

**SECURITY CHALLENGES AND THE SOCIO-POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION  
OFAKOKOLAND IN THE 19TH CENTURY**

**By**

**Abiodun Daniels FAMOYE**

**Matriculation No: 182553**

**B.A. History and International Studies (AAUA), M.A. International History (Sheffield)**

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## ABSTRACT

Akokoland, a frontier area in north-eastern Yorubaland, faced numerous security challenges during the 19th century, which had lasting impressions on the pre-existing socio-political structure. Existing literature on pre-colonial Akokoland have focused largely on the traditions of origin, socio-political and economic structures with scant attention paid to the security challenges and their socio-political consequences on the 19th century Akokoland. This study was, therefore, designed to interrogate the security challenges and its implications on Akokoland, with a view to establishing the socio-political changes that occurred during the period.

The historical approach was adopted. Primary sources, comprising the Colonial Annual and Intelligence Reports files and other relevant official files obtained from the National Archives, Ibadan and Kaduna, were utilised. In-depth interviews were conducted with 52 purposively selected informants, 16 local historians, 15 indigenous rulers and chiefs, six academics and 15 elders aged between 45 and 90 in Akokoland based on their knowledge of Akoko history. Secondary sources included books, journals and theses. Data were subjected to historical analysis.

The 19th century Akokoland experienced a series of invasions from the military forces of Ekiti (1830-1870), Ibadan (1859-1880) and Nupe (1830-1897). These challenges altered the pre-existing socio-political architecture of the area. Akoko communities such as Afa, Epinmi, Eruhon, Oyin and others were desolated by Ibadan forces between 1859 and the 1880s. By the third quarter of the century, the Nupe, who had been attacking the people since the 1830s, conquered Akokoland, with the exception of Oka, thus ending Akoko's history of self governance. The Nupe administered Akokoland through the *Ajele* vassal system. Nupe's suzerainty also came with the creation and imposition of new chieftaincy titles, like the *Zaki* of Arigidi, on the existing indigenous political titles. Due to contacts with the external forces, Akoko dialects became varied. Ekiti dominance up to the 1870s led to the adoption of Ekiti dialect by the Akoko communities of Irun, Ogbagi, Ese and others. Nupe's dominion between the 1830s and 1897 influenced the local dialects of Arigidi, Okeagbe, Ikaramu and others. Nupe forces introduced and spread Islam as a major faith in Akokoland. In the wake of ceaseless invasions, a new class of warlords and women with strong political influence emerged as major force in the local politics between the 1840s and the 1890s. Encouraged by the British, the Akoko, for the first time in 1895, succeeded in organising a pan-Akoko military alliance that challenged Nupe's overlordship in the Ogidi War (1895-1897). In 1897, the Royal Niger Company took advantages of the depression caused by the war to pronounce Akokoland its protectorate. On 1 January, 1900, Akokoland was officially colonised by the British.

The security challenges faced by Akokoland from the external forces of Ekiti, Ibadan and Nupe in the 19th century led to different socio-political transformations, such as the imposition of foreign rule, dialectical variation, emergence of new classes of political actors, introduction of Islam, alien chieftaincy titles and annihilation of communities, that ultimately resulted in British colonisation of the area.

**Keywords:** Security challenges in Yorubaland, Akokoland, Nupe imperialism, *Ajele* vassal system

**Word count:** 493

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Clement Famoye and Mrs. Rachael Famoye.

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**Abiodun Daniels, FAMOYE**

**2021**

## **CERTIFICATION**

I certify that this work was carried out by Abiodun Daniels FAMOYE in the Department of History, University of Ibadan, Nigeria under my supervision.

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### **Supervisor**

Professor Victor Osaro Edo, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. (Ibadan), PGDE (Ife)  
Department of History,  
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

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**Date**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAUA	Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko
AIR	Ado Intelligence Report
CSO	Chief Secretary Office
CS	Colonial Secretary
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
MA	Master of Arts
NAK	National Archives Kaduna
NAI	National Archives Ibadan
RNC	Royal Niger Company
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UI	University of Ibadan
OAU	Obafemi Awolowo University

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Security is a commonly used but, perhaps, most difficult term to define, especially within the social sciences circle. This is because it is ambiguous or means different things at different points, depending on the context in which it is being discussed.<sup>1</sup> For example, one may talk of social security, economic security or financial security, job security, computer or data security, food security, spiritual security, health security and so on. This is why it is profitable to always clearly state the context in which one views security at the beginning of any discussion as this may enhance good understanding of such a discourse. Security in this study is, therefore, perceived from the context of the protection of human beings and their belongings from threats, violence or dangers that can reduce or destroy the quantity and quality of life and development. While speaking from the above perspective, Bajpai argues that: ‘security relates to the protection of the individual’s personal safety and freedom from direct and indirect threats of violence’.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, security, according to Alemika, is the ‘protection from danger, violence... capable of impairing the full development and existential wellbeing of citizens’.<sup>3</sup> Cohen and Tuttle also view security as ‘a protective condition which statesmen either try to acquire or preserve, in order to guard the various components of their

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<sup>1</sup>Buzan, B. 1991. *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*. New York: Harvester. pp. 5 and 57; Malec, M. 2003. *Security Perception: Within and Beyond the Traditional Approach*. M.A. Dissertation submitted to the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California. pp. 6-7. See also Brauch, H.G. 2011. *Concepts of Security Threats, Challenges, Vulnerabilities and Risks*. Eds. Brauch, H.G.; Spring O.; Oswald, U.; Mesjasz, C.; Grin, J.; Kameri-Mbote, P.; Chourou, P.; Dunay, P.; Birkmann, J. *Coping with Global Environmental Change, Disasters and Security Threats, Challenges, Vulnerabilities and Risks*. New York City: Springer. pp. 61-62.

<sup>2</sup>Bajpai, K. 2000. *The Idea of a Human Security Audit*. Joan B. Kroc Institute Report, No. 19, [http://www.nd.edu/~krocinst/ocpapers/op\\_19\\_1.PDF](http://www.nd.edu/~krocinst/ocpapers/op_19_1.PDF), p. 1-4. (Accessed on May, 29, 2017).

<sup>3</sup>Alemika, E.O. *Security Challenges and University System in Nigeria*. <http://irepo.unijos.edu.ng>jspui>bitstream, p. 2> (Accessed May 29, 2017).

polities from either external or internal threats'.<sup>4</sup> It can, therefore, be deduced from the above that security entails safeguarding people and their possessions.

The significance of security to the existence of man, either as an individual or a community, cannot be over emphasised. This is largely because, security is central to the attainment of other aspirations of man. In fact, it is doubtful if any society has prospered or developed in a state of insecurity. It is only under a secure atmosphere that all machinery, including the government and private sector, can perform actively and expressively engage available human and material resources to ensure that the required goals of the society are adequately met. Baldwin, for instance, has concisely explained the value of security when he comments that:

One way of determining the value of security is to ask what life would be like without it. The most famous answer to this question is that... life would be 'solitary, poorer, nasty, brutish, and short'... The logic underlying this assertion is that security is a prerequisite for the enjoyment of other values such as prosperity, freedom...<sup>5</sup>

Even the technically and militarily advanced nations such as the United States, Russia, Germany, and so on still make security their priorities. This has been largely demonstrated in the continuous increment in their military budgets and constant review of their security strategies over the years. The search for security as a major national interest of nations, which is commonly demonstrated in their international collaboration, establishment and sponsoring of different domestic and international security outfits, continuous invention of sophisticated security technologies and increment in security spending over the years, further attests to the fact that security is a priority.<sup>6</sup>

But despite the fact that security has been demonstrated over the time to be a priority of all human societies, no society, irrespective of size, financial status and technology, can claim to be completely immune to security threats. In other words, no human society can boast of being entirely invulnerable to security challenges, though the challenges may be

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<sup>4</sup> Cohen, I.S. and Tuttle, A.C. 1972. *National Security Affairs: A Syllabus*, New York: National Strategic Information Centre.p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Baldwin,D. A. 1997. *The Concept of Security.Review of International Studies...* p. 18.

<sup>6</sup>Vaca, A.M. 2020. *The Rise of Defense Spending in the United States*. MA Dissertaton, Department of Political Science and Law, Montclair State University; Crane, K., Olikier, Olga and Nichiporuk, B. 2019. *Trends in Russia's Armed Forces: An Overview of Budgets and Capabilities*. Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation; Tian, N., Kuimova, A., Da Silva, D.L., Wezeman, P.D. and Wezeman, S.T. 2019. *Trends in World Military Expenditure, Sipri Fact Sheet*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. April.

different from one society to another. Thus, security challenges are those acts or events that constitute threats to peace and order in the society. For example, security challenges may be in form of war (internal or external), insurgency, terrorism, genocide or ethnic cleansing, organised crimes such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, kidnapping, armed robbery and so on.<sup>7</sup> Recent security related events globally have shown that even the most powerful countries with the best security technology are still faced with security challenges. This explains why human societies constantly review their security policies and frameworks as a way of tackling security threats.

Historical studies have shown also that security challenges are as old as human societies. Historians have recorded a number of events, which amounted to security challenges, even in the past when there were no sophisticated military weapons as we have in the contemporary period. In the nineteenth century alone, for example, Europe recorded events such as the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, the Crimean War, the Austro-Prussian War, the Franco-Prussian War and many more, which constituted major security challenges to the continent. In the Americas, there were the Haitian Revolution, the Mexico-America War, the American Civil War and so on. In Southern Africa, there was the *Mfecane*.<sup>8</sup> The Fulani *jihad* ravaged the area now known as northern Nigeria, and even extending beyond that area. It is important to note, therefore, that a most fascinating and general fact about security challenges is that wherever they occur, in many instances, they seem to leave a strong imprint on the existing socio-political structure of the affected societies. For example; the most important socio-political consequence of the *Mfecane* was the introduction of strong centralised states in Southern Africa,<sup>9</sup> while the Fulani *Jihad* also reconfigured the political order in Hausaland by the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate. Subsequently, the hitherto politically independent Hausa states were subjugated under a centralised religious/political authority.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Maulny, Jean-Pierre and Sarraf, Sabine. 2016. Assessment and Prospects of Security Threats: Synthesis Report for the International Forum TAC (Technology against Crime). [www.iris-france.org](http://www.iris-france.org) (accessed on February 12, 2019).

<sup>8</sup>*Mfecane* is a series of wars that devastated Southern African region in the nineteenth century. The wars have been argued to be caused by several factors such as shortage of land, population explosion, proliferation of weapons, European search for forced labourers and so on. For details, see: Cobbing, J. 1988, 'The Mfecane as an Alibi: Thoughts upon Dithakong and Mbolompo', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 29, pp. 487-519.

<sup>9</sup>For more details, see Cobbing, J. 1988. The Mfecane as an Alibi: Thoughts Upon Dithakong and Mbolompo...

<sup>10</sup>Aremu, J. O. 2011. The Fulani Jihad and its Implication for National Integration and Development in Nigeria. *African Research Review: An International Multidisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 5 (5), Serial No. 22, p. 9.

Similarly, in Yorubaland, the people were confronted with series inter-states wars, which lasted throughout the nineteenth century. The wars were major security challenges to the people, having a lot of socio-political implications until the advent of British colonial authority. Like other parts of Yorubaland in the nineteenth century, Akokoland was not invulnerable or immune to security challenges. In other words, security challenges were fundamental issues in Akokoland in the nineteenth century. Thus, the nineteenth century history of Akoko people can arguably be referred to as a period of meeting security challenges. This is evident in their constant harassment, forms in raids and plundering, by forces near and far. In fact, as early as the fifteenth century, during the reign of *ObaEwuare*, Akoko communities had been raided continuously by the Benin forces.<sup>11</sup> However, by the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century, Benin invasion of Akokoland had significantly subsided. This change can be attributed largely to the internal political crises that engulfed Benin, which among other things weakened its military.<sup>12</sup> However, by the nineteenth century, Ekiti, Ibadan and Nupe forces had taken over as most notable aggressors of Akokoland.<sup>13</sup>

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the fact that security was a major theme in the nineteenth century history of Akokoland, little academic attention has been paid to studying this aspect of the people's past, especially as it related to their socio-political development in the century and beyond. Even where attention has been given, such references are largely attempts to provide further explanations for other subject-matters. Consequently, extant literatures on the pre-colonial history of Akoko people have concentrated more on other historical events, such as migration patterns, state formation, the indigenous political organisation, economic structure, inter-group relations and so on. The result is a creation of historiographical questions bothering on issues such as what was the people's perception of security in the nineteenth century? What was the nature of the internal and external security challenges: were they territorial, economic or political? Who were the external aggressors, what were their interests and how did Akokoland fit into such interest? How did the Akoko perceive and respond to the security threats? What mechanisms were devised to solve the security problems and how efficient

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<sup>11</sup>Osarhieme, B.O. 2001. The Military System of Benin Kingdom, c.1440 – 1897. PhD Thesis, Department of Philosophy and History, University of Hamburg, Germany.p. 130.

<sup>12</sup>Akintoye, S.A. 1967. The North-Eastern Yoruba District and the Benin Kingdom. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 169-173.

<sup>13</sup>Mason, M. 1970.The Jihad in the South: An Outline of the Nineteenth Century Nupe Hegemony in North-Eastern Yorubaland and Afenmai. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 195-197.

were they? What was the relevance of geography to the security situation in Akokoland? How defining were the security challenges to the socio-political development of the area in the century under review?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This study examines the security challenges of Akokoland and how these challenges transformed the existing socio-political structure in the area during the nineteenth century. Therefore, the specific objectives involve:

1. highlighting and discussing the nature of internal security challenges of Akoko people in the 19th century.
2. analysing the nature and dynamics of external security challenges in Akokoland in the 19th century.
3. examining the pattern and degree of alterations that the security challenges imprinted on the pre-existing socio-political structure of Akokoland in the 19th century.
4. contributing to the current debate on the nature, dynamics and resolution of the contemporary security challenges in Nigeria.

The study is employed as an avenue to venture into wider debates touching on the relationship between security challenges and socio-political development of human societies.

### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is viewed from two perspectives: period and geography. In respect of time, the study examines the significance of security challenges to the socio-political development of Akokoland in the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century is significant because, though there are evidence that show that Akokoland had been well inhabited right before 1800, it is not clear, however, if well-structured and functioning socio-political institutions had evolved in most of the communities before the nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup> However, it is obvious that by the 1800s, these state institutions had been in operation in most of the towns, with clearly defined authorities and responsibilities.<sup>15</sup> It is a fact, therefore, that studies like this can only be properly carried out within the purview of these structured and functioning state institutions.

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<sup>14</sup>Okajare, S.T. 2012. The Akoko-Yoruba and their Neighbours, 1800-1960: A Study in Inter-group Relations. Ph.D, Department of History and International Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria.pp. 61-62.

<sup>15</sup>Okajare, S.T. 2012...p. 61.

Geographically, the study focuses on Akokoland in the north-eastern Yorubaland. They are presently located in Akoko North-East, Akoko North-West, Akoko South-East and Akoko South-West Local Government Areas in Ondo State. They are, therefore, different from other Akoko groups found presently in Edo State and among the Ikaale people of Ondo State, even though they share similar cultural affinities.

### **1.5 Significance and Justification of the Study**

This study represents a modest contribution to a body of literature on the history of Akokoland. As the scopes of many existing literatures on Akokoland are largely limited to issues that bother on its process of state formation, political organisation, economic structure, colonisation, and so on, this study, therefore, addresses some academic gaps concerning the security experiences and socio-political development of the people in the nineteenth century. The study raises critical issues that are capable of opening new vistas for future researchers working on the pre-colonial history of Akokoland.

### **1.6 Methodology**

Data for this study were collected largely from primary sources. Primary source data included oral tradition. Oral data were obtained from a number of individuals that were carefully selected because of their in-depth knowledge of Akoko history. The informants included traditional rulers, quarter chiefs, traditional (palace) historians, community leaders, academics working on Akokoland and so on. The fact that Akoko people, like many other groups in Yorubaland, did not commit their past into written documents before colonialism makes oral traditions very important sources of data to the study. Oral tradition has been demonstrated over times to be an indispensable source of historical reconstruction, especially in Africa where the art of written documentation came late. While arguing for the relevance of oral tradition to the reconstruction of the pre-literate societies, Jan Vansina argued that ‘those parts of the world inhabited by people without writing, oral tradition forms the main available source for a reconstruction of the past, and even among peoples who have writing, many historical sources, including the most ancient ones, are based on oral traditions’.<sup>16</sup> While oral tradition is indispensable in carrying out this research, serious efforts are made to address the challenges that are peculiar to this primary source.

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<sup>16</sup>Vansina, J. 1965. *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*. (Translated) H.M. Wright. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. p. 1.



Information was also sourced from relevant archival materials at the National Archives, Ibadan and Kaduna and local archives at Kabba and Akure. These archives provided several volumes of annual and intelligence reports handed over by the colonial masters, which touch on the history of the people, especially the nineteenth century aspect of it. It is no longer news that when the colonial master came to Akoko, they sponsored the production of intelligence reports which probe into the pre-colonial history of the people.<sup>17</sup> They embarked on these projects because they believed that sound knowledge of Akoko's past would help them to govern the people effectively. It must be stated, however, that the conduct of intelligence survey into the past of the colonies was not restricted to Akoko as the exercise was carried out across Nigeria. These materials largely referred to as Akoko Intelligence Reports contain vital information, which are crucial to this study. Other relevant primary sources such as government publications, community publications, private papers, and so on were also consulted. Relevant secondary source materials in terms of published and unpublished books, journals, dissertations, theses, monographs, seminar papers, pamphlets and so on were also interrogated in the course of the study.

The study adopts the historical method of narration and critical assessment of data. This method is deployed not only because it allows for systematic and wide-range data gathering, but also because it is descriptive, interrogative, explanatory and analytical in nature,<sup>18</sup> qualities which are fundamental to historical studies of this nature. Sandelowski and Egudo, for example, have argued that historical narrative approach involves a system of studying the past by carefully and critically selecting, analysing and reading meaning to

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<sup>17</sup>See N.A.I. N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667, 'J.H. Beeley's Report on the Akoko Area of the Owo Division, Ondo Province'; N.A.I. File 1/1. The Reverend Charles Phillips' Description of Arigidi, 1894.N.A.I., 'Annual Report, Owo Division, Ondo Province', 1932; N.A.I., 'Annual Report, Owo Division, Ondo Province', 1933; N.A.I., 'Annual Report, Owo Division, Ondo Province', 1934;N.A.I., Letter No1297/1/380, 'Provincial Conference on Native Authorities', 1950; N.A.I., CSO 862/3, 'Minutes of the Ondo Provincial Conference/ Owo Division', 1959; N.A.I., CSO 2768/3, 'T.B. Bovell-Jones, Establishment of Separate Division of Akoko District of Owo Division'; N.A.I. F.O. 84/2245, Goldie's Letter to Salisbury, March 24, 1892; N.A.K. S.N.P. 1725355. Notes on Nupe; N.A.K., 'J.A. Ley Greaves' Annual Report on Akoko District, Kabba Province', December, 1911; N.A.K: Notes on Kabba Division, 1920.

<sup>18</sup>Sandelowski, M. 1991. Telling Stories Narratives Approaches in Qualitative Research.*Image: Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, Vol. 23, No. 3. pp. 163; Etherington, K. 2012.Narrative Approaches to Case Studies. [www.kimEtherington.com](http://www.kimEtherington.com),

A Paper presented a workshop on Narrative Enquiry at the Bristol University, United Kingdom, September 15, 2012. Accessed on August 22, 2016; Dey, I.1993. *Qualitative data analysis: A User-friendly Guide for Social Scientists*, London and New York: Routledge. p. 3.

primary or (and) secondary source materials.<sup>19</sup> In fact, it is for the reason of meaning-reading to data that historical method has been described as a branch of the qualitative methodology.<sup>20</sup> Dey, for instance, has sustained that the most important feature of the qualitative methodology is that it involves a process of data-reading, which clearly differentiates it from the quantitative methodology, which deals with numbering.<sup>21</sup> According to him, this consequently, 'does have implications for analysis, for the way we analyse meanings is through conceptualisation, whereas the way we analyse numbers is through statistics and mathematics'.<sup>22</sup> It is, therefore, within the descriptive and investigative framework that this study is carried out.

## 1.7 Review of Literature

The secondary source materials reviewed here are approached thematically and consequently, they are divided into four categories, which include General Security Knowledge, General Yoruba History, Yoruba Military and Wars in the Nineteenth Century and General History of Akokoland.

### Security Studies

Buzan, Weaver and Wilde's book, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, is an attempt by the authors to set out a more comprehensive conceptual framework for perception, analysis and interpretation of security. The book attempts to create a more critical view and wider scope for security than it has been with the traditional conceptual framework. The traditional approach has largely reduced the meaning and understanding of security to a state of being free or protected from military attacks. Also, the traditional framework strongly perceives threat to security as coming only from outside a state. The book, therefore, challenges some of these misconceptions. For instance, it argues for the emerging importance of localisation of security as recent events have demonstrated that substantial threats to security of most contemporary nations are now from within their territorial jurisdictions. The book also opens another vista to security discourse as it examines the importance of regional and global environment to the security of states in the international system. Furthermore, the

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<sup>19</sup>Sandelowski, M. 1991... pp. 163; Mitchell M. and Egudo, M. 2003. A Review of Narrative Methodology: A publication of the Department of Defence on Defence Science and Technology Organisation, Australian Government. p. 3.

<sup>20</sup>Dey, I. 1993. *Qualitative data analysis: A User-friendly Guide for Social Scientists*, London and New York: Routledge. p. 3.

<sup>21</sup>Dey, I. 1993...

<sup>22</sup>Dey, I. 1993...

book argues that security has a wide scope and as such cannot be reduced to politics or military interpretation alone. It explains this wider outlook of the term to include economic, societal, agricultural, health and environmental dimensions. Thus, the book's main contribution to knowledge is in the widening of one's scope of what security entails and on that note it suggests that the context of security must be defined at the start of a discourse to avoid misconceptions.<sup>23</sup> This piece is useful to this study, especially as it broadens one's understanding of security.

CzelawMasjasz's 'Security as an Analytical Concept' is another important work that is relevant to this study. The concern of the study is also with the analysis of security as a concept with the central aim of providing a workable or popularly acceptable understanding of the term. According to Masjasz, disagreements on the definition of the concept arise from various reasons, which he collectively refers to as selective and predominantly normative issues. These issues are formed on the basis of questions surrounding what security is about, for whom or what, how it can be attained and according to which norms. One's position or answers to these questions, according to the author will definitely shape one's understanding of the term. Having noted this, the author, however, argues and proposes that a concession can be reached mainly by analysing the core value of security, which is safety or wellbeing, irrespective of one's perspective.<sup>24</sup> The work is highly informative, especially on the meanings of security and as such it is relevant to the current study.

'Human Security: Pillar of Development' by Yannick also attempts a discussion on the meaning of security. The author, however, tries to avoid the complexity surrounding the definition of the term by limiting the scope of his discourse to human security. Even at that, he still envisions human security from a broad perspective, covering health security, food security, socio-economic security, environmental security, political security, personal security, collective security and international security. It is argued that the attainment of human security is very significant to the development of the society and the individual. Accordingly, security is argued to be an important human desire that is needed not for itself, but for the attainment and enjoyment of other human wants, such as the rule of law, cultural identity and advancement, etc. It is, therefore, submitted that security is the pillar of human development. The author further analyses the contemporary strategies and agents of security

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<sup>23</sup>Buzan, B.; Weaver O. and Wilde, J. 1998...

<sup>24</sup>Mesjasz, C. 2004. Security as an Analytical Concept. Paper presented at the 5th Pan-European conference on International Relations, in The Hague, 9-11 September.

and the expected responsibilities of such agents. These agents include the family, the youth, the media, the civil societies, etc. The framework for analysis of this work is, therefore, relevant to the present study.<sup>25</sup>

James Sperling and Emil Kircher's 'The Changing Definitions of Security' explains the changing nature of security challenges facing the European nations and NATO and how these challenges are changing the opinions of the concerned societies on the meaning of the term, 'security'. The authors view the European and NATO's definition as having expanded beyond territorial integrity and military security as it now encompasses issues ranging from macroeconomic stability to environmental degradation. Thus, during the Cold War era, security was conceived primarily to be militarily based, especially as it concerned the sustenance of the nuclear terror balance between NATO and the Soviet Union. Though attention was given to the economic implication of the military budgets, economic issues were viewed as secondary to a more demanding and pressing military security. And as such, economic security never gained prominence until the late 1960s. However, as from the late 1960s, economic security grew and even attracted relevant analytical approaches such that by the late 1980s, the security concerns of many European nations, especially Germany, were expressed in terms of economic security rather than in military term. This trend has continued and even encompassed many factors such as environmental security. The authors, therefore, conclude that there may not be an end to this change in perspective in the future for as long as new security challenges keep unfolding.<sup>26</sup> The work is, therefore, considered useful to this study, especially in the area of conceptual analysis of security.

'Meaning of Security and Securitisation' by Vladimir Sulovic also joins the debate on the complexity in the definition of security. According to the author, at the inception of security studies, the discipline represented one of the core aspects of international relations, predominantly dealing with issues of war and peace. Consequently, this made its perception to be considerably limited within the military context. Also, years after World War II, Security Studies became synonymous to strategic studies, expressively focusing on military security and once again, the meaning of the term was confined within the military viewpoint. However, following the growing complexity of other factors with serious economic and

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<sup>25</sup>Yannick, B. M. 2010. Human Security: Pillar of Development. Eds. Obasanjo, O.; Mobogunje, A.; Okebukola P. *Human Security in Africa: Perspectives on Education, Health and Agriculture*, Centre for Human Security, Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library. pp. 342-357.

<sup>26</sup>Sperling, J. and Kirchner, E. 1995. The Changing Definition of Security. *Paper presented at the ECSA Conference, Charleston, South Carolina, 11-14 May.*

environmental challenges, risks and threats, emergence of the new international relations actors and so on, especially in the contemporary period, perspectives on the meaning of security have been expanded. This, therefore, has created a disagreement among security studies scholars on the best way to define the term. The author concludes that, although a lot of efforts have been made to resolve the dissimilarity with the aim of coming up with an all encompassing workable meaning of the concept, such efforts, however, have resulted in the extensive and systematic widening of the concept.<sup>27</sup> The work is relevant in the sense that it provides needed information on the factors responsible for the changing perspective and conceptualisation of security.

Gloannec, Irondelle and Cadier's 'New and Evolving Trends in International Security' focuses on a number of issues on international security, ranging from the theoretical discourse to the analysis of impact of security on the international community. Thus, theoretically, the work discusses the new perspectives and approaches to security, with a special emphasis on three emerging concepts that have been increasingly used in security studies. These concepts are globalisation, human security and securitisation. At the empirical level, the work looks at a number of emerging security challenges in the world. These challenges, according to the authors, include terrorism, health pandemics, international migration, environmental security and energy security. The work, thereafter, proceeds to analyse the impact of these challenges on the broader international security system. Attempts are also made by the authors to examine the response that states in the international system have been given to these challenges. Also, the work considers the changes to the international security system brought about by the rise in economic power of states such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The work also investigates the changing nature of war, with an emphasis on the rise in civil wars, their relation to limited statehood and the significant role being played by external actors.<sup>28</sup> The work is, therefore, useful as it provides relevant information on the developments in international security in the contemporary global system.

The 217<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Lecture of the University of Benin, 'Nations and National Security: The Historical Context of Security Sector in Contemporary West Africa' presented by Osarhieme Osadolor is an attempt to contribute to the debates on Security Sector Reform

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<sup>27</sup>Sulovic, V. 2010. Meaning of Security and Theory of Securitization. *Belgrade Centre for Security Studies*, [www.bezbednost.org](http://www.bezbednost.org) (Accessed on May 6, 2017).

<sup>28</sup>Gloannec, A.; Irondelle, B. and Cadier, D., 2013. *New and Evolving Trends in International Security. Transworlds: The Transatlantic Relationship and the future Global Governance*, Working Paper 13, 2013.

(SSR) and governance, with an analysis of the historical context in investigating the events that influenced nations of West Africa to evoke a 'common agenda for promoting democracy, good governance and human rights within their security needs'. Precisely, the work examines in historical context why and how ECOWAS, a regional organisation originally established for cooperation and integration of member-states for economic development, in less than a decade after its establishment, transformed to an organisation saddled with the responsibility of tackling security challenges within the sub-region. According to the author, the security challenges and realities in West Africa were very influential in ECOWAS involvement in the security scheme as it was realised by nations in the sub-region that, they would not be able to play any role in the regional security arena without collaborating with one another. In other words, giving the growing security threats in the sub-region, it was realised that collective efforts under the auspices of ECOWAS would be more effective than individual approach in the attempt to make the region safe.

The lecture, therefore, explores events that had and are still shaping ECOWAS security initiative and how the regional body has been responding to such. For instance, the Protocol on Non-Aggression of 1978 and Protocol of Mutual Assistance on Defence of 1981 were signed by ECOWAS members as a security mechanism in the region. These at the period were hoped would be enough to handle the regional security threats. However, following the Liberian Civil War in 1990, Sierra Leone crisis in 1997 and Guinea Bissau armed conflict in 1999; it was obvious that the region was in need of immediate security sector reform. Subsequently, the concepts of 'common security' and 'cooperative security partnership' were propounded to tackle the challenges as it was realised that a conflict not well-managed could spread from a member-state's domain to other parts of the region. It was in such circumstances that ECOMOG (ECOWAS Monitoring Group) was established and it was effective in resolving the crises in the nations earlier mentioned. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, the increasing number of domestic socio-political crises and their complex dynamism indicate that the security architecture needs to be reformed. Of interest is the ECOWAS Plan of Action from 2018 to 2020, which has been designed to create and enhance a secured environment that will be conducive for regional integration.

As a member that has been classified as one of the High Risk destinations in the sub-region and the world at large, the author argues that Nigeria's security sector's reform is long overdue. The current security architecture of the country which was handed down by the

military since their first intervention in 1966 is now outdated irrelevant to the current security realities. The country, as a result, needs to reform its security sector. Until Nigeria reforms its security sector to meet the present demand, it may remain for a long time in its present security state and may not be able to take its leadership position in security sector reform in West Africa. As such, recommendations were made to assist Nigeria and other West African nations in that regard, chiefly among them, being that the region should advance SSR and Governance:

as mechanism in state-building policy and practice, while strengthening the ability of member states of ECOWAS in order to meet the range of their security needs in a manner consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, transparency and the rule of law.<sup>29</sup>

The work is highly insightful as it broadens one's historical knowledge of West African security. Also, the work is considered relevant to the present study since they both share the objective of contributing to the current debate on the nature and resolution of the contemporary security challenges of Nigeria.

#### General Yoruba History

*The History of the Yorubas* by Johnson, attempts to reconstruct the history of the Yoruba, focusing on the geographical description of their abode, the process of state formation, political structure, economic activities, socio-cultural belief and so on. Johnson, who traces real politics in pre-colonial Yorubaland to Oyo Empire, suggests that the king of the empire, *Alaafin*, ruled the whole territory now known as Yorubaland after the political demise of Ile-Ife, the purported *orirun* (source) of the Yoruba. This view appears to support a general belief among the Yoruba, who see Ile-Ife as the source of human existence and spiritual home of the Yoruba, and Oyo as the political home.<sup>30</sup>

It is important, however, to note that the use of the article 'The' at the beginning of the topic in every standard falls short of academic historical writing. The use of the article implies, in historical interpretation, completeness or perfection. But no historical account or

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<sup>29</sup>Osadolor, O. B. 2019. Nations and National Security: The Historical Context of Security Sector in Contemporary West Africa. The 217<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Lecture of the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria, June 13.

<sup>30</sup> Johnson, S. 2001. *The History of the Yorubas from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*. Lagos: C.S.S. Bookshop Ltd.

argument can claim to be final on any subject. As such, no historian can write ‘the’ history of a people, the best he or she can do is to write ‘a’ history, an account of the past and such an account cannot be a final statement because it is always opened to debates. The attempt also to cover as many as possible Yoruba groups seems rather too ambitious, consequently leading to several accounts being provided with little or no details. For example, the discourse of the book focuses more on the events and personalities in metropolitan Yoruba communities at the expense of those in the periphery. In his assessment of the book, for instance, Olaoba criticised Johnson for not giving the warlords from the north-eastern Yorubaland a deserving attention in his work, despite the fact that they played significant and decisive roles in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Yoruba warfare.<sup>31</sup> For example, the best he mentioned concerning Esubiyi, an Ekiti warlord, whose activities constituted major security threats to Akokoland in the nineteenth century, is that he was a never-do-well warrior. But, new studies have emerged to demonstrate that the warrior was influential to major military and political developments in Yorubaland in the 1800s. It should, however, be reminded that Johnson was not a trained historian, so he can be excused on this ground. And irrespective of the above shortcomings, the book is relevant in the sense that Akoko people can now be studied within the larger Yoruba perspective based on scanty information provided on them by the book.

Atanda’s *An Introduction to Yoruba History* attempts a discourse of Yoruba history from the earliest time.<sup>32</sup> The book tries to provide explanations to the different accounts on the origin, foundation, growth and development of Yoruba people. It also discusses the political crises of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Yorubaland, the conquest of the Yoruba by the British, the introduction of the colonial system of administration and the impact of the alien rule, politically, economically and socially, on the people. In chapter one, for example, effort is made to discuss why, how and when the different Yoruba groups were established and developed. In the chapter, reference is made to Akoko and Yagba groups as follows:

There were other Yoruba settlements which did not develop into large kingdoms like the ones discussed above. The most notable of these were the Akoko and the Yagba groups, both in the north-east of Yorubaland. In these areas there developed a number of towns and villages, none of which was able to become dominant over the others. Prominent among these in Akoko area were Irun, Ogbagi, Arigidi, Akungba, Ikare, Erusu, Oke-Agbe, Efifa, Ikram, Supare,

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<sup>31</sup>Olaoba, O.B. 2013. Esubiyi: A Neglected Hero of Nineteenth Century Yoruba Warfare. *Ibadan Journal of History*, Vol. 1. pp. 30-43.

<sup>32</sup>Atanda, J.A. 1980. *An Introduction to Yoruba History*. Ibadan, Ibadan University Press.



Oba, Oka and Isua. In Yagba area, the prominent people were the Bunu.<sup>33</sup>

But like Johnson, Atanda did not give the north-eastern Yorubaland a proper place, even while the scope of the work claims to cover the Yorubaland in his discourse. One major inference that can be made is that Akoko and Yagba are Yoruba people found in north-eastern part of the Yoruba country. Another deduction is that Akoko organised themselves into communal life and none of these communities was subdued by another. The information on the size and independence of these communities seems to provide clues into why the people for a long time could not form a formidable defence alliance against their adversaries, especially in the nineteenth century.

Smith's *Kingdoms of the Yoruba* is a short book that attempts a reconstruction of the pre-colonial history of the Yoruba kingdoms from the earliest times to the colonisation by the British. With only 147 pages, the book is divided into three major sections. The first part of the book examines the origin of the Yoruba, using various sources including legendary, linguistic and archaeological evidence. The second aspect of the book examines the political structure of or organisation of the Yoruba, using the Ife and Oyo's templates as the bases for its analysis. The third section of the book goes on to examine the collapse of Oyo and its implication for the general security and power balance in Yorubaland. Thus, the book pays specific attention to the rise of Ibadan, the resistance of Ibadan hegemony by other Yoruba kingdoms and the nineteenth century wars up to the period of British colonisation. Among other thing, the last section of the book proves very relevant to this study as it provides information on the rise and military exploits of Ibadan and its warriors, which partly constituted security challenges to the Akoko in the nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup>

*The Sociology of the Yoruba* by Fadipe discusses the physical environment of Yorubaland and the impact of the geographical features on the socio-cultural life of the people. It also discusses the history of the people, recounting and critically assessing the well-known traditions of origin. The book also looks at the Oyo Empire, considering its rise and fall. Of most importance to this study is the discussion on the general defence technology of the Yoruba. For, instance, the book examines the different causes of war in pre-colonial Yorubaland and mentions the different roles that some socio-political institutions played in

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<sup>33</sup>Atanda, J.A. 1980... p. 18.

<sup>34</sup>Smith, R. 1988. *Kingdoms of the Yoruba*. London, James Currey.

defence and war. While the distinct roles of groups such as hunters were recognised, the book argues that war and defence were the responsibilities of every member of the community.<sup>35</sup> Information contained in the book is, therefore, too general, not taking into account the different security experiences and defence structures and tactics of different Yoruba groups. Nevertheless, this study benefits from such general description and knowledge.

#### Yoruba Security, Military and Wars in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

*Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland, 1840-1893: Ibadan Expansion and the Rise of Ekitiparapoby* Akintoye, which examines the incidents leading to the collapse of the Oyo Empire and the power tussle that ensued afterwards in Yorubaland, argues that the decline of Oyo's supremacy in the said century created a space for the struggle for power among Yoruba metropolitan states.<sup>36</sup> The work pays close attention to the military expeditions of Ibadan and some of its conquered territories. While identifying the sub-ethnic divisions in eastern Yorubaland that felt the onslaught of Ibadan, the author mentions the Ekiti, Iyagba, Owo and Akoko. It also briefly provides information about the military alliance formed by these groups and the Igbomina against Ibadan. Though the book noted that the contributions of the Akoko to the alliance were eminent, especially in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, details of such contributions are, however, never discussed. The book is, no doubt, relevant to this study as it provides information on the nineteenth century Yoruba wars, especially the exploits of Ibadan forces, which went as far as Akokoland.

Falola and Oguntomisin in a book titled, *The Military in the Nineteenth Century Yoruba Politics* attempt a geographical description of Yorubaland and the traditional political organisation of the people, focusing on the hierarchy of the political institutions, such as the *oba*, *igbimoilu*, *bale*, *bale*, etc.<sup>37</sup> The book also examines the various traditions of origin of the Yoruba. Finally, the book assesses the impact of the nineteenth century wars on the influence and power of the military class in Yorubaland and how such affected the existing socio-political order. Thus, the insecurity of 'life and property that prevailed in Yorubaland in the nineteenth century was substantially responsible for the emergence of military administration in some Yoruba towns. In search of protection, many kings and their subjects had turned to

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<sup>35</sup>Fadipe, N. A. 1970. *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, Ibadan, Ibadan University Press.

<sup>36</sup>Akintoye, S.A. 1971. *Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland 1840-1893: Ibadan Expansion and the Rise of Ekitiparapo*. Ibadan: Longman.

<sup>37</sup>Falola, T. and Oguntomisin, D. 1984. *The Military in the Nineteenth Century Yoruba Politics*, Ife: University of Ife Press Ltd.

the war-chiefs for help, creating a situation in which many warlords became very relevant and played dominant roles in politics. Consequently, the warriors introduced different forms of government, whose features differed largely from the traditional Yoruba pattern of government.

Like several other books on the nineteenth century Yorubaland, examples and inferences were drawn overwhelmingly from Oyo, Ibadan, and so on. As argued above, the military experience of the nineteenth century was not restricted to the metropolitan towns alone. The turmoil of the 1800s was widespread throughout the Yoruba country. The rise of the warlords at the expense of the indigenous rulers, for instance, was a common experience in north-eastern Yorubaland. For example, warlords such Aduloju, Esubiyi, Fabunmi, and so on wielded enormous powers and played important roles in the socio-political changes of the area. Having said this, it is also important to state that the general assessment made by the book gives one clues about the security situation in Yorubaland in the nineteenth century. Also, the book provides hints on the socio-political changes and military reforms brought to Yorubaland during the period.

Ade Ajayi and R. Smith's *Yoruba Warfare in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* explores a historical explanation of war experiences of the Yoruba people starting from the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the 1860s and the impact of these on the political, economic and military development of the Yoruba. Divided in to two parts, the first section of the book focuses on issues such as the organisation of the army and weaponry. It also discusses popular security measures or tactics of the people, such as the fortification of towns and camps, war strategy and so on. The section also pays attention to some of the major battles of the time like the battles of Oshogbo (1840), Abeokuta (1851), Ijaye (1860-62) and Ikirun (1878). The section concludes by an assessment of the level and significance of the casualties, and the military and political changes recorded due to the wars. The second section of the book pays attention to the Ijaye War, examining issues such as the causes and course of the war, the fall of Ijaye and the British efforts to end the war. According to the authors, contrary to the British view, popularly expressed by McCoskry and Glover, that the war was caused chiefly by economic factors, the war was largely brought about by the attendant political problems that emerged in Yorubaland due to the collapse of the Oyo Empire. This misconception and the fact that the British were themselves pre-occupied with the problem of protecting their commercial

interest, the authors argued, were major reasons why their efforts failed.<sup>38</sup> The book, therefore, is considered relevant as it provides vital information on the security strategies of the Yoruba in the nineteenth century. Also, this study gives insights into the political turmoil ravaging Yorubaland following the decline of Oyo and Ibadan's ambition to lord itself over other Yoruba states.

