



Sea Piracy and Regional Security in the Gulf of Guinea

¹Christopher Nimi Apokoro & ²Nekabari Johnson Nna

Department of Political and Administrative Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences,
University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Sea piracy poses a grave threat to regional security and stability in the Gulf of Guinea, leading to increased concerns among coastal countries and the international community. This study aims to examine sea piracy, regional security and stability in the Gulf of Guinea. The specific objectives of this study is to examine the trend in sea piracy and insecurity among the Gulf of Guinea states, examine the causative factors of sea piracy in the Gulf of Guinea states and provides an analysis of the impact of sea piracy on security amongst the Gulf of Guinea states. Sea piracy in the Gulf of Guinea has been on the rise in recent years, with pirates targeting commercial vessels, oil tankers, and fishing boats. This not only poses a risk to the safety of maritime trade and the livelihoods of local fishermen but also undermines the economic development and stability of the region. Pirates often operate with impunity due to the lack of effective law enforcement mechanisms and regional cooperation. The activities of sea pirates have resulted in significant economic losses, as shipping companies face increased costs for insurance and security measures. The presence of armed pirates and the constant threat they pose to seafarers, ship crews, and local communities have created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity. This has hampered the development of coastal areas, as fishing activities decline, tourism increases, and foreign direct investment is deterred. To address the issue of sea piracy, coastal countries in the Gulf of Guinea have taken several steps to enhance maritime security and promote regional stability. The theory adopted for this study is the securitization theory. The methodology used for this study is the Ex Post Facto or After the Fact design. The study concludes that sea piracy's existence in the Gulf of Guinea has deep roots in the weak governance of regional states and their inadequate legal infrastructure and law enforcement capacity. There is a need for sustained political will, regional cooperation, and international support to combat sea piracy and ensure the long-term security and stability of the Gulf of Guinea.

Introduction

Sea piracy poses a significant threat to regional security and stability, particularly in the Gulf of Guinea. This region, located on the western coast of Africa, has witnessed a rise in pirate attacks in recent years, leading to concerns about the safety of maritime trade and economic activities. In order to address the issue of sea piracy, it is important to examine its impact on regional security and stability and explore potential strategies for enhancing maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine sea piracy, regional security and stability in the gulf of Guinea. They specific objectives of the study are listed as:

1. Examine the trend in sea piracy and insecurity among the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) states.
2. Examine the causative factors of sea piracy in the Gulf of Guinea states
3. Analyzes sea piracy's impact on security among the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) states.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is securitization. The proponent of securitization theory is Barry Buzan, who, along with Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde, developed the concept in the late 1990s. Securitization theory provides a basis for understanding how certain issues, in this case sea piracy, are constructed as security threats. This theory argues that security issues are not objective but are rather products of social and political processes. In the Gulf of Guinea, sea piracy has been securitized by regional actors, international organizations, and external powers based on perceived threats to maritime trade, economic interests, and human security.

Securitization theory is a theoretical framework developed in the field of international relations that seeks to understand how and why certain issues or phenomena are framed as security threats. It analyzes the process through which non-traditional security issues are "securitized," meaning they are constructed and presented as existential threats that require urgent and exceptional measures to address.

In the context of sea piracy, securitization theory can shed light on how piracy is discursively framed as a security threat and the consequences of this framing. The process of securitizing piracy involves various actors, such as governments, international organizations, and media, who construct piracy not just as a criminal activity but as a threat to global trade, maritime security, and the stability of coastal states.

There are several key elements in the securitization of sea piracy:

1. **Framing:** Actors involved in the securitization process create narratives that depict piracy as a grave and immediate threat. These narratives often emphasize the violence, economic costs, and potential consequences of piracy on a global scale.
2. **Role of actors:** Different actors play specific roles in the securitization of piracy. National governments might employ military or naval forces to combat piracy, while international organizations like the UN or the International Maritime Organization (IMO) may facilitate cooperation and provide legal frameworks to address it.
3. **Securitizing moves:** Securitization theory suggests that securitizing moves must be made to enhance the urgency of responding to piracy. For instance, governments may declare piracy as a national security concern, leading to the deployment of military assets and the prioritization of resources to combat piracy.
4. **Exceptional measures:** Securitization often leads to the implementation of exceptional measures, such as military interventions, increased surveillance, or international collaborations to disrupt and deter piracy activities.

However, securitizing an issue like sea piracy has both positive and negative consequences. On one hand, it can mobilize resources and international cooperation to address the problem effectively, leading to the reduction of piracy incidents. On the other hand, securitization may also lead to potential negative consequences, including the militarization of responses, infringement of human rights, and the neglect of underlying socioeconomic factors that contribute to piracy.

Overall, securitization theory provides a valuable lens to analyze how sea piracy is transformed into a security issue, influencing policies, strategies, and international cooperation to address this problem.

