

Nature of Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea: A Study of Bayelsa Waterways

IYAMAH Joy Obiageli^{1*}, Dr. AJAYI Olumuyiwa², ERUDE Shalom Ufuoma³

¹ *Department of International Relations, Covenant University, Ota*

² *Department of Peace and Strategic Studies, Covenant university, Ota*

³ *Department of Public Administration, Delta State University, Abraka*

*Corresponding author; Email: joy.iyahmahpgs@stu.cu.edu.ng, shallomerude26@gmail.com



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ABSTRACT: Sometime now the Niger-Delta area, has been the host of all criminal and insecurities in Nigeria. It has been characterized by a plethora of criminal cum premium insecurity challenges. Chief amongst these, is the issue of piracy on the waterways. It is in that regard, this study was carried out to underscore the nature cum effect of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea vis-a-vis Bayelsa waterways. Our focus here is restricted to water bodies around the Bayelsa region. The second cum qualitative method of data collection was maximally explored. We are not novice to the fact that, there exist a plethora of hitherto existing works, that are relevant to the topic. The relative deprivation theory was our dominant guide in this study. From our findings, the people of Niger-Delta area felt deprived of certain benefits that should ordinarily accrue to them, as key players in the mainstream economy of the country. As a vendetta, they go about causing unnecessary problems in the waterways. One way of curbing this issue is, for the government to be transparent, provide amnesty cum employment for the restive youths.

Keywords: Piracy, Gulf of Guinea, Bayelsa, Waterways.

Introduction

More than one-fifth of all documented maritime incidents globally occurred in the Gulf of Guinea in 2013. To prevent higher shipping costs or a bad reputation, shipowners and governments are working to cut down on assaults. However, this statistic only represents a small part of the real assaults in this area (UNITAR, 2014). International Maritime Bureau events indicate that the impacted area is vast. The ports of Cotonou in Benin, Bonny and Lagos in Nigeria, Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire, Lomé in Togo and Tema in Ghana are frequented by a large number of commercial ships, making them particularly vulnerable to attack. (Osinowo, 2015).

Due to a shortage of port capacity in West and Central Africa, ships are trapped on the roadside for days (areas of calm water close to ports where ships can anchor). The security measures at these ports

are still lacking. It was exposed that many of the port vessels were unattended and unmonitored after 25 ships were washed up on a beach during a two-hour storm in Lagos in 2010. Other research suggest that pirates and armed robbers might utilize many of these unmanned and unmonitored ships or boats as hideouts and blinds" (UNITAR, 2014).

In the event that pirates gain possession of a ship, Osinowo claims, the ship's cargo and equipment are usually stolen as well (2015). In certain cases, crew members may be abducted in exchange for a ransom. By hijacking ships and carrying them beyond maritime borders, products may be transported across maritime boundaries. As seen in the Gulf of Guinea, crude oil and petroleum products are popular targets for terrorists. A similar assault has been made on both Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire. It was eight days after the MT Kerala was detained near Luanda, Angola, that her oil cargo was located in the waters near Ghana's Tema Port. If an offshore support vessel is repeatedly assaulted in this manner, it increases the possibility that someone is stealing oil or selling it illegally (Broohm, 2021; Songur & Sihmantepe, 2021).

The Gulf of Guinea has become a hotbed for violent attacks on ships and the abduction of hostages (Osinowo,2015). Two hundred and seventy-nine sailors were abducted in 2013. There has also been a rise in the frequency of incidents of violent resistance to naval patrols. Six pirates were murdered in August 2013 after a member of the Nigerian Navy (NN) opened fire on a passenger boat during a routine operation near the Cameroonian border.

A previous incident between eight Nigerian Navy (NN) warships and pirates trying to escape the MT Notre occurred only a few weeks prior to this one. In a 30-minute shootout during the conflict, twelve pirates were slain and their ship sank. Pirates boarded the SP Brussels off the coast of Nigeria in April 2013 and killed two crew members. Five crew members were kidnapped by pirates on the same ship just 18 months earlier in the Niger Delta (Hassan & Hassan, 2016; Essien & Adongoi, 2015).

