

INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION AND BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS IN NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of bureaucratic politics on inter-agency coordination and its implications for national security administration in Nigeria. National security challenges in Nigeria, including insurgency, banditry, and organised crime, often require coordinated responses across multiple security agencies. However, persistent coordination failures have undermined policy implementation and operational effectiveness. Guided by bureaucratic politics theory and coordination theory, the study examines how organisational rivalry, information hoarding, resource competition, and leadership behaviour affect inter-agency collaboration. It further explores the institutional, organisational, and political factors that exacerbate coordination challenges and assesses the role of effective inter-agency coordination in enhancing the formulation and implementation of national security policies. The study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to a sample of 400 personnel across Nigeria's security agencies, including the Armed Forces, Police, State Security Service, and paramilitary organisations. Qualitative data were gathered via semi-structured interviews with 30 senior officials directly involved in policy formulation and operational coordination. Descriptive statistics (percentages, means, and standard deviations) were used to summarise patterns of bureaucratic politics, coordination challenges, and policy outcomes. Inferential statistics, including Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and regression analysis, were employed to test the study's hypotheses and examine the relationships among variables. Findings indicate that bureaucratic politics significantly undermines inter-agency coordination, while

institutional, organisational, and political factors exacerbate coordination failures. Effective inter-agency coordination, however, significantly improves the effectiveness of national security policy formulation and implementation. The study concludes that addressing bureaucratic politics, clarifying institutional mandates, and strengthening coordination mechanisms are essential for enhancing national security administration in Nigeria. Policy recommendations include institutional reforms, capacity building, and political insulation of security agencies, resource investment, and the promotion of a collaborative culture.

KEYWORDS: - Bureaucratic politics, inter-agency coordination, national security administration, Nigeria, institutional factors, policy implementation.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

National security administration in contemporary states increasingly depends on effective coordination among multiple government agencies whose mandates intersect in complex and often contested ways. In Nigeria, the challenge of inter-agency coordination has become particularly salient due to the persistence of multifaceted security threats, including terrorism, insurgency, banditry, separatist agitations, transnational organised crime, and cyber insecurity (Adebajo, 2020). These threats cut across traditional institutional boundaries, requiring sustained collaboration among military, intelligence, law-enforcement, and civilian security agencies. However, Nigeria's national security architecture continues to be characterized by fragmentation, rivalry, and bureaucratic competition, which often undermine policy coherence and operational effectiveness.

Inter-agency coordination refers to the structured interaction, information sharing, and joint decision-making among public organisations pursuing overlapping or complementary policy objectives (Christensen and Lægreid, 2011). In the context of national security, effective coordination is essential for timely intelligence fusion, coherent strategy formulation, and efficient deployment of resources. Yet, coordination is rarely a purely technical exercise. It is deeply embedded in bureaucratic politics, where agencies seek to protect institutional autonomy, maximise budgets, expand influence, and assert jurisdictional dominance (Allison and Zelikow, 1999). As a result, national security outcomes are shaped not only by formal structures and policies, but also by informal power struggles and organisational interests.

Nigeria's national security administration exemplifies these dynamics. Despite the existence of coordinating institutions such as the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) and the National Security Council, security agencies frequently operate in silos, with limited information sharing and competing chains of command (Oni, 2019). Public disputes between agencies, duplication of functions, and uncoordinated operations have been widely reported, raising

concerns about the effectiveness of the country's security governance (Ewi and Aning, 2021). These challenges suggest that bureaucratic politics play a significant role in shaping inter-agency relations within Nigeria's security sector.

Bureaucratic politics theory provides a useful analytical framework for understanding these patterns. The theory posits that policy outcomes emerge from bargaining, negotiation, and power struggles among actors embedded in bureaucratic organisations, rather than from unitary, rational state decision-making (Allison and Zelikow, 1999). Applied to Nigeria's national security administration, this perspective highlights how institutional histories, leadership rivalries, organisational cultures, and political patronage networks influence coordination outcomes. It also draws attention to how civilian oversight, constitutional arrangements, and executive authority mediate inter-agency interactions.

This study examines inter-agency coordination and bureaucratic politics in Nigeria's national security administration, with the aim of explaining how bureaucratic interests and power relations shape security decision-making and operational effectiveness. By situating Nigeria's experience within broader debates on public administration and security governance, the study seeks to contribute to both theoretical and empirical scholarship. Understanding these dynamics is critical not only for improving Nigeria's security outcomes, but also for informing reforms in other developing states facing similar coordination challenges in complex security environments.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite repeated security sector reforms and the establishment of formal coordination mechanisms, Nigeria continues to experience persistent and escalating national security challenges. Insurgency in the North-East, widespread banditry in the North-West and North-Central regions, separatist agitations in the South-East, militancy in the Niger Delta, and the growing threat of transnational organised crime collectively expose significant weaknesses in Nigeria's national security administration (Adebajo, 2020; Ewi and Aning, 2021). While these challenges are often attributed to resource constraints, weak intelligence capacity, and political instability, less attention has been paid to the systemic coordination failures among security agencies and the bureaucratic politics that underpin them.

Nigeria's national security architecture comprises multiple actors, including the Armed Forces, the Nigeria Police Force, intelligence agencies, paramilitary organisations, and relevant civilian ministries. In theory, institutions such as the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) and the National Security Council are mandated to ensure policy coherence, strategic coordination, and integrated responses to security threats. In practice, however, inter-agency coordination remains weak, inconsistent, and highly personalised (Oni, 2019). Security agencies

frequently operate independently, pursue overlapping mandates, and engage in jurisdictional competition, resulting in duplication of efforts, delayed responses, intelligence failures, and operational inefficiencies.

Empirical evidence suggests that inter-agency rivalry and poor information sharing have directly undermined Nigeria's capacity to prevent and respond effectively to security threats (Ewi and Aning, 2021). Public confrontations between security agencies, contradictory official statements, and uncoordinated operations reveal deep-seated institutional tensions. These patterns indicate that coordination problems are not merely administrative or technical deficiencies, but are rooted in bureaucratic politics characterised by competition for authority, budgetary control, political relevance, and access to executive power (Allison and Zelikow, 1999).

