The Western Nigeria Security Network Operation and Crime Management in Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the roles Amotekun Corps is playing in crime management in Akure South Local Government Area. The study adopted explorative research which shed more light on the operational roles of Amotekun Corps in the Akure South local government area. The study was structured with a quantitative research design. The desired sample size for the study is 200. The sample size was arrived at by using Taro Yamane's sampling technique, analysed with the help of computer software called Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27. The analysis was completed using descriptive statistics in the form of percentages, frequencies and tables. It was revealed from the findings that community collaboration is essential and the Amotekun outfit collaborates with the community. Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed the benefit and essentiality of the deployment of officers to the community for effective jobs. It was also revealed that the Amotekun Corps has made some notable progress in fighting crime in the South-Western Region. It is no longer news that the Federal Republic of Nigeria is facing rising security issues across its six geographical zones. It was therefore recommended that the Amotekun operation must work in line with the new policy of the federal government over community policing to ensure collecting and gathering security information and addressing security issues at the local community's level.

Keywords: *Crime, Security, Policing*

Introduction

Between 2015 and 2020, the security situation in south-west Nigeria deteriorated significantly. Suspected herdsmen, armed robbers, and kidnappers operated on major highways in the region, causing a wave of criminal activities that instilled fear and terrorised the local population (Amaize et al., 2019). Several notable incidents highlighted the urgency for enhanced security measures, leading to the establishment of the South Western Security Network. In 2015, former Finance Minister and presidential aspirant, Chief Olu Falae, was attacked and abducted on his farmland in Ondo State by alleged Fulani herdsmen on his 77th birthday. His farm employees were seriously injured, requiring urgent medical

attention (Johnson, 2015). Chief Falae was released three days later after a ransom of 5 million naira was paid (Johnson, 2017). Unfortunately, his farm was raided again, resulting in the murder of his security guard (Baiyewu & Akinloye, 2016).

In April 2017, the Managing Director of the Daily Times Newspaper, Adedoyin Ojo Onukaba, was robbed and killed by alleged Fulani herdsmen while traveling on the Akure-Ibadan expressway. Similarly, Mr. Sola Abe, a popular banker, and his driver were murdered by criminals on the same highway a few days later (Johnson, 2017). The President of the Yoruba Council of Elders revealed in a 2019 security brief that approximately 1,123 cells were prepared to house armed herdsmen involved in these criminal activities across Yoruba land (Johnson and Akinrefon, 2019). During that time, the Governor of Ondo State, Rotimi Akeredolu, disclosed that a gang of kidnappers attempted to attack his convoy on the Akure-Ibadan expressway (Akingboye, 2019). Adding to the security concerns, the daughter of Pa. Reuben Fasoranti, the national leader of the Yoruba socio-cultural group, Afenifere, was murdered by suspected herdsmen while traveling from Akure to Ore junction in July 2019 (Vanguard, 2019). Similar attacks and clashes between farmers and herdsmen occurred across several South Western states, resulting in the loss of lives and property. Consequently, anti-grazing laws were enacted in the region to address some of these security challenges.

To address the rising insecurity and protect the region, the Western Nigeria Security Network, also known as the "Amotekun" Corps, was formed. This regional security initiative covers Ondo, Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Osun, and Ekiti States. The establishment of the Amotekun Corps was driven by the urgent need for a well-structured regional security framework following violent attacks on Yoruba people and their properties by invading pastoralists, primarily Fulani herdsmen (Nwoko & Osiki, 2016). The Amotekun Corps operates within the confines of the Western Security Network Law and is empowered to conduct searches, gather criminal intelligence, and collaborate with the Nigeria Police Force for criminal investigations in order to combat criminality linked to alleged Fulani herders (Nwoko & Osiki, 2016). Specifically, this study focuses on the role of the Amotekun Corps in crime management within the Akure South local government area (Olusola and Adeleke, 2020). In light of the above, the Amotekun Corps will be understudied in relation to their specific roles towards crime management within the Akure South local government area.

Statement of Problem

The dissatisfaction among members of society towards security agencies, particularly the government's perceived failure to ensure the safety of lives and properties, has escalated as the crime rate continues to rise. The South Western states have experienced severe security challenges, including wanton killings, kidnappings, armed robberies, and other crimes committed by armed bandits and Fulani herdsmen. In response to these challenges, the South-West governors established the Amotekun Corps to address the prevailing tensions. However, the Corps has faced criticism at the federal level, with claims that it operates outside the boundaries of Nigerian laws. Furthermore, despite its establishment, reports indicate that kidnapping and killings remain widespread in the region (Premium Times, 2021).

