



Institutional Coordination and Maritime Governance in Nigeria

BY

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of institutional coordination in shaping maritime governance outcomes in Nigeria. Existing research often treats coordination as secondary to piracy, oil theft, or naval capacity, leaving a gap in understanding how inter-agency interactions affect coastal communities, human security, and livelihood outcomes.

A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was adopted. Data were collected from 350 personnel across key maritime institutions and supplemented with purposively sampled Key Informant Interviews with senior officers, regulators, and coastal stakeholders. Institutional theory guided the analysis, examining how overlapping mandates, normative pressures, and weak inter-agency interactions influence operational effectiveness.

The study identified a critical human resources and coordination gap, with over 68 percent of respondents reporting overlapping mandates among maritime agencies and marine police, constraining operational efficiency. Coordination deficiencies were most pronounced at the operational and community engagement levels, with strategic committees rated as effective. These gaps delayed responses to piracy, illegal fishing, and oil theft and limited benefits to coastal communities.

Institutional coordination is central to effective maritime governance in Nigeria. Weak coordination reduces enforcement efficiency, undermines coastal livelihoods, and limits the translation of national security investments into human and economic security.

This study reframes institutional coordination as a governance variable linking security, regulatory enforcement, and coastal community welfare, extending scholarship beyond organizational compliance to tangible development outcomes.

Policymakers should harmonize agency mandates, strengthen operational structures, and integrate coastal community engagement to ensure sustainable maritime governance and development outcomes.

Keywords:

Institutional coordination, maritime governance, coastal communities, Nigeria, operational efficiency



1. Introduction

Maritime governance depends on how states coordinate institutions that share overlapping mandates over safety, security, trade facilitation, and environmental protection. Weak coordination increases transaction costs, enables regulatory capture, and creates operational gaps that criminal actors exploit. Strong coordination, by contrast, aligns policy, law enforcement, and economic objectives, improving both security outcomes and development returns. Much of the existing literature treats maritime governance as a technical or sectoral issue, often focusing on port efficiency, naval capacity, or maritime law enforcement in isolation. This fragmented treatment mirrors the institutional fragmentation it seeks to explain. A growing body of work acknowledges coordination failures, but it largely describes them rather than interrogating how institutional design and power relations shape coordination outcomes. This study addresses this gap by extending existing scholarship through a governance-focused analysis of institutional coordination, treating coordination not as an administrative afterthought but as a core variable shaping maritime governance effectiveness.

At the global level, maritime governance has evolved in response to globalization, containerization, and the expansion of transnational maritime crime. Over 80 percent of global trade by volume moves by sea, making maritime governance central to economic stability and supply chain resilience, as documented by UNCTAD in its Review of Maritime Transport 2023. Countries with complex maritime spaces have increasingly adopted integrated governance frameworks to manage overlapping institutional roles. The European Union provides a prominent example through its Integrated Maritime Policy and the Common Information Sharing Environment, which link navies, coast guards,



customs, and port authorities across member states, reducing duplication and improving situational awareness (European Commission, 2022). In Asia, Singapore's maritime governance model demonstrates how coordination among the Maritime and Port Authority, the navy, the police, the coast guard, and customs supports both security and efficiency, contributing to its ranking as one of the world's most efficient ports (World Bank's Container Port Performance Index, 2023). These cases show that coordination is not merely institutional harmony but a governance strategy that links security, commerce, and regulation.

In contrast, regions with weaker coordination frameworks continue to face persistent maritime insecurity. Southeast Asia's experience in the Malacca Strait before coordinated patrols illustrates this point. Prior to the Malacca Strait Patrols, overlapping national jurisdictions and limited information sharing allowed piracy to flourish. Following coordinated initiatives among Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and later Thailand, reported piracy incidents declined significantly, as recorded by the International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reports. The literature on these cases emphasizes that coordination mechanisms, such as joint patrols and shared information platforms, altered incentive structures for both institutions and offenders.

In Africa, maritime governance challenges reflect colonial administrative legacies, limited resources, and fragmented institutional mandates. The African Union's 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy explicitly identifies poor inter-agency coordination as a structural constraint on maritime security and development, linking governance failures to piracy, illegal fishing, and revenue losses, estimated at over 10 billion US dollars annually from illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing alone (FAO, 2022) report on



fisheries losses in Africa. The Gulf of Guinea, which accounts for the majority of global seafarer kidnappings between 2018 and 2021, illustrates how fragmented governance undermines maritime security (IMO and UNODC, 2021). While several coastal states have adopted national maritime strategies, empirical studies show that coordination remains uneven, often constrained by rivalry between navies, maritime administrations, and port authorities.

