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DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND THE ROLES OF NON-STATE ACTORS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST INSECURITY IN SOUTHWEST, NIGERIA

Ahmed Olawale, Moliki Ph.D.
Department of Political Science,
Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State,
molikiao@tasued.edu.ng 07064693597.
&
Temitope Emmanuel, Abiodun
Department of Political Science,
Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and Technology, Omu-Ajose,
emmanuelhope2065@gmail.com 08038284612.

Abstract
One germane onus of government across the globe is the protection and welfare of citizens. Obviously, democratic governance plays a crucial role in ensuring political participation, thus, bringing non-state actors in the fold for the fight against insecurity. Thus, this study examines the collaborative roles of non-state actors in the fight against different insecurity issues in Nigeria. The study is qualitative, and adopts group theory and relied on secondary data in explaining the importance of collaboration between state and non-state actors for a peaceful milieu in Nigeria. Since the return to democratic governance in 1999, different issues of security have bedeviled successive administrations in Nigeria, which makes the security operatives to be over-stretched. Selected non-state actors such as Amotekun, Vigilante groups and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) were discussed. It was discovered that non-state actors have over the years assisted the government in the fight against insecurity. Though the outcome of this has been relatively successful, however, identity issues, proven allegations of human rights violations and other crimes have served as challenge to effective collaboration with state actors. The paper recommends that efforts should be made to provide formalized structures for organized non-state actors to avoid undesirable political, security and legal consequences in the fight against insecurity in Nigeria.
Keywords: *Democratic governance, non-state actors, state actors and security.*

Introduction

Security and the upkeep of law and order are important responsibilities of all governments. This promotes the development of a favorable atmosphere and enabling environment for a nation's social, political, economic, cultural, and governance activities. Security here refers to a threat-free environment (Oikhala, 2022). Security is more than just the absence of threats in a broader sense. The existence of a continuous procedure of safety precautions is more important. Democratic government through political participation embrace both political gladiators and the citizens in the area of decision-making. This makes the state actors to carry out the germane role of security in the state. However, non-state actors' activities have in no small measures contributed to the development and growth of states in the recent time.

According to Hafer, Carolyn, Conway, Cheug, Malyk and Olson (2012), non-state actors are any form of organizations or bodies that are not recognized as independent and sovereign states. They contend that non-state actors can be divided into two (2) main groups:

state formations like the Amotekun of the Southwest geopolitical zone, Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) of Borno State and international organizations like the Red Cross and the United Nations. The fact that non-state actors, in general, might fall on either side of the security spectrum (be the originators, or propagators of existing violence or acting as an aid to ending such violence) should be noted. In other words, they have the potential to either contribute to or eliminate insecurity in a given state. Since the end of colonial control, Africa has faced a number of difficulties for a very long period. Keeping the security sector in balance is one of the biggest problems (Ozden, 2019). Across the continent different insecurity issues are experienced such as terrorism, wars, xenophobic attacks, ritual killings, kidnapping and violent crimes among others have made democratic governance and the activities of state actor cumbersome, thus, the need to engage non-state actors who are positively minded in the fight against insecurity.

In Nigeria, the return to democratic rule came with the expectations that human and property security will be guaranteed and assured, however, like most states in Sub-Sahara Africa; Nigeria has been battling with different security challenges. Since it began keeping track in 2011, the Nigeria Security Finder created by the Africa Programme of the Council on Foreign Relations, there have been over 60,000 deaths connected to violence (Campbell, 2020). A significant portion of these deaths are caused by banditry, insurgency, kidnapping, and armed robbery, which adds to rising concerns about the ability of the country's security organizations (Oluro & Oluwasuji, 2021), in their current structure and set-up, to appropriately protect lives and property. Nigeria has consistently ranked low in the Global Peace Index (GPI, 2021), signifying a worsened state of insecurity in the country.

All five (5) Nigeria's democratically elected presidents since 1999 have in one way or the other grabbles with the issue of security. Already, according to a report, twenty-three (23) out of Nigeria's thirty-six (36) states have created local security outfits to help the federal security agencies in the fight against the rising cases of insecurity (Ojo, 2020; Campbell & McCaslin, 2020; Oluro & Oluwasuji, 2021). The six (6) state governors in the Southwest geopolitical zone came together to establish the Western Nigerian Security Network (WNSN), which they code-named "Operation Amotekun" after the leopard, a wild animal renowned for its exceptional agility and prowess in hunting. In order to support the traditional security services in their states and areas, several governors also established their own security organizations. But Operation Amotekun, a non-state actor active in the Southwest, is the focus of this paper; specifically, how has Operation Amotekun's work in the region contributed in the quest for peace and what are the results of a cooperative relationship between Amotekun as a non-state actor and the conventional security agencies in the Southwest. The paper is therefore divided into four sections; the introductory part forms the first section, clarification of concepts are done in the second section along with theoretical framework, the third section looks into the activities of Amotekun in the Southwest region and its impacts while the last section will be for conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptual Clarification

It is imperative to conceptualise key words in the discourse, that is, governance and democratic governance, security, and non-state actors.

