American Journal of Management Science and Engineering
2026, Vol. 11, No. 5, pp. 111–121
https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajmse.20261105.12

Research Article

Formal Security Actors Collaboration and Security Management in Kogi State Nigeria, 2015-2025

Isah Abdulraman*, Matthew Ola-Rotimi Ajayi, Timothy Onimisi

Department of Political Science, Federal University, Lokoja, Nigeria

Abstract

This study examines the role of collaboration among formal security actors in security management in Kogi State, Nigeria, from 2015 to 2025. The period witnessed increasing security threats such as kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery, communal clashes, cybercrime, and organized criminal activities, which adversely affected socio-economic development in the state due to its strategic location linking Northern and Southern Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to examine the extent of collaboration among formal security actors in Kogi State, and assess the challenges affecting effective inter-agency cooperation in security management. The study adopts a qualitative research design and relies on secondary data obtained from academic literature, policy documents, government publications, and security reports. It is anchored on Elite Theory, which explains how political and institutional elites influence decision-making and inter-agency relations within state security structures. Findings reveal that although collaborative efforts such as joint operations and intelligence sharing exist among agencies like the Nigeria Police Force, Nigerian Armed Forces, DSS, and NSCDC, effective collaboration is hindered by institutional rivalry, lack of trust, political interference, inadequate funding, and poor coordination mechanisms. However, where effective collaboration exists, it enhances intelligence gathering, operational efficiency, and crime control. The study concludes that improved synergy among formal security actors is essential for effective security management in Kogi State and recommends enhanced coordination frameworks, institutional reforms, intelligence sharing, and adequate funding for security agencies.

Keywords

Collaboration, Formal Security Actors, Security Management

1. Introduction

Security is a fundamental responsibility of the state and a critical condition for sustainable development, political stability, and social cohesion. In Nigeria, the security landscape has become increasingly complex, particularly since the mid-2010s, with the rise of kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery, terrorism, and communal conflicts. These threats have not only undermined public safety but have also weakened economic activities, disrupted social life, and eroded citizens' confidence in state institutions [8, 19] and [9]. Consequently, the capacity of formal security institutions to effectively manage these challenges has come under intense scrutiny, leading to growing calls for improved coordination and collaboration among security agencies. Formal security actors in Nigeria refer to state-recognized institutions legally mandated to ensure internal and external security. These include the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), the Nigerian Armed Forces, the Department of

*Correspondence: Isah Abdulraman (abdulramanisah9@gmail.com)

Received: 22 April 2026; **Accepted:** 11 May 2026; **Published:** 13 November 2026

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State Services (DSS), and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), among others. These agencies operate within defined legal and institutional frameworks, with distinct but often overlapping roles in crime prevention, intelligence gathering, and law enforcement. However, despite their constitutional mandates, the effectiveness of these agencies has been limited by several structural and operational challenges, including inadequate funding, poor logistics, corruption, manpower shortages, and weak institutional capacity [7, 29] and [36]. More importantly, inter-agency rivalry, lack of trust, and poor intelligence-sharing mechanisms have significantly hindered the development of a unified and coordinated security response system [20].

In response to these challenges, contemporary security governance increasingly emphasizes collaboration among formal security actors. The concept of collaborative security governance underscores the importance of inter-agency cooperation, joint operations, and information sharing as essential tools for addressing complex and transnational security threats [9]. Effective collaboration enhances operational efficiency, reduces duplication of efforts, and improves the overall capacity of security agencies to respond to emerging threats. In the Nigerian context, however, achieving such synergy has remained problematic due to institutional fragmentation and competing organizational interests. Kogi State, located in North-Central Nigeria, presents a unique and important case for examining the dynamics of formal security actors' collaboration. The state occupies a strategic geographical position as a confluence point linking Northern and Southern Nigeria, making it a critical transit hub. This strategic location, while economically advantageous, has also exposed the state to heightened security risks, particularly along major highways such as the Abuja-Lokoja-Okene route. Between 2015 and 2023, Kogi State experienced a noticeable increase in security challenges, including kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, and communal clashes, which posed serious threats to public safety and economic stability [33] and [42]. These developments necessitated the involvement of multiple security agencies operating simultaneously within the state.

