

## Intelligent gathering and crime control in Nigeria: A critical sociological view

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### Abstract

Security challenges such as militancy, kidnapping, oil theft, and communal conflicts threaten stability in South-South Nigeria. Traditional kinetic security measures, while providing temporary relief, fail to address the root causes of insecurity, perpetuating cycles of violence. This study critically examines the role of intelligence gathering and non-kinetic strategies in crime control, emphasizing their potential to transform the region's security landscape. Non-kinetic approaches, including socio-economic empowerment, community engagement, and conflict resolution, target underlying drivers like poverty, unemployment, and environmental degradation. Using a mixed-methods design, findings highlight the effectiveness of grassroots intelligence gathering, skill empowerment initiatives, and advocacy programs, such as school-based crime prevention clubs, in reducing criminal behavior. Guided by Routine Activities and Social Disorganization Theories, the study recommends prioritizing vocational training, enhancing community-police collaboration, and implementing conflict resolution mechanisms. These strategies offer a sustainable pathway to peace and security in South-South Nigeria.

**Keywords:** *Intelligent gathering, crime control, Nigeria, sociological view.*

### Introduction

Security is a cornerstone for the stability and development of any society. In South-South Nigeria, a region rich in natural resources, particularly oil, security challenges have profoundly impacted economic activities and the overall well-being of its residents. The region's economic prominence has also rendered it vulnerable to security issues such as militancy, kidnapping, oil theft, and communal conflicts (Ikelegbe, 2010). Traditional kinetic strategies, centered on military interventions and the use of armed forces, have often achieved only temporary stability, failing to address the root causes of insecurity. Comprising states like Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers, South-South Nigeria plays a crucial role in the nation's economy due to its abundant oil reserves. However, this wealth has not translated into widespread prosperity but has instead led to significant socio-economic disparities and environmental degradation, fostering a climate conducive to conflict and criminality (Omeje, 2006). Militancy, one of the most pressing security concerns, is fueled by grievances over resource control, environmental pollution, and perceived marginalization by the central government. Groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) have resorted to violent tactics to highlight their demands, disrupting oil production and resulting in significant human and economic losses.

Kidnapping has evolved from being politically motivated to a lucrative criminal enterprise, with high-profile abductions of expatriates and affluent individuals becoming increasingly common. This trend undermines investor confidence and instills widespread fear. Similarly, oil theft, or "bunkering," not only depletes national revenue but also funds other criminal activities and worsens environmental degradation. Communal conflicts, driven by competition for land and resources, further complicate the region's security dynamics (Ojajorotu, 2008; Obi, 2010; Okoli & Agada, 2014). The predominant reliance on kinetic security measures in South-South Nigeria, including military deployments and law enforcement crackdowns, has produced mixed results. While effective in suppressing immediate threats, these approaches often neglect the underlying socio-economic and political issues, leading to cycles of violence and unrest. Moreover, military interventions frequently result in collateral damage, displacement, and strained relationships with local communities,

exacerbating tensions rather than resolving them. The limitations of these approaches underscore the need for innovative strategies that address the root causes of insecurity.

Non-kinetic security strategies provide a viable alternative by focusing on socio-economic development, community engagement, intelligence gathering, and conflict resolution (Ukiwo, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 2007; Watts, 2008). These approaches aim to build sustainable peace by addressing poverty, unemployment, and inadequate education—factors that often drive individuals toward militancy and criminality. For instance, initiatives offering vocational training and employment opportunities can divert youth from participating in illicit activities (Onuoha, 2010; Oluwaniyi, 2011; Kaldor, 2013). Community engagement is a pivotal component of non-kinetic strategies. Establishing trust and collaboration between security agencies and local communities enhances intelligence gathering and strengthens early warning systems, facilitating timely responses to security threats. Involving community leaders in peacebuilding efforts fosters a sense of ownership and collective responsibility for maintaining security. Effective intelligence gathering further bolsters these efforts by identifying and addressing potential threats before they escalate into widespread conflict. Conflict resolution mechanisms such as mediation and dialogue play a critical role in addressing grievances and fostering reconciliation among disputing parties. These mechanisms provide peaceful alternatives to violence and help to build a foundation for long-term stability (Lederach, 2003; Alao, 2007; Oluwaniyi, 2011; Kaldor, 2013).

Given the complexity of security challenges in South-South Nigeria, non-kinetic strategies offer a promising framework for achieving lasting peace and development. By shifting the focus from military suppression to socio-economic empowerment, dialogue, and community cohesion, these approaches address the deeper issues fueling insecurity. This study aims to advance understanding and implementation of non-kinetic security strategies in the region, providing practical insights for policymakers and stakeholders. Ultimately, resolving the entrenched security challenges in South-South Nigeria requires a holistic approach. Non-kinetic strategies, with their emphasis on development, engagement, and proactive conflict resolution, offer a sustainable path forward. By reducing dependence on force and prioritizing dialogue and empowerment, these strategies have the potential to transform the region's security landscape, fostering peace and enabling inclusive development.