However, existing scholarship on Nigeria's security sector has largely focused on operational performance, civil-military relations, or counterterrorism strategies, with limited systematic analysis of how bureaucratic politics shape inter-agency coordination within the national security system. Where coordination is discussed, it is often treated as a normative policy objective rather than as a contested political process influenced by organisational interests, leadership rivalries, and institutional cultures (Christensen and Lægreid, 2011). This creates a critical gap in understanding the internal dynamics that affect security governance and policy outcomes in Nigeria.

The absence of a comprehensive, theory-driven examination of inter-agency coordination through the lens of bureaucratic politics limits both academic inquiry and policy reform efforts. Without a clear understanding of how bureaucratic interests, power struggles, and informal practices influence coordination, reform initiatives risk addressing symptoms rather than underlying causes. Consequently, security sector reforms may continue to produce limited results, while coordination failures persist across successive administrations.

This study addresses this gap by systematically examining inter-agency coordination and bureaucratic politics in Nigeria's national security administration. By analysing how bureaucratic actors interact, compete, and negotiate within the security governance framework, the study seeks to explain persistent coordination failures and their implications for national security outcomes. In doing so, it aims to contribute to theoretical debates on bureaucratic politics and inter-agency coordination, while providing empirically grounded insights to inform more effective and sustainable security sector reforms in Nigeria.

Based on the above, the general objective of this study is to examine the relationship between inter-agency coordination and bureaucratic politics in Nigeria's national security administration.

The specific objectives include - to analyse the extent to which bureaucratic politics shape patterns of inter-agency coordination among security agencies in Nigeria; to identify the key institutional, organisational, and political factors that hinder effective coordination within Nigeria's national security architecture; and to assess the impact of inter-agency coordination dynamics on the formulation and implementation of national security policies in Nigeria. The research questions include - how does bureaucratic politics influence inter-agency coordination within Nigeria's national security administration? What institutional, organisational, and political factors account for persistent coordination failures among Nigeria's security agencies? And what are the implications of inter-agency coordination dynamics for the effectiveness of Nigeria's national security policy implementation? The study is guided by the following null hypotheses - H_{01} : Bureaucratic politics have no significant influence on inter-agency coordination within Nigeria's national security administration; H_{02} : Institutional, organisational, and political factors do not significantly account for coordination failures among Nigeria's security agencies; and H_{03} : Inter-agency coordination dynamics have no significant effect on the effectiveness of national security policy implementation in Nigeria.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualization of Key Variables

Inter-Agency Coordination

Inter-agency coordination is a central construct in public administration and security governance, referring to the deliberate alignment of activities, information, and decision-making processes among multiple government agencies to achieve common objectives (Christensen and Lægreid, 2011). It involves both horizontal coordination, across agencies at the same administrative level, and vertical coordination, across different hierarchical levels of government. Coordination mechanisms may include formal structures such as inter-ministerial committees, joint task forces, and integrated policy frameworks, as well as informal arrangements like personal networks and ad hoc collaboration (Bouckaert, Peters and Verhoest, 2010).

In the security domain, inter-agency coordination is crucial for effective intelligence sharing, operational synergy, and coherent policy implementation. Failure in coordination can lead to fragmented responses, duplication of effort, and operational inefficiencies (O'Toole and Meier, 2004). In Nigeria, studies have documented persistent coordination challenges among security agencies, despite formal mechanisms such as the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) and the National Security Council (Oni, 2019). These challenges are compounded by overlapping mandates, limited trust, and competition for resources and influence, highlighting the need to examine coordination not only as an administrative process but also as a political phenomenon.

Bureaucratic Politics

Bureaucratic politics is a theoretical framework that conceptualises policy outcomes as the product of negotiation, bargaining, and conflict among actors embedded in different bureaucratic organisations (Allison and Zelikow, 1999). Unlike rational-actor models, which assume unitary decision-making, bureaucratic politics recognises that organisations and their leaders pursue institutional interests, seeking to maximise authority, budgetary resources, and political relevance.

Within bureaucratic politics, security agencies are understood as active participants in shaping policy rather than neutral implementers. Their interactions are influenced by organisational culture, leadership styles, access to decision-makers, and historical patterns of rivalry (Downs, 1967; Betts, 2007). Bureaucratic politics provides a lens for analysing why coordination efforts often fail: competing priorities, jurisdictional disputes, and power struggles can undermine formal mechanisms designed to facilitate collaboration.

In Nigeria, bureaucratic politics manifests in inter-agency rivalry, information hoarding, and fragmented operational strategies, which impede effective national security administration (Ewi and Aning, 2021). By conceptualising bureaucratic politics as a variable, this study focuses on how institutional interests and power relations influence the extent and quality of inter-agency coordination, and ultimately, national security outcomes.

National Security Administration

National security administration refers to the structures, processes, and institutions responsible for safeguarding the state from internal and external threats (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998). It encompasses the military, intelligence agencies, law enforcement, paramilitary organisations, and civilian oversight bodies, as well as the policies, strategies, and legal frameworks governing their functions.

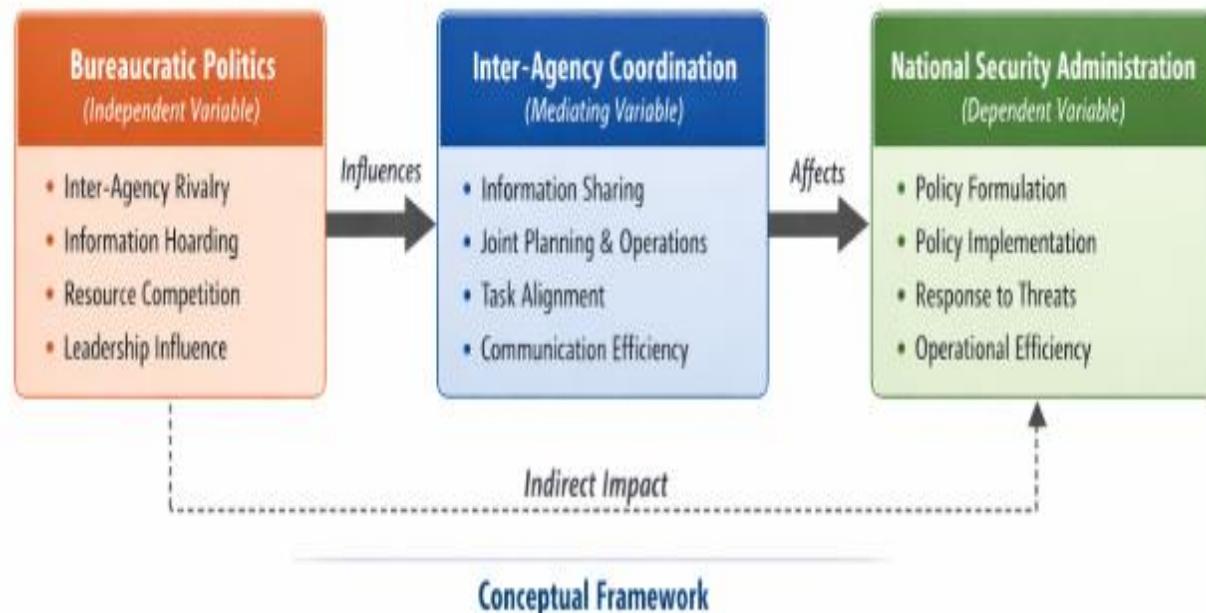
In conceptual terms, national security administration is both an outcome and a context variable. It serves as the environment in which inter-agency coordination and bureaucratic politics interact. Effective administration depends on clear mandates, well-defined authority, resource allocation, and integrated decision-making mechanisms (Adebajo, 2020). Conversely, weak administration, characterised by fragmented authority, politicisation, and limited oversight, exacerbates coordination failures and magnifies the effects of bureaucratic politics (Oni, 2019).

