



Regional Police: A Panacea to Insecurity in Nigeria (A Case Study of Amotekun)

By

OBASI ASOH

**Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nigerian Defence Academy,
Kaduna**

Abstract

Nigeria's escalating insecurity, driven by kidnapping, banditry, insurgency, and farmer-herder violence, has exposed the chronic failure of the constitutionally centralised Nigeria Police Force, characterised by delayed response, poor local intelligence, and eroded public trust. This study critically examines regional policing as a potential remedy, using Operation Amotekun (2020–2025) as a single critical case. Employing a qualitative-dominant mixed-methods design, the research analyses legal texts, official reports, crime statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics and independent monitors, perception surveys, and human rights documentation through thematic analysis, descriptive statistics, and process-tracing. Findings reveal that Amotekun produced dramatic reductions in kidnapping (from 243 cases in 2019 to an estimated 30–35 in 2025), halved regional homicide rates, virtually eliminated mass highway abductions, and restored public confidence from 31 % to 74 % in the South-West, far outperforming zones without similar structures. These gains stemmed from local recruitment, rapid-response capabilities, and community intelligence networks. However, persistent legal ambiguity, documented human rights violations, funding instability, political instrumentalisation, and jurisdictional friction with federal agencies severely limit the model's sustainability. The study concludes that while Amotekun proves the superiority of decentralised policing in Nigeria's context, it is not a panacea. It recommends urgent constitutional amendment to establish properly regulated state police services with independent oversight, equitable federal funding, and mandatory professional standards to transform Nigeria's broken security architecture.

Keywords: Amotekun, Regional Policing, Insecurity, Decentralised policing, State police.



1. INTRODUCTION

There has been the prevalence of insecurity in the country for the past ten years, with insurgency in North-East, banditry and kidnappings in the North-West and North-Central areas, violence due to separatism in South-East, oil theft and related crimes in South-South, and increased kidnappings and armed robberies in South-West (International Crisis Group, 2024; Institute for Economics and Peace, 2024). The above-mentioned security problems have led to the loss of lives, displacement of people, and financial losses (ACLED, 2025; SBM Intelligence, 2025; World Bank, 2023; Dataphyte, 2024).

Frustration with the ineffectiveness of the federal police force led to the creation of the Western Nigeria Security Network known as Operation Amotekun by the six South-West states in January 2020. Operation Amotekun is a regional security scheme that aims at supplementing the work of the existing security forces through intelligence operations, surveillance, community policing, and crime prevention (Ojo, 2021).

The formation of Amotekun has attracted many debates. While the advocates see it as an innovation aimed at addressing problems associated with centralized policing, opponents have raised issues on the legal basis of this regional security organization. Although it has been reported that there are positive results in terms of crime prevention, intelligence activities, and community relations, there are still many concerns about the funding, accountability, human rights, and inter-agency operations (Ojo, 2021).

In spite of the existing body of literature on issues of insecurity and security provision in community contexts in Nigeria, there still exists insufficient scholarly consideration of Amotekun as a legal, government funded and inter-state regional security organization that has been operating for a considerable period of time. In this regard, this paper investigates the efficacy of Amotekun operation in terms of improving security in South West Nigeria.

1.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Insecurity

Security has always been an important subject in politics and social theories. It used to be seen as the defence of the sovereignty, integrity, and interests of a state against military



attacks from the outside. With this view, it was believed that such institutions as the army and the police were mainly supposed to defend the state. Yet, modern times have proved to be contradictory to this traditional notion of security, and the meaning of it has been expanded and now includes more dimensions than just defending the state from any possible military attack.

Modern studies define security as a multi-dimensional phenomenon where protecting people, communities, and social structures is a matter of concern. Pavleski (2023) claims that security is not limited to any military issues but rather covers such aspects as social cohesion and cultural continuity of communities in the face of new threats. Likewise, the idea of human security defines security through the prism of the person and treats threats such as poverty, disease, environmental changes, and exclusion as important security issues according to Nuhu et al. (2025).

In addition, there is an impact of institutions and governance on the efficacy of security mechanisms. According to Adeniji (2025), in a country like Nigeria, the highly centralized nature of the security system makes it difficult to respond to localized security problems effectively. On the other hand, Asike (2023) argues that in societies characterized by plurality, sustained security needs not only coercive institutions but also trust, integration, and cooperation between different communities.

Apart from institutions, security can be understood through the perspective of people's experiences. Ferhani and Nyman (2023) argue that the issue of security should be assessed in terms of the experiences of people. Thus, one should take into account not only the official approaches but also social circumstances that determine the perception of people's sense of security.