The success of the Amotekun Corps is hindered by several challenges, as identified in the literature. These challenges include insufficient funding to acquire weapons and improve security infrastructure, inadequate intelligence security architecture, and poor collaboration with the Nigeria Police Force and other security agencies (Adejumo, 2021). In the lead-up to the inauguration of the Amotekun Corps, the Oyo State Government passed an anti-open grazing bill, which has faced legal challenges from herders. This has further heightened tensions and deepened the fears among the Fulani community of being persecuted. Governor Akeredolu, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), expressed his concern during a Western Governors Forum, stating that it is embarrassing for the historically accommodating South-West region to be plagued by numerous negative stories of attacks. He emphasised the need for a collective effort to combat banditry, terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, herdsmen/farmers clashes, ritual killings, and cybercrime (Ayoola, 2019). The current situation in the country calls for practical and proactive solutions to address the ongoing threats to lives and properties. Despite various studies conducted on the Amotekun Corps and its alignment with the vision of its pioneers, there remains a gap in the literature regarding its effectiveness in the Akure South Local Government Area. Consequently, this study aims to assess

the Amotekun Corps and evaluate its effectiveness in efficiently managing crime in the Akure South Local Government Area.

Research Questions

The primary question sought to be answered in this study is this: What roles are Amotekun Corps playing on crime management in Akure South Local Government Area? However, the secondary research questions of this study include the following:

i.   What are the major challenges facing Amotekun Corp in Akure South Local Government Area?
ii. What is the level of community collaboration with Amotekun Corp on crime management?
iii. How effective is Amotekun in tackling crime in the area?

Significance of the Study

This study addresses the relevance of the Western Security Network in the south-western Nigeria region. Special attention is placed on how the Corps is contributing towards crime management in Akure South Local Government Area. It is the hope of this study to address each of these key issues efficiency of the Corp on crime management, rapid response to emergency situations. The study will also consider the strengths, weaknesses and prospects of the Corp. To do this, attention will be placed on the success of the community-level collaboration strategy of the Corp at the local government level and how this is resolving security challenges faced by the Corp on a daily basis. The findings of this study are expected to help inform the council of the Western Security Network, made up of key stakeholders of the Corp to re-strategise solutions that may help resolve the challenges affecting the operations of the Corp.

Scope of the Study

The study covers some of the districts in the Akure South local government area. The areas were selected randomly from the following: Aponmu, Gbogi, Isikan, Ijomu, Obanla, Lisa, Oda, Odopetu, Aro, Uro, Oke-Aro, Oshodi, Owode, Isolo, and Imuagun. Due to time and financial implications, the study is limited to selected officers of

Amotekun Corps in Akure South and a number of local residents within the selected districts.

Literature Review

Conceptualising Security

Security as a concept has a plethora of scholarly definitions. However, describing "security" is not without some measure of aiding indications, characterised by a number of changing coefficient or variables that aid this process. One may therefore conceive of security in terms of the presence of peace, safety, joyfulness and development in society secured through by acts geared towards the protection of human lives and properties, or security in the context of human enhancement via a guarantee of human dignity against threat to life or injury. Thus, human and social development, as well as the preservation of lives and properties, hinge upon security. The end of the Cold War gave rise to scholarly perspectives concerning security studies. These scholarly efforts sprung up newer dimensions to the study of security built on interdisciplinary considerations across psychology, finance, access to information, public safety, defense, and the military sciences. It is therefore reasonable to judge, reading from the context of resources concentrated on studying security that security is a social necessity affecting all of our lives. Being so then, security has been most considered in the context of these two definitions: security as conceived by Buzan (1991) and William (2008).

Buzan (1991) conceives of security as an ambiguous and multidimensional concept that has gained several misconstrued explanations. He argues that security concerns itself with the procedure that is related to gratifying any kind of threat to the values, and morals the members of the society hold in high esteem. Buzan (1991), observes that security describes the affairs of states as protected against threats and of states' capacity to sustain their sovereign identity as well as their functional integrity to fight against hostile changes inimical to human survival (Bodunde et al, 2014). Therefore, there is an agreement that security sets societies and peoples free from fear, harm, oppression,

anxiety, danger, poverty, injury and deaths caused by human or natural hazards. Security therefore is about the preservation of the society's important values and a protection from threats to those values. William (2008) posits that security's main purpose is to eradicate threats detrimental to values widely cherished by people, especially those threats harmful to the survival of critical assets. Assets may include properties, state structures, or personal safety. Therefore, security can be summed up as freedom from the danger of threats to a nation's survival and its ability to develop by protecting its core values. Ogaba (2010), submits that internal security can be described as a form of freedom or absence of elements that undermine cohesion internally, undermines the corporate existence of nations, and undermines the state capacity to sustain its core institutions socio-political and economic goals that satisfy the yearnings of the people.

