, persée.fr), various other reviews (ethnographic.org and anthropologie et santé), the search engine (Google scholar), the data base (caïrn.info) and the online bibliography (masters' degree dissertations and PhD theses) that studied social construction, the issue of public transport and the precise question of small change.

6. Data analysis

The various data collected were subjected to a qualitative analysis. It was codified, transcribed, sorted, arranged and filed according to the research themes. It was then processed using content analysis. Three theories were then used to analyse them (Andreani and Conchon, 2015) [1]. The perverse effects theory (Boudon, 1977; Gosselin, 1998) [4, 10] and the social change theory were both used in this paper to that end. The perverse effect theory analyses the unintended results that are associated with individual behaviours that are rational. That theory is used in social sciences as a tool for analysing and interpreting social facts in order to better understand the unintended consequences of intentional actions (Boudon, 1977 *op.cit.*, Forquin, 1979) [4, 8]. This theory suggests that the owners of the minibuses used in the public transport sector are well intended since their goal is to help passengers commute freely and peacefully. However, the scarcity of small change brings about the pervasiveness of multifaceted conflicts.

As for the theory of social change, sociologist Guy Rocher (1968), states that the theory of social change corresponds to any observable transformation over time that affects the structure or the functioning of the social organisation of a given community in a way that is not merely temporary, but rather changes the course of history. This theory has allowed us to understand that any solution to the lack of small change onboard minibuses must be sought in a context of sustainable change.

7. Ethical considerations

We sought the free and informed consent of the participants by clearly explaining to them the objectives of this study. We also secured their permission to record their interviews. Throughout this study, the anonymity and confidentiality of the data collected were guaranteed. For example, when collecting the data, we granted fictitious names to all participants to ensure total anonymity around them. On top of that, nobody else but us has got access to the audio recordings. The same precautions of anonymity applied to the data entry and analysis to enhance the confidentiality of the information collected on the field.

Results of the research

The manifestations of the phenomenon of scarcity of small change

1. The exigence of small change when embarking the minibuses

There is a diversity of contradictory opinions around the possession of small change. The fact of the matter is that there seems to be a strong unwritten law that bars passengers from getting onboard the minibuses if ever they do not have the exact change to cover their transport fare. At the stations, the apprentice drivers strongly warn passengers on a daily basis to get ready with the right fares before getting into their vehicles. And they do so in a rude and a patronising way. A female passenger we interviewed stated the following

« Get onboard with the exact change or I will associate you to share one bank note between yourselves when disembarking. Get onboard with the exact change. I do not have any small change for you, I do not have any small change, han! ... That's how they talk to the passengers ».

(Interview realised on February 10th at the Yopougon-Siporex minibus station with Moussa, a gbaka apprentice driver).

At minibuses stations, we heard inappropriate language following such harsh remarks uttered by the apprentice drivers. Insults of all kinds were uttered and words of frustration were shouted as if everyone was doing without regards for human values. Some passengers were forced to seek small change from fellow passengers sitting next to them onboard the minibuses in order to avert potential conflict or heated argument with the apprentice drivers.

2. Soliciting other passengers for small change

In order to ensure the transport fare, passengers onboard the vehicles check with their neighbours if they have coins on them. They then join forces to easily pay for the correct and exact fare without the need for small change being due to them. Such early collaboration between passengers even before the apprentice driver requires the fares from them avoids problems between the two sides at the destination.

« In the vehicles, passengers are looking for change with their neighbours. They ask for change from those who have it until they find it before the apprentice driver collects the fare from each passenger. If they have not been able to find the correct small change, the apprentice drivers associate them when disembarking without taking into account the direction of each of the passengers » (interview conducted on February 12th at the Adjamé Texaco minibus station with Florent, a passenger).