Ivančik and Andrassy (2023) see security as an evolving and situation-dependent concept that depends on various factors such as politics, economy, technology, and society. In particular, security may mean protection of the state, society, and individuals depending on the situational context. This implies that modern approaches to security cover military, societal, economic, environmental, and human aspects of security.



Insecurity in the Nigerian Context

Insecurity in Nigeria depicts the trend of today's security which has gone beyond state-centric security towards wider security concepts where people's welfare and social stability are considered more important than before. Instead of focusing on dangers to the state, insecurity is manifested in violent crimes, communal clashes, poverty, and organizational inadequacies.

According to Ivančík and Andrassy (2023), insecurity is a result of the incapability of individuals and communities to receive proper protection from danger in order to guarantee their safety. These threats can be seen in Nigeria through the continued occurrence of acts such as kidnappings, banditry, communal clashes, and criminal activities.

Insecurity is now considered one of the greatest obstacles to development. According to Chibueze (2023), insecurity causes interruption to economic activities and undermines people's trust in institutions. The prevalence of insecurity shows the incapability of current security mechanisms to offer enough protection for people.

Insecurity, according to human security scholars, is based on such aspects as deprivation, exclusion, and weak governance mechanisms. According to Nuhu et al. (2025), security measures ought to not only provide protection for government institutions but also guarantee that human well-being and dignity are taken into account. These views are supported by Asike (2023), who claims that trust, inclusion, and cohesion play an important role in securing the stability of multi-ethnic countries.

Pavleski (2023) adds that insecurity is a multidimensional phenomenon that is based on such aspects as economic, societal, political, and psychological insecurities. Therefore, it is essential to develop comprehensive measures for addressing the problem of insecurity in Nigeria.

Regional Policing in Practice: Case Study of Àmòtèkùn in Nigeria

The creation of Àmòtèkùn in 2020 marks an important step in the security governance framework in Nigeria. Established by the South-West Governors' Forum in response to the increase in kidnappings, banditry, and other forms of criminal activities, this development is a result of increasing demands for decentralized security management (Adebayo, 2020; Akeredolu, 2024).



The rise of Àmòtèkùn is also connected with the wider discussion of regional policing and security decentralization. According to Odewale and Lamidi (2020), regional security programs create the opportunity for greater involvement of local populations in crime prevention and intelligence gathering. Such structures are believed to be more attuned to local needs than highly centralized police systems.

Several pieces of empirical research point out the positive impact of Àmòtèkùn on the problem of crime control in some areas of South-West Nigeria. In particular, Awotayo et al. (2023) claim that this program has improved local intelligence gathering and the cooperation between the security agencies and the local communities. Awotayo et al. (2025) also state that the use of local knowledge has led to a better performance of the security operations in the region.

The public perception has also made the programme more legitimate. According to Olowo (2025), most people view the Àmòtèkùn as closer to them than other law enforcement structures and capable of dealing with their concerns better than the former. The findings confirm the arguments of Iwuamadi et al. (2021) that the presence of public trust and cooperation is vital for successful policing.

Nevertheless, there are still issues relating to the legitimacy and legal regulation of the Àmòtèkùn. Adebayo (2020) and Akeredolu (2024) observe that the constitutional regulations on policing are highly centralized; therefore, the legality and sustainability of such regional security forces become doubtful. Other problems are related to financing, training, accountability, and collaboration with federal security organizations.

Overall, the example of the Àmòtèkùn illustrates both possibilities and limitations of the decentralization of security governance in the country. Although this programme managed to involve communities into security measures, its success largely depends on proper legal regulation and collaboration with various institutions.

1.2 Empirical Literature Review

Tamuno's (1970) seminal work documents that pre-1966 Nigeria operated a federal policing system comprising Northern, Western, Eastern regional forces and Native Authority



police. These forces were culturally attuned, enjoyed community cooperation, and maintained order with minimal brutality. The 1966 unification decree, justified as preventing secession, transformed the police into a centralised, militarised institution detached from citizens (Rotimi, 2001). Ahire (1991) and Alemika (1988) demonstrate that post-civil war centralisation produced systemic extortion, human rights abuse, and inability to police rural areas effectively.

Multiple empirical studies confirm the failure of Nigeria's unitary model. Human Rights Watch (2010) documented institutionalised torture, extrajudicial killings, and checkpoint extortion. Owen (2014, 2016) describes the NPF as a "total institution" that deliberately isolates officers from communities through rotational posting. Hills (2008, 2012) found that deployment patterns follow federal regime security priorities rather than crime maps. Public trust collapsed: Afrobarometer Round 7 (2018) recorded only 23% confidence in the police. By 2019, kidnapping had become industrialised, with South-West highways recording hundreds of cases annually (CLEEN Foundation, 2019).

