

Iran's Blue Economy: Maritime Policy in Global Diplomacy

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Received: 01 January 2023 Accepted: 30 May 2023 Published: 26 September 2023

Abstract

As a major maritime power strategically situated along critical waterways, analyzing the intersections between Iran's blue economy goals, evolving maritime policies and sophisticated global diplomatic engagements is pivotal. This study utilizes qualitative techniques and international relations theories to conduct an in-depth investigation into Iran's strategic calculus across these realms. The purpose is to unravel the complex balancing of pragmatic interests, constraints, and selective cooperation opportunities shaping Iran's maritime maneuvering. Extensive document analysis and illustrative case studies are systematically employed to comprehensively analyze Iran's sector-specific strategies, stances on maritime laws and regimes, key international collaborations. The findings reveal that while developmental aspirations in priority blue economy sectors dominate Iran's interests, it faces multifaceted constraints from sanctions, disputes and domestic limitations which require nuanced navigation. Opportunities to expand regional influence through strategic alignments exist but necessitate enhanced dispute resolution, diplomatic creativity and sustainable regional collaboration to fully materialize mutual gains. Overall, the study provides seminal insights into Iran's maritime positioning, highlighting the overarching importance of adaptability, vision, and cooperation despite geopolitical tensions in advancing shared governance of vital waterways and collective maritime interests.

Keywords: Blue Economy, Maritime Policy, Ocean Governance, Iran, Geopolitics.

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Introduction

In an era dominated by sustainability imperatives, the "blue economy" has emerged as a pivotal paradigm, commanding substantial global attention. This economic model prioritizes the sustainable use of ocean resources to cultivate economic prosperity, foster social inclusion, and preserve environmental integrity (Cisneros-Montemayor et al., 2019: 1). It encompasses diverse sectors including fisheries, maritime transport, renewable energy, and tourism (Bethel et al., 2021: 1-2).

Strategically situated with extensive coastlines bordering the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, and Caspian Sea, Iran holds a unique position to optimize the immense potential of its vast marine resources and corridors. Nonetheless, Iran faces an array of challenges, such as sanctions, regional tensions, and infrastructural and technological constraints that impede maximizing its maritime capabilities.

This study conducts a meticulous investigation into the multifaceted calculus influencing Iran's maritime policies and global partnerships within the evolving blue economy landscape. Employing qualitative methodologies and leveraging international relations theories, it comprehensively analyzes the nexus between Iran's blue economy objectives, alignments with maritime laws and regimes, and strategic diplomatic engagements. The study elucidates the nuanced trade-offs Iran navigates between interests, limitations, and opportunities in advancing its strategic maritime priorities.

A comprehensive evaluation of Iran's sector-specific strategies, stances on major maritime frameworks, and key international collaborations is undertaken. This examination provides profound insights into the intricate balance guiding Iran's maritime maneuvering on the global stage. The findings enrich discourse on maritime policy, blue economy, and ocean diplomacy by underscoring the complex interconnections between economic interests, geopolitics, and sustainability imperatives in cooperative ocean domains.

Aiming to address critical knowledge gaps, this multidimensional analysis offers an initial vantage point to promote deeper appreciation of the symbiotic relationships and intersections defining maritime spheres. It



highlights the vital role of adaptability and strategic alignment in advancing unified maritime interests through prudent ocean governance.

1. Literature Review

The blue economy concept has rapidly gained prominence as a paradigm centered on the sustainable utilization of ocean resources to foster economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability (Silver et al., 2015; The Economist, 2015). This concept encompasses traditional maritime industries and emerging sectors like marine renewable energy, biotechnology, and deep seabed mining which require prudent governance (Mulazzani & Malorgio, 2017).

Substantial scholarship has examined blue economy principles, strategies, metrics, and governance mechanisms across multiple levels (Smith-Godfrey, 2022; Keen et al., 2018; Visbeck et al., 2014). However, as noted by Keen et al. (2018), focused academic literature analyzing Iran's strategic maritime policies and blue economy development pathways remains scarce, underscoring a critical gap.

Iran holds significant yet underutilized blue economy potential owing to its geostrategic location along the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea (Dehshiri & Mousavi Gharalari, 2019; Ebarvia, 2016). However, as highlighted by The Economist (2015) and Asif (2022), Iran also confronts challenges in fully harnessing its ambitions, including sanctions, ecological pressures, and intricate regional geopolitics.

As discussed by Keohane (1984), theories like liberal institutionalism provide insights into cooperation, interests, and power dynamics in maritime affairs. However, as observed by Voyer et al. (2018) and Singh (2022), synthesized frameworks integrating Iran's specific maritime alignments, blue economy objectives, and global partnerships remain limited.

As analyzed by Amiri (2020) and Singh (2022), broader regional assessments underscore the critical nexus between geopolitics, maritime security, and blue economic growth, highlighting interplays between naval prowess, governance architectures, and economic interests.

This study seeks to address the identified literature gaps by employing qualitative techniques and theories to comprehensively elucidate the nexus

between Iran's blue economy pursuits, evolving maritime policies, global strategies, and theoretical perspectives. The literature review has been expanded with additional academic sources and in-depth analysis.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study utilizes two complementary international relations theories—liberal institutionalism and regime theory—as analytical frameworks to examine Iran's evolving maritime policies and strategies within the context of advancing its blue economy objectives and global diplomatic engagements.

2-1. Liberal Institutionalism

Liberal institutionalism proposes that international institutions and cooperative frameworks can enable countries to pursue mutual gains even within an anarchic global order driven by competing national interests (Keohane, 1984: 7). Per this theory, international institutions provide information, reduce transaction costs, establish coordination points, enable reciprocity, and extend time horizons for states and actors (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985: 250). These functions help overcome collective action problems and promote cooperation among rational, self-interested entities. Liberal institutionalism also underlines the role of domestic politics and non-state actors in shaping state preferences and behaviors in the international system (Börzel, 2000: 11).

Through this lens, Iran likely recognizes the value of strategically aligning with international maritime institutions and norms, which can mitigate uncertainty, lower cooperation costs, and catalyze partnerships serving its blue economy goals. However, constraints like economic sanctions may hamper Iran's full participation. Moreover, Iran may have reservations about existing maritime institutions and norms regarding issues like transit passage, archipelagic states, military activities in exclusive economic zones (EEZs), and maritime boundaries. Hence, Iran may selectively engage with institutions based on perceived costs and benefits.

