Community-Based Security and Crime Control: The Role of Amotekun Corps in Crime Prevention in Ondo West Local Government Area

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ABSTRACT

Crime prevention and the protection of lives and properties remain major security concerns in Nigeria, particularly at the community level. This study examined the role of the Ondo State Security Network Agency (Amotekun Corps) in crime prevention and control in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and purposive sampling technique to select 250 respondents who were knowledgeable about security issues and the activities of Amotekun Corps. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed using frequencies, percentages and mean scores. The findings revealed that 40.8% of respondents strongly agreed and 36.0% agreed that Amotekun officers contribute to the protection of lives by preventing crimes capable of causing human death. Similarly, 36.8% strongly agreed and 36.0% agreed that Amotekun has assisted the police in addressing the root causes of crime within the community, while 39.6% strongly agreed and 31.2% agreed that the Corps has made a significant impact on crime control. On crime prevention strategies, 40.8% strongly agreed and 42.4% agreed that Amotekun adopts undercover operations. Furthermore, 36.0% strongly agreed and 41.6% agreed that stop-and-search is used to enhance community safety. For systematic investigation, 38.0% strongly agreed and 30.0% agreed, while 36.0% strongly agreed and 26.0% agreed that the Corps employs surveillance. Intelligence gathering received comparatively lower support, with 26.0% strongly agreeing and 31.2% agreeing. The study concludes that Amotekun Corps makes a meaningful contribution to crime prevention, community safety and the protection of lives and properties in Ondo West Local Government Area. It recommends improved funding, professional training, intelligence-gathering capacity, operational logistics, inter-agency collaboration and community participation to strengthen the effectiveness of the Corps.

Keywords: Amotekun Corps, Crime Prevention, Crime Control, Community Security, Protection of Lives and Properties, Ondo West

INTRODUCTION

Crime can be defined as an act or offenses that are forbidden by law and are punishable by imprisonment or a fine. Criminal acts range from burgling, murder, drunk-driving, child neglect, embezzlement, rape, homicide, and failure to pay taxes among others (Ugwuoke, 2010). Crime in the society is viewed as one of the most factual occurrence which confronts people in this modern age. According to Ugwuoke (2010) crime and criminality are as old as mankind and they are global features of all human societies. In fact, Abrahamsen and Williams (2011) emphasized that there is no human society where norms and values are not violated, from the simplest hunting and gathering societies to the most complex civilized societies. It is because of this universal nature of crime that every society is expected to have specific mechanisms for put in peace for controlling crime interest and wellbeing of their people and their society (Igbo, 2017).

Abrahamsen and Williams (2011) noted that as a result of police inefficiency and ineffectiveness in crime prevention and control, detection and apprehension of criminals, poor reporting and recording system, violation of human rights, poor accountability and corruption, have made the public hold the Nigeria police in low esteem. In fact, the loss of trust and confidence in the Nigeria police and in the state, have necessitated the formation of an informal policing system, otherwise known as vigilantism or neighbourhood watch (Abrahansen & Williams,

2015). Interestingly, increasing attention has now been given to this informal policing system, and it is now viewed as a rational response of the helpless people to the weak criminal justice system in Nigeria (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2011). Unfortunately, inspite of the increasing importance of the informal policing system, the Federal Government of Nigeria still finds it difficult to integrate their activities into the mainstream security system.

The manifestation of this is evident in that no day passes without the national dailies reporting one form of crime or the other, ranging from murder, forcible rape, aggravated assault, child sexual abuse, herdsmen killings, political assassination, kidnapping, armed robbery, burglary, motor vehicle theft, oil pipe line, cybercrimes and child trafficking among others. For example, reports abound of armed robbers using dynamites and hand grenades to blow up the doors of bullion van conveying money with full police escort or using rocket propelled grenades to attack helicopters (Johnson, 2023). Similarly, kidnapping which used to be a localized problem in some communities in Nigeria has now become a national problem.

