



# FATAL VIOLENCE IN AKURE SOUTH AND AKURE NORTH (NIGERIA): A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Ogunmakinju Olajide

Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



LIST OF FIGURES..... 3

ABSTRACT ..... 4

INTRODUCTION..... 5

METHODOLOGY..... 6

CAUSES OF VIOLENT DEATHS IN THE TWO LGAs..... 8

DEATHS RESULTING FROM ROAD ACCIDENTS..... 10

DEATHS RESULTING FROM CRIME..... 12

SLIGHT DIFFERENCES IN BODY COUNT..... 13

CONCLUSION..... 16

REFERENCES..... 20

# LIST OF FIGURES



**Figure 1:** Overall Fatalities in Akure North and South LGAs, Ondo State by Causes (2006-2022)

**Figure 2:** Road Accident Fatalities in Akure North and South LGAs, Ondo State (2006-2022)

**Figure 3:** Distribution of Fatalities related to crime in Akure North and South LGAs, Ondo State (2006-2022)

**Figure 4:** Protagonists of lethal violence in Akure North and South LGAs, Ondo State (2006-2022)

# ABSTRACT

This study examines patterns of violence in Akure North and Akure South local governments in Ondo State using a mixed-methods approach. Data were obtained from the Nigeria Watch database which records fatal incidents in Nigeria since 2006. Quantitative analysis of the data reveals similarities in the number and causes of violent incidents in both local governments. Qualitative data obtained through in-depth interviews provides additional insights into the context of local dynamics. The study highlights the role of criminal, political and ethnic groups, and security forces as key protagonists in violent incidents.

## Key words

**Fatal Violence, Nigeria Watch, Akure South, Akure North**

# INTRODUCTION

This study examines fatal violence in two Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ondo State, Akure South and Akure North. The first is centered on Akure, the state capital, while the administrative headquarters of the second are located in Iju Itagbolu. According to the 2006 census, the two local governments had, respectively, a population of 360,268 and 130,765 people.

Together with several industrial estates and a seaport in Ore which serves as an export outlet for agricultural products, Ondo State is a major producer of cocoa, rubber, palm oil, and timber. Furthermore, it is well-known for its vast mineral resources, including bitumen, kaolin, and limestone, which contribute to the region's economic potential. The majority of residents engage in farming, fishing, and trading. Civil servants also make up a significant amount of workers in the 18 LGAs of the state.