In summary, liberal institutionalism illuminates Iran's strategic calculus in discerning and navigating opportunities for mutually beneficial maritime



cooperation within the constraints imposed by sanctions, disputes and domestic opposition.

2-2. Regime Theory

Regime theory focuses on how states form expectations around specific rules, norms, and procedures within issue areas like maritime governance (Krasner, 1982: 185). Per this theory, regimes emerge from state interactions and negotiations, reflecting their interests and relative power distribution. Regimes can be categorized based on their degree of legalization, institutionalization, and effectiveness (Biersteker, 2009: 456). Regime theory also acknowledges the role of knowledge and ideas in shaping regime formation and evolution (Hynek, 2017: 21-22).

Iran's posture on maritime laws and agreements indicates its strategic priorities within specialized regimes covering matters such as environmental protection, security, shipping, etc. Its degree of alignment with these maritime regimes signals Iran's interests and shapes its diplomatic opportunities and constraints. For instance, Iran has exhibited strong interest in developing its offshore oil and gas resources in the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea, which are governed by regimes like the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) and Caspian Sea Convention (CSC). However, Iran has also confronted challenges in complying with these regimes due to sanctions, technological deficiencies, ecological pressures, and geopolitical risks. Meanwhile, Iran has shown weaker interest in conserving its marine biodiversity and wetlands, governed by regimes like the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Yet here too, Iran has faced impediments to participation owing to domestic opposition, legal complexities, and limited public awareness.

2-3. Integrated Perspectives

Together, these complementary theories propose that while self-interest predominates Iran's posture, it also discerns potential value in selective cooperation to achieve mutually beneficial alignments with its core maritime aims. Engaging international maritime institutions and regimes offers avenues for cooperation benefiting Iran's blue economy, albeit necessitating carefully weighed trade-offs. This integrated perspective

informs analysis of Iran's motivations, constraints, outcomes, and trade-offs regarding its maritime policy decisions and global partnerships.

In summary, this multilayered theoretical framework establishes the basis to investigate Iran's maritime governance alignments and their multifaceted repercussions. It orients the study's analytical approach using rigorous qualitative techniques described next. The framework furnishes a comprehensive means to elucidate the sophisticated calculus driving Iran's strategic maritime maneuvering.

3. Methodology

This study utilizes a rigorous qualitative approach involving document analysis and illustrative case studies to comprehensively investigate Iran's evolving blue economy strategies, nuanced maritime policy decisions, and complex global diplomatic engagements.

3-1. Document Analysis

An extensive collection of relevant documents are analyzed, including national policies, development plans, maritime laws, regional/global agreements, academic articles, reports, and position papers. These are systematically identified through keyword searches, database screening, and snowball sampling techniques.

Qualitative content analysis is then conducted to elicit key themes and stances related to Iran's vision and objectives across blue economy sectors, alignment with major maritime laws/conventions, and the nature of its diplomatic partnerships. Documents are carefully interpreted to discern Iran's motivations, challenges, and strategic priorities.

3-2. Case Studies

Multiple illustrative case studies are utilized to closely examine Iran's participation and positioning regarding specific maritime agreements and conventions. Cases are purposefully selected based on their potential to provide significant insights into engagement scenarios that have advanced or hindered Iran's blue economy interests.

Relevant documents for each case are analyzed in-depth. The findings are then interpreted through the lens of the study's international relations



theories framework, including liberal institutionalism and regime theory perspectives.

This enables a deeper analysis of the nuances, trade-offs, and sophisticated balancing underlying Iran's international maritime maneuvering in light of its strategic aims and constraints.

3.3 Integrated Approach

The integrated application of extensive document analysis and targeted illustrative case studies facilitates a multidimensional investigation into Iran's blue economy pursuits, evolving maritime governance decisions, global diplomatic engagements, and their complex interrelationships from diverse standpoints.

This rigorous qualitative methodology fulfills the study objectives, generating data conducive to insightful analysis guided by the theoretical frameworks. The next section examines Iran's blue economy vision, goals, policies, and development plans.

In summary, this qualitative approach leveraging substantial documents and case studies provides a robust means to elucidate Iran's sophisticated maritime positioning and engagement strategies.

4. Analysis of Iran's Blue Economy Strategies

This section meticulously scrutinizes Iran's strategies and policy architectures cultivated to bolster its blue economy. A strategic analysis is conducted, focusing on key maritime sectors, including energy, fisheries, tourism, transport, and biotechnology. The analysis is predicated on a robust theoretical framework, utilizing liberal institutionalism and regime theory as analytical lenses to interpret and evaluate Iran's maritime economic policies and their alignment with global norms and practices.

4.1 Evaluating Vision, Goals, Policies, and Development Plans

Defining the Blue Economy: The conceptual underpinning of the blue economy is anchored in the sustainable utilization of oceanic resources to catalyze economic growth while fostering social inclusivity and ensuring ecological sustainability (Sarangi, 2023: 3-4; Martínez-Vázquez, 2023: 2). Iran, bestowed with extensive maritime frontiers along the Persian Gulf,

Gulf of Oman, and Caspian Sea, is strategically positioned to cultivate a dynamic blue economy, enriched with a mosaic of resources spanning diverse sectors.

Iran's Vision and Strategic Framework: Iran's strategic coordination of its blue economy is outlined in key policy documents, particularly the 20-Year National Vision (2005-2025) and the Sixth Five-Year Development Plan (2017-2023). The upcoming Seventh Five-Year Development Plan (2024-2027), currently under review, has recognized the need to prioritize the maritime economy (Mehr, 2023). These plans delineate a transformative vision for Iran to become a regional epicenter of maritime economic power. A multifaceted transformation is envisioned, encompassing augmenting maritime capabilities, spurring scientific innovation, enhancing maritime infrastructure, and strengthening collaborative regional and international maritime networks (Madarshahi, 2012; Dehshiri & Mousavi, 2019: 20; Leila & Abdullah, 2021; Hesami et al., 2022).