Conceptual Review

Sea Piracy

Sea piracy has existed for hundreds of years and is a very old occurrence (Ahmed 2020:62). The academic community has been perplexed by the definition of piracy. 'Priority Paper for the Danish Efforts to Combat Piracy and Other Types of Maritime Crime 2019-2022' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark) defines piracy as any unlawful act of violence, detention, or depredation committed for private ends against another ship or aircraft on the high seas. 2019. In an effort to define piracy, the Harvard draft convention of 1932 distinguished between how it would be defined under international law and domestic law. This distinction was made based on where the act was carried out; under international law, piracy was conducted beyond the state's territorial authority, whereas under domestic law, piracy was done within its borders. They added that while piracy was illegal under domestic law, it was not so under international law. Their justification was that since the law of nations does not apply to private individuals, it differs from municipal law. In other words, there isn't a global super state that administers justice for private citizens. Therefore, marine piracy is only considered to be a particular ground for state jurisdiction and not a crime under international law (Rubin, 2007). Piracy is an international crime, and all countries may exercise jurisdiction over pirates, regardless of the country of the ship or the pirates, according to the Oxford Dictionary of Law (2000:395). Over 6,000 kilometers of coastline make up the Gulf of Guinea, which is a portion of the Atlantic Ocean and runs from Senegal to Angola. Between west and central Africa, it is located. It is a hotspot for sea piracy and other maritime insecurity due to its strategic location, which includes seventeen (17) countries with fishery resources and as a significant international shipping route. Sea piracy is characterized as an armed robbery at sea carried out by private actors (criminals) acting for egotistical motives, particularly financial gain. It is thought to be among the earliest criminal activities ever. Piracy is believed to have been common in ancient Greece and was widely accepted as a respectable means of subsisting. Parts of the Mediterranean were also plagued by piracy during the Roman era, which led to the development of many naval techniques to combat the threat. Pirate activities have also plagued South-East Asia. Some also happened on the African continent's east and west coasts. The increase in piratical attacks within the Gulf of Guinea throughout the nineteen-year review period, 2000–2019, brought sea piracy and general maritime insecurity to the attention of the world. The International Naval Protection of Merchant Shipping, according to Lehr (2010), offers some hope for reducing the vulnerabilities in the marine industry, but hasn't been very successful. It is evident that a number of reports have stated that in the Gulf of Guinea, maritime terrorists have changed into sea pirates. The Gulf of Guinea is seeing an increase in sea piracy as a result of a number of events. Attacks on anchorages, armed robberies against ships, and the theft of cargo ships for use as personal vehicles by criminals have all increased. Security organizations in the Gulf of Guinea, however, have successfully combatted the trend in recent years (Displacement Tracking Matrix Report (2019). The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which was adopted in 1982, defines real sea piracy as an advance that takes place on "the top sea" "outside the administration of any state" (United Nations, 1982).

Regional Security

Regionalism and security can be related in many different ways. One has to do with the choice of unit of investigation e.g. a regional security complex defined by Barry Buzan as 'a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national security cannot realistically be considered apart from one another' (Buzan, 1991). The concept has later been rethought in a multi sectoral and social constructivist

direction, making the actual delimitation of the unit more nuanced, but not easier since different security sectors (economic, environmental, and societal) may define different regions (Buzan, 2003). The idea of securitization further adds to this fluency of the concept (Buzan and Weaver, 2003).

In an alternative approach developed by Lake and Morgan regions are defined in terms of the mode of security management or 'regional order' (Lake and Morgan, 1997). Regional orders can shift from simple balance of power systems or concerts to more comprehensive communities or integrated polities. The authors also suggest an alternative definition of regional security complex: 'the states affected by at least one trans-border but local security externality'. The region is nevertheless also here primarily a level of analysis. Another link between regionalism and security concerns the regional implications of a local conflict. These depend on the nature of the security complex and the way various security problems are vertically and horizontally linked in particular regions, which can be highly varying. Some local conflicts are primarily affecting relations with different forms of higher authority, others may concern political rivalry among ethnic groups or cross border competition for land and other natural resources.

A third link has to do with the conflict management role of the organized region (if there is one) for internal regional security, or 'regional order', for the immediate environment (e.g. the neighbourhood policy of the EU) of the region, and for world order (to the extent that Regionalism and security can be related in many different ways. One has to do with the choice of unit of investigation e.g. a regional security complex defined by Barry Buzan as 'a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national security cannot realistically be considered apart from one another' (Buzan, 1991). The concept has later been rethought in a multi sectoral and social constructivist direction, making the actual delimitation of the unit more nuanced, but not easier since different security sectors (economic, environmental, and societal) may define different regions (Buzan, 2003). The idea of securitization further adds to this fluency of the concept (Buzan and Weaver, 2003).

Gulf Of Guinea

A 300 million consumer market can be found in the Gulf of Guinea. Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, So Tomé and Prncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo are among the many nations included in it from West and Central Africa. These nations have a rich diversity of geology, geography, and culture. From English-speaking nations to those that speak French, Portuguese, and Spanish, they are all represented. According to The Economist (2004), the Gulf of Guinea produces a total of \$112 billion in gross domestic product (GDP), \$45.5 billion in exports, and \$31.63 billion in imports.

In addition to being open to the Atlantic Ocean, the countries of the Gulf of Guinea also benefit from a rich bionetwork made up of diverse fauna and flora. These natural riches include, among other endowments, rain forests (accounting for much of the oxygen-generating sources of the globe) and watercourses with access to the sea like the Congo and Niger Rivers. The Congo River is about 4,700 kilometers long and has the second-longest delta in the world. The Niger River, which flows through nine nations and has a length of 4,200 kilometers, is vital to the survival of 110 million people in Western Africa. Its source is in Guinea. The Niger River and its tributaries, as well as the Congo River, continue to be the favored trading routes in the area. Additionally, the Niger's proximity to other rivers and the sea offers the bordering nations a fantastic fishing ground. Pollution is a problem in the area, though. The region's nations have experienced rapid urbanization and industrialisation over the past 50 years, along with significant population expansion. Natural resources and biodiversity in the area and in places adjacent to the Basin have been severely degraded as a result. It endangers the ecological foundation of the area's long-term development. The desire of the world community to aid in the restoration and preservation of the region's natural ecosystem has been emphasized along with knowledge of the environmental issues the Gulf of Guinea is currently experiencing. Several countries from the Gulf of Guinea, including Nigeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Gabon, and Chad, are oil producers and are anticipated to become major energy suppliers. The region is endowed with abundant natural resources that, if carefully managed, can contribute to global prosperity. Soon, So Tomé and Prncipe will be included in this group of nations. A key competitive advantage for the supply of oil is the location of the Gulf of Guinea. In fact, the Gulf of Guinea benefits from the absence of chokepoints, or limited shipping channels, between the region and North America and Western Europe, despite its close proximity to these major energy users. These maritime transit chokepoints are where a significant part of the world's crude oil passes. These channels are all routes for significant oil flows that are made by oil tankers. The chokepoints are vulnerable to blockades, pirate attacks, and shipping mishaps because to how narrow they are. These dangers don't exist in the Gulf of Guinea.

