Does grease money from police roadblocks speed up the wheels of the commuter omnibus? The case of kombis into and out of Harare

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ABSTRACT

The study employed cross section econometrics and tested the “grease the wheels” hypothesis at a micro level. To achieve its objective, the study employed survey data from 188 kombi drivers and/or conductors (i.e., kombi crew) which was collected in the two months of January and February 2015. Estimated results show that three out of the six variables used in the model were statistically significant at 1% level of significance. The findings of the study indicate that profits pocketed by kombi crew (lnprofits) are an important factor in determining the daily takings (profitability) of kombis. This result makes economic sense given that kombi crew are motivated to remain on the road when the extra profits they collect (over and above their wages/salaries) are higher. A positive and significant relationship between kombi fare (lnfare) and daily takings of kombis was also found by this study. In this instance, as the fare charged per given trip increases, ceteris paribus, the total daily takings per given route will also increase. This has an overall positive effect on the viability of kombi operations. Lastly, the study found that the more the number of round trips completed per day, the more the daily takings for a given route. The three variables which have been found to be statistically insignificant are the number of roadblocks (lnrblocks), bribe paid (lnbribes) and number of roadblock stops (lnstops) in a given route. Although the number of roadblocks variable, lnrblocks, has an unexpected sign, the other two variables have their respective expected signs. Whilst paying bribes ensured reduced stoppages at roadblocks along a given route, resulting in more daily takings, the variable is however not statistically significant. The number of police roadblock stops along a given route had a negative effect on daily takings, although the variable was not statistically significant.

Keywords: grease money; corruption; police roadblocks

1. INTRODUCTION

Corruption, like cockroaches which are a menace to human beings, but which for whatever reason the human race can never totally eradicate, has coexisted with human society for a long time and remains as one of the problems in many of the world’s developing economies with devastating consequences. Agbu (2003) contends that corruption as a phenomenon, is a global problem, and exists in varying degrees in different countries from the most democratic to the most dictatorial. In terms of culture and religion, corruption continues to exhibit its tentacles throughout the Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist cultures (Dike, 2005). Corruption is not an issue that just begins today; but its history is as old as the world (Lipset and Gabriel, 2000). The World Bank (1997) defines corruption as the abuse of public office through rent seeking activities for private gain when an official accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe.

The impact of corruption on economic activity remains a controversial issue, especially in the developing world. On the one side of the debate are those who view corruption as not only detrimental to economic activities but an act which even ‘sand the wheels’ of economic activity, thus further slowing down an already sluggish economic trajectory. Among others, the following scholars Mauro (1995), Brunetti and Weder (1998) and Mo (2001) through their analysis concluded that corruption negatively affects economic growth and investment. On the other extreme, some scholars suggests that corruption and bribery activities not only propagate economic activities, but they even ‘grease the wheels’, of economic activities and ensure rapid economic growth when compared to situations where corruption and bribes are not given their chance to influence business activities.

The writers from the latter camp including Leys (1965), Beck and Maher (1986), Lien (1986), Huntington (1968) and Bardhan (1997) argue that corruption is a ‘lubricant’ which facilitates speedy movement in an
otherwise sluggish economy. Specifically, Leff (1964), Huntington (1968) and Leys (1965), argue that bribes may act as a dangling carrot in economies that are overwhelmed by bureaucracies, distortions and malfunctioning institutions. These authors contend that bureaucratic hierarchies are impediment to economic activities, and as such there is need for some ‘speed’ or grease or lubricant money to ensure that the squeak wheels that slow speed brought by bureaucracy or bureaucratic tendencies are sufficiently oiled for economic business to smoothly progress. The point is that; in most economies, bureaucratic services remain the prerogative of government ministries, agencies or municipalities and these services include: customs, sanitary inspections, police, electricity providers, water service providers, tax revenue authorities and immigration services (e.g. for passports, national identify documents and marriage certificates).

In summary, the ‘grease the wheels’ hypothesis argues that bribes and corruption are potential panacea to bureaucratic tendencies and as such, can potentially improve efficiency which in turn increases investment and, eventually, growth. On the contrary, the ‘sand the wheels’ hypothesis suggests that corruption not only retards economic activities, but may become more harmful when governance is poor (Meon and Sekkat, 2005).

The main aim of the study was to test the “grease the wheels” hypothesis at a micro level. The study empirically investigates the relationship between the impacts of police roadblock bribes (corruption) on viability (daily takings) of commuter (kombi) transport operations within Harare, Zimbabwe. The next sub-section of the study presents the theoretical underpinnings of the “grease the wheels” and the “sand the wheels” hypotheses, and Zimbabwe’s corruption levels. Section two provides a review of literature while section 3 describes the methodology employed to achieve the study aim. Section 4 presents the results. Section 5 has the conclusion from the overall study.