In Nigeria, national security administration is shaped by a centralised presidential system, with the Office of the National Security Adviser and the National Security Council serving as coordination hubs. Nonetheless, recurrent security crises suggest gaps between policy design and

implementation, highlighting the relevance of understanding the interplay between bureaucratic politics and inter-agency coordination (Ewi and Aning, 2021). Conceptually, this variable provides the context for assessing how the interaction of agencies and the power dynamics among them affect national security performance.

Thus, from the foregoing, inter-agency coordination represents the procedural and structural mechanisms through which security agencies collaborate; bureaucratic politics captures the behavioural and organisational dynamics that shape these interactions; and national security administration provides the institutional context and operational environment. Conceptually, bureaucratic politics is posited to influence the quality of inter-agency coordination, which in turn affects the effectiveness of national security administration. Understanding these linkages is crucial for diagnosing coordination failures and designing reforms that enhance Nigeria's security governance.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of National Security Coordination



The Extent Bureaucratic Politics Shapes Patterns of Inter-Agency Coordination among Security Agencies in Nigeria

Bureaucratic politics has long been recognised as a central factor influencing policy outcomes and administrative behaviour within complex government systems. Unlike rational-actor models that view the state as a unitary decision-making entity, bureaucratic politics theory posits that policies and coordination outcomes emerge from the bargaining, negotiation, and power struggles among actors representing distinct institutional interests (Allison and Zelikow, 1999).

In the context of national security, where multiple agencies with overlapping mandates operate under high-stakes conditions, bureaucratic politics can profoundly shape patterns of inter-agency coordination, influencing both efficiency and effectiveness.

In Nigeria, inter-agency coordination among security agencies—including the Armed Forces, Nigeria Police Force, State Security Service, and paramilitary organisations—remains a persistent challenge. Despite formal structures such as the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) and the National Security Council, agencies frequently operate in silos, with minimal information sharing, jurisdictional disputes, and duplicated operations (Oni, 2019; Ewi and Aning, 2021). Scholars attribute much of this dysfunction to bureaucratic politics, whereby agency leaders prioritise institutional autonomy, access to political patronage, and resource control over collective security objectives (Downs, 1967; Betts, 2007).

Empirical studies reveal that bureaucratic politics manifests in several ways within Nigeria's security sector. First, inter-agency rivalry often delays the flow of critical intelligence, impeding coordinated responses to threats such as insurgency in the North-East and banditry in the North-West (Adebajo, 2020). Second, agencies sometimes withhold information or bypass formal coordination channels to assert jurisdictional authority, reflecting the influence of informal power networks and personal relationships (Oni, 2019). Third, political interference exacerbates these dynamics, as agency leaders seek to maintain favour with the executive, further complicating coordination efforts (Ewi and Aning, 2021).

The literature indicates that while bureaucratic politics can stimulate negotiation and adaptive problem-solving, in Nigeria it more often produces fragmentation and inefficiency. Coordination failures are not merely technical deficiencies but are rooted in organisational behaviour shaped by historical rivalries, leadership styles, and institutional cultures (Christensen and Lægreid, 2011). Studies highlight that even when formal coordination structures exist, their effectiveness is contingent upon the willingness of agencies to subordinate parochial interests to collective security goals—a condition often absent in the Nigerian context.

In sum, the evidence suggests that bureaucratic politics significantly shapes the patterns of inter-agency coordination among Nigeria's security agencies. Understanding the mechanisms through which power struggles, institutional competition, and political patronage influence coordination is critical for explaining persistent gaps in operational effectiveness and informing policy and institutional reforms. The Nigerian experience demonstrates that strengthening coordination requires not only structural solutions but also attention to the behavioural and political dynamics inherent in bureaucratic governance.

Key Institutional, Organisational, and Political Factors Hindering Effective Coordination within Nigeria's National Security Architecture

Effective inter-agency coordination in national security administration is shaped not only by bureaucratic politics but also by structural, organisational, and political factors that facilitate or constrain collaboration. In Nigeria, coordination challenges are influenced by the interplay of institutional design, organisational culture, and political context, all of which determine the capacity of security agencies to share information, synchronise operations, and implement coherent security policies (Christensen and Lægreid, 2011).

From an *institutional perspective*, overlapping mandates and ambiguous authority structures among security agencies create systemic coordination challenges. For example, the military, police, and intelligence services often have competing responsibilities for intelligence gathering, surveillance, and counterterrorism operations (Oni, 2019). Despite the formal establishment of the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) and the National Security Council to coordinate inter-agency activities, unclear legal and operational frameworks frequently result in jurisdictional disputes, task duplication, and gaps in operational coverage (Adebajo, 2020). These structural ambiguities weaken formal coordination mechanisms and exacerbate inter-agency rivalries.