Governance and Democratic Governance

There is no universally agreed definition of governance in the extant literature as scholars over the years have explained governance in several ways as it relates to their terrain and peculiar situations. Rhodes (1997) explains governance as self-organizing, inter-

organizational networks characterized by interdependence, resource-exchange, rules of the game, and significant autonomy from the state. This points to the fact that governance goes with an independence and sovereign state.

As a corollary to Rhodes, Hyden and Bratton (1992) avers that governance is the stewardship of the formal and informal political rules of the game. It refers to those measures that involve setting the rules for the exercise of power and settling conflict over such rules. Governance has three (3) legs viz: Political, economic and social governance. Here, Nzongola-Ntalaja's attempt to distinguish between three primary styles of governance is quite appropriate and pertinent. First, political or public governance, under the control of the state, the federal government, or the public sector. According to Nzongola-Ntalaja (2003), it has to do with the method by which a society manages and organizes itself. According to Manning, Kraan, and Malinska (cited in Yagboyaju & Akinola, 2019), public sector is defined as activities that are undertaken with public funds, whether within or outside of core government and whether those funds represent a direct transfer or are provided in the form of an implicit guarantee. In the second place, the private sector has economic governance control over "the policies, the processes, or the institutional mechanisms that are germane to service delivery." Finally, social governance, which is under the control of "the civil society, including citizens and non-profit organizations and relates to a system of values and beliefs that are necessary for social behaviors to happen and for public decisions to be taken" (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2003).

It should be recognized from the foregoing functional study of governance that it transcends politics and the conventional idea of government. For efficient administration, it also has many interconnected parts and subsystems. In order to promote economic productivity, competitiveness, and development generally, the government, business, and citizens "play different but profoundly complementary and collaborative roles," according to Ezekwesili (2011, p. 19). The Political or public governance which is our concern can be either good or bad in nature, thus, in the political sphere, there can be either good or bad governance. A government that possesses features such as Participation, Rule of Law, Transparency, Responsiveness, Consensus Oriented, Equity and Inclusiveness, Effectiveness and Efficiency, and Accountability is said to have good governance (UN, 2021), the contrary is believed to be bad governance.

Democratic governance is widely believed to be good in several sectors. This is so because democratic governance ensures the participation of citizens in the process of policy-making and its implementation. Participation can be through election, referendum, local self-governance, protest, etc. Thus, in this paper, democratic governance is referring to the processes through which democratic institutions are operating in accordance with democratic procedures, not just a set of laws and institutions, and this is crucial to the promotion of security of lives and property in a given state.

Security

According to Microsoft Encarta 2007, security is sometimes described as the certainty of future welfare. Security is the notion of safety for the territory and inhabitants of a state, and by extension, the policies undertaken for its maintenance. In a wider context, security of a state can be said to include the full spectrum of policies influencing the economic and social wellbeing of a society, as well as defenses against external assault or internal subversion. These policies are made by the political gladiators and where it is at equilibrium with the demand and expectation of the citizens, the threat to breakdown of law and order will not be seen as philosophically espoused by David Easton (1957). To Ayodeji (2004), security exists as a result of the need to establish some measures to protect life and property against destruction of any

kind. In this sense, the State security operatives especially the Nigerian Police Service (NPS) is presented as an inevitable instrument for the peace maintenance; promotion and sustenance of conditions necessary to make people and their environment to become comfortable, habitable, safe and free from any threat. This is not, however, to say that there will be total freedom from security challenges as the safest State (Iceland) in the world today still encounters one security issue or the other (Global Peace Index, 2021). To effectively fight against insecurity especially in a multi-ethnic state like Nigeria, the need to involve non-state actors that are for peaceful co-existence cannot be overemphasized.