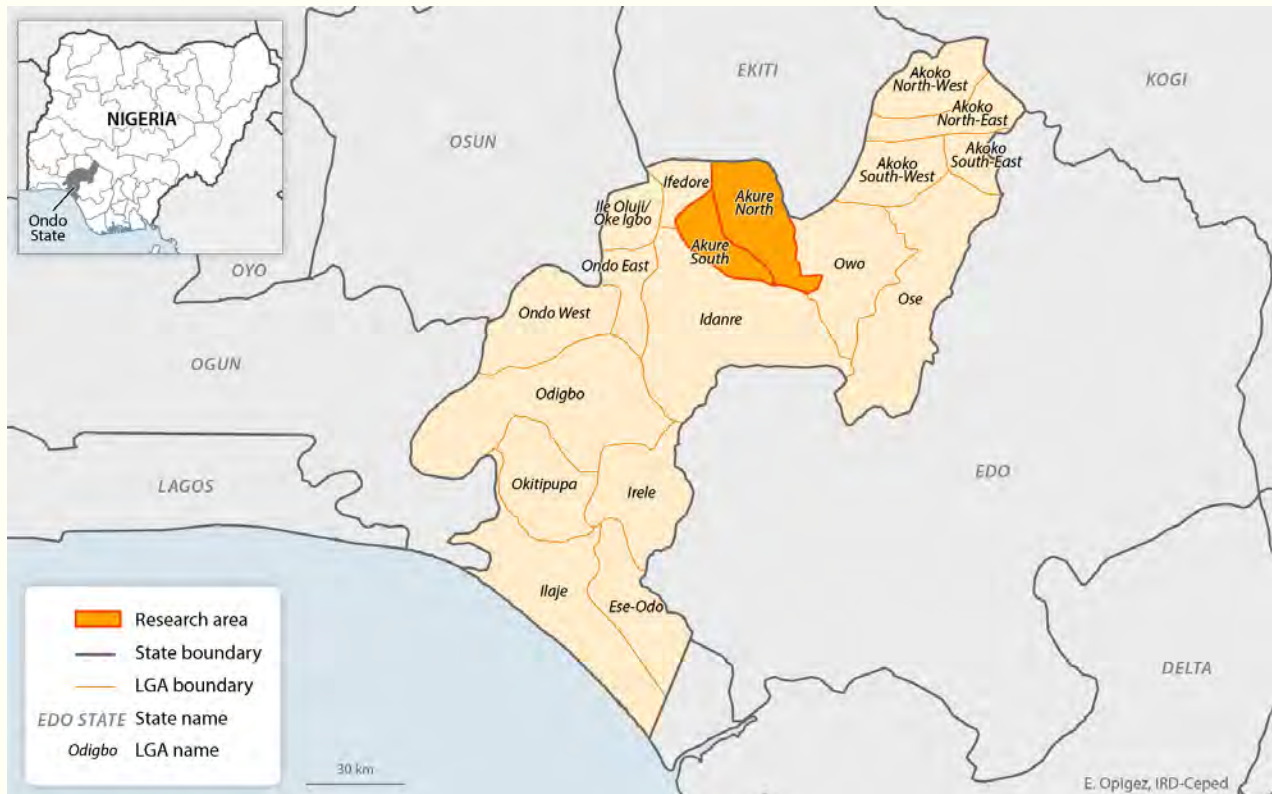
This study focuses on Akure South and North. It aims at understanding the drivers of lethal violence in these areas and answers three main research questions:

1. What are the primary causes of fatal violence in Akure North and Akure South, and how do they differ between the two LGAs?
2. How many violent deaths were recorded in Akure North and South between 2006 and 2022, and what patterns or trends could be observed over time?
3. Who are the main protagonists involved in these incidents?

# METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a mixed-methods approach to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to violence in Akure North and Akure South. Quantitative data on the frequency and trends of fatal incidents since 2006 was gathered from the Nigeria Watch Database. Fieldwork was also conducted in March and April 2023 in police stations, the king's palace, and prominent streets. A total of 20 participants from both LGAs, 12 from Akure South and 8 from Akure North, were selected for in-depth interviews. They included traditional chiefs, security operatives, youth leaders, government officials, religious clerics, members of the transport workers' union, and residents from both Akure North and Akure South.