It therefore can be inferred that irrespective of the diversity of thoughts permeating the concept, security, underlined concern anchors on the protection of both living and non-living things from loss or destruction. Nwolise (2008) introduces two schools of thoughts that may help elucidate the meaning of security: traditional and non-traditional schools. The traditional school leans towards the pre-Cold War concept of security. A traditional school conceives of security as safety from danger, and freedom from external aggression or attack. The traditional school of thought gives emphasis to the state as the referent object (Abolurin, 2010). Scholars at this school posit that security is equated with peace and conflict prevention through military means (that is, policies to deter attackers or offensive defense). Walt (1991) defines security along this thought system as he describes security as a study of the threat, use and control of military coercion. The traditional school of thoughts place much emphasis on the use of military might or coercion and defense policies employed by the state to engage in a war or avoid war. This school of thought is heavily connected to the military's approach to security. Commenting on this, Buzan (1991) observes that security was in an undeveloped state and needed urgent rehabilitation. Nwolise (2008) opines that the period of the Cold War propagated the doctrine that the most effective tool for dealing with threats or attacks is the use of military force.

Amotekun as a Regional Security Framework

Amotekun is a security initiative created for the Yoruba-speaking people residing in Nigeria. The term "Amotekun" translates to "one who looks like a leopard." This initiative, known as Operation Amotekun, was established on January 9, 2020, by the decision of the six governors representing the southwestern states of Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, and Lagos (Olawale, 2020). The motivation behind starting Operation Amotekun was the rise in incidents of murder, kidnapping, and looting in the six provinces of the southwestern region, leading to numerous casualties and property destruction. To demonstrate their support, the six governors collectively provided a total of 600 motorcycles (20 each), excluding the Oyo state government, which contributed 33 vehicles during the launch of Amotekun (Ojelu, 2020). The security outfit comprises members from various groups, including the Oodua Peoples' Congress (OPC),
The operatives of Amotekun are expected to support the police, other security agencies, and traditional rulers in tackling terrorism, banditry, armed robbery, kidnapping, and resolving conflicts between herders and farmers. During the start-up phase, Lagos, Osun, and Ekiti states recruited 1,320 operatives for the operation, who will carry dane guns similar to local hunters and operate in approximately 52 high-risk locations throughout the South West region. The emblem of the famous Amotekun corps depicts an aggressive leopard leaping, symbolising the intolerance of any criminal activity in the region (Egbas, 2020). The establishment of this initiative was made possible after the formal creation of the agency within a legal framework. Part III of Chapter VI, Section 214(1) of the 1999 Constitution (Amendment) states that the power to maintain security must be federated or shared otherwise violence may erupt. In the context of Amotekun's creation, the term "government" mentioned in that section of the constitution refers to "any federal, state, or local government agency, or any person acting on its behalf," as explained in Section 318(1) of Part IV of Chapter VIII (WIPO, 2020). Therefore, the governors of the Southwestern states are responsible for implementing appropriate measures to safeguard lives and property within their respective jurisdictions. To support Amotekun,

the legislatures of Ondo and Ekiti states have passed bills for its funding (Vanguard, 2020). Similar funding measures have also been approved in the state capitals of Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, and Osun (Adeyemi et al., 2020).

In the political sphere of Nigeria, the early part of 2020 witnessed the emergence of several local security initiatives based on ethnic lines. During the launch, Governor Dr. Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State referred to the new security outfit as the local police force, emphasising that Amotekun is a strategy for self-policing in the southwestern states (Feyisipo, 2020). Since its formation, Amotekun has made significant progress in combating crime in the Southwestern region. Within just one month of its establishment, the corps successfully apprehended three key suspects involved in a kidnapping gang (Gbadamosi, 2020). However, despite the presence of Amotekun, incidents of attacks on Chief Orfalae's farmlands in Irad by suspected nomadic herdsmen continued, resulting in the destruction of crops and injuries to farm workers (Otabor, 2020)

In the aspect of community involvement, Obioha's (2004) study on public perception of the Nigerian Police Force and civil society-based security operatives in urban crime management sheds light on the importance of community trust and collaboration in crime prevention efforts. This underscores the significance of the security outfit's collaboration with traditional rulers and local communities in the South West region to combat crimes effectively. The study by Obioha (2006) on civil society's participation in urban crime management, specifically examining the rise and fall of the Bakassi Boys in Onitsha, Anambra State, provides insights into the dynamics of non-state actors in addressing security challenges. While the Bakassi Boys' methods might differ from those of the security outfit in the South West, the idea of leveraging community-based initiatives for crime prevention aligns with the collaborative approach adopted by the states in the region.

Theoretical Framework

This study explores the weak state and regional power theories as propounded by Hanna Samir Kassab. Special attention will be given to the regional security structure in the south-western Nigeria. The theory links weak state structure to regional security formation processes. The details of this elaborate theory will be provided in the coming paragraphs.