## Literature review

Intelligence gathering and crime control are integral to law enforcement and national security, playing a vital role in ensuring societal safety and security. The effectiveness of these processes profoundly influences the overall stability and protection of communities. This literature review examines the theoretical frameworks, empirical evidence, and practical applications of intelligence gathering in crime control. Intelligence gathering involves the structured process of collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information to inform security and crime control decisions. Central to this process is the intelligence cycle, which encompasses direction, collection, processing, analysis, dissemination, and feedback—offering a foundational understanding of intelligence operations. Collaboration among various agencies and leveraging advanced technologies are essential for effective intelligence gathering.

Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) represents a strategic paradigm that prioritizes the use of intelligence in shaping policing strategies. As Ratcliffe (2008) explains, ILP integrates crime analysis and criminal intelligence into police practices to identify, disrupt, and dismantle criminal networks. By shifting the emphasis from reactive to proactive approaches, ILP focuses on addressing high-risk offenders and areas, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of law enforcement efforts.

Several empirical studies have examined the relationship between intelligence gathering and crime control, highlighting various factors that influence the effectiveness of intelligence operations. Gill et al. (2018) conducted a study on the impact of ILP on crime rates in the United Kingdom. The study found that areas with robust ILP practices experienced significant reductions in crime rates, particularly in violent and organized crimes. The researchers attributed this success to the targeted approach of ILP, which focuses resources on high-risk areas and individuals.

Gill et al. (2018) aimed to assess how ILP practices influenced crime rates across different regions in the UK. The study focused on areas where ILP was robustly implemented, examining its impact on overall crime rates, with a particular focus on violent and organized crimes. The researchers employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of crime statistics with qualitative interviews of law enforcement officials. The study covered a period of five years, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of trends and changes in crime rates. The study yielded significant findings, highlighting the efficacy of ILP in reducing crime rates. The findings underscore the potential of ILP to transform crime control strategies. For law enforcement agencies, adopting ILP practices can lead to more effective crime prevention and a safer community. The study provides compelling evidence that ILP can significantly reduce crime rates, particularly in violent and organized crimes. The study highlights the importance of a targeted, intelligence-driven approach to law enforcement, which can lead to more efficient use of resources and better outcomes for community safety. As ILP continues to evolve, ongoing research and practice will be essential in refining its strategies and maximizing its impact on crime control.

Ratcliffe (2016) explored the effectiveness of intelligence dissemination in Philadelphia's police department. The study showed that timely and accurate dissemination of intelligence information to patrol officers resulted in more efficient resource allocation and improved crime-solving rates. The feedback loop in the intelligence cycle was crucial for refining intelligence products and enhancing operational outcomes. Ratcliffe's study aimed to evaluate the role of intelligence dissemination in enhancing the operational efficiency of the Philadelphia Police Department. The research specifically examined the processes involved in disseminating intelligence to patrol officers and the subsequent effects on crime control and resource management. His study underscores the importance of effective intelligence dissemination in enhancing the operational efficiency of law enforcement agencies. By ensuring that intelligence is timely, accurate, and appropriately disseminated, police departments like Philadelphia's can improve resource allocation, increase crime-solving rates, and strengthen overall crime control efforts. The feedback loop in the intelligence cycle is essential for refining intelligence products and achieving better operational outcomes. This study provides valuable insights into how intelligence dissemination can be optimized to support effective policing and enhance public safety.

Johnston and Shearing (2019) investigated the role of community intelligence in crime control in South Africa. Their research emphasized the importance of community engagement and trust in gathering actionable intelligence. The study demonstrated that when community members felt secure and trusted law enforcement, they were more likely to provide valuable information that could prevent and solve crimes. Ratcliffe's study aimed to evaluate the role of intelligence dissemination in enhancing the operational efficiency of the Philadelphia Police Department. The research specifically examined the processes involved in disseminating intelligence to patrol officers and the subsequent effects on crime control and resource management.

Ratcliffe's study highlights the need for investments in technology to facilitate timely and accurate dissemination of intelligence. Implementing advanced communication systems and data management tools can support effective information sharing. Training programs for both intelligence analysts and patrol officers are essential to ensure that they understand how to use intelligence effectively and provide valuable feedback for improvement. Establishing robust feedback mechanisms is critical for refining intelligence products. Regular debriefings and feedback sessions can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that intelligence remains relevant and actionable. Enhancing communication channels between intelligence units and patrol officers can improve the overall flow of information and coordination. Creating dedicated roles or teams to manage and facilitate this communication can be beneficial.

The study underscores the importance of effective intelligence dissemination in enhancing the operational efficiency of law enforcement agencies. By ensuring that intelligence is timely, accurate, and appropriately disseminated, police departments like Philadelphia's can improve resource allocation, increase crime-solving rates, and strengthen overall crime control efforts. The feedback loop in the intelligence cycle is essential for refining intelligence products and achieving better operational outcomes. This study provides valuable insights into how intelligence dissemination can be optimized to support effective policing and enhance public safety.

