Beyond Conventional Policing: A Criminological Framework for Intelligence-Led Crime Prevention and Security Governance in Nigeria.

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Abstract

Nigeria's security situation has become increasingly difficult, with terrorism, armed banditry, kidnapping, cybercrime, oil theft, cult-related violence, farmer-herder conflicts, separatist violence, and transnational organized crime affecting different parts of the country. These challenges have also revealed the limits of policing approaches that focus mainly on responding to crime after it has occurred. This article examines how intelligence-led policing can contribute to a more preventive and coordinated approach to crime control in Nigeria. It draws on Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP), Routine Activity Theory, Rational Choice Theory, Situational Crime Prevention Theory, Social Disorganization Theory, and Problem-Oriented Policing to provide a criminological basis for understanding security governance. The study is based on existing literature, government reports, and relevant international experiences. It identifies several challenges affecting intelligence-led policing in Nigeria, including weak intelligence systems, poor information sharing among security agencies, corruption, political interference, limited technological and analytical capacity, and low public trust. The article therefore proposes a framework that gives attention to intelligence sharing, evidence-based decision-making, cooperation among security agencies, community involvement, legal oversight, respect for human rights, and collaboration with civil society, private security organizations, and technology partners. It argues that strengthening intelligence-led policing could help Nigeria move beyond largely reactive policing towards earlier detection of threats, better crime prevention, improved coordination among security agencies, and greater public confidence in the security system.

Keywords: Intelligence-led policing; Security governance; Crime prevention; Criminology; Intelligence analysis.

Introduction

The nature of crime in the twenty-first century has fundamentally transformed the responsibilities of law enforcement agencies worldwide. Globalization, technological innovation, rapid urbanization, demographic shifts, porous borders, digital connectivity, and the expansion of transnational criminal networks have significantly altered the dynamics of crime and security. Contemporary criminal threats increasingly transcend traditional geographical and jurisdictional boundaries, rendering conventional policing approaches that rely primarily on reactive law enforcement less effective (Ratcliffe, 2016). Consequently, many countries have shifted towards intelligence-driven policing models that emphasize crime prevention, strategic analysis, predictive policing, and proactive intervention.

Nigeria exemplifies this evolving security landscape. As Africa's most populous nation and one of its largest economies, the country faces diverse and interconnected security threats, including terrorism, armed banditry, kidnapping for ransom, farmer-herder conflicts, piracy, crude oil theft, separatist violence, cybercrime, cultism, human trafficking, arms trafficking, illegal mining, and other forms of organized crime (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2023; Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime [GI-TOC], 2023). These threats have become increasingly sophisticated, decentralized, and technologically enabled, posing serious challenges to national security, economic development, democratic governance, and human security.

Despite sustained military operations and increased deployment of security personnel,

insecurity persists across many parts of the country. Independent security assessments indicate that criminal groups have become more adaptive through the use of digital technologies, illicit financial networks, and cross-border criminal collaborations, exposing the limitations of conventional policing methods that depend largely on patrols, checkpoints, arrests, and post-incident investigations (SBM Intelligence, 2024). This situation underscores the urgent need for a proactive, intelligence-driven approach to crime prevention.

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF), established under Section 214 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) and strengthened by the Nigeria Police Act 2020, remains the country's primary internal security agency. Although recent reforms have sought to improve professionalism, accountability, and community policing, institutional challenges continue to limit the effectiveness of the police. These challenges include inadequate intelligence infrastructure, weak forensic and analytical capacity, fragmented inter-agency information sharing, insufficient technological integration, corruption, political interference, inadequate funding, shortages of skilled personnel, and declining public confidence (Alemika, 2013; CLEEN Foundation, 2023). Consequently, policing in Nigeria remains predominantly reactive, with investigations often commencing only after crimes have been committed rather than preventing them through timely intelligence and strategic analysis.

Globally, Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) has emerged as a modern policing philosophy that prioritizes intelligence as the foundation for operational and strategic decision-making. Developed initially in the United Kingdom to combat organized crime, ILP has been adopted across several jurisdictions, including the United States, Canada, Australia, and parts of Europe (Ratcliffe, 2016; Carter & Carter, 2009). Unlike conventional policing, intelligence-led policing emphasizes the systematic collection, analysis, sharing, and application of intelligence to identify criminal patterns, assess risks, disrupt criminal networks, and deploy resources efficiently before crimes occur.

