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AN ASSESSMENT OF REGIONAL SECURITY CRIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PUBLIC SAFETY IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed regional security crime management strategies and public safety in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the influence of regional security intelligence-led policing on public safety and examined the relationship between regional security community engagement efforts and public safety. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted across the five states of South-East Nigeria: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire whose reliability was established through a pilot study, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.70. Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that intelligence-led policing had a strong and statistically significant influence on public safety. Similarly, community engagement demonstrated a strong and significant positive relationship with public safety. The study concluded that intelligence-driven policing and effective community engagement are critical determinants of improved public safety in South-East Nigeria. The study recommends the establishment of dedicated intelligence units to strengthen intelligence gathering and analysis, as well as the institutionalisation of structured community engagement programmes through regular town hall meetings, security forums, and stakeholder consultations to enhance collaboration between security agencies and local communities.

Keywords: Regional security, crime management, security intelligence and community engagement

Introduction

Over the past decade, the South-East geopolitical zone has experienced a notable rise in violent crimes, including kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, cult-related violence, separatist agitations, targeted killings, and attacks on public infrastructure. These developments have not only threatened the security of lives and property but have also undermined economic activities, weakened public confidence in government institutions, and disrupted social cohesion (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2022). Regional security crime management refers to the coordinated efforts of governmental institutions, law enforcement agencies, community-based organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to prevent, control, and respond to criminal activities within a defined geographical area. Unlike conventional policing that relies primarily on centralized law enforcement institutions, regional security management emphasizes collaboration, intelligence sharing, community participation, and context-specific interventions designed to address the unique security dynamics of a particular region (Alemika, 2013). This approach has become increasingly relevant in Nigeria, where variations in cultural, political, and socio-economic conditions require localized security responses capable of addressing emerging threats more effectively than uniform national strategies. In the South-East of Nigeria, the security landscape has undergone significant transformation due to the interaction of multiple socio-political and economic factors. High youth unemployment, political grievances, economic hardship, weak institutional capacity, proliferation of small arms, and declining public trust in formal security institutions have contributed to increasing levels of insecurity (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2023). The resurgence of separatist movements, particularly the activities associated with the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), alongside the enforcement of periodic sit-at-home orders by armed groups, has further complicated the operational environment for security agencies and intensified public safety concerns.

These conditions have created an atmosphere of fear that affects mobility, commercial activities, educational institutions, healthcare delivery, and overall regional development. The growing inadequacy of conventional policing has prompted the adoption of complementary regional security initiatives involving federal, state, and community actors. Security agencies such as the Nigeria Police Force, the Department of State Services, the Nigerian military, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and various state-backed vigilante groups have implemented diverse crime management strategies including intelligence-led policing, surveillance operations, joint security task forces, community policing initiatives, and technological crime-monitoring systems (Okeshola & Mudiare, 2013). Despite these interventions, criminal activities continue to evolve, raising important questions regarding the effectiveness, coordination, sustainability, and public acceptance of existing regional security frameworks. Public safety extends beyond the absence of crime to encompass the protection of individuals, communities, institutions, and critical infrastructure from threats capable of disrupting normal societal functioning. Effective crime management strategies contribute significantly to public safety by reducing fear of crime, enhancing citizens' confidence in security institutions, protecting human rights, and promoting an environment conducive to economic growth and social stability (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2022). Conversely, ineffective security responses often generate distrust between citizens and law enforcement agencies, weaken intelligence gathering, and limit community participation in crime prevention efforts (Alemika, 2013). However, while several studies have examined insecurity in Nigeria from national or sectoral perspectives, relatively limited empirical attention has been devoted to evaluating how regional security crime management strategies specifically influence public safety outcomes within the South-East geopolitical zone. Existing studies frequently concentrate on individual dimensions of insecurity, such as insurgency, separatist violence, or community policing, without providing an integrated

assessment of the effectiveness of regional crime management mechanisms across the affected states. Against this background, this study seeks to examine regional security crime management strategies and public safety in South-East Nigeria. The findings are expected to contribute to academic discourse on regional security management while providing evidence-based recommendations that can support policymakers, security practitioners, and community leaders in developing more effective and sustainable strategies for improving public safety in South-East Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the relationship between regional security intelligence and public safety
2. To examine the relationship between regional security community engagement and public safety.

