

Analysis of Ship Security Management in Coastal Towns and Villages of Fujian Province

Xu Lishan

China People's Police University, Langfang, Hebei, China

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Abstract: Fujian is a major maritime province with a superior geographical location, boasting a vibrant marine economy and a unique, complex geographical position as it is separated from Taiwan, China by only a narrow strait. Strengthening the public security management of vessels in coastal towns and villages in Fujian is of great significance for promoting regional economic and social development. In recent years, with the national institutional reform centered on "streamlining administration, delegating power, and improving services," significant changes have occurred in both the entities and mechanisms responsible for vessel public security management in coastal towns and villages. This has ushered in a new phase of development for such management. Accelerating the establishment of a new mechanism for vessel public security management in coastal towns and villages, improving the legal system, reinforcing basic control forces, and advancing the application of information technology, are of great practical significance for promoting the development of vessel public security management in coastal towns and villages.

1. Introduction

Fujian is a major maritime province with vast sea areas and long coastlines. It has numerous coastal ports (ao), docks, and tidal flats, where aquaculture and fishing industries are well-developed. Coastal townships' vessels, as essential tools for the production and daily life of fishermen along the coast, are widely manufactured and used due to their broad applicability in nearshore operations, low construction costs, and the ability to switch between different types of work according to seasonal changes and production needs. According to incomplete statistics, there are currently over 90,000 various types of vessels along the coast of Fujian, with township vessels accounting for more than 80%. Strengthening the public security management of coastal townships' vessels is crucial for maintaining stability and peace in the overall socio-economic development of Fujian's coastal areas. Especially since the release of the "Opinion of the State Council on Supporting Fujian in Exploring New Paths for Cross-Straits Integration and Building a Demonstration Zone for Cross-Straits Integration," Fujian is accelerating its integration into and service to the construction of the demonstration zone for cross-strait integration. Enhancing the effectiveness of public security management in coastal areas and maintaining their safety and stability are of great significance to Fujian's economic and social development as well as the integration of cross-strait development.

Since 2019, against the backdrop of deepening national institutional reforms and promoting government function transformation through "streamlining administration, delegating power, and improving services," significant adjustments have been made to the entities and mechanisms responsible for maritime security management in coastal towns. Public security organs have taken over the responsibilities of the former public security border defense departments, and the information filing system has replaced the previous administrative licensing approval system. As economic activities along the coast become increasingly vibrant, enhancing the efficiency of maritime security management in coastal towns by public security organs is not only a concrete requirement for implementing the people-centered philosophy and streamlining administration to better serve the public, but also a favorable opportunity for transforming police models driven by "streamlining administration, delegating power, and improving services" and advancing the construction of "smart maritime defense."

2. The current situation of ship security management in coastal towns and villages in Fujian Province

2.1 Strengthen information filing and dynamic supervision

In conjunction with the responsibilities of public security and maritime defense departments, a "three-report" mechanism for registering and filing information on vessels, personnel, and their entry and exit from ports has been established to strengthen the collection of security elements related to vessels. The filing process adopts a dual-track model of "online + offline," allowing the public to file information through boat management stations, coastal police station windows, or the Minzhengtong APP, or to conduct the "three-report" through the online platform of the marine fisheries department. This ensures the comprehensive collection and understanding of all basic information about vessels and fishing crew members, enabling real-time control and risk warnings through technical means. The filing data is synchronized in real-time to the provincial public security maritime defense management system and shared with departments such as marine fisheries, forming a cross-system data sharing mechanism.

2.2 Crack down on illegal crimes of ships and fishing boats

Focusing on the frequent illegal activities such as smuggling, illegal immigration, unauthorized extraction of sea sand, and unlawful fishing along the coast of Fujian Province, public security organs at all levels in Fujian have combined practical control measures to strengthen the investigation of public security risks. They have organized special law enforcement actions like "Jing An" and "Shi Sha," severely cracking down on various criminal activities involving township vessels. These actions target maritime crimes such as smuggling, illegal immigration, fishing, and unauthorized extraction of sea sand, maintaining a high-pressure stance against these offenses. This has effectively safeguarded the social security environment in coastal areas.