From a criminological perspective, intelligence-led policing draws support from several established theories. Routine Activity Theory explains how crime occurs when motivated offenders encounter suitable targets in the absence of capable guardians (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Rational Choice Theory suggests that offenders make calculated decisions based on perceived risks and rewards (Cornish & Clarke, 1986), while Situational Crime Prevention advocates reducing opportunities for crime through environmental and situational interventions (Clarke, 1997). Similarly, Social Disorganization Theory emphasizes the influence of community structures on crime (Sampson et al., 1997), and Problem-Oriented Policing promotes evidence-based responses to recurring crime problems (Goldstein, 1979). Intelligence-led policing operationalizes these theoretical perspectives by transforming criminological knowledge into practical strategies for proactive crime prevention.

Although intelligence functions exist within major Nigerian security institutions—including the Nigeria Police Force, the Department of State Services, the National Intelligence Agency, the Defence Intelligence Agency, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps effective intelligence coordination remains limited. Institutional rivalry, fragmented databases, weak information sharing, inadequate technological infrastructure, and limited interoperability continue to undermine collaborative security operations (Onuoha, 2021). At the same time, advances in artificial intelligence, geographic information systems, biometric technologies, big data analytics, and digital surveillance present significant opportunities for predictive policing and strategic crime analysis, although these capabilities remain underutilized within Nigeria's security architecture.

Furthermore, addressing Nigeria's complex security challenges requires a broader conception of security governance that extends beyond traditional state policing. Contemporary security governance recognizes that effective crime prevention depends on collaboration among government institutions, security agencies, local communities, civil society organizations,

traditional authorities, private security providers, academia, and technology partners (Johnston & Shearing, 2003). Intelligence therefore becomes a shared strategic resource for coordinated security management rather than an exclusive function of law enforcement agencies.

Despite growing international scholarship on intelligence-led policing, limited research has developed a comprehensive criminological framework specifically suited to Nigeria's security environment. Existing studies have focused largely on police reforms, community policing, terrorism, and criminal justice administration, with comparatively little attention to intelligence-led crime prevention as an integrated governance strategy (Alemika, 2013; Chukwuma, 2020). This article addresses this gap by developing a criminological framework for intelligence-led crime prevention and security governance in Nigeria. It examines the changing nature of crime and insecurity, evaluates the limitations of conventional policing, explores the theoretical foundations of intelligence-led policing, and proposes policy reforms for strengthening intelligence-driven security governance. The article argues that transitioning from reactive policing to intelligence-led, evidence-based, and collaborative security governance is essential for enhancing crime prevention, improving institutional effectiveness, strengthening public trust, and promoting sustainable national security in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Nigeria's Contemporary Crime and Security Landscape

Nigeria's security landscape has become increasingly complex, with traditional crimes now intersecting with terrorism, armed banditry, kidnapping for ransom, cybercrime, oil theft, piracy, farmer-herder conflicts, separatist violence, cultism, human trafficking, illegal mining, and transnational organized crime. These threats are driven by socio-economic inequality, weak governance, rapid urbanization, technological advancement, porous borders, and the growing sophistication of criminal networks (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2023; Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime [GI-TOC], 2023).

The insurgency by Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) continues to threaten security in North-East Nigeria through terrorist attacks, kidnappings, extortion, and illicit arms trafficking despite sustained military operations (Institute for Security Studies [ISS], 2023). Similarly, armed banditry and kidnapping have escalated across the North-West and North-Central regions, evolving into organized criminal enterprises that exploit weak security presence and generate substantial ransom payments (SBM Intelligence, 2024). In the Middle Belt, recurring farmer-herder conflicts have intensified due to competition over land and natural resources, often resulting in violent clashes, displacement, and criminal exploitation (International Crisis Group, 2023).

The Niger Delta continues to experience crude oil theft, pipeline vandalism, illegal refining, and maritime piracy, causing significant economic losses and environmental degradation (Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative [NEITI], 2023). In the South-East, separatist violence has contributed to attacks on public infrastructure and security personnel, while cybercrime, financial fraud, cryptocurrency scams, and technology-enabled offences have expanded alongside Nigeria's growing digital economy.