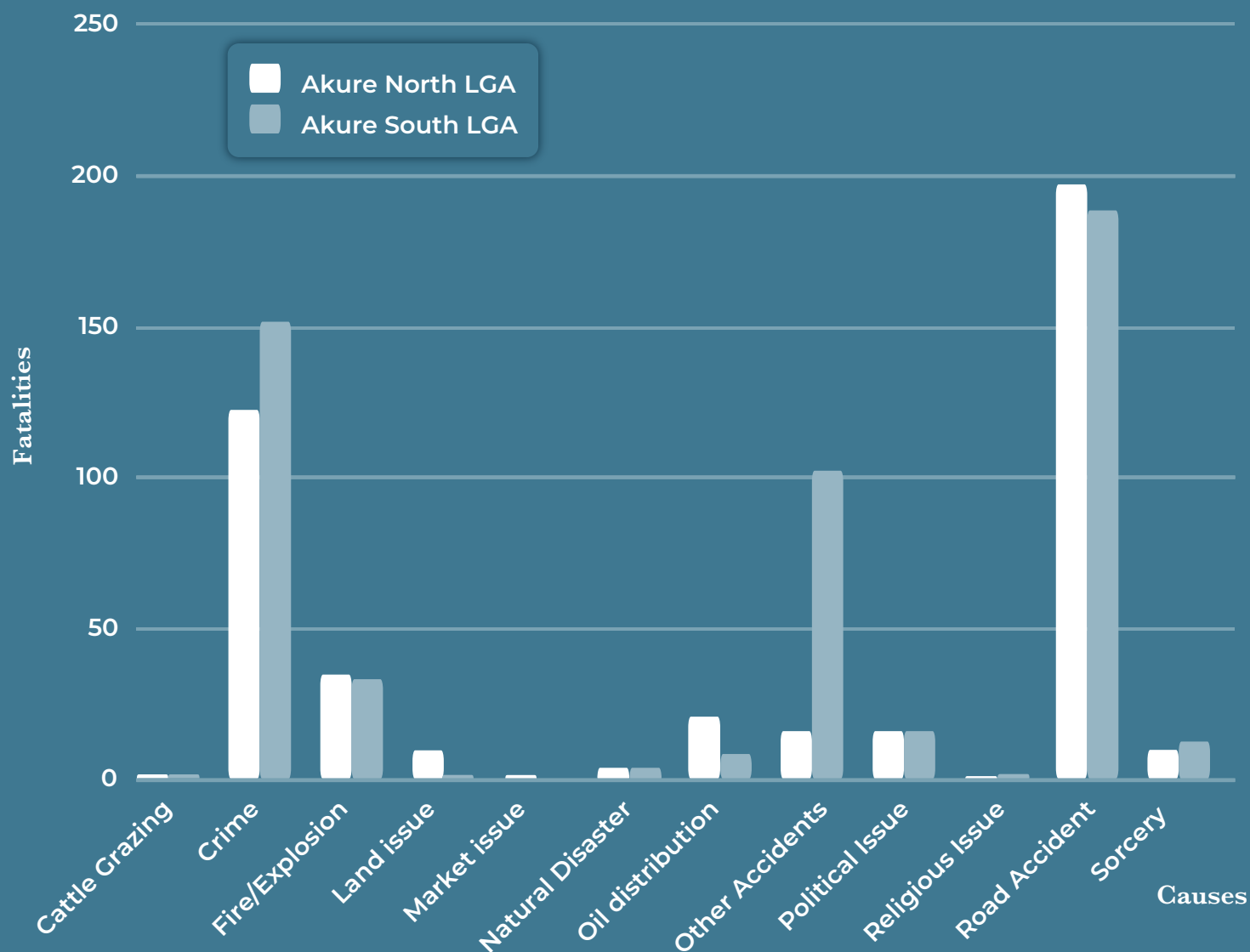
## Akure North and South LGAs in Ondo State



## CAUSES OF VIOLENT DEATHS IN THE TWO LGAs

The data presented in the figure below highlights the causes of violent deaths recorded by the Nigeria Watch Database in the two LGAs. The comparison reveals more similarities than differences between the two areas, especially when it comes to the deadly impact of road accidents and explosions. Akure South, which is more populated, recorded more crime and other types of accidents. According to a retired officer with 35 years of experience in security, however, “*domestic violence and intra communal violence [is allegedly] more prevalent in Akure North*”.

Figure 1: Overall Fatalities in Akure North and South LGAs, Ondo State by Causes (2006-2022)