Organisational factors also significantly influence coordination effectiveness. Agencies differ in their hierarchical structures, decision-making styles, and operational cultures, which affect their ability and willingness to collaborate. Militarised or rigidly hierarchical organisations, such as the Nigerian Armed Forces, often emphasise command-and-control principles that are less compatible with the collaborative approaches required for multi-agency operations (Betts, 2007). Similarly, institutionalised secrecy in intelligence and paramilitary organisations encourages information hoarding, reduces transparency, and undermines trust between agencies (Ewi and Aning, 2021). Leadership styles, professional norms, and historical experiences of inter-agency conflict further shape the patterns of collaboration and competition among security actors.

Political factors constitute another critical dimension. The politicisation of security agencies in Nigeria, including appointments based on loyalty and patronage rather than merit, affects coordination by aligning agency priorities with political interests rather than collective security objectives (Oni, 2019). Executive influence over agencies, inconsistent policy directives, and pressure to demonstrate immediate results often lead agencies to prioritise institutional visibility over cooperation, thereby hindering information sharing and joint planning. Political interference can also exacerbate inter-agency rivalry, as competing actors seek to maintain access to resources, budgets, and decision-making authority (Ewi and Aning, 2021).

Collectively, these institutional, organisational, and political factors create structural and behavioural barriers that limit the effectiveness of inter-agency coordination in Nigeria's national security architecture. The literature underscores that coordination failures are not merely technical problems but are deeply embedded in the interplay of agency mandates, organisational cultures, and political dynamics. Addressing these challenges requires reforms that simultaneously clarify institutional mandates, foster collaborative organisational cultures, and insulate security administration from undue political influence (Christensen and Lægreid, 2011; Adebajo, 2020).

Impact of Inter-Agency Coordination Dynamics on the Formulation and Implementation of National Security Policies in Nigeria

Inter-agency coordination is widely recognised as a critical determinant of the effectiveness of national security policy formulation and implementation. Coordination dynamics, including information sharing, joint decision-making, and operational alignment, influence how security policies are translated from strategy into practice (Christensen and Lægreid, 2011). In contexts where multiple agencies operate with overlapping mandates and competing interests, the quality of inter-agency coordination directly affects policy coherence, responsiveness to emerging threats, and the overall performance of the national security system (O'Toole and Meier, 2004).

In Nigeria, national security policies are formulated within a centralised presidential system, with strategic guidance provided by the National Security Council and operational oversight by the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) (Adebajo, 2020). However, the implementation of these policies often suffers due to coordination gaps among the Armed Forces, Nigeria Police Force, State Security Service, and other paramilitary agencies. Studies indicate that inter-agency rivalry, lack of trust, and bureaucratic politics undermine collaborative planning, resulting in fragmented operations and delayed responses to security crises (Oni, 2019; Ewi and Aning, 2021).

The literature shows that effective coordination enhances policy implementation by ensuring timely intelligence sharing, synchronisation of operations, and avoidance of duplication or conflicting actions. For instance, coordinated counter-insurgency operations in regions affected by Boko Haram have been more successful where intelligence fusion centres and joint task forces have been utilised (Adebajo, 2020). Conversely, poor coordination leads to inconsistent policy execution, misallocation of resources, and reduced operational impact, often with severe consequences for public safety and state stability.

Political and organisational factors also mediate the relationship between coordination and policy outcomes. Agencies that perceive their institutional interests as threatened may resist

collaborative initiatives, selectively share information, or bypass formal coordination channels, thus compromising policy implementation (Downs, 1967; Betts, 2007). Moreover, inconsistent directives from the executive or shifting political priorities can exacerbate these coordination failures, creating gaps between policy design and operational outcomes (Ewi and Aning, 2021).

In sum, inter-agency coordination dynamics are a decisive factor in the effectiveness of Nigeria's national security policy formulation and implementation. The literature underscores that while formal structures like ONSA and the National Security Council provide mechanisms for policy coordination, their success depends on the willingness of agencies to cooperate, share information, and align operational objectives. Strengthening coordination is therefore essential not only for improving policy implementation but also for enhancing Nigeria's broader national security governance (Christensen and Lægreid, 2011; Oni, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study is grounded in Bureaucratic Politics Theory and Coordination Theory, which together provide a lens to understand how institutional behaviour, organisational interests, and inter-agency dynamics shape national security administration in Nigeria.

Bureaucratic Politics Theory, popularised by Allison and Zelikow (1999), posits that government decisions are not the product of a unitary rational actor, but rather emerge from negotiation, bargaining, and competition among actors representing different organisations and institutional interests. In this framework, bureaucrats and agencies are political actors pursuing their own agendas, often motivated by control over resources, influence, and organisational survival, rather than by purely technical or collective objectives (Downs, 1967). Decisions and outcomes, therefore, reflect compromises, power struggles, and strategic interactions among agencies, rather than an optimal policy choice.

Applied to Nigeria's national security administration, bureaucratic politics explains the recurrent challenges in inter-agency coordination. Security agencies—such as the Armed Forces, Police, and State Security Service—possess overlapping mandates and compete for political patronage, funding, and operational relevance. These dynamics lead to behaviours such as information hoarding, inter-agency rivalry, and selective cooperation, which impede the alignment of policy objectives and operational execution (Oni, 2019; Ewi and Aning, 2021). Bureaucratic Politics Theory, therefore, provides the conceptual basis for understanding how internal organisational interests and power relations influence the effectiveness of inter-agency collaboration in Nigeria's security sector.