Another respondent gave more details away in the following terms

« Once the passengers get into the vehicles, they greet their neighbour and then ask them, my brother, do you have any change? Sorry, if you do have some, please give it to me before you hand it over to the apprentice driver. I will pay for both our fares since I have 5.000 fcfa, 1000 fcfa, 2000 fcfa » (interview conducted on February 16th at the Yopougon-Siporex minibus station with Mariam).

The exchange of small change between passengers commuting using minibuses sometimes shows the short mutual aid and sympathy they display onboard public transport vehicles. However, the satisfaction of the need for small change happens in the context of distrust because the swindling and the embezzlement of coins are part and parcel of the phenomenon of the scarcity of small change. At the final destination apprentice drivers do associate passengers to whom change is due by handing over to one of them a bank note and ordering them to give everyone else the correct change instead.

On the other hand, the price of transport depends on the context, the time and the mood of the apprentice drivers. There are no preconditions for pricing nor a set rules for fixing the fares. For the same destination, passengers keep complaining about the transport fare set out by the apprentices. There are no defined price structures for any destination whatsoever. From the same destination, guests complain about the fare of public transport by minibus because the apprentice drivers set them out according to their own will. They even change the cost of transport at

peak times without warning. At those times, minibus drivers and their apprentices unilaterally choose the final destination for the passengers because they refuse to take them all the way to their desired destination.

In this condition, they make no effort to ensure all passengers are given their correct change. Once the customers get off, the apprentice drivers aggregate their small change and give away a bank note to one of them, asking that person to give everyone else their due change. However, some of those passengers run off with their comrades' share of the change. At times, one of the passengers will take responsibility to find the correct change for everyone.

So, the lingering question remains: what causes the scarcity of change in our cities?

Aggregating passengers' small change

1. Root causes of the change scarcity

One respondent gave us a general explanation of the scarcity of change in public transport by minibuses in the following way

« The lack of change is due to the fact that at the domestic level, some people save their petty cash in coins in small tills which, in the long term, leads to the scarcity of change. As a result, there is a lack of change in circulation. Also, many passengers don't get ready with the correct change before leaving their home, yet there are others who have some small change in their tills at home and they still prefer to go out with their banknotes instead. Drivers are also involved because they sell their coins to the ladies that sell stuff onto the streets at the end of their daily shifts. They don't save their change for their next customers ». [Interview conducted on February 13th, 2023 at the Adjamé Texaco minibus station with Armand from the public transport trade union].

After all this verbatim, we shall provide some details regarding the causes of the scarcity of small change.

2. Trafficking and speculating on small coins

It is unanimously and recurrently clear that the apprentice drivers sell their small change to the merchants after their daily shifts. They speculate on small change to make even more money. The interviews conducted for this study highlighted this illicit practice by minibus drivers and the street vendors. According to one street saleswoman:

« Some apprentice drivers sell their coins to the shopkeepers and street merchants. For example, if you give 1000 francs to street vendors, you get 100 francs profit » (Interview conducted on February 11th at the Adjamé-Liberté minibus station with Alice, a lotus and muffler seller).

Money trafficking and speculation on coins make it more difficult to exchange coins on public transport by minibus. Indeed, from one vehicle to another, the situation and the discourse expressed are the same. Apprentice drivers never have small change any day whatsoever. Yet, they are still in business during which they receive change day and night from passengers.

« The driver apprentices never have change, no matter how many round trips are made per day. The only words they know are "get on board with the correct change". They do this in order to be able to sell their small change to the little girls who sell stuff on the edge of the Adjamé-Liberté minibus station ». (Interview conducted on January 20th, 2023 at the Adjamé-Textaco station with the passenger Loraine).

In order to facilitate change, passengers are forced to buy the goods from the street vendors. Indeed, our participant and direct observations show that at the Adjamé Liberté and the Textaco minibus stations, street vendors of cosmetics and consumables are ready to facilitate change on the condition that passengers buy their goods first. They have a significant amount of change regardless of the price tag of the purchased goods and the value of the banknote held by the passengers. In order to force passengers to buy their goods, they position themselves around the vehicles and offer their services to the passengers in need of change by saying that they are able to hand out the change. Indeed, it is these saleswomen with whom the apprentice drivers of the minibuses carry out the various small change trafficking and speculation. As a result, they possess coins every day that enable them to compel stranded passengers to buy their commodities.