Hypotheses

1) There is no significant relationship between regional security intelligence and public safety
2) There is no significant relationship between regional security community engagement and public safety.

Literature review

Regional security intelligence and public safety

Globally, intelligence-led policing has demonstrated considerable potential in addressing various forms of criminal activity. Countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Australia have institutionalized intelligence-led policing frameworks to improve crime prevention and public security. These countries have developed centralized intelligence systems that integrate local, regional, and national law enforcement efforts while encouraging collaboration among public safety agencies (Ratcliffe, 2016). The success of these initiatives has influenced policing reforms in several other jurisdictions seeking to strengthen their security architecture through intelligence-driven approaches. In developing countries, however, the implementation of intelligence-led policing continues to face numerous institutional and operational challenges. Inadequate technological infrastructure, insufficient intelligence analysis capacity, poor interagency cooperation, inadequate funding, political interference, corruption, and limited public trust often constrain the effectiveness of intelligence-based policing strategies (Carter, 2019).

These challenges are particularly evident in countries experiencing high levels of violent crime, insurgency, kidnapping, terrorism, and organized criminal activities. As a result, the potential benefits of intelligence-led policing are not always fully realized despite increasing recognition of its importance. Within the Nigerian context, public safety has become an increasingly significant national concern due to persistent security threats such as armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, banditry, terrorism, cult-related violence, communal conflicts, cybercrime, and farmer-herder clashes. These security challenges have placed enormous pressure on law enforcement agencies to adopt more proactive and intelligence-driven policing strategies. The Nigeria Police Force and other security agencies have initiated several reforms aimed at improving intelligence gathering, information sharing, and crime prevention. Nevertheless, concerns remain regarding the effectiveness of intelligence management, technological capacity, personnel training, and collaboration among relevant security institutions in addressing evolving criminal threats. Conventional policing methods, which primarily focus on responding to crimes after they occur, have often been criticized for their limited capacity to prevent criminal activities or address their underlying causes.

Consequently, policing strategies have gradually shifted toward proactive and evidence-based approaches that prioritize crime prevention, efficient resource allocation, and informed decision-making. One of the most significant developments in this regard is intelligence-led policing (ILP), a policing philosophy that integrates intelligence gathering,

crime analysis, and strategic decision-making to enhance public safety (Carter, 2019). The concept of intelligence-led policing gained prominence during the 1990s following concerns over the increasing sophistication of criminal enterprises and the need for law enforcement agencies to optimize limited resources. Rather than relying solely on routine patrols and reactive responses, intelligence-led policing emphasizes the systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of information to identify crime patterns, high-risk offenders, and emerging security threats before they escalate (Ratcliffe, 2016). This approach supports proactive policing by enabling law enforcement agencies to prioritize interventions based on credible intelligence and risk assessment rather than random or generalized enforcement activities. Intelligence-led policing is rooted in the broader principles of strategic crime management and evidence-based policing. It recognizes that effective policing depends not only on the availability of information but also on the capacity to transform raw data into actionable intelligence.

According to Ratcliffe (2016), intelligence serves as the foundation for informed operational decisions, helping police agencies allocate personnel, technology, and financial resources more efficiently. Through crime mapping, intelligence analysis, surveillance, and interagency collaboration, police organizations are better positioned to disrupt criminal activities before significant harm occurs. The increasing adoption of intelligence-led policing has been facilitated by rapid advancements in information and communication technologies. Modern policing increasingly relies on digital databases, predictive analytics, geographic information systems (GIS), artificial intelligence, biometric technologies, and integrated surveillance systems to collect and analyze large volumes of crime-related data (Boba Santos, 2017).

These technological innovations have significantly improved the ability of law enforcement agencies to identify criminal hotspots, monitor repeat offenders, predict crime trends, and coordinate responses across jurisdictions. Consequently, intelligence-led policing has become an essential component of contemporary public safety strategies in many developed and developing countries. Public safety extends beyond the prevention of crime to include the protection of lives, property, and critical infrastructure while promoting citizens' sense of security. Effective public safety requires collaborative efforts among law enforcement agencies, government institutions, communities, and other stakeholders. Intelligence-led policing contributes to this objective by facilitating informed decision-making and fostering coordinated responses to complex security challenges. Through strategic partnerships and information sharing among security agencies, intelligence can enhance the detection of criminal networks, reduce opportunities for crime, and improve emergency preparedness (Carter, 2019). Public confidence in policing institutions remains an important factor influencing the effectiveness of intelligence-led policing. Intelligence gathering depends significantly on community cooperation, public trust, and the willingness of citizens to share relevant information with law enforcement agencies. Where police-community relationships are weak, intelligence collection may be limited, thereby reducing the effectiveness of crime prevention efforts (Goldstein, 1990).