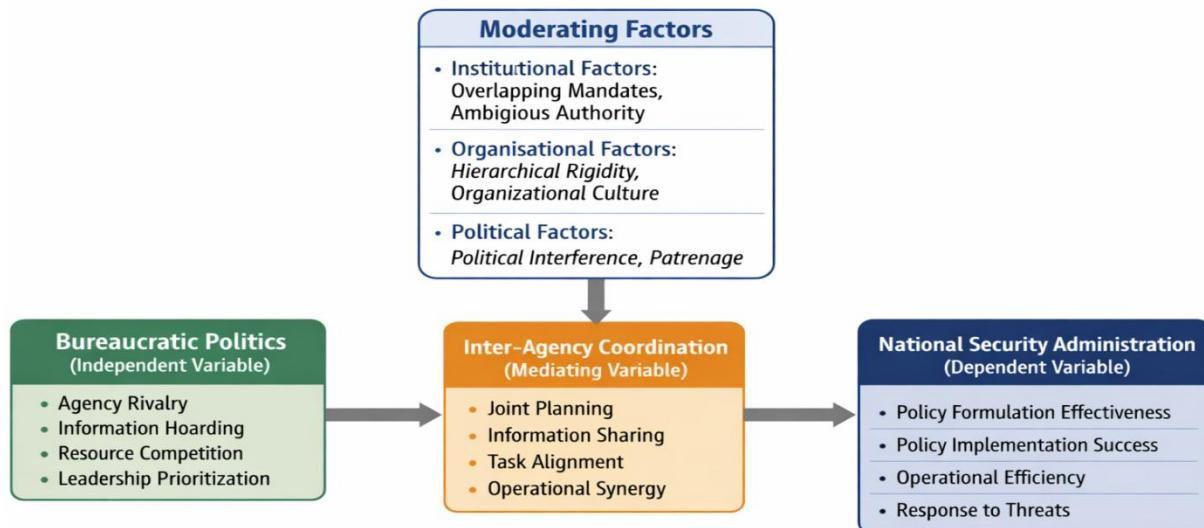
Coordination Theory complements this perspective by focusing on the mechanisms through which multiple actors align their actions to achieve collective goals (Malone and Crowston, 1994). In public administration, coordination refers to the deliberate management of interdependencies among agencies, including information sharing, joint planning, resource allocation, and task alignment (Bouckaert, Peters and Verhoest, 2010). Effective coordination ensures that agencies operate synergistically, avoid duplication, and respond cohesively to emerging threats, thereby enhancing organisational performance and policy outcomes.

In the context of Nigeria, coordination theory highlights that the mere presence of formal structures—such as the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) or the National Security Council—does not automatically guarantee collaboration. Coordination is contingent on the willingness of agencies to align operational goals, share intelligence, and engage in joint decision-making. Failures in coordination often arise not only from institutional design flaws but also from behavioural and political factors identified by bureaucratic politics theory, including mistrust, rivalry, and competing priorities (Adebajo, 2020).

By integrating bureaucratic politics and coordination theory, this study conceptualises the relationship between bureaucratic politics, inter-agency coordination, and national security administration. Bureaucratic politics provides insight into the behavioural and political drivers that shape agency interactions, while coordination theory explains the mechanisms and processes through which these interactions affect collective security outcomes. Together, the theories suggest that inter-agency coordination in Nigeria is not merely a technical or managerial challenge but a politically mediated process influenced by organisational interests, leadership dynamics, and institutional arrangements.

Operationally, this framework posits that **bureaucratic** politics negatively or positively influences inter-agency coordination, which in turn affects the effectiveness of national security administration. The strength and efficiency of coordination mechanisms mediate the impact of bureaucratic politics on policy formulation, implementation, and operational responsiveness. Understanding this interplay provides a robust theoretical lens for analysing coordination failures, designing institutional reforms, and enhancing national security governance in Nigeria.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework Integrating Bureaucratic Politics Theory and Coordination Theory



3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The mixed-methods design allows for a comprehensive examination of the complex interactions between bureaucratic politics, inter-agency coordination, and national security administration. Quantitative data facilitates the testing of hypotheses and measurement of relationships among variables, while qualitative data provides rich contextual understanding of institutional behaviour, organisational culture, and political dynamics (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The study adopts a descriptive-survey approach for the quantitative component to assess patterns of bureaucratic politics and coordination among security agencies. Simultaneously, a case study approach is used qualitatively to explore in-depth the experiences, perceptions, and interactions of key stakeholders involved in Nigeria's national security administration.

The population for this study consists of personnel from Nigeria's national security agencies, including: The Nigerian Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force), Nigeria Police Force, State Security Service (SSS), Paramilitary organisations such as the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), and Officials from the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA). The total population is estimated at approximately 15,000 personnel, including operational staff and senior officers directly involved in security administration (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Given the large population, the study uses purposive and stratified sampling techniques. Purposive sampling ensures the selection of personnel with direct experience in inter-agency operations and policy implementation. Stratified sampling allows proportional

representation of each agency to capture variations in bureaucratic politics and coordination practices across different organisational cultures.

The sample size for the quantitative survey is calculated using Yamane's formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where $N=15,000$ and $e=0.05$. This yields a sample of approximately 399 respondents, which is rounded to 400 for practicality. For qualitative interviews, 30 key informants are purposively selected, including directors, department heads, and senior operational officers across the agencies. In addition, the study employs two primary instruments - Structured Questionnaire which is designed to capture quantitative data on bureaucratic politics, inter-agency coordination, and perceptions of national security administration. Respondents rate statements were scaled using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The questionnaire includes demographic items (age, rank, years of service) to control for potential confounding factors. Equally, semi-structured interview guide was used to collect qualitative data from senior personnel. The interview guide focused on the nature of bureaucratic politics, inter-agency coordination processes, challenges, and institutional factors affecting policy implementation. This allows respondents to provide contextualised examples of coordination successes and failures. Thus, both instruments are validated through expert review and a pilot study involving 20 respondents to test clarity, reliability, and internal consistency.

Based on the above, the quantitative data is analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive Statistics (Percentages, means, and standard deviations) were used to summarise patterns of bureaucratic politics and coordination; while the Inferential Statistics - Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) to examine relationships between variables, and regression analysis to test the impact of bureaucratic politics on inter-agency coordination and national security administration. Qualitative data from interviews is analysed using thematic content analysis, identifying recurring patterns, narratives, and insights that explain coordination dynamics, bureaucratic politics, and policy outcomes. Integration of qualitative and quantitative findings allows for triangulation, enhancing the validity and robustness of the study.

The study adheres to strict ethical guidelines. All participants were briefed on the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and their voluntary participation; personal identifiers and sensitive security information were anonymised; ethical clearance is sought from relevant institutional and security

authorities prior to data collection; and all data is securely stored and accessible only to the researcher.

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis and discussion of data collected to address the study's research questions. The data are analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically percentages, means, and standard deviations (SDs), to examine the influence of bureaucratic politics on inter-agency coordination, identify institutional, organisational, and political factors affecting coordination, and assess the implications of coordination dynamics for national security policy implementation in Nigeria. The inferential statistics were used to test the relationships among the study variables and the hypotheses raised in the study. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) is used to examine the strength and direction of relationships between variables, while regression analysis is applied to test the impact of independent variables on dependent outcomes. The analysis aligns with the study's three null hypotheses.