Technological advancements have significantly enhanced intelligence gathering capabilities. The integration of big data analytics, artificial intelligence, and geographic information systems (GIS) has revolutionized crime analysis and prediction. Chen et al. (2016) analyzed the use of big data analytics in crime prevention. The study found that data from various sources, including social media, surveillance cameras, and public records, could be analysed to identify patterns and predict criminal activities. This proactive approach enables law enforcement agencies to prevent crimes before they occur. The integration of big data analytics into crime prevention strategies represents a significant advancement in law enforcement practices.

Chen et al. (2016) conducted a comprehensive analysis of how big data analytics can be utilized to enhance crime prevention efforts. The study explored the potential of analyzing data from diverse sources to identify patterns and predict criminal activities, offering a proactive approach to law enforcement. Chen et al. (2016) aimed to investigate the effectiveness of big data analytics in predicting and preventing criminal activities. The study examined how data collected from various sources could be leveraged to enhance crime prevention strategies and improve the overall safety of communities. Chen et al. (2016) found that big data analytics significantly improved the ability to identify criminal patterns. By analyzing data from various sources, law enforcement agencies were able to detect emerging trends and potential threats more accurately. Social media analysis, in particular, provided valuable insights into public sentiment and potential criminal activities that might not be captured through traditional methods. The study demonstrated that predictive analytics could forecast criminal activities before they occur. By analyzing historical data and current trends, predictive models were able to anticipate where and when crimes were likely to happen. This proactive approach allowed law enforcement agencies to deploy resources more effectively and prevent crimes before they occurred. Big data analytics enabled more efficient resource allocation by identifying high-risk areas and times. Law enforcement agencies could focus their efforts on areas with the highest likelihood of criminal activity, optimizing their patrol strategies and response times. The study noted that resource allocation based on predictive analytics led to a reduction in crime rates and an increase in successful interventions.

Chen et al. (2016) highlighted the importance of integrating data from multiple sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of criminal behaviour. Combining social media data, surveillance footage, and public records provided a more complete picture of potential threats and patterns. This integration facilitated more accurate and actionable intelligence for law enforcement agencies. The study provides compelling evidence of the potential of big data analytics to revolutionize crime prevention efforts. By utilizing data from diverse sources and employing advanced analytical techniques, law enforcement agencies can identify patterns, predict criminal activities, and allocate resources more effectively. The proactive approach enabled by big data analytics represents a significant advancement in crime prevention, offering the potential for safer and more resilient communities. However, addressing challenges related to data privacy, quality, and ethical considerations remains essential for the successful implementation of these strategies.

Perry et al. (2013) examined the use of predictive policing techniques in Los Angeles. The study highlighted those predictive models, which analyse historical crime data to forecast future crimes, led to a significant reduction in property crimes. The authors stressed the importance of continuously updating predictive models with new data to maintain their accuracy and effectiveness. The research aimed to assess the effectiveness of predictive policing models in Los Angeles. The study evaluated how historical crime data was used to forecast future criminal activities and the subsequent impact on crime rates, particularly focusing on property crimes such as burglary and theft. Perry et al. (2013) found that the use of predictive policing models led to a significant reduction in property crimes in Los Angeles. The study observed a notable decrease in incidents such as burglary and theft in areas where predictive policing techniques were actively employed. The predictive models enabled law enforcement agencies to allocate resources more effectively, focusing on high-risk areas and times identified through the analysis of historical data. The study highlighted that predictive models were effective in forecasting property crimes by identifying patterns and trends in historical crime data. This proactive approach allowed for more targeted law enforcement efforts and preventive measures. The accuracy of the predictive models depended on the quality and completeness of the input data, as well as the relevance of the variables used in the models.

Perry et al. (2013) emphasized the importance of continuously updating predictive models with new data to maintain their accuracy and effectiveness. As crime patterns evolve over time, it is crucial to incorporate recent data into the models to ensure they remain relevant and reliable. Regular updates and recalibration of the models were necessary to adapt to changing trends and emerging threats. Predictive policing provided law enforcement agencies with actionable insights that improved operational decision-making. By anticipating where and when property crimes were likely to occur, police departments could implement preventive measures and optimize their patrol strategies. The study noted that predictive policing techniques also facilitated better coordination and resource management, leading to more efficient and effective crime control. Law enforcement agencies should invest in robust data infrastructure to support the development and maintenance of predictive models. This includes investing in data collection systems, analytical tools, and technology platforms. Training for police officers and analysts on the use and interpretation of predictive models is essential. Ensuring that personnel understand how to effectively use the models and incorporate their insights into operational practices is crucial for maximizing their benefits. Regular evaluation of predictive models is important for ensuring their ongoing accuracy and relevance. Agencies should establish processes for continuously updating and refining models based on new data and changing crime patterns.

The study provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of predictive policing techniques in reducing property crimes in Los Angeles. The study demonstrates that predictive models, when informed by historical crime data and continuously updated, can significantly improve crime prevention efforts and resource allocation. The findings underscore the importance of maintaining data accuracy, regularly updating models, and balancing predictive techniques with privacy and ethical considerations. By leveraging predictive policing, law enforcement agencies can enhance their ability to prevent crime and ensure the safety and security of their communities.