The most relevant empirical antecedents are vigilante movements. The Oodua People's Congress (OPC) in the South-West (1999–2005) reduced armed robbery dramatically in Lagos and Ibadan but later engaged in ethnic violence (Nolte, 2004; Guichaoua, 2007). The Bakassi Boys in the South-East (1999–2002) virtually eliminated robbery in Aba and Onitsha within months through ruthless methods but were later implicated in hundreds of summary executions (Smith, 2004; Harnischfeger, 2003). Hisbah in northern states enforced Sharia bylaws effectively but clashed with federal authorities over jurisdiction (Last, 2008). All three cases illustrate the "dual face" of local policing: rapid efficacy accompanied by accountability deficits when legal oversight is absent (Agbiboa, 2015).

Country like India maintains state police lists under a national framework; despite corruption scandals, state forces respond faster to local crises than a hypothetical central force could (Verma, 2005). Brazil's state-level Military Police, though notoriously violent, provide the rapid-response capability federal forces lack (Husain, 2007). South Africa's provincial operational control (with national standard-setting) is credited with preventing total crime collapse in the 1990s (Shaw, 2002). These cases suggest that regulated decentralisation



outperforms monopoly central control in large, diverse countries.

Pre-2020 literature overwhelmingly demonstrates the structural incapacity of centralised policing and the short-term efficacy (but long-term risk) of unregulated vigilantism. However, no study examines a legally sanctioned, multi-state, state-funded security outfit with formal powers operating continuously for over five years. Amotekun fills this exact gap, offering the first opportunity to test whether hybrid regional policing within Nigeria's unitary constitutional order.

1.3 Summary of Reviewed Literature and Research Gap

From the reviewed literature, it is evident that security has changed from being a state-oriented phenomenon of territorial protection to a more complex system which incorporates human welfare, social cohesion, institutional efficiency, and community resilience. Scholars like Pavleski (2023), Ivančík and Andrassy (2023), Nuhu et al. (2025), and Asike (2023) indicate that security comprises economic, societal, political, and human elements. In Nigeria, the indicators of insecurity include kidnappings, banditry, communal violence, poverty, poor institutions, and loss of confidence in security agencies. Literature has established that the management of security requires the participation of communities and responsiveness in governance.

Despite the growing literature on insecurity and regional security measures, there is an evident gap. The existing literature focused mostly on the deficiencies of centralised police system, vigilante groups, or the constitutionality and legal status of Àmòtèkùn. There was not much empirical research carried out in order to investigate the effectiveness of Àmòtèkùn as a state-supported and legal regional security institution in several South-Western states. This study fills this gap by investigating the effectiveness of Àmòtèkùn in ensuring better security in South-West Nigeria, especially focusing on crime prevention, intelligence, community trust, and problems associated with it.



1.4 Theoretical Framework

Federalism and the Allocation of Policing Powers

Classical federal theory holds that in compound republics, functions should be assigned to the level of government closest to the people unless overriding considerations demand central control (Riker, 1964; Watts, 1999). Policing is traditionally regarded as a quintessential local function because threats, cultural contexts, and community expectations vary dramatically across territory. Elazar (1987) and Ostrom et al.'s (1961) polycentric governance thesis argue that multiple, overlapping centres of authority produce more innovative, responsive, and accountable services than monocentric hierarchies. Applied to security, polycentric policing enhances legitimacy, intelligence flow, and rapid intervention – critical in asymmetric threats such as kidnapping and banditry that exploit terrain familiarity (Skogan & Hartnett, 1997; Bayley, 2006).

In deeply divided societies, centralised police forces frequently become instruments of the dominant ethnic or political group, alienating minorities and eroding voluntary compliance (Hills, 2000; Enloe, 1980). Decentralisation, conversely, permits cultural congruence, linguistic competence, and political accountability to sub-national elected executives (Ostrom, 2010). However, opponents of decentralised policing highlight the risk of capture by regional elites and potential for inter-unit conflict, citing historical abuses in Nigeria's First Republic and contemporary India and Pakistan (Akinyele, 2001; Verma, 2005).

Community Policing and Hybrid Security Governance

Modern policing theory shifted in the 1980s–1990s from reactive, militarised models toward community-oriented policing that emphasises partnership, problem-solving, and local knowledge (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990; Skolnick & Bayley, 1988). In many African states where formal police capacity is weak, communities have generated “twilight institutions” or hybrid security actors – vigilantes, neighbourhood watches, ethnic defence groups, and religious police (Baker, 2008; Lund, 2006). These non-state actors often outperform state police in rapid response and intelligence because they are socially embedded and enjoy higher legitimacy (Pratten, 2008; Meagher, 2007). However, without legal regulation and oversight,



they frequently degenerate into predatory or partisan militias (Harnischfeger, 2003; Gore & Pratten, 2003). Amotekun represents a rare attempt to formalise and regulate such hybridity while retaining local recruitment and political direction.