Weak States and Regional Insecurity

Hanna Samir Kassab (2010) conceived the distribution of power among players in the international system to be unequal, and as a result, states have developed differently. The term development is synonymous with the concept of national strength. A high level of development (development measured by the degree of sociopolitical cohesion) usually indicates a strong state and vice versa. According to Buzan, the degree of sociopolitical cohesion within a country is a quantitative factor that indicates the relative strength or weakness of a nation. The activities of weaker states have profound implications for the anarchic structure of the international system and the national security considerations of other states within the system. The strength of the international system obviously depends on the strength of its constituents, and weak states pose stability and security problems that can arise at the system level. For this reason, considering them is essential to understanding the origins of the security complexes that destabilise our world today. Like strength, strength and weakness are not easily measured. For many people, the concept of what each word means is clear, but when it comes to national technology, the exact quantification of terms is vague. Despite the ambiguity associated with that definition, power remains in the way political scientists and historians measure state capacity within the system. Today, the quantification of state power is easily determined.

According to Buzan, because the quality of 'statehood' can be measured by sovereignty criteria, there are some clear benchmarks to measure where a state of today's size is weak (Little, 410). A state can be seen as absolutely powerless or weak when it has little or no socioeconomic cohesion and high levels of disorganisation and chaos. Some are less likely to affect the home and the external environment. By contrast, when referring to the other end of the spectrum, it is much more difficult to define power in absolute terms, and power raises the question of whether there are logical limits to derive. Finally, the power scale and the terms weak and strong are best understood in relative terms. Determining a nation's strengths or weaknesses requires assessing its current best and worst performance within the international system and assigning a rating to the nation accordingly. Classifying a state as a

strong or weak entity depends on many factors. Comparing entities reveals distinct differences in state performance and cohesion. Determining the strengths and weaknesses of a state is less problematic than assessing strengths and weaknesses at the system level. This is because there is still extensive debate about what level of interaction between entities must be achieved to qualify as a system. A disproportionate accumulation of weak or strong states will undoubtedly affect the strength of the system.

The degree of an entity's penetration into the international system is often related to classifying that entity as a weak or strong state. A strong state is classified as having high penetration, and a weak state is classified as having low penetration. Also, when a nation weakens, the possibility of external intervention in the domestic affairs of that nation increases. As a result of internal incompetence, weak states are subject to constraints and threats at the system level, thus limiting direct system-level engagement. Compared to strong countries, weak countries undoubtedly face political, military and economic threats to their sovereignty. Alternatively, powerful states project domestic interests and agendas onto the state, making it more resilient to external influences. Strong states are much more likely to maintain autonomy and also have the ability to interact and intervene at the system level without compromising sovereignty which is not found in weaker states. Weak or strong states are defined according to the degree of socio-political cohesion. At the unit level, socio-political cohesion refers to "the degree of consensual integration between civil society and government". It is a measure of the extent to which coercion has been removed from the relationship between citizens and their agencies." A major problem in determining the strengths or weaknesses of the international system is that, unlike states, there are no actor qualities that can be attributed to the system as a whole. We can also assess the relative strengths or weaknesses of nations based on their degree of sovereignty and interaction, and determine where nations fall on the spectrum in terms of capabilities. Understanding the internal dynamics of weak states is of great importance because, as long as weak states exist, high levels of volatility and uncertainty are inevitable at both the regional and system levels. Put in context, the weakness of the national security structure and poor sociopolitical cohesion in Nigeria were a major triggering factors for the escalation of violence in the south-western Nigeria, which in turn led to the regional security formations crippling national police efforts at crime management.

Methodology

This study is explorative research aimed at sharing more light on the operational roles of Amotekun Corps in the Akure South local government area. The study was structured with a quantitative research design. The data collection process was structured to be collected using the questionnaire method. All the data collected was envisioned analysed using descriptive methods following the pattern of objectives already outlined for this study. This method was determined to be best in these circumstances. The study centred on describing the characteristics, averages, trends and relationships of understudied variables.

The population of this study focuses exclusively on the Akure South local government area of Ondo State, Nigeria. The local government area is headquartered in Akure town of Ondo State. It has an approximate area of 331 km^2 and a population of 352,211 based on 2006 census statistics. The following are the district composition of the local government area: Aponmu, Gbogi, Isikan, Ijomu, Obanla, Lisa, Oda, Odopetu, Aro, Uro, Oke-Aro, Oshodi, Owode, Isolo, and Imuagun (City Facts, 2015).

Participants for this study are drawn out from the following groups: selected members of staff of the Amotekun Corps, and local residents of the Akure South local government area. The method of sampling technique used here is the multi-stage sampling technique. The sample size was arrived at by using Taro Yamane's sampling technique (Yamane, 1967). Below is the mathematical illustration for the sample size determination: **n=N/(1 + N (e)2)**, where **N** signifies the population being studied, **e** as the margin error which could range from 0.10 to 0.01 and **n** as the sample size.