Smith's, 'Yoruba Armament' can be described as a military study of the nineteenth century Yoruba weaponry, focusing on the itemisation, description and uses of some indigenous military weapons among the Yoruba. Common among these weapons were swords, bows and arrows, spears, clubs, *kondo*, *kumo*, *opaga*, and so on, of different types, sizes and shapes. Attempts are also made by the author to explain the manufacturing technology and economic processes of acquiring these weapons. Smith attributes the proliferations of these weapons in the nineteenth century to prominence of wars among Yoruba towns.<sup>39</sup> The work does not only provide hints about security, but also general and useful background information on the development of military and weaponry in Yorubaland in nineteenth.

Akinjogbin's edited work, *War and Peace in Yorubaland, 1793-1893* is a compilation of papers presented at the Obafemi Awolowo University Conference on Kiriji War in 1986. The conference itself was organised to mark the centenary of the Kiriji Peace Treaty, which ended the Ekitiparapo War. The book has many chapters written by renowned Yoruba scholars such as Akinjogbin himself, Adediran, Adebayo, Akinwowo and others. As such, the book covers a wide range of topics on the Yoruba inter-state wars from the later eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century. For instance it examines some of the popular wars and battles of the nineteenth century such as the Igbomina War. Themes such as the British role in the local wars, the military strategies, especially the military alliances such as the Ekitiparapo, were also examined. In all, the book is considered relevant to this study as it provides vital information on the general insecurity and measures taken to end it and bring peace to Yorubaland prior to British colonisation.<sup>40</sup>

In 'Ajele System: A Study of Ibadan Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century', Awe examines the rise of Ibadan as a major power, its expansionist programme and imperial

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<sup>38</sup> Ade-Ajayi, J.F. and Smith, R. 1971. *Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century* Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

<sup>39</sup> Smith, R. 1967. Yoruba Armament. *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 87-106.

<sup>40</sup> Akinjogbin, A. 1998. *War and Peace in Yorubaland, 1793-1893*. Ibadan, Heinemann Education Book (Nig).

system of administration in Yorubaland in the nineteenth century. According to Awe, the fall of Oyo Empire created a political vacuum, which after a while, was to a large extent filled by Ibadan. Thus, the responsibilities of checkmating further Fulani incursion into Yorubaland fell mainly on Ibadan as it became the main bulwark against external aggressions. And by the middle of the nineteenth century, Ibadan had largely contained the jihadists. However, Ibadan continued further military campaigns in Yorubaland and even encouraged its warriors to embark on personal wars to expand its hegemony as far as possible within the Yoruba country. Consequently, a lot of Yoruba towns, even in Akoko area, were attacked, conquered and came under Ibadan imperialism. To govern the large empire, a system of indirect rule was introduced. The system worked by first allotting a conquered territory to a loyal chief, popularly known in Ibadan as *babakekere* (small father), who had the responsibility of ensuring good governance in the affected territory. He reported directly to the headquarters. On his own part, the chief, who in many instances had several territories in his care, would also appoint representatives, the *ajeleto* administer the territories on his behalf. The *ajele*, who were permanently residents in the towns, had the responsibilities of maintaining law and order and sustaining the hegemony of Ibadan. Their duties also involved collection of levies. However, they were not supposed to interfere in the local political affairs, except such issues concerned Ibadan. For their membership of the empire, the territories enjoyed Ibadan protection. Although the scope of the study covers Akokoland, the area was discussed passively as attention was paid more to the Ijesa and Ekiti.<sup>41</sup> However, the work is a pointer to some of the security challenges of Akoko people in the nineteenth century.

Gleave's 'Hill Settlements and Their Abandonment in Western Yorubaland' examines why and how some western Yoruba towns like Iseyin, Shaki, Ado Awaiye, Okeiho, and so on at some points settled on the hills, but later on relocated down the hills.<sup>42</sup> The author argues that the decisions to settle on the hills were chiefly motivated by the people's search for security against external aggressions. Having been exposed to wars in their erstwhile lowland abodes, the people, as a matter of survival, relocated to the top of the hills and effectively engaged them as important defence mechanisms. Though the stress of moving up and down the hills on the daily basis was obvious, they, however, considered it a worthy price for their security. Subsequently, this pattern of settlement began to imprint on the political, economic and social life of the people. This was largely the experience of the people until they were

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<sup>41</sup>Awe, B. 1967. The Ajele System: A study of Ibadan Imperialism in the nineteenth century. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 3, No. 1, December, pp. 47-60.

<sup>42</sup>Gleave, M.B. 1963. Hill Settlements and their Abandonment in Western Yorubaland. *Africa*, Vol. 33, No. 1.

encouraged after the introduction of British rule to relocate down the hills. The needs for town planning, sanitary regulations, particularly regarding water-supply, and the colonial officers' difficulties in climbing the hills every time they had to see the rulers of these towns, who in many instances lived at the highest point of the hills, were main reasons why the people were encouraged to relocate to the lowland. Although the study does not centre on Akokoland, it, nonetheless, provides fascinating information about hill dwellers in pre-colonial Yorubaland.<sup>43</sup> This study is, therefore, useful to this work as Akokoland was a hilly terrain and the people, especially the Oka, made good use of the geographical resources to their security advantage in the century under review.

*Northeast Yorubaland: Studies in History and Culture of a Frontier Zone*, edited by Olukoju is also relevant and useful to this work, though its interest is different from that of the current study. A section of the book makes an assessment of the implication that the environment of the concerned region had on the political, economic and cultural interactions of the people with their neighbours. It also examines the impact of the environment, especially the hills and the mountains, on the political, economic and cultural lives of the people. The work also assesses the nature and pattern of Akoko's political, commercial and other forms of interactions with her neighbours such as the Nupe, Benin and Owo.<sup>44</sup> From the viewpoint of geopolitics, though not seriously stressed, the works generally reminds one of the importance of geography to history or development.

Mason's 'The Jihad in the South: An Outline of the Nineteenth Century Nupe Hegemony in North-Eastern Yorubaland and Afenmai' explores a chronological explanation of the nineteenth century Nupe military and political ascendancy and activities in north-eastern Yorubaland. The work examines the incursion and imposition of Nupe administration on a number of communities in the study area, which of course included Akokoland. The administrative system which can best be described as tributary involved the imposition of agents, who governed the conquered on behalf of the Nupe. These agents were variously known as *ajele* or *ogba* (in Yorubaland) or *azeni* (in Afenmai). These agents were stationed in most of the larger towns to which the satellite villages paid their levies. In return for their services, the agents took a share of the tribute collected and as well received gifts from the Nupe headquarters.<sup>45</sup> This work carries information on the political and economic activities

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<sup>43</sup>Gleave, M. B. 1963... p. 347.

<sup>44</sup>Olukoju, A.O. Ed. 2003... Ibadan, Rex Charles.

<sup>45</sup>Mason, M. 1970... pp. 193-209.

of Nupe in north-eastern Yorubaland and Afenmai, which is highly useful to the current study.

Babawale's 'The Outbreak of the Kiriji/Ekitiparapo War (1877-1886): A Re-assessment of Its Cause' is an attempt to interrogate the reasons for the emergence of the Ekitiparapo War. Babawale argues that the major cause of the war was economy, which presented itself largely in the economic interests of Ibadan and some powerful individuals or warriors. The work sets out by presenting a cursory narration of the nineteenth century Yoruba wars. Attention is paid closely to how Ibadan emerged as a very strong power, conquered many Yoruba towns and imposed its rule on them. Babawale argues that the need for Ibadan to acquire wealth in primitive manner through exploitation of other peoples' labour and resources was a major motivation for its invasions of other Yoruba towns. He argues further that a similar desire of the warlords to acquire slaves, which they would use for farming and prosecuting their wars, was the main reason why many of them sustained the wars. He demonstrated this claim in the activities of some warriors such as Latosa of Ibadan, FabunmiOkemesi, Kurunmi of Ijaye, Ogedemgbe of Ilesa, etc., who embarked on several wars and accumulated wealth through such means. While one cannot ignore the significance of economy in the outbreak of the Yoruba wars in the nineteenth century, it is a fact, however, that the causes of the wars cannot be entirely reduced to economy.<sup>46</sup>

'Aduloju of Ado: A Nineteenth Century Ekiti Warlord' by Ojo proves to be an account of the life and achievement of Aduloju, one of the prominent north-eastern Yoruba warlords of the nineteenth century. To successfully drive home its point, the work takes a cursory look at some relevant aspects of Yoruba history in the nineteenth century, For instance, it discusses major events leading to the fall of Oyo Empire and how Ibadan emerged as an important power. The book also examines the security challenges of Ibadan and the entire Yorubaland and how these influenced the emergence of the warlords, with Aduloju as one of them. Ojo argues that the rise of Aduloju was a product of circumstance, largely resulting from a denial of family affection and care, and his personal determination to rise above all odds. Having acquired the necessary military prowess, Aduloju embarked on a series of military campaigns, sometimes personally and at some instances in collaboration with his allies, especially the Nupe, against the Akoko, Yagba and their neighbours. At the peak of his military career, he was approached by the Ekitiparapo to fight with them against

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<sup>46</sup>Babawale, T. 1988. The Outbreak of the Kiriji/Ekitiparapo War (1877-1886): A Re-assessment of Its Cause. *Journal of Teachers Education*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 43-50.

Ibadan. He rejected the offer for reasons best known to him. The alliance with Nupe, however, broke down and subsequently, he decided to punish the Nupe by supporting Oka Akoko against them. His support for Oka partly contributed to the defeat of the Nupe by Oka in the second half of the nineteenth century. He retired afterwards from military campaigns. He was later arrested by the British in 1898 and released. He finally relocated to Ado, where he died in 1902. The work is relevant and useful as it provides some hints about the external security challenges of Akokoland in the nineteenth century.<sup>47</sup>

In what can be tagged a concise biography of Esubiyi, Olaoba examines the life, activities and achievements of Esubiyi, one of the Yoruba military heroes of the nineteenth century. The author argues that Esubiyi has been neglected by historical studies and so, he attempts to put him in proper historical perspective. In doing this, the author starts by debunking the early claim, mostly presented by Samuel Johnson, that Esubiyi was a never-do-well warrior. He then sets out to examine the birth and early life of the warlord, concentrating on how circumstance and personal determination shaped him to become a brave and successful man. As an adult and professional warrior, his success was largely attributed to bravery, good leadership quality, charisma, dynamism and tactics. Having fought for the Ilorin and Ibadan forces at different times, he returned to AyedeEkiti, where he continued with his military campaigns, especially in the Ekiti and Akoko areas. He later played influential roles in the Ekitiparapo alliance against Ibadan before his demise in 1880. Thus, the author argues and concludes that Esubiyi was an influential personality in the nineteenth century history of the Yoruba people and so he should be given a deserving historical recognition. The work contains vital information that is relevant to the present study.<sup>48</sup>

Oguntomisin's *Studies in Pre-colonial Yorubaland Warfare and Peace-making* highlights the technical aspects of Yoruba wars and warfare during the pre-colonial times. The six-chapter book sets out with a description of the Yoruba and the geographical space they occupy. It also recounts the popular traditions of origin of the Yoruba and how they advanced themselves as a group since the state formation era. The book also pays attention to other important parts of their life, including political organisation, art, culture, religion and socio-economic structure.

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<sup>47</sup>Ojo, E.O. 2013. Aduloju of Ado: A Nineteenth Century Ekiti Warlord. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 18, Issue 4 (Nov-Dec), pp. 58-66.

<sup>48</sup> Olaoba, O.B. 2013... pp. 30-43.



In line with its main objective, the book discusses some weapons that featured popularly in the pre-colonial wars among the Yoruba. Thus, prior to the nineteenth century, weapons such as *agedemgbe*, *kondo*, *kumo*, *ogole*, bows, arrows, and so on were popularly used. The book also describes the technology behind the manufacture of the weapons and how geography influenced the usage of such weapons. For example, the people in the forest zone mainly used *kondo*, *kumo*, *ida* and *agedemgbe*, while people in the savannah region were popular with weapons such as horses, spears, arrows, and so on. Charms were also commonly used as weapons by the Yoruba during the period. With the frequency of wars, Yoruba warfare became revolutionised in the nineteenth century. Aside the fact that wars were fought for longer periods, they also became more complex. The introduction of firearms, such as flints or Dane guns became a major game-changer. The new weapons were used together with the old ones. The author also recounts some of the popular military alliances in Yorubaland in the nineteenth century, such as the Ekitiparapo military confederacy and the significance of the military alliances to the changing nature of warfare in Yorubaland. The book also attempts a short biography of great warriors in Yorubaland during the period. They included Oluyole, Ibikunle, Ogunmola, Kurumi, Ogedengbe and so on. Finally, the book also discusses the major causes of wars and mechanisms for preventing or ending wars among the Yoruba. The book is relevant to this study as it provides useful information on the state of wars and warfare in pre-colonial Yorubaland.<sup>49</sup>

#### General History of Akokoland

*Introduction of Christianity into Akoko* by Akeredolu is a concise documentation of the introduction, spread and growth of Christianity in Akokoland. Among other things, the book pays close attention to the historical background of the people, discussing their political, economic and social structures before and during the colonial administration in Nigeria. The book also takes a look at the indigenous religions of the people before the coming of the Christian missionaries, the reactions of the natives to the new faith and other challenges that the missionaries encountered in the process of introducing the new faith. Of most interest to the present study is a clue it provides into the origin and migration patterns of Akoko people.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Oguntomisin, G.O. 2017. *Studies in Pre-colonial Yorubaland Warfare and Peace-making*. Ibadan, John Archers (Publishers) Ltd.

<sup>50</sup>Akeredolu, J.L. 1986. *Introduction of Christianity into Akoko*. Owo: Temidire Press.

Adegbulu's 'Akoko-Yoruba and Akoko-Edo: An Exploration of Relations between Two Akoko Communities in the Pre-colonial Era' examines the relationship between the two Akoko groups prior to colonialism as a way of explaining their contemporary cultural affinities. The work opens by first distinguishing the two and as a way of doing that; it embarks on geographical description of their locations. Thus, while Akoko Yoruba were located in the area presently under the territorial jurisdiction of Ondo State, Akoko Edo people were found in the area presently under Edo State. The two, however, shared (and still share) boundaries, which largely accounted for their close interactions and cultural similarities. As such, the author argues that the foundations of these cultural similarities were laid several centuries back through their interactions in the form of politics, commercial activities, inter-marriage, festivals, religion, language, and so on. This piece is very informative on the inter-group relations of Akoko-Edo and Akoko-Yoruba, though its focus is clearly different from that of the present study.<sup>51</sup>

Okajare's 'The Akoko-Yoruba and their Neighbours, 1800-1960: A Study in Inter-group Relations' is an examination of the patterns and dynamics of relationship between Akoko-Yoruba communities and their neighbours, namely, Owo, Ekiti, Okun Yoruba, Akoko-Edo (Afenmai), Benin, Nupe and Ibadan within a period of one hundred and sixty years'. The thesis also deals with issues surrounding the importance of geography to the development of the people. It discusses the origin, emergence and growth of some selected Akoko communities, trying to understand the cultural values of the people in pre-colonial times. An examination of inter-group relations of the people, in terms of political, economic and socio-cultural interactions with their neighbours, had profound impact on the people's way of life and organisation.<sup>52</sup> Though the work explores a different aspect of pre-colonial history of Akoko people, it, however, contains information that benefits this study.

Okajare in another study, 'Traditions of Origin, Migration and settlement patterns among Akoko communities in North-eastern Yorubaland' examines the geography, origin, migration theories and settlement patterns of the Akoko people in pre-British period. He argues that the contemporary plurality, especially in the area of languages spoken, among the Akoko is strongly connected to their numerous migration sources in pre-colonial times. Thus, the major acclaimed sources of migration, according to the author, were Ile-Ife, Benin

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<sup>51</sup>Adegbulu, F. 2004. Akoko-Yoruba and Akoko-Edo: An Exploration of Relations between Two Akoko Communities in the Pre-colonial Era. *AAUA: African Review Studies*, No. 1, Vol. 3, pp.185-2002.

<sup>52</sup>Okajare, S.T. 2012...p. 29.

(Kukuruku also known as Akoko Edo) Kabba. The Ile-Ife source, however, is very significant as many Akoko towns have used it to lay claim to Yoruba identity. The author also takes time to delve into analysing the socio-political history of the Akoko, which showed great similarity with the common Yoruba political system. Thus, the structure recognised a village or town head at the apex of the political hierarchy. This personality was assisted by quarter chiefs, who formed the village or town council. The quarter chiefs, who also had their palaces in their respective quarters, were assisted by lower chiefs, who in most cases were family or clan heads. Although the work focuses on a different aspect of Akoko history, it, however, provides useful information on the earliest history of Akokoland.<sup>53</sup>

Akomolafe's 'Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935', which majors on the introduction, development and impact of British colonial governance on Akokoland up to 1935 also takes its time to delve into discussions relating to the origin, migration patterns, state formation and development of Akoko prior to the coming of the British.<sup>54</sup> The work examines the impact of geography and inter-group relations of Akoko on their development. Like the title, it proceeds to showcase the nature and pattern of the administrative system introduced. It pays special attention to how this new system of administration altered the indigenous political organisation of the people. Thus, before the coming of the British, all Akoko towns, not minding the size, were independent of one another. However, the introduction of the District Head System in which communities were constituted into districts and a few communities (rulers) were elevated above others, seriously distorted the original political interactions of these communities. The study, therefore, tries to trace the root of modern rivalry and animosity among leader of different Akoko communities to British administration. Although the work focuses on colonial Akokoland, the preliminary aspect of it, which highlights Nupe incursion into Akokoland in the nineteenth century as a precursor to British colonialism, is very relevant to the present study.

In Oguntomisin's edited *Yoruba Towns and Cities, Volume One*,<sup>55</sup> Ogundana's chapters, 'Ikare'<sup>56</sup> and 'Oke-Agbe',<sup>57</sup> and Olukoju's 'Oka'<sup>58</sup> are also relevant to this work.

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<sup>53</sup>Okajare, S. T. 2008. Traditions of Origin, Migration and Settlement Patterns among Akoko Communities in North-eastern Yorubaland. Eds. Alao, A.A. and Babawale, T. *Culture and Society in Nigeria: Traditions, Gender Relations and Political Economy*, Lagos: Concept Publications.

<sup>54</sup>Akomolafe, C.O. 1976. Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935. M.Phil. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ife, Ile-Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University).

<sup>55</sup>Oguntomisin G.O. Ed. 2003. *Yoruba Towns and Cities Volume One*, Ibadan: Bookshelf Resource Ltd.

<sup>56</sup>Ogundana, J.B. 2003. Ikare. Ed. Oguntomisin, G.O. *Yoruba...* pp. 20-31.

<sup>57</sup>Ogundana, J.B. 2003. Oke-Agbe. Ed. Oguntomisin, G.O. *Yoruba...* pp. 60-76.

Ogundana's first chapter, for instance, examines the history of Ikare, discussing its geographical location on the world map and assessing the impact of such on the people's living. It also examines the different traditions of origin, political and socio-cultural structures of Ikare. The work also briefly delves into the kingship tussle between the two ruling dynasties of the town, *Owa-Ale* and *Olukare*. The work, as well, discusses Ikare's colonial experience. His second chapter, which is the seventh chapter of the book, examines the history of Oke-Agbe, paying attention to the origins and establishment of the four sections that made up the town, Afa, Oge, Aje, and Ido. The chapter also investigates Oke-Agbe's colonial experience and the notable development that had taken place in the town since independence in 1960. In chapter eight of the book, Olukoju attempts a discussion of origin, migration and settlement patterns of Oka-Akoko. He pays close attention to the traditional political organisation, social structure and economic activities of the town. He concludes by assessing major developments in the town since the British conquest in the 1890s. Though the book focuses on different aspects of the past of the selected towns, it is considered relevant to this study.

'From Kingdoms to Kingdom: A Historical Appraisal of the Chieftaincy Institution in Okaland Southwest of Nigeria'<sup>59</sup> by Ogunode is a discourse on the traditional chieftaincy institution in Okaland since the pre-colonial period. The trajectory and relevance of the traditional political institution of Oka-Akoko are the major focuses of the paper. The study argues that the colonial enterprise in the area fundamentally altered the Oka people's political institution and tradition. The author reveals that in pre-colonial Okaland, a village administration headed by hereditary chiefs and elders supported by the age grade system evolved in the fifteen quarters that comprise the present day Oka kingdom. The paper argues further by revealing how the hitherto well organised independent chiefdoms under their leaders were brought under the control of one centralised administration under the paramount leadership of the *Olubaka* of Okaland. This development was the direct aftermath of the reckless power politics that colonial rule used to alter the traditional political structure. The author stressed that the subsisting quasi-federal traditional government of Okaland which emerged as a result of the alteration caused by colonial interference is alien to Oka native laws and customs. The author, however, concluded that, chieftaincy institutions have always been a potent pillar of cultural and traditional values, which had helped to sustain social order

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<sup>58</sup>Olukoju, A.O. 2003. Oka. Ed. Oguntomisin, G.O. *Yoruba...* pp. 77-88.

<sup>59</sup>S.A. Ogunode 2012, *From Kingdoms to Kingdom: A Historical Appraisal of the Chieftaincy Institution in Okaland Southwest of Nigeria, European Scientific Journal*, Vol. 8, no. 23, pp.22-37.

and communal harmony between and among the various communities in Okaland, and that the emergence of the *Olubaka* as the paramount ruler of Okaland marked the beginning of a comprehensive and enduring socio-political system.<sup>60</sup>

Another important work is Faboyede's 'The Akoko Elite, 1900 – 1960'.<sup>61</sup> The study was basically tailored towards correcting the general notion that there was no practice of elitism in Akokoland until the eve of colonialism. To achieve this, the thesis examined the Akoko traditional and modern *elite* between 1900 and 1960 and did an analysis of the evolution and contribution of the Akoko *elite* to the development of Akokoland. The various functions of the Akoko *elite* for a period of sixty years were also evaluated. The study concludes that the traditional *elite* had been in existence in Akokoland long before the advent of the Europeans and had undergone various stages of transformation. It further submits that, Akokoland produced *elite*, in different spares of life, who made invaluable contribution to the growth and development of the region between 1900 and 1960. The study equally emphasised that contrary to the assumptions that Akoko traditional *elite* were autocratic; the indigenous political or administrative system had in place very effective system of checks and balances, which regulated the conducts of those in positions of authority.<sup>62</sup>

Aremu and Oniye's 'Nupe Hegemony in Akokoland in the Nineteenth Century: A Local Imperialism in Pre-colonial Nigeria, 1845-1897' examines the Nupe incursion into Akokoland in north-east Yorubaland in the nineteenth century. The paper argues that one of the major reasons for the defeat of Akoko communities by the Nupe was the lack of cooperation among the communities. As such, they could not bring up the necessary formidable force to successfully resist their common enemy. The lack of cooperation according to the study was also determined by the internal warfare among the communities. The paper also attempts an analysis of the political and economic changes that the Nupe's reign brought on Akoko towns. However, it is important to state that from the available evidence, Nupe's military activities in Akokoland started earlier than 1845. Also, while inter-communal war existed among Akoko communities, it had become very uncommon in the nineteenth century due to the mutual respect for each other and more importantly, land dispute that used to be the major cause of the war was longer popular due to the emergence of a new land tenure system that had transferred the practical management and usage of land from the state to the family.

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<sup>60</sup>Ogunode, S.A. 2012... p.37.

<sup>61</sup>O. Faboyede 2013. The Akoko Elite, 1900 – 1960. A Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the Department of History and International Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State. Nigeria. pp. 1-125.

<sup>62</sup>O. Faboyede 2013. The Akoko Elite, 1900 – 1960... pp.122-125.

Consequently, most land disputes involving families from different communities stopped at the family level. Notwithstanding the paper is relevant to this study as it gives provides information on the Nupe, who constituted major external security threat to the Akoko in the century under review.<sup>63</sup>

‘British Rule and the Transformation of Akokoland, 1897 – 1960’,<sup>64</sup> by Adeyeri reveals the colonial journey of Akokoland between 1897 and 1960 and clearly shows the level of alteration the foreign rule made to its pre-existing socio- political organisation. Socially, for instance, it is noted that Akokoland had access to Western education through the British and as early as 1920, Akokoland had been populated by a good number of indigenes having the requisite education to take up jobs in the local administration. Westernisation with the support colonial policies imprinted significantly on the socio-cultural value system of Akokoland. For instance, Western marriage system was superimposed on the indigenous marriage culture. More importantly, the *Omoluka*(integrity, dignity and honesty) was negatively affected. Furthermore, it is observed that, most Akoko communities had relocated to the hilltops, due to the numerous security challenges they faced in the nineteenth century prior to the British incursion. However, with the colonial authority in place, Akoko settlement pattern once again changed as the people relocated and settled on lowlands with spatial settlement pattern, especially between 1917 and 1960. Economically, British rule bequeathed to Akokoland, road networks, which marked a clear departure from the pre-colonial transport system in terms of socio-economic utility value. This, was, however, accompanied by a negative development – the introduction of forced labour in the 1920s. The evolution and growth of cash crop economy and the introduction of British currency created new commercial *elite* of Akoko middlemen. Increased cash flow and purchasing power transformed Akoko architecture considerably. The intensive drive for cash crop production and the attendant scarcity of land resulted in frequent land disputes and food crisis from the 1930s. In the political domain, British colonial policies subverted the power and authority of Akoko traditional rulers and also created conflicts within the traditional authorities and institutions in Oka, Akungba and Ikare as evidenced in the imposition of the *Olubaka* over *Asin*(1904), *Alale*over *Alakungba*(1913), and *Olukare* over *Owa Ale* (1946) respectively. The imposition of Momoh, a non-titled person, as paramount ruler of Akokoland generated

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<sup>63</sup> Aremu, O.J. and Oniye, O.S. 2018. Nupe Hegemony in Akokoland in the Nineteenth Century: A Local Imperialism in Pre-colonial Nigeria, 1845-1897. *Research in Social Sciences*, Vol. 1, No.1, pp.1-8

<sup>64</sup> Adeyeri, J.O. 2015. British Rule and the Transformation of Akokoland, 1897-1960. A Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the Department of History, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

grievances from Akoko chiefs. This aspect of the study is very relevant to the understanding of issues related to power politics in Akoko kingship institution and its ripple effects. The Native Court system completely altered the pre-colonial judicial system and institutions of the people for new ones that generated inter-communal tensions and agitations championed by the village heads for reforms between 1919 and 1929. In response, British rule evolved a caricature of central administration in the area until the attainment of independence in 1960.<sup>65</sup>

‘The Military System of Benin Kingdom, C.1440-1897’ by Osadolor, represents an attempt to document the transformation and exploits of the Benin military between the fifteen and the nineteenth centuries. Thus, the study opens by addressing the concept of military with the aim of putting the Benin military system within the wider perspective of military discourse or study. The study, thereafter, proceeds to examine the structure, characteristics and development of Benin’s politics and military prior to 1440. In Chapter Three of the study, the author focuses and provides elaborate discussion on the development of Benin’s military during the era of warrior kings from c.1440 to 1600. This period is important because it marked the expansion of the state through military campaigns. In Chapter Four, the author discusses notable changes in the military system during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and provides explanation for the changes within the context of domestic political challenges of Benin. According to the author, the domestic political challenges in Benin were largely responsible for the fluctuations and decline of its military power. Chapter Five continues with the analysis of the development of the military during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Chapter Six, the Anglo-Benin military confrontation of February 1897 that ended the sovereignty of the Empire is re-examined. Although the work does not focus on Akokoland, it provides information on some of the military activities of Benin in the area.<sup>66</sup> The work, especially the third chapter, is therefore considered relevant to the present study.

From the foregoing, three major points can be inferred. First, existing literatures on general security knowledge are more concerned with the explanation of the complexity in defining and providing more critical views of security. The scopes of some of the works in this category also cover the importance of security to human development and some strategies for its maintenance. Secondly, most of the existing studies on the security experiences of the Yoruba people in the nineteenth century pay little attention to Akokoland.

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<sup>65</sup>J.O. Adeyeri 2015... p.125.

<sup>66</sup>Osadolor, O.B. 2001. The Military System of Benin Kingdom, C.1440-1897. Ph.D, Department of Philosophy and History University of Hamburg, Germany.

Thus, where such attention was given, it was largely as a means of providing detailed explanation for their subject-matters. For instance, all the identified works, which discuss Akokoland in the context of military or war in Yorubaland, largely generalised the experience of the people based on the findings emanating from the studies of bigger Yoruba communities. Thirdly, studies that major on the pre-colonial history of Akokoland seem to focus on other aspects of the people's past. Thus, this is where the originality of this research comes in, as it represents a novel attempt to specifically study the pattern or nature of security challenges in Akokoland and the socio-political consequences of these in the nineteenth century. However, this does not imply that the existing studies are not useful to this study; they are all rich in information that is of great benefit to this study.

## **1.8 Chapters Synopsis**

In line with the objectives of the study, the contents of the research are carefully structured in themes and discourses, which comprehensively captured the subject-matter. Accordingly, the research has seven chapters:

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

The Chapter provides the background knowledge to the study, highlighting and discussing the meanings and definitions of security and security challenges. The chapter properly places and explains the context in which these terms are viewed and used in the study. This is considered very important as it will not only prevent misunderstanding, but also guarantee good understanding of the readers. The chapter also includes the objectives of the study, statement of the problem, scope of the study, significance and justification of the study, research methodology and sources of data used. Also, the Chapter contains a review of directly and indirectly related and relevant literature. This has helped to locate the originality and contributions of the study to the existing body of knowledge and academic debates on the pre-colonial history of Akokoland.

### **Chapter Two: An Overview of Geographical, Socio-Political Structure and Security Challenges of Akokoland up to the Nineteenth Century**

The Chapter discusses both the physical and human geographical compositions of Akokoland. Physically, the chapter describes the major features of the natural environment of Akokoland such as climate, vegetation, topography, drainage system and so on and examines



the impact of these physical features on the security experiences of the people. The chapter examines the human composition of Akokoland, paying close attention to themes such as the stories of origin, migration and other major features that distinguish them from other Akoko people such as Akoko Edo and Akoko Ikale. The Chapter also examines the socio-political structure that commonly existed among Akoko people up to the opening of the nineteenth century. This background information, especially on the existing socio-political structure up to the nineteenth century is crucial to our understanding and appreciation of the changes that the security challenges of the aforementioned century brought upon the existing political system. In other words, our understanding of the pre-nineteenth century political structure of Akokoland can only help to clearly identify the degree of changes that the security challenges brought upon the pre-existing socio-political structure.

Chapter Two also interrogates the pattern of the security challenges in Akokoland up to the nineteenth century. The chapter provides historical background information on the internal and external security challenges that the Akoko had to deal with during this period. The chapter also examines the major external aggressors of Akokoland and how the political and economic interests of their foreign policies were relevant to the security of Akokoland, with the aim of showing how the events in this period were crucial to shaping the security situation in the nineteenth century.

#### Chapter Three: The Nature and Impact of Internal Security Challenges on Akokoland in the Nineteenth Century

The chapter examines the domestic and intra-Akoko security challenges in the nineteenth century. The chapter probes into criminal activities that generally constituted internal security threats in different Akoko communities including murder, arson, manslaughter, kidnapping, witchcraft and so on. It also assesses the mechanisms that were put in place to address such challenges. Furthermore, as part of internal security challenges, the chapter interrogates the reasons, nature and patterns of inter-communal wars within Akokoland and concludes by evaluating the impact of these on the political development of Akokoland in the century under review.

#### Chapter Four: The Nature and Impact of External Security Challenges on Akokoland in the Nineteenth Century

Chapter Four explores major external security challenges in Akokoland in the nineteenth century. Consequently, the military exploits of Ekiti, Ibadan and, most importantly, Nupe in Akokoland were analysed. The chapter, in order, to provide explanations for the reasons behind the activities of these aggressors, analyses the political and economic interests of the foreign policies of the invaders and how Akoko fitted into all of these. Also, the chapter examines the mode of attacks and how Akoko people responded to them. In addition, the chapter analyses how the security challenges of the nineteenth century impacted or altered the pre-existing socio-political structure in Akokoland during the period under review. And most importantly, the chapter probes into how these security events prepared the ground for British colonisation in 1897.

#### Chapter Five: Conclusion

The chapter presents the findings and contributions of the study to the body of existing knowledge on the history of Akokoland. It also concludes the thesis.

## CHAPTER TWO

### GEOGRAPHY, SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUCTURE AND SECURITY SITUATION IN AKOKOLAND UP TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

According to Getis, Bjelland and Fellmann, geography involves an examination of 'relationships between human societies and natural environments that they occupy and modify' and focuses 'on the systems that link physical phenomena and human activities in one area of the earth with other areas'.<sup>67</sup> From the foregoing, it can be deduced that geography portrays two natures. The first aspect deals with the physical environment such as climate, vegetation, drainage and topography, while the second aspect is concerned with the humans inhabiting the identified physical environment. Thus, geography is preoccupied with analysing how the two sectors of the environment interact and influence each others. In other words, geography explains how physical features of a particular location influence the actions or inactions of human lives in such an environment. This explains why physical and human geography are two major branches of geography as an academic discipline.

Regardless of time and location, one cannot in anyway underestimate the significance of environment or geography to the life and development of an individual or a society. This probably informs Ogunremi's argument that no one can understand the history of a people without first understanding their geography.<sup>68</sup> Thus, there is a strong relationship between geography and history, development and survival. Geopolitics, the scientific study of how states interactions are influenced by geography, has been able to entrench our knowledge of why and how states in international politics take their decisions in recourse to their geographical advantages and disadvantages. In 'Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps that Explains Everything about the World', Tim Marshall from geographical and journalistic perspectives, divides the world into ten regional maps, which include Russia, China, the United States of America, Western Europe, Africa, the Middle-East, India and Pakistan, Korea and Japan, Latin America, and Arctic. He argues that the geographical realities in each

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<sup>67</sup> Getis, A; Getis, J.; Bjelland, M.D; and Fellmann (2011). *Introduction to Geography*. Mc Graw Hill, p. 5.

<sup>68</sup> Ogunremi, G.O. 1994. Dialogue Between Geography and History in Badagry: An Economic History Review. Ed. G.O. Ogunremi , *Badagry: A Study of the History, Culture and Traditions of an Ancient City*, Rex Charles, 1994, p. 37.

of these regions have continually shaped the actions of states or nations inhabiting them. International tensions arising from the struggles among nations to control certain geographical space or endowments such as seaways, mountains, islands, and so on will be more meaningful and understandable if envision within the geopolitical framework. Take for instance, the ceaseless efforts of China to keep Tibet and the southern seas under its control are more of security and economic concerns than anything else. While the control of these territories is of security advantage, losing them may make China vulnerable economically and security wise. On the other hand, the location and availability of abundant quantity of natural resources, especially oil and gas in Africa and the Middle-East, have attracted more foreign interests with ‘nothing but misery, predicaments and subversion’ to show for it. Furthermore, while the United States of America is blessed with strategically advantageous location and landforms that have made it prosperous, its prosperity, however, has become a motivation for overwhelming migration into the country, especially from less developed neighbouring countries. The on-going US-Mexico fencing saga speaks volumes about the security and socio-economic challenges that the surrounding human geography poses to the United States of America.

It is, therefore, on the above premise that efforts are made here not only to discuss the physical features of Akoko geography, but also to evaluate the relevance of these features to the security of the people in the nineteenth century. The chapter also x-rays human geographical constituents of the peoples, paying attention to their origin, migration pattern and settlement pattern and how all of these were related to the security of the people during the period under review. Finally, the chapter attempts a description of general pre-existing socio-political structure of the people so that later on in this work, the area of alteration or transformation propelled by the security challenges of the century will be well appreciated.

The chapter also examines the nature of the security challenges in Akokoland prior to the nineteenth century, with the intention of identifying the impact of the challenges on the existing socio-political structure and how this prepared the background for the security challenges of the nineteenth century.

## **2.1 Physical Geography of Akokoland**

As explained above, physical geography focuses on the natural aspect of the human environment. Therefore, 'its concerns are with land-forms and their distribution, with atmospheric conditions and climatic patterns, with soil or vegetation associations, and the like'.<sup>69</sup> Akokoland is located in the north-eastern part of Yorubaland, precisely in the north-eastern part of the present Ondo State in South-Western Nigeria. Akokoland stretches between longitudes 5<sup>oE</sup> and 6<sup>oE</sup>, and between latitudes 7<sup>oN</sup> and 7<sup>o</sup> 45<sup>N</sup>.<sup>70</sup> The people are presently formed into four local government councils: Akoko North-East, Akoko North-West, Akoko South-East and Akoko South-West Local Government Area Councils of Ondo State. Akokoland is strategically located between divergent cultures. For example, it shares boundary in the north with the people of Yagba and Owe sub-ethnic divisions of the Yoruba, presently located in Kogi State. To its north-western region, it shares boundaries with the north-eastern people of Ekiti presently in Ekiti State. It is also bounded in the south by Owo, presently in Ondo State and in the west by Emure and Ise Ekiti in Ekiti State. Finally, Akokoland shares boundary in the east with the people of Akoko-Edo in the present Edo State, South-South, Nigeria.<sup>71</sup> From the foregoing, it can be clearly seen that Akokoland is a centre peace connecting many communities and cultures from different geo-political zones of Nigeria. These contacts, as will be seen later on, explain why some aspects of cultural practices of these neighbouring groups are presently found among Akoko people.

The climate of Akokoland is tropical. Basically, there are two seasons, the wet or raining season and the dry season. With average temperature of 27 <sup>o</sup>C, the raining season usually lasts between April and October, while the dry season is usually between November and March.<sup>72</sup> The annual rainfall of the area is above 1,150mm. The humidity is roughly high throughout the year mainly as a result of a long period of rainfall. The effect of this, prior to colonial invasion of the area, was mainly felt on agriculture, as it supported farming activities for most part of the year. Vegetation wise, Akoko is thickly forested in the southern part. Although there is no forest reserve in the area, there is presence of woods such as Iroko, Omo, Mahogany, etc.<sup>73</sup> The forest also houses different species of games. This explains why hunting was a major pre-colonial economic activity of Akoko people. Also, in the pre-

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<sup>69</sup> Getis, A; Getis, J.; Bjelland, M.D; and Fellmann. 2011... p. 5.

<sup>70</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667. J.H. Beeley's Intelligence Report on the Akoko Area of the Owo Division, Ondo Province, 1934.

<sup>71</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...; Akeredolu, J.L. 1986. *Introduction of Christianity into Akokoland...*, p. 11.

<sup>72</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667. Geography: Physical Features.; N.A.I. CSO 862/3. Minutes of the Ondo Provisional Conference held at the Provisional Conference Room, Akure on Frokoy the 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1950.

<sup>73</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667, 'Geography: Physical...; N.A.I. CSO 862/3...

colonial period, when there were no modern medicines, the forest was highly appreciated as a source of herbs for traditional medical concoction (*agbo*).

Meanwhile, the forest decreases in progression towards the north, producing open sub-savannah grassland.<sup>74</sup> In the pre-colonial times, while the forest region supported the plantation of capital intensive farm produce such as palm trees and bananas, the savannah was a fertile ground for arable crops such as yams and vegetables. The vegetation divide between the north and the south was, however, a blessing as it encouraged exchange of agricultural products between the two areas. Thus, it motivated some kind of economic inter-group relations among the communities of the two divides. More importantly, the savannah provided the routes that connected Akoko people of the forest to their neighbours mentioned earlier. The essence of these was the provision of opportunities for commercial activities between Akokoland and their neighbours. C.O. Akomolafe, for example, has recorded a version of such commercial trades in which the mainly leather goods and beads from the Nupe and Ilorin were exchanged for pots and palm kernel oil (*adiri* or *adin*) produced by Akoko people.<sup>75</sup>

While there are no big water bodies such as found in the riverine areas of Ondo State, Akoko is well drained by a number of waters. In other words, Akoko is not a landlocked area. Notable among these waters is the River Ose on the eastern boundary of Akoko. There are also rivers Oyinmo and Edua along the western boundary of Akoko with Ekiti; and other rivers like Itapako in Isua, Owu and Ajan between Ikun and Oba along the Oba-Ikun-Idoani road, Otagala along Arigidi-Okeagbe route. Some of these rivers and streams discharge their waters into two relatively large rivers, Ose and Ovia.<sup>76</sup> A notable feature of these water bodies is that they are all seasonally active. In other words, the water levels usually rise during the raining season, while they decrease during the dry season. In the pre-colonial period, the rivers and streams supported fishing, though mainly for domestic consumption. There is no evidence to suggest commercial fishing by any pre-colonial Akoko communities. The small size of these rivers, with exception to Ose and Ovia, did not make them major sources of transportation. However, they adequately served the domestic needs of the people

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<sup>74</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667, 'Geography: Physical...; N.A.I. CSO 862/3...

<sup>75</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1979. The Establishment of British Administration and Its Impact on Owo-Akoko Relations, 1919-1935. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 67; Ogungbemi, T.M. 2011. The Growth of Market in Ikare Akoko: A Case Study of *Osele* Market (1840-Present), A BA Dissertation, Department of History and International Studies, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria', p. 36.

<sup>76</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667, 'Geography: Physical...

such as drinking and washing.<sup>77</sup> The stretches of the rivers sometimes created swamps (*akuro*), which supported all year-round farming (*oko akuro*).