2.3 Strengthen multi-departmental collaborative governance of the government

In accordance with relevant laws, regulations, and provisions, efforts are being made to ensure that all small unlicensed vessels under 12 meters in length are managed uniformly by the coastal town governments. These governments are responsible for registering and numbering these vessels and installing positioning devices. In some areas, a comprehensive management system for townships' vessels has been established to enhance dynamic control. Additionally, active collaboration with fisheries and maritime departments is being pursued to jointly conduct various

comprehensive law enforcement activities. This clarifies the responsibilities of different levels of government and maritime functional departments, forming a management chain mechanism for coastal townships' vessels, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of collaborative governance.

3. Problems and difficulties existing in the current work

3.1 The application of legal basis is not clear

Currently, the public security and maritime departments manage ship-related public security issues primarily based on laws and regulations such as the 'Law of the People's Republic of China on Public Security Administration Punishments, 'the' Regulations on Public Security Management for Coastal Vessels, 'and the' Fujian Province Regulations on Public Security Management for Coastal Border Defense. 'Due to these laws and regulations not being updated in a timely manner to reflect policy changes, the public security authorities lack clear legal grounds when dealing with violations of information filing and other regulations by ships or fishing vessel owners. As a result, they often resort to' flexible measures 'and are unable to impose appropriate penalties, which undermines the effectiveness of law enforcement in deterring illegal activities. For instance, the' Fujian Province Regulations on Public Security Management for Coastal Border Defense 'stipulates that individuals who sail without obtaining or carrying the' Fisherman's Certificate' and 'Vessel Household Register,' fail to update or cancel the 'Vessel Household Register' as required, or fail to obtain the necessary border defense visa, will be fined between 200 and 500 yuan. These provisions, which are based on the issuance of sailing documents, impose obligations on the managed parties, but under the current information filing system, they are not applicable, thus failing to effectively regulate and constrain the behavior of fishing vessel owners at the legal level. Additionally, the extensive legal framework and policy regulations involve multiple departments, and in the past, the public security authorities, as one of the main bodies responsible for public security administration, had to coordinate with other departments while exercising their legal powers, which to some extent affected the effectiveness of management work due to the alignment of policies and systems among different departments. [1]

3.2 The foundation of coastal defense control is not solid

After the transformation of public security border defense forces, the original vertical management system was dismantled. The public security organs in Fujian Province established provincial, municipal, and county-level maritime police institutions to take over the responsibilities of the border defense department. However, due to factors such as institutional integration, duty adjustments, and personnel reallocation, the newly established maritime police institutions need to adapt to the territorial management model of public security organs, facing structural challenges in management systems and resource allocation. As the main body for business guidance, the core functions of the maritime police departments of public security organs are positioned as business supervision and performance evaluation. After the original border defense police stations and officers were transferred to the management of local public security organs, their staffing and police forces have been optimized and integrated to some extent, with the team strength being somewhat weakened compared to before the transformation. Currently, all police stations in coastal areas are equipped with full-time or part-time police forces responsible for coastal management and prevention work. However, in addition to monitoring the dynamic situations of vessels and fishing communities within their jurisdiction, the police officers also need to handle a heavy workload of various tasks [3].

3.3 The departmental cooperation mechanism is not smooth

The management of vessels in coastal towns and villages involves multiple departments, including the town government, marine fisheries, maritime affairs, emergency response, public security, industry and information technology, culture and tourism, and the Coast Guard. Due to overlapping functions, lack of coordination mechanisms, and data barriers, the collaboration among these departments has long been inefficient. The unclear boundaries of responsibilities have led to a situation where 'everyone can manage, but no one is willing to, and no one can manage effectively,' making it difficult to form a cohesive working force. Additionally, the separation between land and sea law enforcement (the law enforcement authority of the Coast Guard) has increased the cost of cooperation in public security management. 'Land-based law enforcement agencies lack the mobility required for maritime operations, while the Coast Guard, despite its strong mobility, struggles to track the movements and basic conditions of fishing communities on land.' [2] Currently, although the police and the Coast Guard are exploring ways to establish a cooperative mechanism for maritime law enforcement, the characteristics of the Coast Guard's active-duty system mean that the challenge of 'operating independently' remains unresolved.