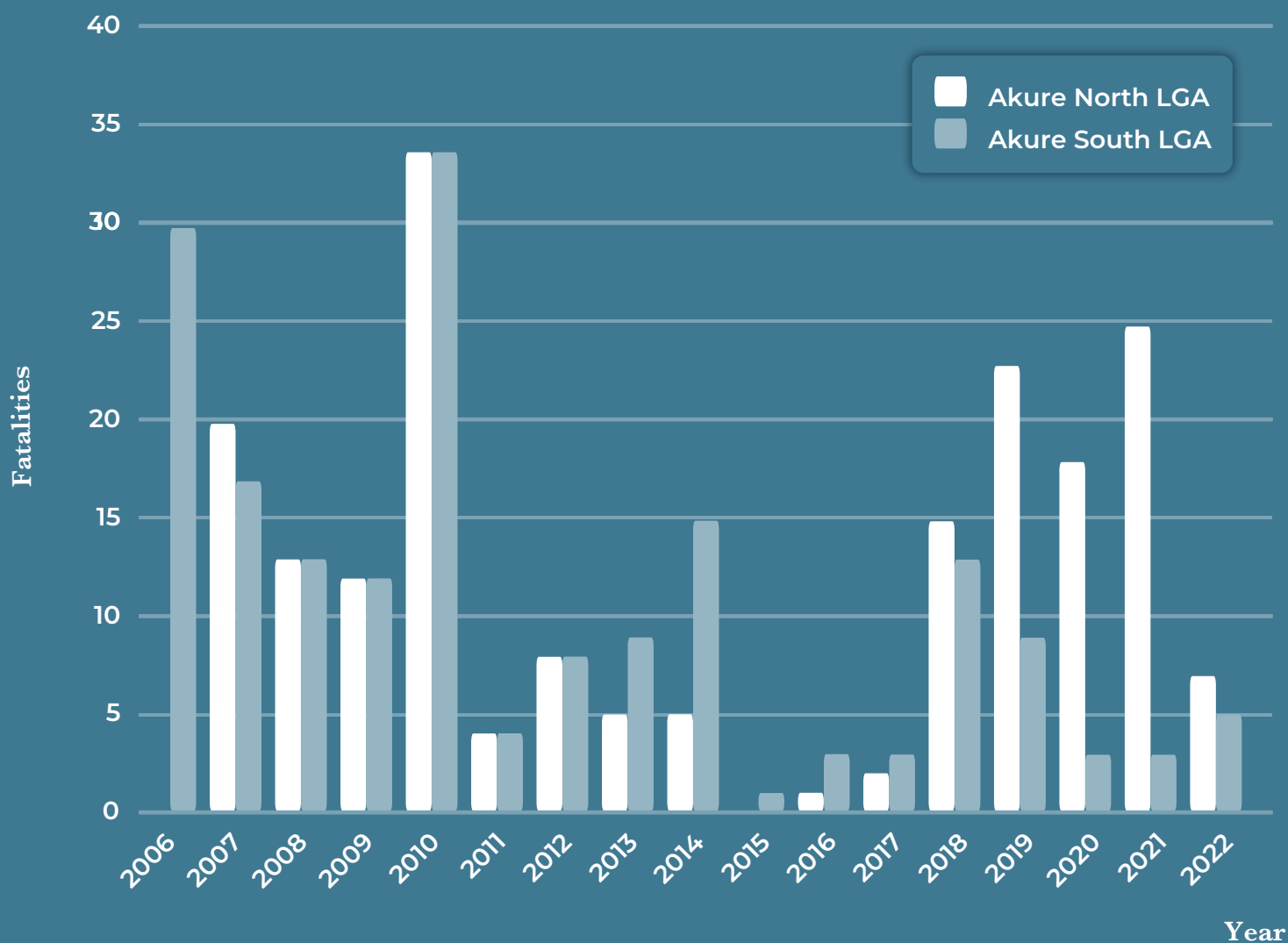
Source: Nigeria Watch Database

In both local governments, residents also confirmed that crime was a major issue. But there were differences. According to a chief, “*the activities, structures and the nature of business that goes on in Akure South is way more civilized than those of Akure North. The population in Akure North is far lesser. Moreover, the state house and government offices are located in Akure South, which attracts many people [looking for jobs or contracts]*”.



Figure 2 shows that, from one year to another, the level of fatalities resulting from road accidents are quite similar in the 2 LGAs. As one of the transport workers said, “most accidents occur along the express road and neighboring communities. Those on the streets [of Akure city] are minor and usually involve over speeding motorbikes, with less casualties”. Elsewhere, residents attributed accidents to poor road conditions, break failures, bad tires, fire outbreaks from car overheating, adverse weather, and reckless driving. Some drivers were suspected of being drunk or on drugs. Driving under the influence of intoxicants and the lack of compliance of road signs are indeed known as important causes of accidents in Nigeria<sup>1</sup>. Another transport worker thus added: “Driving on Akure Ilesha Expressway is like a war... About 70% of road accidents are caused by man-made error. Many cars are not in good conditions but drivers do not care and put the life of innocent passengers in danger”.