Topographically, Akokoland is mostly hilly though with ruggedly plain land area. For instance, there are Ikare Hills, Oka Hills at Oka, Akunmirin Hill at Akungba, Osinni at Isua and Eruwakun and Otakepe at Ikun, etc.<sup>78</sup> This is the basis for the ancestral praise (*oriki*) of Ikare indigenes, which states that, '*Ikare, omo oloke meji, tako-tabo*', meaning 'Ikare, child of possessor of two hills, male and female'. Generally, these are high rising hills, with rugged bed surface, which allowed for settlement. For instance, Oka Hill is said to be more than 2,000 feet above the sea level.<sup>79</sup> In pre-colonial times, many Akoko communities settled on these hills, mainly for security reasons. In some instances, the relocations to the bottom of the hills were as recent as the 1900s. And these were largely due to the directives of the colonial officers, who found it difficult climbing the hills each time they came visiting the indigenous leaders.<sup>80</sup>

The above geographical features of Akokoland considerably influenced the life of the pre-colonial people. However, the following discourse has been analysed largely from security perspective, since that is the major interest of the study. The vegetation of Akoko, for example, was a mixed blessing to the people. For example, the agricultural prosperity of the region, which was due largely to its fertile soil and abundant rainfall, made it attractive to its adversaries, such as Nupe, Ibadan, Benin, and so on, who wanted to lord their authorities over the area as a way of controlling and exploiting its wealth.<sup>81</sup> For example, aside the fact that Akoko towns were raided for slaves, their adversaries' intentions also included making them vassal or tributary towns. The area, due to its proximity and economic potentials, often caught the attention of the exploiters as it fitted perfectly into their programmes or foreign policies of territorial and economic expansions.<sup>82</sup>

The sub-savannah grassland that progressed towards the north, without any serious natural barriers like rivers or gulfs, made it possible for attacks to be easily launched from that end. This demonstrates why most external attacks suffered by Akokoland were from the

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<sup>77</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...

<sup>78</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667... p. 11.

<sup>79</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667, 'Geography: Physical...

<sup>80</sup> Oyolola A.A., *Olisua* (King) of Isua-Akoko, *Olisua* palace, Isua-Akoko, August 10, 2015. He provided useful information on the early history of Isua and other neighbouring Akoko communities now found in Akoko South-East Local Government Area of Ondo State.

<sup>81</sup> Mason, M.A. 1970... pp. 204-205.

<sup>82</sup> Faboyede, O. *Women and Warfare in Pre-Colonial Akokoland...*, pp. 47-48.

northern borders. Furthermore, the relatively small size and population of Akoko communities compared to her aggressors can be arguably said to have encouraged their invasions by these forces. For instance, the Nupe that attacked Ikare and Oka, etc., aimed to quickly overrun them, because of their relatively small size and population.<sup>83</sup> The inability of the communities to successfully form a common front to rebuff the onslaught of their adversaries was to worsen the situation.

Meanwhile, the thick forest of the southern end did not encourage such frequent attacks from the south. This was because it was difficult to penetrate the forest, especially with horses that were major military carriers of the period. More so, the abundant presence of tsetse flies, causers of sleeping sickness that was (and still) deadly to animals, prevented such sudden invasions from the forest. However, this does not imply that there were no attacks launched through the forest. It is on record, for example, that, Owo, Akoko's neighbour to the south attacked some Akoko communities, penetrating from nowhere but the forest.<sup>84</sup> Thus, while the forest did not encourage frequent attacks like witnessed in the north, it, however, did not entirely prevent them.

Perhaps, the most important natural resources that were of military advantage to Akoko people in pre-colonial period were the hills. As established earlier, major parts of Akokoland are surrounded by hills and in fact, people intentionally settled on these hills as a security measure against attacks. Major distinguished features of these hills were the caves found in them. These usually provided safe havens for the people during wars as it was usually difficult for their adversaries to climb the hills and fetch them out of the caves. Thus, from the hills, they would tactically launch guerrilla attacks against their enemies. More so, the rubbles at the top of the hills served as significant weapons. These were rolled down on the enemies at the basement of the hills. These tactics have been widely reported in Nupe-Oka War in which the Nupe for the first time failed to conquer an Akoko town.<sup>85</sup>

Geographical factors, especially land, seemed to have major impact on the inter-communal relationship within Akokoland during the pre-colonial period. At the earliest stage of state formation, majority of inter communal wars within Akokoland had evolved due to land disputes. Since land, which was a major element of power and economy, was not evenly

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<sup>83</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...

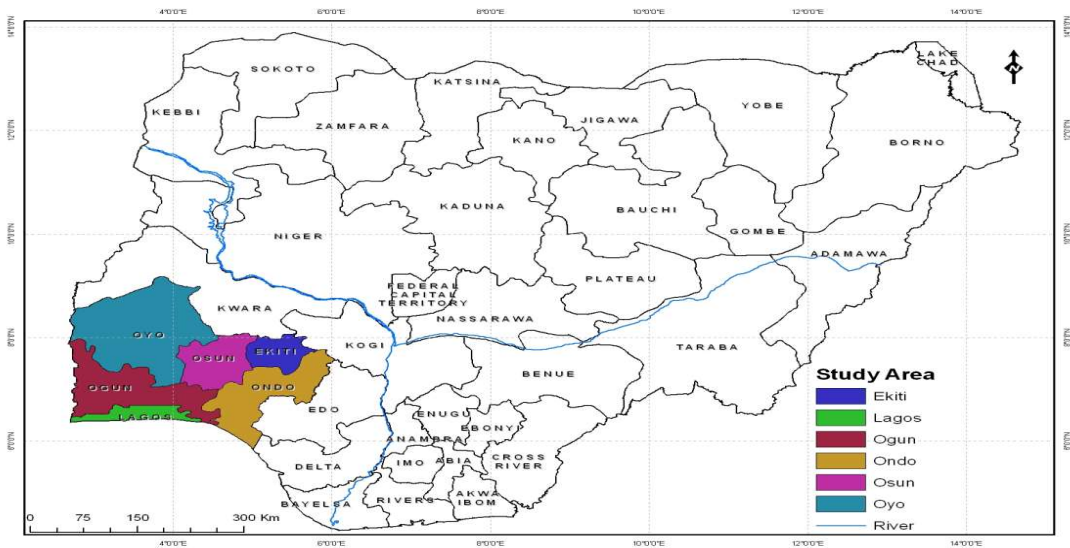
<sup>84</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...

<sup>85</sup> Adewolu J.A., 90 years, retired teacher, 3 Hospital Road, Iworo Oka, Oka-Akoko, July 13, 2015. He provided useful information on Oka-Akoko's experience of wars and defence methodologies in pre-colonial times.



distributed, the communities struggled among themselves to acquire it and some cases such struggles would result to arm conflicts.<sup>86</sup> However, this pattern of relations over land soon changed as the communities came to acknowledge and respect superior claims over land. While land was still not equally available to all the communities, a practice evolved in which communities with not enough land space usually made use of the available land belonging to other communities, though with a clear acknowledgement of the final decisions of the original owners. For instance, Oka people are said to have cultivated land belonging to Oba, while Akungba did same on Supare land, but with the recognition that the lands belonged to Oba and Supare respectively.<sup>87</sup>

A deduction or conclusion that can be carefully made from the forgoing is that both the physical and human geography of Akokoland right from time, especially in the pre-colonial period, have always been influential in shaping the lives, survival and development of the people socially, economically and politically.



**Fig 1: Map of Nigeria showing Yorubaland**  
Source: Ministry of Land and Housing, Akure, 2011



**Fig.2: Map Showing the Study Area**

Source: Ministry of Lands and Housing, Akure, 2011

## **2.2 Human Composition of the Geography of Akokoland**

Among other things, human geography deals with the people, covering issues such as their composition, ‘what they are like, how they interact over space,... what kinds of landscapes of human use they erect on the natural landscapes they occupied’ and so on. On that basis, this section bothers on some aspects of human geography of Akokoland, focusing mainly on their composition. With historical touches to the geographical explanation, the chapter also examines the popular traditions of their origin and how they settled and evolved as a sub-division of Yoruba race. This further justifies the position of Ogunremi on the close relationship between history and geography.

Having said this, it is also important to know that Akokoland during the period under review was made up of about forty communities, which were independent of one another. In other words, none of these forty communities enjoyed over-bearing authority over others. These communities are currently divided under the four local government council authorities in the area. Thus, in Akoko North-East are communities such as Akunnu, Auga, Iboropa, Ikakumo, Ikare, Ise Ugbe, etc. In Akoko North-West, there are communities such as Afin, Ajowa, Arigidi, Ese, Gedegede, Ibaram, Igasi, Ikaram, Irun, Ogbagi, Okeagbe, Oyin, etc. Communities like Epinmi, Ifira, Ipe, Ipesi, Isua and Sosan are found in Akoko South-East, while in Akoko South-West there are Akungba, Ikun, Oba, Oka and Supare.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Ondo State Government: Department of Research and Statistics, Ondo State Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, ‘Digest of Local Government Statistics’, 2009, p. 1; M.A. Olanipekun, ‘Memorandum on the Re-upgrading of *Obas*, Review of Chieftaincy Matters Bordering on Paramouncy and Consenting Authority’, 2004.

In order to properly understand the human composition of Akoko geography, especially its fluidity, it may be necessary to look into the various sources of the people's migration. The fact is that migration forms a leading theme in the traditions of origin and evolution of the Akoko. This is due, largely, to the fact that Akokoland served and still serves as a melting point for different migrants from different parts of what is now known as Nigeria, especially Ekiti, Owo, Benin, Okun and Nupeland. By and large, the legends concerning the origin of Akoko people can be classified into three prototypes. This classification is based mainly on the sources, directions and patterns of migration claimed by the legends. The first legend, for example, is popularly known as the Ife-Akoko tradition. The second is the Kabba-Akoko tradition, while the third is the Ado, Kukuruku or Benin-Akoko tradition of origin.

The first tradition, which has been roughly pegged at around the 12<sup>th</sup> century, saw migrants moving directly from Ile-Ife to Akokoland. The legend further states that the migrants to Akoko sojourned with the ancestors of Owo.<sup>89</sup> Thus, according to the legend, Ife, the cradle of the Yoruba, was the main source of the migrants. It is claimed that the migration coincided with the time of mass exodus of people from Ile-Ife, which was initiated by a prolonged drought that later resulted to a long period of famine.<sup>90</sup> This legend is very popular among the people of Afo, Aje, Iboropa, Ifira, Ikare, Ikun, Ipe, Ipesi, Oba, Oge, Ora and Supare.

The legend, however, raises a number of concerns. First, considering the long distance of Ife to Akoko and the proximity of bigger Yoruba kingdoms of Ijesa and Ekiti, and even Owo, it is doubtful if the ancestors of Akoko had not temporarily settled in any of these places before moving down to Akokoland. In fact, as it is later shown in the remaining migration accounts, there are strong indications that a large component of Akoko populace probably migrated from these near-by kingdoms and not directly from Ile-Ife as they have claimed. And if Beeley's categorisation of the Akoko communities in this category as Owo-Akoko is anything to go by, it is highly possible that these set of migrants took off from Owo and its surrounding communities. The similarities between the dialects of the

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<sup>89</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667. Origins of Akoko People.

<sup>90</sup> Fadipe, N.A. 1970. *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, edited by F.O. Okediji and O.O. Okediji, Ibadan Uni. Press, pp. 8-9; Ed. Akinjogbin, I.A. *Milestones and Concepts in Yoruba History and Culture: A Key to Understanding Yoruba History*, Olu-Akin Publishers, pp. 104-119; Oguntomisin, G.O. 2003. *Yoruba Towns in Perspective...* pp. 1-2.

aforementioned communities, with exception to Ipe, and that of Owo strongly suggest this view.

Secondly, if the ancestors of Owo and these Akoko communities had left Ile Ife and settled directly at Akoko, it meant that their processes of state formation started roughly about the same time. It will be interesting then for one to know why none of these Akoko towns is big and developed as Owo. The third and, perhaps, most serious question revolves around the acclaimed date of migration, which is said to be around the 12<sup>th</sup> century. While one does not claim that there was no human existence in Akokoland in the century, it is obvious from the available evidence that the area had not been well-inhabited and the people were not well-structured or organised as at this period. No empirical evidence suggests that there was a large population of inhabitants in Akokoland, even in the fifteenth century. In fact, the Oduduwa era in Ile Ife has been tentatively pegged at about 1100 A.D. (the twelfth century).<sup>91</sup> It, therefore, means that the formation stage of Akoko communities happened concurrently with the socio-political transformation of Ile-Ife that was spearheaded by Oduduwa.

Notwithstanding, a reasonable deduction can still be made from the legend. For instance, it can be carefully said that there were ancestors of Akoko, who had cultural linkages with Ile-Ife. Thus, Akoko people had a past that can be traced to Ile Ife. It should be noted also that the popular claim of direct connections to Ile-Ife by the contemporary Yoruba communities and their traditional rulers cannot be divorced from the contemporary politics and the attempts by the *oba* or other traditional rulers to arrogate authenticity to their thrones in order to maximise their chances in modern politics.

It should be noted that there is another version of the above tradition of origin. This version which also traces the ancestral home of some Akoko people to Ile-Ife, however, claims that the people had a stopover at Ilesa and later at Ekiti before sojourning to Akoko. This pattern of migration was what influenced the classification of these set of Akoko communities by Beeley as Ekiti-Akoko.<sup>92</sup> The period of this migration has been set between the thirteen and fourteenth centuries.<sup>93</sup> Akoko communities such as Akungba, Erusu, Eshe,

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<sup>91</sup> Afolayan, F. The Early Yoruba Kingdoms. Eds. Lawal, N.S.; Sadiku, M.N.O. and Dopamu, A. *Understanding Yoruba Life and Culture*, Trenton NJ, African World Press Inc., pp. 32-33.

<sup>92</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...

<sup>93</sup> Okajare, S.T., 2012.... p. 44.

Igashi, Irun, Ogbagi, Omuo and Onyin are in this category. This account has also been widely justified by the people owing to the close similarities between their dialects and that of Ekiti.

While this account seems to be more logical, it is, however, not without some controversies. For example, the issue of dating raises some concerns. As earlier observed, there are no physical proofs to substantiate that live had been well-organised in Akoko before the eighteenth century. This then proposes that, perhaps, what is being referred to as stop-over at some Ekiti communities was actually a long-time settlement before further migration. The strong cultural affinities of these set of Akoko communities and their Ekiti neighbours, especially language wise, seem to point in this direction. It will be interesting to note that there is a strong claim by Ikole that Akoko communities of Afin, Oyin, Erusu and Ese were its villages that were only confiscated by the Nupe at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>94</sup> According to Akamolafe, an Ikole tradition while justifying this overlordship claims that:

...the four villages of Afin, Ese, Oyin and Erusu were often summoned at short notices to join in the repair of the Oba's (*Elekole*) palace. During the time of repair, these four villages had to fetch thatch, ropes, sticks and other materials for the repair. Secondly, during such traditional festivals as Ogun or Ifa, these four villages had to present the *Elekole* with gifts of yams, palm oil, kolanuts and goats. Thirdly, the four villages also took part in building or repairing the palace walls to provide strict security for the palace. Fourthly, each of these villages, on losing its *Oba*, had to send an envoy with a sum of five shillings in those days and one goat to inform the *Elekole* about the death of the chief. This practice was also repeated as soon as a new candidate to the vacant stool had been found. Two representatives of the *Elekole*, Chiefs Rawa and Elemese, were usually detailed to perform the installation ceremony. On no account should a new chief whose candidature was not approved by the *Elekole* be installed.<sup>95</sup>

While there is still no concrete evidence to justify that the concerned Akoko towns were at any point under the suzerainty of Ikole, it is possible that a reasonable number of migrants came from Ikole. Perhaps, these migrants later played major roles in the socio-political transformations of the concerned Akoko communities. Nevertheless, the account has been able to demonstrate again that the claim of Akoko people to Yoruba origin, Ile-Ife. Furthermore, this tradition of origin has been able to show that an influx of migrants, mainly

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<sup>94</sup> Ado Intelligence Book (ADB) Vol. 1, p. 51.

<sup>95</sup> Akamolafe, C.O. 1979... pp. 68.

from Ekiti, was highly decisive to the socio-political transformation of the concerned Akoko communities prior to the nineteenth century.

There also exists another version of the legend among Akungba people. In their own account, there is a claim that they migrated originally from Ile-Ife and with the ancestors of Ado Ekiti, Oye Ekiti, Oba-Akoko, Imesi-Ile Ekiti, Ijebu Ode and Ayede Ekiti on a Saturday (*ojo abameta*). Thus, on getting to Ilesa, the migrants all went their different ways, implying that they had not settled at any Ekiti community before migrating to Akungba.<sup>96</sup> Owing to the size and development of Akungba compared to the above mentioned Ekiti towns, it is difficult to conveniently rely on this account. Also, it is doubtful if Akungba's experience could be entirely different from other sister Akoko towns. And lastly, the close affinities existing between Akungba and Owo dialects proposes that a good number of migrants that set up socio-political transformation in Akungba came from around Owo.

The second tradition of origin represents a shift from Ile-Ife to Okun area of the present Kogi State. The account states that Akoko communities of Akunnu, Daja, Efifa, Esuku, Gedegede, Ikaram, Ojo and Oso migrated from Kabba and Yagba area.<sup>97</sup> Again, the affinities in cultural practices such as festivals, burial ceremonies and dialects of these Akoko communities with Kabba and Yagba have been presented as justifications for this account. For example, with a slight difference in the dialects of Daja and Ikaram, the people all speak dialects that are closely related to those of the Yagba, Owe and Gbede of Kabba area.<sup>98</sup>

A major defect of this account is that it does not suggest a probable date that the migration took place; hence, it does not in any way provide an insight into when the socio-political transformation of the concerned Akoko towns took place. Also, the brief nature of the account also deny one the opportunities of having clues on what probably influenced or motivated the exodus of the migrants from their original settlements. Lastly, the account does not provide clues into what transpired between the migrants and the aboriginal settlers they met in Akokoland, therefore, denying one the opportunity to understand the nature of the socio-political interaction and transformation of these communities.

The third migration account is a complete shift from Ile-Ife and Okun presumptions, or rather Yoruba hypotheses, to Benin Theory. In other words, this account traces the

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<sup>96</sup> Orisha, R.A.E. 1961. *Itan Isedale ti Akungba-Akoko...*, p. 1-2.

<sup>97</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667/62. Affinities and Languages, pp. 1-2.

<sup>98</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1976. Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935..., pp. 9-11.

migration of a section of Akoko people to the Benin, currently in Edo State, Nigeria. This account is popular among Akoko communities of Afin, Arigidi, Auga, Epinmi, Kakunmo, Ipe, Ise, Isua, Oso, Sosan and Uro. The migration and settlement are said to have taken place in the thirteenth century. Cultural affinities in terms of language, burial customs, ceremonial dress as well as typical Benin chieftaincy titles, such as *Osere*, *Ajana*, *Ologbosere*, *Olisa*, *Ojomo* and *Edibo*, have been sited to justify this account.<sup>99</sup> Isua dialect (*Uhanmi*), for instance, is said to be a variation of Edo. These Akoko communities were referred to by Beeley as Akoko-Benin and Akoko-Bengari.<sup>100</sup>

A major controversy surrounding this tradition is also in the dating of the migration and settlement which is said to be the 13<sup>th</sup> century. As observed in the first two accounts, there are no concrete evidence to showcase that these communities had been well-populated with a well-developed socio-political structure by the thirteenth century. And if the Benin imperialist campaign under *Oba* Ewuare in the fifteenth century is anything to go by, it is probably possible that the ancestors of these communities had migrated from closer villages of Akoko Edo that were under the imperial rule of Benin and had through this means adopted some aspects of Benin culture.

Another version of the above account, perhaps, seems to substantiate some of these observations. The version claims that though the people took-off from Benin, they, however, settled temporarily in Akoko Ayanran or Afenmai in Akoko Edo before proceeding to Akokoland.<sup>101</sup> Communities that make claims to this account are Auga, Epinmi, Kakunmo, Isua and Sosan. A major justification of this account by the people has been the affinities in their dialects and that of Afenmai people. However, the account does not provide probable dates of migration from Benin to Akoko Edo and from Akoko Edo to Akokoland. This has denied one the opportunity of relating the migration with other events in Benin and elsewhere, which could have given a clue to why and how the people migrated. Also, the account has not been able to state in clear term the reasons for the migration of the people from Benin to Akoko Edo and from there to Akokoland. These issues are very germane to understanding the pre-colonial socio-political development of the affected Akoko communities.

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<sup>99</sup> Egharevba, J.U. 1986. *A Short History of Benin*, University Press, pp. 76-79.

<sup>100</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667/62...

<sup>101</sup> Olukoju, A. 1982. *A History of Local Government in Akokoland, 1900-1962: A Study in Political Integration and Changes*, M.A. Thesis, Department of History, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, p. xvii.

Not minding the inadequacies of the above traditions of origin, they surely point out some facts about the pre-colonial past of Akoko people. In the first instance, the accounts all demonstrate the fact that the bulk of migrants that occupied Akokoland were people from the region or a landmass now known as Nigeria. Thus, there is no evidence to prove that there were migrations of people beyond this land into Akokoland. Although S.K. Ogidan has documented a claim among Isua people that they migrated from Israel in the Middle East and settled in Ado-Benin before their onward movement to Isua, the claim is not only illogical, but also lacks substance, and the only thing that can be carefully derived from it is that a considerable set of migrants to Isua originated from Ado-Benin.<sup>102</sup>

Secondly, although the sources of the migrants have carefully been traced to major groups (Ife, OKun and Benin) in Nigeria, there are strong indications that immediate migrations to Akokoland took off from smaller groups having strong historical attachments to the major groups. There are strong indications that the migrations were principally motivated by disputes over political positions or titles and in such instances, when disappointed claimants left their native towns, they were accompanied not merely by their own domestic circles, but by fairly large number of adherents and sympathisers. And if the Yoruba cosmology is anything to be examined, perhaps Akokoland partly witnessed notable influx of migrants from splinter Yoruba groups, especially Ekiti, who took off from Ile-Ife, when Oduduwa sons moved out of Ile-Ife to find new habitations. This event seemed to have been between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries.<sup>103</sup> Consequently, each of the migrant groups retained its imported cultures, which was blended with other available cultures to create a distinctive culture.

Furthermore, there are also strong demonstrations that socio-political life in the area had been very quiet until the influx of the migrants. Like many communities in Yorubaland, there were aboriginals popularly referred to as autochthonous, who had lived in the land several years before an influx of the new migrants.<sup>104</sup> However, little or nothing is known about these aboriginals. While trying to reconstruct the earliest history of Oka, Olukoju, for instance, argues that the *Okarufe* (the Oka that migrated from Ife) actually met people already inhabiting the area. He, however, submits that nothing tangible is known about the

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<sup>102</sup> Ogidan, S.K. 2013. *Isua Past and Present...*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>103</sup> Afolayan, F... pp. 31-49.

<sup>104</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1976. *Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935...*, pp. 4-12.



aboriginals.<sup>105</sup> Also, it is difficult to understand when and how the first set of migrants that made substantial impact to the socio-political transformation of the area entered. However, either peacefully or forcefully, the two settlers are believed to have absorbed each other. What evolved in the end was a new process of political and social transformation that eventually led to state formation. This is why Akoko is said to imply *ibi ti ati nko*, meaning a ‘place of convergence’,<sup>106</sup> even though their processes of absorption, transformation and state formation are still very much unknown.

And finally, these accounts have also provided insights into the background of the independent nature of Akoko. The diverse origins, formation processes of the towns that started about the same time, did not provide the opportunity for the emergence of a super-power town (among Akoko communities) that would exercise political suzerainty over other towns. Thus, irrespective of the disparity in landmass, population and wealth; Akoko towns have always interacted with one another on equal basis and as equal players in their inter-communal relations.<sup>107</sup>

Meanwhile, there is a need to provide explanations on the classification of Akoko people without Ife origin as Yoruba people. In this light, only Akoko groups with Benin origin fall within this framework since other groups (Akoko-Owo, Akoko-Ekiti and Akoko-Okun) have been identified with one link of Yoruba source or the other. Thus, in their argument for Yoruba identity, people have provided the following as the justifications. In the first instance, it is argued that the geographical location of these Akoko towns in Yorubaland has made them to view and imagine themselves for a very long time as Yoruba.<sup>108</sup> This was later consolidated by the modern politics, which has always earmarked them within the ‘political spectrum and governance’ dominated by the Yoruba. Having lived and adjusted under these circumstances for so long with strong cultural interaction with core Yoruba

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<sup>105</sup> Olukoju, A. 1989. The Siege of Oka, ca 1878-84: A Study in Resistance to Nupe Militarism in Northeastern Yorubaland. Eds. Falola, T. and Law, R. *War and Diplomacy in Pre-colonial Nigeria: Essays in Honour of Robert Smith* Wisconsin, Madison: African Studies Project, pp. 102-110.

<sup>106</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...

<sup>107</sup> N.A.I. Annual Report, Owo Division, Ondo Province, 1932 and 1934.

<sup>108</sup> Adesunloye, A.A.; Yemi, A.A., *Ashipa* of Isualand, 76 years, the *Olisua* Palace, August 10, 2015. He gave very useful information on the origin, early life, pre-colonial security experiences and socio-political structures of Isua and other neighbouring Akoko communities such as Ipe and Epinmi.

groups, the people now perceive themselves as Yoruba, though without forgetting their history.<sup>109</sup>

Secondly, the people have also presented their historical antecedence as a proof of their Yoruba personality. This is argued from the perspective of their ancestral or blood relationship with Oranmiyan's son, Prince Agberuma. According to the tradition, when Oranmiyan departed Benin, Agberuma, his eldest son, was supposed to be crowned the king instead. However, the kingmakers refused to crown him mainly because his mother was not a Benin princess. Thus, his younger brother, Ewedo, who had a Benin mother, was made the King. This betrayal angered Agberuma, who left Benin and was followed by a large number of sympathisers and aides. After a long period of movement, they finally settled at Idoani. Thus, Idoani got its name from the corruption of the phrase, *ibi ti Ini do si*, meaning, 'where Ini settled'. Further migration, however, made him and his supporters to settle at Isua. It was also from this process that Epinmi, Ipe, and other Akoko communities along this axis were later formed.<sup>110</sup> To the people, 'blood is always thicker than water'. Thus, they have claimed that since they are descendants of Oranmiyan, a prominent Oduduwa son, they are, therefore, *bona fide* Yoruba people.

Lastly, the justification was provided in their socio-political organisation that bears close resemblance with the existing Yoruba structure. For example, the political structure of these communities is arranged in hierarchical order like the indigenous Yoruba political structure. For instance, there is an *oba* (king) in the centre, assisted by *ijoye adugbo* (quarter chiefs) in the quarters and *bale* (family head) of a lineage or extended family. A very strong cultural argument is the adoption of Yoruba language as essential means of communication among the people. Despite their different dialects, the people still speak and see the general Yoruba language as a bridge of communication among the dialects. Consequently, Yoruba is commonly spoken not only in these communities, but across the length and breadth of Akokoland. So, they argue that this also portrays them as authentic Yoruba group.<sup>111</sup>

Generally speaking, language is a serious factor in Akokoland as there are several dialects being spoken. For example, there are several dialects, without resemblance of any

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<sup>109</sup> Olanipekun, O.J., farmer and community leader, 79 years, Oho Quarters, Epinmi-Akoko September 20, 2015. He provided useful information on the origin, sate formation and pre-colonial socio-political and economic life of Epinmi.

<sup>110</sup> Adesunloye, A.A.; Yemi, A.A., *Ashipa* of Isualand, 76 years, the *Olisua* Palace, August 10, 2015.

<sup>111</sup> Adesunloye, A.A.; Yemi, A.A., *Ashipa* of Isualand, 76 years, the *Olisua* Palace, August 10, 2015.

kind to Yoruba language, being spoken only at Oke-Agbe. This accounts for the popular saying that '*Akoko ni Olorun ti da ede ru*', meaning that 'Akoko was the spot, where God caused language confusion among human beings'. This refers satirically to the biblical account in Genesis 11: 9, where God confused the language of all the earth in Babel to prevent them from building a tower (Tower of Babel) to the heaven. But as explained above, Yoruba language has remained, from time immemorial, the most widely spoken language in the area as all communities and not minding their cultural sources, adopt it as their general medium of communication.

### **2.3 Socio-Political Structure of Akokoland up to the Nineteenth Century**

At this juncture, it would only be profitable to examine the indigenous socio-political organisation of the Akoko people for the following reasons. First, since it is only logical to have knowledge of the existing structure before the nineteenth century in order to properly now understand to what extent it was transformed by the security challenges of the century. Having said this, it is important to state that the socio-political system of Akoko people was (and is still) similar to what obtained in several Yoruba communities. And as earlier observed, this structure has been used by some Akoko communities to justify their claim of Yoruba identity.

The pre-colonial political system common in Akokoland was centralised system of governance, involving a centre ruled by a communal leader and districts or quarters ruled by chiefs. Caution should, however, be taken to avoid picturing the political structure as exactly the same, in terms of size, complexity and sophistication, as those found in Ife, Oyo, Ibadan, Ilesa and other metropolitan pre-colonial Yoruba communities. Notwithstanding, the structure was largely fashioned in line with what was obtainable in Yorubaland. Hence, one can rightly conclude that the pre-colonial political structure of Akoko people was monarchy built on the existing general Yoruba structure of kingship.

Thus, at the apex of the political pyramid was the *ijoye* (chief) or *oba* (king). He was well-revered by his people and wielded much power. For an Akoko community ruler, his power could be quantified and viewed within the scope of an average Yoruba king. For instance, he was believed by his people to be a representative of the gods of the land, therefore, second to none on the earth. He was believed to be divine and therefore perceived as a god in human flesh, sent by the Supreme Being to lead and give directions and provide

leadership to the people. This belief is well-captured and described by Olaniyan when he wrote that:

The Yoruba *oba* is revered as the focal embodiment of the kingdom; he is regarded not as an ordinary mortal but one sharing in divinity with the *orisa* (gods), a veritable link between his people and the world of the gods and ancestors, hence, his appellation ‘*alase ekeji orisa*’ (ruler, second only to the gods: or ruler, companion of the gods).<sup>112</sup>

Furthermore, he was believed to own the community land and enjoyed the power and prerogative to give a portion to whoever he wished. This is demonstrated in the titles of some of Akoko rulers such as *Alale* (owner of the land) of Akungba, *Olisua* (owner of Isua) of Isua, *Onikun* (owner of Ikun) of Ikun and so on. All these titles imply that the rulers owned the people and the land. Theoretically, therefore, he had absolute power on his people throughout the territorial jurisdiction of his town. This also explains why an *oba*, for instance, was addressed by his subjects as *kabiesi* (he, who no one dares to question). In the real sense, however, such power did not exist because there were a body of traditions or practices to checkmate his excesses. For example, his chiefs and the people could boycott his palace or disobey his orders to protest his arbitrary use of power.<sup>113</sup> In some instances, the gods of the land could be approached through some ritual rites, to deal with a despotic or corrupt king.<sup>114</sup> Consequently, though he held executive power and could pronounce capital punishment on any offender, he could only take such decision, in most cases, after due consultations with the council of his chiefs. Falola, for instance, has attempted to explain this from the larger Yoruba perspective when he said that:

In theory, the *oba* had the power of life and death over his people, but in practice he was more of a constitutional monarch because he could not dispense with his council of chiefs and representatives of the key lineages. An *oba* who attempted to be tyrannical would face a number of sanctions, and this varied from one society to another.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Olaniyan, R.A. 2004. Installation of Kings and Chiefs Past and Present. Eds. Lawal, N, Sadiku, M.N.O. and Dopamu. A., *Understanding Yoruba Live and Culture*. New Jersey, African World Press. p. 274.

<sup>113</sup> A.D. Famoye. 2015. Pre-colonial Security System of Akungba-Akoko, Southwest, Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, July-September, 2015, pp. 179-191.

<sup>114</sup> A.D. Famoye. 2015...

<sup>115</sup> Falola, T. 2006. Power, Status, and Influence of Yoruba Chiefs in Historical Perspective. Eds. Falola, T and Genova, A. *Yoruba Identity and Power Politics*, Rochester, NY, University of Rochester Press, pp. 163-164.

In administering the people, the leader required and enjoyed the support of the traditional chiefs, who sat with him in his palace to decide and dispense justice. In several instances, many of these chiefs were quarter chiefs. The leader as the head met with them regularly and sought their opinions on all important community affairs. Nevertheless, he could not be compelled to take their advice. This body or council was the *ajo* or *igbimo ilu*, overseeing matters that affected the whole community. There were other members of the community council such as the *olori ebi* (family heads), *agba ilu* (elders), important personalities, other title holders and members of secret courts such as *ogboni* and so on.<sup>116</sup>

There were criteria or conditions attached to one's ascendancy to the position of a community leader. Although these conditions varied from one community to another, this study only focuses on the aspects where there were similarities across the land. The first condition for anyone to attain the position of a leader was to be a male child from a ruling family. Consequently, the position was patriarchy, meaning that no female could attain it, no matter her biological status and wealth in the society. Secondly, intending leaders must be persons of good conduct or character and sound mind, without any kind of deformity. Every qualification was important; however, the last seemed to be given more attention because the responsibilities associated with the position could only be handled by persons with healthy mind.<sup>117</sup> But most importantly, the selection decision rested chiefly on the directive given by the *Ifa* (god of divinity). One cannot over-emphasise the significance of *ifa* among the pre-colonial Akoko people. As it was and still very referred as *atonisona* or *afinimona* (guide). For example, while appraising the significance of *Ifa* among Akoko people, Okajare observes that:

The consultation of the *Ifa* oracle was done for certain purposes, some of which included the desire to know the destiny and future of a new baby; to know the fate of a community under a regime; to ascertain the suitability of a candidate for the royal stool whenever it was vacant; to foreknow the future fortune and misfortune; and to know when to appease the gods and ancestors for their blessings and protection. In fact, individuals could consult *Ifa* for sundry

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<sup>116</sup> Onibalusi, A., 87 years, Farmer and High Chief Olupane (Third in rank to the King (Owa)). He was interviewed on April 4, 2017 at his residence, GM/44, Ayetoro Street, Ogbagi Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>117</sup> Sulaimon S., retired civil servant and *Alakun* (Chief) of Igbelu Quarter in Akungba- Akoko, 67 years, Igbelu Quarter, Akungba-Akoko, February 23, 2013. He gave useful information on the evolution of Akungba, pre-colonial socio-political and economic life and security system.

personal purposes. But, it was particularly important in the leadership selection process.<sup>118</sup>

Due to the frequency of wars, bravery and military prowess were also major qualities a community must possess. In fact, in the earliest times, kings are said to have led their people to battles. They were popularly addressed as *akinkanju oba* (brave kings)<sup>119</sup> This did not only increase the morale of the warriors, but also demonstrated that the kings perceived security of their people as the first among their priorities. It should be known that the prosperity and misfortune of the society were always attached to the personality of the rulers. However, this practice gradually declined as population increased and there was availability of more warriors.<sup>120</sup>

Next on the pyramid were the *ijoyeadugbo* or quarter chiefs. Usually, a quarter comprised families and lineages. Each quarter in every community had a chief, so the number of quarter chiefs in a particular community and the size of the *ajo* or *igbimoilu*, depended on the number of quarters available in such a community. In some big communities such as Oka, Ikare and Ogbagi, some quarters were further divided into three or four groups. Each of these quarter groups had a 'group head'<sup>121</sup> The responsibilities and rights of the *ijoyeadugbo* were similar to that of the community leader, except for the fact that while those of the leader cut across the whole community, the quarter chiefs' authorities were principally restricted within their domains. Thus, the chiefs were the representatives of the *oloriilu* (community leader) in their quarters and responsible for the day-to-day administration of their quarters. They also acted as the link between the central authority and their people, informing the people about the trends in governance and also giving feedbacks to the central authorities on the people's disposition to the government activities.<sup>122</sup>

The quarter heads also had an advisory council, comprising family heads, elders, individual title holders and important personalities in the quarter. These people had the responsibilities of listening to cases, advising the quarter heads and deciding cases with him. Like the *igbimo ilu*, the quarter heads and his council members met regularly to discuss issues

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<sup>118</sup> Okajare, S.T., 2012... p. 59.

<sup>119</sup> Abegunde, O., herbal practitioner and community elder in Ikare-Akoko, 87 years, 20, Okoron Quarter, Ikare-Akoko, December 21, 2014. He provided information on the pre-colonial political structure of Ikare as well as the community security experience and the roles of the *Ogboni* and related secret courts in the security maintenance of the town; Adesunleye, A.A...

<sup>120</sup> Famoye, A.D. 2015... pp. 182-184.

<sup>121</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667/62...

<sup>122</sup> N.A.I. Annual Report, Owo Division, Ondo Province...

bothering on the development of their quarters.<sup>123</sup> Their jurisdiction also covered the settling of disputes involving two or more families within the quarter. However, matters that could not be resolved by the quarter chiefs and their councils were expected to be forwarded to the centre for appropriate action. Like in the case of the *olori ilu*, the most important general criteria for a person willing to become a quarter head included being an adult male that hailed from such a quarter, having good behaviour, sound heart and health and a record free of crime. Age and experience also counted in the selection of a quarter chief.<sup>124</sup> The significance of *Ifa*'s guidance in the selection of a quarter head in pre-colonial Akoko cannot again be overrated.

Next on the hierarchy were the family heads or *olori ebi*. A family in pre-colonial Akoko implied an extended family, involving several nuclear families. Usually, a family head would be the oldest male in the family. He was responsible for the day-to-day running of the family affairs. His responsibilities included serving as the link between his family, their quarter and by extension the entire community. He had an advisory body consisting of all elders in the family and had the power to reward good or bad conduct, hard work or laziness, etc., accordingly.<sup>125</sup> His duties also involved settling disputes among members of his family and monitoring their adherence to the family socialisation process, rituals and other acceptable practices. His duties also involved sharing of the family property, especially land, among members and protecting the family property against all forms of encroachment.<sup>126</sup>

The reference accorded family in pre-colonial Akoko made the roles of the family head a very crucial one. For example, as the smallest unit of the society, a family was expected to properly bring up all children belonging to such family, informing them of the dos and don'ts of the society and also ensure that they act at all times in accordance with the acceptable practices of the community. Individuals were publicly envisioned and addressed in view of their family image. Similarly, a family could be rewarded for the achievement of a member and at the same time, it could be punished for the wrong-doing of a member. It then suffices to state that the place of family in the socio-political organisation of pre-colonial Akoko was fundamental.

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<sup>123</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667/62...

<sup>124</sup> Asefon, A., businessman, traditional chief and community leader in Akungba-Akoko, 60+, Ibaka Quarter, Akungba-Akoko on January 05, 2010. He provided very useful information regarding the origin, development, socio-political and economic structures and inter-group relations of Akungba and her neighbours in pre-colonial times.

<sup>125</sup> Asefon...

<sup>126</sup> N.A.I. CSO 29667/62...

At the bottom of the socio-political structure was the age grade system or *egbe*. Although there were differences from one community to another, there abound similarities on which one can attempt general discussion. This was a practice in which every member of a community at any point belonged to a social-political group according to his or her age.<sup>127</sup> In other words, the main criterion was age. Some rituals and ceremonies were sometimes required for admission into some age grades, especially the elder's groups or *egebe agba*. Gender was also an important factor, since the age grades were also formed on masculine and feminine lines. However, male age grades were more evident than those of females. There are many reasons for this. In the first place, male age grades in all the communities were usually many, sometimes between six and ten groups, while the female age grades were usually between two and six. For example, in Akungba, women were divided into two age grades, *adelebo* (married women) and *omeedan* (the unmarried).<sup>128</sup> In Isua, women had six age grade, namely *uvisi* (unmarried girls), *orkwufa* (attained from the day of marriage), *ormanorfuere* (elderly married women), *Ere-dede* (attained after the birth of first grandchild), *ikooshi* (attained after the birth of great grandchild), *okosaboh* (attained after the birth of great, great grandchild), and *aaniiseh* (attained after the birth of great, great, great grandchild).<sup>129</sup> It is, however, doubted if a good number of women had attained the last two stages. Another reason, perhaps, why the male age grade groups were more noticeable was that they performed energy-required community tasks, such as road clearing, securing the community and so on. This, however, does not imply that the females did not play any role in community development.

Generally, the *egbe* performed responsibilities ranging from community development to security maintenance, administration and socialisation. As community developers, the age grades were responsible for initiating and executing community projects such as building or repairing public buildings like the palace and houses of the quarter chiefs. These responsibilities in most cases were performed by the young age grade, popularly known as the *odo ilu* (youth). Community development projects also involved clearing of roads leading to farms and streams, clearing or sweeping of village squares or markets and sometimes

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<sup>127</sup> N.A.I. CSO 5267. H. Cook's Proposed Akoko Federation. 1948.

<sup>128</sup> Olotu, W, retired teacher and community leader, 65 years, 15 Igbelu Quarter, July 16, 2016. He gave information on socio-cultural practices and age-grading system of Akungba.