Consequently, many scholars argue that intelligence-led policing should be implemented alongside community policing initiatives that encourage public participation, transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights. Despite the increasing global adoption of intelligence-led policing, empirical evidence regarding its effectiveness in improving public safety remains mixed. While several studies report reductions in crime rates, improved resource deployment, and enhanced operational efficiency, other scholars caution that excessive reliance on surveillance technologies and predictive policing may raise ethical concerns relating to privacy, civil liberties, racial profiling, and accountability (Maguire & John, 2006). These concerns highlight the need for continuous evaluation of

intelligence-led policing frameworks to ensure that security objectives are achieved without undermining democratic principles and human rights.

Security outfit community engagement and public safety.

Globally, community-oriented policing has gained considerable recognition as an effective strategy for improving public safety. The philosophy encourages law enforcement agencies to work collaboratively with residents, traditional institutions, civil society organizations, religious leaders, youth groups, and other community stakeholders in addressing security challenges. Instead of relying solely on force or reactive crime control, community engagement emphasizes crime prevention through dialogue, consultation, trust, transparency, and shared responsibility. Research has consistently shown that communities characterized by strong police-community partnerships generally experience improved crime reporting, increased public confidence, and enhanced perceptions of safety (Gill, Weisburd, Telep, Vitter, & Bennett, 2014).

In Nigeria, the importance of community engagement has become increasingly evident due to the country's evolving security challenges. Rising incidents of kidnapping, armed robbery, terrorism, communal conflicts, farmer-herder clashes, cultism, banditry, and separatist agitations have stretched the capacity of conventional security institutions.

Consequently, the Nigerian government has promoted community policing initiatives aimed at strengthening collaboration between security agencies and local communities. These initiatives seek to encourage citizens' participation in security governance, improve intelligence gathering, and foster mutual trust between law enforcement personnel and the public. Despite these policy efforts, implementation has been constrained by inadequate funding, insufficient personnel, poor logistics, allegations of corruption, and persistent public distrust arising from reported cases of human rights violations and police misconduct. The nationwide #EndSARS protests further highlighted longstanding concerns about police accountability and significantly influenced public perceptions of security institutions in Nigeria (Skogan, 2006).

The South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria presents a particularly important context for examining the relationship between security outfit community engagement and public safety. Comprising Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States, the region has experienced persistent security challenges in recent years, including attacks on security formations, violent crimes, kidnapping for ransom, destruction of public infrastructure, separatist-related violence, and enforcement of unauthorized sit-at-home orders. These developments have disrupted economic activities, reduced investor confidence, threatened social stability, and increased fear among residents. The complexity of these security challenges has demonstrated that conventional security operations alone may be insufficient without meaningful community collaboration and public support. The effectiveness of security operations in the South-East largely depends on the willingness of community members to cooperate with security agencies by providing timely information, reporting suspicious activities, participating in neighborhood security initiatives, and supporting conflict prevention efforts. However, relationships between security outfits and local communities have often been characterized by mistrust, fear, inadequate communication, and perceptions of excessive use of force. Such strained relationships reduce citizens' willingness to volunteer information and undermine the effectiveness of security operations. Where residents perceive security personnel as fair, accountable, respectful, and responsive, they are more likely to support law enforcement activities and contribute to maintaining public safety (Tyler, 2006).

Furthermore, community engagement extends beyond intelligence gathering to include public awareness campaigns, stakeholder consultations, conflict resolution mechanisms, youth empowerment initiatives, and regular interactions between security

agencies and community leaders. These strategies create opportunities for mutual understanding, enhance transparency, reduce misinformation, and strengthen social resilience against criminal activities. The integration of traditional rulers, town unions, vigilante groups, religious organizations, women associations, and youth organizations into local security governance has become increasingly important in addressing the peculiar security realities of the South-East. Despite growing scholarly attention to policing and security management in Nigeria, relatively few studies have comprehensively examined how community engagement by various security outfits influences public safety outcomes specifically within the South-East region. Existing literature has largely focused on crime trends, police reforms, human rights concerns, or community policing in general, with limited empirical attention to the effectiveness of collaborative engagement between multiple security institutions and communities in improving public safety.