The advancements in intelligence gathering have significantly enhanced law enforcement capabilities, enabling more effective crime prevention and security measures. However, the collection and analysis of vast amounts of personal data introduce substantial challenges, particularly concerning privacy. Balancing security with individual privacy rights remains a critical and ongoing issue for law enforcement agencies. Modern intelligence gathering often involves the collection of extensive amounts of personal data from various sources, including social media, surveillance systems, and public records. The sheer volume of data can lead to concerns about how this information is handled and safeguarded. Data collected may include sensitive information such as personal communications, location history, and biometric data. The breadth and depth of such information raise concerns about potential misuse and the erosion of personal privacy. Surveillance technologies, such as facial recognition and digital tracking, have become more sophisticated. While these tools enhance security, they also pose risks of intrusive monitoring and constant surveillance, potentially infringing on individuals' privacy. The knowledge that one is being watched or monitored can lead to self-censorship and a chilling effect on freedom of expression. People may alter their behaviour or limit their activities due to fear of surveillance (Bennett, 2018).

The study by Bennett (2018) underscores the significant privacy concerns associated with advancements in intelligence gathering. As law enforcement agencies increasingly rely on sophisticated data collection and analysis techniques, balancing security with individual privacy rights remains a challenging and crucial task. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach, including implementing privacy protections, developing clear policies, engaging with the public, and strengthening oversight and accountability. By navigating these complexities thoughtfully, agencies can enhance their security capabilities while respecting and safeguarding individual privacy.

Effective intelligence gathering is a cornerstone of modern law enforcement and national security efforts. It involves the systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of information to support decision-making and operational strategies. However, the success and sustainability of intelligence-led initiatives heavily depend on the availability and allocation of substantial resources. Gill (2018) highlights that limited resources can significantly impede the implementation and long-term effectiveness of these initiatives. Gill (2018) emphasizes that the effectiveness of intelligence gathering is contingent upon substantial resources, including trained personnel, advanced technologies, and adequate funding. Limited resources can impede the implementation and sustainability of intelligence-led initiatives, affecting their ability to address threats and maintain operational efficiency. Addressing these challenges requires strategic resource allocation, public-private partnerships, investments in training and technology, and a focus on operational efficiency. By effectively managing and optimizing available resources, law enforcement agencies can enhance their intelligence capabilities and improve overall security outcomes.

The success of intelligence operations heavily relies on effective collaboration among various agencies. However, factors such as jurisdictional boundaries, conflicting priorities, and

a lack of trust can hinder the seamless exchange of intelligence (Carter, 2015). As a vital component of crime control, intelligence gathering significantly enhances law enforcement's capacity to prevent and solve crimes. Empirical evidence underscores the benefits of intelligence-led policing and the application of advanced technologies in crime prevention. Nevertheless, challenges such as privacy concerns, resource limitations, and inter-agency coordination must be addressed to optimize the impact of intelligence operations. To keep pace with evolving security threats and safeguard communities, sustained research and innovation in this domain are imperative.

## **Theoretical framework**

### *Routine Activities Theory*

Developed by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson (1979), Routine Activities Theory suggests that crime occurs when three conditions are met - a motivated offender, a suitable target, and a lack of capable guardianship. Non-kinetic security strategies often focus on increasing capable guardianship and altering routine activities to reduce opportunities for crime. These strategies may include community engagement, environmental design, and increased surveillance to deter criminal activity without the use of force. Routine Activities Theory (RAT), developed by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson in 1979, posits that crime occurs as a result of the convergence of three elements - motivated offender, suitable target and lack of capable guardianship.

#### i) *Motivated offender*

Motivated offender is an individual with the inclination and intention to commit a crime. Several factors can contribute to this motivation, including the desire for financial or material gain often drives individuals to commit crimes like theft, burglary, or fraud. Some individuals may be driven by psychological needs or disorders, such as anger, thrill-seeking, or a need for power and control. Peer pressure, social environment, or gang affiliations can also motivate individuals to engage in criminal activities. Economic challenges and lack of legitimate opportunities can push individuals towards criminal behaviour as a means of survival. Addiction to drugs or alcohol can lead individuals to commit crimes to support their habits (Cohen & Felson, 1979).

#### ii) *Suitable target*

Suitable target can be a person, object, or place that is seen as vulnerable or attractive to a potential offender. Several characteristics make a target suitable - the worth or desirability of the target to the offender. High-value items like jewellery, electronics, or cash are more attractive. The physical size and weight of the target. Items that are easy to carry and move are more likely to be targeted. How noticeable or exposed the target is. Visible items or individuals in isolated or poorly lit areas are more likely to be targeted. How easy it is to reach the target. Targets that are easily accessible, with minimal barriers or security measures, are more vulnerable. The level of defense or protection a target has. Individuals who are alone, elderly, or distracted, and objects without proper security measures, are more susceptible.

#### iii) *Lack of capable guardianship*

Capable guardianship refers to the presence of individuals or mechanisms that can prevent crime or deter offenders. The absence of capable guardianship increases the likelihood of a crime occurring. Guardianship can take various forms - the presence of people who can observe, intervene, or call for help, such as neighbours, security personnel, or police officers. Security measures like locks, alarms, surveillance cameras, and well-lit environments that can deter offenders. A community that is vigilant and engaged in crime prevention, such as neighbourhood watch programs. Modern technological solutions like motion detectors,

security apps, and automated systems that can alert authorities or homeowners of suspicious activities.