More than 95 percent of the crew members have been kidnapped in the Gulf of Guinea, making it the world's deadliest piracy. In 2020, there were 35 reports of piracy off the coast of Nigeria. Although the perpetrators of these crimes remain a mystery, several private pirate businesses have been connected to armed groups responsible for decades of pipeline vandalism and kidnappings in Nigeria's Niger Delta (Broohm, 2021; Ponniah, 2020). Oceans and other waterways account for almost 80% of global commerce. This yearly transaction involves over 93,000 cargo ships, 1.25 million seafarers, and an estimated six billion tons of products (Bowden, 2010).

In recent years, the volume of goods transported by ships has expanded substantially. As a result, advanced pirates are now destabilizing and obstructing the navigation of ships transporting people and cargo. Since Europeans invaded Africa, piracy at sea has been a serious concern in the West African region, and Nigeria is a classic illustration of how European incursions into the continent have given rise to criminal activities (Nwalozie, 2020). The Gulf of Guinea, which stretches from Senegal to Angola, is encircled by about 6,000 kilometers of coastline. The continent's 20 coastal, island, and landlocked states are divided into two regions: West Africa and Central Africa (Barla & Agarwala, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Piracy is a major issue in the Bayelsa waters of Nigeria. Because of the severity of the violence, local citizens' safety has been put in jeopardy (Broohm, 2021). Despite the public outcry of locals, market women, and business boat operators who conduct business on the high seas and in territorial waters,

criminals continue to operate unchecked.(Essien & Adongoi, 2015). Sea pirates have been warned several times to stay away from waterways by law enforcement agencies, notably the Nigerian Navy, but it seems that each time such warnings are provided, the sea pirates' attempts to plunder the high seas intensify (Nwalozie, 2020).

Personal Insecurity is an issue in Bayelsa's waterways due to piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. Investing in the state becomes more difficult as a result of the policy, which is considered anti-development (Mcloughlin & Bouchat, 2013). Piracy continues to be a concern in the Gulf of Guinea despite a number of regulations aimed at limiting the activity. A study of how piracy affects people's safety in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) is necessary since West African governments, in particular Nigerian leaders, have fallen short of meeting the challenges of this challenging scenario (Hassan & Hassan, 2016).

Objectives of the Study

This study has three central objectives which are to:

1. establish the relationship between piracy and personal security on the waterways of Bayelsa state.
2. investigate the immediate and remote causes of piracy in Bayelsa waterways.
3. identify strategies that can be used to drastically reduce the incidents of piracy in Bayelsa waterways.

Scope of the Study

The study investigated piracy in the Gulf of Guinea from a personal security perspective from 2017-2021. The study focuses particularly on Bayelsa waterways respectively.

The justification for focusing on these areas is because the incidents of pirates' attacks and riverine criminalities have increased tremendously in these areas within the last two years (2020-2022).

Methodology

This work focus on the effects of Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea vis-a-vis Bayelsa waterways. It made ample use of secondary and qualitative method of data collection. Hence, both the historical and content analysis is utilized. Data for the study were obtained from hitherto existing works by authors, scholars and academics alike, relevant Journals, articles (both published and unpublished), books, and other relevant literatures, were its building blocks.

Literature Review

The Concept of Piracy: Piracy is not a new phenomenon. Because of its antiquity, there is limited agreement among academics on how piracy is characterised. International law, domestic law, and academics all contribute definitions that range significantly in scope and focus. Definitions are accepted or rejected depending on one's point of view and intent. To begin with, piracy was considered an offence against humanity, and pirates were considered "hostis humani generis"—enemies of humanity in general (Halberstram, 1988; Greene, 2008; TwymanGhoshal, 2014). There are numerous definitions of piracy, which Kelly (2013) describes as a "definitional adventure" in the evolution of pirate's concept (p 42). The International Maritime Bureau has received reports of 2,914 piracy events during the last decade (IMB). "hotspot" piracy areas include, the Horn of Africa, the Indonesian Archipelago, the Gulf of Guinea, as well the Malacca and Singapore Straits, which have been frequented by pirates.