As a response to the security challenges in the country, many communities and neighbourhoods as well as governments, have made increasing recourse, to formal and informal security providers, such as community policing, Community Based Security/Neighbourhood Watch/Vigilante and the formed by the South Western Governors; Amotekun Corps group structures to improve their safety and security conditions. Reports indicate that at about 50% of Nigerians patronize the services of these community based security operatives for their protection from criminal attacks (Ameh & Omoniyi, 2023).

This paper raises vital questions such as:

1. To what extent has Ondo State Security Network Agency (Amotekun Corps) helped in protecting lives and properties of residents of Ondo West Local Government Area?

2. What are the strategies adopted by Ondo State Security Network Agency (Amotekun Corps) in crime prevention and control in Ondo West Local Government Area?

These questions constitute the central focus upon which the paper examines the role of community-based security in crime prevention and control, with particular attention to the activities of the Amotekun Corps in Ondo West Local Government Area. To achieve the objectives of the paper, the paper will be structured into three sections. Section one begins with a general introduction to community-based security, crime prevention and control, and the emergence of the Amotekun Corps in Nigeria. Section two presents the clarification of concepts and review of relevant literature, while section three provides a discursive analysis of the research questions raised, with emphasis on the contribution of the Amotekun Corps to community security and the protection of lives and properties in Ondo West Local Government Area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Security

Security is a fragile and significant issue which conveys different meanings to scholars, analysts, policy makers and organizations across the globe. Fundamentally, security has to do with the presence of peace, safety, gladness and the protection of human and physical resources or absence of crisis or threats to human dignity, all of which facilitate development and progress of any human society (Buzan, 2011).The elastic nature of the concept of security attracts different meanings and different views. Security is an important concept that every human person desires and it has one or two meanings though it defies precise definition. This account for the position of Buzan (2011) who describes security as an ambiguous and multidimensional concept in which military factors have attracted misappropriate attention.

Security has to do with the process connected with assuaging any kind of threat to people and their precious values. This is why Buzan (2011) asserts that security is about freedom from threat and ability of states to maintain independent identity and their functional integrity against forces of change, which they see as hostile while its bottom line is survival (Bodunde, Ola, & Afolabi, 2014). From the foregoing, security is generally

agreed to be about feeling of being safe from harm, fear, anxiety, oppression, danger, poverty, defense, protection and preservation of core values and threat to those values. It could therefore be inferred that security, be it classical, state-centric and traditionalist or non-traditionalist, is all about protection of assets including living and non-living resources against loss or damage.

Human Security

Human security emanates from the conventional security studies which centers on the security of the state. Its focus is individuals and its ultimate end point is the protection of people from traditional and non-traditional threats. Centre to this concept is the belief that human security deprivations can undercut peace and stability within and among states (Bodunde et al., 2014). Commission on Human Security (2003) in one of its work defines human security as: The ability to protect the vital core of all human lives in such a way that it enhances human freedoms and human fulfillment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from serious and persistent threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It is important to state that human security covers every area of human needs. This is why it serves as the basis of all forms and categories of security. In essence, human security means safety of people from violent and non - violent threat. It is a condition of being characterized by freedom from pervasive threat to people's rights, their ability or even their lives. it is all about protection.

Crime

In ordinary language, a crime is an unlawful act punishable by a state or other authority, although the term "crime" does not have any simple and universally accepted definition in modern criminal law. The popular view is that crime is a category created by law, meaning that something is a crime if declared as such by the relevant and applicable law. A crime or offence is an act harmful not only to some individual but also to a community, society or state, and such acts are forbidden and punishable by law (Igbo, 2017). The state has the power to severely restrict one's liberty for committing a crime. In modern societies, investigations and trials must adhere to established procedures, while a person found guilty may be sentenced to community service, imprisonment, life imprisonment or, in some jurisdictions, execution. However, while every crime violates the law, not every violation of the law counts as a crime, since breaches of private law such as torts and contracts are generally enforced through civil procedures.