Recent improvements in regional coordination, however, highlight emerging governance pathways. Ghana's establishment of an inter-ministerial maritime security committee has improved coordination among the navy, ports authority, fisheries commission, and customs, contributing to a decline in piracy incidents off its coast after 2021 (IMO Global Integrated Shipping Information System, 2021). Similarly, Kenya's Blue Economy Strategy emphasizes institutional coordination between security agencies and economic regulators to support port expansion in Mombasa and Lamu, linking governance reform to development planning (World Bank, 2022). These African cases suggest that coordination is increasingly recognized as a governance problem rather than a purely security issue.

Nigeria represents a critical national case within this regional context. As Africa's largest economy and a major oil exporter, Nigeria's maritime domain underpins national revenue, trade, and energy security. However, Nigeria's maritime governance architecture is characterized by multiple institutions with overlapping mandates, including the Nigerian Navy, the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, the Nigerian Ports Authority, the Nigeria Customs Service, and the marine police. The literature documents how this multiplicity generates jurisdictional conflicts, regulatory duplication, and



operational inefficiencies, particularly in maritime security enforcement and port operations (Adejumo, 2019; Onuoha, 2020). While recent reforms, such as the Deep Blue Project, have strengthened surveillance and interdiction capacity, studies show that coordination challenges persist at the strategic and operational levels, especially in information sharing and command authority (Nigerian Institute for Strategic Studies, 2022).

Most Nigerian-focused studies analyze maritime insecurity through the lenses of piracy, oil theft, or naval capacity, often treating institutional coordination as a secondary variable. Others examine maritime governance from a legal or economic perspective without systematically linking coordination structures to governance outcomes. It creates a gap in the literature as limited empirical analysis that places institutional coordination at the center of maritime governance assessment, examining how institutional design, mandate overlap, and power asymmetries shape security and development outcomes. This study addresses that gap by extending existing governance scholarship, arguing that coordination failures are not incidental but structurally embedded in Nigeria's maritime governance framework.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Nigeria's maritime governance framework remains fragmented despite its strategic position along the Gulf of Guinea and its heavy reliance on coastal and maritime resources. Globally, empirical evidence shows that weak institutional coordination is associated with higher maritime crime rates and significant economic losses, particularly in jurisdictions with overlapping security and regulatory mandates, as documented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UNCTAD (UNODC, 2021; UNCTAD,



2023). In Nigeria, this governance problem is most visible in coastal communities, where coordination failures translate directly into insecurity, livelihood disruption, and environmental degradation. Nigeria has an estimated 853-kilometer coastline, and coastal and riverine zones support over 30 million people whose livelihoods depend on artisanal fishing, fish processing, small-scale trading, and maritime-related services, based on the National Bureau of Statistics population disaggregation and FAO fisheries profiles (NBS, 2022; FAO, 2022).

Empirical evidence indicates that coordination gaps among the Nigerian Navy, the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, the Nigerian Ports Authority, the Nigeria Customs Service, and the marine police weaken maritime domain awareness, delay response times, and reduce enforcement effectiveness. Between 2018 and 2021, the Gulf of Guinea accounted for over 90 percent of global seafarer kidnappings, with a significant proportion occurring within Nigerian waters and nearshore areas routinely accessed by artisanal fishing communities, according to the International Maritime Bureau annual piracy reports (IMB, 2021). Although piracy incidents declined after 2022 following the deployment of the Deep Blue Project, other threats affecting coastal communities persist. Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing alone costs Nigeria an estimated 2 billion US dollars annually in lost revenue, with direct implications for household income and food availability in coastal settlements, according to FAO and World Bank estimates (FAO, 2022; World Bank, 2023). Oil theft and chronic marine pollution further degrade fishing grounds and coastal ecosystems, compounding livelihood vulnerability.



The core research problem is that existing studies acknowledge maritime insecurity but rarely examine how institutional coordination failures shape governance outcomes at the coastal community level. This gap matters because policies that prioritize offshore security without resolving coordination dynamics fail to convert national maritime security investments into improved human security for coastal populations. This study addresses this gap by empirically linking institutional coordination failures to lived socio-economic outcomes in Nigerian coastal communities, which forms the conceptual thrust of the research and justifies a governance-centered analytical framework.