Despite the presence of these formal security actors, security management outcomes in Kogi State have remained mixed. While there have been efforts to promote collaboration through joint task forces, coordinated patrols, and intelligence-sharing initiatives, evidence suggests that such efforts are often undermined by institutional weaknesses. Issues such as lack of coordination, duplication of responsibilities, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and political interference continue to limit the effectiveness of collaborative security arrangements [36] and [42]. Furthermore, the absence of a well-defined framework for inter-agency collaboration has contributed to inefficiencies in security operations and delayed responses to emerging threats. The period between 2015 and 2023 is particularly significant for this study as it captures a phase of intensified security challenges across Nigeria, alongside various policy and operational responses by government and security agencies. This period also reflects changes in political leadership and security strategies at both federal and state levels, which have implications for the coordination and effectiveness of security institutions. Examining this timeframe provides an opportunity to assess the evolution of security management practices and the role of inter-agency collaboration in addressing insecurity in Kogi State.

It is against this backdrop that this study investigates the role of formal security actors' collaboration in the management of security in Kogi State, Nigeria, from 2015 to 2023. Specifically, the study seeks to examine the nature and extent of collaboration among security agencies, identify the challenges affecting such collaboration, and evaluate its impact on security outcomes within the state. By doing so, the study contributes to the broader discourse on security governance and provides practical insights into strengthening inter-agency synergy for improved security management in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Kogi State has continued to experience persistent and escalating security challenges despite the presence of multiple formal security agencies such as the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigerian Armed Forces, the Department of State Services (DSS), and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). Between 2015 and 2025, the state recorded increasing incidents of kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery, communal violence, cyber-related crimes, and other forms of organized criminal activities. These threats have adversely affected human security, economic development, and public confidence in state security institutions [2] and [32]. The strategic geographical position of Kogi State as a gateway between Northern and Southern Nigeria further exposes it to complex and trans-regional criminal networks. In contemporary security governance, effective crime control requires strong collaboration, coordination, and intelligence sharing among security agencies [31]. However, evidence suggests that inter-agency cooperation in Kogi State remains weak and inconsistent. This is reflected in recurring security breaches despite joint security operations and deployments.

The problem is further compounded by institutional rivalry, lack of trust among agencies, inadequate funding, overlapping mandates, and political interference, all of which weaken operational efficiency and delay responses to security threats [20]. These challenges indicate that formal security actors are not functioning as a fully integrated system capable of addressing evolving security threats effectively. Although several studies have examined insecurity and crime control in Nigeria, there is limited empirical focus on the nature, extent, and effectiveness of collaboration among formal security actors in Kogi State between 2015 and 2025. This gap in knowledge necessitates a systematic investigation into how inter-agency collaboration influences security management outcomes in the state.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual Framework

2.1.1. Formal Security Actors

The concept of formal security actors often referred to as state security actors is central to understanding security governance, particularly in developing states such as Nigeria. Formal security actors are institutions established, funded, and regulated by the state, with a constitutional or legal mandate to provide security, maintain law and order, and defend national sovereignty [19]. They constitute the official apparatus through which the state exercises its legitimate authority over the use of force, in line with the Weberian notion of the state as the entity that holds the monopoly of legitimate violence within its territory [9]. In Nigeria, formal security actors include the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), the Nigerian Armed Forces (comprising the Army, Navy, and Air Force), the Department of State Services (DSS), and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), among others. Each of these institutions operates within a clearly defined legal framework and performs specialized roles. The Nigeria Police Force is primarily responsible for internal security, crime prevention, and law enforcement, while the Armed Forces focus on external defence and, increasingly, internal security operations. The DSS handles intelligence gathering and national security surveillance, whereas the NSCDC is tasked with protecting critical national infrastructure and supporting civil defence operations [7] and [36].

Beyond their statutory mandates, formal security actors are integral components of a country's security architecture, which encompasses the structures, processes, and institutions responsible for ensuring safety and stability. Their operations are typically characterized by hierarchical command structures, standardized operational procedures, bureaucratic accountability, and adherence to legal norms. These features distinguish them from informal or non-state security actors, such as vigilante groups or private security organizations, which often operate outside formal legal frameworks [19]. In contemporary security discourse, the role of formal security actors has expanded significantly due to the evolving nature of security threats. Traditionally focused on territorial defence and law enforcement, these actors are now increasingly involved in addressing non-traditional security challenges, including terrorism, insurgency, cybercrime, transnational organized crime, and humanitarian crises. In Nigeria, this expansion is evident in the involvement of the military in internal security operations, such as counterinsurgency efforts and anti-banditry campaigns, which were previously considered the domain of the police [9]. This shift underscores the dynamic and adaptive nature of formal security institutions in response to changing security realities.