Crime Control

Crime control refers to the strategies, measures, and institutional efforts employed to regulate criminal activities, maintain law and order, and minimise the occurrence and consequences of crime within a society. It involves law enforcement, security patrols, crime-prevention initiatives, surveillance, and collaboration between security agencies and community members. Chainey and Ratcliffe (2005) explain crime control as the management of criminal activities to keep crime within tolerable levels, while the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2010) emphasises the importance of measurable performance indicators in evaluating crime-prevention initiatives. In this study, crime-control effectiveness will be assessed through measurable indicators, including reported crime patterns, response to security incidents, frequency of patrols, crime-prevention activities, cooperation between security personnel and residents, community perceptions of safety, and perceived changes in local security conditions.

These indicators will be examined through respondents' experiences and observations, alongside available crime records where accessible. The presence of a security agency alone will not be considered evidence of crime reduction; rather, its effectiveness will be assessed based on observable activities and reported changes in the security situation within the study area. This approach is consistent with the UNODC's emphasis on crime statistics, victimisation experiences, and perceptions of safety in evaluating security outcomes.

Relationship between Amotekun Corps and the Police in Crime Control

For Amotekun Corps to have a full control in Nigeria, the Nigeria Police Force must shift from its traditional model of policing to a more community-oriented policing that stresses community partnership, decentralisation

of powers and proactive policing. Such partnership requires greater reliance upon compromise and cooperation that would serve the public better than the traditional model of policing (Igbo, 2017). Amotekun, as a tool for community policing, is particularly relevant to Nigeria's security situation and the inability of existing security apparatus to adequately respond to emerging threats. Amotekun Corps seeks to tackle kidnappings, farmer/herder clashes, armed robbery and thuggery in the region (Rasheed, 2020). This can be effectively achieved through the assistance and cooperation of community members who can readily repose trust in a security structure in which they are part and parcel.

Community-based Security

Community-based security refers to security arrangements and crime-prevention activities that involve the active participation of community members, traditional leaders, neighbourhood associations, vigilante groups where legally recognised, and formal security agencies in identifying, preventing, and responding to local security threats. It emphasises local knowledge, information sharing, collective vigilance, community cooperation, and shared responsibility for public safety. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2010), effective crime prevention requires coordinated efforts involving government institutions, communities, and other relevant stakeholders. Community-based security therefore places emphasis on local participation and collaboration in addressing security challenges rather than relying exclusively on formal law-enforcement institutions.

Community-based security differs from conventional policing in its degree of community participation and the organisation of security activities. Conventional policing is primarily undertaken by formal state security institutions, such as the police, through their legally established authority to enforce the law, investigate crimes, arrest suspects, and maintain public order. In contrast, community-based security places greater emphasis on residents' involvement in identifying security risks, reporting suspicious activities, sharing relevant information, supporting crime-prevention initiatives, and cooperating with security agencies. However, community participation does not replace the legal authority and responsibilities of state security institutions. In this study, community-based security will be examined through residents' participation in security activities, information sharing, cooperation with security personnel, community surveillance, collective crime-prevention initiatives, and perceptions of safety within the study area.

Crime Prevention and Community Safety

Crime Prevention and Community Safety (CPCS) helps readers to identify effective strategies for improving crime prevention and enhancing community safety. Coverage includes crime trends; audits for crime and disorder; policing measures and initiatives; multi-agency partnerships; crime investigation technologies; anti-social behavior; domestic violence; zero tolerance policing; strategic planning; fear of crime; international perspectives on crime control; alcohol and drug related crime and disorder issues, tourism, security and disorder and more. Each issue presents research papers, reviews, and critiques of the latest developments in the field.

Strategies Adopted for Crime Prevention and Control

The following principles are the steps taken by the Western Security Network (Amotekun) in preventing crime in the community.

a. **Target hardening:** It means making it physically more difficult to commit the crime, such as fitting better, stronger locks to your doors and window, installing a retractable gate, fitting a strong padlock and using thick laminated glass in shop windows.