Methodology

Study Design

The Ex Post Facto or After the Fact design was chosen for this paper. This is a type of design in which the investigation begins after the incident has occurred, with no intervention from the observer (Neil, 2010). The ex post facto design was chosen because it is a systematic empirical study in which the independent variables cannot be controlled or modified in any way because the circumstance of investigation already exists or has occurred.

Nature/Sources of Data

The data collected is qualitative, and it was derived from secondary sources. By secondary source, we indicate that the data was derived from existing materials, publications, and other sources other than the researcher's own knowledge.

Methods of Data Collection

The vast data collections were compiled from books, journal papers, the internet, and other unpublished sources.

Methods of Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data gathered throughout the study, the content analysis method was used. Content analysis is a technique for determining the existence of specific words, topics, or concepts within a set of qualitative data (Hodder, 1994). The researcher can use content analysis to qualify and analyze the presence, meanings, and linkages of such terms, topics, or concepts.

Validity/Reliability of Instrument

The study was heavily reliant on data from published sources. As a result, the risk of manipulation is minimal or even non-existent. To increase the study's validity, efforts were made to ensure that the data addressed the key points identified in the study. The reliability resulted in a valid conclusion to the research problem. As a result, data were acquired from a variety of sources, such as journals, newspapers, magazines, and various forms of documentation that were dependable since their topics and views aligned with the research problem and goals. As a result, the risk of bias was greatly reduced, and precision was improved and achieved. As a result, the study's data were reliable, valid, and satisfying, yielding valid and dependable results.

Examine the causative factors of sea piracy in the Gulf of Guinea states

Table 1

CAUSATIVE FACTORS OF SEA PIRACY IN THE GOG STATES	THE GROWTH OF SEA PIRACY
Legal and Jurisdictional Weakness	Weakness of International law regarding sea piracy.
Favourable Geography	The geographical condition of the GoG plays an important role in allowing pirates to execute attacks for various reasons
Underfunded Law Enforcement and Inadequate Security	limited maritime security capability of the coastal states has contributed significantly to the steady rise and growth of sea piracy
Conflict and Disorder	Violence, conflict and political disorder, created a breeding ground for sea piracy in the GoG.
Access to Weapons	The growth of sea piracy and the proliferation of illegal arms in the Niger Delta

Causative Factors of Sea Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea States

Source: Computed by the researcher based on data from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341525368>

Table 1 above showing the GoG believes that conflict and chaos, geographical favorability, underfunded law enforcement/inadequate protection, the promise of reward, permissive political contexts, and cultural acceptance are the main driving forces behind sea piracy. These elements, along with a number of others, such as the frequency of illegal fishing, environmental deterioration, and easy access to firearms, may all be claimed to exist in the Gulf of Guinea to some extent.

Weakness in Law and Jurisdiction

The legal and jurisdictional weakness in the region mainly follows from the international law regarding piracy. The established international definition of piracy is contained in Article 101 of UNCLOS. As stated previously, the definition has many shortcomings, the most notable being the delimitation of the geographical location of acts be regarded as piracy. The UNCLOS definition of piracy limits piracy to an act occurring on the high seas and is silent on the legality of such acts occurring within territorial waters. This gap in the definition suggests that such behaviors are a state issue in terms of jurisdiction in whose territorial waters they occur. To date, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea has largely been confined to territorial waters. In this regard, only a small percentage of the attacks meet the definition of piracy. Furthermore, while pursuing pirates into the territorial waters of neighboring governments, law enforcement officials have jurisdictional challenges. States are hesitant to allow external coastguards and navy to operate in their waters, despite the fact that piracy is a frequent menace to the region's coastal nations. Hot pursuit into the territorial waters of another state is not permitted by UNCLOS. The extent to which the high seas of UNCLOS was remedied in the SUA. The Convention broadens the geographical limit and allows states to prosecute violent assaults on ships even when they occur in another state's territorial waters. Though it doesn't create any enforcement jurisdiction for parties to intervene in such area of waters. The shortcoming of SUA is that there is only one way for it to be invoked when violence is sufficient to endanger maritime safety. Further, in practice, the Convention is rarely invoked despite the majority of the Gulf States having acceded to it. Poor maritime border demarcation between nations in the Gulf of Guinea creates additional jurisdictional problems that fuel piracy in the region (Murphy, 2011). A recent investigative report revealed that the poorly defined maritime areas between Nigeria and its neighbours contributing to the growth of maritime crime in the nation's waterways (Chuka, 2013). In addition to influencing states' rights to extract mineral resources, improper demarcation is also likely to make piracy suppression difficult.

Favourable Geography

The Gulf of Guinea's geography plays a significant role in enabling pirates to carry out attacks for a variety of reasons. First off, the area has a sizable coastline that is mainly unprotected, enabling pirates a sizable area to operate in. This gives pirates the freedom to launch attacks without worrying about naval retaliation. Second, the marine region holds a strategic position of significant economic value due to its substantial natural resource deposits,

particularly oil and gas. The main economic countries have made significant investments in the oil industry, making the region an absolute strategic and economic requirement for the entire world. Third, ships, especially tankers, must approach the coast closer due to the transport requirements of transferring this oil. For example, in Nigeria, bulk of oil is produced part of the Niger Delta, and is thereafter pumped to stations and oil platforms at various navigable river mouths. Here, the supply ships and tugboats must travel in narrow waters, making them vulnerable to pirate attacks.