2.1.2. Security Management

The concept of security management has become increasingly important in contemporary society due to the rise in complex and multidimensional threats affecting individuals, organizations, and states. At its core, security management refers to a systematic, coordinated, and continuous process of protecting people, assets, information, and infrastructure from risks, threats, and vulnerabilities. It involves the development and implementation of policies, procedures, and practices designed to prevent, detect, and respond to security challenges in an efficient and sustainable manner [3, 29] and [34]. Scholars like [34], generally defined security management as the identification of valuable assets and the formulation of strategies to safeguard them against potential threats. According to [13], security management involves a structured framework that integrates risk assessment, planning, and control measures to ensure the protection of organizational resources. Similarly, [34], view it as both a managerial and operational function that coordinates human, technological, and physical resources to maintain safety and continuity. These perspectives highlight the multidisciplinary nature of security management, combining elements of management science, criminology, and strategic studies.

From a functional perspective, security management incorporates the classical management functions of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. Planning involves identifying potential risks and designing preventive strategies; organizing focuses on allocating resources and assigning responsibilities; directing entails leading personnel and implementing policies; while controlling ensures monitoring and evaluation of security measures [16]. This demonstrates that security management is both proactive anticipating and preventing threats and reactive responding effectively when incidents occur. A critical component of security management is risk management, which involves identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing risks followed by the application of appropriate measures to minimize their impact. This risk-based approach enables organizations to allocate limited resources efficiently while addressing the most significant threats [26]. In this regard, security management is not a one-time activity but a continuous cycle of assessment, implementation, monitoring, and review [27] and [15].

In recent years, the scope of security management has expanded beyond traditional physical protection to include information security, cyber security, and human security. Human security, for instance, emphasizes the protection of individuals' well-being, dignity, and livelihoods, reflecting a broader understanding of security beyond mere absence of violence [44]. This evolution is driven by emerging global threats such as terrorism, cybercrime, and environmental risks, which require integrated and adaptive responses [1]. Furthermore, effective security management depends on strong institutional frameworks and collaboration among stakeholders, including state and non-state actors. Scholars emphasize that

cooperative security governance enhances effectiveness, especially in contexts like Nigeria where security challenges are complex and localized [35] and [20]. Community participation, intelligence sharing, and local engagement are therefore essential components of modern security management systems [32]. In addition, resilience and adaptability are key dimensions of contemporary security management. Modern approaches emphasize the ability of systems and organizations to withstand shocks, recover quickly, and adapt to evolving threats. This has led to the adoption of resilience-based strategies that focus not only on preventing threats but also on ensuring continuity in the face of disruptions [17].

2.1.3. Collaboration (Inter-Agency Collaboration)

Collaboration, particularly in the context of formal inter-agency relations, refers to a structured and institutionalized process through which two or more organizations work jointly toward shared goals, especially in addressing complex and cross-cutting issues such as security, governance, and public service delivery. Formal inter-agency collaboration is typically governed by established rules, legal frameworks, and administrative procedures that define roles, responsibilities, and mechanisms for coordination [5, 28] and [30]. Scholars like [41], conceptualize inter-agency collaboration as a deliberate and sustained interaction among autonomous organizations aimed at achieving outcomes that cannot be effectively realized by a single agency acting alone. According to [41], collaboration involves joint decision-making, resource sharing, and coordinated implementation of policies across institutional boundaries. Similarly, [41], defined it as a governance arrangement where public agencies formally engage with one another to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability in service delivery.

Formal inter-agency collaboration is distinguished from informal cooperation by its reliance on official agreements such as memoranda of understanding (MOUs), joint task forces, inter-agency committees, and statutory mandates. These frameworks provide clarity of purpose, reduce duplication of efforts, and ensure that participating agencies operate within a coordinated structure [21]. In security governance, for instance, collaboration between the police, military, intelligence agencies, and local authorities is often formalized to address threats such as terrorism, banditry, and organized crime. A key feature of formal inter-agency collaboration is shared responsibility and pooled resources. Agencies contribute their expertise, personnel, information, and logistics to achieve collective objectives. This is particularly important in addressing "wicked problems", complex issues that are multifaceted, dynamic, and resistant to single-agency solutions [25] and [14]. By working together, agencies can leverage complementary strengths and enhance overall effectiveness. Another important dimension is coordination and communication. Effective collaboration requires continuous information sharing, joint planning, and synchronized operations. Poor communication or lack of trust among agencies can undermine collaborative efforts and lead to inefficiencies or conflict [10]. Therefore, mechanisms such as regular meetings, integrated communication systems, and liaison officers are often established to facilitate smooth interaction.