2. **Target Removal:** This is about remembering to remove something from risk or from view. Removing items of value from your parked car or putting them out of sight in the boot, putting the car in the garage, and putting things like jewellery, money and important documents into an insurance rated fire safe or in a safety deposit box.

3. **Removing the Means to Commit Crime:** Criminals often need stuff to commit crime. Keeping passwords hidden, chaining up the wheelie bins and ladders, not leaving a key in a back door, and not leaving gardens tools lying around the garden.

4. **Reducing the Pay-Off:** This is about reducing the profit the thief can make from the crime, including marking your property, registering your mobile phone on Immobilise, and using dye alarms.

5. **Access Control:** Access control is about preventing the criminal gaining access to the target. Making sure you lock your doors and windows, car doors and windows, and employing a security guard and barrier.

6. **Surveillance:** Criminals would rather not have their crimes witnessed. Installing a monitored CCTV system, establishing Neighbourhood Watch, and employing security officers.

7. **Environmental Change:** Environmental change is about improving the condition and appearance of streets and open spaces, including cleaning away graffiti, refurbishing old rundown buildings, and improving the street lighting.

8. **Rule Setting:** This is about household and commercial discipline and giving clear indications to a potential thief that certain routines are in place to thwart criminal behaviour.

9. **Increasing the Chances of Being Caught:** Using tracking devices on vehicles, appropriate security lighting, covert CCTV and police observations points, and property marking.

10. **Deflecting Offenders:** The use of timer switches, referring drug users to drug rehabilitation programmes, running youth diversionary schemes, making certain streets 'one-way', and introducing parking restrictions.

Challenges Facing Ondo State Security Network Agency (Amotekun Corps)

Considering the magnitude of criminal activities being recorded on daily basis in Nigeria, it is clear that the conventional security agencies like police, as presently constituted, cannot tackle the problem. Stories of kidnapping, robberies, destruction of farmlands and crops and violent clashes between farmers and herdsmen are rife. It was in realization of this fact that it became imperative for the governors of the South-west states of Nigeria, to come up with the Regional Security Network codenamed, Amotekun, to complement the efforts of conventional security agencies. Since inauguration, Ondo Amotekun Corps operatives have recorded many successes through foiling of kidnaps, arrest of armed robbery suspects, rescue of kidnapped victims and mediation between farmers and herders. Many herders had been arrested and over 5,000 cows seized for destroying farmers' crops in some villages. However, despite these achievements, the corps faces serious operational challenges.

The forces have recorded injuries from attacks by criminals during operations just as the corps had lost operational vehicle and motorcycles. In Sanusi Village, Owo Local Government Area, herdsmen set the operational vehicle and motorcycles of the Security agency ablaze following a distress call concerning a fight between members of the vigilante group and armed Fulani herdsmen. The corps is also perceived as a lame duck by some people, who believe that it has not been able to stem the tide of kidnapping and banditry in the state, especially in the Northern Senatorial District where kidnapping is almost a daily occurrence. Many kidnap cases had been recorded and victims freed after ransom. The right people are clearly not being recruited into the security agency. A source among the corps also admitted that the security outfit had not been able to perform up to expectations due to certain constraints particularly on the use of firearms and modern equipment to track the location of bandits. The state Commander of the Amotekun, Chief Adetunji Adeleye, listed insufficiency of personnel and equipment to operate as part of the drags of the Corps. He noted that the first major challenge has to do with manpower and that they want to be better equipped. He called for more support from the state and Federal Government to provide sophisticated weapons and empower the corps to face security challenges.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on Conflict Theory, which was principally propounded by Karl Marx in 1848 through his work *The Communist Manifesto*, with later development by Marx and other scholars. The theory views society as characterised by inequality, competition and conflict over scarce resources, power and opportunities. It assumes that the dominant class controls important social institutions and uses them to protect its interests and maintain the existing social order. Conflict Theory is relevant to this study because it provides a useful explanation of the relationship between the police, Amotekun Corps and different groups within the community. In the Nigerian context, unequal access to power and resources may influence how security institutions perform their duties and how different categories of citizens experience policing and crime control.