The formula was then applied as follows:

Based on the information provided in Section 3.2 above, the population of Akure South local government area stood at 352, 211. This figure represents our **N,** which is the universal population of the area. Thus:

n= 352211/1+352211 (0.5)2
n= 352211/1+352211*0.0025
n= 352211/1+880.5275
n= 352211/881.5275
n= 399.546224
n= 399.546224÷2
n= 199.77
n= 200 (rounded off)

The division of the sample size at "n = 399.546224" by 2 was done with an intent to absorb only half of the average of the same size, which is a sample of a sample size, without altering the predictability of the sample.

A sample is then drawn from the districts of Akure South local government. It is practically impossible, for financial implications, that samples were drawn from each of the following 15 districts: Aponmu, Gbogi, Isikan, Ijomu, Obanla, Lisa, Oda, Odopetu, Aro, Uro, Oke-Aro, Oshodi, Owode, Isolo, and Imuagun. Therefore, five districts were selected randomly using a simple random sampling technique. Officers were selected equally across rank divisions. A simple rank division system was adopted: the lower ranks and the upper ranks. The most senior ranking officers constituted 50% of the respondents while the remainder comprised the junior ranks.

Data was collected using a questionnaire. Questionnaires were structured using both closed-ended and open-ended question types. The collected data collected was sorted out and then converted into values in a code-book manually. Data will further be transferred into a code-sheet, then analysed with the help of computer software called Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23. The analysis was completed using descriptive statistics in the form of percentages, frequencies, tables and charts.

Presentation of Findings

Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents

This section highlights and discusses the demographic variables of the respondents. (Sex, Ethnic, Marital Status, Religion, and Occupation).

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

S/N	ITEM RESPONSE	Frequency (n=200)	Percentage (%)
1	How would you describe crime rate in Akure?		
	Very high	40	20
	Fairly high	60	30
	Low	80	40
	Very low	20	10
2	Do you feel Amotekun is responsible for this improved sense of security?		
	Yes	177	88.5
	No	23	11.5
3	In what ways has Amotekun failed Akure communities?		
	Unlawful Arrest	116	58
	Victimisation of Civilians	36	18
	Loss of life	46	23
4	If considered effective, mention some of Amotekun's notable achievements in Akure.?		
	Arrest of Fulani Herdsmen	160	80
	Prevention of Kidnapping	16	8
	Safeguarding the capital city against attacks	24	12
5	Do you consider Amotekun to be proactive or reactive to criminal activities?		
	Yes	194	97
	No	6	3
6	Have you ever requested or been requested for emergency security services from Amotekun?		
	Yes	60	30
	No	140	70
7	Which of the following do you think will enable Amotekun to improve upon its emergency response speed? Assigning more officers to vehicle patrol		
	Creating more neighbourhood offices	20	10
	Integrating information technology for efficient distress calls management	60	30
	Others	110	55
		10	5
8	In your opinion, what specific areas of crime is Amotekun effectively managing in Akure?		25
	Kidnapping cases	50	60
	Fulani herdsmen related cases	120	10
	Burglary	20	5
	Highway security	10	0
	Others	0	

Table 4.1 reveals the distribution of the respondents by socio-demographic characteristics. On the sex of the respondents, 57% of the respondents were male, while 43% of them were female; this implies that male respondents constituted the majority. Furthermore, the distribution revealed that on the basis of the marital status of the respondents, 14% of the respondents were single, 46% of them were married, 31% of the respondents were divorced, and 9% were separated. On the basis of religion characteristics of the respondents, 60.5% were Christians, 15% were Muslims, 20% were traditionalists and 4.5% were of other religions. In addition, based on the ethnic affiliation of the respondents, 60% of the respondents were Yoruba, 20% were Igbo 14% were Hausa while 6% were of other ethnic groups. This implied that Yoruba constituted the majority. The last characteristic deals with the occupation of the respondents. Findings revealed that 25% of the respondents were civil servant, 22% were public servants, 43% were self-employed, and 10% were unemployed. It was revealed that none of the respondents were members of the Amotekun corp, while 97% of the respondents declared they were not members of the Amotekun group, however, 3% of the respondents did not disclose if they were members or non-members of the security network. Furthermore, the respondents were distributed over different areas of Akure, and the findings revealed that 19% of the respondents were residents of Aponmu, 30% resided in Isikan, 21% resided in Obanla, 10% were residents of Aro, and 20% were residents of Oda.

The demographical results, therefore hence affirmed that, all the respondents were matured enough to give an accurate and reliable responses that would help this study.