Significance of the Theoretical Framework to the Study

Community policing and hybrid security governance theory is significant to the present research since Amotekun is a hybrid security organisation where governmental power mixes with community-based security measures. By means of local recruitment, community involvement and information collection, the organisation aims at mending the relationship between state security organisations and communities. With the use of the theory, it will be possible to determine how community involvement and local legitimacy help Amotekun in addressing the issues related to crime and insecurity. The theory allows for assessing the contribution of institutionalisation of community-based security measures to the increase in public trust and security governance in South-West of Nigeria. Incorporation of the Federalism Theory into Community Policing/Hybrid Security Governance Theory makes up a theoretical framework which allows for examining Amotekun in terms of its formation, functioning and effectiveness. While Federalism Theory helps to understand why the security functions are decentralized to sub-state level, Community Policing and Hybrid Security Governance Theory explains the ways local community involvement and trust can improve security results.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative-dominant mixed-methods case study design with quantitative supplementation, focusing on Operation Amotekun as a single, critical case of regional policing in a centralised federation. The case study approach was considered appropriate because it provides an in-depth understanding of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and enables the researcher to explore the institutional, operational, and security implications of regional policing in South-West Nigeria.

Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary legal and policy



texts – the six state Amotekun establishment laws (2019–2020), South-West Attorneys-General harmonised guidelines (2021), DAWN Commission reports, and official statements by governors and Amotekun commandants.

Secondary documents – National Bureau of Statistics crime reports (2019–2024), Nigeria Health Watch/NOIPolls homicide data, CLEEN Foundation perception surveys, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch field reports, and media-archived operational parades.

3 Quantitative trend analysis – kidnapping incidents, homicide rates, arrests, and victim rescues in the South-West zone, benchmarked against national averages and North-West/North-Central zones without equivalent structures.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic and content analysis techniques. These techniques include:

- i. Content and thematic analysis of legal instruments and public discourse to establish institutional design and political contestation.
- ii. Descriptive statistical analysis of crime trends (percentage change calculations, zonal comparisons).
- iii. Process-tracing to link Amotekun interventions (forest combing, rapid-response patrols, community intelligence networks) to observed outcomes.
- iv. Critical discourse analysis of human rights allegations and federal–state tensions.

However, the limitations include incomplete disaggregated state-level data (especially Lagos and Ogun) and the absence of an experimental control group. These were mitigated by triangulating multiple sources and comparing South-West trends with zones lacking similar outfits. The timeframe 2020–2025 provides sufficient longitudinal depth to assess both immediate impact and medium-term sustainability.

1.7 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Analysis of Documentary Evidence

Theme 1: Legal and Institutional Framework of Amotekun



Following the assessment of the reviewed Amotekun Establishment Laws (2020-2021), DAWN Commission reports, constitutional commentaries, and security policy documents, Amotekun came out as a regional security agency established by the six South-West states to work alongside the Nigeria Police Force in responding to the emerging security threats within the region. In the reviewed legal texts, Amotekun is defined as a security and safety corps whose main duties include intelligence gathering, surveillance, crime prevention and apprehending of suspects to be handed over to the relevant law enforcement agencies. Further analysis of the establishment laws and policy documents has shown that the establishment of Amotekun was largely determined by the high frequency of kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery, and other types of violence, as well as dissatisfaction of the population with the efficiency of the centralized policing model. Moreover, the review of legal analyses and constitutional evaluation showed that there was continuing disagreement on the constitutionality of the Amotekun. Whereas some documents analyzed the organization from the perspective of legality based on the state government obligation to provide security to its citizens, other documents brought into discussion the constitutional clause on the federal power to establish police. The documentary data shows that the institution of Amotekun is an effort to combine local security requirements with constitutional policing in Nigeria.

Theme 2: Crime Prevention and Security Management:

Based on the analysis of crime statistics, security assessment reports, operational records, and policy documents obtained from the National Bureau of Statistics (2025), ACLED (2025), SBM Intelligence (2025), DAWN Commission reports, and Amotekun operational reports, the findings revealed that Amotekun has played a significant role in crime prevention and security management across the South-West region since its establishment.vv The analysis of the documents under review indicates an observed trend of reduced reports on incidences of kidnapping, armed robbery, and other violent crimes in some of the South-West states between 2020 and 2025. From the documents under review, the presence of the intelligence gathering network in the communities, regular patrols, forest monitoring, and quick response efforts had been found to improve security results in various rural and semi-urban communities. According to the analyzed reports, the personnel of Amotekun were seen to be undertaking intelligence



work, arrests, rescue operations, and neutralizing criminal hideouts, especially those in the forest area favored by the kidnappers. Operational reports have been found to indicate that the cooperation between Amotekun and traditional security agencies such as Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and local vigilante forces improves information sharing and collaboration in addressing the security challenges in the region. It was further revealed that the South-West region had better security results compared to other regions which lack a security body like Amotekun.