<sup>129</sup> Okijiola, J.A. the *Bobajiroro* of Isualand, 65 years, Isua Civic Centre, Isua-Akoko, August 17, 2015. He provided information on the pre-colonial history of Isualand, covering its politics, economy, inter-group relations and socio-cultural practices.



working on the farm of the community leaders.<sup>130</sup> In many cases, failure of any member to participate in any of these public works without a genuine reason was an offence, which would attract fines. The fine could take any form. For example, such offender could be asked to go and work on the farm of a community leader or clear communal stream all alone for a period of time.<sup>131</sup>

As security agents, the roles of the age grades included policing the community to ensure peace and order and safety of lives and property. For example, they were to maintain law and order on the street and in the markets. They had the power to arrest, for example, anyone involved in street fighting. Such arrested person would be taken to the authority for sanction, which would be enforced by the appropriate age grade under the supervision of a more senior age grade or other constituted authority. The security roles of the age grades, especially those that fell between ages twenty and fifty, also involved contributing personnel to the military forces of the community. The age grades were also responsible for the implementation or enforcement of the decisions taken by the community or the quarter councils.<sup>132</sup>

Lastly, the age grades performed administrative responsibilities by serving as the middle men between the political authorities and members of the community. In other words, they were the major vehicles through which information was exchanged between the authorities and the masses. Leaders of these groups were sometimes even invited to attend important community council meetings. By and large, the age grades can also be viewed as important agent of socialisation as their responsibilities involved teaching and ensuring that their members behave in line with the acceptable cultural values.

It can carefully be deduced from the foregoing that, geography was a major factor of development in pre-colonial Akoko as its impact was not felt only on the economic activities of the people, but also on the socio-political development of the people, especially their security, which is the main thrust of this study. The strategic location of the area at the centre of different ethnicities encouraged an influx of migrants from heterogeneous cultural backgrounds. This development largely accounts for the presence of some aspects of cultural practices of these ethnic groups among Akoko people. While these diversities in cultural

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<sup>130</sup> N.A.I. CSO 29667/62...

<sup>131</sup> Aroge, 68. He retired as a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>132</sup> N.A.I. CSO 29667/62...

backgrounds are noted, it can be safely said that Akoko people are largely Yoruba people. Accordingly, majority of the people have direct Yoruba origin, having emerged as long time products of the mass exodus from Ile-Ife. Even, those who do not trace their sources directly to Ile-Ife, have also claimed Yoruba identity through their blood relations with Oduduwa's son, Oranmiyan. These groups have further justified their claim of Yoruba identity by their placement over the years within the Yoruba geographical space and practise of notable Yoruba customs and traditions, such as speaking Yoruba language and practising the *obaship* political system. Finally, it can be said that the socio-political structure of Akoko communities was monarchical in nature, with different power sharing formula between the central and the subordinate authorities. More importantly, up till the opening of the nineteenth century, Akoko communities were independent of one another and there is no convincing evidence suggesting that they were under any form of foreign control. Although there were instances of external attacks, especially by Benin and Owo forces, none of these resulted in the loss of sovereignty of any Akoko town up to the nineteenth century.

#### **2.4 An Overview of the Pre-Nineteenth Century Challenges of Akokoland**

Like every other society, the pre-nineteenth century communities were able to classify their security and challenges into internal and external. Thus, internal security challenges were viewed as those threats to peace and tranquillity of the society, which arose within the community, while external security challenges were threats from outside the community.<sup>133</sup> Internally generated security challenges can further be divided into two categories. The first category of the internal security challenges were those that sprang up between the original settlers and later migrants during the process of settlement and accommodation. Olukoju has recorded, for instance, this pattern of relations which ensued between the original Oka settlers and the Ife migrants. According to him, the influx of the Ife migrants to Oka and their attempts to settle there were resisted by the original settlers, which eventually led to a war of survival between the two groups.<sup>134</sup> Even though the author did not mention the reason(s) for the migration, it can be guessed, relying on the traditions of origin of many Yoruba towns, that the migrants would have come to Oka probably in search of land or a more secured territory. It is also possible that the migrants could have been led by a great warrior or leader, who had angrily left his original town after his failure to win a chieftaincy contest. Whatever

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<sup>133</sup>N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667... Crime and Punishment, p. 47.

<sup>134</sup>Olukoju, O., 2003. Oka. Ed. Oguntomisin, G.O., *YorubaTowns...*, pp. 79-80.

the case was, the Ife migrants won the war after they had over powered the military strength of the indigenous settlers and killed the dwarfish and powerful king of Akusi. Since, Akusi at the time was the strongest military power among Oka chiefdoms, the whole of Oka, therefore, fell to the onslaught of the Ife migrants. Consequently, the people fled into different directions such as Oba and Owo.<sup>135</sup>

Stories of origin of many Akoko communities have demonstrated this pattern of relations between the later immigrants and the aboriginal settlers. The migrants appeared, however, to have subdued the aboriginal inhabitants largely because of their overwhelming population and superior military strategies and weapons. According to Beeley's intelligence report, nothing 'is known about of the aboriginal inhabitants of Akoko, but it is presumed that their number was small... and it seems that the aboriginal races of the Akoko, if there ever were any, are now extinct'.<sup>136</sup> This, however, is not to claim that the process of settlement and accommodation followed this violent pattern across Akokoland. A tradition of Akoko origin, for example, shows that the processes of settlement and accommodation between the aboriginals and migrants were largely peaceful.<sup>137</sup>

Regardless of the patterns of settlement and accommodation, the influx of the migrants raises two major issues. First, since the aboriginal settlers had no traceable organised political structure before the coming of the migrants, it seems, therefore, that the known indigenous political administration in Akokoland was an invention of the migrants. The semblance between the indigenous political administrations of most Akoko towns and those of other Yoruba communities seems to point in this direction. It, therefore, appeared that the migrants with Ife connections were very instrumental in the establishment of such political systems. Second, if the above was correct, the implication is that the political administrations established would have been dominated by the migrants who invented them. Accordingly, it can be inferred that an influx of migrants into Akokoland in the earliest period brought about a significant political transformation of the area.

The second category of internal security challenges were inter-communal wars among Akoko communities. Consequently, these were purely intra-Akoko wars. Having successfully dealt with the challenges of the aboriginals and settled down, the newly formed mini-states

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<sup>135</sup>Olukoju, O., 2003. Oka. Ed. Oguntomisin, G.O., *Yoruba Towns...*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>136</sup>N.A.I. CSO 29667/62, J.H. 'Beeley's Intelligence Report,... p. 22.

<sup>137</sup>Orisa, R. 1961. *Itan Isedale ti Akungba-Akoko: Akun Ma Wo No-Ere Ro* (Apa Kini), Lagos, Olisa Printing Works.

‘were wrecked in local wars arising from disputes over titles or quarrel over land’.<sup>138</sup> The demand for land space seemed to be motivated mainly by political and economic factors. Thus, the increasing demand for land by the states were central to the consolidation of their powers since land was one of the basic elements, if not the most important, used in rating the power of a state.<sup>139</sup> Consequently, a land tenure system, which put the states at the centre of land acquisition and control developed. For example, at the apex of the land administrative system was the *oloriilu*. As the highest authority in land matters, the *oloriilu* had the community land under his control and supervision. He held it in trust for the entire community and had the most duty to protect them against all forms of external encroachment. Hence, he was responsible for the allocation of the land to the quarters. It was a practice for each quarter to have boundaries. Although these were not clearly demarcated, every quarter knew the extent of its boundaries. Thus, in collaboration with the quarter chiefs and heads of families, community leaders had the authority to allocate land, especially for communal projects.<sup>140</sup>

Land within the jurisdiction of the quarters were controlled and administered by the quarter chiefs, who were next on the hierarchy. Quarter land was usually divided among the family units. Hence, the family heads that were at the bottom of the political hierarchy, though equally very central to land administration and control, had the duty of allocating the family land to all the grown-up males in their families. The motive was to ensure that no family was unnecessarily denied access to land, which was the major capital requirement for farming, the main occupation of the people. Thus, land ownership was a matter of privilege, which could be revoked at any point it was abused. For example, it was forbidden for anyone to sell a piece of land that was allocated to him. If such happened, both the seller and buyer would lose the land. But rather than reducing cases of land disputes, this pattern of land tenure system further contributed to the frequent land-related armed conflicts as states often became overzealous in their will to acquire and control more land. In discharging the responsibility of protecting their ancestral inheritance, states often disregarded diplomatic approach to land-related misunderstanding among themselves and consequently, military means became one of the prominent means of resolving land disputes.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Akomolafe, C. O. 1976. ‘Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935...’, p. 18.

<sup>139</sup> Okajare, S.T. 2012... p. 91.

<sup>140</sup> Adeleye, Y. A., the *Olubaka* (king) of Oka-Akoko, *Olubaka’s* palace, Oka-Akoko, December 8, 2015.

<sup>141</sup> C. O. Akomolafe. 1976...p. 29.

Among the notable local wars before the nineteenth century were the Ikare-Ikanmu War and Ifira-Ipesi War.<sup>142</sup> While available records, both primary and secondary, have no sufficient information about the former, there is more information on the latter from both sources, perhaps, because it is regarded as the most popular and destructive war in Akokoland in the period preceding 1800. The war which lasted for three years (1779-1781) involved the participation of many Akoko communities that formed military alliances with the original belligerents. For instance, while Ikare entered the war in support of Ipesi, Ikaramu, Isua and Oka allied with Ifira. The war took another dimension following the entrance of Owo, a non Akoko community, in support of Ipesi. While one may understand that the aforementioned Akoko communities could have entered the war based on their sentiment arising from the nature of their relationship with Ipesi and Ifira, the interest of Owo is still largely unknown. However, a historical account that is popular among Akoko and Owo people states that Owo's decision on the war was largely influenced by its reigning king at the time, Owa Ajaka (1760 and 1781).<sup>143</sup> It is said that Owa Ajaka grew up at Ipesi and was even raised by a spiritually powerful woman, who prophesied that he (Ajaka) would become a very successful military lord. The woman, however, warned him not to ever raise his sword against Ipesi as an attack on Ipesi would mark his decline and fall.<sup>144</sup> While our concern is not with the spirituality aspect of the narration, the web of military alliances is significant and important to the study as it demonstrated some of the strategic responses of ancient Akoko people to their security challenges. Although Ifira won the war, Ipesi was not politically subdued. In fact, while there are records that there were inter-communal wars in the period under review, no evidence suggests that any Akoko community was politically subdued by another Akoko community, irrespective of their sizes, population and military power.

External security challenges confronting Akokoland before the nineteenth century came from three major directions, which were Benin, Ekiti and Owo. Three major factors can be given as reasons for this development. The first one was the proximity of Akokoland to these neighbours. Two, in the absence of strong natural barrier such as rivers, gulf and so on, Akokoland became easily accessible to these neighbours. Lastly, the small size of Akoko communities and their lack of a common defence front made them to be highly vulnerable to the onslaught of the above powerful neighbours. In most cases attacks on Akoko communities were primarily motivated by their neighbours' quests for active political

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<sup>142</sup>N.A.I. CSO 29667/62... p. 20.

<sup>143</sup> N.A.I. CSO 29667/62... *Owa* used to be the title of Owo king before it was changed to *Olowo*.

<sup>144</sup> N.A.I. CSO 29667/62...

conquest or territorial expansion and slave raiding. According to Akintoye, Ekiti wars against Akoko communities and their Okun neighbours were primarily for conquest, with the goal of establishing political control over them.<sup>145</sup> For instance, prior to the nineteenth century, Ado and Ikole invaded several Akoko communities in order to achieve their political expansionist policy.<sup>96</sup> Ikole, for example, has claimed it had political dominion over Afin, Erusu, Ese and Oyin until they were confiscated by the Nupe in the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, this claim has been denied by the affected Akoko towns, who claimed that what they had with Ikole was mutual relationship of equal political status.<sup>146</sup> Irrespective of the nature of their political relationship, what has been confirmed by both sides is that Ekiti communities posed serious security threat to Akokoland in the period before the nineteenth century.

The recurrent attacks of Owo on Akoko communities, especially in the second half of the eighteenth century were chiefly parts of the territorial expansionist policy of the kingdom.<sup>147</sup> Under *Olowo* Ajaka, for example, the expansionist programme of Owo was well-designed and coordinated to take over a large portion of Akokoland and the Afenmai. Consequently, Owo military expeditions became incessant in Akokoland. Although the development created security issues, there is still no strong evidence to support the claim that Owo established a political dominion in Akokoland and as such the claim is still highly disputed. According to a popular historical account among Owo people, which was also reaffirmed by the immediate past *Olowo*, Sir Victor Olateru Olagbegi, Owo military activities were so pronounced in Akokoland to the extent that its overlordship was established over a number of unidentified Akoko communities.<sup>148</sup> The fact that these Akoko communities cannot be identified made such claim less convincing. More so, the claim has been widely rejected throughout Akokoland. Even when there is a significant acceptance among the Akoko that Owo military expedition was significant to their security before the nineteenth century, have further argued consistently that the close economic and socio-political affinities between some Akoko towns- Oba, Akungba, Afo, Ikun and Supare and Owo were products of their proximity to Owo and the fact that they both migrated from Ile-Ife at the same time.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> S. A. Akintoye, *Revolution and Power Politics*...p. 30-31.

<sup>146</sup> C. O. Akomolafe. 1976. 'Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935'...p. 29.

<sup>147</sup> M.B. Asara. 1951. *The History of Owo*, The Moonlight Printers, p. 25.

<sup>148</sup> Olagbegi, Olateru V. *The Olowo (King) of Owo...*; See also Akomolafe. C.O. 1976. *Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935*...p. 28.

<sup>149</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1979... pp. 65-85.

Nonetheless, it is on record that when Akoko was made part of the Northern Province, with the headquarters at Kabba, the *Owa* of Owo was paid the sum of £20 annually by the colonial authority as compensation for the loss of unspecified Akoko communities to the Northern Province. The payment was only suspended when Akoko District later transferred to the Southern Province in 1919.<sup>150</sup> Though the record was insightful, its failure to again specify the affected Akoko communities further provides more ground for claims and counter claims between Owo and Akoko. In further discrediting the Owo's claim, the Akoko have also made reference, for instance, to the *Ore*, a popular Owo festival. It was said that during the festival in the past, it was a practice by the *Olowo* to send presents to the leaders of some Akoko communities as an expression or acknowledgement of being members of one family that migrated together from the same source, Ile-Ife, probably in the late fourteenth century. As an expression of gratitude, therefore, the leaders of these Akoko towns could either attend the ceremony or send other presents to the *Olowo*. It is, therefore, argued that this was a mutual relationship that did not show any form of political dominance by either of the parties.<sup>151</sup> What has, however, be firmly established from the foregoing is that Owo constituted a source of external security challenges to Akokoland prior to the nineteenth century. Multi-disciplinary studies study may, therefore, be needed to under unravel the actual nature or pattern of the pre-nineteenth century Akoko-Owo political relations.

As mentioned above, Benin was the third major external security challenge to Akokoland. Benin and Akokoland are noted to have had a long time relationship and as also observed above, a notable portion of Akoko people migrated from Benin. There is also a suggestion that Benin relations with the Akoko people developed through trading.<sup>152</sup> For instance, the popular Osele Market in Ikare-Akoko has been said to be a major meeting point for the Akoko and well-organised Benin traders. Other foreigners from Boko, Owo and Ilorin were also prominent traders in the market. While salt, coral beads and brass utensils from Benin were exchange for locally woven clothes from Owo, leather products and beads came from Boko and Ilorin. Major products from Akoko traders were pots and palm kernel oil (*adin*).<sup>153</sup> However, military relationship between Akokoland and Benin became highly visible as early as the fifteenth century.<sup>154</sup> Thus, between the mid-fifteenth century and early

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<sup>150</sup> N.A.I. CSO 29667/62... p. 92.

<sup>151</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1979... p. 67.

<sup>152</sup> N.A.I. CSO 29667/62...

<sup>153</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1979... p. 67.

<sup>154</sup> Egharevba, J.U. 1960. *A Short History of Benin...*, p. 14.

seventeenth century, Akokoland was invaded by the Benin military forces in order to ensure the expansion of power of the empire.<sup>155</sup> Beginning with *Oba* Ewuare the Great and especially throughout the period that has been regarded by Osadolor as the era of military kings (c.1440 - 1600 AD), both human and material resources of Benin were successfully mobilised for the expansion programme.<sup>156</sup>

However, as from the early seventeenth century, there was a change of intention for war. It would be recalled that Benin had established a slave-trading relationship with the Portuguese as early as the sixteenth century and as the trade flourished, there was a strong need to increase supply in order to meet up with growing demand for slaves. The establishment of slave trade with the Dutch and British later on, further increased the need for captives to be sold as slaves.<sup>157</sup> Subsequently, Benin soldiers intensified their slave raiding not only in Akoko, but throughout the north-eastern Yorubaland.<sup>158</sup> Two military posts were established in eastern Yorubaland, one at Akure and the other at Ikere. Thus, from Akure, Benin warriors penetrated into the interior of Ekiti, while from Ikere, they forcefully entered into Akokoland and Okun area. The two posts were also operated as collation centres, where the captives were gathered and sorted for onward transportation to the ports.<sup>159</sup> The success of Benin in its raids of Akokoland can be attributed to some factor, but most importantly, the large size of its army and the wide use of firearms by the soldiers. It should be noted that Benin got in touch with firearms through the Portuguese as early as the sixteenth century. This made them a superior military force to small and fragmented Akoko communities and other northern Yoruba people. There are indications that the firearms were usually exchanged for slaves, which could probably have started with the Portuguese and later on with the Dutch and British.<sup>160</sup> In summary, the military expenditure of Benin in Akokoland constituted security challenge more than that of any other external force before the nineteenth century.

From the foregoing, it can be inferred that security challenges of Akokoland in the period preceding the nineteenth century were both domestic and external. Domestically,

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<sup>155</sup> Akintoye, S.A. 1971...p. 26.

<sup>156</sup> Osadolor, O.B. 2001. *The Military System of Benin Kingdom, C.1440-1897...* p. 130.

<sup>157</sup> Ryder, A. F. C. 1965. Dutch Trade on the Nigerian Coast during the 17th Century. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 208.

<sup>158</sup> Osadolor, O.B. 2001. *The Military System of Benin Kingdom, C.1440-1897...* p. 130-131.

<sup>159</sup> Osadolor, O.B. 2001. *The Military System of Benin Kingdom, C.1440-1897...* p. 130-131. See also Egharevba, J.U. 1968. *A Short History of Benin...* p. 31.

<sup>160</sup> Inikori, J.E. 1982. The Import of Firearms into West Africa, 1750 to 1804: A Quantitative Analysis. Eds. Inikori, J.E. *Forced Migration: The Impact of the Export Slave Trade on African Societies*. London: Hutchinson University Library for Africa, pp.142-143.



security challenges became apparent between the original settlers and the later migrants to Akokoland during the settlement and accommodation stage in the earliest period. Skirmishes often arose between the aboriginal settlers and the migrants, especially those that migrated from Ife. In many instances, the aboriginals were defeated, dispersed or in some cases absorbed and subdued by the migrants, who seemed to have had more population and better military technology. Another major source of domestic security challenges was the struggles for more land space by the Akoko communities. This was either motivated by the desire of the Akoko communities to expand and consolidate their powers. Secondly, crises also arose from the quest for more farmland to meet the economic demand for the growing population. However, none of these skirmishes resulted into political imposition as the Akoko communities remained independent of one another throughout the period preceding the nineteenth century. Of more political significance before the nineteenth century were the external security challenges arising from Ekiti, Owo and especially Benin. However, there is no evidence to show that Akoko communities went under the political control of any of these foreign aggressors.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE NATURES AND IMPACT OF INTERNAL SECURITY CHALLENGES ON AKOKOLAND IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

As explained in the preceding chapter, the Akoko, like any other human society, were able to classify their security and the challenges in the pre-nineteenth century into internal and external. This knowledge about security and its challenges had still not changed in the nineteenth century. It is against this backdrop that this chapter examines the nature of internal security challenges of Akokoland in the nineteenth century, taking into consideration the changing nature of these security challenges in relation to the preceding times. The chapter also pays attention to other adjoining issues such as the society's response to the new form of security threats and the extent the challenges impacted on the existing socio-political structure of Akokoland.

#### **3.1 The Nature of Internal Security Challenges in Akokoland in the Nineteenth Century**

This section examines the internal security challenges that Akokoland faced in the nineteenth century. For easy understanding of readers, this section is, therefore, divided into two aspects. The first aspect focuses on the domestic security challenges of individual states. In other words, this aspect is concerned with acts or crimes that generally constituted threats to domestic peace and tranquillity of the communities. But since time and space will not permit one to give account of all the communities separately, efforts are made here to present experiences that seemed general to all the communities. The discourse also probes into major internal mechanisms that were designed by the people to address those challenges. Although these mechanisms varied in some instances from a community to another, attention is, however, also placed on the areas of general similarities. The second aspect of the section, therefore, focuses on the intra-Akoko security challenges during the nineteenth century, especially inter-communal wars.

#### **3.2 Major Domestic Security Challenges in Akokoland in the Nineteenth Century**

Crime, like many social science concepts, is difficult to define mainly because what constitutes crime may be different from one society to another. Nonetheless, the most significant thing is that crime informs any act that runs contrary to the laws and acceptable conducts of the society.<sup>161</sup> In other words, crime implies any unlawful activity as defined by the society. There is also a notion that crime and the society are two inseparable entities because crime has always been one of the characteristics of human societies. The fact that crime is as old as the society explains why every society, past and present, has its definition of crime. From the available oral and written accounts, it is clear that nineteenth century Akokoland was not free or immune to crimes. Consequently, crimes were categorised into four units. These were crimes against the *orisa* (gods), crimes against the king (*oba*), crimes against the *ilu* (community) and lastly crimes against the individual. Of all these, the last two categories were considerably related to security. For example, adultery with a king's wife was seen as crime against the *oba*,<sup>162</sup> while crimes against the gods can be informs of blasphemy or failure to appropriately worship or perform required rituals to certain gods.<sup>163</sup> Although they attracted grievous penalties, they had no bearing or relevance to security and as such they were not considered as threats to security.

Among crimes that were considered as security threats across Akokoland in the nineteenth century was murder, *ipaniyan*. Murder was treated not only as a crime against humanity, but against the gods.<sup>164</sup> It was believed that life was sacred and no human had the right to intentionally terminate the life of a fellow human. Furthermore, murder cases were also treated as a crime against the community and not the victim alone. Hence, it was usually handled by the highest constituted authority, that is, *ajo* or *igbimoilu*.<sup>165</sup> Once a murder case was reported, the first step was to take the accused into custody, while a proper investigation would be launched. If the accused found guilty as charged, then he or she would serve the required punishment. Generally, the punishment was death sentence. In Oka, for example, the offender was to be buried alive. In Oba, it was death by crucifixion, while in Ikare, the offender would be beheaded. In Arigidi, the offender was to be burnt to death. In Ifira, it was

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<sup>161</sup> For more details on the meaning of crime, see McGuire, J. 2004. *Understanding Psychology and Crime, Perspective on Theory and Action*. Maidenhead, Open University Press.

<sup>162</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667, Crime...p. 48.

<sup>163</sup> Origbemusuyi, A., 70+, a spiritualist with specialty in the treating of the mental ailment, Ibaka Quarter, Akungba-Akoko, 23 August, 2014. This was corroborated by Arapo, Saliu, 79, Palace Historian, Olukare Palace, Ikare Akoko, 10 February, 2017.

<sup>164</sup> Ogunoye, O.S., The *Owalusi* of Iworo-Oka, Oka-Akoko, *Owalusi* Palace, August 28, 2017.

<sup>165</sup> Adedoyin, S., 70+, the *Owa-Ale* of Ikare- Akoko, *Owa-Ale's* Palace, Ikare-Akoko, July 8, 2014.

death by hanging and in Ogbagi, the criminal would be beaten to death.<sup>166</sup> What can be deduced from the above is that in all the communities across Akokoland, the punishment for murder was death through painful processes. It seems that since the society had viewed the crime as a strong security challenge, it strived to discourage it by allotting capital punishment of public execution of the offender through a process of slow but severe pains.

Another crime that was considered a serious domestic security threat was manslaughter. While murder and manslaughter involved killing somebody illegally, the former is done deliberately while the latter is an accident.<sup>167</sup> Like in the contemporary period, the people understood these major differences between murder and manslaughter. And that is why manslaughter was known as (*iseesi paniyan*).<sup>168</sup> For example, if a hunter accidentally killed somebody, in an attempt to kill an animal, it would be treated as manslaughter and not murder. In this instance also, it was normal for some investigations to be carried out to determine if the case was actually an accident or otherwise. The investigation process usually involved spiritual activities or ordeals. For instance, the offender might be asked to swear to an oath, which could include asking certain calamities to befall him after a number of days if the killing was deliberate. If no terrible occurrence happened to the offender within the stipulated days, the case would then be treated as manslaughter. As a punishment, therefore, the offender would be made to pay a fine involving valuable material items. Also, the deceased was to be replaced by a member (same sex) of the offender's family. The replacement, therefore, automatically became a slave in the new family.<sup>169</sup> It is crucial to understand the psychology behind the replacement part of the punishment. It is based on the belief that the offender was a member of a family unit. So if the family was made to partake in the punishment which the transgression of their member had attracted, the family would be alive to its responsibility of properly training their wards. It was believed that this would, to a large extent, help curb crimes and improve security.

Kidnapping was another serious crime that also attracted strong punishment. Kidnapping among Akoko people was defined as forceful possession of a person without the concept of the victim or that of the family of the victim. This, therefore, was entirely different from 'kidnapping marriage'. This is because in kidnapping marriage, first, the intending

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<sup>166</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667... 47.

<sup>167</sup> A.S. Hornby (2005), *The Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of Current English*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 899 and 965.

<sup>168</sup> Adewolu J.A., 80 years old, a retired primary school teacher, Hospital Road, Iwaro Oka, Oka-Akoko, July 13, 2015.

<sup>169</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667... pp. 47-48.

husband and wife would have had the understanding of forming a family. Secondly, the parents or the families of the two would have been aware and consented to their relationship. Thirdly, in many instances, the elders of the woman's family would be aware of such plans and might even be the one that would provide strategic information on her movement so that the kidnapping exercise would be stress free.<sup>170</sup> Kidnapping marriage usually happened when the man was ready to settle down, but the woman, though willing to marry the man, was not ready for marriage at that particular time.<sup>171</sup> So, when the man became impatient, he would resolve to kidnapping. The man and his family would return afterwards, usually after several years when the woman would have even become a mother, to pay the bride price.<sup>172</sup> Generally, kidnapping attracted serious fines of valuable materials and if the kidnapper had committed such a crime in the past, he could be sold to slavery.

Like kidnapping, theft and robbery were also considered a serious crime and as result attracted heavy punishment. While theft usually involved stealing without the use of weapons, robbery was usually carried with the aid of weapons. In most cases, robbery attacks usually happened along the routes to farms, markets and other important commercial centres.<sup>173</sup> Injuries that the victims of robbery attacks often suffered, including rape of the women, made robbery a far more rated security threat than theft. But as a means of protection, the communities normally had a body of hunters or members of certain age grade patrolling these routes. On their own, the trader sometimes arranged for security escorts to avoid being robbed of their goods and money.<sup>174</sup> While theft offenders would be asked to pay a fine or be sold as a slave if the offence was committed more than once, the robbers generally got stiffer punishment such as enslavement and death by beheading.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Momoh, J. I., 78+, Queen (*Olori*), Olukare's Palace, Ikare-Akoko, April 20, 2017; Olotu R. 65 years, Farmer and Trader, 4, Ibaka Qtr, Akungba-Akoko. She gave her own practical experience on how she was kidnapped by her fiancé (now husband) and taken away to Ibadan. According to her she did not return to Akungba until 6 years later after she had given birth to three boys. However, after the sixth year, the husband performed the necessary marriage rites.

<sup>171</sup> Olamitoke, R., 50+ , civil servant, Akunmi Quarter, Akungba-Akoko, August, 2014.

<sup>172</sup> Olamitoke, R...; Momoh...

<sup>173</sup> Ehindero, C., 115 years, the head of Imole Cult of Oyin Akoko. She was interviewed at her residence, A44, Ogosan, Oyin Akoko, Ondo State...

<sup>174</sup> Ehindero, C...

<sup>175</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667... p. 49.

Witchcraft, especially *aje dudu* or *ajebuburu* (wicked witchcraft)<sup>176</sup> was also regarded as a major crime by the people. Though more of spiritual belief than scientific explanation, the people still tried to provide justification for its relevance to their security. For example, it was believed that witchcraft could be used to hypnotise people to commit crimes or attract other physical evil occurrences such as plagues and even external invasions to the community.<sup>177</sup> Thus, anyone accused of witchcraft would be made to drink *obo* (sassafras poison).<sup>178</sup> If the allegations were true, the culprit, after a few days usually seven days, would automatically fall under mysterious distress which would make the offender to confess all the bad deeds in the past.

While spiritual beliefs of this nature have no place in history, the description, however, gives one an insight into how the people in the past perceived security. And by extension, it further shows the undue reference that the people accorded spirituality in their day-to-day living: they always found spiritual explanation for all events. For instance, even security challenges that were physical such as arson and war were generally believed to have occurred because they had first been approved in the spiritual realm.<sup>179</sup> And as such, spiritual assistances were often sought to solve physical security challenges. For instance, before declaration of war, it was a common practice to consult *Ifa* on whether to embark on war or not. And if approval was granted, it (*Ifa*) would further be asked on what to do to be victorious in the war.<sup>180</sup> Furthermore, the warriors in preparation for the war would generally go for *ironilagbara* (fortification), both individually and collectively. It was believed that this would help protect and win the war. *Aso ogun*<sup>181</sup> and other forms of charms normally worn by the warriors to wars also represented an expression of this belief. Beliefs and practices of this nature were not exclusively restricted to Akokoland, they were commonly found among the Yoruba generally. Even while Ajayi and Akintoye claimed that, ‘no exhaustive study has been made of the place of charms in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Yoruba warfare’,<sup>182</sup> they, however,

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<sup>176</sup> Members of *aje dudu* among the Yoruba and Akoko in particular are generally believed to be wicked, using the diabolical power to inflict pains on others. There is *aje funfun* (white witchcraft), which members are believed to be mild and harmless.

<sup>177</sup> Yakubu, A., *Iyalaja* of Okeagbe, King’s Palace, Okeagbe-Akoko, March 09, 2017.

<sup>178</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667... p. 49.

<sup>179</sup> Yemi, A.A., *Ashipa* of Isualand, 76 years, Olisua Palace, Isua-Akoko, August, 10, 2015.

<sup>180</sup> Yemi, A.A., *Ashipa* of Isualand..

<sup>181</sup> *Aso ogun* were special clothes worn by the warriors to war, generally made of stripped trouser (*sokoto*) and multi-pocketed shirt (usually *dansiki*). The clothes were usually decorated with charms which the warriors believed would not only protect them but would also aid them in winning the wars. These clothes were made from several materials such as animal skins and hard wool.

<sup>182</sup> Ajayi, J.F.A and Akintoye, S.A. 1980. Yorubaland in the Nineteenth Century. Eds. Ikime Obaro, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Heinemann Educational Books (Nig) Plc, p. 293.

admitted that there are enough proofs to conclude that ‘the Yoruba reposed much confidence’ in their ‘charms and employed them not only for personal protection, but also for offence both in attacking the persons and morale of the enemy’.<sup>183</sup> Smith also cited Johnson’s comment on *opa ogun*,<sup>184</sup> which in addition clearly demonstrates the place of spirituality in security among the Yoruba. According to him:

...The size of course varies with the cost. It is encased in leather with the charms hanging all over it. To this day, proper standards of war are procured from Ile Ife and are dedicated to Oranyan. Human sacrifices were usually offered to such standards before they are taken out to any campaign. Whenever war is declared, and it is to be worshipped, priests and priestesses are always required for the purpose of offering the sacrifice.<sup>185</sup>

But just as mentioned above, the only historical relevance of beliefs and practices of this nature is the insight they provide into the past.

### **3.3 Inter-Communal Security Challenges within Akokoland in the Nineteenth Century**

From the available evidence, a most common form of intra-Akoko security challenge during the nineteenth century was inter-states wars. However, the frequency of the inter-communal crises had subsided compared to what was witnessed during the formative and consolidation stages of the states. In other words, inter-states wars among Akoko states had become unpopular by the nineteenth century.<sup>186</sup> This is not to assert that interactions of the towns were entirely peaceful during this period. Whether reduced or not, inter-states wars among Akoko states constituted major sources of insecurity to the people. In fact, there is nothing like big or small war because according to Tunde Adeniran, war ‘is distinct from peace and it is characterised by military activity, high social and political tension, and a breakdown of normal relations.’<sup>187</sup> Having said this, it will not be out of place to interrogate a number of factors that were instrumental to this shift in the pattern of inter-group relations in Akokoland.

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<sup>183</sup> Ajayi, J.F.A and Akintoye, S.A. 1980...

<sup>184</sup> *Opa Ogun* (war standard) is a staff, which can be made of different materials such as brass and wood, and can be of different heights, served as a symbol of a Yoruba army. Usually decorated with charms, it acted as a rallying point for the soldiers and was believed to possess mysterious power that could guarantee victory.

<sup>185</sup> Johnson as cited in Smith, R. 1967... p. 100.

<sup>186</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667, Village Wars...

<sup>187</sup> Adeniran T. (1983). *Introduction to International Relations*. Macmillan Nigerian Publishers Ltd, p. 123.

One of such fundamental reasons would be the land tenure system which was in practice at this period. As pointed out in Chapter Three, a good number of inter-communal crises witnessed during the formation and consolidation periods of the states were chiefly due to land disputes that could not be diplomatically managed, largely because the states were too much involved and interested in land grabbing. By the nineteenth century, however, aside the fact that land grabbing by states had faded out, state involvement in land matters seemed to have relaxed as real control of land had largely been transferred to the family.<sup>188</sup> According to Okajare, this process developed reflexively over a period of time as parents began to transfer the land in their possession to their children. Thus in the past, the state was the sole active owner of land and had almost absolute control over it. The central authority in each state would, however, share the land among the quarters that made up the state. As the representatives of the central authority, the quarter chiefs would also share the land among the extended families in their quarters. With time, families began to lay claim to land and transfer them to their children. Consequently, land gradually became individually possessed as the individual or family could lay claim to certain land spaces that were hitherto communal land.<sup>189</sup> This also corresponded with a colonial report, which states that the ‘family system of land tenure obtains in Akoko. Each village and quarter of a village has its own particular area, the boundaries of which are jealously guarded, but within such areas individuals seem to farm as much as they liked’.<sup>190</sup> This, however, is not to suggest that the state had totally transferred its supreme authority over land to the family, rather, the family, like never before, became more active in land control. Thus, with the active involvement of family and relaxed power of states on land, most land disputes were now limited to the family level. Accordingly, land motivated inter-communal wars steadily became unpopular. Even when land disputes involved families of different communities, they hardly degenerated to inter-state wars.

Furthermore, it also appeared that the general attitude of the people and even the states during this period no longer favour the use of military might to resolve inter-communal land or other disputes. This could, partly, not be entirely unconnected with the established knowledge of the people concerning land boundaries. For instance, after the consolidation era and the available land had been shared by the states, the information about it had been transmitted across generations that everyone now seemed to have the understanding about

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<sup>188</sup> N.A.I., CSO 26, 29667... p. 84.

<sup>189</sup> Okajare, S.T. 2012... p. 67.

<sup>190</sup> N.A.I., CSO 26, 29667, Land Tenure, pp. 84-85.



which community owned a particular piece of land.<sup>191</sup> Notwithstanding the fact that the demarcations of the boundaries were done with not too significant items such as trees or other natural features, the boundaries of each communities were knowledgeable to the people.<sup>192</sup> For example, there were instances where communities such as Ikare and Oka with shortage of farmlands, embarked on farming on plains that belong to Ekiti and Oba. In such instances, they still acknowledged the community that was the real owners of the affected land spaces.<sup>193</sup>

Another reason that made inter-communal wars unpopular within the territorial space of Akoko was the fact that after living together for a long time, the communities assumed themselves to be relatives. This was built on a belief and concept popularly known as *omiye*,<sup>194</sup> among Akoko people. It was held that, though conflict of interests could not be totally erased as the communities that were members of the same family related, such conflicting interests should, however, not be allowed to degenerate to the level of devastation of each other. It has been demonstrated in the previous chapter that most Akoko people, notwithstanding their patterns of migration, traced their origin to Ile-Ife directly or indirectly and as such, they saw themselves as having one ancestral source, Oduduwa.<sup>195</sup> In other words, they saw themselves as *omo* Oduduwa (offspring of Oduduwa). *Omiye* also captured Akoko people with historical sources other than Ile-Ife. It was assumed that since this group of people had cohabited in the area and the two sets (Ife and non-Ife descendants) had even assimilated each other's cultural values, they (non-Ife descendants) were therefore bona fide members of *omiye*. It is worthy to state that this belief still exists among Akoko people and is the basis for their popular chant, '*okan l' Akoko*', meaning that 'Akoko is one indivisible entity'.

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<sup>191</sup> Ayeni, C. J., 65 years, Retire Civil Servant and Community Leader, 8 Upara quarters, Sosan Akoko, February 12, 2019; Ogboye, O.J., 84 years, Retired civil servant and farmer at St Peters Anglican Church, Oba-Akoko, Ondo State on February 20, 2018.

<sup>192</sup> Also, some perennial and regenerative trees like *peregun* (*dracaenia manii*, *dracaenia fragrans*), *atorin* (*glypheece brevis*), *lapalapa* (*jatropha curcas*), and *aika* (*lecaniodiscus cupanioides*), were planted at soafme meters intervals along the boundaries. See Okajare, S.T. 2012... p. 81.

<sup>193</sup> Okajare, S.T. 2012... p. 68.

<sup>194</sup> *Omiye*, is the Akoko version of Yoruba word, '*Omo-Iya*', meaning siblings. *Omiye* is used to foster the spirit of communalism among Akoko people and communities. It is believed that one as siblings Akoko people or communities, though can quarrel, cannot and should not arm one another. Details on the concept of *omiye* was provided by *Adelewe*, Y. A., the *Olubaka* of Oka-Akoko, *Olubaka's* Palce, Oke- Oka, Oka-Akoko, December 8, 2015; Faboye, O., 51 years, lecturer at the Department of History and International Studies, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State. Faboyede is specialist on the cultural history of Akoko.

<sup>195</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667, Origins of Akoko People...

The *omiye* concept seems like a variation of the *ajobi* and *ajogbe* concepts, popular propounded by Akinwowo. Accordingly, the primitive structures of human relations, especially among the Yoruba, were *ajobi* and *ajogbe*. *Ajobi*, which means consanguinity, is a 'lineal and collateral relationship based upon blood or birth', while *ajogbe*, meaning co-residence, implies 'sharing same or contiguous shelter whether or not the sharers are related by blood'.<sup>196</sup> In other words, *ajobi* implies people who are members of a family or families that are able to trace the source of their relationship to the same ancestor or blood. In *ajobi*, location of members is irrelevant. In other words, whether the members live together or separately is not an issue; the only thing that counts is the fact that they are all products of a particular blood. Consequently, these members are qualified to enjoy the rights and benefits associated with their membership. For example, they have the right and privilege to share in the family property. On the other hand, they are qualified also to participate in the sharing of the pains or loss of the family. Thus, the success and failure of a member of the family depends considerably on other members of the family and will go a long way to affect the entire family. Also, the good or bad deeds of any members of the family have implications for the entire family. Similarly, the problem of one is seen as the problem of all. This, therefore, balls down to the popular adage, 'blood is thicker than water'. This is also why the spirit of *ajobi* is often invited to adjudicate in period of disagreements between or among family members.<sup>197</sup>

While blood is the only unifying factor in *ajobi*, the only factor determining relationship under *ajogbe* is *iwa* (character). *Ajogbe* usually proceeds from *ore* (friendship), when opportunities are provided for people to interact and develop bonds through their living together.<sup>198</sup> Over time, some *ore*, will earn the trust and respect of one another and even begin to imagine themselves as families or *alajobi*. For example, an *alajogbe*, later on, can be allocated a piece of land in a community that he is not a citizen by birth. But despite this, he cannot become an *omo onile* (son of the soil). Therefore, he cannot possess the authority to allocate land or step beyond the portion of land allocated to him. He could not transfer or sell

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<sup>196</sup> Details on the concepts of *ajobi* and *ajogbe* among the Yoruba can be found in Akinsola, A. (1980). "Ajobi and Ajogbe: Variations on the Theme of Sociation" *Inaugural Lecture University of Ife* (now Obafemi Awolowo University) Ile-Ife, Series 46, June 10. Ile-Ife University Press Ltd.

<sup>197</sup> Akinsola, A. (1980). "Ajobi and Ajogbe: Variations on the Theme of Sociation" *Inaugural Lecture University of Ife...*

<sup>198</sup> Akinsola, A. (1980). "Ajobi and Ajogbe: Variations on the Theme of Sociation" *Inaugural Lecture University of Ife...*

such land without the approval of the constituted authorities in the community and the family that absorbed him.