3.4 The application of science and technology is not ideal

The dual transformation of management methods and systems has placed higher demands on the work of public security maritime departments, making the construction of "smart maritime defense" an important task. Building on the informatization efforts of the former public security border defense department, the public security maritime department actively seeks support from local governments, increasing investment in technological control along the coast through a combination of self-construction and sharing. However, overall, it still faces issues such as insufficient hardware construction, low software levels, and poor resource sharing, with informatization failing to effectively empower public security management. Marine big data is diverse and heterogeneous; therefore, during the data acquisition phase, its completeness and reliability cannot be fully guaranteed, and there may be contradictions or conflicts between similar or different data sources. For example, in terms of data collection, various maritime functional departments have different standards and varying target requirements. The public security department focuses on the security elements of vessels and fishermen, while the fisheries department concentrates on fishing trajectories and navigation data. The maritime department's "AIS vessel database" emphasizes navigation safety, and currently, the shared software and hardware resources among departments mostly remain at the stage of being visible and usable, failing to achieve open sharing of backend resources and real-time data processing, significantly limiting the effectiveness of big data.

4. Suggestions on strengthening the security management of ships in coastal towns and villages

4.1 Follow up legislation construction and make good transition and connection of policies and systems

The legal dilemma faced by coastal townships in managing vessel security lies in the tension between institutional transformation and legal lag. Current laws and regulations have not been timely revised to address changes in policy mechanisms, leading to a substantial disconnect between existing system designs and new governance needs. It is necessary to approach this issue from the perspective of adapting and revising laws and regulations, aiming to build a legal framework that fits new entities and mechanisms.

First, the adjustment of law enforcement entity qualifications involves re-establishing these qualifications through revisions to laws and regulations, ensuring a dual unity of entities and responsibilities. This addresses the conflict between the term 'public security border defense department' in regulations such as the 'Regulations on the Management of Public Security Border Defense for Coastal Vessels' and the 'Fujian Province Regulations on the Management of Public Security Border Defense for Coastal Areas,' ensuring the legal legitimacy of public security organs as law enforcement entities. Second, the reshaping of rights and obligations involves redefining these relationships in line with institutional reforms and functional adjustments. When revising laws and regulations to adapt to these changes, the content and procedures for public security organs to perform public security management duties are clarified, thereby reconstructing a clear division of rights and responsibilities and a principle of 'punishment fitting the offense.'

4.2 Pay attention to the combination of management and service, find the right positioning and optimize the police mode

The main challenge in the transformation of public security management work lies in the tension between the traditional "control-oriented" policing model and the dual functional requirements of "service-regulation." The improvement in the efficiency of public security management is essentially a process of transitioning from a "unidirectional control" policing model to a "coordinated management and service" model. This transformation not only involves reshaping administrative concepts but also requires achieving a dynamic balance between rigid management constraints and flexible service provision through the upgrading and transformation of policing mechanisms. This approach aims to build a modern policing operation mechanism that adapts to institutional transitions.

The first is the functional transformation from "management" to "service," in line with the requirements of the "streamlining administration, improving regulation, and optimizing services" reform. The focus shifts from setting thresholds to providing process services, continuously strengthening the "three filings" work for vessels, establishing a simultaneous online and offline filing mechanism, facilitating information registration and filing methods, while also improving the full-cycle service system including filing guidance, policy interpretation, dispute mediation, and daily supervision. By advancing services, governance efficiency is enhanced. The traditional heavy management approach is transformed into a service-oriented institutional model, enhancing the institutional recognition of fishing vessel owners through service penetration. The second is the capability upgrade from "static management" to "dynamic supervision," embracing new preventive policing concepts and fully utilizing big data to achieve dynamic supervision. Dynamic data such as vessel positioning information, navigation tracks, and operation records are converted into risk assessment bases, establishing a comprehensive prevention and control system of "risk identification—assessment—response." A dynamic supervision mechanism centered on "data-driven" is constructed, promoting the transition of supervision from "post-event investigation" to "pre-event prevention."