The theory therefore helps explain concerns about discrimination, corruption, police brutality, inefficiency and loss of public confidence in conventional security agencies. The theory further explains the emergence and relevance of Amotekun as a community-based security initiative. The establishment of Amotekun reflects the need to respond to security challenges that conventional agencies have not adequately addressed, particularly kidnapping, robbery, farmer-herder conflicts, destruction of farmlands and other forms of insecurity affecting local communities. The theory suggests that where existing security institutions are perceived as ineffective or unresponsive to the security needs of less powerful groups, alternative security arrangements may emerge to protect community interests. Thus, Conflict Theory provides a framework for examining the challenges confronting Amotekun and its contribution to crime prevention and community safety in Ondo State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to collect information directly from community members about their experiences and opinions concerning the activities of the Ondo State Security Network Agency (Amotekun Corps) and crime control. The study focused on Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State, selected because of its population, economic activities and security concerns, which make it suitable for examining the role of Amotekun in crime prevention and community safety. The population comprised residents affected by security activities, including traders, farmers, civil servants, community leaders and other relevant stakeholders. The study purposively selected 250 respondents who were knowledgeable about security issues and the activities of the Amotekun Corps in the study area. All 250 questionnaires were administered and retrieved, providing a 100% response rate for analysis.

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data, focusing on the effectiveness of Amotekun Corps in crime prevention and control, its contribution to community safety, challenges confronting its operations, and its relationship with other security agencies. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). To ensure validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by two experts in Political Science and Public Administration. A pilot test was also conducted, producing a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.91, indicating that the instrument was reliable and internally consistent. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages and mean scores. The five-point scale was interpreted as follows: 4.50–5.00 = Strongly Agree; 3.50–4.49 = Agree; 2.50–3.49 = Neutral; 1.50–2.49 = Disagree; and 1.00–1.49 = Strongly Disagree.

RESULT

The table indicates that Protection of lives, the officers have to guide their districts and do everything to prevent crimes that can potentially cause human death (Mean = 3.10); Western security networks has help the police to get to the root cause of crime within the community (mean =2.97); Since its inception, Amotekun Corps has had a significant impact on crime control in the community (mean = 2.94), Crime detection, each crime has to be investigated, related offenders have to be arrested and sent to jail. (Mean = 2.80) and Ondo State Security Network Agency is fast and effective and makes peace immediately (Mean = 2.90). The findings revealed that there are lots of significance of Ondo State Security Network Agency in crime detection, protection and peacemaking in Ondo West because the average mean calculated is 2.94.

The Table indicates that Ondo State Security Network Agency adopt undercover work which is the act of keeping a secret watch for intelligence purposes and facilitative investigation (Mean = 3.18); hey carry out a systematic or formal inquiry to discover and examine the fact of an incident, allegation as to establish the truth (Mean =2.91); They adopt intelligent gathering which is a system through which information about a particular entity is collected for the benefit of another through the use of more than one, inter-related source (Mean = 2.62), Stop-and-search powers are Amotekun's Corps interventions to keep people safe (Mean = 3.04) and Ondo State Security Network Agency adopt surveillance which is the act of keeping a close observation of someone, often in order to catch them in wrong doing (mean = 2.82). The findings revealed that Strategies Adopted by Ondo State Security Network Agency helps in Crime Prevention in Ondo West because the average mean calculated is 2.91.

To what extent has Ondo State Security Network Agency (Amotekun Corps) helped in protecting lives and properties of residents in Ondo West Local Government Area?