### *Application in Non-Kinetic Security Strategies*

In the context of non-kinetic security strategies, these components can be addressed through various means - implementing programs that address underlying social, economic, and psychological factors that drive individuals towards criminal behaviour. This could include education, job training, counselling, and substance abuse treatment. Enhancing the security and resilience of potential targets through environmental design, improved lighting, community awareness campaigns, and the use of technology. Strengthening community policing efforts, increasing the presence of security personnel, fostering community vigilance, and leveraging technology to create a robust network of capable guardianship.

According to RAT, the likelihood of a crime happening increases when all three conditions are present. The theory shifts the focus from the characteristics of the offender to the environmental and situational factors that influence criminal behaviour. RAT emphasizes the role of environmental and situational factors in preventing crime. By understanding how crime opportunities arise, strategies can be developed to alter these conditions and reduce criminal activities. The theory is versatile and can be applied to various types of crime and different environments. It provides a framework for analysing crime patterns and developing situational interventions. RAT complements other criminological theories, such as Social Disorganization Theory and Rational Choice Theory, by focusing on the situational context of crime. It can be integrated with broader crime prevention strategies to address both social and environmental factors.

The theory supports practical crime prevention measures, such as increased surveillance, improved lighting, and community policing, which are actionable and can be implemented in real-world settings. Changes in physical environments to reduce crime opportunities, such as better street lighting, installation of CCTV cameras, and maintenance of public spaces. These modifications aim to reduce the attractiveness of targets and increase surveillance. Engaging community members in crime prevention efforts, such as neighbourhood watch programs, helps increase capable guardianship and fosters a sense of collective responsibility for safety. Implementing strategies that alter the immediate context of potential crimes, such as target hardening (e.g., secure locks, alarm systems) and access control measures (e.g., restricted entry points), to deter offenders.

RAT primarily addresses situational factors and does not delve deeply into the psychological or sociological characteristics of offenders. This limitation can lead to incomplete understanding of the motivations behind criminal behaviour. The theory assumes that offenders make rational decisions based on opportunity and risk. However, not all criminal behaviour is purely rational, and some crimes may be driven by emotional or psychological factors. While RAT emphasizes situational factors, it may underplay the importance of broader social and economic conditions that contribute to crime, such as poverty, inequality, and lack of social support. The theory may not fully account for variations in crime patterns across different regions or communities. Cultural, economic, and social differences can influence the applicability and effectiveness of situational interventions. Evaluating the effectiveness of situational crime prevention measures can be difficult. It may be challenging to isolate the impact of specific interventions from other factors influencing crime rates.

Routine Activities Theory provides valuable insights into crime prevention by focusing on the situational and environmental factors that contribute to criminal opportunities. Its strengths lie in its practical application and ability to integrate with other criminological



theories. However, its limitations include a narrow focus on situational factors and assumptions about rational decision-making. Understanding these strengths and limitations can help in designing more comprehensive and effective crime control strategies, particularly in the context of non-kinetic security approaches.

## Methodology

This study employs a survey research design to investigate the relationship between non-kinetic security strategies and crime control in South-South Nigeria. Through the use of questionnaires, data is collected from a wide population, enabling the analysis of various variables and their interactions. This approach provides a thorough understanding of how non-kinetic strategies influence crime control across different stakeholder groups. The survey method is particularly effective due to its ability to generate quantitative data that can be statistically analyzed, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the research findings.

The South-South Geopolitical Zone—comprising Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers States—is a critical contributor to Nigeria's socio-economic development, largely due to its abundant natural resources, especially crude oil. However, the region is plagued by significant security challenges, such as militancy, kidnappings, and the sabotage of oil infrastructure. These issues often stem from deep-rooted socio-economic inequalities and historical marginalization. While traditional kinetic security measures, like military interventions, have provided temporary solutions, they have not effectively addressed the underlying causes of insecurity. This study highlights the potential of non-kinetic strategies, including community engagement, economic empowerment, and environmental rehabilitation, as sustainable approaches to addressing the root causes of insecurity in the region. By focusing on these strategies, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how to promote lasting peace and security in South-South Nigeria.

Given the ethnic diversity, cultural richness, and economic opportunities beyond oil and gas in the South-South Zone, this study underscores the importance of tailored security approaches. Non-kinetic strategies are specifically designed to promote social cohesion, foster sustainable development, and address the socio-economic disparities that contribute to criminal activities. By evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies in complementing traditional security measures, the research aims to provide actionable insights. The findings are intended to assist policymakers, security agencies, and community leaders in adopting best practices that enhance security and foster regional development.

The study engages a diverse range of participants, including security personnel, community leaders, local government officials, civil society organizations, youth groups, academics, business owners, and media representatives. A multi-stage sampling technique—encompassing purposive, stratified random, and snowball sampling—ensures the inclusion of various demographic groups and hard-to-reach populations. Data collection combines primary sources, such as structured 5-point Likert scale questionnaires and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), with secondary literature. This mixed-method approach enables a comprehensive analysis, providing both quantitative data and deeper qualitative insights from stakeholders. These methods collectively contribute to a nuanced understanding of crime control, informing the development of effective and sustainable security policies for the South-South Zone.