4.3 Analysis of the Research Questions

In this Section relevant tables were used to discuss and interpret the research questions.

Table 2: Analysis of data based on the challenges facing Amotekun and their activities

S/N	ITEM RESPONSE	Frequency (n=200)	Percentage (%)
1	**In your opinion, what the major challenges faced by the Amotekun corps towards crime prevention in Akure?**		
	Poor funding	20	10
	Shortage of man power	30	15
	Lack of state-of-the art equipment and weapons	30	15
	Poor community collaboration	50	25
	Poor inter-agency intelligence sharing	50	25
	Other	20	10
2	**What do you consider the major causes of these challenges?**	10	5
	Low annual budget allocation	40	20
	Inconsistent recruitment strategy	40	20
	Insufficient training to handle modern security equipment	70	35
	Failing community relations between Amotekun and members of the community	24	12
	Rivalry between the Nigeria Police Force and Amotekun	16	8
	Others		
3	How do you think these challenges can be overcome?	24	12
	Increased annual budget allocation	36	18
	Recruiting officers on a need basis	40	20
	Continuous on job training	46	23
	Creating familiarity with the communities Amotekun serves	40	20
	Creating mandatory inter-agency intelligence flow	6	3
	Other		
4	Is Amotekun Corps solving crime-related problems in Akure?		
	Yes	140	

			70
	No	60	30
5	In which of the following ways is Amotekun solving crime problems in Akure?		
	Increased presence of the Amotekun corps in Akure environs	36	18
	Maintaining constant vehicle patrol of Akure neigbourhoods	24	12
	High-way patrol	46	23
	Making arrest of Fulani herdsmen encroaching on Akure farms	80	40
	Other	6	3

Field Survey, 2023

The table 2 answers the research question on the challenges faced by the corps.

Item 1 revealed that 10% of the respondents agreed that poor funding was a challenge faced, 15% agreed that a shortage of man power was a challenge, 15% also agreed that a lack of state-of-the art equipment and weapons was a challenge faced, and 25% opined that poor community collaboration was the challenge faced. 25% of the respondents considered poor inter-agency intelligence sharing as a challenge against the Amotekun Corp while 10% agreed that other factors were the challenges faced. Item 2. which discussed the major causes of these challenges revealed that low annual budget allocation was a major cause and this was affirmed by 5% of the respondents. 20% of the respondents agreed that inconsistent recruitment strategies were a major cause of the challenges while 20% also agreed that insufficient training to handle modern security equipments was a major cause. 35% of the respondents agreed that failing community relation between Amotekun and members of the community was the major cause while 12% of the respondents agreed that rivalry between the Nigeria Police Force and Amotekun was a major cause of the challenges faced. 8% also agreed that other factors caused the challenges faced. Item 3 revealed how the respondents think these challenges can be conquered. 12% of the respondents agreed that increased annual budget allocation can be used to solve some of the challenges faced while 18% of the respondents agreed that recruiting officers on a need basis will solve the challenges faced by the security outfit. 20% of the respondents opined that continuous on-the-job training for the men of the security outfit can tackle the challenges they face. 23% of the respondent corroborates the assertion that familiarity

with the communities Amotekun serves can help tackle the challenges faced by the organisation. 20% of the respondents agreed that creating mandatory inter-agency intelligence would help to tackle the challenges faced by the organization 3% of the respondents agreed that other means could be explored to tackle the challenges faced by the organisation. Item 4 checked if Amotekun Corps solves crime related problems in Akure. 70% of the respondents agreed that this assertion was true while 30% of the respondents disagreed. Item 5 inquired into the methods employed by Amotekun in solving crime problems in Akure. 18% agreed that increased presence of Amotekun corps in Akure environs had been one of the method used by the security outfit while 12% opined that maintaining constant vehicle patrol of Akure neighbourhoods was a major job used in countering criminal activities by the security outfit 23% viewed that high-way patrol was the backbone of the successes of the security outfit, while 40% affirmed that making arrest of Fulani herdsmen encroaching on Akure farms was a major duty that the security outfit employed in nipping crime in the bud and 3% believed that other means were used.

By implication, one can thus submit that several challenges faced by the Amotekun Corp can be solved and that the effectiveness of the group has been felt in curbing crimes within Akure.