Furthermore, the mutual acknowledgement and respect for the independence and sovereignty of one another by the communities that made up Akokoland, irrespective of size and military strength, was also a factor that helped to make inter-states crises unpopular during the nineteenth century. As stated earlier, Akokoland comprised of about forty independent mini-states. These mini-states had their internal political structures and as such enjoyed their sovereignty. Ikare, Irun, Ogbagi and Oka were the biggest among the states and their leaders sometimes enjoyed reverence because of this, especially among their nearest neighbours. According to a colonial report, 'it was clear that the smaller villages in the various groups considered the Village Heads of larger villages as person of higher standing than themselves and frequently, what may be termed as the group heads, were characterised as "our father".'<sup>199</sup> Notwithstanding, this did not make the smaller states less autonomous than their bigger counterparts. Thus, the states jealously guarded their autonomy. In fact, no evidence has suggested that there was any point in history when any Akoko town had been subdued by another one.<sup>200</sup> This claim was confirmed even by the same colonial officials when they remarked that, there 'is no historical evidence to show that any village was ever subject to another...'<sup>201</sup>

Meanwhile, this attitude of jealously guarding one's autonomy by the states also had its own negative consequences on the security architecture of the area as the opportunity of forming a formidable defence front against common external forces eluded them for most part of the nineteenth century. In other words, the over protection of the autonomy of the states was largely responsible for their inability to come up with a regional security design until the later part of the 1800s. They, therefore, remained vulnerable for a long period to the onslaught of their external adversaries.

As earlier clarified, the reduction in inter-communal war within the Akoko region in the nineteenth century in comparison to the previous centuries does not imply that inter-communal relations among Akoko communities were entirely peaceful in the 1800s. From the available records, Akokoland also had its own share of intra-regional conflicts which on

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<sup>199</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667... p. 2.

<sup>200</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667... p. 2.

<sup>201</sup> N.A.I., CSO 26, 29667...

many occasions became serious security challenges in the nineteenth century. Again, it will be recalled that wars in the previous centuries were fought strictly for the sake of the states, either for the establishment of a political authority, consolidation of state power or context for land space. However, many of the nineteenth century inter-communal wars within Akoko were fought by the emerging local warlords for personal gratification. In other words, internal security challenges in Akokoland in the nineteenth century were more motivated by personal aggrandisement than communal progress.

An example of such wars was the Irun-Afa War (1880-1881).<sup>202</sup> It is said that the war occurred largely because of the covetousness of a military chief in Afa, popularly known as *Balogun* Bakare. Thus, a group of six slaves belonging to another warlord in Irun, a nearby community, had escaped from their master. While on the run, Bakare saw the slaves and harboured them in his compound. It is, however, not clear whether he wanted to help them escape or keep them for his personal use. However, the original owner of the slaves launched a massive hunt for the slaves and eventually through his intelligence gathering discovered that they were with Bakare. When Bakare was approached, he admitted to have kept the slaves, but declined returning them to their owner. Not even the pleas of highly placed personalities such as the *Ajana* (Afa king) could make Bakare change his mind. After waiting for a while, the Irun warlord became impatient and subsequently declared war on Bakare and his community. Interestingly, Afa neighbours (Afin, Oyin and Ogbagi) and the major warlords in the area, who felt threatened by Bakare's attitude, all formed a military alliance and attacked Irun. They also reached for military support from beyond Akoko territory. For instance, Odu, an Ogbagi warlord, solicited the support of Aduloju of Ado-Ekiti. Aduloju was one of the leading Yoruba warlords of the nineteenth century, who had previously raided several Akoko communities, especially for slaves.<sup>203</sup> But since Aduloju and Odu were good friends, it is probable that his decision to join the war had nothing to do with his previous ambition in Akokoland. According to Ojo, for example, 'by 1880, a substantial part of the population of Aduloju's and Akogun's wards of Idemo and Irona in Ado were composed of

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<sup>202</sup> Note that Afa is now a section in Okeagbe. This amalgamation happened in 1924. But before then, Afa was an independent state.

<sup>203</sup> Ojo, E.O. (2013), 'Aduloju of Ado: A Nineteenth Century Ekiti Warlord', *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 18, Issue 4 (Nov-Dec), p. 62. Also note that more is said in Chapter Four about Aduloju and how his antics became major sources of insecurity in Akokoland in the nineteenth century.

slaves and refugees from Southern Ekiti, Akoko and Owo'.<sup>204</sup> Nonetheless, his intervention was significant as it increased the military strength of Irun and its allies.

It should be noted that Aduloju had earlier on got an invitation from another friend, Ogedengbe, the famous nineteenth century Ijesa military lord to ally with Imesi-Ile so they could curtail the overbearing influence of Ibadan. But despite these Ogedengbe's pleas, Aduloju refused to fight against Ibadan. Aduloju's refusal to fight Ibadan was not unconnected with his membership of the *Ogboni* cult. It would be remembered that following the bravery of Aduloju which led to the defeat of Ibadan at Igbo Alahun in 1873, *Basorun* Latosisa cleverly enticed him with the membership of the *Ogboni* Cult and even gave him the Oranmiyan sword.<sup>205</sup> Thus, as a member of the *Ogboni*, it was forbidden for Aduloju to publicly fight against Ibadan. Even when Ibadan alienated Ado, Aduloju's home town, his respect for the oath he had taken with Ibadan did not allow him to defend Ado.<sup>206</sup> In this circumstance, Aduloju, therefore, resolved to support Odu. Subsequently, Ogedengbe sent a troop of young warriors led by Aso Ogundana of Ikole Ekiti and Ode of Ilesa to support Afa. At the end of the war, Afa was terribly defeated with several of its inhabitants fleeing to different directions, while others died or were taken as prisoners of war, which were later shared as part of the war booties by the leaders of Irun alliance.<sup>207</sup>

### 3.4 The Socio-Political Impact of the Internal Security Challenges

The internal security challenges of Akokoland in the nineteenth century had notable political impact which are worthy of historical discussion. To start with, the presence of crimes as major sources of domestic security challenge in various communities and the place of the existing traditional authorities in such communities as the chief security and law enforcement agents is a demonstration that the traditional political authorities were still very relevant in the day-to-day domestic administration of their people. Thus, the indigenous authorities had the sole responsibilities of crime prevention, investigation, detection and apportioning of punishment for crimes committed. Usually, the above responsibilities were delegated to the appropriate *egbe* (age grades) which were thoroughly supervised by the

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<sup>204</sup>Ojo, O. Ethnic Identity and Nineteenth Century Yoruba Warfare. <http://www.yorku.ca/nhp/seminars/2003>. Assessed on August 11, 2016.

<sup>205</sup> Ojo, E.O. 2013... p. 62

<sup>206</sup> Ojo, E.O. 2013...p. 62

<sup>207</sup> Okajare, S.T. 2012... p. 93. This was corroborated by Owolabi, Aina High Chief, the *Bobatolu* of Irun, c. 120 years. He was interviewed at his residence, 10. Okeubo, Irun Akoko on 11th October 2018.

higher political authority.<sup>208</sup> It can, therefore, be summed up that the indigenous political authorities during the period under review still retained its importance as the highest authority in term of decision-making concerning the maintenance and sustenance of domestic law and order. In other words, it was a demonstration that the indigenous institutions considerably enjoyed their sovereignty in the administration of their domestic affairs. Also, the slight modifications in the punishments allotted to a particular crime across the communities also affirmed that Akoko communities up till the nineteenth century were independent of one another. It should be recalled, for instance, that while murder attracted death by being buried alive among the Oka, in Oba, the punishment was death by crucifixion.

Meanwhile, a major consequence of the local wars was the dislocation of the population. The dislocation, like in any war, followed two major patterns. The first pattern involved those that emigrated from the troubled scenes or locations to peaceful communities. These people were not captured but on their own relocated as a way of protection. The second pattern involved those that were captured and forcefully removed from their communities. From the available records, it was this second pattern of population dislocation that was more popular. For example, in the Afa-Irun War earlier mentioned, the defeat of Afa led to the capturing of many of its inhabitants as prisoners of war. Some of them were later sold into slavery, while others were personally engaged by the warlords on their farms. Going by the economic trend in Yorubaland during the 1800s, it is not unlikely that the local warlords and slave owners in Akokoland would not have applied simple economic principle of selling their slaves for more money and arms.<sup>209</sup> Records have shown, for instance, that slavery was more profitable than palm oil and kola that were major agricultural products from Akokoland and Ekiti during the period.<sup>210</sup> According to Ajayi and Akintoye, a slave in Yorubaland during this period, was sold for between forty to eighty bags of cowries, depending on their age and sex, whereas, two pots of palm oil were sold as low as one bag of cowries.<sup>211</sup> This was a major reason why most of the slaves from Yorubaland ended up on the Atlantic coast as important exchange for firearms and other foreign goods.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> N.A.I., CSO 26, 29667, Maintenance of Order, p. 33.

<sup>209</sup> The emergent of the military class is treated as a political impact of the nineteenth century because from the available evidence, the external crises contributed more internal security challenges to the evolution, growth and prominence of the class.

<sup>210</sup> Ajayi, J.F.A and Akintoye, S.A. 1980... p. 297.

<sup>211</sup> Ajayi, J.F.A and Akintoye, S.A. 1980...

<sup>212</sup> Ajayi, J.F.A and Akintoye, S.A. 1980...

The social implication of this was gradual reduction of human population in Akokoland. Thus, it is important to correct the impression that the depopulation of Akokoland in the century was a sole responsibility of the external invaders, who captured and extracted a reasonable number of people from Akokoland in form of prisoners of war. As it has been seen, the Akoko themselves, especially the warlords, were partly responsible for this negative development, through their wars and selling of fellow Akoko for their personal aggrandisement.

On the final note, it can be deduced from the above that internal security challenges of Akokoland in the nineteenth century were of two major different dimensions. The first involved the domestic security challenges mainly in forms of crimes in each community. The second dimension included the security challenges that were limited to the region and chiefly among them were inter-communal wars. But while inter-communal wars, like in any inter-states relations, were major security threats to Akokoland, their frequency had largely reduced compared to the earlier period. With all the negative political impact, the internal security challenges of the nineteenth century did not tamper with the sovereignty or autonomy of any of the states. Nonetheless, the opportunity to form a formidable defence against common external enemy eluded the Akoko and as it will be seen in the next chapter, this factor became a serious weakness that external invaders exploited in the nineteenth century.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE NATURES AND IMPACT OF EXTERNAL SECURITY CHALLENGES ON AKOKOLAND IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

In the previous chapter, efforts were made to understand not only the nature and dynamics of the nineteenth century internal security challenges of Akokoland, but also their socio-political impact. As explained earlier, security is always viewed internally and externally. This section is, therefore, a build-up on the previous one as it attempts a reconstruction of the history of external security challenges of the area in the century. Accordingly, the chapter is concerned primarily with the assessment of the nature and dynamics of security challenges that came from outside or external aggressors, primarily Ekiti, Ibadan and Nupe, but had serious political consequences on Akokoland. While attempts are made to present the challenges in historical sequence, the chapter also tries to understand the external security challenges within the purview of the political-economy of the external aggressors.

#### **4.1 Ekiti Military Exploits and Security Challenges in Akokoland in the Nineteenth Century**

One of the directions where major external security threats came to Akokoland in the nineteenth century was Ekitiland. Recall that the Akoko and the Ekiti were and still are immediate neighbours, with the two sharing boundaries on southern and western parts of Akokoland. The impact of such closeness on the migration, origin and population constitution of Akokoland has also been identified in Chapter Two. It should also be recalled that Ekiti assaults on Akoko communities predated the nineteenth century. Such attacks, notwithstanding, were largely state coordinated.<sup>213</sup> In order words, they were orchestrated and coordinated by powerful Ekiti communities against weaker Akoko towns, even though this has been denied by the Akoko. However, by the nineteenth century, there seemed to have been a shift in this pattern of attacks as invasions of Akokoland from Ekiti axis were mainly military expeditions of powerful Ekiti warlords. To be best put, such attacks considerably

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<sup>213</sup> Akintoye, S.A. 1971... pp. 30-31. Also see, Olaoba, O.B. 2013... pp. 30-43.



lacked state backing as they were engagements of the warlords meant for their personal aggrandisement.

It is important to note that this development cannot be entirely separated from the general insecurity in Yorubaland in the century. It would be recalled, for instance, that one of the long-time effects of the collapse of Oyo Empire was the upsurge of private warlords, who staged attacks in different directions across Yorubaland. Johnson,<sup>214</sup> Smith<sup>215</sup>, Akintoye,<sup>216</sup> Olomola,<sup>217</sup> Oguntomisin<sup>218</sup> and a host of other historians have recorded the times, activities and socio-political impact of the actions of some of these Yoruba war generals, such as Kurumi, Oluyole, Ogedengbe, Aduloju, Fabunmi and so on Yorubaland. In most cases, the activities of these warlords were strictly to gratify their economic aspirations, especially the desperation 'to get rich speedily'<sup>219</sup> through the highly lucrative slave business in the century. And as observed, the career of most of the warlords in the nineteenth century usually began with highway robbery and kidnapping.<sup>220</sup> It has also been noted that while kidnapping was an alternative source, war was the major means of acquiring slaves. However, kidnapping did not require the kind of resources, energy and other risks associated with war.<sup>221</sup> In other words, kidnapping presented a more peaceful, safer and less risk means of obtaining slaves. Through the process, a good number of people became captives in north-eastern Yorubaland in the nineteenth century. While some of these captives were later sold as slaves, some were retained for domestic uses and the remaining enlisted in the armies of their captors or masters. Some of these captives turned soldiers later grew so influential and powerful to the extent of purchasing their freedom. In some cases, they would quit their masters' camps, probably after little misunderstandings, while some simply deserted their bosses for no

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<sup>214</sup> Johnson S. 2001. *The History of the Yorubas from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, Lagos: C.S.S. Bookshop Ltd.

<sup>215</sup> Smith, R. 1967... pp. 87-106.

<sup>216</sup> Akintoye, S.A. 1966. *Ekitiparapo and Kiriji Wars*. A Ph.D. thesis submitted to the Department of History, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

<sup>217</sup> Olomola, G.O.I. 1977. *Pre-colonial Pattern of Inter-States Relations in Eastern Yorubaland*. A Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the Department of History, University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)), Ile-Ife.

<sup>218</sup> Oguntomisin, G.O. 2017. *Studies in Pre-colonial Yoruba Warfare and Peace-making*, Ibadan, John Archers.

<sup>219</sup> Johnson S. 2001... p. 321; Akinjogbin, I.A. 1965. *The Prelude to the Yoruba Civil Wars of the Nineteenth Century*. *Odu*, Vol., No 2., p. 24; Olomola, G.O.I. 1977. *Pre-colonial Pattern of Inter-States Relations in Eastern Yorubaland*. A Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the Department of History, University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)), Ile-Ife, pp. 305-307.

<sup>220</sup> Ojo, O., 'Ethnic Identity and Nineteenth-Century Yoruba Warfare', <http://www.yorku.ca/nhp/seminars/2003>, p. 18: (accessed on September 18, 2018).

<sup>221</sup> For more details on kidnapping, see OJO, O.2010. "In Search of their Relations, to Set at Liberty as Many as They Had the Means": Ransoming Captives in Nineteenth Century Yorubaland, *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 60.

tangible reasons. Whichever the case, what is fascinating is that many of these ex-captives returned to their original bases to set up their own armies for the familiar business.<sup>222</sup>

One of such men in north-eastern Yorubaland, for example, was Esubiyi of Ayede Ekiti. Esubiyi was reported to have been captured by the Ilorin invaders, who, in search of captives, incessantly sacked Iye Ekiti as well as other communities in the northern part of Ekiti. The location of Iye Ekiti, which made it a major rout for the Fulani operations in Ekitiland, exposed it to constant raids by the Fulani. The need for it to be protected from the frequent external invasion consequently turned Iye to warriors' town. Accordingly, a situation where nearly every male child of the town was exposed to military training right from childhood soon developed. And it was under this circumstance that Esubiyi had his first military training experience.<sup>223</sup> Thus, from when Esubiyi was under servitude at Ilorin to the point he abandoned them to align with Ibadan forces, he had gained a lot of military experience. He later combined the strategies and experience he had gained to launch himself as a very successful professional warrior and slave owner. Subsequently, his success soon attracted brigands from near and far. And with kin interest in raiding and kidnapping, Akokoland became one of the major targets of Esubiyi and his brigands, who had settled and made Ayede their headquarters.<sup>224</sup>

Other places where his professional influence touched in north-eastern Yorubaland were Ogbe, Otunja, Iyara, Erinmope, Alu, Ileje and so on. In Akokoland, his activities were more felt in communities that shared boundaries with Ekitiland, such as Ogbagi and Irun.<sup>225</sup> His activities were, however, not restricted to these adjoining towns as they also extended their operations to the hinterland of Akokoland. His strategies included sudden invasions of communities with indiscriminating burning of houses and farms to starve and weaken his victims. In case of kidnapping, his men usually lay siege in the bush along the road paths, especially those leading to popular markets. Their victims were always caught by surprise and as such would be defenceless. On the whole, Esubiyi's onslaught on Akokoland was very notorious that by the last quarter of the century he was famously addressed as 'Esubiyi, ekun,

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<sup>222</sup> Oguntomisin, G.O. 2017. *Studies in Pre-colonial Yoruba Warfare and Peace-making*, Ibadan, John Archers, pp.74-89.

<sup>223</sup> Olaoba, O.B. 2013... pp. 30-43, NAI: CSO 26/31014 and CSO 26/30983, 'Intelligence Reports on Ayede and Ishan districts'.

<sup>224</sup> Olaoba, O.B. 2013...; Olaoba, O.B. 1990. The Ata Dynasty in Aiyede Kingdom, 1850-1880: An Experiment in Traditional Political Culture. *African Notes*, Vol. 14, No. 1-2, pp. 62-69.

<sup>225</sup> Olaoba, O.B. 2013...; Olaoba, O.B. 1990...

oko Akoko, ẹni tí Àkókó n bí ọmọ sìn l'ẹsẹ òkè', meaning Esubiyi, the tiger, husband of the Akoko, he whom the Akoko worship with their children in the valley.<sup>226</sup> Considerably, a large part of his captives were exchanged for weapons, which were essentially not only for the defence of his settlement, but also for the prosecution of further wars and raids. Esubiyi, like many of his contemporaries, also retained a substantial part of the captives on his farms. It can be said that Esubuyi's adventure in Akokoland was meant more for the satisfaction of his personal economic interest.

Another prominent warlord from Ekiti that became a source of insecurity to Akoko communities in the century was Aduloju of Ado Ekiti, also popularly known as *Dodondawa*. Unlike Esubiyi, the early stage of Aduloju seemed to have been well documented. For instance, it is on record that Aduloju was born in Ado in 1824.<sup>227</sup> His father, Ategbemoró, was an *Edemo*, one of the well revered chiefs in the Ado Kingdom. His mother was Adeyeye, who died shortly after she was delivered of Aduloju. Fasawo Okunkolade, was later to be tagged Aduloju because of his outstandingly dark face. With other physical deformities such as his few premature teeth, his family hurriedly considered him to be a mysterious child. Consequently, there were attempts to get rid of him, however, such attempts all failed.<sup>228</sup> Even with that, growing up was difficult for him as he was constantly stigmatised by the society. So, it can be extracted that while external factors contributed more to the structuring of Esubiyi's adult life, it was the internal environment in forms of discrimination and rejection of Aduloju by his family and the larger Ado society that considerably shaped Aduloju's future.

As an adult, after several attempts at securing jobs had failed, Aduloju eventually landed himself in the military business. And after he had acquired the necessary military training at Ibadan, he returned to Ekiti and began to teach interested youths some military tactics he had acquired. Nevertheless, he only became famous after the bravery display of his military worth during the Ijesa-Efon War (1860-1862), where he fought against the Ijesa soldiers.<sup>229</sup> Thus, after the war, he had more youths, who came for training and from there he established a large army. But more importantly, the war brought Aduloju to the notice of

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<sup>226</sup> Olaoba, O.B. 2013... pp. 30-43.

<sup>227</sup> Ojo, E.O. 2013... pp. 61.

<sup>228</sup> Ojo, E.O. 2013...

<sup>229</sup> Olomola, G.O. 1967. Aduloju of Ado-Ekiti. A Case Study of An Ekiti Warrior Chief of the Nineteenth Century. A B.A. dissertation submitted to the Department of History, University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife) p. 10; Ojo, E.O. 2013... p. 61.

Ogedengbe, the famous Ijesa warlord, who had previously raided invaded a good number of Akoko towns such as Iwaro-Oka, Ipesi, Ifira and so on. And not too long after the war, the two concluded a military alliance.<sup>230</sup> Consequently, more youth were attracted and enlisted into his army. And due to the condition of such military coalition, Ogedengbe's army continued to work in alliance with Aduloju for several years even after Ogedengbe had retired from Akokoland.<sup>231</sup>

Aduloju and his brigands first began to raid and kidnap strangers and travellers along Ado axis. But soon, they extended activities to Akoko communities, especially those close to Ekiti such as Irun, Okeagbe, Ese and so on, raiding, plundering, kidnapping and killing the people indiscriminately.<sup>232</sup> His methods were similar to that of Esubiyi, which included burning of farmlands and houses as a strategy to make his victims submissive. Though Akoko communities presented a few cases of resistance, but as usual, their small size and lack of common military or defence front made them vulnerable to the onslaught of Aduloju. Consequently, Aduloju was highly successful in creating panic in the area. In the face of the challenges created by Aduloju, one of the best measures the people could come up with was going to farm, stream or market in mass. At times, the people would have to willingly part away with their valuables as a price for their freedom or life.<sup>233</sup> However, one wonders how effective these measures were, especially as the attackers were more interested in taking people captive to sustain their supply to the lucrative slave market.

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<sup>230</sup> Oguntomisin, G.O. 2017. *Studies in Pre-colonial Yoruba Warfare and Peace-making*, Ibadan, John Archers, pp. 86-89; Ojo, E.O. 2013... pp. 61-62. Also see Akintoye, S.A. 1966. *Ekitiparapo and Kiriji Wars*. A Ph.D. thesis submitted to the Department of History, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

<sup>231</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1976. *Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935*. M.Phil. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ife, Ile-Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), p. 32; Ojo, E.O. 2013...

<sup>232</sup> Johnson, S. 2001. *The History of the Yorubas from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*. Lagos: C.S.S. Bookshop Ltd, p. 323. This was affirmed by Sanusi, Daisi, 97 years, retired farmer and hunter. He was interviewed at his residence in Oke 'run, Irun Akoko, Ondo State on August 16, 2018.

<sup>233</sup> Interview: Sanusi, Daisi, 97 years, retired farmer and hunter. He was interviewed at his residence in Oke 'run, Irun Akoko, Ondo State on August 16, 2018; Adare, Ojo, 87 years, retired civil servant. He was interviewed at his residence A21, Ogosan, Oyin Akoko, Ondo on September 7, 2018.



group was defeated at the Battle of Irun.<sup>234</sup> As it is later discussed below under Ibadan military incursion into Akokoland, the invasion of Ayorinde's territories in Akokoland was premeditated as part of the larger plans to uproot Ibadan's presence from the north-eastern Yorubaland. For instance, after the personal war between Ayorinde and Aduloju, the latter with the support of Ogedengbe did not only invade more Ibadan territories, but also punished several north-eastern Yoruba communities that were Ibadan allies. For example, the Aduloju-Ogedengbe military alliance attacked and destroyed Ise between 1873 and 1875.<sup>235</sup> Therefore, Akoko communities were caught in between the personal interest and power struggle of Ayorinde and Aduloju camps. The inability of Ayorinde to effectively check Aduloju's group meant that the onslaught of the latter on Akoko would continue up to the 1880s. In 1881, for example, he (Aduloju) invaded and dissolute Afa, leaving the survival of the war with little choices, chiefly among them being fleeing to other communities.<sup>236</sup>

From the foregoing, a number of assumptions can be drawn. First, it is obvious that geography was relevant and played decisive roles in the Ekiti invasions of Akokoland in the nineteenth century. Among other things, the nearness of Akoko to Ekiti and the absence of strong natural barriers made it easy for the warlords to easily cross from their bases in Ekiti to Akokoland to carry out the attacks. Perhaps, this was why the activities of Ekiti warriors were largely limited to the western portion of Akokoland that served as the boundary between Ekiti and Akokoland. Ogbagi, Irun and Afa as explained above were all located on the western part of Akokoland. Secondly, though the Akoko attempted to resist the Ekiti warriors, such efforts, yielded no desirable expectations. This was mainly because of its size and the inability of Akoko communities to convert their cultural feeling of oneness, hitherto explained in the previous chapter, into meaningful political/military alliance.

Thirdly, what has been popularly regarded as Ekiti military exploit in Akokoland in the nineteenth century appeared more as personal expeditions of notable Ekiti warlords. For example, there is no evidence to suggest that the invasions carried out by the warriors were

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<sup>234</sup> Adeyeri, J.O. 2015. British Rule and the Transformation of Akokoland, 1897 – 1960. A Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the Department of History, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, p. 48.

<sup>235</sup> For more details on Aduloju of Ado, see Olomola, G.O.O. 1967. Aduloju of Ado-Ekiti. A Case Study of An Ekiti Warrior Chief of the Nineteenth Century, B.A. Dissertation submitted to the Department of History, University of Ife, (now Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)), Ile-Ife June. 1967.

<sup>236</sup> For more details on Aduloju of Ado, see Olomola, G.O.O. 1967. Aduloju of Ado-Ekiti. A Case Study of An Ekiti Warrior Chief of the Nineteenth Century, B.A. Dissertation submitted to the Department of History, University of Ife, (now Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)), Ile-Ife June. 1967.

sponsored by any Ekiti community or recognised monarch. Rather, all evidence points to the fact that the military expeditions were purely privately envisaged, planned and executed by the concerned Ekiti military generals. This, like in other part of Yorubaland, was more promoted by the economic interest of the warlords. The pattern of the attacks, especially in form of a long period of kidnapping, looting and plundering without any political imposition, clearly demonstrated that the warriors were only interested in economic benefits they could grab from their Akoko victims. The warlords, who had no allegiance to any recognised traditional authority, independently decided, based on their own strategic calculations, the communities to be attacked and took responsibilities for the approaches to be used and the consequences arising from such operations.

Fourthly, the alliance between Aduloju and Ogedengbe also demonstrated some of the military mechanisms that were popularly engaged in the century by the north-eastern Yoruba warlords as they set out to attain their aims. This was in contrast to popular oral accounts and folklores, which had almost entirely subjected pre-colonial warfare in the study area to metaphysics by giving the impression that the ability to win battles/wars depended considerably on how spiritually the warriors had prepared. Ordinarily, one would have thought that it would be difficult for Aduloju and Ogedengbe to come into agreement because of their conflicting interests. However, the two were pragmatic enough to understand the strength and enormous gains in their alliance; they therefore, buried their differences. This, therefore, goes to show that the ability to win wars at this period like any other period depended principally on how scientifically the army was organised and prepared. The combating strategy, morale and perseverance of the soldiers were important qualities that also counted in winning a war.

This, however, is not to claim that Akoko people in the pre-colonial times did not overwhelmingly believe in victory in wars through proper engagement of metaphysics or spirituality. In fact, as available records suggest, the Akoko, like other Yoruba people, believed in the potency of charms in the maintenance of security. For example, even while the external invasions or attacks were clearly physical and the people themselves made physical attempts to resist such attacks, it was still generally believed that such crises could not have happened if they had not been first approved from the spiritual realm.<sup>237</sup> And in line

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<sup>237</sup> Abegunde, O. 87 years, herbal practitioner. He was interviewed at his residence, B20, Okorun Quarter, Ikare-Akoko, Ondo State on December 21, 2014; Yemi, A.A., 76 years, Ashipa of Isualand. He was interviewed at the

with this belief, spiritual assistances were often sought to solve the problems. Thus, it was a common practice to first consult the *Ifa* for direction and help. Subsequently, rituals were performed as directed by the *Ifa*. Furthermore, the warriors in preparation for the war would generally go for *ironilagbara* (fortification), both individually and collectively. It was believed that this would help protect and win the war. And finally, in case of victory, the warriors and the entire community would further make sacrifices to the gods of the land as a way of appreciation for the victory and also an appeal for further protection. However, these are beliefs that cannot be substantiated.<sup>238</sup> Their major significance is that they enable us to understand how the people conceptualised security.

In all, there is no evidence suggesting that the Ekiti warlords successfully established any form of political suzerainty on Akokoland in the nineteenth century. Although the attacks were overwhelming, especially in the areas of displacement of the population, they, however, never resulted to a political dominion on any Akoko community. The warlords seemed not to be interested in actual political control as the most important thing was for the dues to be paid promptly.

#### **4.2 Ibadan Incursion and the Security Challenges of Akokoland in the Nineteenth Century**

Among other things, the collapse of the Oyo Empire at the opening of the nineteenth century had serious implications for the security architecture of Yorubaland for the remaining part of the century, at least from two perspectives. First, it would be recalled that prior to its collapse, Oyo was the most significant defending force against external threats or incursions into Yorubaland.<sup>239</sup> The fall, consequently, created serious external defence loopholes as the people were opened to frequent assaults from the Fulani jihadists, who had successfully established themselves at Ilorin. Secondly, Oyo represented a strongly symbol of domestic stability in Yorubaland as it played the role of a power balancer among the Yoruba states. Its

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*Olisua* Palace, Isua Akoko, Ondo State on August 10, 2015; Origbemisuyi, A., 70+, spiritualist. He was interviewed at his residence, Ibaka Qtr, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State on August 23, 2014.

<sup>238</sup> Abegunde, O. 87 years, herbal practitioner. He was interviewed at his residence, B20, Okorun Quarter, Ikare-Akoko, Ondo State on December 21, 2014; Yemi, A.A., 76 years, Ashipa of Isualand. He was interviewed at the *Olisua* Palace, Isua Akoko, Ondo State on August 10, 2015; Origbemisuyi, A., 70+, spiritualist. He was interviewed at his residence, Ibaka Qtr, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State on August 23, 2014.

<sup>239</sup> Awe, B. 1967... pp. 47-60. See also Afe, A.E. 2003. Political Changes in Nigeria in the Nineteenth Century. Eds. Arifalo, S.O. and Ajayi, G. *Essays in Contemporary Nigerian History* Vol. 1, Lagos, First Academic Publishers, pp. 28-32.



fall, subsequently, became a threat too to the internal security of Yorubaland. Thus, the post-Oyo Yorubaland was pre-occupied with both internal and external security challenges. Thus, while there was the question of who had the moral justification and power to act as the stabilising force among the Yoruba states became expedient, there was also the concern about the renewed attacks from the jihadists at Ilorin, which had made life more miserable for the Yoruba states.

Refugees from Oyo were to later regroup themselves into three camps, namely Ibadan, Ijaye and new Oyo.<sup>240</sup> *Alafin* Atiba, the ruler of the new Oyo, who had all moral and political grounds to take up these leadership responsibilities, was, however, too weak a personality live up to such expectation. The onus of external security maintenance in Yorubaland, therefore, fell on Ibadan and Ijaye. While Ijaye under the control of *Are-Ona-Kakanfo* Kurunmi was saddled with the responsibility of securing the western section, Ibadan was to protect the eastern part of Yorubaland.<sup>241</sup> And to some degree, the arrangement largely addressed the external security challenges in Yorubaland, especially as Ibadan proved capable of pushing Ilorin backwards after they had defeated the Ilorin forces at Oshogbo around 1840.<sup>242</sup> Having been checked from advancing eastwards, the Ilorin forces decided to change direction towards the Ijesa and Ekiti, Akoko neighbours in the north-eastern Yorubaland. But again and more decisively, Ibadan in 1854, under the command of *Balogun* Ibikunle, extricated Ilorin from Otun Ekiti.<sup>243</sup>

The displacement of Ilorin from Otun in 1854 was in two major ways significant to the future activities of Ibadan in the area. One, having emerged as the most significant check on the incursion of the jihadists into the north-eastern Yorubaland, it became necessary for Ibadan to have its presence stationed in the area to ensure that its gains did not slip away into the hands of the jihadists. This seemed to have been well thought out as ordinarily, the return

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<sup>240</sup> Awe, B. 1967... p. 47; Isichei, E. *A History of Nigeria*. New Jersey, Prentice Hall Press, pp. 216-220

<sup>241</sup> Oguntomisin, G.O. 2017. *Studies in Pre-colonial Yoruba Warfare and Peace-making*, Ibadan, John Archers, pp. 83-86; Azeez, T. 2013. Reading Kurunmi and Ijaye's Factual Historical War Dramas: A Genre and Text. *International Journal of English and Literature*, Vol. 4(4), p. 105.

<sup>242</sup> Johnson S. 2001. *The History of the Yorubas from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, Lagos: C.S.S. Bookshop Ltd, pp. 285-289; Awe, B. (1967), 'The Ajele System: (A study of Ibadan Imperialism in the nineteenth century)', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 3, No. 1, December, p. 48.

<sup>243</sup> Awe, B. (1967), 'The Ajele System: (A study of Ibadan Imperialism in the nineteenth century)', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 3, No. 1, December, p. 49; Olomola, G.O.I. 1977. Pre-colonial Pattern of Inter-States Relations in Eastern Yorubaland. A Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the Department of History, University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)), Ile-Ife, p. 234.

of the jihadists to the area would also have brought back the earlier security threats which were the reasons the Jihadists had been fought in the first instance. This is one area that the Nigerian government and military need to learn from. The Nigerian Army's ongoing efforts in combating the insurgency in the north-east have been criticised, for instance, for not doing enough to establish its presence in the areas taking from the insurgents. Consequently, this has allowed some of the freed territories to slip back into the hands of the terrorist. Secondly and more importantly, Ibadan had earlier on dreamt of having imperial control not only over the Ijesa, Ekiti and the whole of the eastern Yorubaland, but the entire Yorubaland.<sup>244</sup> It was, therefore, necessary for it to be permanently present in the area to achieve these two interests. However, it was envisaged that the long distance between Ibadan and north-eastern Yorubaland would be a bane of direct administration. The best solution that Ibadan could come up with was to direct its military commanders not to only protect its gains, but to also conquer more territories in that direction. From the conquered territories, Ibadan was, therefore, expected to 'collect tributes, acquire captives to cultivate crops for sale, to buy arms and ammunition, recruit fighting men to swell its forces and thereby strengthened itself generally'.<sup>245</sup>

It was under this circumstance that Ayorinde or Aje, one of the renowned Ibadan warlords penetrated and subdued Ijesa, Igbomina and Ekiti districts. His success in these places subsequently encouraged him to further his adventure into Akokoland. But, due to same distance factor, Ibadan could, therefore, not really monitor or supervise Ayorinde's activities in Akokoland. In fact, Ibadan influence on Ayorinde became even lesser after it was decreed in 1859 that Ibadan should momentarily abstain from war.<sup>246</sup> The decree was meant to address the increasing number of slaves residing in Ibadan. Due to the intimidating population of slaves in Ibadan, it was feared that there could be slave rebellion. The warriors, who were themselves ambitious and enjoyed their new status of independent and wealth, also decided to use such opportunities created by the less supervision from Ibadan to further their

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<sup>244</sup> The ambition of Ibadan to take the place of Oyo by imposing itself on other Yoruba states was resisted. This partly led to a series of wars in Yorubaland, lasting to the end of the nineteenth century. For more details, see Akinjogbin, I.A. 1965. *The Prelude to the Yoruba Civil Wars of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*. *Odu: Journal of Yoruba and Related Studies*, Vol. 1, No 2, pp. 24-47.

<sup>245</sup> Ajayi, J.F.A and Akintoye, S.A. 1980. *Yorubaland in the Nineteenth Century*. Ed. Ikime Obaro, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Heinemann Educational Books (Nig) Plc, p. 289.

<sup>246</sup> Awe, B. 1967... p. 49.

personal aggrandisement.<sup>247</sup> Thus, Akokoland as from this point began to serve the purposes of these warlords and not really that of Ibadan.

Probably, this was the major reason why Akokoland did not experience the typical vassal administrative system of Ibadan. It would be recalled, for instance, that as a practice, every conquered territory of Ibadan was placed under a chief, regarded as *Baba Kekere*, meaning 'small father'. Usually, the title of *Baba Kekere* was conferred on a military chief by the *Aare* as appreciation and commendation of his bravery and success. He was, therefore, directly answerable to the *Aare*. Accordingly, *Baba Kekere* could appoint an *Ajele*, who was directly responsible to him (*Baba Kekere*). The *Ajele* was to ensure that the conquered people fulfil their obligations of tribute paying and obeying the order of the chief (*BabaKekere*). Also, he was to receive and guarantee the safety of his boss's visitors during their stay in the area under his watch. He was also to protect Ibadan traders and travellers transacting business or transiting through the territory.<sup>248</sup> But as earlier stated, even when the military generals sent parts of the tributes and taxes they collected to Ibadan, there was no record of any kind to show that Ibadan *Ajele* were instituted in Akokoland during the period under review. Thus, it can be deduced from the foregoing that Akokoland was more of economic significance to the Ibadan.

Ayorinde, whose military activities lasted for decades in Akokoland, first attack Irun in 1856.<sup>249</sup> Thereafter, he established his military camp at Irun and from there; he attacked Ogbagi in 1857. Although Ogbagi put up a strong resistance for a while, in the end, it was brought to its knees. It should be noted that success over Ogbagi was probably largely because of Ayorinde's superior weapons, especially guns and well-organised military strategies. Also fundamental to its success was the fact that he had a lot of experienced soldiers that fought in his camp. After he had successfully defeated Ogbagi, he extended his mission as far as Idoani, raiding and prowling the people. Aside the factors mentioned above, Ayorinde also understood the advantages in military alliance. He clearly knew when to make use of it. For example, in his war against Irun, he engaged the services of Esubiyi, the *Ata* of Aiyede Ekiti, who had more knowledge of the geographical terrain of Akokoland than

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<sup>247</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1976. Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935. M.Phil. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ife, Ile-Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), p. 32.

<sup>248</sup> Okajare, S.T. 2012... p. 153.

<sup>249</sup> Akintoye, S.A. 1971... p. 50; Okajare, S.T. 2012... p. 150.

himself (Ayorinde). He also at different points allied with Ilorin and Nupe to ensure victory.<sup>250</sup>

All these tactics made him successful against Akoko communities that were still unable to form themselves into a united and formidable force. More importantly, while it seemed that the geographical factor had cut Akokoland off the mainstream of Yoruba wars of the period, news about Ibadan victories over strong Yoruba groups such as Ijaiye, Ijesa and Igbomina, however, usually got to Akokoland, especially through the traders that used it as a connecting route.<sup>251</sup> Thus, the Akoko dreaded anything Ibadan and as a result of this, they were not courageous enough to challenge Ayorinde. Whereas, Ayorinde's plundering was more of a personal business than state assignment, the Akoko unknowingly feared that a revolt or attack against him would automatically provoke grievous sanctions from Ibadan.<sup>252</sup>



<sup>250</sup> Akintoye, S.A. 1971... p. 50.

<sup>251</sup> Ehindero, C., 115 years, the head of Imole Cult of Oyin Akoko. She was interviewed at her residence, A44, Ogosan, Oyin Akoko, Ondo State on January 8, 2019. See also, Okajare, S.T. 2012... p. 151.

<sup>252</sup> Ehindero, C., 115 years, the head of Imole Cult of Oyin Akoko. She was interviewed at her residence, A44, Ogosan, Oyin Akoko, Ondo State...

**Fig 4: Map showing the directions of Ibadan invasion of Akokoland**

While Ayorinde did not superimpose any kind of clearly defined political authority or structure on Akoko communities, his period has largely been described as a reign of terror. For example, it is said that his men were well noted for harassment, extortion, plundering, torture, kidnapping, killing and all other forms of dehumanisation.<sup>253</sup> The indigenous rulers were mandated to collect tributes and taxes, which were in forms of cowry shell and foodstuffs, and hand them over to Ayorinde boys, who according to Okajare:

...did not comport themselves as consular agents of an overlord. While they maintained abounding loyalty and allegiance to their master, they were not like Ibadan consuls in some Ekiti communities... or Nupe consuls in some Akoko kingdoms... they might have lived and behaved like potentates, they hardly received important visitors. ...But, as agents of a powerful overlord, they often encroached on the sovereignty of the Akoko communities where they operated. And, they poached authority and influence at will as little army of occupation.<sup>254</sup>

However, in the 1870s, Aduloju and Ogendengbe began to challenge the authority of Ibadan warriors in Akokoland. Subsequently, they began to attack Ayorinde's area of interest, gradually routing out his warriors. Moreover, Ibadan's feeble involvement in Akokoland made Ayorinde more vulnerable as no reinforcement was sent to him. The military alliance formed by Akoko, Ekiti and Ijesa in 1878 became the final phase of Ayorinde and Ibadan power in Akokoland.<sup>255</sup>

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that what had hitherto been regarded as Ibadan imperial domination of Akokoland in the nineteenth century was more of personal project of Ibadan warriors. This explains why there was no establishment of a typical Ibadan imperial political structure in Akokoland during the century. The activities of Ibadan warriors in Akokoland were not necessarily for the attainment of the territorial expansion of Ibadan. Rather, the warriors were more enticed by their personal economic prosperity. Notwithstanding, their activities will always be remembered by the Akoko as one of their greatest security challenges of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>253</sup> Akintoye, S.A. 1971... pp. 72-73.