Theme 3: Community Trust and Public Legitimacy

Analysis of surveys, policies, media reports, and research (CLEEN Foundation, DAWN Commission, Amnesty International, NHRC) indicates that legitimacy and trust from the community form the most significant strengths of Amotekun. The South West communities find it to be more accessible, effective, and culturally sensitive than federal law enforcement officers. Recruitment of local people, speaking in their language, and understanding the geography of the region have enhanced their trust and willingness to report. Regular patrols and intervention in the rural and semi-urban parts of the region have raised their security level, helping fill gaps in the absence of federal presence.

On the other hand, several concerns arise. Analysis of the policies and human rights reports has identified issues such as lack of accountability, professionalization, and misuse of power. Issues of political involvement, ethnic preference, and lack of proper supervision create skepticism. Sustainability concerns identified in government and NGO reports include lack of funding, training issues, and lack of coordination between Amotekun and federal law enforcement agencies.

Theme 4: Operational and Institutional Challenges

From the review of the above-discussed reports, inadequate and inconsistent funding is the biggest problem in South-West States. There are differences in budget allocations, logistic support, welfare schemes, and provision of equipment causing different levels of capacity building of Amotekun outfits in different states. The above reports further show that



the shortage of vehicles, communication devices, and other operational devices limits the effectiveness of Amotekun operations sometimes.

The analysis of institutional and policy documents also highlighted some difficulties associated with legal and constitutional ambiguities. The analysis revealed that despite the fact that Amotekun was founded by state laws, the powers of this organization in the context of Nigeria's centralized system of police were not clearly defined. It was found that this ambiguity sometimes led to conflicts of jurisdictions between members of Amotekun and federal security agencies with regard to the procedures of arrests, investigations, and utilization of security equipment. Moreover, the analysis of oversight and human rights documents highlighted issues related to accountability, professionalism, and human rights standards compliance. The reviewed literature contained some allegations about excessive use of force, illegal arrests, and ethnic profiling on some occasions. Lastly, the analysis showed that political influence and over-reliance on state governments also pose further institutional challenges.

1.8 FINDINGS

This study examined the effectiveness of Operation Amotekun in enhancing security in South-West Nigeria through the analysis of legal documents, policy reports, operational records, government publications, and relevant scholarly literature. Four major findings emerged from the documentary analysis.

First, the study found that Amotekun operates as a supplementary regional security agency which operates in the centralised policing structure in Nigeria. It was documented that the agency was formed to assist other security agencies in dealing with the security problems in the region in terms of intelligence gathering, surveillance and community security operation. Nevertheless, the operations of the agency are hindered by the constitutional provisions which limit the activities of the agency because of the powers of the Nigeria Police Force.

Secondly, the study found that Amotekun has played a very big role in the prevention of crimes and security management in the South West Nigeria. According to the documented literature, the agency has improved the intelligence gathering, rapid response to security threats, community surveillance and joint operation with other security agencies.

Third, the study found that community trust and public legitimacy constitute important



factors underpinning the effectiveness of Amotekun. It was found from the analysis that the organization has received great levels of acceptance in the local communities due to the community-focused nature of the organization, recruitment within the local communities and knowledge of local languages and culture. This level of legitimacy has facilitated collaboration between the community members and security agents.

Lastly, the study found that despite its achievements, Amotekun continues to face some challenges in terms of operation, laws, and institutions. From the documentary data, it was evident that financial constraints, poor logistics, lack of accountability, conflicting interests and constitutional uncertainties are some of the challenges faced by the organization.

1.9 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The First findings drawn from the fact that Amotekun operates as a complementary regional security body within the centralised system of security management in Nigeria is in line with the existing literature on decentralisation of security governance in Nigeria. As evidenced by the reviewed documents, even though Amotekun was established to provide solutions to local security challenges, its activities operate within the legal ambit of the Nigeria Police Force. The same conclusion was arrived at by Adebayo (2020) in his assertion that the emergence of Amotekun was due to deficiencies in the existing centralised security governance system. In a similar vein, the observation made by Odewale and Lamidi (2020) is in line with the aligns with the current findings that the regional security initiatives are as a result of the failure of traditional policing systems to address local security challenges. Lastly, the findings aligns with the observation made by Akeredolu (2024) that though Amotekun offers an innovative solution to local security management, its operations are still affected by constitutional grey areas.