Underfunded Law Enforcement and Inadequate Security

The maritime community, naval forces, and pirate enterprises are engaged in an ongoing conflict over piracy. Due to piracy's extensive reach in the Gulf of Guinea, regulation and security activities are essential in the struggle against piracy. Unfortunately, the limited maritime security capability of the coastal states has contributed significantly to the steady rise and increase of piracy because the majority of the Gulf of Guinea countries lack the resources necessary to combat pirate. In Nigeria, the statutory mandate for protecting Nigerian territorial waters lies with the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) and Nigerian Navy. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed on 12 April 2007, the two agencies agreed to work together for the efficient and safe administration of Nigeria's maritime domain. The MoU also established the Maritime Guard Command (MGC), which allows operatives to carry heavy arms and ammunitions on board its platforms. President Goodluck Jonathan, while appointing Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Dele Joseph Ezeoba, gave a fresh mandate to the Nigerian Navy to eradicate maritime piracy and all forms of illegalities in the Nigerian maritime domain in the shortest time possible (Dele, 2012). Following this development, the Nigerian Navy and NIMASA, in a joint news conference at the NIMASA headquarters in Lagos on 23 October 2010, pledged to increase their existing MoU on security in the country's territorial waters. They added that the capability of the MGC would be raised by providing it with more personnel and equipment (that is, military hardware).

Conflict and Disorder

Sea piracy is a produce of failed or weak states (Brian, 2009). It typically thrives in places where the governmental power is either weak or nonexistent. (Dozie, 2011). For instance, the civil war that followed the fall of the Somali state in 1991 contributed to the growth of sea piracy in the Gulf of Aden by causing disorder to spread throughout the nation. Similar to how the Niger Delta oil insurgency that lasted for ten years, which was followed by war, violence, and political unrest, helped to foster marine piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. Due to the Nigerian governments and multinational oil companies' coercive tactics to subdue the movement, the local communities' initially peaceful social movements against environmental degradation in the Niger delta gradually turned into a violent and illegal armed insurgency. (Victor, 2009). The Nigerian government sent military forces in the area to quell the legal protest, while the oil sector started arming mercenaries and security forces (Amina, 2008). The militarization of the Niger Delta aided in the rise of several types of militant organizations that used justifiable complaints such government corruption, environmental damage, and poverty to justify their attacks on government and foreign oil sector targets. Armed strife in the area increased when MEND was founded in 2006. Given that the pirates are former members of the MEND insurgency, the expansion of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea region has been connected to the growth of this militant group. The Nigerian government offered amnesty to the Delta militants in 2009 and almost all senior commanders of the rebel group and their respective followers laid lower their arms, embraced the amnesty process. There are still questions about whether the amnesty has been able to resolve the problem of militancy in the Niger Delta, notwithstanding its apparent success. There were reports of sporadic attacks conducted by factions of the rebel group refusing the amnesty in 2011 and 2012. In April 2013, the militant group threatened in an e-mail statement to resume assaults on the country's oil industry as a reply to the jailing of its leader Henry Okah by a South African Court (Mike, 2013). The current resurgence of the militant group is probably increasing piracy in the Gulf of Guinea region.

Access to Weapons

Exists an increasing nexus between increasing marine piracy and the proliferation of illegal arms in the Niger Delta. Since the 1990s, inter-communal and ethnic disagreements over resources have fueled an arms race across the area that has indirectly contributed to a rise in piratical activities (Cyril, 2012). This has mainly arisen out of militants' need to fund their inter-ethnic conflict. At the same time, the military intervention to suppress Niger Delta rebels has further contributed to the extent of weapons in the region. Militants' efforts to gain equal weapons in order to address the Nigerian security forces' attacks have stimulated an arms trading network throughout the region. In reaction to a2009 Nigerian Government amnesty deal, many militants their weapons; however, the failure of the amnesty package inevitably directed them to rearm (Akpan and Ering, 2010).

Conclusively, It is noteworthy that sea piracy occurs in the Gulf of Guinea has deep roots in the weak governance of regional states and their inadequate legal infrastructure and law enforcement capacity. The thriving local black market for crude oil represents a grim picture of the overall structural problems in the Gulf of Guinea states. This leads to the proposition that a practical solution to the problem will depend on having political will of regional governments taking the required steps to curtail the criminal activity. Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea has developed into an organised criminal enterprise. Despite various efforts to suppress piracy, there seems to be no limit to its growth.

The impact of sea piracy on insecurity among the Gulf of Guinea States**Table 2**

The Impact of Sea Piracy on Insecurity among the Gulf of Guinea States	Direct Costs on Maritime-related activities
Impact on Regional Economy and Stability	The expansion of sea piracy in the Gulf poses a serious threat to the local economies of the region.
Impact on Oil Production	The growing incidence of sea piracy in the region is creating a negative impact on the region's oil industry.
Impact on Security	Gulf of Guinea sea piracy affects local and regional security.
Impact on Seafarers	As the risks of sea piracy and armed robbery continue to intensify in the Gulf of Guinea, a growing number of seafarers are affected by violence in the region.
Impact on Fishing Sector	Sea piracy negatively affects the local fishing sector.
Impact on Global Economy	The negative implications of sea piracy in the Gulf could well spread far beyond Africa, with probable complications for the wider global economy.
Impact in the carriage by sea	Sea piracy activities have been observed to distract the shipping industry in several arenas.
Loss of lives and properties	Piracy and armed robbery have made the GoG unsafe for merchant shipping
Poor image and low global rating	Cause of serious reputational damage for the countries in the GoG.