<sup>254</sup> Okajare, S.T. 2012... p. 152.

<sup>255</sup> Akintoye, S.A. 1971...

### 4.3 Nupe Military Intervention and Security Challenges in Akokoland in the Nineteenth Century

The Nupe are current neighbours of the Hausa, Gbari, Birnin Gwari, Yoruba, and Kakanda. While it is true that the people are scattered over several states in west-central and northern parts of Nigeria, the bulk of their population can be found at Bida, Minna, Lapai, Mokwa, Jebba, Lafiagi, and so on. From the available historical records, the presence of the Nupe in Kwara and Kogi is not an accident, but has so much to do with their military exploits of the nineteenth century.<sup>256</sup>

Before the nineteenth century, the Nupe had established themselves as a strong political unit and had embarked on territorial expansion far before the commencement of the Uthman dan Fodio's *jihad* in 1804. According to Nadel, for example, 'Tsoede carried big and victorious wars against many tribes...conquering in the south the countries of Yagba and Bunu, Kakanda, as far as Akoko'.<sup>257</sup> There is a need, however, to further interrogate this claim because, while there are proofs of Nupe incursion and domination of Akokoland in the nineteenth century, there is no evidence whatsoever to establish Tsoede's interference in the area in the sixteenth century. What is also apparent is the fact that there were flourishing commercial contacts between Nupe and Akokoland as early as the eighteenth century. For instance, Akokoland due to its geographical location had served as an entry port for the commercial connections between the Nupe, Ekiti and Afemai. Potash (*kanun*), copper, glass and sheabutter (*ori*) from Nupeland were usually exchanged for kolanuts (*obi*), palmoil (*epo-pupa*), palm-kernel oil (*adin*), camwood (*osun*), indigo and so on that were readily available in Akokoland and other commercial centres in Ekiti and Afemai. Usually, the Nupe traders would stop over at Akokoland, especially Arigidi and Ikare, which were emerging commercial centres. Gradually; a number of Nupe people began to settle in Arigidi especially.<sup>258</sup> Perhaps, it was the same nineteenth century Nupe assaults on Akokoland that Nadel misrepresented for Tsoede incursion.

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<sup>256</sup> Yahaya, M.K. 2003. The Nupe Kingdom. *Studies in Tribes Tribals*, Vol.1, No. 2, pp. 95-97; N.A.K. S.N.P. 1725355. Notes on Nupe.

<sup>257</sup> Nadel, S.F. 1965. *The Black Byzantium: The Kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria*, London, Oxford University Press, p. 74.

<sup>258</sup> N.A.I. File 1/1. The Reverend Charles Phillips' Description of Arigidi, 1894; The Morgan Chieftaincy Report of 1979, p. 38; Orojo, O.J. 2008. *A Short History of Arigidi-Akoko*. Lagos, Royet and Day Publications Ltd, pp. 18-19.

Nonetheless, by the early 1820s, it is evident that the Nupe had been using the *jihad* as a justification for their expansionist campaigns in north-eastern Yorubaland. The Nupe's local rulers and their devotees were very instrumental in the spread of the revolution to their neighbours such as the Ebira, Okun and Akoko.<sup>259</sup> Although earlier authors such as Komolafe gave the impression that the earliest military campaign undertaken by the Nupe in Akokoland was done in collaboration with Aduloju of Ado, when their allied forces attacked Afa around 1880-1881,<sup>260</sup> available records, however, seem to suggest otherwise. First, the earliest attack of Nupe on Akoko neighbours, the Okun, Ebira and so on in the nineteenth century has been put before the 1830s.<sup>261</sup> So, considering the proximity of Akokoland to these neighbours, coupled with its economic buoyancy, military weakness and the fact that the Nupe had been well familiar with the area through their earlier commercial presence and influence, it is very doubtful that the Nupe would have delayed their attacks on Akoko to the last two decades of the century.

Secondly, available records have also shown that the Nupe's representatives, *ajele*, had been installed in Akokoland right before the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>262</sup> The question then is; was it the military campaigns that came before the installation of a political authority or the other way round? The sequence in the histories of conquered societies always presents attacks as preludes or background to the establishment of political suzerainty. Since it is only logical that attacks always precede political subjugation, the case of Akokoland might, therefore, not be different. Also, *Etsu* Masaba, for example, is said to have appointed one Makun in Arigidi as the Chief *Ajele* of Akokoland and saddled him with the responsibility of supervising the collection of taxes and tributes in the area. From the available records, Masaba had two reigns; the first was between 1833 and 1845, while the second was between 1859 and 1873.<sup>263</sup> Masaba, who died in 1873, could not have installed an *ajele* in 1873 let alone after 1880.

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<sup>259</sup> Obayemi, A. 1980. States and Peoples of the Niger-Benue Confluence Area. Ed. Ikime Obaro, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*...pp. 154-155. See also, Mason, M. 1975. The Tsoede Myth and the Nupe Kinglists: More Political Propaganda? *History in Africa*. Vol. 2, pp. 101-112;

<sup>260</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1976. Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935. M.Phil. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ife, Ile-Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), p. 33.

<sup>261</sup> Obayemi, A. 1978. The Sokoto Jihad And the 'O-Kun' Yoruba: A Review Source. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 9, No. 2...; Mason, M. 1970...

<sup>262</sup> Orojo, O.J. 2008. *A Short History of Arigidi-Akoko*. Lagos, Royet and Day Publications Ltd, p. 19. This information was corroborated by Olufemi, K. Lydia, *Iya-Ewe* of Arigidi-Akoko, 72 years. She was interviewed on September 24, 2018 at her residence, 102, Agbaluku, Arigidi-Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>263</sup> Obayemi, A. 1978... p. 64; Mason, M. 1970... pp. 195-197.

From the foregoing, the military campaigns of the Nupe with the intention of actual occupation of Akokoland can, therefore, be reasonably and roughly assumed to be between the 1830s and 1840s. It would be recalled that after the demise of *Mallam* Dendo in 1833, his son, Zaki, and his half brother, Masaba were engaged in leadership tussle and ruled simultaneously as *Etsu* Nupe up to 1845.<sup>264</sup> While Zaki established his capital at Raba, Masaba planted another at Lade, which was very close to Pategi. The Nupe leadership was, therefore, engrossed in internal political crisis coloured by incessant civil wars. The domestic development, would, however, later have strong impact on their immediate and distant neighbours including Akokoland. Thus, from Lade, Masaba, organised his armies which pounded on the southward Yoruba communities of Bunu, Oworo, Owo, Yagba, Ijumu, Ekiti, Akoko and Afenmai.<sup>265</sup>

Apparently, the invasions were largely due to three major reasons. First, Masaba was desperate to increase the population of his followers and number of territories as his success in these two areas would help advance his diplomatic chances with Gwandu and in the long run assist him in outplaying Zaki. Apart from this, Masaba also engaged the diplomacy of 'gifting' and through this showered Gwandu with gifts items.<sup>266</sup> Secondly, it was estimated that the wealth which would flow in from the conquered territories in form of tributes and taxes would go a long way in building his government and the capital. Also, such wealth would be useful in the acquisition of the necessary military wears to strengthening his armies to embark on more successful military conquests. Finally, he also hoped to conscript some of the captives from the invaded communities into his armies for further exploit.<sup>267</sup> Meanwhile, Usman Zaki also seemed to have similar calculations as his armies also turned their military campaigns towards the north-eastern Yorubaland. Nevertheless, Masaba forces seemed to have had more military impression on the people of Akoko and their neighbours. Thus, the nature of the attacks included raiding, kidnapping, plundering, forceful collection of tributes and even killing.<sup>268</sup> And just like earlier attacks, the military prowess of Akoko was far too

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<sup>264</sup> N.A.K. S.N.P. 1725355. Notes on Nupe.

<sup>265</sup> Akeredolu, J.L.1986. *Introduction of Christianity into Akoko*. Owo: Temidire Press, p. 12; Obayemi, A. 1980. States and Peoples of the Niger-Benue Confluence Area. Ed. Ikime Obaro, *Groundwork of Nigerian History...*p. 157.

<sup>266</sup> Mason, M.A. 1970. The "Jihad" in the South: An Outline of the Nineteenth Century Nupe Hegemony in North-Eastern Yorubaland and Afenmai. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria...*, p. 196.

<sup>267</sup> Mason, M.A. 1970...

<sup>268</sup> N.A.K: Notes on Kabba Division, 1920; N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667... See also, Adeyeri, J.O. 2015. British Rule and the Transformation of Akokoland, 1897 to 1960. A Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the Department of History, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.



inferior to that of the Nupe. And once again, the Akoko communities could not organise themselves into a united force to take up this security challenge. Consequently, they became preys to the Nupe invaders.

When the Nupe political history entered into an interregnum between 1850 and 1857, Akokoland and their neighbours seemed to enjoy a short period of peace. This again was not in separation from the Nupe domestic situation. A military commander in the person of Umar Maiyaki, had capitalised on the existing political crisis in Nupeland and usurped power by sacking Zaki and Masaba from their respective capitals.<sup>269</sup> So, without much domestic and foreign support, especially from Gwandu, Maiyaki was pre-occupied with how to consolidate his power by gaining both domestic and foreign acceptance. Consequently, the wars of expansion slowed down a great deal. However, his hold to power was cut short following his defeat by a military alliance formed by the Nupe ruling houses and the forces of Ibadan and Ilorin in 1857. Subsequently, Usman Zaki was re-elected as the *Etsu* Nupe, but now ruling from a new capital, Bida. The reinstatement of Zaki brought a sudden end to the peace enjoyed by Akokoland and other targets of Nupe under Maiyaki as the Nupe armies once again began to trouble and kidnap, even far more than they had done in the past. Subsequently, they began to bring Akoko states under effective imperial control. For example, what could be described as a military base was established at Arigidi, where the Nupe invaders settled and continued with their attacks on the remaining part of the region.<sup>270</sup>

The Nupe's renewed wars against Akokoland and their neighbours appeared to have been propelled by two major factors. In the first instance, having been ravaged by civil wars, especially between 1850 and 1857, there was a serious need to rebuild the state and its economy. The economic reconstruction, no doubt, was crucial to the political stability and other development. Hence, there was the need to embark on more aggressive military campaigns to generate the wealth needed to run the state. In the second instance, there was a need to sustain the inflow of gifts to Gwandu in order for Zaki to enjoy its recognition and support and protection. Zaki seemed to find no difficulties in carrying out his invasions in Akokoland and other parts of north-eastern Yorubaland, having been familiar with the terrain prior to this period.

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<sup>269</sup> Mason, M.A. 1970... p. 196.

<sup>270</sup> N.A.I. File 1/1, Phillips Notes on Arigidi...; Okajare, S.T. 2012... p. 145.

Zaki, however, died in 1859 and his brother, Masaba, was immediately made the *Etsu* Nupe. Although Masaba, after he became *Etsu* between 1859 and 1873, sustained the imperial domination of Akoko towns, his administrative approach this time has been described as less oppressive.<sup>271</sup> Again, explanations can be made for this. First, Akoko, having been successfully conquered and even put under effective imperial control before this time, Masaba, had little or no difficulty in sustaining the Nupe overlordship on the people. Hence, there was no cause for his administration to unnecessarily harass people who had already been subdued politically. All he, therefore, had to do was to consolidate on the existing Nupe suzerainty on conquered Akoko communities and ensure the free flow of the tributes and taxes to Bida. Also, it should be recalled that he was overwhelmingly engaged in several wars at this period with people such as the Odo-ape, Koin in Bunu, Okene and Ibadan.<sup>272</sup> Furthermore, aside the fact that there were a number of unresolved domestic socio-political crises; the Nupe were also involved in wars with their immediate neighbours. For example, while Masaba's administration was fighting a war with Baba between 1866 and 1867, it also engaged in a dispute with Kontagora up till 1867 on the ownership of the western part of Nupeland. Similarly, there was a conflict with the riverine Igala up till 1870.<sup>273</sup> All these factors appeared to have distracted the concentration of Masaba on Akokoland.

This, however, is not to create the impression that Nupe's harassment and oppression of Akoko people ceased entirely under Masaba. Far from it, Akokoland still suffered in the hand of the Nupe tributes agents, who were often ruthless in the course of collecting the tributes and taxes. For instance, the agents often demanded exorbitantly from the people, not necessary for the purpose of remitting everything collected, but their own personal gains. So, for people who could not fulfil their obligation of tribute and tax payment, it was only normal for them to be taken as captives.<sup>274</sup> And owing to the lucrative nature of slaves trading at this period, it is suggestive that a considerable number of the captives from Akokoland would have ended up being sold as slaves.

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<sup>271</sup> Interview: Babalola, S.A., 100 Years, the Amuludun of Oyin Akoko. He was interviewed on July 22, 2018 at his residence, F9, Oyin Akoko, Ondo State; Okijiola, J.A., 65 Years, High Chief (*Bobajiroro*) of Isualand. He was interviewed at the Isua Civic Centre, Isua-Akoko on August 17, 2015.

<sup>272</sup> Mason, M.A. 1970... p. 198.

<sup>273</sup> Mason, M.A. 1970...

<sup>274</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1989. The Establishment of Nupe Administration and Its Impact on Akoko, 1840-1897, *Odu*, pp. 216-217.

Following the demise of Masaba in 1873, the leadership of Nupe kingdom fell on Umaru Majigi, who reigned up till 1882. He was popularly known as *Ajagajigi*, meaning ‘trouble’, because of the agony it brought to the people. Thus, right from the inception of his administration, the Nupe agents resumed their old fashion of harassment and oppression of Akoko people. Subsequently, the large scale extortion was renewed and worse than whatever had been witnessed in the past.<sup>275</sup> Consequently, many people fled Akokoland and retreated into the caves or to the mountains top as a way of escaping Majigi’s onslaught. In the early 1870s, Majigi re-energised the Nupe war of conquest in Akokoland and conquered more south-eastern states such as Isua, Epinmi, Upe and even Ikun in the south-western part of Akokoland.<sup>276</sup> In Epinmi, for instance, he had to establish a military post.<sup>277</sup>

By around 1880, the Nupe had successfully concluded a military alliance with Aduloju and their forces besieged more Akoko towns. The alliance, however, soon ended on a sad note because of the inability of the two to reconcile their conflicting interests. Even when the alliance had broken down, the Nupe continued to molest Akoko communities. Their earlier victories in Akokoland soon encouraged them to attack Oka. The Oka episode was, however, an entirely different experience for the Nupe. The war did not only become protracted, the Nupe also suffered huge casualties.<sup>278</sup> Oka’s well coordinated military tactics, especially the guerrilla warfare, under courageous leadership of *Asin* Olugbagada and the environmental factors, especially the hills, gave them a successful outing against the Nupe. And unlike the previously attacked and conquered Akoko communities, Oka decided also to reach out for military assistance from Aduloju.<sup>279</sup> In fact, the choice of Aduloju from all indications seemed deliberate and strategic too. It should be recalled that the alliance between Aduloju and the Nupe had ended on a bitter note. So, when contacted by Oka for help, Aduloju saw it as an opportunity to humiliate the Nupe: his way of punishing them for betraying him.

It is also appropriate to mention some external factors, which the Oka had no connections with or control over, that contributed immensely to their successful resistance

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<sup>275</sup> Okajare, S.T. 2012... p. 146.

<sup>276</sup> Mason, M.A. 1970... p. 198.

<sup>277</sup> For more details, see Akomolafe, C.O. 1970. Akoko and the Nupe Wars in the Nineteenth Century. B.A. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

<sup>278</sup> Olukoju, A. 1989... pp. 102-110.

<sup>279</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1989... pp. 216-217.

against the Nupe too. First, while the Nupe's campaign against Oka was on-going, some of the unresolved domestic crises cropped up again and became serious distractions to Majigi. For instance, in 1875, there was the Baba uprising and there were even plans by Majigi's rivals to resuscitate the defunct western Nupe kingdom. The news got to Majigi while on conquest mission, he immediately returned to Bida to suppress the uprising. There were also the uprising of the Kede and so on in the early 1880s, which exhausted the *Etsu's* power and concentration.<sup>280</sup> Thus, Majigi's was on one of such military campaigns when he died in 1882 at Lafiagi.

Maliki, therefore, succeeded Majigi as *Etsu* Nupe in the same year the latter died. It should be noted that Maliki was a son of Usman Zaki. And as a war general under Majigi, who was intimately involved in the Nupe imperialism, he did not waste any time in continuing with the existing expansionist plan of his predecessors. Thus, he sustained Nupe's harassment of Akoko communities in order to uphold the inflow of resources from that end to Bida. And in this, he was highly successful as regular tributes continually travelled from Akokoland to Bida. However, as efforts for the collection for taxes and tributes were constantly reinforced, Akoko people gradually began to challenge the authorities of the Nupe. This eventually forced many people in Akoko to relocate, in most cases, to bigger and safer neighbouring communities and not-easily accessible sites such as hill tops and so on. The Nupe only responded by intensifying their raids of Akokoland.<sup>281</sup>

This was the situation until the second half of the 1880s, when the Europeans gradually began to settle down in the area. Initially, Maliki appeared undisturbed by this development as there was no friction between his and the European interests. But not long, as the number and activities of the Europeans increased, especially as from 1886 when the Royal Charter was granted the Royal Niger Company, *Etsu* Maliki, therefore, began to show concern. However, he chose to first approach the situation diplomatically. This, he did by reaching an agreement with the Royal Niger Company in 1892. Thus, the Company promised non-interference in the activities of Nupe around Lokoja, while the Nupe in return would have to end their slave raids in the areas under the administration of the Company.<sup>282</sup> The seemingly perfect agreement, nonetheless, soon led to a misunderstanding between Maliki

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<sup>280</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1989... pp. 216-217.

<sup>281</sup> Ehindero, C., 115 years, the head of Imole Cult of Oyin Akoko. She was interviewed at her residence, A44, Ogosan, Oyin Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>282</sup> See F.O. 84/2245, *Goldie's Letter to Salisbury*, March 24, 1892.

and the Europeans barely a year after it was signed. This was due to the conflicting interpretations that the two parties gave to what constituted the European area of influence. For instance, while the Nupe assumed that Akokoland was under its influence, the Royal Niger Company had a contrary opinion. In 1893, the two imperialist groups were even close to an open armed confrontation, when the Company outplayed the Nupe by occupying Ikaram. There had been a clandestine plan by the Nupe to attack Ikaram, but when the European got wind of the plan they simply swung into action by occupying the town.<sup>283</sup>

In 1895, when Abubakar became the *Etsu*, the Nupe once again relaxed their aggression against the Akoko as the new *Etsu* did not show much interest in being too hard on his vassal towns. But in spite of this; the Europeans were still very sceptical about his administration. And as such, they began to incite Akoko people and their neighbours, who had been under the Nupe suzerainty for long to revolt against them (the Nupe).<sup>284</sup> But as it later turned out, the encouragement was a 'divide and rule' method meant to make their (Europeans) conquest of the area almost unchallenged. The Akoko, who did not realise this early enough, wholeheartedly took to the advice of their seeming protectors. So, in 1895 when the Ogidi revolted against the Nupe, the Akoko quickly rallied to support the Ogidi, mainly as a symbol of their resistance against the Nupe overlordship. Subsequently, a military alliance was formed between Akoko, Ijumu, Yagba and others to fight against the Nupe forces.<sup>285</sup> Thus, from Ogidi, the military base of the coalition forces, attacks were launched against the Nupe. So by 1897 and there was no sign of end in view, the Royal Niger Company's Constabulary entered the war in support of the coalition forces in January. The Nupe were defeated and consequently, their overlordship on Akokoland ended.

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<sup>283</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...

<sup>284</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1976. Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935. M.Phil. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ife, Ile-Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), p. 37.

<sup>285</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1976... p. 37.



Fig 5: Map showing the directions of Nupe invasion of Akokoland

It can be summarised from the foregoing that the Akoko lived most part of the nineteenth century attending to external security threats. The security challenges of Akokoland in the nineteenth century can be carefully classified into two categories. The first involved those that were individually sponsored by the Ekiti and Ibadan warlords. And from all indications, these assaults seemed to have been mainly motivated by the personal economic goals of the warlords, which considerably included their desire to participate and benefit from the lucrative slave trade in the century or the intentions to amass wealth by raiding or engagement of their captives as capital assets for production. On the other hand, the second category involved the Nupe incursion, which can largely be described as a foreign policy carefully drafted to suite their domestic political and socio-economic structures. It is, therefore, apparent that external security challenges were major themes in the nineteenth century history of Akokoland and as it would be discussed in the next chapter, they were with a lot of socio-political consequences.

#### **4.4 Resistance and Responses to Insecurity by the Akoko**

In order not to create an impression that the Akoko did nothing to resist the onslaught of their external aggressors or address the security challenges, this section of the thesis examines some of the measures or strategies used to resist the external attackers and manage the security challenges of the period. Thus, resistance to external attacks was usually military and was either organised by the state or local warlords.<sup>286</sup> As there is no evidence of state owned army, warriors for this purpose were usually sourced from among the youths, many of them being hunters, professional warriors, farmers and herbalists.<sup>287</sup> The operations of the soldiers were usually coordinated by more experienced local warriors. As earlier noted; community leaders that were also great warriors like *Asin Olugbagada*, were able to use their experiences and resources to defend their people against external attackers. In places like Afa and Oka, where there were chief warriors, *balogun*, they were usually saddled with this responsibility.<sup>288</sup> Aside the state effort, there is also popular accounts of local warlords, who

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<sup>286</sup> Ehindero, C., 115 years, the head of Imole Cult of Oyin Akoko...; Olorunsola, 57 years, retired teacher and community leader (*Eli of Eegun*), at his residence, 16 Araromi, Ogbagi Akoko, Ondo State on April 22, 2017.

<sup>287</sup> Ehindero, C., 115 years, the head of Imole Cult of Oyin Akoko...; Olorunsola, 57 years, retired teacher and community leader (*Eli of Eegun*)...

<sup>288</sup> Aremu, J.O. and Afolabi, S.O. 2018. Akoko Resistance to External Invasion and Domination in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Sciences*, Vol. 2, Issue 11, pp. 66-72.

independently took up the responsibility of defending their communities against the invaders. For example, Arogunyo and Bakare of Afahave been reported to have defended the town against external attacks for a long time.<sup>289</sup> The contribution of *Balogun* Odu in resisting the forces of Ibadan and Ekiti has been come a popular aspect of the nineteenth century history of Ogbagi.<sup>290</sup> What can be deduced from the above is that security in Akokoland in the nineteenth century was not viewed as exclusive responsibility of the government. However, it still not clear if there was a synergy between such independent and state's efforts.

As external invasions became more evident and could not be effectively resisted, the people devised methods to manage and live with the challenges. One of such methods was running for cover. This practice was carried out in two forms. The first format included the people fleeing from the troubled zone to more secured territories. In most cases, these territories were friendly non-Akoko neighbouring communities of Ekiti, Owo, Ifon, Ijumu, Ido-Ani and so on.<sup>291</sup> Due to the existing cordial relationship between Akoko communities and these neighbours, it was said that the refugees were usually welcomed and treated well.<sup>292</sup> Thus, they usually lived with their neighbours until when the situation got better. But like Aremu has observed, one cannot totally rule out the fact that many of these refugees would have decided to settle permanently in these neighbouring communities. For example, the ancestors of a quarter named Akungba in Owo are said to have fled to Owo during this period and never to return to Akungba their original town.<sup>293</sup>

The second means of running for cover involved taking an advantage of the available geographical features. As mentioned earlier, Akoko was and it is still a hilly region. Thus, the people usually moved up the hills in time of trouble. The fact that some of the hills had caves, made them inhabitable for people. But as the attacks increased, especially as from the 1840s,

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<sup>289</sup> Omotoyinbo, A110 years, at his residence1/42 Ogo, Irun Akoko, Ondo State on December 13, 2018.

<sup>290</sup> Aremu J.O. and Afolabi S.O. 2018. Akoko Resistance to External Invasion and Domination in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries..., p. 71

<sup>291</sup> Adewunmi, O.S. *Ogotunlgase* (Chief Priest) of Afa in Oke-Agbe, at his residence at Afa, Oke-Agbe Akoko, Ondo State on October 2, 2017.

<sup>292</sup> Aremu J.O. and Afolabi S.O. 2018. Akoko Resistance to External Invasion and Domination in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries...

<sup>293</sup> Adeyoyin, K.O, No 8, Akungba Quarter, Owo, Ondo State on December 16, 2020.



communities such as Oka began to relocate permanently to the top of the hills.<sup>294</sup> The hills had their advantages too. For example, it was very difficult for the external aggressors to launch sudden attacks from the bottom of the hills. Also, leaving on the hills provided an opportunity of having a wide surveillance of the surrounding environment. These factors, as mentioned earlier assisted the Oka in defeating the Nupe in the late nineteenth century.<sup>295</sup> Meanwhile, leaving on the hills retarded the growth of the communities as most of the people remained on the hills until the period of British colonisation, when they were convinced that it was safe to relocate down the hills.<sup>296</sup>

As a measure too, people began to travel enmass more than before. While this strategy could have effectively addressed security challenges such as kidnapping, highway robbery and so on, it is, however, uncertain if such measure would have been relevant to real war or Nupe's style of invasion that was always spontaneous and massive.<sup>297</sup> Nonetheless, it was reported that farmers, traders, especially those transacting business outside Akokoland, and other travellers adopted the system of moving in group and most times with the assistance of hired escorts.<sup>298</sup> The usual movement pattern was to position some of the guards a few metres ahead and another set a few metres behind.<sup>299</sup> The authorities made it a duty on their own to provide travellers with necessary and useful information on how safe the routes were. At a period when modern communication media was not in existence, the usual method of disseminating such information was through the *adagoṣba* (town criers), who would move across different quarters.<sup>300</sup> It is, therefore, assumed that the emerging warlords and hunters, who provided such escort services, would have made a lot of future from the exercise that had become very lucrative though also risky. This goes to demonstrate that even in crisis times; a group of individuals or professionals still see and make use of the opportunities to create or amass wealth.

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<sup>294</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1989... pp. 216-217.

<sup>295</sup> Olukoju, A. 1989... p. 104.

<sup>296</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 2966...

<sup>297</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...

<sup>298</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...

<sup>299</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...

<sup>300</sup> Omotoyinbo, A110 years, at his residence 1/42 Ogo, Irun Akoko, Ondo State on December 13, 2018.

According to an account by Olukoju, poisoning or fumigation of communities' borders was another prominent measure used by the Akoko to stem down the activities of their aggressors.<sup>301</sup> Like mines, the pots containing the poisons made of certain concoctions could be buried at strategic places at the borders leading into the towns. In some instances, the poison would be poured or spread at the borders of the communities.<sup>302</sup> There is a claim that while the poisons could not harm the indigenes, they were however, very dangerous for an outsider to cross it as the consequence would be instant death.<sup>303</sup> Despite the fact that this claim may not stand any scientific test, it was and is still very much believed by the people.

Perhaps, a most fascinating thing was the engagement of spiritual exercises as measures against the security challenges of the period. It is important to state that the Akoko, like other Yoruba people, spiritually conceptualised insecurity. For instance, it was widely believed among the people that the security challenges they faced were either a punishment for the sins that were committed by their ancestors or their own failure to properly worship and appease the ancestral gods.<sup>304</sup> In all, it was believed that the angry gods had unleashed the security challenges on the people.

Consequently, consultation/appeasement and spiritual fortification of the people became some of the most popular measures taken against insecurity. In Akungba, for instance, the ancestral god, *Oroke*, was usually appeased, while Oba consulted and appeased *Kemen*. *Apara* in Supare, *Oloyi* in Irun, *Gidige* or *Gudugbe* in Ikare, *Ogbagi* and *Arigidi* and *Itonba* in Ifira were the ancestral gods the people ran to for help.<sup>305</sup> Meanwhile, fortification, *ironilagbara*, was believed by the people to give them protection or keeping them safe from danger. This usually involved a series of processes such as rituals and self-denial such as seclusion, avoidance of certain food, abstinence from sex and so on. In most cases, the processes ended with the wearing of charms.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> Olukoju, A. 1989... p...

<sup>302</sup> Olukoju, A. 1989... p...

<sup>303</sup> Yemi, A. 76 years, *Ashipa* of Isualand, at the *Olisua* palace, Isua Akoko, Ondo State on August 10, 2015; Ehindero, C., 115 years...

<sup>304</sup> Ogboye, O.J. 84 years, at St Peters Anglican Church, Oba-Akoko, Ondo State on February 20, 2018.

<sup>305</sup> Ogboye, O.J. 84 years, at St Peters Anglican Church...

<sup>306</sup> Owolabi, Aina, High Chief *Bobatolu* of Irun, c. 120 years, at his residence, 10 Okeubo, Irun- Akoko, Ondo State on October 11, 2018.

While the above seems not to be more than a mere mythical belief, which has no place in history, it is, however, important to also mention that the description gives one insight into how opinions concerning insecurity were formed by the people. For instance, while Ajayi and Akintoye claims that ‘no exhaustive study has been made of the place of charms in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Yoruba warfare’, they however, admitted that there are enough proofs to conclude that the Yoruba had much confidence in their ‘charms and employed them not only for personal protection but also for offence both in attacking the persons and morale of the enemy’. A major problem with mythical beliefs of this nature, however, is that the efficacy of such charms and rituals always evade logical or scientific evaluation and conclusion. Nonetheless, their descriptions are not totally useless as they can help to capture the view of the people on security in the past. Ultimately, the inability of the Akoko to form a united and formidable force against common attackers or bring all these efforts together in a coordinated manner to repel their external invaders was a major weakness that made them suffer for long in the hands of the Ekiti, Ibadan and Nupe forces.

#### **4.5 Socio-Political Implications of the External Security Challenges of Akokoland in the Nineteenth Century**

As a follow-up to the above section, this section investigates the impact of the external security challenges on the pre-existing socio-political structure of the area. The chapter is critical to the work not only because it gives rooms for the assessment of the socio-political consequences of the security problems of Akokoland in the century, but also because it makes one to appreciate such consequences as important backgrounds to the post-nineteenth century political history of the people.

A major socio-political impact of the external security threats which confronted Akokoland in the nineteenth century was population displacement. As earlier noted, Ekiti, Ibadan and Nupe were the three significant areas where external security threats came from. The fact that Akokoland fell, especially, within the socio-economic interests of the invaders explained why they all incessantly pillaged the area. Consequently, a lot of Akoko inhabitants were taken captive during the period. Thus, while a good number of these captives were

exchanged for more European weapons, some engaged on the farms of their lords, others, especially the brave ones, were enlisted in the armies of their masters.<sup>307</sup>

Although there is no demographic record to showcase the exact figure and age bracket of the captives, it can, however, be assumed that the youth, *odo ilu*, would have been the most affected component of the population. It should be recalled that the youths, between twenty and fifty years old, were the active working force of the population saddled with the most significant communal responsibilities such as the construction of community buildings, clearing of roads and streams and more importantly the maintenance of security.<sup>308</sup> It was not impossible, therefore, that the raiders would have preferred them for the obvious reasons. Moreover, studies on adoptions and slavery before and during the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, generally in the area now known as Nigeria and elsewhere in the world, have demonstrated that both the merchants and slave buyers/owners preferred their slaves young and vibrant.<sup>309</sup> In his assessment of the development in the Niger-Delta during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Ryder observed, for instance, that, those abducted and later sold into slavery were extracted from the active set of population as a slave merchant would never settle for ‘a child below the age of puberty nor an adult who was old or showed any physical defect.’<sup>310</sup> It is, therefore, strongly doubted if the experience in Akokoland would have been entirely different from what was witnessed elsewhere. Since profit was the most important thing, it was only reasonable for the slave traders and owners that would engage them (slaves) on their farms to settle for the active age group. Aside the facts that they were the most productive piece of the population, expenses on them were not usually as high as the ones on the dependant population.

On another note, it is known that a good number of Akoko people voluntarily fled the area as security situation got worse. In other words, these were also the active members of the

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<sup>307</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...; Ayodele, C.O. 1978. Akoko in the Nupe and Yoruba Wars. A B.A. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, p. 6; Okajare, S.T. 2012... p.201.

<sup>308</sup> N.A.I. CSO 5267, H. Cook’s Proposed Akoko Federation...; Akomolafe, C.O. 1976. Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935. M.Phil. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ife, Ile-Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), pp. 42-44. For details on age grade system in Yorubaland, see Fadipe, N. A. 1970. *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, Ibadan, Ibadan University Press.

<sup>309</sup> Ryder A.F.C. 1980. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Eds. Ikime Obaro, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Heinemann Educational Books (Nig) Plc, p. 244.

<sup>310</sup> Ryder A.F.C. 1980. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Eds. Ikime Obaro, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Heinemann Educational Books (Nig) Plc, p. 244.

population who were lucky to have escaped before being captured.<sup>311</sup> This practice seemed to have been more popular during the Nupe era. As earlier observed, for example, a major feature of the Nupe wars of expansion was their expensive nature. The effect of this was mostly felt on the economy of the empire. And as a way out, it was the tradition of the Nupe to make the conquered people or territories partly responsible for the cost of their administration. This explains the rigidity of the *ajele*, who was saddled with the rigorous collection and onward transmission of taxes to Bida. The movement of the majority of these emigrants have been reported to have been towards the nearby bigger and safer communities in the Ekiti, Owo and Okun regions.<sup>312</sup> The practice of seeking protection in safer community, however, was not peculiar to Akoko people. It should be recollected that when the Fulani pressure on Oyo became overwhelming, the capital was deserted as thousands of the inhabitants fled from the centre of the empire 'to the southern part of Oyo-the Osun and Ibarapa areas-as well as the territories of Ijesa, Ekiti, Ife and Egba'.<sup>313</sup> Similarly, when Efon was pillaged by the Ijesa during the Efon-Ijesa War of 1862, many people fled from Efon to Ogotun, a more secured town.<sup>314</sup> Again, when Ijebu-Remo towns such as Epe, IKosi, Ofin and Makun, were destroyed by the Egba in the 1850s and 1860s, there was a mass migration of the Remo to Ikorodu and later on in the 1870, when there was no security improvement, the people had to further migrate and in the process formed Sagamu.<sup>315</sup> But in all of these cases, many of the so called voluntary migrants never returned, while the original settlements; take Oyo for example, never had the opportunity to regain their former socio-political status and relevance.

By and large, what is important is that the external security challenges of the century impressed depopulation on Akokoland, therefore leading to loss of substantial number of active people who should have settled down and contributed meaningful to the development of the area. And according to political demography experts, there is a close relationship

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<sup>311</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1976. Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935. M.Phil. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ife, Ile-Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), p. 35.

<sup>312</sup> Afele Ologunwa Babade, c. 90 years. He was interviewed at his residence, 12 Owalusin, Iwaro Oka, Ondo State on November 3, 2018; Gabriel Asesan Ajongbolo, 73 years. He was interviewed at his residence, 21 Irepodun Street, Iwaro Oka on September 23, 2018.

<sup>313</sup> Ajayi, J.F.A and Akintoye, S.A. 1980. Yorubaland in the Nineteenth Century. Ed. Ikime Obaro, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*...p. 283.

<sup>314</sup> Adeoti, E.O. and Adeyeri, J.O. 2013. War and Peace in Eastern Yorubaland: Efon Alaaye And Her Neighbours (1815-1893). *Global Journal of Political Science and Administration*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 3-5.

<sup>315</sup> Ajayi, J.F.A and Akintoye, S.A. 1980. Yorubaland in the Nineteenth Century. Ed. Ikime Obaro, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*...p. 286.

between population and political development of human societies. Thus, as demography determines or influences governance-government policies, so also governance influences demography-age distribution, migration, urbanisation, ethnicity, and so on. The end product of this interaction over a long period of time is usually a naturally developed socio-political and economic order for the advancement of the society.<sup>316</sup> Thus, it can be said that Akokoland was largely denied the opportunity to experience such natural process of development in the century. Consequently, many Akoko communities did not only remain small but its indigenous political structure was almost stagnant throughout the century. It is a fact, for example, that the small size of the communities generally was one of the reasons why the area did not capture the attention of the earliest Yorubaland historians. As such, the nineteenth century history of the Akokoland was always treated as part of the general experiences of larger neighbouring Yoruba groups such as Owo, Okun, Ekiti and Ijesha. Furthermore, like other societies where this pattern of population extraction had taken place, it can be contested that Akokoland would have been left with population imbalance, where the defenceless dependants grossly outnumbered the active force unit. Probably, this was one of the main reasons why the region remained vulnerable to external security threats throughout the century.

Another major impact of the security challenges of the nineteenth century on Akokoland is the establishment of colonialism and indirect rule system prior to the widely acclaimed British colonial experiment that started only at the close of the nineteenth century. In other words, the experience of colonialism in Akokoland predated the British incursion. It is to be remembered that while Ekiti and Ibadan invaders did not impose any form of political suzerainty over their Akoko victims, the Nupe, however, successfully did that. In fact, with the exception of Oka as noted in the previous chapter, the Nupe episode in Akoko history was revolutionary as it ended the century-long acclaimed non-external political subjugation status of Akokoland.

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<sup>316</sup> Political demography is a scientific study of interconnectivities between population and politics. For more details, see Goldstone, J.A., Kaufmann, E. P. and Toft, M.D. 2012. *Political Demography: How Population Changes Are Reshaping International Security and National Politics*, Oxford University Press, Paradigm Publishers; Weiner, M. and Teitelbaum, S. 2001. *Political Demography: Demographic Engineering*. New York, Berghahn; Dixon, M. and Margo, J. 2006. *Population Politics*. London, The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR).

Following the defeats of Akoko towns, the Nupe introduced the *Ajele* or *Ogba* system as the means of administration of its Akoko colonies. Just like the British, the Nupe generally did not interfere with the local administration of the people; rather, they only subdued the indigenous structure under their royal representatives called the *ajele*.<sup>317</sup> It must be stressed that the Nupe's adoption of such an administrative method was more of economic consideration. Aside other benefits, the system was cost effective as it did not give room for the establishment of a large Nupe government, which would have required substantial financial service, in the colonies. And as it will be seen later, for instance, the major responsibility of the royal agents, *ajele*, was the collection of tributes and taxes and forwarding such to Nupe's headquarters. An *ajele* was, therefore, not allowed to operate an elaborate and expensive royal court at the expense of the empire's resources.

As the representative of the *Etsu* in a conquered territory, an *ajele*, according to Mason, was usually someone that was able to key into the interests of Bida.<sup>318</sup> Consequently, he had the mandate of ensuring the prompt payment of tributes and taxes by the inhabitants of the community under his jurisdiction. He was also responsible for the onward transfer of such tributes and taxes to the capital. In most cases, the *ajele* were Nupe or 'Hausa clients (*barazhi*) of one or other of the important titleholders of Bida, returned slaves of proven loyalty to their foreign masters, or even local notables'.<sup>319</sup> The *ajele*, who usually resided in big cities, mainly in Iyagba district, only visited his administered Akoko territories periodically just to perform his duties.<sup>320</sup> And while on this mission, he protected himself with a handy of armed men, who were also expected to quash any form of disturbance that could hinder the smooth running of his business. In appreciation for his services, he would receive gift items from the capital. The rewards were usually in horses, turbans, horsetails and trumpets.<sup>321</sup> Interestingly, upon his death, his family were, however, expected to return

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<sup>317</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...; Orojo, J.O. 2008. A Short History of Arigidi-Akoko. Lagos, Royet and Day Publications Ltd, pp. 18-22; Adedoyin, S., 70+, the *Owa-Ale* of Ikare- Akoko, *Owa-Ale's* Palace, Ikare-Akoko, July 8, 2014.

<sup>318</sup> Mason, M. 1970... p. 205.

<sup>319</sup> Mason, M. 1970... ; Obayemi, A. 1978...pp. 75-76.

<sup>320</sup> Nadal, S.F. 1965. *The Black Byzantium: The Kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria*, London, Oxford University Press, p. 115, Mason, M. 1969. Population Density and Slave-Raiding: The Case of the Middle-Belt of Nigeria. *Journal of African History*, Vol. 10, No. 4.

<sup>321</sup> Olukoju, A. 2003. The Siege of Oka, c.a. 1878-84. Eds Falola T. And Law R., *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-colonial Nigeria: Essay in Honour of Robert Smith*, African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison, p.104.

half of his movable property to Bida.<sup>322</sup> Again, this proves that economic calculations took precedence over other factors in the adoption of the *ajele* system by the Nupe. This, therefore, negate the claim that religious interest was the only reason for the spread of the *jihad*. It is obvious that all efforts were geared towards the maximisation of economic gains with little or no trace of concrete state or official effort to spread Islam, the purported reason for the invasions.

While it would seem that the *ajele* were super-powerful, they nonetheless sought and valued the cooperation of the indigenous chiefs in order to make their mission easily practicable. From the available evidence, for instance, it seems that Akoko chiefs were not entirely dispensable as far as the collection of tributes was concerned. They made the jobs of the *ajele* easier not only when they could convince their people to pay, but also when they were able to gather the tributes even before the arrival of the Nupe officials. As a motivation, a cooperating chief, therefore, was usually rewarded with gift items. While an *ajele* had no power to officially reward a loyal chief, he could recommend him for a reward from Bida. He could as well recommend a difficult chief for punishment.<sup>323</sup> It can only be imagined how this process of reward and punishment would have compelled or make many chiefs to willingly betray the oaths taken and pledges made to protect their subjects.