Figure 2: Road Accident Fatalities in Akure North and South LGAs, Ondo State (2006-2022)



Source: Nigeria Watch Database

## DEATHS RESULTING FROM CRIME

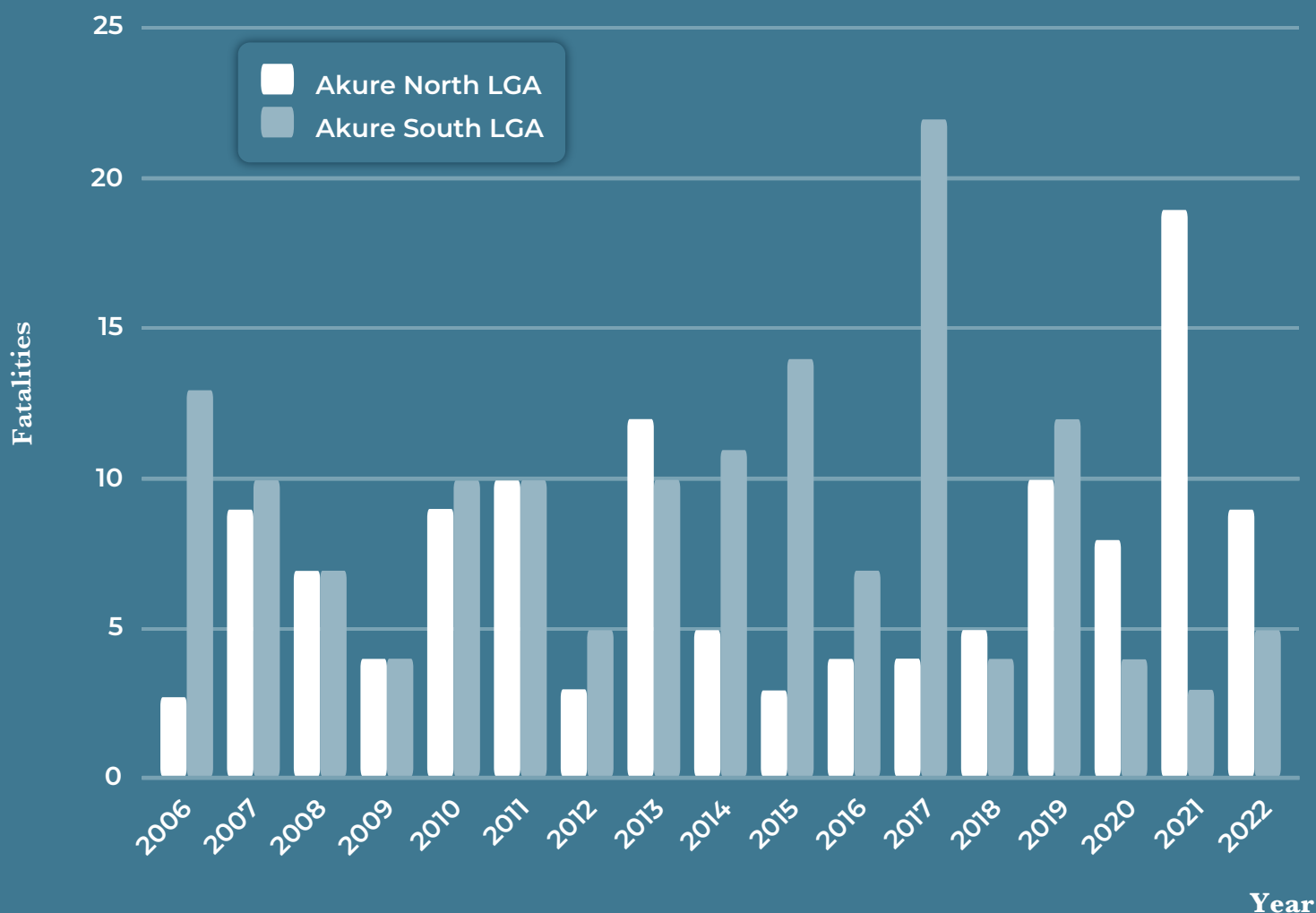
The Nigeria Watch data shows that bank raids and armed robberies are among the most deadly incidents when it comes to crime. Other cases include cult killings in and out of universities, domestic violence at home, clashes with herdsmen and extra judicial killings by the security forces. The youth are seen as the main perpetrators of crime, especially in armed robbery and cult clashes. Respondents pointed at factors such as unemployment, poverty, limited access to education, exposure to violence, a lack of positive role models, and inadequate social support to explain their involvement in crime. A retired police officer, however, claimed that violent crime declined as many youths have taken to cybercrime or legal business. According to a resident who is a fashion designer in Akure North, “crimes such as laptop theft and money rituals were once rampant. However, many uneducated and jobless individuals have now turned to learning trades, attending school, finding work, and starting families. They have embraced a new way of life. Some have become involved in illegal land dealings and unauthorized collections of rents. Overall, the focus has shifted towards non-violent business.”