1.1 The “grease the wheels” and the “sand the wheels” hypothesis

1.1.1. The “grease the wheels” hypothesis

The bureaucratic tendencies exhibited by most government officials, especially those from the developing countries where salaries for government employees are very low, is considered as the main reason why corruption tends to increase. According to Huntington (1968): “In terms of economic growth, the only thing worse than a society with a rigid, overcentralized, dishonest bureaucracy, is one with a rigid, overcentralized, honest bureaucracy”. This quotation implies that the existence of excessive taxes and regulations as written in a country’s statutes will remain excessive without bribery. However, if corruption and bribery are given a chance, the burden of these written taxes and regulations can be lessened as officials, after being bribed, can end up not enforcing all the written rules and regulations. Kaufmann and Wei (2000) enumerated the various aspects of bureaucratic tendencies which may be reduced or eliminated by corruption and bribery. These include slowness, the quality of civil servants, decision choices by government officials, economic agents escaping consequence of some polices and quality of investment.

With regards to slowness, Lui (1985) employed an economic model and found out that bribes can be able to effectively reduce the time spent in queues by economic agents. The intuition is that such payments provide an incentive to government officials to speed up the process which could, under normal circumstances, be very slow. Supporting the same argument Huntington (1968), argues that bribes overcome monotonous bureaucratic tendencies and in the process boost economic activities. The author indicates that corruption by railroad, utility and industrial corporations resulted in faster growth in the case of USA in the 1870s and 1880's.

Leys (1965) and Bailey (1966) pointed out that bribes can improve the quality of civil servants. In this instance, if government officials’ salaries and benefits are very low and insufficient, the existence of bribes provides a supplement that may lure skilled civil servants who might have otherwise ventured into other potential businesses and economic activities.

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1 Given that money is never enough, insufficient is interpreted in relative terms, in relation say to private sector salaries in the same country or location.
Does grease money from police roadblocks speed up the wheels of the commuter omnibus?

Beck and Maher (1986) and Lien (1986) argue that bribes may improve the choice of the right decisions by bureaucrats. The authors suggest that in situations where government officials have limited information or are not able to make competent decisions and associated choices, corruption can provide the outcome of a competitive auction. In their analysis, the authors modelled a situation of government procurement and suggest that when it comes to the decision or choice of awarding the contracts, firms which provide the highest bribes are assumed to be the most efficient. Thus, according to this view, government contracts and licenses are normally allocated to firms which pay highest bribes who are likely to be more efficient.

Some authors, including Leff (1964), posit that when government spending is insufficient, corruption can possibly compensate for inadequacy. The intuition is that, corruption will be considered as a means of tax evasion, and if in turn the bribers can invest efficiently in the same economy, the overall investment will increase, and that will be good for the country. Furthermore, corruption may also increase investment levels. Leff (1964) argues that bribes are a possible way of hedging against other risks especially those which come from the political system; such risks include expropriation or violence. In this instance, if bribes can eliminate such risks, investment will turn out less risky and may accordingly increase.

1.1.2 The “sand the wheels” hypothesis
The positive impact of corruption on economic activities is premised, among other things, on fixed and exogenously determined regulations and bureaucratic rules. However, in most instances, most of these regulations can be manipulated by government officials. In fact, and as Myrdal (1968) indicates corrupt government officials may intentionally cause unnecessary delays so that they get the opportunity to siphon a bribe. Furthermore, the powers of bureaucrats to speed up the process once bribed may be limited in instances where there are decision making stages involved in approving any request. Thus, in such cases, the cost of corruption may be positively related to the many successive stages involved. Mydal (1968) once quoted an Indian bureaucrat who said that he may not be able to speed up the process, but he could intentionally cause administrative delays so that he get more bribes. Meon and Sekkat (2005) suggest that increased cases of transactions due to corruption may well negate the increased efficiency with which economic activities are conducted. Under these scenarios, adding a distortion in the form of corruption and/or bribe is like adding petrol to a fire. In this case, corruption increases instead of decreasing. This is precisely the meaning of the “sand the wheels hypothesis”.