Table 3: Analysis of data based on the extent of community collaboration with the Amotekun Corp

S/N	ITEM RESPONSE	Frequency (n=200)	Percentage (%)
1.	Do you think there is a reasonable extent of community collaboration between Amotekun and communities in Akure towards crime prevention? Yes, there is. No, there are none. I'm not sure.	 100 90 10	 50 45 5
2.	If yes to question 13, how valuable would you describe this collaboration? Extremely valuable; Fairly valuable; Not valuable?	 94 76 30	 47 38 15
3.	In what ways are Amotekun and Akure communities in collaboration? Tick the options that apply: ? Community members report suspicious criminal activities to the Amotekun corps Amotekun holds regular stakeholder meetings with communities Amotekun let members of the communities volunteer for spy activities Others	 80 50 60 10	 40 25 30 5
4.	How consistently are Akure communities reporting suspicious activities to the Amotekun corps? Very consistent Consistent Not consistent at all	 120 58 22	 60 29 11
5	To the best of your knowledge, is Amotekun maintaining consistent stakeholder meetings with members of your community? Yes, they do No, they do not.	 140 60	 70 30

Field Survey, 2023

The table above showed the data based on the extent of community partnership. Item 1, 50 % of the respondents agreed that there is a reasonable extent of community collaboration between Amotekun and communities in Akure towards crime prevention, 45% disagreed and 5% were not sure. On item, 2 47% of the respondents who agreed with item 1 agreed that the collaboration between the Amotekun and the community was extremely valuable, 38% agreed that it was fairly valuable, and 15% disagreed that the collaboration was valuable. Item 3 revealed ways Amotekun and Akure communities collaborate. 40% agreed that the collaboration was done via community members reporting suspicious criminal activities to the Amotekun Corps. 25% agreed that Amotekun holds regular stakeholder meetings with communities, 30% opined that Amotekun let members of community's volunteer for spy activities, and 5% agreed that other methods were used. Item 4 revealed how consistently Akure communities report suspicious activities to Amotekun Corps. 60% agreed that it was very consistent, 29% agreed that it was consistent, and 11% agreed that it was not consistent at all. Item 5 revealed whether Amotekun maintained consistent stakeholder meetings with members of the community. 70% agreed that they do, while 30% agreed that they do not.

By implication, one can thus submit that Amotekun Corp and its host community have some collaboration history and thus have a reasonable partnership with their host community.

Table 4: Analysis of data based on the effectiveness of the corps

S/N	ITEM RESPONSE	Frequency (n=200)	Percentage (%)
1	How would you describe crime rate in Akure? Very high Fairly high Low Very low	 40 60 80 20	 20 30 40 10
2	Do you feel Amotekun is responsible for this improved sense of security? Yes No	 177 23	 88.5 11.5
3	In what ways has Amotekun failed Akure communities? Unlawful Arrest Victimisation of Civilians Loss of life	 116 36 46	 58 18 23
4	If considered effective, mention some of Amotekun's notable achievements in Akure.? Arrest of Fulani Herdsmen Prevention of Kidnapping Safeguarding the capital city against attacks	 160 16 24	 80 8 12
5	Do you consider Amotekun to be proactive or reactive to criminal activities? Yes No	 194 6	 97 3
6	Have you ever requested or been requested for emergency security services from Amotekun? Yes No	 60 140	 30 70
7	Which of the following do you think will enable Amotekun to improve upon its emergency response speed? Assigning more officers to vehicle patrol Creating more neighbourhood offices Integrating information technology for efficient distress calls management Others	 20 60 110 10	 10 30 55 5
8	In your opinion, what specific areas of crime is Amotekun effectively managing in Akure? Kidnapping cases Fulani herdsmen related cases Burglary Highway security Others	 50 120 20 10 0	25 60 10 5 0

Field Survey, 2023

The table above shows the data based on the effectiveness of the corps. In item 1, respondents described the crime rate in Akure with 20% agreeing that the crime rate is very high, 30% agreeing that it is fairly high, 40% opining that it is low and 10% agreeing that it is very low. Item 2 revealed the position of the respondents on whether Amotekun is responsible for this improved sense of security 95% agreed while 0% disagreed. Item 3 revealed how Amotekun has failed Akure communities. 58% agreed that it was by unlawful arrest, 18% opined that it was by victimisation of civilians and 23% believed it was through loss of life. Item 4, revealed the achievements of the Amotekun's in Akure. 80% agreed that the arrest of Fulani herdsmen was a major achievement of the Amotekun in Akure. 8% agreed that the prevention of kidnapping was an achievement for the Amotekun, and 12% opined that safeguarding the capital city against attacks was a major achievement for the Amotekun. On item 5, 97% of the respondents agreed that Amotekun is proactive or reactive to criminal activities while 3% disagreed. On item 6, 30% of the respondent revealed that they had requested/been requested for emergency security services from Amotekun while 70% disagreed. Item 9 revealed respondents rating of Amotekun's emergency arrival speed. 50% of the respondents agreed that the delivery was very fast, 30% agreed it was fast, 10% agreed it was slow and 10% agreed it was slow. Item 7 Methods to enable Amotekun to improve upon its emergency response speed. 10% of the respondents agreed with the suggestion that assigning more officers to vehicle patrol can improve the speed, 30% agreed that creating more neighbourhood offices can improve the response speed, 55% agreed that integrating information technology for efficient distress calls management will be of great benefit in improving the response of the security outfit, and 5% agreed posited that other methods can be looked into for the facilitation of rapid response. It was also revealed that Amotekun effectively manages specific areas of crime in Akure. 25% agreed that it was kidnapping cases, 60% opined that it was Fulani herdsmen-related cases, 10 agreed that burglary was one of the cases effectively managed, and 5% agreed that highway security was one of the methods deployed.