This knowledge gap necessitates further investigation into the extent to which community engagement strategies adopted by security outfits contribute to crime prevention, public trust, intelligence sharing, and overall safety in the South-East. Against this background, this study seeks to examine the relationship between security outfit community engagement and public safety in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, it aims to assess how collaboration between security agencies and local communities influences crime prevention, strengthens public confidence, enhances intelligence gathering, and promotes sustainable peace and security. In every society, effective security management depends not only on the operational capacity of security agencies but also on the quality of their relationship with the communities they serve. Contemporary policing has therefore shifted from the traditional reactive model to a more collaborative approach that emphasizes community engagement, intelligence sharing, trust-building, and partnership between security outfits and local residents. This approach recognizes that public safety is more effectively achieved when citizens actively participate in identifying security threats and supporting law enforcement agencies (Skogan, 2006). Community engagement has become an essential component of modern security governance because crime prevention requires collective responsibility rather than exclusive dependence on formal security institutions.

Security outfits including the Nigeria Police Force, military formations, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the Department of State Services (DSS), and recognized local security organizations rely significantly on information provided by community members to prevent crime and respond effectively to emerging security challenges. Where trust exists between security personnel and residents, intelligence gathering becomes easier, emergency responses become faster, and public confidence in security institutions increases. Conversely, weak relationships between security agencies and citizens often result in poor intelligence, reduced cooperation, fear of reporting crimes, and declining public confidence in law enforcement (Tyler, 2006). The findings of the study are expected to contribute to policy.

Theoretical framework

Community Policing Theory

Community Policing Theory is widely associated with Herman Goldstein (1979). The theory assumes that maintaining law and order is not the exclusive responsibility of security agencies but requires the active participation of citizens, local leaders, community-based organizations, and government institutions. The theory further assumed that community members possess valuable information regarding criminal activities, emerging threats, and suspicious behaviours within their localities. Effective policing therefore depends on integrating local intelligence into security operations. Community Policing Theory provides a suitable theoretical framework for examining regional security crime management strategies and public safety in South-East Nigeria. The region has experienced persistent security

challenges, including armed robbery, kidnapping, violent separatist activities, communal conflicts, cult-related violence, and attacks on public institutions. These security threats have necessitated the emergence of regional security initiatives such as the Eastern Security Network (ESN) and Ebube Agu, alongside conventional security agencies. The theory is relevant to this study in several ways. First, it explains the rationale behind establishing regional security outfits as mechanisms for improving local participation in crime prevention. Regional security organizations are often created because local actors possess better knowledge of the geographical terrain, cultural dynamics, and social networks within their communities than centrally controlled security agencies.

Second, the theory emphasizes collaboration between formal and informal security institutions. In South-East Nigeria, effective crime management requires cooperation among the Nigeria Police Force, regional security outfits, traditional rulers, town unions, youth organizations, religious institutions, vigilante groups, and community development associations. Despite its relevance, Community Policing Theory has several limitations. First, the theory assumes that communities are cohesive and willing to cooperate with security agencies. In reality, many communities are divided along ethnic, political, religious, or socio-economic lines, making collective action difficult. Although the theory has limitations, particularly in dealing with structural and highly organized forms of criminality, it remains an appropriate framework for analysing the extent to which collaboration between security agencies and local communities contributes to effective crime management and improved public safety in South-East Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. The design is appropriate because it enables the researcher to obtain information directly from respondents concerning their perceptions, experiences, and opinions on regional security crime management strategies and public safety in South-East Nigeria. The study was conducted in South-East Nigeria, comprising the five states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. The region occupies a strategic position in Nigeria's socio-economic and political landscape. In recent years, the South-East has experienced increasing security challenges, including kidnapping, armed robbery, violent crimes, communal conflicts, attacks on security formations and activities of armed groups. These security concerns have led to the emergence of regional security initiatives aimed at improving crime management and enhancing public safety. The target population comprises adult residents (18 years and above), community leaders, security personnel, local government officials, civil society representatives, business owners, and other stakeholders residing in the five states of South-East Nigeria who possess relevant knowledge or experience regarding regional security crime management strategies. The study utilized a sample size of 588 respondents. The sample was drawn using Taro Yamane (1967) formula.