The second finding that Amotekun has greatly impacted crime prevention and security management aligns with a number of empirical research about the effectiveness of regional security operations. Documentary evidence from the analysis shows that the security corps has improved intelligence gathering, surveillance efforts, and fast reactions to security threats. This



finding is in line with Awotayo et al. (2023), who found that Amotekun has helped to improve local security through intelligence gathering and increased security presence within South-West communities. The findings is also in line with Akano and Ayodele (2024), who found that Amotekun contributed to crime reduction in some areas of Oyo State. The current findings further is further corroborated by Olowo (2025) swho observed that Amotekun has improved community security operations due to local information sharing and cooperation with other security organizations. The findings is thus consistent with the premises of Community Policing Theory, which places great emphasis on community involvement in policing efforts.

Thirdly, the study further found that local acceptance and public confidence have strengthened intelligence gathering and cooperation between citizens and security personnel. This finding corroborates Iwuamadi et al. (2021), who argued that public trust and legitimacy are essential prerequisites for effective law enforcement and security management. The finding also supports Ajiboye (2023), who found that the success of Amotekun in combating security threats was largely linked to its close relationship with local communities. This finding aligns with Community Policing Theory, which maintains that policing institutions are more effective when they enjoy public trust and active community collaboration.

Lastly, the study found that operational, legal, and institutional challenges continue to pose problems for the performance of Amotekun. The study identified the existence of challenges such as funding, inadequate logistics, lack of accountability, conflict of interests, and legal uncertainties. This finding is consistent with Awotayo and Omitola (2024) who identified structural and institutional deficiencies as the biggest obstacles facing decentralised security arrangements in Nigeria. The findings further aligns with Onoja et al. (2024) who suggested that though there exists considerable potential in state level security arrangements, their effectiveness could be hindered by inadequate legal instruments and poor coordination with federal security institutions. Based on Federalism theory, it can be stated that though decentralisation of security operations could lead to better security outcomes, it is highly dependent on clearly demarcated legal powers, institutional accountability, and cooperation.



1.10 CONCLUSION

This study examined the effectiveness of Operation Amotekun in enhancing security in South-West Nigeria through the analysis of legal documents, policy reports, operational records, and relevant literature. The findings showed that the institution of Amotekun has been created to overcome the shortcomings of the centralized policing system in Nigeria and has emerged as an important institution of security in the region. The study also found that Amotekun has played an important role in crime prevention through the use of intelligence, community surveillance, local patrolling and collaboration with other security institutions. The effectiveness of the institution is mainly because of the high level of support it enjoys in the local communities.

However, the analysis also revealed that there have been a number of challenges in the operation of Amotekun. These challenges relate to issues of funding, logistics, accountability, coordination between institutions and constitutionality of Amotekun. This study thus concludes that although Amotekun has shown great promise in improving security in the region, there are a number of issues that need to be addressed in the future.

1.11 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Government should provide clearer legal and policy guidelines on how Amotekun will operate under Nigeria's security system.
- ii. South-West state governments should provide adequate funding, equipment, and training to enhance the crime prevention and security management functions of Amotekun.
- iii. Amotekun should sustain community participation and public trust through regular engagement, information sharing, and community-based security initiatives.
- iv. Effective oversight mechanisms and stronger collaboration with conventional security agencies should be established to improve accountability and operational efficiency.



REFERENCES

- Abrahams, R. (1998). *Vigilant citizens: Vigilantism and the state*. Polity Press.
- Adebayo, B. O. (2020). Nigerian federalism and the legality or otherwise of Amotekun. *University of Jos Law Journal*, 2020(3), 1–27.
- Afrobarometer. (2018). Summary of results: Afrobarometer Round 7 survey in Nigeria, 2017. <https://www.afrobarometer.org>
- Agbibo, D. E. (2015). Protectors or predators? The embedded problem of police corruption and deviance in Nigeria. *Administration & Society*, 47(3), 244–281. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399713513144>
- Ahire, P. T. (1991). *Imperial policing: The emergence and role of the police in colonial Nigeria, 1860–1960*. Open University Press.
- Ajibade, A. A., Akano, O., Idris, O. F., & Sanusi, S. O. (2025). Comparative analysis of perceived effectiveness of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and Amotekun on crime control in Ondo State. *Fuoye Journal of Criminology and Security Studies*, 3(1), 1–15.
- Ajiboye, B. M. (2023). The Western Nigeria Security Network and the fight against hostage-taking and kidnapping in the South-Western region of Nigeria. *London Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 23(14), 65–78.
- Akeredolu, O. F. (2024). Àmòtèkùn Corps: Constitutionality or otherwise as a subnational response to security in a federal state. *Journal of Indonesian Constitutional Law*, 2(3), 45–61.
- Akinyele, R. T. (2001). Ethnic militancy and national stability in Nigeria: A case study of the Oodua People's Congress. *African Affairs*, 100(401), 623–640. <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/100.401.623>
- Alemika, E. E. O. (1988). Policing colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. In T. N. Tamuno, I. L.