2.2. Empirical Review

In a study conducted by [6] on security management and actors' collaboration in Kogi State, Nigeria with the objective of examining how collaboration among security actors influences security outcomes in the state. The study adopted a mixed-method research design, combining the use of structured questionnaires, key informant interviews, and documentary sources to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data. The findings of the study revealed that collaboration among formal security actors particularly the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigerian Army, and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps has significantly improved operational responses to security challenges in Kogi State. However, the study also identified critical constraints such as inadequate funding, poor logistics, weak institutional coordination, and ineffective intelligence-sharing mechanisms, which limit the effectiveness of such collaboration. Based on these findings, the study recommended the institutionalization of inter-agency collaboration frameworks, improved funding and logistical support, and the development of formal intelligence-sharing platforms among security agencies. Despite its contributions, the study did not provide a time-bound analysis covering 2015-2023, nor did it explicitly establish the causal relationship between formal security actors' collaboration and security management outcomes, thereby creating a gap which the present study seeks to address.

Similarly, [43], examined collaboration between formal and informal security actors in Nigeria-Benin border communities, with the aim of understanding how such partnerships influence security management. The study adopted a mixed-method approach, involving surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions across selected border communities. The findings revealed that formal security agencies collaborate through joint task forces, intelligence sharing, and coordinated enforcement operations. However, such collaboration was found to be largely informal, personality-driven, and weakly institutionalized, thereby limiting its sustainability and long-term effectiveness. The study recommended the formalization of collaboration frameworks, development of clear operational guidelines, and strengthening of institutional accountability mechanisms to enhance effectiveness. Nevertheless, the study is limited by its focus on border communities and formal-informal collaboration, rather than examining collaboration exclusively among formal security actors within a state context. This limitation creates a gap that the present study fills by focusing specifically on formal security agencies in Kogi State.

2.2.1. The Nigerian Police and Their Mandate

The Nigerian Police Force (NPF) is the principal civil law enforcement agency in Nigeria, constitutionally established to maintain law and order, protect lives and property, and ensure internal security across the country. It is the most visible arm of the state security architecture and operates under the authority of the Federal Government of Nigeria. The establishment, powers, and functions of the NPF are clearly provided for in [23] and further detailed in [40], which modernizes policing in line with contemporary security realities. The legal foundation of the Nigerian Police Force is anchored in Sections 214 and 215 of the 1999 Constitution, which establishes the police as a single national force under the exclusive control of the Federal Government [23]. This centralized structure was designed to ensure uniformity in policing and national security coordination. The Constitution mandates the police to prevent and detect crime, apprehend offenders, preserve public order, and protect life and property. The Police Act 2020 further expands and modernizes this mandate by introducing reforms aimed at improving professionalism, accountability, respect for human rights, and operational efficiency [37] and [40]. The mandate of the Nigerian Police Force is reflected in its core functions. One of its primary responsibilities is crime prevention and detection, which involves proactive measures such as patrol operations, surveillance, intelligence gathering, and preventive policing strategies aimed at reducing criminal activities [8]. Closely related to this is law enforcement, which includes the arrest, investigation, and prosecution of offenders in collaboration with the judiciary, ensuring compliance with national laws and regulations [4].

Another key function is the maintenance of public order, which involves managing protests, elections, religious gatherings, and communal conflicts to prevent breakdown of peace and stability. The police are also responsible for the protection of lives and property, ensuring the safety of citizens against threats such as armed robbery, kidnapping, murder, and other violent crimes. The Nigerian Police also plays a critical role in internal security operations, often working in collaboration with other security agencies such as the Nigerian Army, Department of State Services (DSS), and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). [32], emphasize that inter-agency collaboration has become essential in Nigeria due to the increasing complexity of security threats such as banditry, terrorism, and organized crime. In addition, the police are responsible for criminal investigation and intelligence gathering, carried out through specialized units such as the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and intelligence units. These units support evidence-based prosecution and enhance operational effectiveness. A major reform in the Nigerian Police mandate is the introduction of community policing, which emphasizes partnership between the police and the public. Community policing is based on trust, cooperation, and information sharing between citizens and law enforcement agencies. According to [8], this approach improves police legitimacy, enhances intelligence gathering, and strengthens crime prevention, particularly in diverse and high-risk communities. Despite its broad constitutional mandate, the Nigerian Police Force faces numerous challenges that limit its effectiveness. These include inadequate funding, poor logistics, low morale among personnel, corruption, political interference, and increasing security threats such as terrorism, banditry, and kidnapping [4]. These challenges weaken the operational capacity of the police and reduce public confidence in the institution.