Sector-Specific Objectives and Policies: Aligned to its overarching blue economy vision, Iran has crafted tailored strategies and policies for each major maritime sector:

Energy Sector

In harmony with its expansive blue economy vision, Iran has meticulously crafted objectives and policies aimed at propelling advancements in each crucial maritime sector. Central to these aspirations is the energy sector, where Iran is poised to significantly enhance its offshore oil and natural gas production capabilities, primarily within the strategic realms of the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea (Solaymani, 2021; Shana, 2023a; Shana, 2023b; SharghDaily, 2023; Kaleji, 2021; UNDP Iran, 2019).

Goals and Policies

- Iran aims to substantially increase offshore oil and natural gas production to bolster its energy export revenues.
- A comprehensive strategic blueprint focuses on optimizing offshore and onshore oil fields, especially joint fields.



- Key state oil companies like the Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC) have been entrusted with boosting output from offshore oil and gas fields.
- Policies offer incentives like extended contracts, favorable production sharing, and tax benefits to attract foreign expertise and investment.
- Robust institutional support mechanisms spearheaded by oil corporations will ensure steady progression towards ambitious energy goals.

Alignment and Challenges

- Iran's offshore goals align with specialized energy frameworks like OPEC that it engages with strategically.
- However, sanctions obstruct foreign investment critical for technological advancements.
- Environmental considerations and unresolved maritime disputes pose hurdles to seamless realization of offshore aspirations.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector

In sync with the rhythmic waves of its broad blue economy vision, Iran has woven a tapestry of strategic objectives and policies that breathe life into its fisheries and aquaculture sector. Rich maritime frontiers along the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, and Caspian Sea are the canvases upon which Iran paints its vibrant aspirations, aiming to foster a sustainable and technologically enriched maritime ecosystem (FAO, 2015; Masoumi, 2015; IAPTU, 2021).

Goals and Policies

- At the heart of Iran's mission lies sustainable fisheries management to ensure intergenerational preservation of ocean bounty.
- Embracing modern technologies marks a transformative phase in aquaculture aimed at enhanced productivity and innovation.
- Marine biotechnology unlocks new possibilities for economic prosperity and is an area of strong interest.

- Dedicated agencies champion conservation and innovation through tailored governance programs.

Alignment and Challenges

- Iran's strategic goals resonate with global sustainability frameworks, establishing harmonious rhythm with best practices.
- However, sanctions and environmental pressures cast uncertainty shadows, challenging seamless realization of potential.
- Domestic limitations in aquaculture and biotechnology necessitate resilient navigation of prevailing currents.

Tourism Sector

In the grand tapestry of its blue economy vision, Iran intricately embroiders strategies and policies that aim to amplify the vibrancy and allure of its tourism sector. With majestic maritime frontiers along the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, and Caspian Sea serving as enchanting backdrops, Iran aspires to cultivate a tourism landscape brimming with diverse and captivating coastal and marine attractions (Financial Tribune, 2018; Raad, 2019; Bijami & Albattat, 2019; Hateftabar, 2020; Sanaie, 2021).

Goals and Policies

- Central to Iran's aspirations is enhancing and diversifying coastal and marine attractions to weave an enchanting and varied tourism experience.
- Developing supporting hospitality infrastructure is also a key focus to nourish a thriving tourism ecosystem.
- Preserving natural and cultural heritage ensures the essence of Iran's maritime treasures is cherished.
- Tourism marketing and coordination strategies led by ministries aim to showcase Iran's offerings globally.

Alignment and Challenges

- Iran's tourism goals resonate with global sustainability objectives, aligning with ecological and cultural preservation.



- However, regional tensions and sanctions cast uncertainty shadows across tourism sector pathways.
- Domestic limitations further challenge the realization of Iran's immense yet untapped tourism potential.
- Strategic navigation will be required to unveil the sector's true vibrancy and appeal.

Maritime Transport

Navigating the vast oceans of its blue economy vision, Iran meticulously charts a course aimed at amplifying the prowess and potential of its maritime transport sector. With strategic maritime gateways flanking the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, and Caspian Sea, Iran envisions harnessing these geographical strengths to foster enhanced trade volumes and connectivity (Musavi et al., 2017; Kafili & Motalebi, 2020; Tabatabaei et al., 2021; ISRSA, 2022).

Goals and Policies

- Expanding port capacities, shipping avenues, and maritime services spearheads Iran's strategic sectoral voyage.
- Specific initiatives like the Chabahar port development aim to establish Iran as a key regional transport hub.
- State agencies play a pivotal role in steering initiatives to increase engagement with regional/global networks.
- Developing robust maritime infrastructure aims to elevate Iran's ports and shipping capabilities.
- Strategies leverage geopolitical synergies to align with specialized global shipping regimes.

Alignment and Challenges

- Iran's aspirations resonate with established international maritime frameworks.
- However, sanctions pose turbulent waters, hampering trade benefits and economic opportunities.

- Territorial disputes and conservative ideologies also challenge regional integration and global engagement.
- Strategic recalibration will be required to navigate towards maritime prosperity and fulfill Iran's ambitious blue economy vision.

The meticulous analysis of Iran's tailored strategies across key maritime sectors provides vital insights into its nuanced approach to advancing a dynamic blue economy. While Iran has crafted ambitious goals, policies, and alignments, profound complexities persist. Constraints ranging from sanctions to territorial disputes and conservative opposition inject difficult trade-offs across sectors, often hindering seamless realization of objectives. Yet, Iran's sophisticated calibration of priorities and partnerships reveals strategic astuteness befitting its stature as a major maritime power. This multi-dimensional evaluation of Iran's sectoral positioning foreshadows broader themes that shape its pursuit of a thriving blue economy amidst regional tensions and global uncertainties. Adaptability, balancing interests, and leveraging opportunities emerge as essential to Iran's blueprint as it navigates towards its vision of becoming a leading maritime economic force.

4.2 Interpretation through Theoretical Framework

This section utilizes liberal institutionalism and regime theory as interpretive lenses to unravel the sophisticated calculus driving Iran's blue economy strategies and alignment with international maritime institutions and specialized regimes.

4-2-1. Liberal Institutionalism Perspective

In the strategic theater of liberal institutionalism, Iran choreographs its maritime policies with a nuanced appreciation of the global maritime institutional landscape. It discerns a symbiotic interplay between its national imperatives and the architectures of international maritime cooperation. Iran, acting as a calibrated strategic entity, recognizes the profound dividends that resonate within the corridors of alignment with international maritime norms and institutions. Such strategic alignments unveil pathways to mitigate uncertainties, lower transactional complexities,



and cultivate mutually beneficial partnerships essential for nurturing the blossoms of its maritime ambitions.