By implication, one can thus submit that Amotekun Corp and its subsidiaries have been effective more importantly in the area of Fulani

herdsmen related cases, preventing them from carrying out evil or harmful devises.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the findings in Table 2 revealed that, there are challenges faced by security outfits and such can also be taken care of. The work of Hans Brauch (2011) corroborates this stance. Brauch argued that the hazards presented by multiple challenges, threats, challenges, and vulnerabilities can be "avoided, prevented, managed, managed, mitigated, and adapted by social groups, nations, or regional or global international organisations".

In the sequel to the findings, it was affirmed that community collaboration is essential and the Amotekun outfit collaborates with the community. This was supported by the works of Chene (2012). Chene opined that the community partnership model deals in full harmony with cooperative partnerships between police, individuals, and organisations to develop solutions to local crime problems. This approach may lead to more trust in the police.

Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed the benefit and essentiality of the deployment of officers to the community for effective jobs. The President's final report of his Task Force on Policing in the Twenty-First Century (2015) corroborated this position. It stated that community policing must go beyond a professional perspective and on a more personal basis to engage actively with community members. Schanzer et al. (2016) opined that to achieve this, officers must be consistently assigned to these communities with the sole purpose of building effective relationships. Similarly, if police departments do not build trust with the communities they serve, they are less likely to be successful in addressing local violent crime.

Gbadamosi, (2020), opined that Amotekun has made some notable progress in fighting crime in the South-Western Region. The corps is said to have arrested three key suspects of kidnapping gang just a month after the commission was established. After this feat, Chief Olu-Falae's farmlands in Ilado village were raided by nomads suspected of destroying his crops. These herdsmen were equally responsible for various kinds of farm worker injuries. This position was corroborated in Table 4, where it was affirmed that the Amotekun Security was effective

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is no secret that Nigeria is currently grappling with escalating security challenges across its six geographical regions. In the South West region of Nigeria, home to millions of Yoruba people who share common origins, beliefs, values, and culture, there are recurring security issues such as ritualistic killings, conflicts between Fulani herders and farmers, armed robberies, and kidnappings, among others. The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) in this area is understaffed, underpaid, and stretched thin, making it unable to effectively combat these crimes over the years.

Despite the numerous security concerns that have affected towns across Nigeria, including Akure in Ondo State, these issues are not insurmountable, especially when there is unity and a strong political will to advocate for and support true federalism. Amotekun represents the initial steps towards establishing Nigeria's true federal system. It reflects the will of the people to take action and protect themselves from the prevailing evil in the land. This initiative has garnered significant praise from South Westerners and should be recognised by all well-meaning Nigerians who genuinely seek to address these security challenges head-on.

The emergence of regional security efforts like Amotekun, despite political differences, underscores the social cohesion and political collaboration within the South West region. For the people of south-west Nigeria, the Amotekun Corps offers hope that the scourge of armed robberies, kidnappings, ritualistic killings, and similar crimes in the region can be significantly reduced, if not entirely eradicated, in the coming years. The establishment of Operation Amotekun also highlights the long-standing consensus among key stakeholders in our nation's security and law enforcement agencies regarding the importance of implementing community policing in Nigeria. Amotekun's primary mission is to safeguard the south-west from threats posed by Fulani herders and other terrorist groups. Its role is centred on ensuring the collective survival of the people. Furthermore, Amotekun serves as evidence that Nigeria stands at a critical juncture where each region must be vigorously defended by local security forces. Under Amotekun, killer herders and other terrorist groups will find no sanctuary in the South West.

On the strength of the study's findings, the following are based on the conclusions of this study, the state governments of Western Nigeria are highly advised to consider and execute the following:

- It is imperative for the South West elders to refrain from involving politics, religious biases, or regionalism when managing this security organisation.
- The Amotekun operation should align with the federal government's new community policing policy, emphasising the collection and dissemination of security intelligence and the resolution of security concerns at the grassroots level.
- Ample funding must be allocated to the Amotekun Corps, and the Corps should be transparent in its utilisation of these funds for its operations and the well-being of its personnel.
- State governments should ensure that the recruitment of Amotekun Corps members is based on merit rather than favouritism.
- The Amotekun agency should be consulted and integrated into community policing efforts to track down highway robbers, kidnappers, and ritualistic criminals in their concealed locations.

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