## Results

Table 1 presents result on the scale on housing allowance and job commitment. The scale was presented in the four-point Likert scale of Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The first item which determines whether intelligence gathering efforts are effective in controlling crime in South-South Nigeria, result showed that, 750 (52) agreed 310

(21) strongly agreed, 290 (17) disagreed while 100 (7) strongly disagreed. Item 2 in the scale which determined whether improved intelligence gathering can significantly reduce criminal activities in the region., result showed that 791 (55) agreed, 580(40) strongly agreed, 49(3) agreed while 30 (2) strongly agreed. Item 3 in the scale determine whether law enforcement agencies rely heavily on intelligence gathering to address crime, result showed that about 718 (50) agreed, 528 (37) strongly agreed, 104(7) disagreed while 100 (6) strongly agreed.

**Table 1: Intelligence gathering and crime control**

| S/N | Question  | A       | SA      | D       | SD      |
|-----|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1   | Intelligence gathering efforts are effective in controlling crime in South-South Nigeria.     | 750(52) | 310(21) | 290(20) | 100(7)  |
| 2.  | Improved intelligence gathering can significantly reduce criminal activities in the region.   | 791(55) | 580(40) | 49(3)   | 30(2)   |
| 3.  | Law enforcement agencies rely heavily on intelligence gathering to address crime.             | 718(50) | 528(37) | 104(7)  | 100(6)  |
| 4.  | Lack of sufficient intelligence gathering is a major obstacle to crime control.               | 944(65) | 216(15) | 180(12) | 110(8)  |
| 5.  | Effective intelligence gathering has led to a decrease in crime rates in South-South Nigeria. | 440(30) | 409(29) | 301(21) | 300(20) |

Item 4 in the scale determine whether lack of sufficient intelligence gathering is a major obstacle to crime control, the result revealed that about 944 (65) agreed, 216(15), strongly agree D 180(12) disagreed while 110(8) strongly agreed. Furthermore, item 5 in this scale determines whether effective intelligence gathering has led to a decrease in crime rates in South-South Nigeria, result showed that 440 (30) agreed, 409(29) strongly agreed, 301 (21) while 300 (20) strongly disagreed. The finding summarily revealed that, intelligence gathering significantly relates to crime control.

### *Hypothesis one*

Ho: There is no significant relationship between intelligence gathering and crime control in South-South Nigeria.

Hi: There is a significant relationship between intelligence gathering and crime control in South-South Nigeria.

Accept Ho if calculated r value is  $\leq 0.086$  at 2 degrees of freedom (df) and 0.05 level of significance. Otherwise, reject the Ho and accept Hi. To test hypothesis one above, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was used. From the analysis in Table 2, the calculated r value was 0.61\* which was tested in comparison with the table value of 0.086 at 0.05 level of significance. The calculated r value was greater than the critical, r values. The result was statistically significant, this means that there is a significant relationship between intelligence gathering and crime control in South-South Nigeria.

**Table 2: Pearson Product moment correlation coefficient analysis for relationship between intelligence gathering and crime control (N=1450)**

| Variables              | M     | SD    | $\sum x$<br>$\sum y$ | $\sum x^2$<br>$\sum y^2$ | $\sum xy$ | r-value |
|------------------------|-------|-------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Intelligence gathering | 13.37 | 2.866 | 5421                 | 76717                    |           | 0.61*   |
| Crime control          | 12.44 | 2.712 | 5130                 | 72989                    | 75199     |         |

*\*\*significant at 0.05 level, df = 1448, critical r 0.086*

From the result presented above, since the calculated r of 0.61\* is greater than the critical r-value of 0.086 at .05 level of significance with 1448 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship between intelligence gathering and crime control in South-South Nigeria, was rejected while the alternate accepted. It implies that, intelligence gathering significantly relate to crime control in South-South, Nigeria.

### Discussion of findings

The finding that there is a significant relationship between intelligence gathering and crime control in South-South Nigeria is not only consistent with theoretical perspectives in criminology but is also supported by a wealth of empirical evidence. Intelligence gathering, particularly at the community level, plays a pivotal role in identifying and mitigating criminal activities before they escalate. According to Ratcliffe (2016), intelligence-led policing is a critical aspect of modern crime control strategies. This approach focuses on the systematic collection and analysis of data to guide decision-making, ensuring that law enforcement resources are deployed efficiently and effectively to prevent crime rather than just respond to it. Intelligence gathering relies on multiple sources, including law enforcement agencies, technological tools, and crucially, the community, which provides local insights that are often inaccessible through formal channels.