These security threats are reinforced by structural challenges such as poverty, unemployment, corruption, weak criminal justice institutions, inadequate intelligence coordination, proliferation of small arms, and declining public confidence in security agencies (Alemika, 2013; CLEEN Foundation, 2023). From a criminological perspective, Social Disorganization Theory, Routine Activity Theory, and Rational Choice Theory explain how weak social institutions, increased criminal opportunities, and offenders' rational decision-making contribute to the persistence of these crimes (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Cornish & Clarke, 1986; Sampson et al., 1997).

Given the adaptive and transnational nature of contemporary crime, conventional reactive

policing is no longer sufficient. Strengthening intelligence capabilities, inter-agency collaboration, predictive crime analysis, technological innovation, and community partnerships is essential for effective crime prevention and sustainable security governance in Nigeria.

Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations of Intelligence-Led Policing

a)Concept of Intelligence-Led Policing

Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) is a strategic and evidence-based policing model that places intelligence at the core of crime prevention and decision-making. Unlike conventional policing, which is largely reactive, ILP emphasizes the systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence to identify crime patterns, assess risks, disrupt criminal networks, and prevent crime before it occurs (Ratcliffe, 2016). Developed in the United Kingdom during the 1990s, ILP has been widely adopted in several countries as an effective approach to combating organized and emerging crimes (Carter & Carter, 2009). In Nigeria, the growing complexity of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, cybercrime, and transnational organized crime underscores the need for intelligence-driven policing supported by technology, inter-agency collaboration, and community participation.

b)Intelligence-Led Policing and Crime Prevention

Intelligence-led policing promotes proactive crime prevention by enabling law enforcement agencies to identify emerging threats, predict criminal activities, and deploy resources strategically. Through crime analysis, predictive policing, surveillance technologies, and information sharing, ILP enhances operational efficiency and supports collaborative security governance involving government agencies, communities, and other stakeholders (Ratcliffe, 2016).

Table 1: Comparison of Conventional Policing and Intelligence-Led Policin

Dimension	Conventional Policing	Intelligence-Led Policing
Primary approach	Reactive; responds after crimes have occurred	Proactive; identifies and prevents crime before it occurs
Decision-making	Experience-based and incident-driven	Intelligence-driven and evidence-based
Primary objective	Law enforcement and offender apprehension	Crime prevention, risk management, and disruption of criminal networks
Operational focus	Routine patrols, investigations, and arrests	Intelligence collection, analysis, prediction, and targeted interventions
Crime analysis	Limited use of crime analysis	Continuous intelligence and crime analysis support operations
Resource allocation	General deployment of personnel	Strategic deployment based on threat and risk assessments
Technology utilization	Limited reliance on technology	Extensive use of GIS, AI, predictive analytics, biometrics, digital forensics, CCTV, and big data
Community role	Mainly crime reporting	Active intelligence partners through community engagement and information sharing
Inter-agency collaboration	Often fragmented and ad hoc	Integrated intelligence sharing and coordinated operations
Approach to organized crime	Responds after offences are committed	Identifies, monitors, and disrupts criminal networks proactively
Crime prevention strategy	Visible policing and deterrence	Intelligence-led prevention, hotspot policing, and predictive policing
Performance indicators	Arrests, prosecutions, and response time	Crime reduction, disruption of criminal enterprises, intelligence quality, and public safety outcomes
Governance philosophy	Enforcement-oriented	Intelligence-led, collaborative, and preventive security governance

Source: Adapted from Ratcliffe (2016); Carter and Carter (2009); Goldstein (1979); UNODC (2011).

c)Theoretical Foundations

Several criminological theories underpin the effectiveness of ILP. **Routine Activity Theory** posits that crime occurs when motivated offenders encounter suitable targets without capable guardians (Cohen & Felson, 1979), highlighting the role of intelligence in identifying crime opportunities. **Rational Choice Theory** argues that offenders weigh risks and rewards before offending (Cornish & Clarke, 1986); intelligence-led policing increases perceived risks through surveillance and targeted enforcement. **Situational Crime Prevention Theory** advocates reducing criminal opportunities by modifying environmental conditions (Clarke, 1997), while **Social Disorganization Theory** links crime to weak social institutions and limited collective

efficacy (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). In addition, **Problem-Oriented Policing** emphasizes analysing recurring crime problems before implementing tailored interventions (Goldstein, 1979).