4.3 Clarify the division of rights and responsibilities, and the government takes the lead in improving the cooperation mechanism

The current collaboration challenges faced by public security agencies are fundamentally due to the institutional lack of clear allocation of authority and responsibility, as well as the government's inadequate coordination capabilities. To enhance the efficiency of public security management in coastal towns, it is essential to establish a modern governance system characterized by clear authority and responsibility, clear division of labor, and efficient collaboration. It is necessary to

address structural issues such as multiple management bodies, unclear responsibilities, and low efficiency in collaboration, to create a collaborative governance framework where the government can effectively coordinate, departments collaborate effectively, and the public participates orderly.

First, the legalization of government powers and responsibilities establishes a comprehensive governance system led by the government. Through systematic design of legal empowerment, lists of powers and responsibilities, and dynamic adjustment mechanisms, it constructs a legitimate foundation for the government to lead the management of vessels in coastal towns. This elevates government duties from administrative practices to statutory obligations, avoiding fragmented governance due to departmental competition. Second, the institutionalization of inter-departmental collaboration involves establishing a "decision-making—execution—supervision" power and responsibility allocation mechanism based on hierarchical and departmental structures. It clarifies the division of responsibilities between levels and departments, enhances complementary functional designs, and builds a collaborative mechanism that is "clearly prioritized and mutually beneficial," preventing overlapping functions and resource wastage. At the same time, an "accountability system for collaborative efficiency" should be established, incorporating cross-departmental collaboration outcomes into the government performance evaluation system. Core indicators such as "joint task completion rate" and "public satisfaction" should be set to form a performance-oriented incentive mechanism. Third, the standardization of public participation activates social forces through institutional design, integrating fishing communities, industry associations, and other social entities into the governance network. This forms a new pattern of "government-led—departmental collaboration—social coordination." Public security organs actively construct a multi-level, three-dimensional mass prevention and control work mechanism through innovation in participation channels, optimization of incentive mechanisms, and empowerment of supervisory powers, promoting a transition from "unidirectional control" to "multi-faceted interaction" in governance.

4.4 Promote the development of "smart maritime defense" by empowering science and technology

The current issue of insufficient technological empowerment in the registration of vessel information in coastal towns and villages is primarily characterized by a disconnect between technology application and governance needs. With the rapid advancement of modern technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, the construction of intelligent border and maritime defense will become an inevitable trend in modern border and maritime defense. The public security organs are accelerating their informatization transformation, which is not only a necessary requirement for the construction of 'smart maritime defense' but also an important means to enhance the efficiency of social security control in coastal areas. It is essential to follow the principles of 'demand-oriented, system integration, and intelligent drive,' and through systematic efforts such as hardware upgrades, system integration, AI empowerment, and talent development, transform the public security management of coastal vessels from 'human defense-focused' to 'intelligence-led.' This will genuinely improve the precision and intelligence of coastal public security management, providing a solid foundation for the construction of 'smart maritime defense.'

Public security authorities should first adhere to port-based vessel management, accelerate the construction of integrated shore-sea intelligent control platforms in key areas, promote the establishment of coastal video surveillance platforms, and increase the deployment of intelligent sensing devices in key locations where vessels are concentrated and maritime criminal activities are prone to occur. These measures will enhance early warning and dynamic control capabilities, providing technological support for the dynamic management of vessels in towns. Second, public security authorities must advance the integration and standardization of system platforms and data.

This includes urging the government to issue regulations for data sharing among coastal vessels, integrating databases from public security, fisheries, and maritime departments, and building a provincial "integrated smart maritime defense platform." By clarifying data collection scopes, unifying data standards, and forming a comprehensive data pool, they can break down data barriers, achieve the goal of "one-time collection, universal platform use," and promote the transition of "smart maritime defense" from a "construction-oriented" to an "efficiency-oriented" approach. Third, public security authorities need to emphasize talent reserve and cultivation. They should select police officers with information technology backgrounds as reserve talents, build a tiered, categorized, and combat-oriented talent development system, and improve the practical skills of frontline police officers. Through these efforts, they may address the long-standing mismatch between technical capabilities and job requirements, accelerating the formation of a professional team with technical expertise, combat capabilities, and work experience.

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