In spite of this, piracy is not limited to these "hot regions" and occurs on a regular basis on nearly every continent. In the last five years, data from the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) (2018, p. 6)

shows that piracy has spread from East Asia to Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, South America and the Caribbean, the Middle East (Yemen), and the Pacific Ocean (the Gulf of Mexico and the South China Sea). The data also shows that piracy has spread from the South China Sea to the Malacca Straits, the Spratly Islands, and the Spratly Islands (22 countries, the Gulf of Guinea, Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea).

In summary, "...the piracy that is reported is the piracy no one can ignore" (Murphy, 2010, p. 69). Piracy, as defined in Article.101 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as:

(a) If a private ship or private aircraft crew or passengers engage in unlawful violence, confinement, or depredation for personal benefit, and the act is aimed at: against another ship or aircraft or the people or property on board such a ship and aircraft.

(i) on the high seas

(ii) anywhere that isn't part of any state's jurisdiction.

(b) Any act of deliberately controlling a ship or aircraft while knowing certain facts qualifies the latter as a pirate ship or aircraft

(c) Any deliberate act of instigation or facilitation of a violation of subparagraph (a) or (b) (Wallner, & Kokoszkiewicz, 2019).

However, this definition has been widely criticised for being outdated and for its limited scope (Mair, 2011; Bento, 2011; Twyman-Ghoshal, 2014). This limited scope results in the following difficulties: "...the 'private ends' restriction, the two-ship provision, the issue of reverse hot pursuit, and the locational specificity of 'on the high seas'" (Nyman, 2011, p. 865). The 'private ends' restriction is not clearly codified and excludes incidents involving terrorism at sea, state-sponsored acts, and those involving a mix of private and public actors (Bento, 2011; Nyman, 2011; Twyman-Ghoshal, 2014). The two-ship clause, which is essentially a ship-to-ship attack, excludes many acts of piracy while a vessel is at berth (Nyman, 2011). To be considered an act of piracy, an incident must occur on the high seas, outside of state jurisdiction. Thus, under international law, identical crimes, conducted in territorial and inland waters, cannot be categorised as piratical acts and are broadly defined as armed robbery against ships (Nyman, 2011 and Twyman-Ghoshal, 2014). (Nyman, 2011 and Twyman-Ghoshal, 2014). Further, the UNCLOS definition excludes attempted attacks (Bento, 2011).

They employ small motorboats to carry out their business. Pirates within the Gulf of Guinea are heavily armed outlaws that deploy brutal means to steal oil cargo. Piracy encompasses activities like robbery and seizure of things of a ship, blackmail, kidnapping individuals for ransom, hostage-taking, murder, cargo theft, , shipwrecking done purposely to a ship, and sabotage resulting in the ship sinking. Furthermore, ships can be captured for political reasons (Ali, 2015).

Brief History of Piracy in Selected Countries

Asia: In South Asia, there were raiding traditions and with the coming of religion such as Islamic religion, and colonialism, slaves became a valuable commodity for trading interactions with Arab, Europe and Chinese slavers and this led to a rapid increase of piracy and slave raids. The native persons of Bugis sailors of South Sulawesi, Iranun, and Balanguigui slavers of Sulu, the Iban headhunters of Borneo, and Malays of western Southeast Asia intensively engaged in sea raiding. The Chinese, European, Japanese traders still practiced piracy on a small scale. The depth of piracy was often

dependent on the flow of trade and this was referred to as Pirate Season. It is being estimated that from 1770 to 1870, around 200,000 to 300,000 people were being enslaved by Iranun and Balanguigui slavers. These slaves were taken for piracy on passing ships settlements even venturing as far as the Malacca Strait, Java amongst others. Occasionally, there were Chinese and European Captives who were usually ransomed for (Forster, 2011).