Generally, the impact of bribes on the quality of civil servants at national level in any economy is uncertain. Kurer (1993) pointed out that bureaucrats who are corrupt are motivated to create other distortions in the economy to ensure the perpetuity existence of their illegal source of income. For instance, a bureaucrat has the motive to ration the provision of a public service so that he or she can be able to decide to whom to allocate that particular service in exchange for a bribe. Although such a bribe can indeed improve the economic situation of the individual civil servant concerned as he or she will get extra money, nothing is gained from corruption at the national level.

The notion that bribes have the ability to enhance the choice of the right decisions by civil servants is also controversial. There are a number of reasons to argue that the firm which pays the highest bribe may not be the most efficient one once granted the service. Rose-Ackerman (1997) indicates that a firm may be motivated to pay a higher bribe so that it can be able to compromise (without government restraint) on the quality of the goods or service it will produce and provide once granted the government contract or license. Furthermore, in cases where the profitability of a license is uncertain, the winner of the auction may be the more optimistic rather than the most efficient, a situation that is known as the “winner’s curse” (Meon and Sekkart, 2005). In such scenarios, bribes will not be the best route to award a license.

The argument that bribes may boost both the quantity and the quality of investment is debatable. Results from empirical studies suggest that this may not hold in the case of public investment. Findings from studies by, among others, Tanzi and Davoodi (1997) indicates that although higher corruption may be
associated with higher public investment, such activities will result in a diversion of public spending towards less efficient allocations. In such cases, bribes mean larger amounts of public investments will be put in unproductive sectors, which are unlikely to improve efficiency and result in faster growth.

The proposition that bribes provide a possible avenue to hedge against risk in a politically uncertain environment is also subject to debate. The ability of corruption to be a hedge may only be feasible if it does not imply additional risk-taking. In practice, any transaction which involves bribes is a bit complex. Given that bribes are illegal, the commitment to abide by the agreement terms and obligations will be very weak, and thus may motivate opportunism in the bribers.

1.3 Zimbabwe’s corruption level

Corruption Perception index (CPI)

Zimbabwe is one of the Southern African countries which is considered as having high corruption levels at a national level. Whilst there are various organizations which provide corruption indices, Table 1 provides the country’s corruption trends over years from 1998 to 2012, using the Transparency International Corruption Perception index (CPI) series. The CPI measures the perceived levels of public sector corruption in countries worldwide. Based on expert opinion, countries are scored from 0 to 10 (or 100), with zero indicating high levels of corruption and 10 (100) indicating low levels or very clean. As the tabulated information shows, although Zimbabwe was relatively a low corrupt country in 1998 and 1999, the country’s index has been deteriorating since 2000. Since 2001, the index has been below 3 and this indicates tendencies towards very high corruption status. When one considers its comparative performance among the surveyed countries in each of the tabulated years, the country’s rank was relatively better in the first two years shown in the table, and after 2000, the country has relatively compared badly. Overall, the CPI shown in the table indicates that Zimbabwe is largely a corrupt country.

Table 1: Zimbabwe’s corruption perception index (CPI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>CPI</th>
<th>Country Rank</th>
<th>Total countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>48</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>2.7</td>
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<td>102</td>
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<td>112</td>
<td>133</td>
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<td>2.6</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>159</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>130</td>
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<tr>
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<td>153</td>
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<tr>
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<td>146</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.4</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>178</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tabulated using figures from Transparency International

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In an essay by Chiweshe (2015), the author indicated that Zimbabwean traffic police have used their position to collect informal fortunes through bribes especially from public transport operators in urban areas known
as kombis. The essay argues that in Zimbabwe, kombi operators are required by law to be registered transporters who should comply with regular vehicle checks and employ licenced drivers. However, because of financial economic challenges in the country, many kombi owners flout the rules and many of the drivers are involved in illegal driving practices. As a result of this scenario, an elaborate corrupt system between the police and operators has emerged in which they pay a daily fee to operate without the police stopping them for the various offences they commit. In this instance, the police have powers to arrest the drivers and detain the vehicle. The roadblock police use this power to ensure that kombi owners pay the bribe. The kombi owners have realized that it is cheaper to pay police bribes than to ensure that their cars are roadworthy or have the necessary permits to operate. Thus, paying of bribes to roadblock police has become part and parcel of public transport system in Zimbabwe.

Anti-Corruption Trust of Southern Africa (2014) investigated the extent to which the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) and the City of Kwekwe (CoK) were responsible for the problems facing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the two towns of Kwekwe and Redcliff. The report found out that corrupt members of ZRP and CoK police were accused of demanding informal payments and bribes from, among others, motorists. The study further found out that the police was pocketing a minimum of US$780,187.50 annually from a sample of 285 kombis in the two towns alone. At the same time, the report estimates that the government through the Ministry of Finance was likely to be losing at least US$2,080,500 annually from the 285 kombis alone.