Sea piracy and insecurity among the Gulf of Guinea States

Source: Computed by the researcher based on data from <https://criticalmaritimeroutes.eu/wp-content/uploads>

Table 2 above showing the impact of sea piracy on insecurity between the Gulf of Guinea States. The Impact of Sea Piracy on Insecurity between the Gulf of Guinea States, The Direct Costs on Maritime-related activities. Impact on Regional Economy and Stability: The expansion of sea piracy in the Gulf poses a serious danger to the local economies of the region., Impact on Oil Production: The growing incidence of sea piracy in the region is creating a negative impact on the region's oil industry, Impact on Security: Gulf of Guinea sea piracy affects local and regional security, Impact on Seafarers: As the risks of sea piracy and armed robbery continue to intensify in the Gulf of Guinea, a growing number of seafarers are affected by violence in the region, Impact on Fishing Sector: Sea piracy negatively affects the local fishing sector, Impact on Global Economy: The negative implications of sea piracy in the Gulf could well spread far beyond Africa, with probable complications for the wider global economy, Impact in the carriage by sea: Piracy activities have been observed to distract the shipping industry in several arenas, Impact on the liability of the carrier: Piracy has brought an impact on Carrier's liability under shipping contracts, Impact piracy has in freight: The rise has been attributed to piracy operations of the ship owners' costs for the running of the shipping transport business in general, Loss of lives and properties: Piracy and armed robbery have made the GoG unsafe for merchant shipping.

uman security and environmental damage: Thousands of seafarers have been killed, injured, assaulted, taken hostage or threatened as piracy and armed robbery have increased dramatically, Poor image and low global rating: Cause of serious reputational damage for the nations in the GoG, Exacerbation of organized crimes: Organised crimes that are transnational thrive in spaces, land and water bodies, where the presence and writ of the state are limited.

The Gulf of Guinea is affected by piracy and suffers as a result. Regional governments and the marine industry are under a heavy burden as a result of the region's growing piracy danger since they must take precautions against pirate assaults. This has had direct costs on maritime, similar endeavors like oil production, shipping costs, insurance and fishing. There are also implications for the regional economy and stability, the international economy and regional security.

Impact on Regional Economy and Stability

The local economy of the region are seriously threatened by the growth of piracy in the Gulf. According to estimates, piracy costs the economy of the countries in the region about \$2 billion in annual revenue. The impact on the state economies of the Gulf is clear as port revenue forms a major part of their national income. For instance, 80% of the revenue for the national budget of the Republic of Benin comes from port fees collected at Cotonou. Benin has seen a dramatic decline in activity at the port of Cotonou since the country's first pirate attack off its coast. The number of vessels using the port has dropped by 70%, resulting in a drop in revenue. Further, since sea piracy increases insurance percentages for international shipping companies, how much imported products cost in the region is bound to spike, further imperiling local economies.

The adverse effect on the local economy may affect stability in the region. Pirates have been reported to use the profits accruing from sea piracy to arm rebel groups (for example, in the Niger Delta of Nigeria). If true, this practice would directly impact the firmness of affected countries. Uncontrolled sea

piracy may also hamper growth in that sense that trading companies will search for safer alternative trading routes, avoiding the maritime boundaries and ports of affected countries. This will disrupt the flow of foreign investment and trade.

Impact on Oil Production

The countries of the Gulf of Guinea region namely, Nigeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Cameroon are significant oil makers and rely heavily on budgetary revenue from oil export earnings. However, the growing incidence of sea piracy in the area is creating a negative impact on the area's oil industry. Since 2006, oil production in Nigeria alone has reportedly dropped by 20 per cent due to sea piracy, costing the Nigerian economy millions of dollars. A recent report of Royal Dutch Shell estimates that between 150,000 and 180,000 barrels of oil are stolen daily from Nigeria's pipelines. The International Oil Company estimates that 6 percent of total production is lost to oil thievery. In 2010, the National Hydrocarbons Corporation of Cameroon labelled piracy as a significant factor in its 13 per cent drop in oil production. In 2012, the Gulf of Guinea pirates were reported to have stolen refined petroleum products valued at between \$14 million and \$42 million.

Impact on Security

Gulf of Guinea sea piracy also affects local and regional security. States along the coasts have to devote significant sums as military expenditure for countering sea piracy. Regional military forces spend money on piracy in the form of purchasing vessels and carrying out patrols, training, and military drills in order to increase maritime security. For example, the Nigerian regime had to increase its defence budget for strengthening its navy and maritime patrol capabilities. In June 2012, the Federal Executive Council approved \$19.7 million for the purchase of six security vessels. Regional governments also incur extra costs to keep vessels operational at sea to curb piracy. As the Nigerian Chief of Naval Staff demonstrated by boarding eight ships at sea for one week of exercises costs about \$3.8 million. Piracy-related naval expenditures are expected to grow for the regional countries while the threat persists.

Impact on Seafarers

As the risks of theft with a weapon and sea piracy continue to intensify in the Gulf of Guinea, a growing number of seafarers are affected by violence in the region. One Earth Foundation has recently revealed that Gulf of Guinea piracy directly affects more seafarers than Somali-based piracy. Seafarers throughout the Gulf of Guinea's waters face more stress and fear than do seafarers transiting through Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. The report found that, related to the Somali sea piracy case, although the captivity period is much shorter for seafarers taken hostage in the Gulf of Guinea, they are superfluous often subjected to extreme abuse. IMB reports indicate that in 2012, a total of 966 seafarers were confronted by pirates with either guns or knives in the Gulf of Guinea region. Among them, 206 people were taken captive and 18 seafarers were injured. This involved two seafarers who received non-fatal gunshot wounds when their vessel was shot by pirates, 14 seafarers who were beaten or shot at by pirates while on board and two seafarers who were beaten or shot at during a hijacking. In addition, two seafarers and three security guards were killed in 2012. In 2013, 11 seafarers were injured and one was killed. All mariners passing through the Gulf of Guinea must contend with elevated apprehension and uncertainty. These seamen are apprehensive about operating in the area due to the high level of brutality utilized in pirate attacks. It is possible for seafarers who are captured by pirates or who are harmed by them to suffer long-term physical and mental stress. This could lead to 'clinically significant consequences' and have serious negative implications for seafarers and their families.