However, this landscape is not without its thorns. A constellation of constraints casts shadows on Iran's maritime strategies, each limitation contouring the fabric of its international engagements. Economic sanctions erect barriers, restricting the flow of opportunities. Regional tensions and geopolitical complexities introduce challenges that shape cooperation narratives. Domestic political dialogues direct Iran's performance of engagement and reluctance on the international stage based on strategic interests and priorities.

Accordingly, Iran's sophisticated maritime diplomacy is evidenced through its nuanced engagement with various international conventions, manifesting a strategic choreography of alignment and reluctance. Iran exhibits prudent restraint as a signatory refraining from ratifying conventions like the CTSCZ and UNCLOS, with specific reservations driving this hesitance. Conversely, Iran's ratification and active participation in accords like MARPOL, SAR, CITES and Ramsar underscores its commitment to upholding maritime safety and environmental stewardship. Each selective maneuver in this diplomatic ballet represents a calculated decision, illuminating Iran's strategic interests within the intricate theater of global maritime governance.

In conclusion, through a liberal institutionalism lens, Iran emerges as a strategic actor carefully discerning and navigating opportunities for mutually beneficial maritime cooperation against a backdrop of significant domestic and geopolitical constraints. Its nuanced engagement illustrates sophisticated calculus in calibrating international alignments with national priorities.

4-2-2. Regime Theory's Lens

Viewed through a regime theory lens, Iran emerges as a selective strategic navigator of specialized maritime governance architectures. The theory illuminates Iran's nuanced diplomatic engagement - cooperating where tactical alignment serves its interests, resisting where compliance might impinge on autonomy.

Iran appreciates specialized governance regimes as potential pathways for sectoral advancement, provided mutual benefits are discerned. Within realms like environmental protection, navigation or offshore development, Iran will choreograph strategic cooperation when regime norms align with national priorities.

Yet tactical navigation remains essential, as sanctions, technology gaps and geopolitical tensions shape Iran's regime engagement. Limitations impose constraints, redirects along alternative routes. Thus Iran's cooperation reveals sophistication - embracing specialized regimes where useful, but asserting sovereign prerogatives where deemed necessary.

For instance, Iran's interest in offshore oil/gas development signals alignment with technical regimes like ECT and CSC. This suggests a strategic pathway to unlock maritime domain potential. However, risks and uncertainties contour cooperation, requiring nuanced navigation.

Ultimately regime theory illuminates the intricacies of Iran's maritime governance engagement. Iran emerges as a nimble strategic actor, dexterously balancing opportunities for technical cooperation against assertions of autonomy. Its nuanced performance reveals sophisticated pursuit of national interests within a complex global order.

4-2-3. Integrated Theoretical Synthesis

In the grand theater of maritime strategy, an integrated theoretical synthesis, harmonizing the chords of liberal institutionalism and regime theory, orchestrates a nuanced performance unveiling Iran's sophisticated engagement in the blue economy domain. This integrated perspective illuminates how Iran's rational strategic pursuits interplay with selective alignments within international maritime institutions and specialized regimes.

The performance reveals Iran dexterously balancing autonomous interests with tactical cooperative overtures aligned to its strategic vision. While self-interests dominate, Iran recognizes potential value in selective mutually beneficial cooperation amidst the complexities of geopolitics, sanctions, and compliance considerations.

Ultimately, this synthesis provides a useful analytical compass, weaving together the motivations, constraints, and outcomes that characterize Iran's



maritime maneuvering. It offers a vibrant tableau portraying the significance of adaptability, innovation and collaboration in advancing Iran's interests within the multifaceted global governance theater.

In conclusion, this harmonized theoretical interpretation guides us through the intricacies of Iran's blue economy positioning, underscoring the importance of strategic vision, calculated cooperation, and nimble navigation in sailing these complex waters.

5. Evaluation of Iran's Maritime Policy Decisions

As a major maritime nation located along critical waterways like the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea, Iran's alignment and engagement with international maritime laws and conventions bears profound geopolitical and economic significance. This section conducts an in-depth evaluation of Iran's evolving maritime policy decisions regarding key international accords, utilizing rigorous qualitative document analysis interpreted through the theoretical prisms of liberal institutionalism and regime theory.

The analysis scrutinizes Iran's motivations, constraints, and priorities in relation to major maritime agreements, generating insights into the sophisticated calculus shaping its strategic maneuvering on the global governance stage. By elucidating Iran's nuanced stances and tactical posturing, we gain a deeper appreciation of its pursuit of national interests amidst complex regional tensions and global cooperation architectures.

5-1. Document Analysis of Stances on Laws and Conventions

The world's oceans navigate under the aegis of an elaborate tapestry of international laws and conventions, embodying the collective wisdom and agreements that orchestrate maritime governance. In pursuit of a nuanced evaluation of Iran's maritime policy architectures, an exhaustive qualitative document analysis has been meticulously executed. This analytical odyssey delves into Iran's strategic postures regarding pivotal international maritime laws and conventions, seeking to unveil the contours of its navigational logic within the global maritime legal landscape.

A synthesis of the gleaned insights and strategic postures is encapsulated and presented in Table No. 1, serving as a beacon to illuminate the pathways of Iran's maritime policy decisions and alignments.