Collectively, these theories provide a strong criminological foundation for intelligence-led policing by supporting proactive, evidence-based, and preventive approaches to crime control. Within the Nigerian context, integrating these perspectives offers a comprehensive framework for addressing contemporary security threats through intelligence-driven decision-making, inter-agency collaboration, and effective security governance.

Limitations of Conventional Policing in Nigeria

Conventional policing in Nigeria is predominantly reactive, focusing on patrols, arrests, investigations, and prosecution after crimes have occurred. While these functions remain important, they are increasingly inadequate for addressing contemporary security threats such as terrorism, armed banditry, kidnapping, cybercrime, and transnational organized crime (Ratcliffe, 2016). This reactive approach limits the ability of security agencies to anticipate, prevent, and disrupt criminal activities before they occur (Carter & Carter, 2009).

A major challenge is the weak intelligence infrastructure within security institutions. Intelligence gathering, analysis, and information sharing remain fragmented, with limited coordination among agencies such as the Nigeria Police Force, the Department of State Services, the Defence Intelligence Agency, and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Onuoha, 2021). In addition, inadequate technological capacity, poor crime data management, limited forensic capabilities, and insufficient use of digital surveillance and predictive analytics reduce the effectiveness of crime prevention efforts (CLEEN Foundation, 2023).

Institutional constraints, including corruption, political interference, inadequate funding, poor welfare, limited training, and shortages of skilled personnel, further undermine policing effectiveness and weaken public confidence in law enforcement (Alemika, 2013). Similarly, weak inter-agency collaboration and bureaucratic rivalry often hinder coordinated responses to increasingly sophisticated and transnational criminal networks.

From a criminological perspective, conventional policing focuses largely on responding to criminal incidents rather than addressing the underlying causes and opportunities for crime. Consequently, it offers limited support for evidence-based decision-making and sustainable crime prevention. Addressing Nigeria's contemporary security challenges therefore requires a transition to intelligence-led policing that integrates intelligence analysis, technology, inter-agency collaboration, and community participation to enhance proactive crime prevention and effective security governance.

A Criminological Framework for Intelligence-Led Crime Prevention and Security Governance in Nigeria

Nigeria's evolving security challenges require a transition from reactive policing to an intelligence-led approach that integrates criminological theory, technology, and collaborative security governance. This framework positions intelligence as the foundation of proactive crime prevention by combining Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) with Routine Activity Theory, Rational Choice Theory, Situational Crime Prevention Theory, Social Disorganization Theory, and Problem-Oriented Policing (Ratcliffe, 2016; Goldstein, 1979).

The framework comprises five interrelated components. First, **strategic intelligence management** emphasizes the systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence through crime mapping, hotspot analysis, offender profiling, and predictive analytics to support informed decision-making and efficient resource allocation (Carter & Carter, 2009). Second, **inter-agency collaboration** promotes intelligence sharing and coordinated operations among the Nigeria Police Force, the Department of State Services, the Defence Intelligence Agency, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and other security institutions to address organized and transnational

crimes effectively (Onuoha, 2021).

Third, **technology-driven policing** advocates the adoption of artificial intelligence, geographic information systems (GIS), forensic science, biometric identification, digital surveillance, and big data analytics to strengthen crime detection, forecasting, and monitoring (Ratcliffe, 2016). Fourth, **community intelligence and stakeholder participation** encourage partnerships with local communities, traditional institutions, civil society organizations, and private security providers to enhance information sharing and public trust (Johnston & Shearing, 2003). Finally, **evidence-based decision-making, accountability, and respect for human rights** ensure that intelligence operations remain transparent, lawful, and focused on long-term crime prevention (Goldstein, 1979; UNODC, 2011). Collectively, this integrated framework enhances Nigeria's capacity to anticipate, prevent, and respond to emerging security threats while promoting effective security governance, institutional accountability, and sustainable public safety.