Table 1

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Rank
1.	Protection of lives, the officers have to guide their districts and do everything to prevent crimes that can potentially cause human death.	102	90	39	19	3.10	1st
2.	Ondo State security networks Agency has help the police to get to the root cause of crime within the community.	92	90	38	30	2.97	2nd
3.	Since its inception, Amotekun Corps has had a significant impact on crime control in the community.	99	78	33	40	2. 94	3rd
4.	Crime detection, each crime has to be investigated, related offenders have to be arrested and sent to jail.	70	104	31	45	2.80	5th
5.	Ondo State security network agency is fast and effective and makes peace immediately.	90	85	35	40	2.90	4th
Weighted average mean						**2.94**	

Source: ***Field Survey, August, 2022***

What are the strategies adopted by Ondo State Security Network Agency (Amotekun Corps) in crime prevention and control in Ondo West Local Government Area?

Table 1

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Rank
6.	Ondo State Security Network Agency adopt undercover work which is the act of keeping a secret watch for intelligence purposes and facilitative investigation	102	106	27	15	3.18	1st
7.	They carry out a systematic or formal inquiry to discover and examine the fact of an incident, allegation as to establish the truth.	95	75	42	38	2.91	3rd
8.	They adopt intelligent gathering which is a system through which information about a particular entity is collected for the benefit of another through the use of more than one, inter-related source.	65	78	53	54	2. 62	5th
9.	Stop-and-search powers are Amotekun's Corps interventions to keep people safe	90	104	31	25	3.04	2nd
10.	Ondo State Security Network Agency adopt surveillance which is the act of keeping a close observation of someone, often in order to catch them in wrong doing	90	65	55	40	2.82	4th
Weighted average mean						**2.91**	

Source: **Field Survey, August, 2022**

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study indicate that the Ondo State Security Network Agency (Amotekun Corps) has made a noticeable contribution to crime prevention, protection of lives and properties, crime detection and peacebuilding in Ondo West Local Government Area. The weighted average mean of 2.94 obtained for the first research question indicates that respondents generally acknowledged the significance of Amotekun in protecting residents and addressing criminal activities. Specifically, the protection of lives recorded the highest mean score of 3.10, followed by the agency's assistance to the police in getting to the root causes of crime, with a mean of 2.97. The impact of Amotekun on crime control recorded 2.94, while its ability to respond quickly and restore peace recorded 2.90. Crime detection and investigation recorded the lowest mean of 2.80. These results suggest that although Amotekun is perceived as useful in community security, its effectiveness varies across specific area of operation.

The finding on protection of lives is consistent with the operational mandate of the Ondo State Security Network Agency, which includes protecting lives, property and farmlands, conducting patrols, surveillance and responding to security emergencies. The agency also identifies intelligence gathering and security analysis as central to preventing crime and supporting tactical operations. The result is further supported by Johnson (2023), whose study of Amotekun in Oyo and Ondo States found that the Corps was moderately effective in ensuring the safety of lives and properties in Ondo State, while also demonstrating effectiveness in intelligence gathering, surveillance, security patrol and proactive response to crime.

The finding that Amotekun assists the police in addressing the root causes of crime, with a mean score of 2.97, highlights the importance of cooperation between community-based security organisations and conventional law-enforcement institutions. This is consistent with the argument of Ameh and Omoniyi (2023) that Amotekun can contribute to crime reduction as a regional policing arrangement and should be supported through appropriate recruitment and continuous training. Their study found that recruitment into Amotekun and retaining the Corps as a regional security institution had a substantial relationship with crime reduction in South-West Nigeria. Similarly, research on community participation in crime prevention in rural Nigeria emphasises that police-public partnership is important because inadequate police presence and weak community interaction can limit effective crime prevention.

The finding that Amotekun has had an impact on crime control, with a mean of 2.94, further supports the argument that community-oriented security arrangements can complement conventional policing. Dada (2021) argue that conventional policing in South-West Nigeria is often perceived as overly centralised and reactive, thereby creating the need for more community-oriented approaches to security management. The result from this study therefore suggests that the local presence of Amotekun gives residents an additional security mechanism through which criminal activities can be reported, monitored and addressed.