Richmond and Alpin (2013) conducted a survey on behalf of Afrobarometer in which the main objective was to get the perceptions of people on the extent to which they rated their government and public institutions on corruption issues. The study surveyed more than 51,000 people in 34 African countries (including Zimbabwe) between October 2011 and June 2013. Overall, the survey found that across the 34 countries, perceptions of corruption were highest for the police, followed by government officials and tax officials. On police corruption perception, 62 percent of the surveyed Zimbabweans said that most or all of the police were corrupt. This resulted in Zimbabwe being ranked the fourth country out of the 34 countries where police was corrupt.

Transparency International commissioned a survey entitled “Daily lives and corruption: public opinion in Zimbabwe” in 2011 which was authored by Hardoon and Heinrich (henceforth Hardoon and Heinrich, 2011). In the study, 1,014 people were surveyed in between 26 April and 5 May 2011 and their corruption perceptions were sought across more than nine service providers. The data were weighted by age, gender and region to represent the population of 5,900,000 Zimbabweans. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 means not at all corrupt and 5 means extremely corrupt, police got a point scale figure of 4.5 and this was the institution with the highest scale figure. Interviewees were asked to respond to the question: To what extent do you perceive the following institutions to be corrupt? In response, 72.4% of the surveyed people indicated that the police was extremely corrupt. The second institution which was considered extremely corrupt are political parties and had 49.9% respondents indicating them as corrupt. Around 53% of respondents indicated that they had paid bribes to police, while ‘registry and permit services’ was the second institution from which 38% of interviews had paid bribes.

3. METHODOLOGY
3.1 Theoretical model
The model used in this study borrows from McArthur and Teal (2002) in which social infrastructure is considered as a determinant of firm (kombi) performance. Corruption (and bribe payments) is considered as a component of the social infrastructure. The empirical question is whether a link can be found between kombis paying bribes and their underlying performance. To assess the grease the wheels hypothesis, the study starts by assuming a simple Cobb-Douglas production technology with constant returns to scale:

\[
y_{ij} = \alpha_i \left(z_{ij} \left(k_{ij}^\alpha l_{ij}^{1-\alpha}\right) + \phi X + \varepsilon_{ij}\right)
\]
Where $y_{ij}$ denotes daily transport fare takings (output) of the $i^{th}$ kombi operating in the $j^{th}$ route, $\alpha$ is the level of technology, $k$ is the capital stock, $l$ is the number of workers, $X$ is a vector of kombi-specific characteristics and $\epsilon_{ij}$ is an error term. Corruption is hypothesised to affect the underlying efficiency with which kombis in any economy operate. It is further hypothesized that the direct effects of roadblock bribe, $z_{ij}$ can be shown to have significant effects on underlying operations of kombi business.

In the model, roadblock police bribe, $z_{ij}$ is based on the kombi's need to smoothly pass through roadblocks along its route. Such smooth sailing is determined by traffic police, whose official salaries are not linked to the movement of public transport along a given public road. Each kombi interacts with traffic police in order to pass through a given roadblock. Traffic police or police officers manning a given roadblock have the opportunity to extract extra, unofficial payments or bribes, $b$, from kombis in return for smooth pass at a given roadblock.

3.2 Empirical model
In measuring kombi performance, daily takings (i.e., the sum of all passenger fares collected by the kombi crew) form our main variable of interest alongside $z_{ij}$. Taking logs and rearranging equation (1) into an empirical specification we have:

$$\ln\left(\frac{y_{ij}}{l}\right) = \hat{\alpha}_0 + \hat{\alpha}_1 + \ln\left(\frac{k_{ij}}{l}\right) + \hat{\alpha}_2 z_{ij} + a_0 \phi X + \epsilon_{ij}$$ (2)

In kombi business in Zimbabwe, labour is composed mainly of two individuals, namely the driver and the conductor (assistant), while the major capital is the kombi itself. Thus, in modelling the viability of kombi operations, one can replace the known and fixed labour and capital with number of round trips. Thus, the final empirical model estimated is given by Equation (3):

$$\ln y = \hat{\alpha}_0 + \hat{\alpha}_1 \ln bribes + \hat{\alpha}_2 \ln trips + \hat{\alpha}_3 + \ln stops + \hat{\alpha}_4 \ln profits + \hat{\alpha}_5 \ln rblocks + \hat{\alpha}_6 \ln fare + \epsilon_{ij}$$ (3)

where:
- $y$ = daily takings (i.e. total passenger fares collected by kombi crew)
- $bribes$ = informal (bribe) payments paid by kombi crew to police manning roadblock
- $trips$ = total number of round trips completed by a given kombi per day
- $stops$ = total number of police roadblocks where a kombi is actually stopped along a given route
- $profits$ = total daily takings minus amount required to be surrendered by kombi crew to kombi owner
- $rblocks$ = total number of police roadblock along a given route
- $fare$ = amount paid by a passenger for each one way route