Policy Implications and Recommendations

The findings of this study demonstrate that effectively addressing Nigeria's contemporary security challenges requires a fundamental shift from conventional, reactive policing to an intelligence-led policing model supported by sound security governance. As criminal activities become increasingly organized, technology-driven, and transnational, security institutions must adopt proactive strategies that emphasize intelligence gathering, strategic analysis, inter-agency collaboration, and evidence-based decision-making. Achieving this transformation requires comprehensive institutional, legal, technological, and operational reforms that strengthen the overall capacity of Nigeria's security architecture.

A major policy priority should be the strengthening of intelligence capabilities across all security institutions. The Federal Government should increase investment in modern intelligence infrastructure, including intelligence fusion centres, crime analysis units, forensic laboratories, secure communication systems, and integrated national crime databases. Intelligence collection should move beyond traditional human intelligence to incorporate digital intelligence, financial intelligence, geospatial intelligence, and open-source intelligence. Furthermore, the deployment of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), Geographic Information Systems (GIS), biometric identification systems, drones, facial recognition technologies, predictive analytics, and big data platforms would significantly improve crime forecasting, threat assessment, offender profiling, and operational resource allocation (Ratcliffe, 2016). Such investments would enable security agencies to anticipate criminal activities and intervene before offences occur rather than responding after the damage has been done.

Equally important is the need to institutionalize intelligence sharing and inter-agency collaboration. Nigeria's security architecture comprises several agencies with intelligence functions, including the Nigeria Police Force, the Department of State Services, the Defence Intelligence Agency, the National Intelligence Agency, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, the Nigerian Armed Forces, the Nigeria Immigration Service, and the Nigeria Customs Service. However, institutional rivalry, fragmented databases, and weak coordination often undermine effective intelligence utilization (Onuoha, 2021). Government should therefore establish interoperable intelligence platforms, standardized intelligence-sharing protocols, and permanent joint intelligence and operations centres to facilitate real-time information exchange. Regular joint threat assessments, coordinated operations, and shared intelligence products would improve responses to terrorism, kidnapping, cybercrime, organized crime, and other transnational security threats.

Another critical recommendation is the continuous development of human capacity within Nigeria's security institutions. Intelligence-led policing depends not only on technology but also on highly skilled personnel capable of collecting, analysing, interpreting, and applying intelligence effectively. Consequently, security personnel should receive regular professional training in intelligence analysis, cybercrime investigations, digital

forensics, financial intelligence, behavioural analysis, predictive policing, crime mapping, risk assessment, and strategic crime analysis (Carter & Carter, 2009). Partnerships with universities, research institutions, international policing organizations, and specialized intelligence academies should be encouraged to strengthen professional competence and promote evidence-based policing practices.

Community participation should constitute another central pillar of intelligence-led policing. Effective crime prevention cannot be achieved solely through state security agencies because communities often possess valuable local knowledge regarding suspicious activities, emerging threats, and criminal networks. Government should therefore strengthen community policing initiatives through sustained public engagement, confidential reporting mechanisms, neighbourhood intelligence programmes, and partnerships with traditional rulers, religious leaders, youth organizations, civil society organizations, and private security providers. Building mutual trust between citizens and security agencies is essential for improving intelligence gathering, increasing public cooperation, and enhancing the legitimacy of law enforcement institutions (Johnston & Shearing, 2003). Public confidence is particularly important in Nigeria, where fear of victimization, corruption, and distrust of security agencies often discourage citizens from sharing vital information.

The successful implementation of intelligence-led policing also requires a robust legal, ethical, and institutional governance framework. Intelligence operations should be conducted within the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Nigeria Police Act 2020, relevant cybersecurity legislation, and international human rights standards. Independent oversight mechanisms, judicial supervision, internal accountability systems, parliamentary oversight, and transparent operational procedures should be strengthened to prevent abuse of intelligence powers and protect citizens' rights to privacy, due process, and freedom from unlawful surveillance (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2011). Respect for human rights and democratic accountability is fundamental to maintaining public trust and ensuring that intelligence-led policing contributes to security without undermining civil liberties.