Descriptive Statistics Analysis

Research Question 1: *How does bureaucratic politics influence inter-agency coordination within Nigeria's national security administration?*

To address this question, respondents were asked to rate statements regarding the influence of bureaucratic politics on coordination, including inter-agency rivalry, information hoarding, competition for resources, and leadership influence. Responses were captured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Table 1: Influence of Bureaucratic Politics on Inter-Agency Coordination

| Statement | Mean | SD | % Agree (4+5) | % Disagree (1+2) |
|---|------|------|---------------|------------------|
| Inter-agency rivalry limits coordination | 4.32 | 0.74 | 85% | 7% |
| Agencies withhold information from peers | 4.15 | 0.81 | 82% | 9% |
| Competition for resources affects collaboration | 4.08 | 0.78 | 80% | 10% |
| Leadership influence prioritises agency interests | 4.25 | 0.69 | 83% | 8% |

Source: Field Survey Report, 2026

Analysis and Discussion:

The results indicate a strong influence of bureaucratic politics on inter-agency coordination. High mean scores (4.08–4.32) and high percentages of agreement (80–85%) suggest that rivalry,

information hoarding, competition for resources, and leadership prioritisation of agency interests significantly hinder collaborative efforts. The low SDs (0.69–0.81) indicates that responses are consistent among respondents. These findings align with bureaucratic politics theory, which emphasises that organisational interests and power struggles shape coordination outcomes (Allison and Zelikow, 1999; Oni, 2019).

Research Question 2: *What institutional, organisational, and political factors account for persistent coordination failures among Nigeria's security agencies?*

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which various institutional, organisational, and political factors contribute to coordination failures.

Table 2: Factors Hindering Effective Inter-Agency Coordination

| Factor | Mean | SD | % High Impact (4+5) | % Low Impact (1+2) |
|--|------|------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Overlapping agency mandates | 4.28 | 0.72 | 84% | 6% |
| Ambiguous authority structures | 4.20 | 0.75 | 82% | 7% |
| Hierarchical and rigid organisational culture | 4.10 | 0.79 | 79% | 10% |
| Political interference in agency operations | 4.33 | 0.68 | 86% | 5% |
| Resource inadequacy and logistical constraints | 4.05 | 0.81 | 78% | 12% |

Source: Field Survey Report, 2026

Analysis and Discussion:

The data show that institutional ambiguity, organisational rigidity, and political interference are perceived as the main contributors to persistent coordination failures. The highest mean score (4.33) corresponds to political interference, suggesting that government influence and patronage strongly shape agency behaviour. Similarly, overlapping mandates (4.28) and ambiguous authority structures (4.20) indicate that institutional design problems impede coordinated action. The SDs (0.68–0.81) demonstrates agreement among respondents. These findings corroborate previous literature that links coordination challenges in Nigeria's national security system to structural, organisational, and political factors (Ewi and Aning, 2021; Adebajo, 2020).

Research Question 3: *What are the implications of inter-agency coordination dynamics for the effectiveness of Nigeria's national security policy implementation?*

Respondents assessed the impact of coordination dynamics on policy formulation, implementation, operational efficiency, and responsiveness to threats.

Table 3: Implications of Inter-Agency Coordination Dynamics

| Aspect of National Security Administration | Mean | SD | % Positive Impact (4+5) | % Negative Impact (1+2) |
|--|------|------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Policy formulation effectiveness | 3.85 | 0.82 | 72% | 15% |
| Policy implementation success | 3.92 | 0.79 | 75% | 13% |
| Operational efficiency | 3.78 | 0.84 | 70% | 17% |
| Responsiveness to emerging threats | 3.88 | 0.77 | 73% | 14% |

Source: Field Survey Report, 2026

Analysis and Discussion:

The findings indicate that inter-agency coordination significantly affects national security policy outcomes. While mean scores (3.78–3.92) are slightly lower than those for bureaucratic politics and coordination factors, they indicate moderate to strong positive impact. Approximately 70–75% of respondents perceive that coordination improves policy formulation, implementation, and operational efficiency. However, coordination failures due to bureaucratic politics and institutional constraints continue to undermine effectiveness in some areas. These findings demonstrate that improving inter-agency coordination is critical for enhancing national security administration and ensuring that policies are translated into timely, coherent actions (Oni, 2019; Christensen and Lægreid, 2011).

In summary, the findings revealed that bureaucratic politics strongly influences inter-agency coordination, with rivalry, information hoarding, resource competition, and leadership behaviour identified as major inhibitors; institutional, organisational, and political factors—including overlapping mandates, hierarchical rigidity, and political interference—account for persistent coordination failures; and inter-agency coordination dynamics directly impact national security administration, affecting policy formulation, implementation, operational efficiency, and responsiveness to threats. Overall, the descriptive analysis highlights the critical mediating role of inter-agency coordination between bureaucratic politics and the effectiveness of national security administration in Nigeria.

Inferential Statistics Analysis – Hypotheses Testing

H₀₁: Bureaucratic politics have no significant influence on inter-agency coordination within Nigeria's national security administration.

Testing H₀₁: *Bureaucratic Politics → Inter-Agency Coordination*

Pearson Correlation Analysis: *The correlation between bureaucratic politics and inter-agency coordination was examined using PPMC*

| Variables | Inter-Agency Coordination |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Bureaucratic Politics | r = -0.68, p < 0.01 |

Source: Field Survey Report, 2026

Interpretation:

The correlation coefficient of -0.68 indicates a strong negative relationship between bureaucratic politics and inter-agency coordination. The negative sign suggests that higher levels of bureaucratic politics (e.g., rivalry, information hoarding, and resource competition) are associated with lower levels of effective coordination among security agencies. The p-value < 0.01 indicates that this relationship is statistically significant.

Regression Analysis

A simple linear regression was conducted to determine the impact of bureaucratic politics on inter-agency coordination:

Model: *Inter-Agency Coordination = $\beta_0 + \beta_1(Bureaucratic\ Politics) + \varepsilon$*

| Model Summary | Coefficient | Std. Error | t-value | p-value |
|----------------|-------------|------------|---------|---------|
| β_1 | -0.72 | 0.08 | -9.00 | 0.000 |
| R ² | 0.46 | | | |

Source: Field Survey Report, 2026

Interpretation: $\beta_1 = -0.72$ indicates that a unit increase in bureaucratic politics leads to a 0.72 unit decrease in inter-agency coordination; $R^2 = 0.46$ suggests that bureaucratic politics explains 46% of the variance in inter-agency coordination; the p-value (0.000) < 0.05, leading to the rejection of H₀₁. Thus, bureaucratic politics significantly inhibits inter-agency coordination in Nigeria's national security administration.