The sample size is determined as follows:

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Population size

e = Level of precision (sampling error), commonly set at 0.05 (5%) for a 95% confidence level.

The data obtained was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.The study adopted a multi-stage sampling technique.

Table Summary of Sampling Procedure

Stage	Sampling Technique	Units Selected	Number
Stage 1	Purposive Sampling	States	5
Stage 2	Stratified Random Sampling	LGAs	15
Stage 3	Simple Random Sampling	Communities	30
Stage 4	Simple Random Sampling	Streets	60
Stage 5	Systematic Random Sampling	Household	600
Stage 6	Simple Random Sampling	Valid Respondents	588

The primary instrument for data collection was the structured questionnaire. Reliability of the Instrument: A pilot study was conducted among respondents outside the selected study areas but with characteristics similar to those of the target population. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 was recorded, indicating that the instrument is sufficiently reliable for the study.The research hypotheses was tested at the 0.05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. If calculated the r-value is greater than critical r-value, the null hypothesis is rejected. If calculated the r-value is less than critical r-value, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Results

Hypothesis 1: Regional security Intelligence-led policing does not significantly influence public safety

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) calculation of the relationship between regional security outfit Intelligence-led policing and public safety

Factors	N	Mean	SD	r-value	Sig.
Regional security outfit intelligence-led policing	588	2.6579	1.08178	.893	.05
Public safety	588	2.1342	.85051		

Significant at *P*< .05; Critical r-value = 0.196 d.f = 586

The test result showed that calculated r-value 0.893was greater than critical r-value 0.196 at 0.05 levels of significance with 586 degrees of freedom. This guarantees the rejection of the (H_0) null hypothesis as seen in the decision rule and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which states that regional security outfit Intelligence-led policing significantly influence public safety.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between regional security outfit community engagement and public safety.

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) calculation of the relationship between regional security outfit community engagement and public safety

Factors	N	Mean	SD	r-value	Sig.
Regional security outfit community engagement	588	2.3605	1.33118	.928	**.05**
Public safety	588	2.0395	1.22680		

Significant at *P*< .05; Critical r-value = 0.196 d.f = 586

The test result showed that calculated r-value 0.928 was greater than critical r-value 0.196 at 0.05 levels of significance with 586 degrees of freedom. This guarantees the rejection of the (H_0) null hypothesis as seen in the decision rule and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which states that there is a significant relationship between regional security outfit community engagement and public safety.

Discussion of findings

Intelligence-led policing enables security personnel to identify crime patterns, anticipate security threats, allocate resources efficiently, and intervene before criminal activities escalate. Unlike reactive policing approaches, intelligence-led policing emphasizes evidence-based decision-making, strategic deployment of personnel, and collaboration with local communities. In many regions where conventional policing has faced operational challenges, regional security outfits have complemented formal security agencies by utilizing local knowledge and timely intelligence to detect criminal hideouts, monitor suspicious movements, and prevent violent crimes such as kidnapping, armed robbery, banditry, and communal conflicts. These operational advantages likely explain the strong positive relationship observed in this study. The findings are consistent with the Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) framework, which argues that intelligence should guide operational planning, resource allocation, and crime prevention strategies rather than relying solely on routine patrols or reactive responses. According to Ratcliffe (2016), intelligence-led policing enhances the effectiveness of law enforcement by enabling security agencies to focus on high-risk offenders, crime hotspots, and emerging security threats. Similarly, Carter and Carter (2009) argued that intelligence-led policing improves organizational efficiency and supports proactive policing by transforming information into actionable intelligence for strategic decision-making. Within the Nigerian context, the findings are consistent with studies examining the contributions of regional security outfits to internal security. For example, Akinlabi (2020) found that community-based intelligence significantly enhanced the operational effectiveness of regional security initiatives in addressing kidnapping, armed robbery, and rural insecurity. Similarly, Nte (2021) reported that intelligence gathering by local security networks contributed to early detection of criminal activities and improved public confidence in community safety initiatives. These studies support the argument that localized intelligence provides security personnel with contextual information that is often unavailable through centralized policing structures. The strong relationship observed in this study also suggests that intelligence-led policing enhances public trust and citizen cooperation. When community members perceive regional security outfits as responsive and effective in preventing crime, they are more willing to provide useful information regarding

suspicious activities. This creates a positive feedback mechanism in which increased intelligence leads to better security outcomes, while improved security encourages greater public participation in crime prevention. The implications of these findings are significant for security policy and practice.