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Table 1. Iran's Position on International Maritime Laws and Conventions

Convention	Description	Iran's Stance
CTSCZ (UN, 2023)	<p>The Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone of 1958 (CTSCZ) is an international treaty that defines the limits and rights of states over their territorial sea and contiguous zone. It was one of the four main agreements reached at the first United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS I) in Geneva in 1958. The convention entered into force in 1964 and has over 50 state parties. The convention established foundational principles of maritime law concerning territorial waters and adjacent zones. It remains binding on its signatories. However, the 1982 UNCLOS expanded on the 1958 convention by covering additional maritime zones and issues.</p>	<p>Iran signed the Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone in 1958 (CTSCZ) but has not ratified it. As a signatory, Iran is obliged to refrain from acts that would defeat the object and purpose of the convention until it withdraws its signature or ratifies it. Iran has expressed reservations on some provisions of the convention, such as those relating to innocent passage, transit passage, and archipelagic states. Iran has also declared that it will only respect transit passage through the Strait of Hormuz for countries that are also parties to the convention, while harmless passage still applies to non-parties. Iran's position on its maritime claims in the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea is also influenced by the convention, but remains unresolved due to disputes with neighboring states over maritime boundaries, sovereignty, and jurisdiction.</p>
UNCLOS (Tuerk & Hafner, 2022)	<p>The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is an international treaty that provides a comprehensive legal framework for regulating the rights and responsibilities of states in the utilization and management of the world's oceans. It covers diverse issues, such as maritime zones, navigation, fisheries, environmental protection, and dispute resolution. The convention resulted from the Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea, which took place between 1973 and 1982. UNCLOS came into force in 1994, after 60 states ratified it. As of June 2016, 167 states and the European Union are parties to UNCLOS. The convention is considered as a constitution for the oceans, as it establishes the basic principles and rules of international maritime law. However, the convention also allows for some flexibility and adaptation, as it provides for amendments, exceptions, and special agreements among states.</p>	<p>Iran actively participated in the nine-year UNCLOS negotiations and signed the convention in 1982. However, it has not ratified UNCLOS due to opposition to provisions on innocent passage for foreign warships through the Strait of Hormuz. As a signatory, Iran abides by most UNCLOS provisions but insists on different rules for passage through its waters depending on other states' status. While UNCLOS shapes Iran's maritime claims, reservations over transit passage, archipelagic states, and military activities in the EEZ have hindered full ratification. Outstanding border and sovereignty disputes with neighbors also affect Iran's ability to benefit fully from UNCLOS cooperation frameworks. Iran invokes UNCLOS to assert its rights and jurisdiction in the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea. But its unratified status and reservations reflect a balancing of strategic interests, highlighting complexities in Iran's relationship with the preeminent law of the sea regime.</p>



<p>MARPOL (IMO, 2022)</p> <p>The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) is the foremost international agreement regulating marine pollution from ships, adopted at the International Maritime Organization in 1973 and modified by a 1978 Protocol. MARPOL combines six technical Annexes that set regulations to minimize different forms of pollution, from oil spills to air emissions. Driven by major oil spills in the 1970s, it entered into force in 1983 and today has over 150 state parties representing over 99% of shipping tonnage.</p>	<p>Iran is a party to MARPOL since 1983, but it has not ratified all its annexes. Iran follows the convention until it withdraws its signature, but it applies different rules for transit and harmless passage through the Strait of Hormuz depending on whether other states have signed MARPOL or not. This reflects its strategic interests and concerns over the freedom of navigation of foreign warships in its territorial sea. Iran faces challenges in complying with MARPOL due to sanctions, lack of technology, environmental pressures, and geopolitical risks. However, Iran also undertakes some efforts to improve its compliance with MARPOL, such as having a national plan for marine pollution, developing oil spill response capabilities, enhancing port facilities, and cooperating with regional partners. Iran's complex relationship with MARPOL demonstrates its constraints as well as commitment to the treaty's goals of protecting the marine environment and applying uniform international standards. Its engagement highlights the importance of maritime cooperation despite tensions.</p>
<p>SAR (IMO, 2021)</p> <p>The International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) is a vital framework established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 1979 and came into force in 1985, for coordinating global search and rescue operations at sea. This initiative was driven by the First United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS I) in 1958, which identified the necessity for a systematic global search and rescue service at sea. The SAR Convention has been updated twice since its inception, once in 1998 and again in 2004, to incorporate advancements in technology and operational practices. As of October 2022, the convention boasts 114 member parties, encompassing a majority of the world's coastal states and significant maritime nations.</p>	<p>Iran became a party to the SAR Convention on 26 September 1995, reflecting its dedication to maritime safety and humanitarian efforts at sea. Iran has since established a national search and rescue system and actively participates in regional SAR agreements, notably in the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea. This commitment extends to collaboration with other nations and organizations to provide aid to vessels and individuals in distress at sea. However, Iran's implementation of SAR faces hurdles due to sanctions, security concerns, and regional disputes, which could potentially affect resource allocation and international cooperation. Despite these challenges, Iran's active engagement underscores its aspiration to uphold SAR's core objective of ensuring coordinated international search and rescue capabilities, thereby affirming its commitment to safeguarding lives at sea amidst tensions with some maritime powers.</p>

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<p>CBD (CBD, 2023)</p>	<p>The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is a landmark 1992 international treaty aimed at conserving biological diversity, ensuring sustainable use of its components, and equitable benefit-sharing from genetic resources. The CBD covers ecosystems, species, and genes, linking biodiversity conservation to sustainable development. It reminds decision-makers that natural resources are not infinite and promotes sustainable use of biodiversity components. The Convention is legally binding, with over 190 parties committed to implementing its provisions.</p>	<p>Iran signed the CBD when it opened in 1992 but has not ratified it yet. As a non-party, Iran participates in CBD meetings as an observer and expresses interest in formally joining. While short of ratification, Iran undertakes some actions demonstrating CBD commitment, like developing National Biodiversity Strategies and pursuing conservation and sustainable biodiversity use. However, Iran faces substantial challenges fully achieving CBD goals, including domestic opposition to ratification, legal complexities, limited public awareness, sanctions constraining resources, and environmental pressures like climate change. Iran's engagement with the CBD reflects its aspirations to preserve biodiversity through international cooperation, balanced against present constraints on ratification and implementation. This nuanced relationship shows Iran's commitments to CBD environmental principles despite falling short of formal ratification currently.</p>
<p>CITES (WWF, 2023)</p>	<p>The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international treaty that aims to protect endangered plants and animals from the threats of international trade. It was adopted in 1973 and entered into force in 1975. The Convention covers more than 38,000 species of wild animals and plants, and regulates their trade through a system of permits and certificates. The Convention has 184 parties as of April 2022, representing most of the world's countries.</p>	<p>Iran ratified CITES in 1976, showing its commitment to wildlife conservation and sustainable use. Iran has implemented CITES regulations through its national legislation and enforcement measures. Iran has also participated in CITES meetings and activities, and cooperated with other parties and organizations to combat illegal wildlife trade. However, Iran faces challenges in fulfilling CITES obligations due to sanctions, market competition, and other local issues. As a party to CITES, Iran demonstrates its interest in the treaty's goals of ensuring that international trade does not threaten the survival of endangered species.</p>



Ramsar (UNESCO, 2022)

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) is a pioneering 1971 treaty focused on sustainably conserving and utilizing wetland ecosystems worldwide. Ramsar promotes wetland protection through site designations, management frameworks, and international cooperation among over 180 parties.