The interviews carried out confirm our various observations.

« When getting off public transport, the street vendors offer to make it easier for passengers who are in trouble because of the lack of change on the condition that they buy their goods regardless of the banknotes they have », (Interview conducted on February 13th, 2023 at the Adjamé Texaco station with passenger Clémence).

In addition to this constraint, there is the phenomenon of saving coins at the family level.

3. Saving coins in home tills

The study carried out showed that most people do not keep their money in the bank in Abidjan. Instead, many of them prefer to keep their fortunes in the vicinity of their homes. Some systematically keep their coins in wooden small tills trying to save up their hardly earned cash for future projects. However, by doing so, they hinder the exchange of small change in everyday economic activities, and especially in the case of public transport by minibus.

According to one passenger

« The lack of small change is due to the fact that at the domestic level, some people save their coins in private tills, which means that there is a lack of change overall », (Interview conducted on February 13th, 2023 at the Adjamé Texaco minibus station with Armand, a public transport trade union member).

These different causes certainly have an impact on the daily lives of commuters. However, the various social agents do not have a clear understanding of their responsibilities when it comes to the scarcity of small change. For passengers, it is the apprentice drivers who have to provide them with change and vice versa.

4. The irresponsibility of the apprentice drivers and of commuters

Our in-depth interviews highlight that money is not only an object of exchange or of social mobility, but that it also facilitates exchange in public transport. That is not to say it does not lead to conflicts as several words and gestures by the social agents involved in these conflicts on the road reveal the refusal to recognise one's own responsibility for the shortage of small change. Surprising astonishments and discordant discourses mark the exchange of coins between passengers and the apprentice drivers. Passengers and the apprentices are most often at odds when it comes to small change facilitation. None of them accepts responsibility for the provision of change at minibuses stations. For the passengers, it is the drivers or their apprentices who must have small change because in their mind, they are the customers. And, as the saying goes, 'the customer is king'. As for the drivers and their apprentices, it is the passengers who must prepare the correct change before getting onto their vehicles.

These various refusals of responsibility lead to a deficit of coins on both sides of the argument in their daily interaction. In this context, it is the drivers and their apprentices who are always right because passengers are always in need to move around all the time.

« Passengers don't come with the correct change, especially when it's the end of the month. They come with bank notes to show us that they have been paid their salaries. However, they are the ones to give us the coins, » (Interview conducted on February 22th at the Yopougon-Siporex minibuses station with Clément, a gbaka apprentice driver).

Of course, that opinion is not shared at all by passengers

« Apprentice drivers are full of themselves. They never have any change. If I want to understand their gimmicks about the small change, who do they give it to? They are meant to come to work every day with it to make it easier for us to get change if I'm not mistaken. Often times, when you don't have change, they make you get off their vehicles », (Interview conducted on February 12th at the Yopougon-Siporex minibuses station with the passenger Louise).

These different actions by the apprentice drivers and their acolytes force passengers to look for the correct change before boarding the gbaka (minibuses) because they want to go about their business in time.

Unfortunately, these root causes have an impact on passengers' social lives.

Consequences of the scarcity of small change

Most of the consequences of the scarcity of small change can be summed up in terms of conflict. These conflicts are noticeable through aggressive spirits, threatening behavior, robbery and aggression in words and in deeds.

1. Manifestations of the spirit of aggressiveness onboard minibuses

In minibuses, some passengers sit side by side while others face each other depending on the seats occupied or the type of gbaka they got on. These passengers travel together in the same direction with different points of destination. However, the various observations made in the public

transport sector reveal a set of specific behaviours attributed to the apprentice drivers and drivers alike. Indeed, public transport is perceived by its users and apprentice drivers as the privileged place for unloading their bad mood, the conducive place to show their bravery through inappropriate language and insults.