## SLIGHT DIFFERENCES IN BODY COUNT

The Nigeria Watch Database and Figure 3 reveal slight differences in the recorded body counts of the victims of violence in Akure North and South, especially in 2006, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2021. One potential causal factor for the higher number of fatalities in the south is the prevalence of criminal groups and security forces in the area. In addition, banks and other commercial ventures have made Akure South a more urban space than Akure North, as evidenced by the differences in population density in the two LGAs. On a closer look, the Nigeria Watch database shows that violence in Akure North seems to be more related to land issue, together with herdsmen and communal clashes. Some respondents thus claimed that the council of chiefs in Akure South was more effective to settle peacefully conflicts between landowner, or with tenants.

Yet there were also similarities in the two LGAs. For instance, the human impact of clashes between rival political parties during elections was relatively low. Figure 4 shows that in both LGAs, the main protagonists of lethal violence were criminal gangs and security forces, more than political and ethnic groups. Road accidents were also identified as the most common cause of fatalities in Akure North and South. This could suggest that the dynamics of violence in both LGAs may be driven by similar factors, such as competition for resources and power struggles.

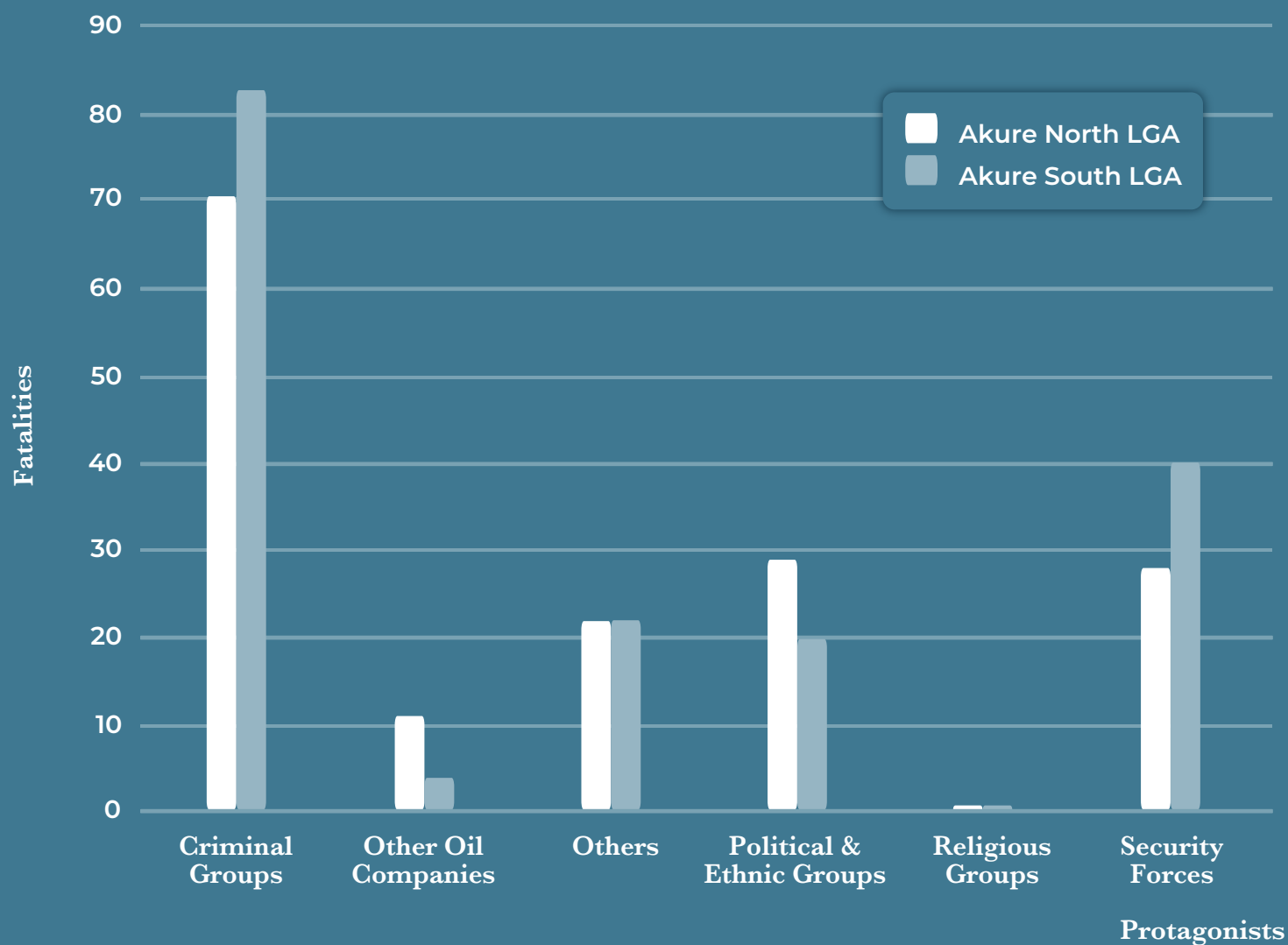
Figure 3: Distribution of Fatalities related to crime in Akure North and South LGAs, Ondo State (2006-2022)



Source: Nigeria Watch Database

Moreover, as shown in Figure 3, the levels of fatalities in Akure North and South were quite comparable in the years 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2022. But this may simply be a coincidence and it does not necessarily indicate any discernible patterns or trends. In both LGAs, some neighborhoods experience less violence.

Figure 4: Protagonists of lethal violence in Akure North and South LGAs, Ondo State (2006-2022)