Non-State Actors (NSAs)

Non-State Actors refers to the term used to describe a broad range of development partners besides governments. According to Biodun, Sheriffdeen, and Bruno (2005), it includes the private sector as well as all economic and social partners, including trade union organizations in all shapes and sizes. Other types of NSAs include community-based organizations, cultural groups, human rights organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), religious bodies, cooperative societies, trade unions, town unions, private universities, research institutes (not owned by the government), paramilitary etc., are therefore welcome to participate (Oparah, Bassey, & Ohatu, 2020). They contribute to the growth and development of the state, and in the context of this paper, we are focusing on the security aspect of NSAs which is germane to other areas in a state.

Theoretical Framework

It is rarely difficult to arrive at a common destination in terms of theory that will explain security in its entirety. As observed by Oikhala (2021), security-related theoretical formulations are intertwined and interconnected. No matter which theory is used, none can fully explain how crimes happen or suggest the best course of action for operatives to combat them. Intellectuals try their best to make sense of the various, varied techniques of controlling crime and upholding order in relation to their unique case. To us in this paper, we are concerned with the interaction of conventional security operative with NSAs that are in place to assist in the quest to end insecurity in South-western Nigeria. Thus, we anchored the paper on entangled security theory (EST).

Entangled security theory can be traced to the work of Adamson and Greenhill (2005). The major assumption is the interconnectedness between and among states in the global community in the quest to end world insecurity. Also, the germane role of a state in the process of ensuring internal security and understand the activities of and relationships within and between nation-states by more fully recognizing the interconnectivity of states and NSAs and the influence of non-great power actors on the behaviour of great powers (Adamson 2016).

One major criticism of this theory as given by Staniland (2007) is the issue of categorizing conflicts as inclusively either between or within nation-states disregards and sometimes even belies how wars are actually fought. It also leaves out categories of conflict that do not neatly fit into either category. This in turn can materially hamper scholars' and practitioners' abilities to analyze conflicts as well as, where appropriate, to devise effective interventions (Staniland 2007).

The criticism notwithstanding, EST is relevant to our discourse as the issue of security today transcend what state actors can effectively handle in a complicated society like Nigeria, thus, the need germane need to relate with other bodies (now NSAs) to get and prosecute influencers of insecurity in the state. With proper application of EST, Southwest geopolitical zone will be able to attend efficiently with the issue of insecurity for the benefit of all.

Security Conditions in Nigeria

Nigeria like many other states in Sub-Saharan Africa have witnessed different degrees of security skirmish since independence in 1960. With different governments (civil and military) making efforts at different times to curtail the menace which rather than abate, escalates**.** At the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1999, the newly democratic government raised the hope of the citizens with laudable plans to ensure security of their lives and property as contain in Section 14 (2b) of the 1999 CFRN (CFRN, 1999).

The security impasses in Nigeria today cut across the six (6) geopolitical zones of the country and the Federal Capital Territory as virtually all states in these zones have had their share of insecurity issue. The Boko Haram insurgency and the Islamic State in West Africa Province are to blame for the more than ten-years humanitarian disaster that has affected the North-east. At least 800 people died as a result of violent conflicts between government security forces and the extremists. Following a contentious local government election in the central city of Jos in November 2008, there were Christian-Muslim sectarian confrontations that lasted two days and resulted in the deaths of over 700 persons. (Suleiman, 2011).

In the North-west zone, banditry, ethnoreligious murders, and illegal mining are militating the security of the citizens. In the South-south zone, towards the end of President Obasanjo's first term in office, militants kidnapped a number of foreign oil employees, attacked government security organizations, infrastructure, and installations, as well as the oil exploration facilities of international multinational corporations (Agbelusi,2022). The kidnapping-for-ransom practice, now widely used by hoodlums and bandits to terrorize many sections of the country, was actually introduced and domesticated by the Niger Delta militancy (Agbelusi,2022). No fewer than 1013 people were killed in at least 416 conflicts and violent attacks in the Niger Delta in 2019 (Foundation for Partnership Initiative in the Niger Delta (PIND), 2023).

Both South-east and South-west zones are not left out of insecurity menace in the country. In the South-eastern zone, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) at the forefront of separatist movement since 2015, have continue to attack different security agencies, government officials and facilities, leaving hundreds of people dead (Ugwu, 2023). South-west zone, have also experienced various of degrees of insecurity and violent attacks in the last decade; cybercrime, armed robbery, kidnapping, domestic violence, extra-judicial executions, ritual killings, banditry and herder-farmer conflicts are on the rise in the geopolitical region (Abiodun, 2022; Agbelusi, 2022). These security issues in Nigeria have overwhelmed state security apparatus and bring to bear the germane need for collaborations with NSAs who are ready to assist the government in an entangle security form, such as, the Western Nigeria Security Network- Amotekun of the South-west political zone.