3.3 Data sources
The study's data was collected using a survey in which face to face interviews were conducted with 188 kombi crew (driver and/or assistant). The information was collected from kombis which operate on routes into Harare and whose radius is around 50 kilometres outside Harare. The information was collected during the two months of January and February 2015. To ensure randomness of the interviewed respondents, the research team interviewed a maximum of 25 respondents from the following kombi bus terminus in Harare – (1) 4th Street, (2) Charge Office, (3) Copacabana, (4) Market Square, (5) Warren Park, (6) Machipisa, (7) Makoni (Chitungwiza) and (8) Zengeza 3 Shpos (Chitungwiza). Although 200 kombi drivers and/or assistants were interviewed, only 188 managed to provide useful information for the study.

4. Discussion of findings
4.1 Descriptive evidence
This section provides the descriptive analysis of police roadblocks, and the kombis which were surveyed and their associated characteristics.
4.1.1 Roadblocks in the newspapers
The media have reported on how police roadblocks have become a nuisance to most motorists in the country. Annex 1 with Boxes 1 through to 3, which provides snapshots from newspapers on police roadblocks. In short, Box 1 is about a tired kombi driver who is complaining about the unnecessary police roadblocks along the route he operates in. Box 2 narrates a situation where police manning a roadblock had collected bribes from motorists, but for fear of being possibly found with the money in their hands by supervisors, they decided to ‘hide’ the loot in a nearby bin. Unexpectedly, a little girl who was scavenging for food picked the loot and took it to her parents. In Box 3 a Zimbabwean high court judge bemoans the prevalence of corruption in the police force, with special emphasis on roadblock police. According to the judge and in reference to roadblock traffic police, “If it is true, then the department (police) is surely cursed. How can a nation continue to condone such a malpractice which creates a breeding ground for corruption?

4.1.2 Basic Characteristics of roadblocks
This section provides the various characteristics of police roadblocks mounted on major roads leading into and/or out of Harare, with special attention on characteristics such as average number of roadblocks per day, average roadblock stoppages per day, expected informal payments (bribe) to be paid to police manning the roadblock, and the official fines paid for common road crimes. The analysis utilises primary data from a survey which was done on 188 commuter omnibuses (kombis) which ferry passengers into and out of Harare. The surveys were done on kombis which carry passengers within a radius of approximately 50 kilometres of Harare and some of the routes included to and/fro such towns as Chitungwiza, Machipisa, Borrowdale, Mount Pleasant, Kuwadzana, Budiriro, Domboshava, Marondera, and Norton, among others. There are a number of reasons why such a detailed analysis is important in the case of commuter omnibus operations in Zimbabwe:

- An evidence based understanding of the level of police roadblock corruption is fundamental for any radical step to be taken to eradicate this cancerous behaviour if the sector is to become an effective economic activity.
- Actions and policies to eliminate police roadblock corruption will be highly beneficial if they are targeted to the most part of the force which practices this behaviour.

Number of police roadblocks and associated stops
On a daily basis, Table 2 shows that kombis are expected to pass through five police roadblocks on each one way trip (i.e., when going into Harare or when coming out of Harare). Data also indicates that, on average, the commuter omnibuses are normally stopped five times along their respective routes in one direction. Overall, these police roadblocks and stoppages represent wasted time, and as such this implies unnecessary costs to the kombi’s optimal operations.

Common crimes and expected bribes
About 51 percent of the interviewed kombi crews (drivers and/or conductors) indicated that at the majority of police roadblocks, the common crime which they were allegedly to have committed was passenger overload, whereby there found carrying more than 15 passengers. 28 percent of the interviewees said that the second common crime on the roadblock which was usually levelled against them was that their kombis had not gone for routine mechanical retests. Inability to provide the authorized permit on a given route to the police manning the roadblock was also considered one of the major crime at the roadblock and this was indicated by nine percent of the respondents.