1.3 Conceptual Clarifications

Institutional Coordination

Institutional coordination refers to the structured interactions, information sharing, and division of responsibilities among public agencies with overlapping mandates to pursue shared policy objectives. In the Nigerian maritime context, coordination goes beyond administrative cooperation and reflects power relations, mandate rivalry, and control over maritime resources. Onuoha argues that weak coordination among maritime security institutions in Nigeria produces operational duplication and enforcement gaps that criminal networks exploit, particularly in coastal and nearshore spaces (Onuoha, 2020). Adejumo further demonstrates that coordination failures are embedded in Nigeria's fragmented maritime institutional design, in which agencies pursue parallel mandates without an effective integrative authority, thereby undermining collective maritime governance outcomes (Adejumo, 2019). This study advances the concept by framing institutional coordination as a governance variable that directly shapes security and livelihood outcomes in coastal communities.



i. Maritime Governance

Maritime governance refers to the formal and informal rules, institutions, and practices that regulate, secure, and utilize maritime spaces and resources. Nigerian scholars increasingly conceptualize maritime governance as a multi-actor system linking security agencies, economic regulators, and local communities. Okafor defines maritime governance in Nigeria as the interaction between state authority, maritime law enforcement, and economic regulation within contested ocean spaces, emphasizing that governance failures often stem from institutional fragmentation rather than capacity deficits alone (Okafor, 2021). This study extends this perspective by situating maritime governance within a coordination framework that connects national policy objectives to subnational coastal realities.

ii. Coastal Community Security

Coastal community security refers to the condition in which coastal populations experience physical safety, livelihood stability, and environmental protection within maritime-dependent spaces. Asuni's work on the Niger Delta shows that when state maritime governance prioritizes offshore security without integrating community-level institutions, coastal insecurity persists despite increased naval presence (Asuni, 2018). Nigerian literature often treats coastal communities as passive victims of maritime crime. This study reframes them as active governance stakeholders whose security outcomes are shaped by the effectiveness of maritime institutions' coordination of their roles and interventions.



1.3 Research Methodology

This study adopted a convergent parallel research design that combined qualitative and quantitative approaches to generate comprehensive insights into the effectiveness and challenges of Nigeria's maritime governance framework. The study population consisted of an estimated 4,800 personnel drawn from relevant maritime institutions, as reported by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2023. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's 1968 formula to ensure representativeness and reduce sampling error. This process produced a sample size of 350 respondents. A probability sampling technique, specifically simple random sampling, was used to administer structured questionnaires to respondents selected across different operational units, ensuring objectivity and broad institutional coverage.

For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was employed to conduct Key Informant Interviews with senior officers, regulatory officials, and coastal community stakeholders with direct operational and policy experience in maritime governance. Data collection relied on structured questionnaires to obtain quantifiable data on perceptions, institutional practices, and operational challenges, complemented by in-depth interviews that provided contextual explanations and experiential insights. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS, while qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, relationships, and governance dynamics. The integration of both data strands enhanced the validity and reliability of the findings by enabling systematic triangulation across multiple sources.



1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Institutional Theory as its theoretical framework. Institutional theory was originally developed by Meyer and Rowan (1977), extended by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), and later systematized by Scott (1995). The theory explains how formal rules, norms, and organizational structures shape institutional behavior, often producing conformity, mandate overlap, and symbolic compliance rather than effective performance. In governance studies, the theory has been used to show how institutions may appear functional on paper while failing in practice due to weak coordination and competing logics.

The relevance of Institutional Theory to this study lies in its capacity to explain why Nigeria's maritime institutions persist in fragmented operational patterns despite repeated reforms and investments. Nigerian maritime agencies operate within overlapping legal mandates and coercive regulatory pressures, which DiMaggio and Powell (1983) describe as isomorphic forces that encourage duplication rather than integration. Empirical applications of Institutional Theory to maritime and security governance since 2015 confirm this relevance. Onuoha (2016) applied the theory to maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea and showed that institutional rivalry and mandate protection undermined cooperative enforcement. Adejumo (2019) similarly used Institutional Theory to explain why maritime reforms in Nigeria produced limited coordination outcomes despite improved assets and legislation.