Formation and Onus of the Western Nigeria Security Network- Operation Amotekun

As part of the bid to quell incessant security breaches in the South west geopolitical zone, the governors of Ekiti, Lagos, Ondo, Ogun, Osun and Oyo states resorted to self-help in providing additional security shield for their people with the official launching of the Western Nigeria Security Network Code-named Operation Amotekun, in Ibadan, on the 9th of January, 2020 with its headquarters located in Gbongan, Osun State. The security network was created to comprise members of the hunter group, Odua People's Congress (OPC) and local vigilante groups who are conversant with the terrain, understand the language and culture of the people in the South-west. At the launch of the security outfit, the former governor of Ekiti state, Dr. Kayode Fayemi explained that "The Western Nigeria Security Network Operation Amotekun is nothing but a community policing response to a problem that our people would like to put

an end to. But pending the time that the community policing strategy being put together by the Nigeria Police comes to fruition, it is clearly important that we give our people a confidence boosting strategy" (Odeyinka, 2021, p. 9).

As often stated, the rationale behind the creation of Operation Amotekun was to aid national security actors in the geopolitical zone as the area has recently seen ongoing brewing conflict and a continual slide into a state of insecurity, particularly in some states in the northern part of Nigeria (Olaniyan, 2020).

Challenges faced by Amotekun in the Fight against Insecurity in South-West, Nigeria

Amotekun was instituted by the Southwestern governors with the major aim of curbing insecurity of lives and property in the geopolitical zone. So far, operation of the non-state agency has been on for up to three (3) years with some improvement in the security of South-west. The operatives of Amotekun have been involved in the fight against kidnappings, armed robbery, and other crimes in the geopolitical zone. Some instances include the killing of two (2) kidnappers in the Iwajowa Local Government Area (LGA) of Oyo State in 2020 (Odeyinka, 2021), the rescue of David Oyewumi, a monarch, in the Oye Local Government Area of Ekiti State, from kidnappers' den in April, 2021. The monarch, who was kidnapped in his palace, was rescued in Kwara State, North-central Nigeria (Adejumo, 2021; Odeyinka, 2021). Amotekun operatives have also contributed to curbing clashes between farmers and herders in the region through arrest of illegal cattle grazers; and also mediate between representatives of farmers and herders. However, Amotekun's operation has equally faced some challenges hampering it successful service delivery in the geopolitical zone. Prominent among them are identity issues, proven allegations of human rights violations, inadequate equipment for operation and persistent insecurity breaches in the region. These are further explained as follows:

First, Identity issues; the argument following the proposed creation of Amotekun in the southwest geopolitical zone has it has been contrary to the laid rule in the 1999 constitution where power to defend the Nigeria and any part therein are sole placed on the central (Federal) government. This was stipulated clearly by the provision of Item 17, 38 and 45 of the Second Schedule of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended). Also, the 1999 Constitution precisely mentioned the national status of the Nigeria police. Section 214 (1) and (2b) affirmed this when it stated: "there shall be a police force for Nigeria, which shall be known as the Nigeria Police Force and subject to the provision of this section; no other police force shall be established for the Federation or any part thereof" (CFRN, 1999 [as amended]). This was also mentioned by the former Minister of Justice, Mr Abubakar Malami when he maintained that no other authority at the state level, whether the executive or legislature, has the legal authority over defence (Adejumo, 2021). This makes it obvious that the creation of Amotekun security outfit has no legal support from the present 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (Oikhala, 2022). Thus, the police and other Federal government security services are established by law to maintain law and order within the country.

As a result of the forgoing, Amotekun operations was tactically placed under the supervision of the Nigerian Police Force after the South-west governors met with the then Inspector General of Police, Adamu Mohammed to agree on its mode of operation (Odeyinka, 2021) which made their activities to be limited. When it comes to proper execution, the operatives of Amotekun are to follow the lead of the officially recognised by the law of the country.

Second, there are proven allegations of human rights violations by the operatives of Amotekun in the process of discharging their responsibilities across the South-west. Prominent

among which were from Oyo state. The alleged killing of a fifteen (15) years old boy- Peter Okafor in Mokola area of Ibadan by an officer of Amotekun which sparked protest by the youths at the Oyo State government secretariat complex. Similarly, the alleged extrajudicial killing of Tosin Thomas, a 23 years old lady reportedly led to the dismissal of an operative in Oyo state (Odeyinka, 2021; Nasiru, 2021). Amotekun officers were also alleged to have killed two men in the Oke-ado area of Ibadan on the eve of the Muslim Sallah celebration (Odeyinka, 2021).