Impact on Fishing Sector

Sea piracy negatively affects the local fishing sector. The effects of sea piracy have been strong on fishing practices and exploitation. Given the dependency of several of the coastal states on fisheries, sea piracy affects the livings of the fishing communities of the area. Among the non-oil sectors, fishing is regarded as the second highest export industry in Nigeria. While attacks are grossly underreported, the hijacking of local fishing vessels and the apprehension of fishers within Nigerian waters by pirates is common. These attacks have significantly reduced the quantity of trawlers participating in fishing in Nigeria's waters, resulting in rising seafood prices. This problem is common to coastal states in the area.

Impact on Global Economy

The negative consequences of hijacking in the Gulf could well spread far beyond Africa, with probable complications for the wider international trade, and the US in particular. The nations off the coast of the Gulf of Guinea namely, Angola, Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo and Gabon produce over 3 million barrels of oil daily, largely for North American and European markets. Nigeria alone is America's fifth largest supplier of oil. However, the increasing trend of occurrences on oil tankers casts doubt as to the ability of these nations to reliably provide oil to the global market. The security threats to offshore oil infrastructure endanger investment in the region's energy sector. In this sense, the spread of piracy in the gulf affects not only the key source of income of the coastal states of the region, but also the international fuel market.

Sea piracy negatively impacts both the regional economy and the environment in the GoG. It is expected that piracy costs the region more than \$2 billion annually (Ban, 2012). The financial impact of oil thefts from ships within coastal waters and pipes on shore is approximately 50,000 barrels per day (Lee, 2014). Pirates also "kill, kidnap, or traumatize" their victims and have caused commercial shipping companies to change their routes and schedules when transiting through the region which has caused in significant economic challenges (Martin, 2009).

Lloyd's Market Association, the largest maritime insurance firm, designated Nigeria, Benin, and most of their territorial waters as "high-risk" areas. This "high-risk" designation has caused in a decrease of commercial shipping activity and an estimated 28% loss of revenue for the country of Benin. The UNODC reported that this significant loss of revenue affects "the livelihoods of the country's citizens" because it increases the cost of imports for its citizens and decreases the "competitiveness of exports" for the affected nation (Nirit, 2013). These criminal acts have a significant economic impact on the oil wealthy nation of Nigeria because it derives most of its income from the petroleum trade. In 2000, the oil trade made up "40% of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 83% of federal revenues, and 98% of oil export earnings (Martin, 2009). Oil companies ashore also have to spend more than \$3.5 billion annually to bolster security and protect workers and facilities in the region (Bamidele, 2011). Other economic impacts of piracy are difficult to assess such as increased costs for individual consumers, indemnity premiums for shipping companies, purchases of security details to protect merchant ships transiting through the region, and the costs of procurement, training, manning, and deploying coastal navies to deter and respond to pirate threats (Michael, Carlson and Nance, 2013).

The escalation of pirate attacks has increased the cost of imports and services imported into the Region. Operators face rising costs for a high-risk the current majority of the Indian Ocean and the GoG owing to an increase in indemnity premiums for the crew, cargo and ships. With the blatant surge in maritime hijacking attempts and their success rate and abduction of crew members in the GoG, government, oil companies, and ship owners have lost a substantial amounts of money in the form of ransom paid to free crew members/workers kidnapped by pirates. The average ransom for a kidnapped crew member is between USD 18,000 and USD 500,000, but most ransoms fall between these two ranges USD 30,000 and USD 50,000.76 other costs include installing preventive measures and protection on board and employing private security personnel. Although it is difficult to determine the exact cost of piracy in the GoG partly because of the type of crime and ship owners' unwillingness to disclose ransom sums and security costs, Oceans beyond Piracy estimates that assaults on ships cost US\$818.1mn in 2017 up from \$793.7m the year before. It is estimated that nearly a quarter of that \$818.1m was spent contracting maritime security (Pigeon, Sadic, Duncan, Ridgway, and Soeth, 2007).

For example, a war risk premium for ships travelling through the GoG is extra than about \$18 million in extra charges in 2017. Over a third of all ships passing through the GoG reportedly carried an extra kidnap and ransom rider at a total cost of \$20 million per year. Since the multiple risks involved in imports and exports to the Region, therefore, insurance premiums have increased astronomically as shippers are beginning to factor in the costs of independent security contractors, extra insurance, and, sometimes, ransom money. This additional cost is in turn spread on goods to be borne by unsuspecting end-users and citizens. In a sense, poor African consumers bear a substantial burden of the additional cost caused by piracy even if the connection is hardly ever made or obvious. Beyond the financial cost, the persistence of piracy discourages ship owners from investing in the accomplishment of more ships and they may decide to sell off their vessels in return. Apart from stifling or killing the fledging local shipping industries, piracy is further entrenching the monopoly of the world's major shipping companies in relations of merchant shipping.