2.2.2. Nigerian Army and Its Involvement in Internal Security Operations

The Nigerian Army is the land component of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, primarily established to defend the country's territorial integrity against external aggression. However, in response to the growing complexity of internal threats such as insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, militancy, and communal conflicts, the role of the Nigerian Army has significantly expanded to include active participation in internal security operations (ISOs). This expanded role reflects the realities of Nigeria's security environment, where conventional policing institutions are often overstretched and require military support to maintain stability [4] and [20]. The legal and constitutional basis for the involvement of the Nigerian Army in internal security is derived from Section 217(2)(c) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), which authorizes the Armed Forces to "suppress insurrection and act in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so" [23]. This provision legitimizes the deployment of the military in domestic operations, particularly in situations where internal security challenges exceed the capacity of the police and other law enforcement agencies. [11], further provides statutory backing for such operations, outlining the scope and procedures for military engagement within the country.

Internal security operations refer to military activities conducted within national borders to maintain law and order, protect lives and property, and support civil authorities during crises. In Nigeria, these operations are typically carried out in collaboration with other security agencies such as the Nigerian Police Force, Department of State Services (DSS), and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). The Army contributes superior manpower, logistics, firepower, and tactical expertise to complement the efforts of these agencies [32]. Over the years, the Nigerian Army has been involved in several major internal security operations across different regions of the country. Notable among these are Operation Lafiya Dole (later Operation Hadin Kai) in the North-East to combat Boko Haram insurgency; Operation Whirl Stroke in the North-Central region to address herder-farmer conflicts; Operation Python Dance in the South-East to curb separatist agitations and criminality; Operation Crocodile Smile in the Niger Delta to tackle militancy and oil-related crimes; and Operation Safe Haven in Plateau State to manage communal violence [31] and [20]. These operations demonstrate the

breadth of the Army's involvement in addressing diverse security challenges within Nigeria.

In carrying out internal security operations, the Nigerian Army performs several critical functions. First, it provides support to civil authorities, particularly the police, through joint patrols, enforcement of curfews, and cordon-and-search operations. Second, it plays a leading role in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations, targeting armed groups such as Boko Haram and ISWAP. Third, the Army is involved in the protection of critical national infrastructure, including oil pipelines, power facilities, and transportation networks, especially in conflict-prone areas. Fourth, it engages in peacekeeping and conflict management, intervening in communal and ethno-religious conflicts to restore stability. Finally, the Army conducts intelligence gathering and surveillance, which are essential for identifying and neutralizing security threats [32] and [4]. The increasing reliance on the Nigerian Army for internal security is driven by several factors. These include the escalation of violent crimes and organized armed groups, the limited capacity of the police, the need for rapid and decisive response to security threats, and the Army's superior training and equipment. As noted by [32], military involvement becomes inevitable in contexts where civil security institutions are unable to effectively manage large-scale violence.

2.2.3. Department of State Services (DSS) and Internal Security in Nigeria

The Department of State Services (DSS), formerly known as the State Security Service (SSS), is Nigeria's primary domestic intelligence agency responsible for the protection of internal security and the preservation of state stability. It operates under the Presidency and is one of the three principal intelligence organizations established by the National Security Agencies Act (1986), alongside the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA). The DSS plays a central role in intelligence gathering, counter-intelligence, and the prevention of threats to national security within Nigeria [22] and [20]. The mandate of the DSS is largely focused on internal intelligence and state protection. According to the National Security Agencies Act, the DSS is responsible for the prevention and detection of crimes against the internal security of Nigeria; the protection and preservation of all non-military classified matters concerning national security; and the safeguarding of government officials, critical infrastructure, and strategic institutions [22]. This mandate places the DSS at the core of Nigeria's internal security architecture, particularly in addressing covert and high-level security threats.

In the context of internal security, the DSS performs several critical functions. First is intelligence gathering and analysis, which involves collecting, processing, and interpreting information related to threats such as terrorism, espionage, sabotage, and subversion. Intelligence generated by the DSS is crucial for guiding government decisions and supporting the operations of other security agencies [20]. Second, the DSS is responsible for counter-intelligence operations, aimed at detecting and neutralizing espionage activities and protecting the country from both internal and external infiltration. This includes monitoring activities that may threaten national unity, political stability, or constitutional order [4]. Third, the DSS plays a key role in counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency efforts. It works closely with the Nigerian Army, Police, and other security agencies by providing actionable intelligence used in combating groups such as Boko Haram and other criminal networks. Its intelligence-driven approach makes it a critical component in Nigeria's fight against terrorism and organized crime [32].