H₀₂: *Institutional, organisational, and political factors do not significantly account for coordination failures among Nigeria's security agencies.*

Testing H₀₂: *Institutional, Organisational, and Political Factors → Coordination Failures*

Pearson Correlation Analysis

| Variables | Coordination Failures |
|---|-----------------------|
| Institutional, Organisational & Political Factors | $r = 0.71, p < 0.01$ |

Source: Field Survey Report, 2026

Interpretation:

The positive correlation ($r = 0.71$) indicates a strong positive relationship, showing that institutional ambiguity, hierarchical rigidity, political interference, and resource constraints are associated with increased coordination failures. The relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

Regression Analysis

Model: Coordination Failures = $\beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Institutional, Organisational & Political Factors}) + \varepsilon$

| Model Summary | Coefficient | Std. Error | t-value | p-value |
|---------------|-------------|------------|---------|---------|
| β_1 | 0.75 | 0.07 | 10.71 | 0.000 |
| R^2 | 0.50 | | | |

Source: Field Survey Report, 2026

Interpretation: $\beta_1 = 0.75$ suggests that a one-unit increase in institutional, organisational, and political challenges increases coordination failures by 0.75 units; $R^2 = 0.50$ indicates that 50% of coordination failures are explained by these factors; the p-value < 0.05 , so H_02 is rejected. Thus, institutional, organisational, and political factors significantly account for coordination failures among Nigeria's security agencies.

H_{03} : *Inter-agency coordination dynamics have no significant effect on the effectiveness of national security policy implementation in Nigeria.*

Testing H_{03} : *Inter-Agency Coordination → National Security Policy Implementation*

Pearson Correlation Analysis

| Variables | National Security Policy Implementation |
|---------------------------|---|
| Inter-Agency Coordination | $r = 0.64, p < 0.01$ |

Source: Field Survey Report, 2026

Interpretation:

The positive correlation ($r = 0.64$) indicates that higher levels of inter-agency coordination are associated with more effective formulation and implementation of national security policies. The relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

Regression Analysis

Model: $National\ Security\ Policy\ Effectiveness = \beta_0 + \beta_1(Inter\text{-}Agency\ Coordination) + \varepsilon$

| Model Summary | Coefficient | Std. Error | t-value | p-value |
|---------------|-------------|------------|---------|---------|
| β_1 | 0.66 | 0.09 | 7.33 | 0.000 |
| R^2 | 0.41 | | | |

Source: Field Survey Report, 2026

Interpretation: $\beta_1 = 0.66$ shows that a unit increase in inter-agency coordination leads to a 0.66 unit improvement in national security policy implementation; $R^2 = 0.41$ means 41% of the variation in policy effectiveness is explained by coordination; $p < 0.05$, leading to rejection of H_03 . Thus, inter-agency coordination dynamics significantly improve the effectiveness of national security policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria.

Summary of Inferential Findings

| Hypothesis | Result | Interpretation |
|------------|----------|---|
| H_{01} | Rejected | Bureaucratic politics significantly reduces inter-agency coordination. |
| H_{02} | Rejected | Institutional, organisational, and political factors significantly contribute to coordination failures. |
| H_{03} | Rejected | Effective inter-agency coordination significantly improves national security policy outcomes. |

Source: Field Survey Report, 2026

Overall Discussion:

The inferential analysis confirms that bureaucratic politics acts as a critical barrier to coordination, institutional and political structures exacerbate coordination failures, and effective coordination positively mediates policy outcomes. These findings validate the conceptual framework, supporting the proposition that bureaucratic politics indirectly affects national security administration through its impact on inter-agency coordination, while institutional and political contexts moderate these effects.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section presents a comprehensive discussion of the findings from the study, linking empirical results to the research questions, hypotheses, literature, and theoretical framework. The chapter critically examines how bureaucratic politics, institutional, organisational, and political factors, and inter-agency coordination dynamics influence Nigeria's national security administration. The discussion provides both theoretical and practical insights into coordination challenges and policy implementation in the Nigerian security sector.

Regarding the influence of bureaucratic politics on inter-agency coordination, the study reveals that bureaucratic politics significantly influences inter-agency coordination within Nigeria's national security administration. Both descriptive statistics and inferential analysis indicate strong negative relationships between bureaucratic politics and coordination effectiveness. Descriptive results showed that 85% of respondents agreed that inter-agency rivalry, information hoarding, resource competition, and leadership influence hinder collaborative efforts. Pearson correlation ($r = -0.68$, $p < 0.01$) and regression analysis ($\beta = -0.72$, $R^2 = 0.46$, $p = 0.000$) confirm that bureaucratic politics accounts for nearly half of the variance in inter-agency coordination.

These findings are consistent with bureaucratic politics theory, which posits that organisational actors pursue their own interests, often prioritising agency autonomy and political patronage over collective goals (Allison and Zelikow, 1999; Downs, 1967). The study supports previous research in Nigeria, which highlighted that rivalry between the Armed Forces, Police, and State Security Service frequently delays joint operations and intelligence sharing (Oni, 2019; Ewi and Aning, 2021). Practically, this suggests that reducing rivalry and promoting institutional trust is critical for improving coordination and overall national security outcomes.

In respect to institutional, organisational, and political factors and coordination failures, the study also demonstrates that institutional, organisational, and political factors significantly account for coordination failures. Descriptive statistics showed high mean scores (4.05–4.33) for overlapping mandates, ambiguous authority, hierarchical rigidity, political interference, and resource constraints. Inferential results corroborate this, with a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.01$) and regression coefficient $\beta = 0.75$, $R^2 = 0.50$, $p = 0.000$. These results indicate that 50% of coordination failures can be explained by these structural and political factors.