Furthermore, intelligence-led policing should not be viewed as a substitute for broader socio-economic development policies. Crime prevention requires addressing the structural conditions that create opportunities for criminal behaviour. Persistent poverty, unemployment, corruption, social exclusion, poor educational opportunities, youth marginalization, weak governance, and inequality continue to contribute to insecurity across many parts of Nigeria (Alemika, 2013). Government should therefore integrate intelligence-led policing with policies that promote employment creation, quality education, youth empowerment, social protection, and community development. Such interventions reduce criminogenic conditions while complementing intelligence-driven law enforcement efforts.

Finally, effective implementation requires continuous monitoring and evaluation. Government should establish measurable performance indicators to assess the effectiveness of intelligence-led policing, including reductions in violent crime, response times, intelligence quality, inter-agency collaboration, public confidence, conviction rates, and successful disruption of organized criminal networks. Regular performance reviews would enable policymakers to identify operational gaps, improve institutional learning, and ensure that intelligence resources are deployed efficiently.

Overall, implementing these policy recommendations would significantly strengthen Nigeria's intelligence capabilities, improve institutional coordination, enhance public trust, and modernize security governance. By integrating technological innovation, professional intelligence analysis, community participation, inter-agency collaboration, legal accountability, and socio-economic interventions, Nigeria can develop a proactive security architecture capable of preventing crime, disrupting organized criminal networks, and promoting sustainable peace, national security, and socio-economic development.

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Decentralized Policing in Fragile Federations: A Theoretical Approach to Institutional Design and Governance in Nigeria

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Abstract

Fragile federations often suffer from tensions between centralized, coercive authority and the need for decentralized, responsive security governance at the local level. Using the current debate on state policing in Nigeria as an important case, this article develops a theoretical framework for understanding under which decentralized policing can work effectively in divided federal systems. Drawing on Federalism Theory, the Political Economy of Security, and Structuration Theory, the division and management of coercive power among the different levels of government is examined as a function of constitutional design, fiscal arrangements, and institutional norms. While decentralization can potentially increase responsiveness to local crime and accountability, decentralization is only effective with strong oversight, equitable distribution of resources, and professional institutions of policing. Comparative lessons drawn from the experiences in the United States, Canada, Germany, and India bring out some institutional mechanisms of relevance to Nigeria, such as subnational autonomy under federal supervision, the standardization of training, and intergovernmental coordination. The article suggests a new model of Contextual Pluralist Security Governance that involves phased constitutional reform, fiscal equalization, independent state police commissions, and national doctrine coordination to achieve more robust security governance in order to control the dangers of politicization and elite capture.

Keywords: Decentralized Policing, Fragile Federations, Institutional Design, Security Governance, State Police

Introduction

Historical, political, and socio-economic contexts vary across the world in policing systems. Decentralized policing is a policing model that integrates federal, state/provincial, and local police agencies to enhance responsiveness, accountability, and community engagement, as seen in many advanced democracies, such as the United States, Germany, and Canada (Levy, 2013; Ceccato, 2016; De Maillard & Zagrodzki, 2020). There is evidence that decentralisation improves decision-making, crime prevention, intergovernmental coordination, and public trust (Buonanno & Mastrobuoni, 2011; De Maillard & Zagrodzki, 2020; Ogunyemi & Aborisade, 2026). It can also, however, foster elite capture, political manipulation, and resource inequalities (Levy, 2013; Mouhanna, 2020).

Policing in Africa is still influenced by colonial centralization, but some reforms in South Africa and Kenya have attempted to increase local accountability and responsiveness (Ogunyemi & Aborisade, 2026; De Maillard & Zagrodzki, 2020; Nwogwugwu & Odedina, 2018). There is comparative evidence that decentralisation can enhance participation, efficiency, and service delivery, provided that it is accompanied by good institutions and fair resource distribution (Lucey, 2018; Animashaun, 2024).

In this context, a fragile federation is defined as a federal system with weak and/or unequal institutional capacity around areas of institutional accountability and the distribution of resources, political stability, and intergovernmental coordination, which limit effective governance at all levels of government. Thus, fragility is regarded as a rather than just a form of conflict; it is a multidimensional governance state of things (Grävingholt et al., 2019; OECD, 2022). This conceptualisation is applicable to Nigeria over time and across the federation where there are disparities between the states' security