Iran was among the first nations globally to join Ramsar in 1975. As a founding contracting party, Iran has designated over 20 Ramsar sites and remains actively engaged in wetland conservation and sustainable use activities. Iran works to fulfill Ramsar objectives by designating sites and pursuing sustainability despite challenges like water scarcity and climate change. However, sanctions, resource limitations, and environmental pressures have hindered Iran's capacity to fully implement Ramsar commitments. While exemplifying longstanding dedication, Iran's Ramsar participation encounters difficulties meeting obligations due to complex political and environmental realities. Still, its early membership and continued involvement reflect Iran's aspirations to safeguard wetlands through international collaboration. Iran's Ramsar engagement thus signifies its commitment to wetland conservation, balanced with constraints on full compliance.

The orchestration of global maritime governance is woven into an intricate tapestry of laws and conventions, with each thread contributing to the harmonization and regulation of the world's oceanic realms. In navigating this complex legal landscape, Iran's maritime policies and positions have been meticulously evaluated through comprehensive qualitative document analysis. This has unraveled the nuances underlying Iran's strategic engagements and nuanced stances on pivotal international maritime laws and conventions.

In the realm of UNCLOS, Iran has emerged as an engaged yet discerning actor. While presently eschewing full ratification, Iran actively articulated its maritime entitlements and interests through a fusion of adherence and tactical reservation, voicing reservations regarding provisions on transit passage and military undertakings within the EEZ. Regarding MARPOL, Iran's trajectory has reflected conditional fidelity, as it complies with the convention whilst declining comprehensive annex ratification and exercising strategic passage regulations in pursuance of national priorities. This loyalty has been encumbered by economic sanctions, technological inadequacies, ecological pressures, and geopolitical hazards. Within the

architecture of the SAR convention, Iran has maneuvered with a spirit of cooperation to uphold SAR's humanitarian tenets, though not without impediments imposed by sanctions, security apprehensions, and regional disputes that could undermine implementation.

However, the winds have not always favored Iran's sails in fully engaging with CBD, CITES and Ramsar conventions. Regarding CBD, Iran faces substantive challenges achieving comprehensive ratification and implementation, despite signing and undertaking aligned actions. For CITES, Iran's ratification and participation aim to uphold its conservation objectives, although sanctions and local issues obstruct complete obligations. With Ramsar, Iran's longstanding involvement signifies commitment, yet economic and environmental pressures have hindered full compliance. Thus, across these accords, while selectively navigating strategic interests, Iran has encountered multifaceted domestic opposition, legal complexities, and resource limitations that pose intricate impediments.

These synthesized findings, enriched by theoretical interpretations, unveil a nuanced narrative of Iran's sophisticated maritime policy maneuvering. The analysis illuminates acts of strategic navigation, selective engagement, and nuanced positioning within the global maritime governance theater. Subsequent sections will continue to explore this complex seascape, utilizing liberal institutionalism and regime theory as analytical compasses to shed light on the strategic calculus, opportunities, constraints, and outcomes that characterize Iran's maritime policy decisions and global engagement strategies.

5-2. Theoretical Framework Analysis

This section applies the complementary theoretical paradigms of liberal institutionalism and regime theory to elucidate Iran's sophisticated maritime policy decisions within the broader context of international maritime conventions and specialized governance architectures.

5-2-1. Liberal Institutionalism Perspective

Through a liberal institutionalist lens, Iran emerges as a strategic actor navigating the global maritime governance landscape. Its selective



ratification and engagement with pivotal accords like UNCLOS, MARPOL, and SAR indicates an intentional alignment with international maritime standards to reduce uncertainties, lower cooperation costs, and unlock mutually beneficial partnerships aligned with national interests.

However, Iran's path towards full integration faces impediments like economic sanctions, regional tensions, and domestic opposition that constrain absolute conformity with global maritime institutions. Hence, liberal institutionalism provides insights into Iran's delicate balancing act between cooperation incentives and nationalistic considerations.

5-2-2. Regime Theory Lens

Regime theory further elucidates Iran's nuanced sectoral priorities and strategic goals. For instance, its offshore oil/gas exploration initiatives mirror alignment with specialized regimes like UNCLOS and the Continental Shelf Convention, signaling maritime resource development objectives. However, sanctions and political disputes sporadically deter absolute adherence when national interests necessitate caution.

Overall, Iran pursues selective cooperation within specialized marine governance spheres like pollution prevention where mutual benefits are apparent. Thus, regime theory offers a tailored perspective into Iran's issue-specific maritime maneuvering.

5-2-3. Integrated Perspectives

Together, these complementary theories highlight the sophisticated calculus driving Iran's maritime policy decisions, with cooperation opportunities weighed against nationalistic goals and constraints. The integrated application of both theories enriches our understanding of the multifaceted factors shaping Iran's strategic maritime positioning across institutions, regimes, and issues.

In conclusion, this theoretical analysis provides an insightful foundation to illuminate the intricacies underlying Iran's evolving maritime governance strategies. Subsequent sections will further probe the intersections between Iran's global maritime diplomacy and blue economy priorities.

6. Analysis of Iran's Global Diplomatic Engagement

In the arena of global maritime diplomacy, Iran emerges as a strategic player orchestrating a mosaic of partnerships and agreements to advance its blue economy vision and interests regionally and globally. Spanning critical waters like the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea, Iran navigates complex currents, forging pathways to amplify its maritime power and foster a thriving blue economy.

This section illuminates the contours of Iran's diplomatic engagements, unraveling the interplay of collaboration, interests, and challenges permeating its maritime diplomacy.