This study departs from previous applications in three ways. First, while earlier studies applied Institutional Theory to explain piracy or state-level security failures, this research extends the theory to coastal community outcomes, linking institutional coordination



directly to livelihood security and human security impacts. Second, rather than treating institutions as static entities, the study operationalizes coordination as an institutional practice shaped by normative and regulative pressures, following Scott's (2015) updated institutional pillars framework. Third, the study integrates qualitative community-level evidence with institutional analysis, addressing critiques that Institutional Theory overemphasizes formal structures at the expense of lived outcomes, as noted by Peters (2018).

By using Institutional Theory to connect institutional design, coordination behavior, and coastal community outcomes, this study extends existing scholarship rather than merely replicating prior applications, thereby offering a governance-centered reinterpretation of maritime coordination in Nigeria.

Institutional Coordination Shapes Maritime Governance: Global Perspective

This section empirically examines how institutional coordination shapes maritime governance outcomes across global, African, and Nigerian contexts, moving from broad systemic evidence to context-specific findings while critically interrogating each contribution rather than cataloguing citations. According to Bueger (2015), empirical studies of maritime security governance across Europe and Asia show that coordination failures emerge when maritime agencies operate under competing security narratives and fragmented information systems. Using comparative case evidence from the Indian Ocean and European waters, Bueger demonstrates that where coordination platforms were weak, such as limited joint tasking and data sharing, maritime crime response remained reactive rather than preventive. While the study is empirically grounded through case comparisons, its limitation lies in its abstraction from development outcomes. Coordination is measured



largely through security effectiveness indicators, leaving unanswered how such failures affect coastal livelihoods or local governance. This study builds on Bueger's empirical insight but extends it by linking coordination deficits to socio-economic outcomes in coastal communities, an area his work empirically underexplores.

In the study of integrated maritime policy implementation in the European Union, Kopytoff and Hoel (2016) empirically assess coordination outcomes using policy evaluation data from member states. Their findings show that countries with centralized coordination units recorded lower compliance conflicts and improved maritime environmental enforcement. However, their empirical model assumes institutional maturity and stable funding environments. It limits transferability to African and Nigerian contexts, where coordination failures are often rooted in mandate rivalry and uneven authority rather than policy absence. The study therefore supports the importance of coordination empirically but does not interrogate how weak state capacity reshapes coordination dynamics, a gap this research addresses.

Similarly, Percy and Shortland (2017) employ cross-national piracy data and institutional indicators to demonstrate that fragmented maritime governance correlates with higher piracy incidence. Their empirical analysis shows that states with multiple uncoordinated maritime agencies experienced slower response times and higher ransom payments. While robust in quantitative terms, the study frames coordination purely as an enforcement efficiency problem. It does not empirically assess downstream impacts on coastal populations. This narrow operationalization leaves room for studies that examine coordination as a governance issue affecting human security, a central focus of this research.



According to Vreÿ (2018), empirical assessments of African maritime security initiatives reveal persistent coordination deficits despite regional frameworks such as the African Integrated Maritime Strategy. Drawing on naval expenditure data and operational reports, Vreÿ shows that coordination improved at regional summits but weakened at national implementation levels. The study's empirical strength lies in its regional scope. Its weakness is its military-centric bias, which marginalizes economic and regulatory institutions. This study advances the discourse by empirically integrating non-military institutions and coastal actors into coordination analysis.

In the study of the Gulf of Guinea, Onuoha (2016) uses incident data and institutional interviews to show that interagency rivalry in Nigeria and neighboring states undermined joint maritime operations. His findings empirically link coordination failure to persistent piracy and oil theft. However, the study stops at national security indicators and does not trace how these failures affect fishing communities or coastal economies. This research extends Onuoha's empirical findings by incorporating community-level impacts as outcome variables.

Similarly, Adejumo (2019) empirically maps Nigeria's maritime institutions using legal analysis and operational case studies. He demonstrates that overlapping mandates between the Nigerian Navy and NIMASA produce enforcement duplication and regulatory confusion. While empirically detailed, the study treats coordination as a structural flaw rather than an evolving governance process. It does not empirically test how coordination failures affect development outcomes. This study builds on Adejumo's evidence but shifts the analytical focus to governance outcomes in coastal communities.



According to Okafor (2021), survey-based empirical evidence from Nigerian ports and maritime agencies indicates that poor coordination is associated with delays, informal charges, and weak enforcement of compliance. His findings empirically confirm coordination as a governance constraint. However, the study remains institution-focused and does not extend its empirical lens to coastal populations. This research expands the frontier by empirically linking institutional coordination patterns to coastal livelihood security, thereby extending existing scholarship rather than repeating it.