Another important function of the DSS is the protection of high-profile individuals and critical infrastructure. The agency is tasked with providing security for senior government officials, including the President, Vice President, and other key public Figures, as well as safeguarding strategic national assets such as airports, government buildings, and communication systems [20]. The DSS is also involved in monitoring political and economic activities that may pose risks to national stability. This includes surveillance of activities that could lead to civil unrest, electoral violence, or economic sabotage. Through this function, the DSS contributes to the maintenance of public order and the prevention of crises before they escalate. In terms of inter-agency collaboration, the DSS works closely with other security institutions such as the Nigerian Police Force, Nigerian Army, and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). This collaboration is essential for effective security management, as intelligence provided by the DSS often informs operational decisions and joint security operations [32]. Despite its critical role, the DSS faces several challenges in carrying out its mandate. These include issues of accountability and transparency, allegations of human rights violations, political interference, and limited public trust. Additionally, the secretive nature of intelligence operations sometimes creates coordination gaps with other security agencies [4].

2.2.4. Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and Internal Security

The Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) is a paramilitary agency established to complement the efforts of other security institutions in safeguarding lives, property, and critical national assets in Nigeria. The Corps was formally established by the NSCDC Act No. 2 of 2003 and further strengthened by the Amendment Act of 2007, which clearly defines its roles, powers, and responsibilities in Nigeria's internal security architecture [24]. Over time, the NSCDC has evolved into a key player in internal security management, particularly in areas that require civilian protection, infrastructure security, and community engagement. The mandate of the NSCDC centers on civil protection, infrastructure security, and support for law enforcement agencies. According to the

NSCDC Act, the Corps is responsible for the protection of critical national assets and infrastructure, assisting in the maintenance of law and order, crisis management, and disaster response. It also plays a role in the detection and prevention of crime, particularly in areas that fall outside the direct operational focus of the police and military [24] and [35].

In the context of internal security, the NSCDC performs several important functions. One of its primary roles is the protection of critical national infrastructure, including oil pipelines, power installations, telecommunication facilities, and water supply systems. This function is particularly significant in Nigeria, where vandalism and sabotage of public infrastructure pose serious economic and security challenges [20]. The Corps is also actively involved in crime prevention and control, working alongside the Nigerian Police Force and other security agencies to detect and deter criminal activities such as vandalism, illegal bunkering, and theft of public resources. Through patrols, surveillance, and intelligence gathering, the NSCDC contributes to maintaining public safety and order [4]. Another critical function of the NSCDC is crisis management and disaster response. The Corps is trained to respond to emergencies such as floods, fire outbreaks, building collapses, and other disasters. This role places the NSCDC at the intersection of security and humanitarian response, making it an essential agency in national emergency management systems [35].

The NSCDC also plays a role in community-based security and public enlightenment. It engages in awareness campaigns, conflict prevention initiatives, and community policing efforts aimed at educating citizens on security matters and promoting cooperation between the public and security agencies. According to [32], such community engagement enhances intelligence gathering and strengthens local participation in security management. Additionally, the Corps is involved in regulation and supervision of private security guards. It oversees the activities of private security companies, ensuring that they operate within legal frameworks and contribute effectively to national security. This regulatory role further expands the scope of the NSCDC within Nigeria's broader security governance system [35]. Inter-agency collaboration is a key aspect of the NSCDC's operations. The Corps works closely with the Nigerian Police, Nigerian Army, Department of State Services (DSS), and other relevant agencies in joint operations and intelligence sharing. This collaboration enhances coordinated responses to security threats such as terrorism, banditry, and organized crime [20]. Despite its important role, the NSCDC faces several challenges that limit its effectiveness. These include inadequate funding, insufficient equipment, manpower shortages, and overlapping functions with other security agencies. There are also issues of coordination and occasional rivalry among security agencies, which can hinder effective collaboration [20].

2.3. Elite Theory

Systems Theory was propounded by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1945 and was later expanded by several scholars including Talcott Parsons and David Easton. The theory emerged as an interdisciplinary framework for understanding how different parts of a system interact and function together to achieve stability and effectiveness. Bertalanffy developed the theory to explain that every system is made up of interconnected and interdependent parts, where the effectiveness of the whole depends on the proper functioning and coordination of its various components [12]. Systems Theory argues that institutions within a society do not operate independently; rather, they function as parts of a unified structure that depends on cooperation, communication, coordination, and feedback mechanisms for survival and efficiency. The theory maintains that a problem affecting one component of a system automatically influences other parts of the system. Therefore, achieving organizational or societal stability requires synergy and effective interaction among all components of the system [18] and [38].