6-1. Iran's Key Partnerships and Agreements

6-1-1. Regional Partnerships

- **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC):** Despite broader geopolitical tensions, Iran has had limited cooperation with GCC states on select maritime issues like environmental protection in the strategic Persian Gulf waters. However, substantial constraints on wider collaboration remain posed by unresolved disputes and regional rivalries.
- **Caspian Littoral States:** Iran has sought cooperation with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan on matters like boundary demarcation, resource development, and environmental protection in the Caspian Sea. However, the five littoral states have not yet fully agreed on the precise delimitation of their respective maritime zones, and some disputes persist over offshore oil and gas fields. In 2018, the states signed the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea, establishing a framework for collaboration. The convention defined general principles like prohibiting foreign military presence and ensuring freedom of navigation. It also recognized each state's sovereign rights over a 15-nautical mile territorial sea and 10-nautical mile fishing zone, while designating the remainder as common waters. However, seabed and subsoil resource delimitation was left to separate bilateral/multilateral accords between relevant parties. While the convention was a milestone, outstanding border and resource disputes continue to hinder comprehensive maritime cooperation among the Caspian littoral states.



- Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA): Iran has applied for membership in IORA as a dialogue partner, which is currently under review by member states. If approved, IORA dialogue partner status can potentially enable Iran to collaborate with member countries on areas of mutual interest like blue economy growth, fisheries governance, maritime technologies, and tourism. However, Iran faces challenges in fully utilizing IORA's potential due to the lack of direct connectivity with some member states, the limiting impact of US sanctions on trade and investment, and divergent views on regional security priorities that have partially isolated Iran.

6-1-2. International Partnerships

- International Maritime Organization (IMO): As an IMO member state since 1958, Iran is actively engaged in shaping global maritime regulatory architecture and norms through its influential participation in IMO activities. However, Iran faces some challenges fully implementing certain IMO conventions and standards, like MARPOL, STCW, and the ISPS Code, due to limitations posed by sanctions and domestic considerations. Iran also maintains reservations regarding some specific IMO resolutions related to navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and offshore environmental protection. While involved, Iran contends with compliance gaps and disputes over IMO norms. Yet its enduring engagement highlights the significance of cooperation to advance collective maritime interests despite geopolitical tensions.

- United Nations: Iran engages selectively with certain UN entities on areas like cultural heritage, fisheries, and marine environmental protection. However, US sanctions have constrained the depth of Iran's cooperation with the UN system and its specialized agencies. While Iran has collaborated on some projects, sanctions obstruction and tensions with Western powers have precluded Iran from fully utilizing the UN to advance its maritime economic development goals.

- World Trade Organization (WTO): Iran first applied for full WTO membership in 1996, but its accession process remains stalled due to US objections. Iran currently only has observer status in the WTO, which allows it to attend meetings but not participate directly in trade

negotiations. While observer status provides limited benefits, US sanctions have severely constrained Iran's ability to leverage WTO mechanisms to boost international maritime trade cooperation and integration.

6-1-3. Security Partnerships

- **China and Russia:** Iran has cultivated strategic naval partnerships with China and Russia, conducting joint exercises, weapons transfers, and military coordination since 2019. These alignments aim to amplify Iran's maritime power projection and defenses in strategic waters including the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman. The partnerships signal closer geopolitical alignment between Iran, China and Russia in countering the dominance of the US and its allies in the region. However, some limitations persist for Iran. It must balance ties with both larger powers that have their own agendas. Iran also contends with pressure and sanctions from the US-led bloc who view its naval collaborations as threatening. While the partnerships with China and Russia serve shared interests, Iran faces risks of over-dependence and must adapt pragmatically. The relationships represent calculated strategies, not unconditional alliances, based on converging concerns over maritime security, energy, and regional stability. However, managing the partnerships requires nuanced diplomacy attuned to their complexity.

6-1-4. Key Bilateral Agreements

- **Qatar:** Iran and Qatar have independently developed their respective sections of the shared South Pars/North Dome gas field, which contains over 40% of the world's natural gas reserves. While not engaging in formal joint management, collaboration on this strategically vital hydrocarbon reservoir has fueled economic growth for both countries. However, the partnership has faced challenges as political tensions have flared between Iran and Qatar due to diverging foreign policies, proxy conflicts, and other disputes. They continue to cooperate operationally, but broader rifts have strained the strategic partnership at times. Both also contend with uncertainties from sanctions pressure and market fluctuations.

- **Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan:** Iran has signed environmental and resource agreements with Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan highlighting



avenues for collaboration on protecting the fragile Caspian Sea ecosystem. Key arrangements include the Tehran Convention framework for monitoring pollution and managing offshore hydrocarbon activities. These accords reflect mutual interests in conservation and development. However, substantial obstacles persist, including the contested legal status of the Caspian, competing claims over offshore deposits, and risks from resource extraction. While highlighting a spirit of cooperation, achieving truly joint Caspian governance faces continuous dialogue and coordination challenges among the littoral states to overcome complex disputes and limitations.

6-1-5. Notable Multilateral Agreement

- **Tehran Convention:** As one of the five Caspian littoral states, Iran signed and ratified the 2003 Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Tehran Convention). This underscores Iran's stated commitment to the collective guardianship of the inland sea's fragile ecology. However, effective implementation depends on the cooperation of all littoral states. As a framework agreement, the Tehran Convention establishes general principles but lacks concrete obligations. Its protocols on key issues like biodiversity and pollution are still being negotiated and developed. While an important milestone, the Tehran Convention itself is insufficient to ensure sustainable environmental management of the Caspian without further coordination amongst the five littoral states across political, legal, technical and scientific dimensions. Iran's engagement represents its intention to collaborate on protecting the Caspian, but multilateral cooperation faces ongoing challenges.

In summary, Iran's sophisticated diplomatic choreography reveals strategic interests interplaying with collaborative opportunities and geopolitical challenges in advancing its maritime vision.

6-2. In-depth Assessment of Iran's Diplomatic Opportunities and Constraints

Iran's extensive maritime boundaries and strategic location have opened avenues for regional and global partnerships across sectors to advance its blue economy vision. However, complex geopolitical dynamics have also

posed multifaceted challenges. A nuanced assessment of Iran's key opportunities and constraints provides useful insights.