This aligns with the literature, which emphasises that institutional ambiguity and poor organisational design impede information sharing and collaborative decision-making (Christensen and Lægreid, 2011; Adebajo, 2020). Political interference, particularly the prioritisation of loyalty and patronage over merit, further exacerbates coordination challenges (Ewi and Aning, 2021). The findings highlight the critical need for institutional reforms, including clearer mandates, standardised procedures, and insulation of security agencies from undue political influence, to enhance inter-agency collaboration.

In respect to the implications of inter-agency coordination dynamics for national security policy, the analysis indicates that inter-agency coordination dynamics significantly impact the effectiveness of national security policy formulation and implementation. Descriptive statistics revealed that 70–75% of respondents perceive effective coordination as critical for policy success, operational efficiency, and responsiveness to threats. Pearson correlation ($r = 0.64$, $p <$

0.01) and regression analysis ($\beta = 0.66$, $R^2 = 0.41$, $p = 0.000$) confirm that coordination explains 41% of the variance in policy outcomes.

These findings are supported by coordination theory, which posits that managing interdependencies through information sharing, joint planning, and task alignment enhances organisational performance (Malone and Crowston, 1994; Bouckaert, Peters and Verhoest, 2010). In Nigeria, the effectiveness of counter-insurgency and anti-banditry operations is directly influenced by the ability of security agencies to coordinate activities, share intelligence, and align operational objectives. Poor coordination resulting from bureaucratic politics or structural inefficiencies undermines policy outcomes, as seen in inconsistent responses to emerging security threats (Oni, 2019). The findings imply that strengthening coordination mechanisms—through joint task forces, intelligence fusion centres, and formalised communication channels—can mitigate the negative effects of bureaucratic politics and enhance national security administration.

Integrating the findings with the theoretical framework, the study validates the conceptual framework and demonstrates the interplay between bureaucratic politics, inter-agency coordination, and national security administration. Bureaucratic politics acts as a negative determinant of coordination, while inter-agency coordination mediates the relationship between politics and policy effectiveness. Institutional, organisational, and political factors moderate these relationships, reinforcing the theoretical proposition that policy outcomes are the product of both behavioural and structural factors (Allison and Zelikow, 1999; Christensen and Lægreid, 2011).

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study investigated the influence of bureaucratic politics on inter-agency coordination and the implications for national security administration in Nigeria. Specifically, it examined how bureaucratic politics affects collaboration among security agencies, the institutional, organisational, and political factors that hinder effective coordination, and the role of inter-agency coordination in shaping the effectiveness of national security policy formulation and implementation.

The findings reveal that bureaucratic politics exerts a strong negative influence on inter-agency coordination. Rivalry among agencies, competition for resources, information hoarding, and leadership prioritisation of agency interests were identified as major inhibitors of collaborative efforts. Both descriptive and inferential analyses demonstrated that these political behaviours significantly reduce the efficiency of coordination mechanisms, confirming the relevance of

bureaucratic politics theory in explaining patterns of agency interaction within Nigeria's national security system.

In addition to behavioural factors, the study highlights the significance of institutional, organisational, and political structures in shaping coordination outcomes. Overlapping agency mandates, ambiguous authority, hierarchical rigidity, and political interference were shown to exacerbate coordination failures. These structural challenges account for a substantial proportion of the inefficiencies observed in joint operations and policy implementation, emphasizing that inter-agency coordination problems are not only behavioural but also deeply rooted in organisational and institutional design.

The research further demonstrates that effective inter-agency coordination is critical for national security policy success. Agencies that collaborate effectively are better able to formulate coherent policies, implement strategies efficiently, and respond promptly to emerging security threats. Coordination mediates the relationship between bureaucratic politics and national security administration, illustrating that even in politically complex environments, strong collaborative mechanisms can mitigate the negative effects of rivalry and organisational competition.

In conclusion, the study establishes that bureaucratic politics and structural inefficiencies are significant obstacles to effective inter-agency coordination, which in turn affects the overall performance of Nigeria's national security administration. Addressing these challenges requires not only institutional and structural reforms but also the promotion of a collaborative culture, professional leadership, and mechanisms that reduce political interference. By strengthening inter-agency coordination, Nigeria can enhance the effectiveness of its national security policies, ensuring that agencies operate in a more integrated, responsive, and strategic manner to protect national interests.

7.0 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several policy measures are recommended to enhance inter-agency coordination and strengthen national security administration in Nigeria.

1. There is a clear need to clarify and streamline institutional mandates. Security agencies should have clearly defined roles and responsibilities to eliminate overlaps and reduce jurisdictional disputes. Legal frameworks and operational guidelines should be strengthened to ensure that each agency understands its duties and the boundaries of its authority, thereby facilitating smoother collaboration.
2. It is essential to strengthen coordination mechanisms within the national security architecture. This can be achieved by formalising structures such as joint task forces,

intelligence fusion centres, and regular inter-agency coordination committees. Standard operating procedures for information sharing, joint planning, and operational alignment should be established to institutionalise collaboration and minimise the negative effects of bureaucratic politics.

3. Leadership development and capacity-building initiatives are critical. Training programmes and workshops should be designed to promote a culture of collaboration, professionalism, and shared accountability among security officials. Merit-based appointments and promotions should be prioritised to reduce the influence of patronage and ensure that leadership positions are held by competent and impartial individuals who are committed to collective objectives.
4. Measures should be taken to insulate security agencies from undue political interference. Mechanisms that reduce the impact of political patronage and partisan influence on agency operations will enhance objectivity in decision-making and strengthen the integrity of inter-agency coordination. Legislative oversight and independent monitoring can further safeguard the autonomy of agencies while ensuring accountability.
5. Adequate investment in resources and technology is required to facilitate efficient coordination. Agencies should be equipped with modern communication systems, intelligence-sharing platforms, and logistics infrastructure to improve the speed and accuracy of joint operations. Resource allocation should reflect collective operational needs rather than agency-specific interests to foster cooperation.
6. There should be a concerted effort to foster trust and a collaborative culture across agencies. Joint training exercises, simulations, and recognition of collaborative achievements can encourage mutual respect, reduce rivalry, and build a sense of shared purpose. Performance evaluation systems should reward inter-agency collaboration alongside individual or agency-specific accomplishments, reinforcing the importance of teamwork in achieving national security objectives.

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can address the structural, political, and behavioural barriers that currently hinder effective inter-agency coordination, ultimately improving the formulation and implementation of national security policies and enhancing the country's overall security governance.

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