Community engagement promotes mutual confidence, legitimacy, and accountability, making security interventions more acceptable and effective. Consequently, communities with stronger engagement tend to experience lower crime rates, quicker emergency responses, and improved perceptions of safety. The findings are consistent with the principles of community policing theory, which argues that sustainable public safety is achieved when security agencies and community members work collaboratively to identify and solve local security challenges. Rather than relying solely on enforcement, regional security outfits that involve community stakeholders are better positioned to prevent crime proactively and maintain social order through shared responsibility. The result corroborates the findings of Skogan (2006), who reported that community participation significantly improves police effectiveness, public trust, and crime prevention. Similarly, Gill, Weisburd, Telep, and colleagues (2014), in their systematic review of community-oriented policing programmes, concluded that community engagement enhances citizens' confidence in security agencies, increases public satisfaction, and contributes to reductions in crime and fear of crime. Likewise, Alemika (2013) observed that active community participation in security governance strengthens intelligence gathering and improves public safety outcomes in Nigeria. In the Nigerian context, studies by Abutudu and Osaghae (2020) further demonstrated that regional security initiatives, such as community-based security networks, become more effective when local residents actively cooperate with security personnel through information sharing and collective vigilance. Regional security outfits should establish regular town hall meetings, community liaison committees, neighbourhood watch partnerships, and accessible communication channels that encourage citizens to report security concerns without fear of victimisation.

Conclusion

This study assessed regional security crime management strategies and their implications for public safety in South-East Nigeria. The findings demonstrate that while various security initiatives have contributed to crime prevention and response, their effectiveness has been constrained by inadequate inter-agency coordination, limited resources, intelligence-sharing gaps, and persistent socio-economic challenges that continue to fuel criminal activities. The study also revealed that public trust, community participation, and the adoption of proactive crime management approaches remain critical determinants of sustainable security outcomes in the region. The major contribution of this study lies in its comprehensive assessment of existing regional security crime management strategies and their impact on public safety within the South-East geopolitical zone. By identifying the strengths and limitations of current security frameworks, the study provides empirical evidence that can inform policymakers, security agencies, and other stakeholders in designing more integrated, community-oriented, and intelligence-driven security strategies. It also enriches the existing body of knowledge on regional security governance and crime management in Nigeria. Looking ahead, strengthening collaboration among security agencies, enhancing community policing initiatives, investing in modern security technologies, and addressing the socio-economic drivers of crime will be essential for improving public safety and ensuring lasting regional stability. Future research should expand the scope of investigation by undertaking comparative studies across Nigeria's geopolitical zones, incorporating longitudinal data to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of security interventions, and exploring the role of emerging technologies and community-based intelligence systems in enhancing crime management and public safety.

Recommendations

Intelligence-Led Policing and Public Safety

1) To strengthen the effectiveness of regional security outfits in promoting public safety, intelligence-led policing should be institutionalized as the primary operational strategy. Rather than relying predominantly on reactive responses to crime, regional security outfits should establish dedicated intelligence units responsible for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating timely information on emerging security threats.
2) Regional security outfits should develop integrated intelligence-sharing mechanisms with the police, military, intelligence agencies, immigration authorities, and local vigilante groups through secure digital platforms and periodic joint intelligence meetings.
3) Investment in modern surveillance technologies, including geographic information systems (GIS), closed-circuit television (CCTV), drones, crime mapping software, and biometric identification systems, should also be prioritized.
4) Regional security outfits should adopt a community-centered security model that positions citizens as active partners in maintaining public safety.
5) community engagement should move beyond occasional consultations to become a structured component of security governance through regular town hall meetings, community policing forums, neighborhood security committees, and stakeholder dialogues involving traditional rulers, religious leaders, youth organizations, women groups, and civil society organizations.
6) To improve public trust and encourage citizen participation, regional security outfits should establish accessible and confidential reporting channels, including emergency hotlines, mobile applications, social media platforms, and anonymous whistle-blowing systems.

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