This method of crime prevention aligns well with Routine Activities Theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979), which posits that crime occurs when a motivated offender encounters a suitable target in the absence of capable guardianship. By increasing guardianship—through the active involvement of community members in intelligence gathering—and by enhancing the ability to monitor potential criminal behavior, the opportunities for crime are significantly reduced. As a result, intelligence gathering becomes a form of "capable guardianship" that disrupts the convergence of potential offenders and targets. This approach shifts the crime control paradigm from reactive measures to proactive prevention, ensuring that security forces can anticipate and preempt criminal actions before they fully materialize. The empirical backing for this perspective is abundant, with studies around the world illustrating the effectiveness of intelligence gathering in reducing crime.

The South-South region of Nigeria presents a unique and challenging environment for crime control due to its complex socio-political landscape. The region, which includes states like Rivers, Delta, and Bayelsa, is rich in natural resources, particularly oil, but has been plagued by economic marginalization, environmental degradation, and high levels of militancy. These factors have contributed to the rise of organized crime, including oil theft, kidnapping, and armed robbery (Okpara & Aghedo, 2016). Given these contextual challenges, the need for a localized, intelligence-driven approach to crime control is imperative. According to Okpara and Aghedo (2016), the complex socio-political and economic conditions in the South-South region necessitate a community-focused intelligence strategy. Traditional kinetic approaches, such as military interventions, have had limited success in addressing the root causes of criminality in the region. These approaches often exacerbate tensions and deepen the grievances that fuel militancy and crime. In contrast, intelligence gathering that involves local

communities provides a more nuanced understanding of the underlying issues, such as economic disenfranchisement and environmental injustice, which often drive people towards criminal behavior. Intelligence gathered from community members is often more actionable because it reflects on-the-ground realities and specific knowledge about criminal networks, their operations, and their motivations.

*The above finding is in tandem with the qualitative data which revealed the relationship between intelligence gathering and crime control in South-South Nigeria. Each participant argued that:*

*Non-kinetic strategies involve using non-violent means like dialogue, community engagement, and intelligence gathering to prevent or mitigate security threats. Intelligence gathering is very effective in curbing crime. It helps us stay ahead of criminal elements, especially in areas with oil pipelines and communal clashes. We rely on community-based informants, surveillance technology, and inter-agency collaboration to collect actionable intelligence. In 2022, intelligence we gathered from local communities helped us prevent several cases of oil pipeline vandalism, which could have escalated into violent conflicts. The major challenges are inadequate funding, insufficient technology for proper surveillance, and fear of reprisals for local informants (KII with Security agent).*

*Non-kinetic strategies are approaches that avoid the use of force. Instead, they focus on gathering intelligence, community policing, and fostering public trust. I believe intelligence gathering is fundamental for effective crime control. It helps us understand crime patterns and respond accordingly. We use informants, undercover operations, and data collection from the local community and surveillance technology to gather intelligence. Last year, intelligence gathered from social media monitoring helped prevent a planned kidnapping in Calabar. We face challenges in terms of manpower, as well as a lack of trust from some communities due to the history of poor relations between the police and the public (KII with Security agent).*

*I am the Chief Security Officer at a multinational oil company in the Niger Delta. I've been in this position for 12 years, managing the security of our facilities and staff. To me, non-kinetic security strategies are preventive methods, including intelligence gathering, community relations, and negotiating with local stakeholders. It is crucial in preventing sabotage and criminal attacks on our installations. Without intelligence, we would constantly be in reactive mode. We use both human intelligence from local communities and technological surveillance like drones to monitor our assets. In 2021, we received intel from community leaders about an impending attack, and we were able to take preventive measures that saved lives and assets. The biggest challenge is the distrust from local communities, which makes it difficult to get reliable information in time (KII with Security agent).*

*Non-kinetic strategies refer to using non-violent methods such as intelligence gathering, public relations, and economic initiatives to address security concerns. Intelligence gathering has been effective in foiling several criminal plots in the South-South region. It's a key element of proactive crime control. We deploy undercover agents, collaborate with local informants, and use electronic surveillance systems. A major success was the interception of arms being smuggled through the waterways, based on intelligence shared by a community member. Challenges include*

*insufficient technology, difficulty in maintaining confidentiality for informants, and budgetary constraints (KII with Security agent).*

*Non-kinetic strategies are security methods that rely on intelligence, diplomacy, and community engagement instead of direct military confrontation. Intelligence gathering is highly effective, especially in monitoring illegal activities on the waterways, such as oil theft and piracy. We use radar systems, aerial surveillance, and human intelligence from local fishermen and traders to track criminal activities. Our intelligence unit recently uncovered a piracy operation near Bonny Island, allowing us to prevent an attack on a commercial vessel. One major challenge is the vast and difficult terrain we have to monitor. Also, there is a lack of advanced equipment to effectively track small, fast-moving vessels used by criminals (KII with Security agent).*

The localized intelligence required in this region is consistent with what Alemika (2017) describes as "indigenous intelligence," which focuses on involving community leaders, traditional rulers, and other local stakeholders in intelligence gathering. These individuals often have deep-rooted knowledge of their communities and can provide early warning signs of impending criminal activities. This collaboration between law enforcement and local communities helps in identifying the root causes of crime—such as economic grievances, marginalization, and environmental degradation—and in finding solutions that go beyond force and repression. Furthermore, this community-based intelligence system strengthens trust between the public and security agencies, fostering a cooperative atmosphere that is essential for sustainable crime control.