Institutional Coordination Shapes Maritime Governance Outcomes in Nigeria

The data analysis draws on the convergent parallel design adopted in this study. It integrates quantitative survey results with qualitative evidence and secondary data to explain how institutional coordination shapes maritime governance outcomes in Nigeria. Quantitative responses from 350 respondents across maritime institutions show a consistent perception of coordination deficits. Over 68 percent of respondents agreed that overlapping mandates between the Nigerian Navy, NIMASA, the Nigerian Ports Authority, Customs, and the marine police reduced operational efficiency. In comparison, only 21 percent reported the existence of effective inter-agency information-sharing platforms at the operational level. This finding aligns with secondary institutional assessments by the Nigerian Institute for Strategic Studies, which report weak interoperability and parallel command structures despite recent investments in maritime assets (NISS, 2022).

Survey data further indicate that coordination challenges are most visible at the tactical and community interface levels. About 72 percent of respondents reported delays in joint responses to maritime incidents in nearshore and riverine areas, attributing them to unclear



lead-agency responsibility and bureaucratic clearance processes. Secondary data from the International Maritime Bureau show that although piracy incidents in Nigerian waters declined from 35 cases in 2021 to fewer than 10 cases in 2023, incidents of illegal fishing and oil theft in coastal zones remained persistent, suggesting that improved offshore security has not translated into comprehensive maritime governance outcomes (IMB, 2023). This disconnect supports the study's argument that coordination failures limit the diffusion of security gains to coastal communities.

Qualitative data from Key Informant Interviews reinforce these quantitative patterns. Senior maritime officers and regulators consistently emphasized that coordination improved at the strategic level following the Deep Blue Project but remained weak at the operational and community engagement levels. Community-level informants reported limited interaction with maritime institutions beyond enforcement actions, which they associated with declining trust and low compliance. These narratives align with UNODC field assessments, which show that coastal communities in the Niger Delta and western coastline experience reduced fishing income and increased livelihood vulnerability due to continued illegal fishing and pollution, despite enhanced naval patrols (UNODC, 2022). Secondary economic data further contextualize these findings. FAO estimates indicate that Nigeria loses about 2 billion US dollars annually to illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, with the burden falling disproportionately on artisanal fishing households that supply over 70 percent of domestic fish consumption (FAO, 2022). World Bank coastal economy assessments show that weak coordination between security agencies and fisheries regulators undermines enforcement consistency, enabling repeated violations in the same coastal zones (World Bank, 2023). The survey data corroborate this



pattern, as 64 percent of respondents acknowledged limited coordination between security operations and regulatory enforcement.

From a governance perspective, the analysis shows that institutional coordination remains reactive rather than integrated. While 59 percent of respondents acknowledged the existence of coordination committees, only 26 percent rated them as effective in resolving mandate conflicts. This finding supports Adejumo's empirical claim that coordination mechanisms in Nigeria are often symbolic rather than functional (Adejumo, 2019). Similarly, Onuoha's analysis of Gulf of Guinea maritime governance links persistent insecurity to institutional rivalry rather than capacity gaps alone, a conclusion reinforced by this study's mixed evidence (Onuoha, 2020).

The integrated analysis demonstrates that institutional coordination significantly shapes the effectiveness of maritime governance in Nigeria. Quantitative data highlight widespread perceptions of coordination failure, qualitative evidence explains how these failures operate in practice, and secondary data confirm their material consequences for security and coastal livelihoods. The study's comprehensive thrust is that without institutionalized coordination linking security, regulation, and community engagement, maritime governance reforms will continue to yield uneven outcomes. This finding extends existing scholarship by empirically grounding coordination as a central governance variable that mediates the relationship between maritime security investments and development outcomes in Nigeria's coastal communities.

1.5 Discussions of Major Findings

The first major finding of this study indicates that institutional coordination among Nigerian maritime agencies remains weak despite strategic reforms such as the Deep Blue



Project. Survey data revealed that over 68 percent of personnel perceived overlap in mandates among the Navy, NIMASA, the Ports Authority, Customs, and the marine police as a key operational constraint. This finding aligns with Adejumo (2019), who identified overlapping mandates as a structural flaw in Nigeria's maritime governance. However, this study extends the analysis by demonstrating that these coordination gaps directly affect coastal community outcomes, linking institutional failure to human security implications—a connection largely absent in previous work. Conceptually, this reinforces Institutional Theory by illustrating how regulative and normative pressures can produce compliance without effective coordination.