- Bashir, E. E. O. Alemika, & A. O. Akano (Eds.), Policing Nigeria: Past, present and future (pp. 1–36). Malthouse Press.
- Alemika, E. E. O. (2014). Crime and policing in Nigeria: Challenges and options. CLEEN Foundation.
- Amnesty International. (2022). Nigeria: They executed some and brought the heads back. Amnesty International.
- Amnesty International. (2024). Harvest of death: Three years of bloody clashes between farmers and herders in Nigeria. Amnesty International.
- Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). (2025). Nigeria conflict dashboard. <https://acleddata.com>
- Asike, J. C. (2023). The concept of national security in Nigeria: Considering the moral resources of trust among the ethnic groups. IGIRIGI: A Multi-Disciplinary Journal of African Studies, 3(2), 1–18.
- Awotayo, O. O., Adeosun, A., Okunola, S. K., & Omitola, B. (2025). Amotekun and the fight against crime: The role of technology in community policing in Southwest Nigeria. Kashere Journal of Politics and International Relations, 3(4), 249–258.
- Awotayo, O. O., Olumuyiwa, B. O., & Oladokun, T. (2023). South-West Security Network and crime control in Osogbo metropolis: An analysis of Amotekun. Ijinle, 6(1), 76–104.
- Baker, B. (2008). Multi-choice policing in Africa. Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.
- Bamgboye, P. O., & Oso, A. O. (2025). Multi-level policing structure and national security in Nigeria. Research on Humanities and Social Sciences, 15(3), 13–28.
- Bayley, D. H. (2006). Changing the guard: Developing democratic police abroad. Oxford University Press.



- Brogden, M., & Nijhar, P. (2005). Community policing: National and international models and approaches. Willan Publishing.
- BudgIT. (2024). State of states 2024 report. <https://budgit.org>
- Centre for Democracy and Development. (2021). Security and governance in Ondo State: 2020 election monitoring report. CDD Press.
- Chibueze, C. N. (2023). Insecurity and economic development in South-East Nigeria since 2020. *Nigerian Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 3(2), 15–29.
- CLEEN Foundation. (2019). Crime and security perception survey in Nigeria. CLEEN Foundation.
- CLEEN Foundation. (2023). Crime and security perception survey in Nigeria: South-West regional report. CLEEN Foundation.
- Dataphyte. (2024). Ransom economy in Nigeria: May 2023–April 2024 analysis. <https://www.dataphyte.com>
- Development Agenda for Western Nigeria (DAWN) Commission. (2025). Five years of Amotekun: Impact assessment report [Internal document].
- Ehirim, U. G., Eda, O., Ehirim, N. F., & Owoyele, A. K. (2025). The law and the agitation for state police in Nigeria: Any point of convergence? *Jurnal Hukum Novelty*, 16(1), 1–26.
- Elazar, D. J. (1987). Exploring federalism. University of Alabama Press.
- Enloe, C. H. (1980). Police, military and ethnicity: Foundations of state power. Transaction Publishers.
- Ferhani, A., & Nyman, J. (2023). What does security look like? Exploring interpretive photography as method. *European Journal of International Security*, 8(3), 354–376.
- Gerring, J. (2007). Case study research: Principles and practices. Cambridge University Press.



- Gore, C., & Pratten, D. (2003). The politics of plunder: The rhetorics of order and disorder in southern Nigeria. *African Affairs*, 102(407), 211–240. <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adg066>
- Guichaoua, Y. (2007). Who joins ethnic militias? A study of the Oodua People's Congress in southwestern Nigeria (CRISE Working Paper No. 44). Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity.
- Harnischfeger, J. (2003). The Bakassi Boys: Fighting crime in Nigeria. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41(1), 23–49. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X02004135>
- Hills, A. (2000). *Policing Africa: Internal security and the limits of liberalization*. Lynne Rienner.
- Hills, A. (2008). The dialectic of police reform in Nigeria. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 46(2), 215–234.
- Hills, A. (2012). *Policing post-conflict cities*. Zed Books.
- Human Rights Watch. (2010). *Everyone's in on the game: Corruption and human rights abuses by the Nigeria Police Force*. Human Rights Watch.
- Human Rights Watch. (2018). *Nigeria: Rising farmer-herder violence*. Human Rights Watch.
- Husain, S. (2007). In war those who die are not innocent: Human rights implementation, policing, and public security reform in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Human Rights Watch.
- Institute for Economics and Peace. (2024). *Global Peace Index 2024*. <https://www.visionofhumanity.org>
- International Crisis Group. (2024). *An exit strategy for Boko Haram? (Africa Briefing N°198)*. International Crisis Group.
- Ivančík, R., & Andrassy, V. (2023). *Insights into the development of the security concept*.



- Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues, 10(4), 26–39.
- Iwuamadi, C. K., Ngwu, E. C., & Onyemaobi, M. C. (2021). Regional security outfits and the challenges of insecurity in Nigeria. *University of Nigeria Journal of Political Economy*, 11(2), 45–62.
- Last, M. (2008). The search for security in Muslim northern Nigeria. *Africa*, 78(1), 41–63.
- Lund, C. (2006). Twilight institutions: Public authority and local politics in Africa. *Development and Change*, 37(4), 685–705.
- Meagher, K. (2007). Hijacking civil society: The inside story of the Bakassi Boys vigilante group of south-eastern Nigeria. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 45(1), 89–115.
- National Bureau of Statistics. (2025). Crime statistics: Reported offences by type and state (2019–2024). NBS.
- Nigeria Health Watch & NOIPolls. (2025). Nigeria homicide monitor 2024. <https://nigeriahealthwatch.com>
- Nigeria Police Force. (2024). Annual report 2023. Nigeria Police Force.
- Nolte, I. (2004). Identity and violence: The politics of youth in Ijebu-Remo, Nigeria. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 42(1), 61–89.
- Nolte, I. (2007). Ethnic vigilantes and the state: The Oodua People’s Congress in south-western Nigeria. *International Relations*, 21(2), 217–235.
- Nuhu, M. B., Terwase, I. T., Sampson, O. E., & Kuma, L. L. (2025). The Nigerian narrative on human security as legitimate security concern in the Global South. *Kashere Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 3(1), 270–278.
- Odewale, A. D., & Lamidi, K. O. (2020). Regionalization of non-state security agencies in Southwest Nigeria: Prospects and challenges of “Amotekun.” *European Scientific*



- Journal, 16(20), 103–115.
- Ojo, J. S. (2021). Amotekun: Federalism and regional security networks in Nigeria. *African Affairs*, 120(480), 339–360. <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adab012>
- Olowo, O. O. (2025). Community security responses to insecurity in Ondo State, Nigeria: An assessment of causes, effects, and the role of Amotekun and other security agencies. *EduLaw: Journal of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence*, 7(2), 69–81.
- Ondo State Government. (2024). Amotekun four-year impact report. Government House, Akure.
- Ostrom, E. (2010). Beyond markets and states: Polycentric governance of complex economic systems. *American Economic Review*, 100(3), 641–672.
- Ostrom, V., Tiebout, C. M., & Warren, R. (1961). The organization of government in metropolitan areas: A theoretical inquiry. *American Political Science Review*, 55(4), 831–842.
- Osun Amotekun Corps. (2023). Press statement on welfare and operational challenges. Osogbo.
- Owen, O. (2014). The Nigeria Police Force: A total institution? *Africa*, 84(4), 637–658.
- Owen, O. (2016). Government properties: The Nigeria Police Force as total institution? *Africa*, 86(1), 37–58.
- Pratten, D. (2008). The politics of protection: Perspectives on vigilantism in Nigeria. *Africa*, 78(1), 1–15.
- Riker, W. H. (1964). *Federalism: Origin, operation, significance*. Little, Brown.
- Rotimi, K. (2001). *The police in a federal state: The Nigerian experience*. College Press.
- SBM Intelligence. (2025). Nigeria security tracker: January–June 2025 update.



<https://www.sbmintel.com>

- Shaw, M. (2002). *Crime and policing in post-apartheid South Africa*. Indiana University Press.
- Skogan, W. G., & Hartnett, S. M. (1997). *Community policing, Chicago style*. Oxford University Press.
- Skolnick, J. H., & Bayley, D. H. (1988). *Community policing: Issues and practices around the world*. National Institute of Justice.
- Smith, D. J. (2004). The Bakassi Boys: Vigilantism, violence, and political imagination in Nigeria. *Cultural Anthropology*, 19(3), 429–455.
- Tamuno, T. N. (1970). *The police in modern Nigeria, 1861–1965*. Ibadan University Press.
- Trojanowicz, R., & Bucqueroux, B. (1990). *Community policing: A contemporary perspective*. Anderson Publishing.
- Verma, A. (2005). *The Indian police: A critical evaluation*. Regency Publications.
- Watts, R. L. (1999). *Comparing federal systems* (2nd ed.). McGill-Queen's University Press.
- World Bank. (2023). *Nigeria development update: Security and economic growth*. World Bank.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Sage.