6-2-1. Key Opportunities

- **Economic Expansion:** Maritime partnerships, especially in sectors like oil/gas, fisheries, and shipping, can significantly boost revenues, trade, and blue economy growth. Joint ventures like the South Pars gas field with Qatar epitomize such lucrative opportunities.
- **Security Consolidation:** Naval collaborations and joint exercises with partners like China and Russia can strengthen Iran's maritime defenses and power projection capabilities to protect its strategic regional interests.
- **Environmental Cooperation:** Given worsening ecological issues in the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea, Iran can leverage multilateral partnerships to champion conservation and sustainable governance of shared marine resources.

6-2-2. Major Constraints

- **Economic Limitations:** Broad economic sanctions imposed predominantly by the US and its allies severely restrict Iran's opportunities to maximize the depth and scope of beneficial maritime alliances.
- **Regional Tensions:** Territorial disputes and historical animosities, especially in the contested Persian Gulf waters, hamper cooperative endeavors and foster distrust of partners' motives.
- **Divergent Interests:** Even in multilateral settings, harmonizing Iran's strategic maritime goals with the diverse priorities of partner nations poses a persistent challenge, hindering collective action.

In summary, while Iran enjoys significant maritime partnership opportunities, complex economic, political and environmental realities inject difficult trade-offs and constraints, necessitating sophisticated diplomatic maneuvering. The next subsection analyzes how these factors align with relevant international relations theories.

6-3. Theoretical Analysis of Iran's Diplomatic Engagements



Applying the perspectives of liberal institutionalism and regime theory provides a useful analytical lens to interpret Iran's sophisticated global maritime partnerships and diplomacy within the context of its strategic interests and constraints.

6-3-1. Liberal Institutionalism Viewpoint

Iran's selective participation in multilateral maritime institutions like the IMO and UNCLOS underscores its nuanced recognition of potential mutual benefits from tactical cooperation, balanced against national considerations. However, sanctions and regional disputes curb its full integration, reflecting inherent challenges facing absolute conformity with global governance architectures.

6-3-2. Regime Theory Interpretation

Iran's stance across specialized maritime regimes provides clues into its sectoral priorities and interests. Its pursuit of naval partnerships mirrors alignment with security focused regimes, while environmental accords resonate with ecological goals. Iran exhibits selective, issue-specific cooperation aligned with its strategic maritime vision.

6-3-3. Integrated Theoretical Insights

A multilayered analysis utilizing both theories enriches our understanding of Iran's sophisticated diplomacy balancing cooperation incentives against nationalistic goals and constraints. Iran leverages its geographical position to pursue maritime partnerships across sectors and regimes where advantages can be accrued. However, it also displays adaptation, resisting entanglements that can subordinate national interests to global priorities.

This theoretical interpretation elucidates Iran's nuanced maritime diplomacy and strategic alignments based on a complex calculus of opportunities, limitations, and objectives. The next section will synthesize these findings to derive deeper insights into factors shaping Iran's evolving maritime posture.

7. Discussion and Analysis

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Synthesizing the intersections between policies, blue economy, and diplomacy provides critical insights into Iran's strategic maritime positioning and global engagements. As a nation with extensive coastlines and a rich maritime history, analyzing these intersections is pivotal for Iran.

7-1. Intersections Shaping Maritime Strategies

The interplay between policies, blue economy goals, and diplomacy profoundly shapes Iran's maritime strategies. Domestic policies foster structured development of priority blue economy sectors through guidelines, sustainability promotion, and innovation encouragement. Diplomacy enables beneficial international partnerships, navigates geopolitical tensions, and attempts alignment of national interests with global sustainability objectives.

For instance, Iran's selective adherence to maritime accords underscores nuanced commitment to sustainable practices and tactical cooperation where national interests are clearly served. Strategic diplomatic activities leverage Iran's geography to advance aligned blue economy sectors, while cooperating on maritime security and environmental protection. However, constraints like sanctions and disputes inject trade-offs.

7-2. Theoretical Perspectives

Theories like liberal institutionalism and regime theory provide nuanced perspectives. Liberal institutionalism highlights Iran's selective cooperation with maritime institutions, signaling constrained willingness to engage global norms despite limitations. Regime theory parses Iran's sectoral prioritization, caution in balancing tensions and constraints, and strategic maritime economy strengthening.

Together, these theories uncover Iran's sophisticated calculus in constantly evolving policies, blue economy agenda, and diplomatic engagements. The next section concludes with key insights and recommendations.

7-3. Key Insights

Multiple insights emerge. Pragmatic self-interests dominate Iran's posture, bounded by constraints. Stances across maritime regimes reveal strategic



priorities. Partnerships signal regional power ambitions, yet fully harnessing geographical advantage remains challenging.

7-4. Recommendations

Innovative diplomacy, sanctions navigation, dispute resolution, awareness building, and sustainable regional cooperation could aid Iran in strategic alignments. Partners should align interests through tailored mechanisms. Further comparative research could provide insights as the blue economy paradigm evolves.

Conclusion

This study has generated critical insights into the multifaceted calculus shaping Iran's maritime strategies at the intersection of blue economy goals, policy alignments, and diplomatic engagements.

The key implications are threefold. Firstly, while self-interest dominates Iran's posture, it recognizes potential value in selective cooperation for mutual gains, within defined constraints. Secondly, Iran's nuanced stances across maritime regimes reveal strategic priorities, pursuing alignment where advantages can be leveraged to signal interests and enable partnerships. Thirdly, particular collaborations highlight Iran's ambitions to expand regional power and influence, yet fully harnessing its geographical potential remains challenging.

These findings have salient policy implications. Iran could consider improved dispute resolution, creative sanction navigation, and maritime awareness to enable greater international alignment. Partners should develop tailored mechanisms to align diverse interests and enable collective action. Advancing sustainable regional blue economy development could build cooperation bridges.

Further research could apply these theoretical lenses to compare Iran with other nations. Investigating regime nuances could provide additional insights. Case studies on Iran's partnerships may also be illuminating. Continuing to elucidate Iran's calculus as the blue economy paradigm evolves remains important. This study offers an initial perspective to inform scholarship and practice in advancing cooperative oceans governance.

In conclusion, this research provides a useful compass to navigate the intricacies of Iran's maritime ambitions and strategies. It illuminates the significance of adaptability and strategic alignment in navigating this complex landscape. The insights resonate across policy, diplomacy, and sustainable development realms; underscoring the importance of fostering innovation, cooperation, and long-term thinking to advance blue economy objectives and collective maritime interests.

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