The second finding shows that coordination deficiencies are most pronounced at operational and community engagement levels. Although strategic committees exist, only 26 percent of respondents rated them as effective in resolving conflicts. Qualitative interviews corroborated this, highlighting delayed responses to piracy, oil theft, and illegal fishing incidents in nearshore communities. Unlike Bueger (2015), who primarily theorized coordination as a global governance practice, this study empirically situates coordination failures within local governance realities, demonstrating that high-level frameworks fail to translate into functional operational effectiveness.

A third finding reveals that poor coordination weakens regulatory enforcement, particularly in the fisheries and environmental sectors. Over 64 percent of respondents reported limited interaction between security operations and regulatory enforcement. It is consistent with UNODC (2022) and FAO (2022), which note ongoing illegal fishing and resource depletion in coastal areas. However, this study makes a unique contribution by empirically linking institutional coordination deficits to measurable economic losses and



livelihood vulnerability, thereby integrating governance, security, and development dimensions that prior studies often treat separately.

Finally, the study finds that enhanced coordination could mediate the relationship between maritime security investments and coastal development outcomes. While Onuoha (2016) highlighted inter-agency rivalry as a driver of maritime insecurity, this research demonstrates that resolving coordination gaps not only improves security but also directly strengthens coastal livelihoods, food security, and compliance behavior. Theoretically, this affirms Institutional Theory's premise that institutional design and interactions shape real-world outcomes, expanding its application from organizational behavior to governance effectiveness and human security.

These findings collectively advance the discourse by empirically situating institutional coordination as the central variable linking maritime governance to coastal community welfare, moving beyond descriptive analyses of piracy or security investments prevalent in earlier studies.

Conclusion

This study concludes that institutional coordination is the central determinant of effective maritime governance in Nigeria, with direct implications for coastal community security, livelihood stability, and regulatory compliance. Conceptually, the research demonstrates that coordination failures are not merely administrative inefficiencies but structural governance deficits that influence how maritime policies translate into real-world outcomes. By empirically linking coordination gaps to offshore security, illegal fishing, oil theft, and community-level socio-economic vulnerabilities, the study situates



institutional coordination as a primary explanatory variable, a departure from prior studies that largely treated it as a secondary or descriptive factor (Adejumo, 2019; Onuoha, 2016). The findings reinforce Institutional Theory by illustrating how overlapping mandates, competing norms, and insufficient information sharing among maritime agencies create persistent gaps in governance outcomes. Unlike previous applications of the theory that focus on organizational behavior or state-level compliance (Bueger, 2015; Percy & Shortland, 2017), this study extends its scope to include coastal populations as active stakeholders whose welfare is shaped by institutional interactions. This conceptual extension confirms the theory's relevance to governance, showing that coordination mediates both security effectiveness and socio-economic development.

Compared with studies by Vreÿ (2018) and Kopytoff & Hoel (2016), which highlighted the importance of strategic coordination in Africa and Europe, this research demonstrates that, without operational integration and community engagement, high-level coordination mechanisms remain ineffective in Nigeria. Similarly, Okafor's (2021) normative prescriptions for maritime governance are supported, but this study empirically validates that coordination deficits materially impact livelihoods and compliance, filling a key gap in the literature.

The study advances maritime governance scholarship by establishing that institutional coordination is the linchpin linking security investments to coastal community development. By integrating quantitative evidence, qualitative insights, and secondary data, it confirms that effective governance requires harmonized mandates, functional operational structures, and inclusion of coastal communities, providing both theoretical and practical guidance for policy reform in Nigeria and similar maritime contexts.



Recommendations

- i. The government should harmonize institutional mandates by clearly defining and aligning the roles of the Navy, NIMASA, Ports Authority, Customs, and marine police to reduce overlap, eliminate conflicts, and enhance operational efficiency.
- ii. The authority should enhance operational coordination by strengthening inter-agency communication and the effectiveness of strategic committees, particularly at the operational and community levels, to ensure timely, coordinated responses to piracy, illegal fishing, and oil theft.
- iii. The government should promote collaboration between maritime security agencies and regulatory bodies in fisheries and environmental management to enforce compliance, protect resources, and minimize economic losses for coastal communities.
- iv. The government should systematically involve coastal communities in maritime governance initiatives to link security interventions with livelihood protection, food security, and compliance, ensuring that governance reforms yield tangible benefits at the local level.

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