A study by Nwagboso (2019) supports this approach, noting that in regions characterized by high levels of community distrust in formal security apparatus, grassroots intelligence becomes even more critical. The study found that in Nigeria, community-based intelligence initiatives significantly enhance crime control by involving local populations in the security process. When local communities are engaged in crime prevention through information sharing and reporting, security agencies are better positioned to act swiftly and decisively. This is especially true in areas like the South-South, where crimes are often perpetrated by well-organized, local criminal syndicates that are embedded within the community. Thus, the incorporation of grassroots intelligence gathering can disrupt these criminal networks more effectively than traditional policing methods alone.

The significance of intelligence gathering in crime control is not limited to the South-South region of Nigeria but is also supported by international evidence. Globally, intelligence-led policing has proven to be one of the most effective tools for reducing crime. In the United States, for example, intelligence-driven approaches have been integrated into policing strategies, particularly in cities with high levels of organized crime. Ratcliffe and McCullagh (2001) found that intelligence-led policing initiatives in the U.S. and the U.K. transformed crime control systems from being reactive to proactive, significantly reducing the incidence of criminal activities. In these cases, intelligence gathering allowed for the early identification of criminal hotspots and the deployment of targeted interventions, preventing crimes before they occurred.

Similarly, intelligence-led strategies have been successful in other parts of the world. In South Africa, where violent crime rates are notoriously high, intelligence gathering has been central to the country's crime prevention strategy (Adams & Wanjiru, 2020). By involving local communities in intelligence gathering and using data to direct resources where they are most needed, South African law enforcement has been able to disrupt criminal networks and prevent

organized crime. This mirrors the approach that could be more widely adopted in the South-South region of Nigeria, where organized crime, often linked to economic grievances and militancy, continues to pose significant challenges to law enforcement.

In Kenya, another African country facing security challenges, intelligence-led policing has been instrumental in curbing terrorism and violent crime. Studies by Adams and Wanjiru (2020) highlight that intelligence-driven initiatives, particularly those involving the collaboration of security forces with local communities, have helped to dismantle terrorist cells and reduce the frequency of attacks. Kenya's experience underscores the value of community-based intelligence in complex security environments, offering lessons that can be applied in the South-South region, where security challenges are similarly rooted in socio-economic grievances and organized criminal activities.

The practical implications of these findings for the South-South region are profound. First, it highlights the importance of developing intelligence networks that are rooted in local communities. Security forces must prioritize building trust and communication channels with local populations to gather timely and accurate intelligence. In the context of Routine Activities Theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979), this increases capable guardianship by ensuring that communities are vigilant and actively engaged in crime prevention efforts. Second, the findings suggest the need for security agencies to invest in modern technological tools to complement human intelligence. Technologies such as drones, surveillance cameras, and data analytics can enhance the capacity of law enforcement to monitor crime patterns and respond swiftly to emerging threats. However, the human element remains crucial, particularly in a region like South-South Nigeria, where cultural sensitivities and localized knowledge are critical to understanding and addressing the root causes of crime.

Finally, these findings point to the necessity of a coordinated approach to crime control that involves multiple stakeholders, including local governments, civil society organizations, traditional leaders, and community members. Such a collaborative framework ensures that intelligence gathering is not just a top-down process but is participatory and reflective of local dynamics. The integration of grassroots intelligence into broader crime control strategies would not only improve the effectiveness of crime prevention efforts but also foster a more resilient and secure environment in the South-South region.

Intelligence gathering plays a critical role in crime control, particularly in regions like South-South Nigeria, where complex socio-political factors contribute to high crime rates. This study's finding that there is a significant relationship between intelligence gathering and crime control is consistent with both theoretical frameworks like Routine Activities Theory and empirical evidence from other regions and countries. The success of intelligence-led policing in reducing crime globally demonstrates the potential for similar strategies to be effective in the South-South region. By investing in community-based intelligence and fostering collaboration between security agencies and local populations, the region can significantly improve its crime control mechanisms and create a safer, more secure environment for all.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

This study concludes that non-kinetic security strategies are essential for effective crime control in South-South Nigeria. A survey research design was employed to explore the relationship between non-kinetic strategies and crime control, using data from six states and various socio-economic groups. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires, complemented by Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), with sampling techniques ensuring diverse representation. Data analysis using Pearson correlation and SPSS established significant relationships between the variables studied. Intelligence gathering at the grassroots

level emerged as a critical factor in enabling security forces to anticipate and prevent criminal activities. Skill empowerment initiatives were found to reduce crime by addressing unemployment and providing alternative livelihoods. Advocacy programs, such as crime prevention clubs in schools, play a key role in shaping youth behavior and fostering law-abiding citizens. Theoretical frameworks like Routine Activities Theory and Social Disorganization Theory validated the importance of community-driven and environmental crime prevention strategies. Community involvement and proactive engagement with citizens were highlighted as pivotal to reducing reliance on forceful interventions and fostering collaboration. The study recommends strengthening grassroots intelligence networks and investing in community-based programs to address the root causes of crime, ensuring long-term peace and security in the region.

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