Fines and police bribes
The average formal and receipted police roadblock spot fine for most of the common crimes indicated above is $20. Given that this figure is relatively high, the kombi crew are enticed to pay an informal payment
to the police officer if they cannot afford to pay the formal fine. In an effort to entice the ‘culprit’, the police officer asks for an informal payment well below the formal fine. As of February 2015, the average informal (bribe) payment given to a police officer at roadblock was $8. This bribe payment is not receipted, but pocketed by the police officer (who will later share with his/her roadblock team). The majority of respondents, 56 percent, indicated that they normally pay the informal payment, compared to the 44 percent who said they pay the formal fine. Thus, in general, majority of kombi crew pay informal bribes to police at roadblocks, the money which will be converted to private use by the police manning the roadblock, with nothing of bribe money contributing towards government revenue.

### Number of payments at roadblocks

Although most kombis are stopped five times on each one-way trip, they are however expected to pay the informal payment to police manning roadblock once per day. The system is coordinated in such a way that the police at all the roadblocks along a given route will be aware of their counterparts who will be manning other roadblocks along the route. As such, once a kombi paid their daily informal payment say at roadblock ‘A’, the police officer at point ‘A’ will communicate with other police officers in the other roadblocks along that route that a given kombi has paid its daily ‘dues’. Some of the common ways in which a given kombi which has paid its informal bribe for the day can be recognised include use of secret number plates, code and facial recognition.

### Table 2: Characteristics of police roadblocks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Averages</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of police roadblocks/day</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of stops at police roadblocks/day</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine charged for common crime</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected daily informal (bribe) payment to police</td>
<td>$8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of times expected to pay informal payment per day</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily takings with punishment for refusal to pay roadblock police bribe</td>
<td>$47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Specific names for informal payment to police at roadblocks

- Tollgate
- Kutonyora/mutonyo
- Seiko-seiko
- Crawa/kirawa
- Dhosvo
- Chebasu
- Chadonha
- Mufanawenyu
- Whatsup
- Bribes
- Yekuora
- Corruption/huori

**Source:** Author using survey data
Does grease money from police roadblocks speed up the wheels of the commuter omnibus?

Consequence for refusing to pay roadblock police bribe
Interviewed respondents indicated that, when one refuses to pay the bribe, there will be consequences. A total of 62 percent of interviewed kombi crew said that the police manning the roadblock will impound the kombi if one refuses to pay, while 11 percent of respondents said the police officer will issue the driver with a formal fine ticket. The third common consequence is that the kombi crew will be asked to drop off the passengers and park at the roadblock for at least an hour. In extreme cases, refusal to pay bribe may result in the arrest of the kombi driver. All these consequences have the negative impact of reducing daily round trips, and eventually result in reduced daily revenue takings. Specifically, 87 percent of interviewees said that the punishment instituted by roadblock police when one refuses to pay a bribe will reduce their daily takings, while only three percent said the consequences does not affect their daily takings.

Specific names given to police roadblock bribes
Police roadblock bribes have become a well known system in Zimbabwean roads to such an extent that specific names for such payments have emerged over time. These names are mostly known by kombi crews and whenever they are stopped at any police roadblock, and when they hear a police officer saying any of such names, the crew will automatically handover the informal payment, and avoid any delay. The names however vary from one route to another, but the common names include: tollgate, kutonyora (mutonyo), crawa (kirawa), dhosvo, chadonha, mufanawenyu, whatsup, bribe, yekuora and corruption/huori, among others.

4.1.3 Basic characteristics of kombi operations
This sub-section provides basic characteristics of kombi operations for routes into and out of Harare. Table 3 provides some of the main features of kombi operations.

Operating times
On average, most kombis start ferrying passengers from as early as 05:17hrs on each day of the week and normally stop operations around 20:00hrs. Outside the average times, some kombis start operating as early as 04:00hrs and some close business as late as 23:00hrs. These times depend on the routes, with routes going to high density suburbs (where the majority resides) being the ones where they start very early and end very late. On average, most kombis will be on the road 14 hours each day of the week and are normally able to complete six round trips per day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Characteristics of kombi operations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Averages</td>
</tr>
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<td>Starting time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average time on road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily round trips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route fare/passenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily (normal) target required by owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily (Friday/monthend) target required by owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger per trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily takings actually collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily profits pocket by driver &amp; conductor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Characteristics of kombi operations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily target differs for Fridays and monthend</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For daily takings shortfall, the driver will...