In collecting the tributes and taxes, an *ajele* was to use his discretion as all that mattered was the prompt inflow of such resources from the territories to the headquarters. The fact that the rewards from Bida depended on the performance of the *ajele*, soon created a situation whereby *ajele* in different locations began to compete in order to outsmart one another. And as the *ajele* subsequently became obsessed with the desperation to over perform one another in order to impress Bida; they had no choice but to intensify on the use of excessive force as the best means of collecting the levies from the locals. This approach, as observed in the previous chapter, involved taking people captive, burning of houses and so on. These were strategic calculations meant to instil fears into the locals such that the dues would be easily collected. For instance, it was believed that destroying the economic lifeline and shelter of the people would make them more defenceless and vulnerable. Unfortunately, a good number of Akoko communities did not survive such tactics. For instance, Afa, the popularly adjudged largest Akoko community in its heyday, was reduced to a very

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<sup>322</sup>Mason, M. 1970... p. 205.

<sup>323</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...



insignificant hamlet.<sup>324</sup> Also, Oge, Aje and Ido were not spared. It was the remnants of these communities that later came together to form Okeagbe in 1924. Epinmi, Oyin, Eriti, Igasi, Efifa and Eshuku also suffered similar fate as they nearly went into extinction.<sup>325</sup>

Thus, at the later part of the system, some desperate *ajele* even began to interfere in the domestic affairs of the people to the level that they sometimes sanctioned indigenous rulers, who were not cooperating or performing to their expectations. Nonetheless, there were also rewards for local leaders, who were considered to be loyal. In reaction to this, the people began to show signs of resistance. It should, however, be noted that such resistance was only passive. The fear of reprisal attacks by the Nupe's army, which was superior in terms of weapons and number of men, however, usually cowed the people.<sup>326</sup> It must, however, be pointed out that not all Akoko communities had devastating experiences. For instance, Ikare, which had before this time emerged as an important commercial centre, became more popular as a collation centre of the Nupe. Similarly, Arigidi emerged as another collection centre and as result witnessed an influx of Nupe people.<sup>327</sup> In fact, in Arigidi, the Nupe successfully created a section for themselves which up till today is referred to as *Isale Tapa* (Nupe's abode). And as it would be seen later, the political history of Arigidi as from the point became strongly attached to the Nupe.

Furthermore, the imposition of the *ajele* as a higher authority on the existing political structure seriously retarded the natural growth and transformation of the original political system. As such, Akokoland was denied the chances of having its political structure transformed by the activities of the domestic change agents, such as mass rebellion, coup, succession disputes and so on. It should be remembered, for instance, that succession disputes played significant roles as internal factors or agents of political transformation, especially in the pre-nineteenth century period. Isua tradition mentioned earlier on, for example, shows how the succession dispute between Agberuma and Ewedo resulted in migration of the former and foundation of Isua as a political unit. In many cases, as already observed, they had led to the migration of losers in the succession disputes and in the process many communities had been established. Nupe intervention, however, did not give room for such internal agents to act in the century.

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<sup>324</sup> Olukoju, A. 1989... p. 107.

<sup>325</sup> Ogundana, J.B. 2003. Ikare. Ed. Oguntomisin, G.O. *Yoruba...* pp. 60-76.

<sup>326</sup> See Akomolafe, C.O. 1989...pp. 216-217.

<sup>327</sup> Orojo, J.O. 2008. A Short History of Arigidi-Akoko. Lagos, Royet and Day Publications Ltd, pp. 18-22.

It is significant to recall that the inhabitants of Akokoland in the nineteenth century had earlier on migrated from different directions including Ekiti, Okun, Owo and so on. However, the Nupe intrusion, more than any other factors, had a serious influence on the political identification and classification of Akokoland during the later part of the century and even beyond. When the British came in the late nineteenth century, Akokoland was under the control of Nupe. The political arrangement they met was to later inform their decisions on the political status of Akokoland under the colonial government. In the first instance, since Nupeland was seen by the British as an extension of Northern Nigeria, its territories in north-eastern Yorubaland were hurriedly assumed and treated as such. Consequently, Akoko was administered as part of the Northern Provinces between 1897 and 1918.<sup>328</sup> Secondly, it is to be remembered that Kabba in Iyagba district had been made the headquarters of the Nupe in north-eastern Yorubaland. Accordingly, Kabba was made the headquarters of the Native Administration that was part of the Northern Province of Nigeria. So, in line with the principle of the indirect rule of sustaining the natural leadership or indigenous administration, though under the supremacy of the British, *Obaro*, the king of Kabba, was super-imposed on the Akoko kings. More importantly and also probably because of the heterogeneous sources of origin of Akoko, many people in the contemporary period, including the educated, still view the Akoko more as non-Yoruba.

The earliest Europeans that visited Akokoland in the late nineteenth century had described the people as mountain dwellers.<sup>329</sup> While, it would seem that this pattern of settlement was a product of the people's architectural taste, it was, however, an innovation that emerged due to the numerous security challenges of the century. In other words, the architectural design was a security mechanism for the protection of the people from the recurrent external attacks. Thus, in the face of invasions by the Ekiti, Ibadan and Nupe, a lot of Akoko communities withdrew from their original locations and settled on the hill tops. Usually, the decisions to retreat to the hill tops were taken by the community leaders.<sup>330</sup> While they could largely be referred to as communal decisions, they were however, not binding on the people, as everyone had the choice to relocate, remain behind or even migrate

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<sup>328</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...

<sup>329</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667... This was also corroborated by Ehindero, C., 115 years, the head of Imole Cult of Oyin Akoko. She was interviewed at her residence, A44, Ogosan, Oyin Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>330</sup> Olufemi, K. Lydia, *Iya-Ewe* of Arigidi-Akoko, 72 years. She was interviewed on September 24, 2018 at her residence, 102, Agbaluku, Arigidi-Akoko, Ondo State; Oyolola A.A... 2015. See also; Olukoju, A. 1989... pp. 102-110 and Gleave, M. B. 1963... p. 347.

to other communities that were considered to be safer.<sup>331</sup> This pattern of settlement has been well noted in Arigidi, Epinmi, Ikare, Irun, Isua, Oka and Oyin.

To a considerable extent, the hills served the defence purpose of the people. For example, while the rugged terrains of the hills made it difficult for the enemies to climb and access the locals, the caves inside the hills also provided safe havens. Also, the hills were strategic locations where guerrilla attacks were launched on the aggressors. In the case of Oka earlier mentioned, for instance, even when the Nupe lay siege around the hills, the people were still able to organise surprise attacks against them.<sup>332</sup> In addition, the rubbles on the hills served as important weapons against the assailants. This pattern of clustered hill settlement remained predominantly until the coming of the British. It is said that in Oka, Epinmi and Isua, most people still hesitated to relocate to the bottom of the hills even when they had been assured of maximum security by the British colonial masters.<sup>333</sup> A long time implication of this was that it partly retarded the natural expansion and development of some of these Akoko communities. Thus, even when there were pressing needs to expand, the people refused to move for the fear of being attacked and probably being taken captive or killed by the external invaders. In some cases, a number of courageous leaders, however, yielded to the natural pressure for more space by taking the risk of leading a section of the communities to the lowlands. Through this, some of them succeeded in establishing satellite settlements which later became semi-independent of the mother towns. Some of these communities like, Iwaro Oka, while still recognising the metropolitan towns as their sources, however, evolved their own internal political structures which were completely autonomous from the original settlements.<sup>334</sup>

There is no doubt that the security challenges of the nineteenth century also contributed to the proliferation of weapons in Akokoland. The incessant external attacks on the people had increased their desire to possess weapons as the last means of protecting themselves. It is reported, for instance, that by the second half of the century, every family unit had had a collection of weapons, though in some cases, the collections might not be more than light blade weapons such as knives, swords and cutlasses which a family had gathered

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<sup>331</sup> Oyedele Bamidele, 71 years, Farmer. He was interviewed at his residence, Damiro Villa, Agbaluku Arigidi, Ondo State on November 5, 2018; Adebisi Olusegun, 51 years, Chief and Community Leader, He was interviewed at his residence, Damiro Villa, Agbaluku Arigidi, Ondo State on November 5, 2018.

<sup>332</sup> Olukoju, A. 1989... pp. 102-110.

<sup>333</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 2966...

<sup>334</sup> Olukoju, A. 1989... pp. 107-108.

and kept at special locations in the family compound.<sup>335</sup> Every male adult of the family was, therefore, expected to pick a weapon from the collection and defend the family whenever the occasion called for it.<sup>336</sup>

This, however, is not to create the impression that there was no shoot-up in the circulation of heavy weapons. Olukoju, for example, has claimed that flintlocks were some of the heavy weapons found among the Oka as from the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>337</sup> It is suggested that these weapons could have been procured from Benin through Okeluse in Owo territory and the port of Ajaokuta. The weapons could have also been exchanged for local products such as cotton, slaves, woven cloth and so on.<sup>338</sup> This seems to agree with the earlier claim by Ajayi and Akintoye that a considerable number of firearms were imported from Benin into Akokoland, especially as from the 1850s.<sup>339</sup> It is, however, doubtful if the available quantity of the firearms in Akokoland was abundant enough to have made any significant communal defence impact. And considering the cost of the weapons, it is suggestive that only a few, especially the wealthy indigenous warriors, would have had access to them.

Meanwhile, there was an explosion in the production of the indigenous weapons. Consequently, the local weapon industry, which was largely represented by the blacksmiths, blossomed. Although there were other professionals such as the carvers, who manufactured wooden weapons, such as bows and arrows, it is doubtful, if their impact was as significant as that of the blacksmiths. The Igbede of Erusu, for instance, have been noted for their artistic blacksmithing products, including weapons such as swords, cutlass, and so on.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> Olufemi, K. Lydia, *Iya-Ewe* of Arigidi-Akoko, 72 years. She was interviewed on September 24, 2018 at her residence, 102, Agbaluku, Arigidi-Akoko, Ondo State; Oyedele Bamidele, 71 years, Farmer. He was interviewed at his residence, Damiro Villa, Agbaluku Arigidi, Ondo State on November 5, 2018.

<sup>336</sup> Olufemi, K. Lydia, *Iya-Ewe* of Arigidi-Akoko, 72 years. She was interviewed on September 24, 2018 at her residence, 102, Agbaluku, Arigidi-Akoko, Ondo State; Oyedele Bamidele, 71 years, Farmer. He was interviewed at his residence, Damiro Villa, Agbaluku Arigidi, Ondo State on November 5, 2018.

<sup>337</sup> Olukoju, A. 1989... p. 104.

<sup>338</sup> Ayodele, C.O. 1978. *Akoko in the Nupe and Yoruba Wars*. A B.A. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, pp.

<sup>339</sup> Ajayi, J.F.A and Akintoye, S.A. 1980. *Yorubaland in the Nineteenth Century*. Ed. Ikime Obaro, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*...p. 295.

<sup>340</sup> Olukosi, A. 97 years, High Chief and Community Leader. He was interviewed on August 3, 2018 at his residence in Erusu Akoko, Ondo State; Adeoye, Adesola, 50+, Curator Owo Museum. He was interviewed on October 18, 2018 in his office, Owo Museum, Owo, Ondo State.

Among other weapons, swords gained special prominence in the century. Swords or *oko* in Akokoland bore close resemblance with the general examples observed by Smith. The most commonly used ones were *okoteere*, *okofife*, *agedengbe*, *ada* and *obe*. *Okoteere*, is a long and slim blade. Usually about 2.5 feet long, though it could be longer or otherwise. Made of iron, except the handle that was made of wood, *okoteere*, normally had a single face strongly sharpened to inflict deep cut even at a slight contact with the skin. The tip end was curve and sharp at the same time so that it could cause a shallow wound if pushed into the body. The use of a wooden handle was to ensure that the sword stay firm in the hand and at the same time create a cushion effect on the carrier's palm. To avoid accidental discharge, it was put in a casing, *ako*, made of animal skins. The casing would also have a small skin hook, *iko*, stitched to it towards the opening end. This was used to hang the *oko* on the wall when it was not in use.<sup>341</sup>

Named by its shape, *okofife* had a wider body than *okoteere*, though the wideness was not too much so to ensure it was not too heavy to carry. Usually made with a wooden handle which was connected to the basement also made of iron, the blade protruded from the basement only to curve towards the hedge, giving it a kind of fish-like head shape. Slightly shorter than the tiny sword, its double face design, allowed it to be deeply sharpened. Hence, it was capable of causing more damage in term of cutting. The precaution designs were synonymous to those of the long and tiny swords.<sup>342</sup>

A similar weapon was *agedengbe*. This had a wide but single cutting face. Also made of iron, the blade, which usually curved backwards, gave it a cocoa fruit shape. Like *oko*, *agedengbe* had a great cutting force. Other forms of swords were cutlasses and knives. Since farming was the major occupation of the people and cutlass, *ada*, was a major farm implement, it could be assumed that *ada* was the most common iron weapon in the nineteenth century Akokoland. Of different sizes and shapes, *ada* was generally a long blade usually with one cutting face and a wooden handle. Like the previously mentioned swords, cutlass

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<sup>341</sup> Ogunjemito, L., 99 years, Blacksmith and Community Leader. He was interviewed on July 28, 2018 at his residence, 15 Ilale Quarter, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State; Ogunlana, O., 86 years, Blacksmith and Farmer. He was interviewed on September 6, 2017 at his residence along Ikaram Road, Erusu Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>342</sup> Odofin, K., 88 years, Hunter and Herbalist. He was interviewed on December 17, 2018 at his residence behind Paulina Guest House, Epinmi Akoko, Ondo State; Ogunmodede, B, 87 years, Blacksmith and Hunter, 23 Ijowa, Irun Akoko, Ondo State.

was mostly effective in inflicting deep cut.<sup>343</sup> Similarly, knives (*usin*) were also engaged as weapons. Knives were common kitchen utensils; however, battle knives were a bit different from the kitchen ones as the former used to be broader and sharper. Generally, *usin* was carried as an additional weapon attached to the war garment (*asoogun*) of a warrior. Having different sizes and shapes, it could also iron or wooden handle.<sup>344</sup>

Other iron weapons included axe, spear and so on. Axe, popularly known as *edun*, had two different forms, which were short (*edun kekere*) and long, (*edun lila*). Made of pressed thick and short iron, a hole was carved in the centre towards the back-edge of the iron, while the front edge was further pressed to give it a sharing force. In the hole was a thick iron rod (*edun onirin*) or wooden rod (*edunonigi*) welded to serve as handle. The usual length of *edunkekere* was about 1 and ½ feet, while *edunlila* could be 2 feet long. Usually, an *edun* was heavier than the swords, which made it even more appropriated for causing deep and shallow cuts.<sup>345</sup>

There were other great weapons made of wood and stones. Wooden weapons, for example, were mainly clubs including *kondo* and *kumo*. Although *Kondo* and *kumo* looked alike, they could easily be differentiated. For instance, *kondo* was usually a rod with a rounded and smoothed body, reminding one of the popular police batons (*kondoolopa*).<sup>346</sup> *Kunmo*, though also a wooden rod, trimmed to form round shape and a broad head, was usually longer than the *kondo*.<sup>347</sup> Aside these, naturally rounded and smoothed

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<sup>343</sup> Oguntimehin Paul, 76 years, Retired Secondary School Principal and High Chief *Arua* (Second-in-Command to the king (Owa)). He was interviewed on April 4, 2017 at his residence, C36, Oke-Igbagbo Street, Ogbagi Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>344</sup> Onibalusi, A., 87 years, Farmer and High Chief Olupane (Third in rank to the King (Owa)). He was interviewed on April 4, 2017 at his residence, GM/44, Ayetoro Street, Ogbagi Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>345</sup> Ojo Adelakun, 88 years, Blacksmith and Hunter. He was interviewed on September 6, 2017 at his residence along Ikaram Road, Erusu Akoko, Ondo State; Omosola, A.B., 76 years, Community Leader and also Local Historian. He was interviewed on August 18, 2017 at his residence Oka Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>346</sup> Ojo Adelakun, 88 years, Blacksmith and Hunter. He was interviewed on September 6, 2017 at his residence along Ikaram Road, Erusu Akoko, Ondo State; Omosola, A.B., 76 years, Community Leader and also Local Historian. He was interviewed on August 18, 2017 at his residence Oka Akoko, Ondo State; Oloba, D.F., 67 years, Retired Teacher. She was interviewed at her residence on November 3, 2018 at her residence, MB 17, Ita Quarter, Arigidi Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>347</sup> Oloba, D.F., 67 years, Retired Teacher. She was interviewed at her residence on November 3, 2018 at her residence, MB 17, Ita Quarter, Arigidi Akoko, Ondo State; Olorunsola, F., 57 years, Retired Teacher and Community Leader (*Eli of Eegun*). He was interviewed on April 22, 2017 at his residence, 16 Araromi, Ogbagi Akoko, Ondo State.

stones (*okuta*) and rock rubbles (*apata*) of various sizes also became important weapons.<sup>348</sup> Looking at the different forms of swords, one cannot but agree with Smith's assumption that their manufacture must have in relations to battles over a long period of time.<sup>349</sup>

Charms were also employed both as weapons for attacks and defence. There are accounts, for instance, of the use of deadly charms like *onide* or *onde*, *oruka*, and so on. *Onide* was a tiny rope that was usually made of animal skins or a piece of cloth that would be trimmed and woven to form a thick rope.<sup>350</sup> After being exposed to a series of spiritual processes and incantations, it was believed to possess the power of death. It was believed to have the potency of making one drop dead instantly after being wiped with it. This weapon was usually worn around the waist.<sup>351</sup> *Oruka* (ring), mainly manufactured by the goldsmiths or blacksmiths, was an important part of fashion and indication of wealth status among the Akoko. As such, they were of different sizes, shapes and colours. Their prices were usually determined by the raw materials used in producing them, and in most cases these included copper and gold.<sup>352</sup> However, there were specially designed *oruka*, which served as weapons. After being subjected to familiar spiritual exercises, the rings were worn by the warriors on their fingers and in most cases would only perform as weapons when the bearers were angry and hit their challenger with them. But *oruka* that were considered very deadly were usually put in the pockets only to be brought out when to be used.<sup>353</sup>

Other popular charms were *ayeta* (bullet resistance), *okigbe* (sharp objects resistance) and *ofe* or *egbe* (disappearing charm).<sup>354</sup> But as argued earlier, even when the potency of these charms still cannot be scientifically established. It was, however, obvious that the

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<sup>348</sup> Olukoju, A. 2003. The Siege of Oka, c.a. 1878-84. Eds Falola T. And Law R., *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-colonial Nigeria: Essay in Honour of Robert Smith*, African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison, p.105. This was also corroborated by Ogunoye, O.S., *The Owalusin of Iwaro-Oka, Oka-Akoko*. He was interviewed on August 28, 2017 at his palace, Iwaro-Oka, Oka Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>349</sup> Smith, R. 1967... pp. 93.

<sup>350</sup> Adewunmi, O.S., Age not known, *Ogotunlgase* (Chief Priest) of Afa in Oke-Agbe. He was interviewed on October 2, 2017 at his residence at Afa, Oke-Agbe Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>351</sup> Yemi, A.A., 76 years, *Ashipa* of Isualand. He was interviewed on August, 10, 2015 at *Olisua* Palace, Isua-Akoko, Ondo State; Adewunmi, O.S., Age not known, *Ogotunlgase* (Chief Priest) of Afa in Oke-Agbe. He was interviewed on October 2, 2017 at his residence at Afa, Oke-Agbe Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>352</sup> Origbemisuyi, A., 70+, Spiritualist, He was interviewed on August 23, 2014 at his residence at Ibaka Qtr Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State; Yemi, A.A., 76 years, *Ashipa* of Isualand. He was interviewed on August, 10, 2015 at *Olisua* Palace, Isua-Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>353</sup> Origbemisuyi, A., 70+, Spiritualist, He was interviewed on August 23, 2014 at his residence at Ibaka Qtr Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State; Yemi, A.A., 76 years, *Ashipa* of Isualand. He was interviewed on August, 10, 2015 at *Olisua* Palace, Isua-Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>354</sup> Origbemisuyi, A...; Yemi, A.A...

people had strong belief in them and whatever they represented. Poison (*majele*) was another weapon, which became prominent among the nineteenth century Akoko people. Among the Oka, for instance, there were two types of poison, the *apo* and *ogudu*, which were employed just like mines are laid in the modern warfare.<sup>355</sup> The *ogudu*, a more potent poison, usually worked with some of the earlier mentioned sharp objects, especially arrow and spears. Once the poison was prepared through a lengthy supernatural process that could last for seven days, it would be put in a big container to soak the sharp weapons. On coming in contact with blood, the victim would be thrown into the air and die instantly on falling on the ground.<sup>356</sup> Poisons could also be poured in the rivers or streams to cause large casualties in the camp of the enemies when they unknowingly drank from them.<sup>357</sup> In all while it would appear from the foregoing that the proliferation of weapons would be more of economic significance, especially as the manufacturers would have made fortunes from selling them, it was also a political signal of the intensity of insecurity in the land during the century and how the people responded it.

In Chapter Three, it was established that one of the reasons why internal communal wars among Akoko people reduced in the nineteenth century was the mutual acknowledgement and respect for the independence and sovereignty of one another, irrespective of size and military strength. Although the bigger communities were sometimes accorded reverence, this, nevertheless, did not make the smaller states inferior to their bigger counterparts. However, the security challenges of the nineteenth century threatened the mutual respect among Akoko states. It would be remembered that prior to the Nupe invasion of Akokoland, Ikare had emerged as important commercial centre in Akokoland. The Osele Market had become a major meeting point for people from different pre-colonial Nigerian societies such as Bida, Owo, Ekiti and Benin.<sup>358</sup> There is no doubt that Ikare enjoyed commercial privileges, which, however, did not transform to any socio-political superiority over its Akoko neighbours. But with the emergence of Ikare as a major Nupe's collection

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<sup>355</sup> Olukoju, A. 2003. The Siege of Oka, c.a. 1878-84. Eds Falola T. And Law R., *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-colonial Nigeria: Essay in Honour of Robert Smith*, African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison, pp. 105-106.

<sup>356</sup> Olukoju, A. 2003... pp. 105-106.

<sup>357</sup> For more details on weapons in pre-colonial warfare, see Oguntomisin, G.O. 2017. *Studies in Pre-colonial Yoruba Warfare and Peace-making*, Ibadan, John Archers and Smith, R. 1967... pp. 87-106.

<sup>358</sup> Ogungbemi, T.M. 2011. The Growth of Market in Ikare Akoko: A Case Study of *Osele Market* (1840-Present), A BA Dissertation, Department of History and International Studies, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria', p. 36; Akomolafe, C.O. 1979... pp. 67.



point in Akokoland, it began to enjoy an unusual socio-political importance, especially as it served as their headquarters in the area. Gradually, the pride that followed this began to alter the old structure of mutual respect as the leaders and people of Ikare began to see themselves as socio-politically superior to others. For instance, the Ikare often referred to other Akoko towns as *oko*, meaning 'farm' and their town as *ule*, meaning 'home'. In other words, Ikare was assumed to be the political capital of Akokoland, while other communities were its suburbs and subordinates. Similarly, its political leaders began to imagine their contemporaries as inferior to them.

The bitterness created by Ikare's arrogance between it and its neighbours lasted throughout the century and even beyond. It is said, for instance, that in order to spite Ikare, some communities such as Akungba, Supare and Oba were reluctant in patronising the Ikare Native Court, even when the colonial authority had directed them to, following the established of the District Head System and the Ikare District in 1914. It is further said that when *Alale Omobobokun Omosowon* (king of Akungba) visited *Olukare Ajagunna* to have a conversation with him on the above issues, the latter had demanded that the former should prostrate for him as a mark of the former's acknowledgement of the latter's superiority. Angrily, Omosowon commanded the pillars of the *Olukare's* palace to prostrate instead and instantaneously, the building began to submerge. However, after several pleas, Omosowon ordered the pillars to return to their original state.<sup>359</sup>

While Ikare's arrogance emanated from being an important collection centre under Nupe imperialism, the successful resistance of Nupe by the Oka was to also play out significantly on the intra-Akoko communal relations. After it had successfully repelled the Nupe that had previously cowed many Akoko states, Oka was highly admired and envied at the same time by its contemporaries.<sup>360</sup> Consequently, the pride of being the only Akoko community that did not tremble under the Nupe resulted in Oka's feeling of being politically and militarily superior to others. Thereafter, Oka believed and openly claimed to be the *uba*, meaning 'father' of other Akoko towns and as such it deserved to occupy the most important political position among Akoko states. Like Ikare, this attitude was carried on through to the colonial era as Oka always opposed collective decisions taken in the interest of all, provided

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<sup>359</sup>Orisa, R. 1961. *Itan Isedale ti Akungba-Akoko: Akun Ma Wo No-Ere Ro* (Apa Kini), Lagos, Olisa Printing Works, p. 20.

<sup>360</sup> Olukoju, A. 2003. The Siege of Oka, c.a. 1878-84. Eds Falola T. And Law R., *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-colonial Nigeria: Essay in Honour of Robert Smith*, African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison, pp. 107-108.

it (Oka) was not allowed to take the leadership position in such processes. For example, between 1919 and 1948, Oka's failure to enjoy the support of its contemporaries in securing the headquarters and permanent presidency of the proposed pan-Akoko Native Administration, made it to consistently work against the successful establishment of the system.<sup>361</sup> Consequently, the plan was never successful.

Another socio-political impact of external security challenges of the century was the emergence of local warlords as principal influences in the indigenous politics of many Akoko communities. As mentioned earlier, the fact that there were no organised or standby armies until the nineteenth century did not make the position of *balogun* (war chiefs) popular in Akokoland until the century. Even in places like Afa and Oka, where there is evidence of the *balogun* in the early part of the nineteenth century, such war chiefs were answerable to the higher traditional authorities largely represented by the *oba*, who had the right and power to appoint them in the first place. Thus, the *balogun* did not only take instructions from these superior authorities; they were also loyal and subservient to them.<sup>362</sup>

But following the incessant external attacks and wars of the century, there emerged a great number of local warlords. Thus, a difference can be drawn between the military chiefs and the warlords. While the military chiefs were appointed by the traditional authorities to protect their communities, the warlords generally got recognition through their bravery and victory. On several occasions, the warlords were men, who had risen to fame by courageously breaking the existing social barriers. As stated earlier also, most warlords in Akokoland, like elsewhere in Yorubaland, started their careers as brigands, who were believed to have no value to add to the society. Having served actively for a long period of time and obtained necessary experience under prominent Ekiti or Ibadan warlords such as Aduloju and Ayorinde, they started out on their own.<sup>363</sup> It is also not impossible that some of the Akoko warlords could have been parts of the captives caught when Ekiti and Ibadan warriors invaded Akokoland. Probably, they were enlisted in their masters' armies and were later able to buy their freedom or run away from their masters. It cannot be entirely impossible also that some of them would have got the experience through their voluntary

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<sup>361</sup> N.A.I. Annual Report: Owo Division, Ondo Province, 'Part II: Native Administrative Affairs: Akoko Area', January 31, 1932.

<sup>362</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1976. Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935. M.Phil. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ife, Ile-Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), p. 45.

<sup>363</sup> C.M.S., CA2/049, *Hinderer to Venn*, 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1861; C.4957, 'Report of the Special Commission of Lagos Government to the Interior in 1886': Evans to Stanhope, 10<sup>th</sup> February, 1887

membership of the aforementioned masters' military bands. Irrespective of the nature of their sojourn to fame, the most important thing was that the warlords were technically not duty bound to take instructions from the constituted authorities, who did not make their success.

Popular among the nineteenth century Akoko warlords were, for instance, Eleji, of the Iroho section of Okia chiefdom in Oka.<sup>364</sup> Others included *Balogun* of Ikese and Dawodu also of Iroho. The three have been said to have fought the Nupe invaders who besieged Oka between 1878 and 1884. They again fought against the Nupe in the Ogidi War. Eleji, who was outstanding, was reported to have served in the Ayorinde's army. It is claimed that he had vast knowledge of the terrains of many areas in Yorubaland through his involvement in wars.<sup>365</sup> Also, there was Saba of Aje and Ojogbooru of Ido. From Oge were Fagbounbe, Adetiba, Arasanyin, Olukoju, Adewanikin and Adanikin. From Afa were Bakare, Adara, Agun, Uwan Aso, Magaji Osunla, Aturu, and Omole. There was also Odu of Ogbagi.<sup>366</sup> These men, at various times, participated in wars to liberate their communities from the yoke of external invaders.

While it would seem that the warlords had great contributions in the area of external security, the weight of their power, wealth and influence were more felt in the local politics and administration of their communities. For example, a typical warlord in Akokoland can be described as owning a large collection of 'slaves, expansive farmland, large compounds, many wives and children, and they lived in princely lifestyle'.<sup>367</sup> Subsequently, they became major determinant factors in local politics and administration of their communities. The fact that they had no obligation to the recognised political authorities empowered them to act on their own free will. As security challenges amplified, the warlords gained more relevance in internal politics as the people now respected them more and looked up to them for protection. And at some points, warlords even amassed serious power to themselves to the extent that the traditional authorities began to imagine them as serious threats to their powers.

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<sup>364</sup> Olukoju, A. 2003. The Siege of Oka, c.a. 1878-84. Eds. Falola T. And Law R., *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-colonial Nigeria: Essay in Honour of Robert Smith*, African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison, p. 103.

<sup>365</sup> Okajare, S.T. 2012... p. 207; Olukoju, A. 2003. The Siege of Oka, c.a. 1878-84. Eds Falola T. And Law R., *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-colonial Nigeria: Essay in Honour of Robert Smith*, African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison, p. 103.

<sup>366</sup> Ogundana, J.B. 2003. Ikare. Ed. Oguntomisin, G.O. *Yoruba Towns and Cities...* pp. 63-67.

<sup>367</sup> Okajare, S.T. 2012... p. 207.

As a way of dealing with the situation, the local leaders started to lobby their (warlords) supports for peaceful and successful administration of their communities.<sup>368</sup> In fact, an attempt to challenge or not properly consult the warlords before the implementation of policies could spell doom for the traditional authorities. Even in some cases, consultation did not always pacify defiant warlords from undermining the constituted authorities by interfacing with the administration of their communities. For example, the warlords, sometimes encouraged by their achievement and military strength, deliberately alter traditional practices and in most instances without consequences. *Balogun* Bakare was reported to have been so powerful and influential that he would sometimes fix meetings with community chiefs, when they were supposed to be meeting with the community head.<sup>369</sup> More crucial was the fact that the activities of the warlords, especially quarrels among them, sometimes resulted to big armed conflicts with serious consequences for their towns. One will recollect the Afa-Irun crisis, which started as a personal quarrel between two warriors from these towns; however, the crisis eventually engulfed the two communities with serious consequences.<sup>370</sup>

It is also crucial to note that the security challenges of the century brought a change to the traditional political responsibilities of Akoko women. Prior to the nineteenth century, Akoko women, aside their regular family social roles; had held important leadership positions in the administration of their communities. For example, women were important and influential religious leaders (*yeye-osa*), women leaders (*iyalode*), market women leaders (*iyaloja*) and so on.<sup>371</sup> However, with incessant security threats, women began to get involved in the military or security schemes of their communities. Subsequently, a good number of female warriors evolved in Akokoland. For instance, there were prominent female warriors such as Iseke, Ipinni and Okonmole Agbede in Oka.<sup>372</sup> In Arigidi, there was Agbata, who was said to have made a name for herself through her efforts at defending the communities against external invasions.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> Okajare, S.T. 2012...

<sup>369</sup> Yakubu, A., *Iyaloja* of Okeagbe, King's Palace, Okeagbe-Akoko, March 09, 2017.

<sup>370</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...

<sup>371</sup> Afele Ologunwa Babade, c. 90 years. He was interviewed at his residence, 12 Owalusin, Iwaro Oka, Ondo State on November 3, 2018.

<sup>372</sup> Afele Ologunwa Babade, c. 90 years. He was interviewed at his residence, 12 Owalusin, Iwaro Oka, Ondo State on November 3, 2018; Gabriel Asesan Ajongbolo, 73 years. He was interviewed on September 23, 2018 at his residence, 21 Irepodun Street, Iwaro Oka, Oka Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>373</sup> Oyedele Bamidele, 71 years and Chief Adebisi Olusegun, 51 years. They were interviewed together on November 8, 2018 at their residence, Damiro Villa, Agbaluku Arigidi Akoko, Ondo State.

Another great socio-political implication of the nineteenth century security challenges of Akokoland was the introduction of new chieftaincy or political titles. Interestingly, many of such titles like Shaba, Leramo, Dawodu, Mogaji and Zaki have not only succeeded till date, they have also formed some of the bases for the contemporary political dialogues and disputes in Akokoland. A good example is the *Zaki* of Arigidi. Presently at Arigidi, there are two opposing claims of thought on the title. According to the first school, the seven towns that formed Arigidi- Ijaja, Agbaluku, Oguo, Osin, Ita Iyu and Imo- were politically autonomous and equal prior to the Nupe incursion.<sup>374</sup> However, after Arigidi had been conquered by the Nupe, one Aromini from the Irara family in Ijaja was appointed the *ajele* by the Nupe, mainly because he could speak Nupe. After his death, his son that also spoke Nupe, Olanipekun succeeded him as the *ajele*. Olanipekun grew in power and influence and started to act as the paramount ruler of Arigidi. The Nupe, who were very pleased with him, hereby, gave him the title *Zaki*, meaning 'lion'. Olanipekun continued to reign, even when the Nupe had been sacked, and worked with the British colonial masters. Subsequently, the *Zaki* supplanted other indigenous titles and fully assumed the position of the paramount ruler of Arigidi.<sup>375</sup>

The second claim has it that, the first paramount ruler of Arigidi was Ajomu, Aromini's father, who took the title of *Gbangadosi*. It is said that Aromini succeeded his father. He (Aromini) was also succeeded by his son, Olanipekun, and the system ever since has been sustained through heredity. However, *Gbangadosi* was replaced with another title, *Zaki*, during the Nupe era.<sup>376</sup> Whatever the case may be, what has been substantiated by the two contradictory claims and is of interest to this research is that the title *Zaki* was a Nupe invention that was successfully imposed on Arigidi. It is glaring from the accounts that *Zaki* was not indigenous to the people; it was an alien title that was forced on the people by the Nupe.

As earlier on mentioned, a major weakness of Akokoland was the fact that they lacked the ability and capability to successfully unite their military resources in their defence against common external aggressors. Although they strongly believed that they were one indivisible entity, it was still very difficult for them to transform such a feeling into a useful

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<sup>374</sup> Orojo, J.O. 2008. *A Short History of Arigidi-Akoko*. Lagos, Royet and Day Publications Ltd.

<sup>375</sup> Orojo, J.O. 2008. *A Short History of Arigidi-Akoko*. Lagos, Royet and Day Publications Ltd, 18-22.

<sup>376</sup> See memorandum on Arigidi submitted by the Irara Family of Ayase, Arigidi to the Arigidi Chieftaincy Enquiry.

defensive strategy. Thus, they suffered throughout the pre-colonial period, both individually and collectively, in the hands of superior and more organised warriors of Benin, Owo, Ekiti, Ibadan and Nupe. However, as the Nupe overbearing forces became unbearable, there began to develop the spirit of rebellion among the Akoko. More importantly, the Akoko began to realise the fact that their ability to resist the Nupe lied in their military alliance. However, the opportunity to demonstrate their willingness to unanimously reject their common oppressor would not come until the outbreak of the Ogidi War (1895-1897).<sup>377</sup> So, for the first time ever, the war was viewed and pursued as a liberation war for all and a collective responsibility that must be accomplished as a team. Interestingly, aside the fact that Akoko communities sent warriors to fight against the Nupe, those left at home, especially women would occasionally send military and relief materials such as food items to the warriors to boost their morale.<sup>378</sup> The alliance seriously paid off as they were able to hold down the Nupe until the intervention of the Royal Niger Company's troops in January 1897, which led to the eventual break of the Nupe's power.<sup>379</sup> It can be said, therefore, that in the light of security challenges posed by Nupe, Akoko communities were compelled to dump their individualistic security approach for collection and more efficient defence strategy.

Finally, insecurity in Akokoland can be argued to have prepared the proper opportunities for the occupation and colonisation of Akokoland by the British towards the close of the nineteenth century. As explained earlier, the Europeans began to settle in Akokoland at the peak of the Nupe's dominion in the later part of the century. Overwhelmed by the Ogidi War, the Akoko and their allies were more than grateful for the intervention of the Royal Niger Company's forces in their support. However, as it turned out later, the British were not really interested in the peace of the area for the development of the locals, but for the perfection of their own colonial ambition. Thus, while pretending to be restoring peace, the British began to conclude the colonial plan of Akokoland. When the people later realised this, they were too weak to raise any form of military resistance. Even if they had not been exhausted by the previous security challenges, it is highly doubtful if their military strength would have matched up with the British. So, starting from the company rule in 1897, the British finally assumed effective control of Akokoland on January 1, 1900, though after

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<sup>377</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1970...; Mason, M. 1970... pp. 203.

<sup>378</sup> Ehindero, C...

<sup>379</sup> N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...

the Charter granted the Royal Niger Company had been successfully revoked in December 1899.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

The earlier chapters have analysed the nature and dynamism of internal security challenges: that is those arising within the communities and among the towns within the geographical space of Akokoland; and external security challenges, namely those springing from forces outside Akokoland in the nineteenth century. Also discussed are the manners in which the security challenges transformed the pre-existing socio-political structure of Akokoland in the nineteenth century. In all, the study has been able to showcase how security challenges marked a watershed in the socio-political development of Akokoland during the period under review.

As we have seen, despite the fluid sources of migration, it has been demonstrated that Akoko people were mainly Yoruba, who had migrated from neighbouring Yoruba settlements. Although many of these so-called core Yoruba Akoko have claimed that their migration was directly from Ile-Ife, available records, however, suggested that their migration to Akokoland would probably have been from larger neighbouring Yoruba communities such as Owo, Ekiti and Okun.<sup>380</sup> Interestingly, even those without Yoruba background have also continued to justify their Yoruba identity through factors such as their geographical location in Yorubaland, ancestral or blood ties of their original abodes with the Yoruba. It is worthy to note the Isua case, where the people have claimed to be Yoruba because of the historical connections of their original home, Benin, to the Ife prince, Oranmiyan. This group of Akoko people have further substantiated their Yoruba identity either based on their socio-political structure which had been patterned on the popular Yoruba political framework, adoption of Yoruba as their general language of communication and the acceptance and practice of some common Yoruba general customs such as the *Ifa* oracle.<sup>381</sup>

Also, we have seen that geography was central to the socio-political development or transformation, especially security experiences of Akokoland. In fact, right from the inception, geography was a major defining factor as far as security was concerned. The

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<sup>380</sup>N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...

<sup>381</sup>Adesunloye, A.A.; Yemi, A.A...., *Ashipa* of Isualand, 76 years, the *Olisua* Palace, August 10, 2015; Adesunloye, A.A.; Yemi, A.A...



vegetation of Akokoland became a mixed blessing to the development of the people. The agricultural prosperity of the region was due largely to its fertile soil and abundant rainfall. Apart from raiding for slaves, the adversaries of Akoko people, especially the Nupe were attracted by the economic potentials of the area, since it promised to be viable source of tributes. Thus, from different perspectives and at different times, Akokoland fitted perfectly into the territorial, strategic or economic expansion projection of the foreign policies of its external aggressors. Having attracted undue external interests, the sub-savannah grassland that progresses towards the north, where Nupe always came from, without any serious natural barriers like rivers or gulfs, made the region to be vulnerable to attacks launched from that end of its boundaries. Furthermore, the proximity of Akokoland to bigger communities like Benin, Owo and Ekiti made it a subject of strategic interest to the development of these neighbours. Meanwhile, the thick forest of the southern end did not encourage frequent attacks from the south. It was a bit difficult for the invading warriors and their hardware to penetrate the forest like the grassland. Similarly, the hills and their caves did not only provide safety cover, but also served as important weapons for guerrilla attacks against the attackers.

So far, security challenges were prominent themes in the pre-twentieth history of Akokoland. As it has been demonstrated, even in the period preceding the nineteenth century, especially during the socio-political formation stage or years, the major internal security challenges were associated with the processes of settlement and accommodation. In these instances, the autochthonous, who had lived in the land several years, engaged in what can be described as survival conflicts with the new migrants to their land.<sup>382</sup> In Oka's case, an influx of the Ife migrants and their attempts to settle down, were resisted by the original settlers, which eventually led to a war of survival between the two groups.<sup>383</sup> The Ife migrants, however, defeated the aborigines and imposed on them a political structure similar to the experience they had where they came from. Another form of internal insecurity that followed was the inter-communal wars among the newly formed mini-states. The emergence of land as the most important determinant factor of the political and socio-economic prominence of these states was the main reason leading to the scramble for land, which also usually resulted in armed conflicts. But as we have noted, none of such inter-communal wars among Akoko communities led to the political subjugation of one town by another. Wars were fought, compromises were reached diplomatically, but autonomy was always intact. In other words,

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<sup>382</sup> Akomolafe, C.O. 1976. *Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935...*, pp. 4-12.