An apprentice driver confirms this hard fact

« In the minibuses that serve as public transportation means, everyone is on the edge. For a trivial thing or for reasons of small change, apprentice drivers and passengers take on each other, they are at odds with each other until they get off and separate. You have the impression that people were eager to pick a fight before coming to the station » (Interview conducted on February 15th, 2023 at the Adjamé Texaco minibuses station with Claude, a passenger).

A driver apprentice confirms this

« Customers know we're not afraid of them, but they provoke us. When it's like that, we don't let them intimidate us. We, the apprentice drivers, respond to what they say. If you don't do that, they won't respect you. They think we are animals, that we don't have blood in our bodies like them », [interview conducted on February 10th, 2023 at the Adjamé Liberté minibuses station with Alpha, the apprentice driver of a gbaka].

These comments testify to the aggressiveness that reigns in the sector of public transport by minibuses. The violent attitudes observed in some of the actors involved are linked to the lack of small change.

2. Verbal and physical aggression

There are several conflicts in the sector of public transport owned by private citizens. Arguments, insults and the use of force are all acts that characterise conflicts related to the exchange of small change in commuters' vehicles. At the scene of the investigation, we observed the same aggressiveness in the actions or in the words used by the apprentice drivers. In addition to the non-compliance with traffic laws by the minibuses drivers, their customers also face disrespectful treatment and language. Their various acts of violence come from the fact that they take drugs and strong coffee to cope with the heavy burden of their daily activities. Drivers and their apprentices have to pay a daily revenue to the owners of the vehicles they drive. They also have to pay daily illegal taxes to their trade union members and some illegal penalties to corrupt police officers. All these daily expenses increase their workload (requiring several round trips a day) and exert tremendous pressure. They then resort to seeking easy and abundant economic gains.

Faced with such aggressiveness, customers also respond in kind to preserve their dignity without trying to make physical contact with the apprentice drivers because they are supportive of each other, disrespectful and violent towards the passengers. According to one interviewee

« In public transport vehicles, it is necessary to avoid having a problem with any apprentice driver, or to insult them, or to hit them because they are violent fellas, utterly rude people and they have a strong sense of solidarity in evil » (Interview conducted on February 15th, 2023 at the Adjamé Texaco minibuses station with Michel, a passenger).

3. Theft and threats on board minibuses

Theft comes in many forms, but generally speaking, it consists in taking the property of others by using force, cunning and lies. As far as public transport is concerned, apprentice drivers take advantage of the difficult situation of the lack of small change to swindle money from passengers' pockets. Several misdeeds are observed from the apprentices' behaviour on the ground.

« Apprentice drivers and drivers knowingly and willingly confiscate passengers' change by pretending they do not have any change. Sometimes, the apprentice driver would shout at the driver to keep driving away once the customer gets off. The driver then speeds up without making sure that the passenger is not due any change. Yet, they owe change to the customers that got off at their destination », (Interview conducted on February 10th, 2023 at the Adjamé Texaco minibus station with Michel, a passenger).

In addition to the thefts by the apprentice drivers, the interviews also highlighted thefts by some passengers. Indeed, when collecting the transport fare, some passengers make the apprentice drivers believe that they have already paid up their fare. And this state of affairs is a clear source of tension and a trigger for conflicts. At the destination of the vehicle, there are some customers who take advantage of the blunders caused by the handing over of the passengers' change to point out that the apprentice driver owed them money while they actually aren't owed any small change at all.

« When they get off, some customers come to us and stretch out their hands to us as if they were also due some change. Yet, we don't owe them any small change. Often times others argue with us and threaten us as if their claims were true. So, we have to be vigilant », (Interview conducted on February 15th, 2023 at the Adjamé Texaco minibus station with Salif, an apprentice driver)

Proposition for solving the problem of shortage of small change

The field study made some propositions for solving the acute and lingering problem of the scarcity of small change. We can mention at this point the process of raising awareness and the possibility to bank coins.