Source: Nigeria Watch Database

# CONCLUSION

Despite Akure South and Akure North being located in the same state and sharing similar cultural and economic characteristics, we observed variations in the levels of fatal violence between the two local governments. Compared to rural Ondo, moreover, it is possible that there is a lower tendency for underreporting in Akure South, as there are more police stations in the state capital, while the presence of military barracks might deter attacks. In this regard, it is important to note that the Nigeria Watch project may not capture all instances of fatal incidents in each LGA. However, its data provide some useful insights into patterns and trends in Akure South and North, as well as the potential causes and impacts of violence.

Indeed, violence in the area has contributed to a sense of insecurity and fear among residents, with negative consequences on economic activities and quality of life. Fatal incidents have affected individual victims and families, causing emotional distress and hardship in the whole neighborhood. As explained by residents, communities have subsequently taken measures by appointing vigilantes to help curb criminal activities and maintaining peace. Such initiatives include landlord associations, civil defense and Amotekun, a regional security outfit. According to some respondents, swift police intervention has also been instrumental in resolving conflicts and addressing violent incidents. Furthermore, government programs providing soft loans and support for livelihoods have had a positive impact in reducing crime and promoting economic stability. The community's commitment to quick and intelligent reporting, coupled with the deterrent effect of law enforcement actions, have thus contributed to a safer environment.

## REFERENCES

- 1 Alafa, I., & Etim, O. F. (2023). The effectiveness of Federal Road Safety Corp (FRSC) on accident reduction in Nigeria: a study of Bayelsa state. *Nigerian journal of social development*, 11(1), 49-56