<sup>383</sup> Olukoju, O., 2003. Oka. Ed. Oguntomisin, G.O., *Yoruba Towns...*, pp. 79-80.

land disputes often led to wars and created security concerns, notwithstanding, the existing political structure of state sovereignty was not distorted.<sup>384</sup>

Meanwhile, external security threats came from Benin, Ekiti and Owo in the pre-nineteenth century period. The interests of these external aggressors differed. Ekiti wars against Akoko communities were primarily for conquest and establishment of political control.<sup>385</sup> Indeed, prior to the nineteenth century; Ado and Ikole invaded several Akoko communities in order to achieve their political expansionist policy. Ikole, for example, claimed it had political dominion over Afin, Erusu, Ese and Oyin until they were confiscated by the Nupe in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the claim has been vehemently denied by the affected Akoko towns. The Akoko communities have also claimed that what they had with Ikole was mutual relationship of equal political status.<sup>386</sup> The lack of any strong evidence in respect to this claim has, therefore, made it difficult to understand and establish the true nature of the political interactions of Ikole and the aforementioned Akoko states. In line with its expansionist policy also, Owo invaded a number of Akoko communities, especially under Ajaka. Thus, military expeditions were carried out against several Akoko communities. But there is no convincing or substantial empirical evidence to suggest that Owo was able to establish a political supremacy on any Akoko town.

Benin's invasion of Akokoland between the fifteenth and seventeenth century was highly motivated by its intentions to expand its territory towards the Akoko region. Benin during this period was led by warrior kings, who largely defined and interpreted state power and influence in terms of huge landmass, which could only be attained by politically subduing smaller communities near and far. However, by the seventeenth century, the motivation for the aggression against Akokoland had considerably shifted from territorial expansion to slave raiding. This was in response to the diversification of Benin's economy, which was now tilted towards meeting the increasing international demand for slaves, especially by the Portuguese. Benin's later establishment of slave trade with the Dutch and the British further increased the need for captives to be sold as slaves.<sup>387</sup> Subsequently, Benin soldiers intensified their slave raiding not only in Akoko, but throughout the north-eastern Yorubaland.<sup>388</sup> Military posts

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<sup>384</sup> N.A.I., CSO 26, 29667... p. 2.

<sup>385</sup> S. A. Akintoye, *Revolution and Power Politics*...p. 30-31.

<sup>386</sup> C. O. Akomolafe. 1976. 'Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935'...p. 29.

<sup>387</sup> Ryder, A. F. C. 1965. Dutch Trade on the Nigerian Coast during the 17th Century. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 208.

<sup>388</sup> Osadolor, O.B. 2001. The Military System of Benin Kingdom, C.1440-1897... p. 130-131.

were, therefore, established in eastern Yorubaland, one at Akure and the other at Ikere. From Akure, Benin warriors penetrated into the interior of Ekiti, while from Ikere, they forcefully entered into Akokoland and Okun area. The two posts also became their collation centres, where their captives were assembled and arranged for onward transportation to the ports.<sup>389</sup> Thus, the economic diversion influenced Benin's foreign policy on Akokoland as it abandoned its erstwhile territorial expansion for slave capturing. Like Owo and Ekiti, there is no tangible evidence suggesting that Benin was able to impose any form of political domination on Akokoland during the period preceding the nineteenth century.

It has, therefore, been observed that major security weaknesses of the Akoko prior to the nineteenth century were geographical nearness and smaller size in comparison to their external aggressors. Owo and Benin, especially, were all far bigger in size and population than even the biggest Akoko towns. So, in an age when population was crucial to victory in wars, it was impossible for the Akoko to have raised enough warriors to successfully resist these powerful aggressors. It should also be noted that the aggressors, especially Benin paraded more superior weapons than the Akoko. More importantly, the Akoko were unable to bring themselves to the point of collectively forming a united and formidable resistance force against their external invaders. But while it may be claimed that no form of external political dominion was established on Akokoland by these external forces, a major political relevance of the incessant security challenges was that Akokoland was rendered more vulnerable to external security threats of the following century.

The security challenges of the nineteenth century, as we have observed, were also in two forms: internal and external. The internal security challenges were in two dimensions. The first was domestic, which was exclusively the experience of each of the states. The second dimension was those security challenges that originated within Akokoland, especially resulting from the inter-communal relations of the existing independent towns. After several years of existing as organised human societies, many Akoko states had by the nineteenth century clearly defined or coded acts which constituted crimes and threats to their domestic peace and tranquillity. Among other things, domestic security challenges were located in crimes which included but not limited to murder (*ipaniyan*), manslaughter (*iseesi paniyan*), kidnapping (*ijinigbe*), wicked witchcraft (*ajebuburu*) and so on.<sup>390</sup> Thus, by the nineteenth century, Akoko communities had devised means of dealing with these crimes. While the

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<sup>389</sup>Osadolor, O.B. 2001. *The Military System of Benin Kingdom, C.1440-1897...* p. 130-131. See also Egharevba, J.U. 1968. *A Short History of Benin...* p. 31.

<sup>390</sup>N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667... p. 49.

methods of tackling these crimes were a bit different from one community to another, they were, however, operated through the existing authorised socio-political institutions.

A major political implication of this was that such socio-political institutions were by this period still very relevant in the day-to-day domestic security maintenance of their lands. More importantly, it was a validation of the claim that the institutions largely enjoyed their sovereignty in the administration of their domestic affairs. However, from a broader perspective, a major significance of the existence of these crimes in Akokoland during this period is that it helps to further debunk a popular assumption that portrays pre-colonial African societies as almost crimeless. It, therefore, substantiates a position in wider security studies, which holds that no human society is crime free after all.

Intra-Akoko wise, we have also seen that while security challenges arose from inter-communal wars, the frequency of such wars had, however, reduced by the nineteenth century compared to the previous period. Among other factors, the change in land tenure system, made land disputes at this point very unpopular.<sup>391</sup> It would be remembered that many pre-nineteenth century inter-communal wars among the Akoko had started as misunderstandings over land. However, with the transfer of practical ownership of land from the state to the family, though the ownership of the state was still theoretically recognised, the strategic importance attached to land in external relations of the states drastically declined. Consequently, land disputes were reduced to nothing more than inter-family quarrels, which could hardly graduate to inter-state crises.

The general attitude of the people, which did not really support wars as the last resort of misunderstandings by the nineteenth century also helped reduced inter-communal wars. The established knowledge of the people about land boundaries played a significant role in this respect. Following the establishment and consolidation of the states, the states and the clear demarcation of the available land, the territorial boundaries had been well noted even though the demarcations of such boundaries were done with not too significant items such as trees or other natural features. Furthermore, the strong belief or assumption, after migration and several years of coexistence, that all Akoko people were relatives, *omiye*, irrespective of their migrations sources, went a long way in making inter-communal wars within Akokoland unpopular. The belief in *okanl' Akoko* which held that, though conflicts could not be totally avoided due to different and sometimes conflicting interests of the communities, such

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<sup>391</sup> Okajare, S.T. 2012...p. 67.

conflicts should, however, not be allowed to degenerate to the level of devastating the states and their ancestral ties. Thus, even in the midst of crisis, no member of the family must be allowed to perish. While the core Yoruba Akoko saw themselves as the offsprings of Oduduwa, the *Omiye* concept collectively bound all Akoko, irrespective of the historical sources. It was assumed that since this group of people had cohabited in the area and the two sets (Ife and non-Ife descendants) had even assimilated each other's cultural values, they (non-Ife descendants) were therefore qualified members of *omiye*.<sup>392</sup> This follows the popular saying that, *ti ewe ba pe l'ara ose, a d'ose*, meaning that, 'when soap is encapsulated with leaves for a long period of time, the leaves will eventually start foaming like soap'.

But as inter-communal wars were not entirely erased as sources of internal security challenges, a large proportion of the scanty inter-communal armed conflicts recorded were orchestrated by the emerging Akoko warlords. A major consequence of the insecurity or security challenges of the past was that it helped create a class of independent warlords. In most cases, their unhealthy rivalry and inability to resolve their differences escalated into inter-state armed conflicts. It is significant to recall the Irun-Afa War (1880-1888), which had started as a misunderstanding between two successful warriors from these towns. The failure to resolve the quarrel diplomatically gave a room for the dispute to degenerate into a war between their communities.

Aside the destruction of life and property that always accompanied the wars, the nineteenth century internal security challenges in Akokoland have also been noted to have brought about population displacement. In the instances of wars, people were usually taken captive and forcefully removed from their settlements. The lucrative nature of slavery in Yorubaland during this period is a strong indication that a considerable number of the captives from Akokoland would have ended up in places other than the region. But again, the internal security challenges were not strong enough to have altered the existing political structure in the area. In other words, no Akoko state was subdued by another. Thus, the autonomy enjoyed by these communities was retained.

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<sup>392</sup> Details on the concept of *omiye* was provided by Adeleye, Y. A., the *Olubaka* of Oka-Akoko, *Olubaka's* Palce, Oke- Oka, Oka-Akoko, December 8, 2015; Faboye, O., 51 years, lecturer at the Department of History and International Studies, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State. Faboyede is specialist on the cultural history of Akoko.

As it has been demonstrated, sources of external security challenges largely involved the aggressions from Ekiti, Ibadan and Nupe. But then, the security threats arising from Ekiti and Ibadan cannot be regarded in any form as state coordinated or sponsored attacks. From all indications, they were private adventures of powerful warlords from these areas. Esubiyi and Aduloju from Ekiiti did not represent the interest of any community or royalty; they were the sole authors and executors of their military missions in Akokoland. Ayorinde's military adventure in Akokoland started as the initiative of Ibadan under the authority of Oluyole. At the initial stage, the primary responsibilities were to expand Ibadan territories and also protect and prevent the north-eastern Yorubaland from falling back to the jihadists from Ilorin. However, due to the long distance and Ibadan's ineffective monitoring of Ayorinde's activities in the area, he shortly became solely responsible for the military exercises he undertook and the attendant consequences.<sup>393</sup> This went a long way to account for the reason why none of these warlords was able to establish political suzerainty on any Akoko towns. Clearly, rather than getting themselves tied down to the people by way of administering them, they were more interested in carting away their own portion of the available economic resources .

But on the contrary, the Nupe incursion into Akokoland can best be described as a state coordinated action. Even when there were two concurrent administrations of Zaki and Masaba, the two planned and attacked Akokoland at different times with the state machinery at their disposals. Though the military actions against Akokoland were strategically aimed at their personal aggrandisement, they still engaged the services of the state apparatus in their disposal to carry them out. Subsequently, right from the reign of Umar Maiyaki in 1850 to the era of Abubakar and the sack of Nupe by the Royal Niger Constabulary in 1897, Nupe missions were always commissioned from Bida. In other words, the missions were well-designed foreign policy of the Nupe, which also enjoyed proper state attention in term of execution.

Generally, all the external military activities in Akokoland, as we have seen, were meant to serve certain purposes, especially the political-economic interests of the aggressors. Importantly, at each point, Akokoland fitted well into such political-economic designs. The

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<sup>393</sup>Akomolafe, C.O. 1976. Akoko under British Rule, 1900-1935. M.Phil. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ife, Ile-Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), p. 32; Awe, B. 1967... p. 49.

warlords from Ekiti and Ibadan were preoccupied with mainly personal economic aggrandisement, which included raiding, looting and kidnapping to raise captives that would be engaged on their farmland to increase production and maximise their profit and wealth. Their interest also included taking people captive to raise supply for the lucrative slave trading. In some cases, the captives were also enlisted in the armies of their captors in order to increase the human capacities to ensure better performance of such armies. Generally under the Nupe, attacks on Akokoland were meant to attain the territorial expansionist goal of the state. Furthermore, proceeds from Akokoland were planned to be used in developing Bida and sustaining the strategically important endorsement of Nupe as important aspect of the Sokoto Caliphate by Gwandu.<sup>394</sup>

Thus, the need to fully achieve the aforementioned goals did not only require constant but also effective presence of Nupe officials. Consequently, a foreign and superior political authority was for the first time in the history of Akokoland imposed on it, though with the exception of Oka. This is why it has been argued that Akokoland witnessed colonialism earlier before the widely acclaimed British colonial experiment. This was a significant political transformation of Akokoland. Recall that, right from time, Akokoland had always been faced with numerous internal and external security challenges. Between the fifteen and the eighteenth centuries, Benin, Owo and Ekiti became sources of security threats to Akokoland. However, none of them had the reputations of successfully imposing a political domination on Akoko people. The *Ogba* or *Ajele* system that was a representative government in which the royal agents known as *ajele*, represented the *Etsu* in the conquered territories and performed among other things, the responsibilities of tribute or tax collection and transmission of such collections to the Nupe's headquarters. Meanwhile, the system did not supplant the existing indigenous political structure or institution, rather, it provided support when necessary, to ensure that the intentions of Bida were realised. Nevertheless, there were few instances where indigenous leaders were stripped of their authorities as a result their arrogance or overzealousness of the royal agents.<sup>395</sup>

As it has been noted, population dislocation was always one of the end products of the past security challenges in Akokoland. External security challenges of the nineteenth century, however, displaced people more than ever before in the area. Thus, a lot of youths were

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<sup>394</sup>Mason, M.A. 1970... p. 196.

<sup>395</sup>Olukoju, A. 1989. p... 107.

taking captives during this period than ever before. On the other hand, due to the widespread insecurity, a lot of people fled Akokoland before being taken captive. The mass exodus of youths that were major stakeholders in the indigenous socio-political administration and development, grossly denied Akokoland the opportunity to have its internal socio-political and economic development naturally steered by this important internal change agent for most part of the century. Consequently, Akokoland was almost retarded in term of indigenous socio-political development.

Furthermore, the security challenges imprinted a lot of changes on the existing socio-political order. In the first place, the insecurity in the land led to the emergence of the local warlords as very important influence on the indigenous administration. The existence of the local warlords, no doubt, had been very crucial to the security and development of the people prior to the nineteenth century. In some instances, the position of the *balogun* had been created as a security measure. As appointees of the existing political authorities, the warlords were inferior and accountable to the powers that had created them. However, with the incessant security threats and the increasing inability of the constituted indigenous political authorities to live up to its responsibilities of protecting their subjects, the local warlords automatically became a viable alternative for the people, who were in serious need of protection. Consequently, the warlords grew in power and affluence. And the fact that they were made by their own courage and circumstances rather than the indigenous authorities made them free agents who were only answerable to themselves. In some cases, they subsequently became very influential parts of the decision-making process and at times unduly interfering in the administrative process.

Another change imposed on the existing socio-political structure was the alteration of the regular socio-political roles of women. Prior to the nineteenth century, Akoko women had performed important religious and socio-political roles. Women held important religious positions like (*yeye-osa*) and political positions such as women leaders (*iyalode*), market women leaders (*iyaloja*) and so on.<sup>396</sup> But with the growing security concerns and the inabilities of the states to provide adequate protections, a good number of women turned independent war leaders, not only providing security to their immediate families, but also to as many as were ready to accept their leadership. Iseke, Ipinni and Okonmole Agbede of Oka

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<sup>396</sup>Afele Ologunwa Babade, c. 90 years. He was interviewed at his residence, 12 Owalusin, Iwaro Oka, Ondo State on November 3, 2018.



and Agbata of Arigidi were a few of popular female warriors in Akokoland during the period.<sup>397</sup>

It has been noted as well that the security challenges of the nineteenth century led to the proliferation of ammunition in Akokoland. The incessant external attacks on the people, especially, and the not effective state designed security architecture to address the security threats had increased the desire to possess weapons as one of the last means of self-defence. While there was increment in the circulations of European firearms, there was also an upsurge in the number of locally manufactured weapons. A lot of charms designed for protection or victory in wars were also paraded. More importantly, like in every human society, the proliferation in the circulation of weapons in Akokoland signalled the high rate of insecurity during the period.

Another major political impact of the nineteenth century security challenges in Akokoland was the introduction of new chieftaincy or political titles. In this aspect again, the Nupe had more impression on Akokoland than any other external aggressor of the century. There is a long list of these titles which included *Shaba*, *Leramo*, *Dawodu*, *Mogaji* and *Zaki*, among others. A good number of these externally introduced titles have not only been sustained till date, but also, some of these titles have formed some of the bases for the contemporary political dialogues and disputes in Akokoland.

As it can be seen also, a major weakness of external security mechanism of Akokoland up to the last decade of the nineteenth century was the people's inability to successfully establish or initiate common security ground with which they would have tackled their external aggressors. But following the Nupe's overbearing forces, there began a gradual show of rebellion and realisation of the importance of a collective resistance against a common enemy. For the first time in their history, Akoko people collectively formed a military alliance and fought together for their liberation in the Ogidi War (1895-1897).<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>397</sup>Afele Ologunwa Babade, c. 90 years. He was interviewed at his residence, 12 Owalusin, Iwaro Oka, Ondo State on November 3, 2018; Gabriel Asesan Ajongbolo, 73 years. He was interviewed on September 23, 2018 at his residence, 21 Irepodun Street, Iwaro Oka, Oka Akoko, Ondo State.

<sup>398</sup>Akomolafe, C.O. 1970...;Mason, M. 1970... pp. 203.

And through this strategy, they were able to hold down the Nupe until the intervention of the Royal Niger Company's troops in January 1897.<sup>399</sup>

Ultimately, the insecurity situation in Akokoland can be argued to have prepared the needed background for the occupation and colonisation of Akokoland by the British. The European had partially encouraged the Akoko to take weapons against the Nupe masters. The entrance of the Royal Niger Company's forces into the Ogidi war in support of the Akoko and their allies significantly helped in the defeat of the Nupe. As it later turned out, the British were not really interested in the peace of the area for the development of the locals, but for the perfection of their own colonial ambition. Thus, while acting like peace brokers, the British commenced and completed the process of colonisation of Akokoland. Although the Akoko later realised, it was too late as they were too exhausted and depressed to stage another war of resistance against a more powerful force than Nupe. Subsequently, the British successfully introduced company rule in 1897. In December, 1899, the Charter granted the Royal Niger Company was revoked and effective British colonisation commenced in Akokoland on January 1, 1900.<sup>400</sup> It is, therefore, sufficient enough to say that security challenges were fundamental determinant factors in the socio-political history of Akokoland during the nineteenth century. Thus, the security challenges did not only transform most of the political traditions which had been evolved and handed down across generations, they as well prepared the background for the political development of the twentieth century.

But as much as the study focuses on an aspect of the nineteenth century history of Akokoland, it is, however, very relevant to the contemporary security situations in our society- Akokoland, Ondo State and Nigeria at large. This is due to the fact that the ongoing efforts to tackle many of the national security challenges have a lot to benefit from the findings of this work. First, the study, for example, has demonstrated and it needs to be further emphasised that, security challenges are some of the major socio-political characteristics of human societies. Security challenges are not only as old as the society, but have also demonstrated to be constant irrespective of all human efforts. Historical accounts of the development of human society from the primitive to the modern period, for instance, have shown that the society at all points was always faced with one form of security challenge or the other. Currently, aside socio-economic problems, security challenges are common among

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<sup>399</sup>N.A.I. CSO 26, 29667...

<sup>400</sup>Okajare, S.T.2012... p. 160.

nations across the globe. In as much as the resources that are available are not sufficient enough to satisfy all human wants, coupled with human physical and ideological differences either on ethnic, cultural, religious or socio-economic stand, struggles and conflicts seem to be bound to happen. This has been referred to in biological sciences as the 'survival of the fittest'. Subsequently, in desperate situations, the approaches of a particular group in attaining or sustaining a particular interest or goal may continue to constitute security threats to another.

This, however, does not imply that the government or the society should resign to fate when confronted with security challenges. The point being made is that, while the efforts may reduce the level of risk and improve life, no society can claim to be entirely immune to security challenges. It is just that security threats of different societies may not be the same. In fact, this is why the society must take security as a major priority. This is because, if security challenges are left unattended to or not given due attention, they tend to grow and expand such that there could be a collateral damage for the society. And when this happens, it may either take the society a long time to recover or temporarily or permanently change the course of history of such society.

Secondly, it is important to mention that there is a strong overlapping relationship between security and geography. In other words, the extent to how a society is secured or vulnerable is considerably determined by its geography. As it has been shown in the study, the physical and human geographical dimensions of Akokoland strongly influenced its security experiences. There is no gain saying that not much has changed in terms of the overlapping influence of geography on the security of the area and by extension Ondo State. For instance, Akokoland, in the present political structure of Nigeria is located in the north-eastern part of Ondo State. It serves as the boundary of the State with Ekiti, Kogi and Edo. Aside the borderline with Kogi that has savannah grassland, Akokoland's borderline with Ekiti and Edo States are thickly forested. From Oba, for example, the forest stretches eastwards to Edo State, while to the west; it extends to Emure Ekiti in Ekiti State. Consequently, criminal elements, who have good understanding of the terrain, have continued to use it to their advantage. This explains why the highways in the area are notorious for criminal acts such as armed robbery and kidnapping. The deteriorated state of the road networks in the locations and inadequate and effective security measures by the government have further made it easy for crimes to trend in the area.

From a broader perspective, the location of Nigeria among poorer nations in West Africa; has made it a haven for citizens of these neighbouring countries, especially those sharing boundaries with the northern part of Nigeria, including Niger, Chad and Cameroon. While the security implications of the nation's porous borders are well acknowledged, no government since independence has paid enough attention to securing these borders. Subsequently, those borders have continuously made Nigeria vulnerable to security threats arising from the region. The borders have been noted to be major sources of illegal firearms and foreign bandits into the country. For example, the Maitasine insurgency in Kano in 1980, which led to the death of 4,177 civilians, 35 soldiers and 100 policemen, was largely carried out by mercenaries and Islamic fanatics from Chad, Niger, Mali and Cameroon. The group was led by a Cameroonian, Mallam Muhammed Marwa.<sup>401</sup> Similar events such as socio-religious riots in Maiduguri, Bauchi, Benin-Kebbi, and Kano in 1982, 1984, 1990 and 1991 respectively involved mercenaries, especially the Fulani from Niger and Chad.<sup>402</sup> While Boko Haram was invented and developed in Nigeria, Chad, Niger and northern Cameroon had become major bases from where they train and strategise. This partly shows why Borno North, bordering Nigeria and the aforementioned neighbours, is the most active spot of Boko Haram.<sup>403</sup>

On the other hand, while not ignoring other factors, geography has been a major reason for the renewed herdsmen-farmers armed conflict in the north-central and southern parts of Nigeria. Climate change, in form of continuous desertification of northern Nigeria, is largely responsible for the on-going mass migration of herdsmen from north to the south. The promotion of the Rural Grassing Area (RUGA) by the Federal Government and the attendant politicisation of the process is a strong signal that such measure may not be the best approach to the crisis. The plan, before its suspension, seemed to have divided Nigerians more along ethnic and socio-political lines than ever before. There was a clear indication that it would have created more security problems to the ones already bedeviling the nation. It appears, therefore, that until desertification in the north is properly addressed, the mass migration of

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<sup>401</sup> Report of the Tribunal of Enquiry on the Kano Disturbances chaired by Aniagolu, 1981.

<sup>402</sup> Onwuka, R.I. 1982. The ECOWAS Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons: A Threat to Nigerian Security? *African Affairs*, Vol. 181, No 232, p. 202. See also, Famoye, A.D. 2011. Regional Peacekeeping and the Attainment of Nigeria's National Interest. M.A. dissertation, Department of History, University of Sheffield, United Kingdom.

<sup>403</sup> Ototoju, B. Journalist Hangout, TVC News. 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2019.

herdsmen to the south may continue to drift and so, the herdsmen-farmers conflicts in Nigeria may be unresolved for a long time.

One major reason why Akoko communities suffered in the hands of common enemies for so long was their inability to form a common front to collectively ward off their aggressors. Not until they realised this late in the nineteenth century that they successfully formed a coalition to resist Nupe's domineering influence in the Ogidi War. By implication, therefore, tackling security challenges is more effective and successful when there are concerted efforts of the government and members of the society. While the Nigerian Constitution unmistakably pronounces one of the two major responsibilities of the government as the protection of the citizens and their property, it is a fact that how far the government goes in performing this duty depends considerably on the assistance and cooperation it enjoys from members of the public. This is why, even in most advanced and more secured societies, community policing is giving attention as the best form of security strategy. Community policing operates on the principle of government-community partnership in the business of security. It is believed that no crime or security threat exists in a society without a member of the society with useful information. Consequently, members of the society are encouraged to relay such information to the appropriate security agencies. However, there is no need stressing the fact that the relations of government and its security agencies, especially the Nigeria Police Force, with the members of the public is presently not encouraging as there is a strong level of distrust between the two. In such circumstances, it may be very difficult to achieve a strong level of cooperation that will go a long way in solving some of the security problems facing the nation.

As said before, earlier authors have created the impression that the nineteenth century security situation in Akokoland were mainly caused by the external invaders. But as it has been shown by this study, there was also local or domestic dimension to those challenges. For example, conflicting interests of Akoko warlords did not only sometimes create security tensions; they were also involved in captive taking and enslavement of their people for their personal aggrandisement. There were proofs also to show that there were collaborations between the external invaders and some local elements, especially the chiefs. For example, in the case of Nupe's administration that had been made reference to in Chapter Five, the *Emir* of Bida made it a habit to directly compensate cooperating local chiefs. This, therefore, points to the fact that for every security challenge, there is always internal dimension in form of

sabotage. It is important to state clearly that one of the main reasons why insurgence seems difficult to fight in Nigeria is sabotage, which has infiltrated the governmental system, including the security agencies.

Seeking external or foreign assistance is not new and not out of place in dealing with a tough security situation. In the case of Akokoland, the British, notwithstanding their ulterior motives, were important foreign allies, who supported the Akoko in their liberation war against the Nupe. While being careful in accepting foreign assistance, the numerous security challenges confronting Nigeria has continued to stretch her and the security agencies humanly, materially and financially. A close observation of the security issues in the nation will leave one in no doubt that the Nigerian government cannot all by itself handle the security challenges, especially insurgence which started in the north-east but now ripping the country apart. From independence in 1960, Nigeria has continued to render security assistance to nations across the African continent in forms of international peacekeeping and bilateral security assistance operations. This is the time when she needs such international help more than before. And considering the significant position that Nigeria occupies in West Africa and Africa regional security, the world powers should realise that assisting Nigeria to secure herself is as good as securing the continent, especially West Africa.

In conclusion, it is important to stress, therefore, that in the recent years, Nigeria has been faced with more security challenges than any time in the past. Boko Haram insurgency and herdsmen insurgencies, militancy, hi-tech armed robbery, kidnapping, ritual killing, communal clashes, cultism are just a few among many. Consequently, these have become banes of our national political, economic and cultural development. Thus, researches into the security history of Nigerian societies, such as this, are needed more than ever before as they will assist the government and the security institutions such as the military and the police not only in deeply understanding the real reasons for the increasing cases of security challenges in our society, but also on the best approaches to apprehend the situation.

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## A Oral Interview

Informant	Age	Occupation	Place of Interview	Date
Abegunde, O.	87	Herbal Practitioner	B20, Okorun Quarter, Ikare-Akoko	December 21, 2014
Adamolekun, Taiwo	62	Lecturer	Department of Religion and African Cultrue, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State	November 23, 2018.
Adare, Ojo, 87 years, on	87	Retired Civil Servant.	A21, Ogosan, Oyin Akoko, Ondo State	September 7, 2018.
Adebisi, Olufemi	51	Chief and Community Leader	Damiro Villa, Agbaluku Arigidi, Ondo State	November 5, 2018
Adedoyin, S. the <i>Owa-Ale</i> of Ikare-Akoko,	70 +	King	<i>Owa-Ale's</i> Palace, Ikare	July 08, 2014.
Adesunloye, A. (Oyolola III), Olisua of Isua-Akoko	Aged not disclosed.	King	Olisua Palace, Isua-Akoko	August 10, 2015
Adewolu J.A.	80	Retired Teacher	3 Hospital Road, Iwaro Oka, Oka-Akoko	July 13, 2015
Adewunmi, O.S.	Age not known	<i>OgotunIgase</i> (Chief Priest) of Afa in Oke-Agbe	His residence at Afa, Oke-Agbe Akoko, Ondo State.	October 2, 2017
<u>Adeleye</u> , Yusuf A., the <i>Olubaka</i> of Oka-Akoko,	Age not declared	King	<i>Olubaka's</i> Palce, Oke-Oka, Oka-Akoko	8 <sup>th</sup> December, 2015.
Adeoye, Adesola	50+	Curator Owo Museum.	Owo Museum, Owo, Ondo State.	October 18, 2018
Afele Ologunwa Babade	c. 90	Community Historian	12 Owalusin, Iwaro Oka, Ondo State	November 3, 2018

Ajongbolo, Gabriel Asesan,	73	Community Leader and Historian	21 Irepodun Street, Iwaro Oka	September 23, 2018.
Arapo, Saliu, Olukare Palace, Ikare Akoko	79 years	Palace Historian	Olukare Palace, Ikare Akoko	Olukare Palace, Ikare Akoko
Asefon, A.	66	Alabe (Sub-quarter Chief) Abe	Ibaka Quarter, Akungba-Akoko	January 05, 2010
Ayeni, Christopher Jide	65	Retired Civil Servant and Community Leader	8 Upara quarters, Sosan Akoko.	February 12, 2019
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Coker Jerome	68	Retired Civil Servant	D/2 Adoro quarters, Sosan.	
Ehindero, C.	115	The head of Imole Cult of Oyin Akoko.	A44, Ogosan, Oyin Akoko, Ondo State	January 8, 2019.
Faboye, O.	51	Lecturer	Department of History and International Studies, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State.	December 16, 2018.
Famoye, C.	65	Business	Plot 52, Gimbia Street, Area 11, Abuja	July 16, 2014
Gbiri, Clement	58	Lecturer	College of Medicine, Idi-Araba, University of Lagos, Nigeria.	January 28, 2019
Haruna Titi 120 years. Oldest woman in Oka-Odo,	c. 120, Oldest woman in Oka-Odo	Farmer and Women Leader	No 10 Irepodun Street, Oka-Odo, Oka Akoko.	December, 21 2018.
Momoh, J. I.	78	Queen of Olukare,	Olukare's Palace, Ikare-Akoko,	April 20, 2017
Muniru, O.	48	Civil Servant	9 Igbelu Qtr,	July, 25, 2014



			Akungba-Akoko	
Oderinde, B.	73	Hunting	19, Ilepa Quarter, Ikare-Akoko	December 23, 2014
Odofin, K.,. He was in interviewed on at his residence	88	Hunter, Herbalist and Community Leader	Behind Paulina Guest House, Epinmi Akoko, Ondo State	December 17, 2018
Ogunjemito, L.	99	Blacksmith and Chief	15C Ilale Quarter, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State.	July 28, 2018
Ogunoye, O.S.	Not declared	The <i>Owalusi</i> (King) of Iwaro-Oka,	<i>Owalusi</i> Palace, Iwaro-Oka, Ondo State	August 28, 2017.
Ogunlana, O.	86	years, Blacksmith and Farmer	His residence along Ikaram Road, Erusu Akoko, Ondo State.	September 6, 2017
Oguntimehin, Paul	76	Retired Secondary Scholl Principal and High Chief <i>Arua</i> (Second-in-Command to the king (Owa)).	C36, Oke-Igbagbo Street, Ogbagi Akoko, Ondo State.	April 4, 2017
Ojo, Adelakun	88	Blacksmith and Hunter	His residence along Ikaram Road, Erusu Akoko, Ondo State	September 6, 2017
Okajare, S.T.	46	Lecturing	26 Ayorinde Street, Ijebu Owo, Owo.	February 08, 2014
Okijiola, J.A.	65	High Chief ( <i>Bobajiroro</i> ) of Isualand	the Isua Civic Centre, Isua-Akoko	August 17, 2015
Olanipekun, O.J.	79	Farmer	86 Oho Quarters, Epinmi-Akoko	September 20, 2015
Olamitoke, R.	50+	Civil Servant	Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko.	August 15, 2014
Olagbegi, OlateruV.	73	The <i>Olowo</i> (King)	<i>Olowo</i> palace, Owo,	November 15,

		<i>of Owo</i>	Ondo State	16 and 17, 2015.
Oloba, D.F., 67	67	Retired Teacher and Community Leader	MB 17, Ita Quarter, Arigidi Akoko, Ondo State.	November 3, 2018
Olorunsola, F.	57	Retired Teacher and Community Leader ( <i>Eli of Eegun</i> )	16 Araromi, Ogbagi Akoko, Ondo State	April 22, 2017
Olotu R.	65	Farmer, Trader and Traditional Women Leader	4, Ibaka Qtr, Akungba-Akoko.	August 15, 2014
Olotu, William	65 years	Retired Teacher and community leader	15 Igbelu Quarter, Akungba-Akoko.	July 16, 2016.
Olufemi, K. Lydia	72 years.	<i>Iya-Ewe</i> of Arigidi-Akoko	102, Agbaluku, Arigidi-Akoko, Ondo State	September 24, 2018
Olukosi, A.		High Chief and Community Leader.	Erusu Akoko, Ondo State	August 3, 2018
Omosola, A.B.	76	Community Leader and also Local Historian.	His residence Oka Akoko, Ondo State.	August 18, 2017
Onibalusi, A.	87	Farmer and High Chief Olupane (Third in rank to the King (Owa))	GM/44, Ayetoro Street, Ogbagi Akoko, Ondo State.	April 4, 2017
Origbemisuyi, A.	70+	Spiritualist	Ibaka Qtr Akungba-Akoko	August 23, 2014
Oyedele Bamidele	71	Farmer and Community Leader	Damiro Villa, Agbaluku Arigidi, Ondo State	November 5, 2018
Rogbitan, Florence	70	Retired Civil Servants	No. 18 Ikese, Oka-Akoko	October 20, 2018.
Sanusi, Daisi	97	Retired Farmer and Hunter.	Oke Irun, Irun Akoko, Ondo State	August 16, 2018.

Sulaimon, S.	67	<i>Alakun</i> (Quarter Chief) of Igbelu Quarter, Akungba	Qyarter Chief Court, Igbelu Quarter, Akungba	February 23, 2013
Yakubu, A., ,		<i>Iyaloja</i> of Okeagbe	King's Palace, Okeagbe-Akoko	March 09, 2017.
Yemi, A.A.,	76	<i>Ashipa</i> of Isualand	Olisua Palace	August 10, 2015.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I

## GEOGRAPHY

### Land and Density of Population

#### Population.

The Akoko country occupies an area of approximately 753 miles or a little less than Owo Division. It has 70752 inhabitants, the density of the population being, therefore, 93.96 per square mile.

#### Boundaries

The boundaries are as follows:-

**North.** The boundary between the Northern and Southern Provinces as described in Government Notice No. 100 in Gazette No. 33 of 13<sup>th</sup> June, 1918.

**South.** The boundaries between the Ikare, Oka and Isua Districts and the Owo District (as shown on the sketch map attached).

**East.** The Ondo-Benin Provincial Boundary from a point about 3 miles due west of Imeri (Kukuruku Division) till it meets the Northern and Southern Provinces boundary at a point about 3 miles east of Kakumo-Aworo.

**West.** The Owo-Ekiti Divisional Boundary southwards, from the point where it meets the Northern and Southern Provinces Boundary, to the point where it crosses the Osse River, or Eyimo River as it is called at the point.

#### Physical

#### Feature.

The Akoko area is very hilly and contains some most attractive scenery. There is a well defined main range running due south from Ogbagi to Isua. In the extreme North-Western area these hills are of a thickly wooded nature, but towards Ikare and Oka, the presence of granite rock renders vegetation fairly sparse and hill sides are covered with grasses. There are occasional hills composed of bare rock. The principal feature of mountain

district, however, is the Oka hill, with a circular plateau, on which the town is situated, at the top. The plateau, the altitude of which is about 2000 feet, is very boulder-strewn in parts, and, although most of the available ground is farmed, the products do not support the large town of Oka, which does nearly all its farming on the borrowed land at the foot of the hills. The Oka plateau tails off in an extremely picturesque succession of small peaks to the wide hills of Isua, Afo and Ifira.

There are outcrops of the main range of Erushu, Supare, Ikaram and Oba, whilst another shorter range runs North-West of Ikare due south of Ogbagi to the Ekiti boundary.

The Akoko area is well watered and contains many small rivers which drain the country well during the rainy season and are dry during the hotter months. The main range of hills forms the watershed, and the streams flow into two large rivers- the Osse on the East and Ogbesse on the west. The stretches of these rivers which come within the Akoko area are not navigable.

**Source: N.A.Ibadan**

## **Appendix II**

### **Origins.**

The early history of the Akoko people is vague, and it is impossible to give more than bare outline of events prior to the arrival, about 1890, of the Royal Niger Company.

The Akoko area contains 40 towns and villages, which appear to have three sources of origin:-

- I. IFE, the mythical cradle of the Yoruba race.
- II. ADO, or as it is now called, BENIN, and the KUKURUKU DIVISION of the Benin Province.
- III. The western area of KABBA PROVINCE (Northern Province).

As far as can be ascertained from the claims of the local historians, these 40 towns and villages originated as shown below. The places in each column are given in order of their size, and the letters in parentheses, after each name, refer to emigrations...

I. IFE (16 villages).

(a) Direct from Ife.

1. Oka (A)
2. Ikare (A)
3. Shupare (A)
4. Ukpe (A)
5. Oba (A)
6. Oge (A)
7. Aje (A)
8. Ora (A)

(b) From Ife via Ekiti to-

1. Omuo (B)
2. Ogbagi (B)
3. Irun (B)
4. Akungba (B)
5. Erushu (B)
6. Onyin (B)
7. Ogbagi (B)
8. Igashi (B)

II. BENIN (16 villages).

(a) Direct from Benin. (b) From Kukuruku area.

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. Arigidi (C) | 1. Auga (C)   |
| 2. Ishua (C)   | 2. Kakumo (C) |
| 3. Ifira (A)   | 3. Ishe (C)   |
| 4. Afa (C)     |               |
| 5. Ikpesi (A)  |               |
| 6. Afo (A)     |               |
| 7. Ikun (A)    |               |
| 8. Ekpeme (C)  |               |
| 9. Afin (C)    |               |
| 10. Boropa (A) |               |
| 11. Uro (C)    |               |
| 12. Shosan (C) |               |
| 13. Ugbe (A)   |               |

III. KABBA AREA (8 villages)

1. Ikaram (D)
2. Ojo (D)
3. Akunnu (D)
4. Gede-gede (D)
5. Daja (D)
6. Efifa (D)
7. Eshuku (D)
8. Oso (D)

**Source: N.A.I badan**

**Appendix III**

**Village Wars.**

There is evidence that, in the early days, there was continual inter-village warfare, the smaller communities joining with whichever of the larger towns happened to be in the ascendant time. The most notable of these local wars were between Ikare and Ikanmu (a quarter of Oka), and the wars wage by Ogbagi and Oka against smaller towns of those areas.

**Source: N.A.Ibadan**

## Appendix IV

### Invasions and Conquests.

These small wars were soon followed by foreign invasions. Aje of Ibadan was the first stranger to come with his forces, and entering the Akoko near Afin, he gradually subdued the whole of the area which now comprises the Ogbagi District, each town uniting with him as conquered. He is said to have remained there for many years, then to have returned to Ibadan, only to return again, and this time, conquered more town and villages including Ikare.

Between Aje's first and second invasions, Ogedengbe, the Ilesha warrior, also raided the southern part of the Akoko and temporarily subdued Oba, Ikpesi and other villages. He also made an alliance with Ikare who accompanied him on a campaign against the towns in the area, what are now the Kukuruku and Ishan Divisions of Benin Province.

Finally, there came the raids of the Nupe of Bida (Northern Provinces) under Ayorinde and Imoru. These two, receiving help locally, drove out Ibadan and eventually established themselves in every Akoko town except Oka.

It has been stated that, Oka, though they resisted the Bida for many years, were eventually conquered. It is quite probable, however, owing to the inaccessible nature of the hill on which Oka is situated that they were able to maintain their independence. The *Olubaka* flatly denies that Oka was ever conquered, and colour is lent to his assertion by the fact that *Olukare* corroborates the statement. The *Olukare* is the *Olubaka*'s deadly rival, and it is inconceivable that he would ever make an admission which could, in the slightest degree, be interpreted as favouring Oka, unless he knew it to be an established fact.

**Source: N.A.Ibadan**

## Appendix V

### *Ajele.*

The Bida left, in each town, *Ajele* or tax gatherer, to whom an annual tribute of cowries and slaves was paid. The amount of tribute levied varied according to the size of the town or village. Having collected the tribute, the *Ajele*, would send it to the Emir of Bida, who usually sent present to the Chiefs within the *Ajele*'s area.

**Source: N.A.Ibadan**



## Appendix VI

**A Sample of Headguards presented to the Akoko warriors by the Royal Niger Company.**



This and other weapons were given to the warriors to strengthen their resistance of the Nupe in the Ogodì War.