- Cash what he managed to collect: 56%
- Top up from his pocket: 5%
- Get his pay deducted: 15%
- Pay next day: 3%

One-way passenger fare and required daily target

Given that most of the routes into and out of Harare are less than 50 kilometres, the average one-way fare is $1. On normal days, the kombi owner requires the kombi crew to hand over $72 from daily takings, and this target increases to $80 during month end and/or Fridays when there are many people travelling into and out of Harare. In the event that the daily target was missed, the majority of respondents (56%) said the owner would allow the crew to cash (hand over) whatever amount they would have collected that day. However, cashing an amount which was below daily target was considered a rare situation, and not the norm. With some owners, missing a daily target resulted in the crew either asked to top from their pockets, or top up the next day, and sometimes the owner will deducted from the crew’s monthly/weekly salaries.

Daily takings and profits pocketed by kombi crew

Although on a daily basis the kombi crew are required to hand over $72 to the owner, the daily target is however different from the actual daily takings. On average, most kombis collect around $132 from the passengers they ferry and when they subtract the required $72, they end up with profits of around $60 which they pocket. In kombi business, the normal arrangement between the crew and owner is that the latter set the daily target, and once that is remitted, the remainder will eventually be taken by the crew. Thus, with daily profits of $60, the crew is motivated to be longer on the road and make as much trips as possible. This also explains why the majority of the crew will be willing to pay roadblock police bribes to avoid being stopped or having their vehicle impounded.

4.1.4 Regression results

This part of the study presents the results from regression estimations. Table 4 provides the results of the regression model. The choice of the explanatory variables is influenced by three factors namely, previous studies on the subject area, and secondly, suitability and availability of data variables from the survey conducted by the author. Lastly, variable selection was informed by the descriptive analysis provided in previous section.

Table 4: Viability of kombi operations (Dependent variable: Daily takings)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>t-Statistic</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lnrblocks</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lnprofits</td>
<td>0.052***</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lnbribes</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>0.256</td>
<td>0.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lnfare</td>
<td>0.085***</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lnstops</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>-0.089</td>
<td>0.929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lntrips</td>
<td>0.063***</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.90***</td>
<td>0.093</td>
<td>41.54</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obs</td>
<td>188</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted-R²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Key: [*], [**] and [***} significant at 10%, 5% and 1% respectively.

*Source: Author simulations*
Does grease money from police roadblocks speed up the wheels of the commuter omnibus?

The results in Table 4 show that three out of the six variables used in the model are statistically significant at 1% level of significance. It is also interesting to note that all the variables do have expected theoretical signs. The findings of the study indicate that profits pocketed by kombi crew (\(\text{lnprofits}\)) are an important factor determining profitability of kombis. A one percent increase in profits collected by kombi crew results in the kombi daily takings increasing by 0.052%. This result makes economic sense given that kombi crew are motivated to remain on the road when the extra profits they collect (over and above their wages/salaries) are higher.

Tabulated results show a positive and significant relationship between kombi fare (\(\text{lnfaire}\)) and daily takings of kombis. Specifically, a 1% increase in kombi fare will result in a 0.085% increase in daily takings for a given kombi. In this instance, as the fare charged per given trip increases, ceteris paribus, the total daily takings per given route will also increase. This has an overall positive effect on the viability of kombi operations.

The results show that the more the number of round trips completed per day, the more the daily takings for a given route. A 1% increase in number of round trips (\(\text{lntrips}\)) will result in 0.063% increase in the daily takings for a given kombi.

The three variables which have been found to be statistically insignificant are the number of roadblocks (\(\text{lnrblocks}\)), bribe paid (\(\text{lnbribes}\)) and number of roadblock stops (\(\text{lnstops}\)) in a given route. Although the number of roadblocks variable, \(\text{lnrblocks}\), has an unexpected sign, the other two variables have their respective expected signs. Whilst paying bribes ensures reduced stoppages at roadblocks along a given route, resulting in more daily takings, the variable is however not statistically significant. Number of police roadblock stops along a given route negatively affects daily takings, although the variable is not statistically significant.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions
The study tested the “grease the wheels” hypothesis at a micro level. Using survey data from 188 kombi drivers and/or conductors (i.e., the kombi crew) which was collected in the two months of January and February 2015, the paper employed an econometric model to achieve its stated objective.