The second major finding concerns the strategies adopted by Amotekun Corps in crime prevention and control. The weighted average mean of 2.91 indicates that respondents recognised the use of different strategies, although the level of agreement was moderate. Undercover operations ranked first with a mean of 3.18, indicating that covert monitoring and intelligence-oriented operations constitute an important strategy employed by the Corps. Stop-and-search ranked second with 3.04, followed by systematic investigation with 2.91, surveillance with 2.82, and intelligence gathering with 2.62. The results demonstrate that Amotekun does not depend on a single approach but combines investigative, preventive, surveillance and intelligence-based strategies.

The prominence of undercover operations agrees with the contemporary understanding of community-based crime prevention, where security personnel require timely information about potential criminal activities and networks. The Ondo State Security Network Agency itself identifies intelligence gathering, surveillance, patrols, rapid response, investigation and community engagement as components of its security operations. The finding is also consistent with Johnson (2023) who found that Amotekun in Ondo State was largely effective in intelligence gathering, surveillance, security patrol and proactive response to crime.

The relatively high mean of 3.04 for stop-and-search suggests that respondents perceive physical intervention and security checks as important components of Amotekun's operations. However, such measures must be

conducted within the framework of legality, professionalism and respect for citizens' rights. The Ondo State Security Network Agency states that its enforcement activities, including arrest, search, investigation and seizure, are to be conducted within applicable laws, human rights standards and due process. This is important because the effectiveness of a security organisation should not only be measured by its ability to detect or arrest suspects but also by the legitimacy and accountability of its methods.

Systematic investigation recorded a mean of 2.91, suggesting moderate recognition of investigative activities. This finding is important because effective crime prevention requires both immediate response and subsequent investigation capable of establishing the circumstances surrounding criminal incidents. Surveillance recorded a mean of 2.82, indicating that monitoring of individuals and crime-prone locations is also part of the Corps' crime-control strategy. Recent research on Amotekun similarly identifies surveillance and proactive response as important components of the agency's operational effectiveness.

However, intelligence gathering recorded the lowest mean of 2.62. This relatively low score represents an important area of concern. Intelligence is central to proactive crime prevention because it enables security agencies to identify threats before they develop into serious criminal incidents. Although the Ondo State Security Network Agency (2020) officially identifies intelligence gathering as one of its core functions, the result of this study suggests that respondents may perceive limitations in the effectiveness or visibility of this aspect of its operations. This finding contrasts somewhat with Johnson (2023) who reported that Amotekun was largely effective in intelligence gathering in Ondo and Oyo States. The difference may be explained by the more localised focus of the present study on Ondo West Local Government Area.

CONCLUSION

The study focussed on the Ondo State Security Network Agency (Amotekun Corps) role in crime prevention and control in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State. The results confirmed the role of the Amotekun Corps in the protection of lives and properties and promotion of community safety over these years. Overall, it was shared that the agency helps to manage criminal activities, supports traditional security agencies and reacts to security challenges in the local government. The study also found that Amotekun Corps uses various methods to stop and prevent crimes from happening such as undercover activity, stop and search, systematic investigation, surveillance and intelligence gathering. Undercover operations were the most frequently mentioned, and the mean score of intelligence gathering was the lowest. It indicates that the agency's intelligence capacity needs to be enhanced, despite its having evolved a number of useful ways of tackling crime.

The study has concluded that Amotekun Corps has emerged to play a significant role in the security architecture of Ondo West Local Government Area. Proximity to the community, understanding of the security situation and its capacity to complement conventional security agencies has made it more relevant in fighting crime and insecurity. The effectiveness of the agency, however, requires adequate funding, professional trainings, better logistics, effective intelligence gathering processes and collaboration with the Nigeria Police Force and other security institutions. The study welcomes the need to strengthen Amotekun Corps and its proper integration into the overall security architecture of Ondo State, therefore. With increased participation of the community, socio-economic and governance information sharing, and coordination among institutions, it will have further capacity to prevent crime, protect residents and promote sustainable peace and security in Ondo West Local Government Area.

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