1. Sensitisation

In order to raise awareness, we can propose several actions and processes aimed at passengers, at minibus drivers and their apprentices in order to draw their attention and interest in making small change available on public transport.

2. To the passengers

Public transport is a reality for all citizens that do not have their own vehicles. Commuting by public transport is of a great help. Since the minibuses' owners have made an effort to help fill the gap left over by the conventional bus companies in the city, commuters must also make an effort to facilitate change by handing over to the apprentice drivers the correct transport fare. When they genuinely cannot do so, the apprentice drivers must do the same the other way round.

According to a minibus driver apprentice

« We need an awareness campaign for the population so that everyone comes with the change. Also, we need to

raise awareness among the people who keep the change in their personal tills at home », (Interview conducted on February 15th, 2023 at the Adjamé Texaco minibus station with Salif, an apprentice driver).

3. To the apprentice drivers and minibus drivers

Some of the behaviour patterns of the minibus apprentice drivers are simply illegal and undermine the exchange of small change. Among their misdeeds, we can mention the trafficking of coins. This practice causes abnormal small change shortages on public transport in Abidjan.

« Drivers must stop selling coins », (Interview conducted on February 08th, 2023 at Adjamé Texaco minibus station with Fanta, a passenger).

Also, humility and respect for passengers must be the primarily cultivated by the apprentice drivers to allow users not only to be sincerely involved in the facilitation of small change but also to avoid conflicts onboard their vehicles. It is still possible to run campaigns that would raise awareness among the public transit union members, minibus drivers and their apprentices and even their passengers alike.

4. To the trade union representatives

The data collected reveals that trade union members are not doing their jobs in terms of ensuring non-violence and safety on the roads. According to them, the unions are more worried about the vast revenues they grab by taxing the minibus crews, than their rights. They don't care about the other problems that plague the apprentice drivers and the commuters that travel by minibuses.

« The role of the unions is to deal with all the issues at the station. As a result, they have to deal with the small change problem », (Interview conducted on February 08th, 2023 at the Adjamé Texaco minibus station with Salimata)

5. Banking coins

The data collected reveals that banking coins could certainly facilitate small change in the public transport sector. This would avoid interpersonal conflicts onboard vehicles or when getting off public transport by minibus.

« Passengers should put their money in the bank instead of putting it in personal tills at home », (Interview conducted on February 08th, 2023 at the Adjamé Texaco minibus station with Moustapha, a minibus station manager).

Conclusion

At the end of this study, the exchange of small change is an unavoidable fact in Abidjan's public transport system by minibuses. The in-depth and detailed analysis highlights several social constructions of small change scarcity which are visible in the continuing lack of coins. Consequently, apprentice drivers demand passengers do have the exact transport fare on them before getting onboard their vehicles. If they do not have the exact change, passengers are forced to purchase goods they do not need one bit. The scarcity of small change can be explained by the coins trafficking, the irresponsibility of the social actors engaged in the minibus business and also by the saving of coins in personal tills at home. These various explanatory factors are at the heart of the multifaceted conflicts between commuters on the one

hand and the minibus drivers and their apprentices on the other hand. The silver coins make it possible for the Abidjanese to move around the city for their everyday business.

In addition to the terrain, our analysis shows that before taking a minibus it is better to make sure where the vehicle is heading to. Then one must find out about the cost of the journey and ensure the exact change is available. This will help avoid small change related conflicts in the public transport sector by minibuses. Everyone must contribute to solving the question of change onboard those vehicles. Each actor involved must provide the correct change to facilitate the exchange of silver coins. But also, this sector must be regulated in terms of setting the appropriate fare structure for each journey so that we have a public transport without violence.

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