To this should be added the outcome on port states in the Region. About 90% of trade in the Area comes by sea, making maritime security a key component in the Region's economy. However, incessant pirate attacks discourage many merchant ships from entering the Region. Due to piracy in the region, there has been a decline in marine activity leads to reduced economic benefits accruable to states, thereby impacting negatively revenue generation, economic growth and growth of the Area. The result is a decline in the national revenue profile of states that operate seaports in the Area. Furthermore, situations of growing pirate actions in the GoG affect oil supplies worldwide. Because it is one of the original frontiers of oil and gas resources, the Area is a key crude oil production hub with about 8 oil exporting countries. International oil companies like Shell, ExxonMobil, Total, Chevron and Eni are currently functioning out of Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria where they risk exposure due to sporadic yet highly disruptive instances of piracy in their supply chains. With Europe, America and the Asian countries depending heavily on the oil from this region, any supply disruption would have a direct effect on their oil supplies and the overall global charge of oil.

Impact in the carriage by sea

Piracy activities have been observed to distract the shipping manufacturing in several arenas. There were so much delay caused by rerouting or hijackings, so much loss caused by delays, theft and ransom, the increase of cost of the sea transport that affect ship owners, governments in addition to consumers who have been witnessed, not only in the Gulf of Guinea but also wherever piracy actions are involved. Charter parties' contracts and marine insurance, and the entire carriage by sea have been affected much by piracy activities. This part analyses impact of piracy basing on the extent by which sea piracy in the Gulf of Guinea affect charter party contracts, marine insurance costs and carriage by sea at large.

Loss of lives and properties

Theft with a weapon and piracy have made the GoG unsafe for merchant shipping. One obvious and direct effect of piracy in the GoG is the threat it poses to the safety and wellbeing of seafarers. In current years, several maritime workers have died, assaulted, injured, abducted and dispossessed of valuables similar to piracy and armed theft incidences increase dramatically. Whenever pirates assault a ship, crew members suffer the torture and stress of being shot at with firearms and grenades, and captives may be kept hostage for an extended period. In 2020 alone, pirates in the GoG kidnapped 130 sailors in 22 different incidents, accounting for all but five of those captured at sea globally (George, 2021).

The growing trend in pirate fierceness in the GoG results in bodily injuries, trauma and fracturing of family structure. For example, several seafarers, naval personnel and artisanal fishermen have lost their lives due to pirate attacks in the area. In December 2019, For instance, pirates assaulted four ships in the harbor of Libreville, the capital of Gabon, murdering the Gabonese captain and capturing four Chinese crew men (VOA News, 2019). In another incident throughout the same month, two crew members died from illnesses contracted while being held hostage in an unknown remote location.

According to IMB, the number and severity of assaults on vessels by pirates in the GoG are increasing, posing a risk to international trade and the security of seafarers working in the Region. Several persons have been maimed and traumatized by a mix of piracy actions.

Because they are criminals desperate to make money, pirates are always prepared to torture, injure, maim or kill their victims in demand to force the government, shipping companies or relatives of victims to pay a ransom. Crew members who encounter robbery face additional dangers beyond the possibility of injuries and abduction can suffer serious mental and post-traumatic stress disorders (PSTD) long after they have been rescued or freed. The testimonial of Sudeep Choudhury, who was abducted on-board MT APECUS in 2019, demonstrates the lasting psychological trauma suffered by victims of such violent maritime crime. He reportedly "lost during the 70 days he spent in the bush, he gained more than 20kg and brought back sunken treasure cheeks" (Ponniah, 2020). Indeed, for every person killed or injured by pirates, there are many more who must cope with the psychological, physical and economic effects that endure in its aftermath (Onuoha, and Hassan, 2009). In this way, armed robberies and piracy pose a direct threat to human security and safety in the Area. This undesirable effect rate of pirate in the GoG and certainly the whole world will persist unless there is a drastic effort at addressing the root sources of piracy.

Poor image and low global rating

There is the wider strategic and political impact of piracy which causes serious reputational damage for the nations of the GoG. In July 2019, the IMB described the GoG maritime domain as "one of the world's most hazardous maritime lanes" and a "world piracy hotspot" (IMB, 2019). As a result, ship owners are having a harder time justifying using sailors and their expensive vessels or cargoes at risk plying the route. They are also struggling to find crews that are ready to join the voyage to the Region or even transit the GoG waters. In addition, some nations have taken measures that have implications for healthy diplomatic relations. For instance, the Directorate General of Shipping in India announced a restriction in June 2019 prohibiting all Indian maritime workers from serving on board vessels in Nigeria and the GoG at large. In the era of globalization, a country's image is significant asset in the global arena. Anholt has rightly noted that the reputation of a country has a direct and measurable impact on just about every aspect of its engagement with other countries and plays a critical role in its economic, social, political and cultural development (Anholt, 2007).

Piracy's prevalence and challenges associated with efforts to rescue foreigners who are held as hostages have caused unwarranted diplomatic tension and squabbles between the nations concerned. There were diplomatic issues between Abuja and New Delhi in the two months that five Indian sailors on board MT APECUS were caught in the outer anchorage off Bonny Island and held in captivity before they were released.

Although the tanker firm had been charged by the Nigerian navy of transporting stolen crude oil from the Niger Delta to Ghana, the ship's owner, Captain Christos, fervently denied the allegation. He attributed the detention of his ships and crew to the Nigerian navy, which he claimed was acting at the behest of the Indian government, in order to force him to "negotiate with terrorists" and pay an "incredible" ransom. Indian authorities however dispute this version of events (Ponniah, 2020).

If poorly managed, an incident such as this can trigger serious diplomatic rows even between otherwise friendly countries. Indeed, the increasing rate of piracy in the GoG in general and Nigeria to be precise, has a damaging effect on the image of the Area, as coastal states are increasingly being seen as unwilling and unable to protect the life and property of foreigners. This adds to the sum of negative developments that slur the region's image, with consequences for foreign direct investments. The region's unfavorable reputation abroad hinders economic growth, especially the shipping and oil industries, consequently, potential investors are deterred from the company possibility.