In the context of security management, the state security architecture is viewed as a system composed of different security agencies such as the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigerian Armed Forces, the Department of State Services (DSS), the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the Nigeria Immigration Service, and other formal security institutions. Each agency performs specific functions, but all are expected to work together toward the collective goal of maintaining law, order, and public safety. Systems Theory therefore emphasizes interdependence, collaboration, information sharing, and coordinated operations among security institutions. The relevance of Systems Theory to the study "Formal Security Actors Collaboration and Security Management in Kogi State, Nigeria, 2015-2025" lies in its explanation of how effective security management depends on cooperation among security agencies. Security threats in Kogi State, including kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery, communal conflicts, cybercrime, and organized criminal activities, are complex and interconnected, making it difficult for a single security agency to effectively manage them alone. Consequently, successful security management requires collaboration, intelligence sharing, joint operations, and coordinated strategies among formal security actors.

The theory further explains that when one security institution fails in its responsibilities or when there is poor coordination among agencies, the entire security system becomes weak and ineffective. For example, rivalry among security agencies, poor communication, inadequate intelligence sharing, lack of trust, and institutional fragmentation can negatively affect the overall security framework in Kogi State. Such weaknesses reduce operational efficiency and hinder timely responses to emerging security threats. This position aligns with the arguments of [39], who maintained that social institutions must work harmoniously to ensure stability and order within society.

Furthermore, Systems Theory is useful in explaining the importance of feedback mechanisms in security management. Through information exchange, joint task force operations, and inter-agency cooperation, security institutions are able to assess threats, evaluate responses, and improve operational strategies. The theory therefore provides a strong analytical foundation for understanding how collaboration among formal security actors can enhance security management and crime reduction in Kogi State between 2015 and 2025.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to examine the role of collaboration among formal security actors in the management of security in Kogi State, Nigeria, between 2015 and 2025. The qualitative approach is considered appropriate because it allows for an in-depth exploration of institutional interactions, coordination mechanisms, and operational dynamics influencing inter-agency collaboration. It also provides a useful framework for interpreting complex social and organizational issues such as trust, communication, rivalry, and cooperation among security agencies. The study relies exclusively on secondary data sources. Relevant information was obtained from peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, policy documents, official government publications, and institutional reports. Key institutional sources include publications from the Nigeria Police Force, Department of State Services (DSS), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), and the Nigerian Armed Forces. Additional data were sourced from credible international organizations, research institutes, and security-focused non-governmental organizations to enrich the analysis and provide comparative insights. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that only materials directly relevant to security collaboration and security governance in Nigeria and Kogi State were included. Priority was given to literature published between 2015 and 2025 to ensure relevance to the study period.

Data analysis was conducted using qualitative content analysis. This involved systematic reading, coding, categorization, and interpretation of textual data to identify recurring themes such as inter-agency collaboration, intelligence sharing, institutional rivalry, operational efficiency, political interference, and security outcomes. The analysis also adopted thematic synthesis, where findings from multiple sources were compared and integrated to generate a coherent interpretation of the subject matter. The interpretation was further guided by Elite Theory, which explains how control over decision-making and institutional influence by elite actors shape collaboration and coordination among security agencies.

4. Discussion of Findings

The study found that collaboration among formal security agencies in Kogi State has become central to addressing the complex security challenges experienced between 2015 and 2025, including kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery, communal conflicts, and organized crime. This is largely due to the state's strategic location as a transit corridor between northern and southern Nigeria, which increases its vulnerability to criminal infiltration. This finding is strongly supported by [4], who argue that Nigeria's evolving insecurity landscape has made multi-agency cooperation unavoidable, especially in states that serve as strategic movement corridors for both legitimate and criminal actors. Similarly, [32] emphasize that no single security agency in Nigeria possesses the capacity to independently manage the complexity of contemporary security threats, thereby making inter-agency collaboration a structural necessity rather than an option.

4.1. Institutional Arrangements for Collaboration

The study revealed that collaboration among security agencies in Kogi State is structured through formal mechanisms such as joint task forces, inter-agency committees, emergency response centres, and coordinated command structures. Each agency plays a specialized role: the Police lead internal law enforcement, the Army provides tactical support, the DSS handles intelligence, and the NSCDC protects critical infrastructure. This finding aligns with [20], who posits that modern security governance operates on a "functional specialization model," where different agencies contribute distinct but complementary capabilities to a unified security objective. [32] also support this view, noting that Nigeria's security architecture is deliberately designed for role differentiation, although effectiveness depends heavily on coordination and integration mechanisms.

4.2. Extent of Collaboration (Operational Vs Institutional Dimension)

The study found that collaboration is strong at the operational level but weak at the institutional level. Operationally, agencies collaborate effectively during emergencies through joint missions, intelligence sharing, and coordinated deployments. However, institutionally, collaboration is inconsistent and often reactive rather than sustained. This finding is corroborated by [4], who argue that inter-agency cooperation in Nigeria is largely crisis-driven, intensifying during emergencies but weakening during periods of relative calm. They further note that the absence of institutionalized coordination frameworks makes collaboration unstable and dependent on situational demands rather than structured systems. Similarly, [32] observe that inter-agency collaboration in Nigeria suffers from weak institutional integration, which limits continuity, strategic planning, and long-term effectiveness.