In the same vein, Amotekun officers were alleged to have stormed Tapa community in Ibarapa north local government area of Oyo State during a youth carnival killing two (2) civilians and leaving several others with varying degrees of injuries. The extrajudicial killings and others anomalies of the operatives of Amotekun negates the rationale behind the creation of the security outfit in the South-west geopolitical zone (Oikhala, 2022). Thus, remain a critical challenge to the efforts put together for the protection of lives and property of the people within the South-west geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Aside the proven allegation of extrajudicial killings against the operatives of Amotekun security outfit in the Southwest geopolitical zone, the rate of criminal activities in the geopolitical zone has not reduced. Though the security outfit have succeeded in curbing minor crimes, kidnappings for ransom and killings persist as major criminals continue their reign of terror in the region (Odeyinka, 2021). The Nigeria Security Tracker (NST) of the Council of foreign Affairs reported that not less than 145 persons have been kidnapped and 178 killed by non-state actors in the South-west geopolitical zones in 2021 (NST, 2023).

In Oyo state, non-state actors reportedly killed 98 residents, and the state has recorded at least 19 cases of kidnapping, with 67 victims since the launch of Amotekun. Criminals have claimed at least 49 lives in Ondo State, while no fewer than 53 persons have been kidnapped since the state launched Amotekun, the Owo church massacre in 2022 (Dada, 2022) also serve as a pointer to the increased rate of criminal activities after the creation of Amotekun. In Osun, 37 persons have been killed and 21 kidnapped since the inception of the security network. Similiarly, in Ekiti State, 11 lives have been lost to criminals and 22 persons kidnapped after the state's inauguration of Amotekun in 2020 (Agbaje, Adeyeye & Omodunbi, 2022). Ogun State is not left out, after the inauguration of Amotekun over 15 persons have been killed in the state, and more 23 kidnapped for ransom in different parts of the state since the establishment of Amotekun (NST, 2023).

Another critical challenge to effective service delivery of the Amotekun security outfit is inadequacy of funds. Managing a security outfit that is expected to be neutral in terms of political affiliation and equal protection of lives and property remains a huge task that needs more funds. Some of these States in the South-west geopolitical zones still finds it difficult to constantly pay the salaries of public servants. This issue of finance has equally affected the level of equipment and training provided to the security outfit in the geopolitical zone.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The paper examined democratic governance and roles of non-state actors in the fight against insecurity in the Southwestern geopolitical zone of Nigeria with focus on Amotekun Security Outfit created by the six (6) democratically elected governors in Southwest, the states comprise of Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo. It also looked into the security issues in Nigeria, and particularly in the South-west which has claimed many lives and property, and this is against the onus responsibility of government anywhere in the world. The legal framework for the creation of Amotekun was looked into, as well as the importance of Security Network in aiding the conventional security architecture of the country.

This paper found that, though the responsibility of defence and internal security of Nigeria lays sole within the purview of the Central government as stipulated in the Second Schedule, Part I of the 1999 CFRN (as amended), the need to create regional non-state actors as done by the Southwest governors became imperative with the peculiarities of the areas and individuals involved in this fight against insecurity especially in the ungoverned areas in the geopolitical zone. In addition, activities of Amotekun were reviewed and finding shows that, though the Security Outfit since creation in 2020 has assisted in ameliorating insecurity issues in the geopolitical zone, the Outfit still grapples with issues such as unprofessionalism, breaching of people's rights, and inadequate equipment to function optimally among others. In lieu of the foregoing, the paper recommended that efforts should be made to provide formalized structures for organized non-state actors to avoid undesirable political, security and legal consequences in the fight against insecurity in South-west and other part of Nigeria. Also. Amotekun as a non-state actor should be given proper recognition by the Central government in order to assist the conventional security forces especially in areas that are known as ungoverned in all parts of the Southwest geopolitical zones.

Importantly, the political class through good governance should as a matter of necessity make policies that will further reduce crime rate in the geopolitical zone and Nigeria as a whole, this will be possible if enabling environment for all to strive in the country is provided, thus, making the people to be meaningfully engaged for productive purpose. Lastly, government at all levels should be accountable and transparent in their dealings with the commonwealth of the people as the issue of corruption often negatively affect the economy and the ripple effects are seen in the social vices that leads to insecurity in the first place. So, when the democratically elected leaders perform their duties rightly, then, issues of insecurity will be curbed and there will the promotion security in Southwest and by extension in Nigeria.

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