In an empirical model where the dependent variable was daily takings, the regression results show that three out of the six variables used in the model are statistically significant at 1% level of significance. The findings of the study indicate that profits pocketed by kombi crew (i.e., drivers and conductors) (\(\text{lnprofits}\)) are an important factor determining profitability of kombis. This result makes economic sense given that the kombi crew are motivated to remain on the road when the extra profits they collect (over and above their wages/salaries) are higher. A positive and significant relationship between kombi fare (\(\text{lnfaire}\)) and daily takings of kombis was also found by this study. In this instance, as the fare charged per given trip increases, ceteris paribus, the total daily takings per given route will also increase. This has an overall positive effect on the viability of kombi operations. Lastly, the study found out that the more the number of round trips completed per day, the more the daily takings for a given route.

The three variables which have been found to be statistically insignificant are the number of roadblocks (\(\text{lnrblocks}\)), bribe paid (\(\text{lnbribes}\)) and number of roadblock stops (\(\text{lnstops}\)) in a given route. Although the number of roadblocks variable, \(\text{lnrblocks}\), has an unexpected sign, the other two variables have their respective expected signs. Whilst paying bribes ensures reduced stoppages at roadblocks along a given route, resulting in more daily takings, the variable is however not statistically significant. Number of police roadblock stops along a given route negatively affects daily takings, although the variable is not statistically significant.

\(^2\) It is assumed that the kombi will be full to the legal maximum number of passenger for each trip.
5.2 Policy recommendations
Although the number of police roadblock stops along a given route has been found to be insignificant in affecting the daily takings, the government is however recommended to reduce the number of roadblocks to ensure smooth flow of traffic within the country.

6. REFERENCES
Richmond, S. and Alpin, C. 2013. ‘Governments Falter in Fight to Curb Corruption: The people give most a failing grade’, AfroBarometer
Does grease money from police roadblocks speed up the wheels of the commuter omnibus?

ANNEX 1: POLICE CORRUPTION IN THE MEDIA

Box 1: Minimise police roadblocks

EDITOR — I’m a commuter omnibus driver plying the City-Epworth route daily and am worried by the conduct of police on this route (Chiremba Road). It’s only a small stretch of a few kilometres yet you usually find no less than four to five roadblocks yet other bigger routes like the City-Glen Norah one have fewer roadblocks, why?

Usually, there is a roadblock near Domboramwari Police Station, then Hatfield Police Station, later the highway police and the “BMW crew” therefore I beg to ask the police authorities if is this normal?

Fine, we have no problem with the police presence on our roads and we can pay fines if we are at fault but why do these different groups of police officers refuse to accept a ticket from a previous roadblock on the same road? They simply give you another. Is this legal?

And now that the law of the country has spoken about the illegality of spot fines, why is police refusing to observe the law? By the way, where are the anti-corruption units when we are being fleeced daily on these roads?

Tired Driver

The Daily News, 20 February 2015
http://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2015/02/20/minimise-police-roadblocks.

Box 2: Example of police roadblock bribe outcome

National Police spokesperson Senior Assistant Commissioner …yesterday said police had launched an investigation into the case where traffic cops nearly lost about $2,000 stolen money, to a 10-year-old girl…. The money, believed to have been part of bribe loot from motorists, was found in a rubbish pit near a roadblock in Beatrice by the 10-year-old scavenging for valuables along the highway last month.

Details surrounding the incident are that the cops were, on December 24 [2013], manning a roadblock along the Harare-Masvingo road near Gilston Farm, some 40 km outside Harare when they hid the $2 000 loot in a rubbish pit nearby. The 10-year-old discovered the $2 000 loot stashed in a plastic bag with wild fruit (matufu) and gave it to her mother.

Traffic police officers are not allowed to carry personal cash while on duty and are subjected to random spot checks by their superiors and the Anti-Corruption Commission in a bid to curb cases of bribery.

https://www.newsday.co.zw/2014/01/10/roadblock-loot-drama-latest/

Box 3: Judge bemoans corruption on Zimbabwe’s roadblocks

Justice Bere said the police were “cursed” if it was true that the force was superintending co-ordinate collection of “security fees” to give commuter omnibus drivers free passage at roadblocks. “Quite often, one hers of more illegal collection which are being made by the police” he said “There is talk of well coordinated collections of security fees on our public roads, particularly from commuter omnibuses, which fees are meant to give commuter free and unhindered passage at the roadblocks “If it is true, then the department (police) is surely cursed. How can a nation continue to condone such malpractice which creates a breeding ground for corruption?

“We talk of determination for the need to rid this country of corruption. How can we achieve this when we allow our police officers to conduct themselves in such a corrupt manner? My view is that all these issues must be seriously looked at and corrective action be taken without further delays”. The Herald (10th February 2015). “Spot fines illegal: High court judge”. Available at:
http://www.herald.co.zw/spot-fines-illegal-high-court-judge/