4.3. Effectiveness and Outcomes of Collaboration

The study found that where collaboration is effectively implemented, it improves intelligence gathering, enhances rapid response, increases security visibility, disrupts criminal networks, and strengthens public confidence. DSS intelligence, in particular, plays a key role in guiding operational decisions. This finding is supported by [20], who argues that intelligence-led collaboration is one of the most effective approaches to modern security management because it enhances early threat detection and coordinated response. [4] also affirm that joint security operations improve public trust and demonstrate state capacity to respond collectively to insecurity. Furthermore, [32] maintain that coordinated operations among security agencies enhance operational efficiency by pooling resources, expertise, and manpower, thereby improving crime suppression outcomes.

4.4. Challenges and Limitations of Collaboration

The study identified several challenges limiting effective collaboration, including inter-agency rivalry, poor communication systems, inadequate logistics, centralized command structures, political interference, and lack of standardized training for joint operations. These findings are strongly supported in the literature. [4], argue that rivalry among security agencies is one of the most persistent barriers to effective cooperation in Nigeria, often leading to poor intelligence sharing and operational inefficiencies. [4], similarly note that differences in institutional mandates and command hierarchies frequently create friction and reduce trust among agencies.

Ebo (2023) further highlights that inadequate communication infrastructure and lack of integrated operational systems significantly weaken coordination during joint missions. Additionally, centralized decision-making structures, especially within the police system, have been identified as slowing down rapid response efforts at sub-national levels. Political interference is also widely discussed in security governance literature as a factor that distorts operational neutrality and weakens professional coordination [4]. The absence of standardized joint training and protocols further limits the ability of agencies to operate seamlessly in collaborative environments.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the role of collaboration among formal security actors in the management of security in Kogi State, Nigeria, between 2015 and 2023, a period characterized by heightened security challenges such as kidnapping, banditry, communal conflicts, and organized crime. The findings reveal that while key security agencies including the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigerian Armed Forces, the Department of State Services (DSS), and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), have made efforts toward collaboration through joint operations and intelligence sharing, such efforts remain inconsistent and largely constrained by structural and operational limitations.

The study established that collaboration among formal security actors is critical to effective security management, particularly in a strategically important state like Kogi State, which serves as a major transit corridor linking different regions of the country. However, the effectiveness of such collaboration is undermined by institutional fragmentation, inter-agency rivalry, lack of trust, inadequate funding, and political interference. These challenges weaken coordination, delay response to security threats, and reduce the overall efficiency of security operations.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the study found that in instances where collaboration is effectively implemented, it leads to improved intelligence gathering, enhanced operational coordination, and reduction in criminal activities. This underscores the relevance of the collaborative security governance framework in addressing complex security challenges. Overall, the study concludes that strengthening inter-agency collaboration is not only desirable but essential for achieving sustainable security management in Kogi State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

First, there is a need to establish and strengthen formal coordination frameworks that clearly define the roles, responsibilities, and operational procedures of all security agencies. Such frameworks should institutionalize collaboration and reduce ambiguity that often leads to conflict and inefficiency.

Second, intelligence-sharing mechanisms among security agencies should be improved through the creation of integrated intelligence platforms and communication systems. This will enhance timely information exchange and support proactive security responses.

Third, the government should provide adequate funding and logistical support to security agencies to enhance their operational capacity. This includes provision of modern equipment, surveillance technology, and mobility resources necessary for effective joint operations.

Fourth, efforts should be made to promote inter-agency trust and professionalism through regular joint training, workshops, and capacity-building programs. These initiatives will foster mutual understanding, reduce rivalry, and improve teamwork among security personnel.

Finally, political interference in security operations should be minimized, and security agencies should be allowed to operate based on professional standards and legal frameworks. Ensuring operational independence will improve decision-making and effectiveness in addressing security challenges.

Abbreviations

CID	Criminal Investigation Department

DIA	Defence Intelligence Agency
DSS	Department of State Services
ISOs	Internal Security Operation
MOU	Memoranda of Understanding
NIA	National Intelligence Agency
NPF	Nigeria Police Force
NSCDC	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps
SSS	State Security Service

Author Contributions

Isah Abdulraman: Conceptualization, Methodology & Writing – original draft

Matthew Ola-Rotimi Ajayi: Formal Analysis

Timothy Onimisi: Methodology, Writing – review & editing

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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