Conclusion

The study concludes that sea piracy exists in the Gulf of Guinea has deep roots in the weak governance of regional states and their inadequate legal infrastructure and law enforcement capacity. This process of militarizing the Niger Delta contributed to the appearance of several militant groups arguing legitimate grievances such as poverty, environmental degradation and government corruption to protect their attacks against government and foreign oil industry targets.

Sea piracy in the Gulf of Guinea has made possible seizures and targets at sea thereby giving room for economic instability in all ramifications. The anchorage attacks, robberies against ships out of float and theft of ships and cargo aimed towards converting as theirs to personal cargoes and belongings. The triad of fuel theft, petro-piracy, and crude oil theft has developed into an overlapping criminal enterprise. Because of the enormous financial rewards associated with disposing of the cargo in Nigeria and on regional and international oil markets, oil tankers have been the subject of pirate attacks. The smuggling of drugs through the sea poses a security threat to all the states of the Gulf of Guinea region. Crew kidnappings were reported in 25% of vessel attacks in the Gulf of Guinea more unlike any other region in the globe. When crew members are taken hostage, their vessel is abandoned, and they may be detained on land until a deal to release them is reached. Kidnappings have also steadily increased over the years in which crew members are abducted from ships well offshore before being brought back into Nigeria where they are held for ransom.

The Gulf of Guinea is the source, rather than the destination, of illegal migration, this activity can still be classified as sea piracy insecurity risk to the region. The criminal syndicates involved in these operations often use unseaworthy vessels, thus running the risk of the containers sinking or becoming distressed at sea, thereby creating further sea piracy security challenges. The growing incidence of sea piracy in the area is creating a negative impact on the area's oil industry. Since 2006, oil production in Nigeria alone has reportedly dropped by 20 per cent due to sea piracy, costing the Nigerian economy millions of dollars. Also, seafarers transiting through the Gulf of Guinea have to contract with increased fear and uncertainty.

These seamen are apprehensive about operating in the area due to the high level of brutality utilized in pirate attacks. Sea piracy attacks have significantly reduced the quantity of trawlers participating in fishing in Nigeria's waters, resulting in rising seafood prices. This problem is common to coastal states in the area. Sea piracy negatively impacts both the regional budget and the environment around the Gulf of Guinea. It is estimated that piracy costs the region more than \$2 billion annually.

References

- Anholt, S. (2007). "Competitive Identity: New Brand Management for Nations", in *Gaiko Forume, Japanese Perspective on Foreign Affairs.Asia, Pacifica Review*.
- Bamidele, M. S. (2011). "Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea Subregion: Threats, Challenges and Solutions." Strategy Research Project. Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College.
- Buzan, B. (1991). *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (Wheatsheaf Harvester)
- Buzan, B. (2003). 'Regional Security Complex Theory in the Post-Cold War World',
- Buzan, B. and Waever, O. (2003). *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Davis, L. E., and Stanley, L. E. (2006). *Naval Blockades in Peace and War*.
- Fiorelli, M., (2014) "Piracy in Africa: The Case of the Gulf of Guinea": KAIPTC.
- George, L. (2021). *Explainer: Why are pirates attacking ships in the Gulf of Guinea*.
- Lake, D. A. and Morgan P. (eds) *Regional Orders. Building Security in a New World*(Pennsylvania State University Press).
- Liz, K. (2005). "You Can Find Anything You Want: A Critical Reflection on Research on Trafficking in Persons within and into Europe," *International Migration*.
- Martin, M. (2012). *Somalia, the New Barbary?: Piracy and Islam in the Gulf of Guinea*
- Martin, M. N. (2009). *Small Boats, Weak States, Dirty Money: The Challenge of Piracy*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Michael J. S. Jon D. C. and Mark T. Nance (2013). *Maritime Piracy and the Construction of Global Governance*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Mike M. (2013). "Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa," testimony before the Subcommittee on African Affairs, United States Senate.
- Molina, R. and McDonald, G. (2019). "The Economic and Environmental Impact of Modern Piracy on Global Shipping", 19 November 2019
- Mukundan, P. (2014). Somali pirate clampdown caused drop in global piracy, IMB reveal viewed in, Joana Ama Osei-Tutu, 2018: *Beauty and the Thief: Why the Gulf of Guinea Attracts Maritime Insecurity*.
- Nicolas, F. and Eric, G. B. (2005) eds., *Armed and Aimless: Armed Groups, Guns, and Human Security in the ECOWAS Region*, Geneva, Human Security Network.
- Nirit Ben-Ari, (2013) "Piracy in West Africa: A Bumpy Road to Maritime Security": *Africa Renewal*.No. 4, pp. 543-72.
- Onuoha, F.C and Hassan, H (2009). "National Security Implications of Sea Piracy in Nigeria's Territorial Waters", *Nigerian Army Quarterly Journal* Vol.5, No.1, (2009), p.15.
- Ponniah, K. (2020). The day the pirates came. BBC News, 10 May 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-52295222>.
- Raimo, V. (2003). "Illegal Immigration, Human Trafficking, and Organized Crime," *United Nations University*, Discussion Paper O.
- Söderbaum, Fredrik and Timothy M. Shaw (eds.) *Theories of New Regionalism. A Palgrave reader* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
- UNODC, "Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A threat Assessment," February 2013.
- VOA News (2019). Pirates in Gabon Kill Ship's Captain, Kidnap 4 Crew Members", 23 December 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/africa/pirates-gabonkill-ships-captain-kidnap-4-crew-members>. Vol. 6, Issue 4 (April 2020)