In east Asia, during the ninth century, the population centered on merchant activities in the coastal provinces of Jiangsu and Shandong. Jang Bogo a wealthy benefactor who was unhappy about the treatment of his countrymen who had fallen victim to the coastal pirates, he petitioned the Sila King Heungdeok upon his return to Silla to establish a permanent maritime garrison to protect the activities of the Silla Merchants in the Yellow sea. The king agreed and gave Jang Bogo an army of 10,000 men to establish and manage the defensive works. Jang became the arbiter of Yellow Sea commerce and navigation (Kye, 2008).

Persian Gulf

In the 18th century, the south of the Persian Gulf was known by the British as the 'Pirate Coast' which was controlled by the Qawasim (Al Qasimi) and other local maritime powers. Early British expeditions to protect the Imperial Indian Ocean trade from competitors, particularly the Al Qasimi from Ras Al Khaimah ad Lingeh which led to campaigns against those headquarters and those harbors along the Coast in 1809 and the relapse in raiding again in 1819. In 1820, the British and the rulers of several coastal Sheikdoms signed the first formal treaty of maritime peace, this was cemented by the treaty of Maritime Peace in Perpetuity in 1853, resulting in the British label for the area which was formerly termed 'Pirate coast' to the 'Trucial coast' (Zahlan, 2016).

North America

It became popular in the early seventeenth century, as the English privateers discharged after the end of the Anglo-Spanish war (1585-1604) and turned to piracy. The most successful and famous of these early pirates was Peter Easton. River piracy was in the 18th to 19th century in America and was primarily concentrated along the Mississippi River valleys and Ohio River. In 1803, the river pirates were driven out by the frontier army. River piracy continued on the lower Mississippi River from the early 1800s to the mid-1830s and the reducing as a result of direct military action and local law enforcement and regulator vigilante groups which helped sweep out the pirates along the rivers (Lackey, 2018).

Canary Islands

This was one of the places on Earth with the greatest pirate presence. Within the Canary Islands, the attacks and continuous looting of French, Berber, Dutch and English corsairs were often successful or unsuccessful. The presence of pirates from this Island made their incursion into the Caribbean. Pirates like Francis Drake, Jacques de Sores, Francois le Clerc, defeated in Gran Canaria, Peter van der Does, Muraat Reis and Horacio Nelson attacked the Island and were defeated in the battle of Santa Cruz de Tenerife (1797) (Maameri, 2008).

Europe

In the pre-classical era, the Greeks had termed piracy as a viable profession thereby making it widespread and was regarded as an entirely honest way of making a living. By the era of classical Greece, piracy was being frowned upon and it was a disgrace to have such a profession. Pirates raids on Olympus in Lycia in the 3rd century BC had resulted in poverty.

The Illyrians, a group of people who lived in the Western Balkan Peninsula, were among the most

famous ancient pirates. The Illyrians caused several conflicts with the Roman Empire by riding the Adriatic Sea constantly, till in 229BC the Romans decisively defeated them. Pirate states existed along the Anatolian coast during the first century BC posing a threat to the Roman Empire's eastern Mediterranean commerce. Julius Caesar was kidnapped by the Cilician pirates during a voyage across the Aegean Sea in 75BC. In the 67BC, the Senate finally gave general Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus authority to fight the pirates and after three months of naval warfare, it was put to an end (Schubert, & Lades, 2014).

Historical overview of Piracy in Nigeria

To put it another way, according to International Maritime Bureau (IMB) data, Nigeria has been the most dangerous country in the world since 2008, following Somalia but ahead of Indonesia and Malaysia. Academics and security experts have little doubt about this.

However, one can challenge the way in which numbers are generated (Pérouse de Montclos, 2012). Many delta coastal communities attacked passing boats on an ad hoc basis in the 1990s because of opportunities. Smugglers operating out of Oron, Cameroon, were much more organized and ran a wide range of trafficking (such as arms and refined oil) toward Cameroon. Armed fishermen would hang around the shore, scavenge for valuables like radios, cash, and telephones, and then distribute the loot among their family members in the nearby villages. However, no action was taken against the thieving parties or their crews, and no ransom was demanded. For the most part what happened in the Niger Delta was nothing more than small-time smuggling, much like the sea robbers who still operate around the Lagos anchorage today.

Since that time, piracy has evolved. Technically, the introduction of cell phones aided in the planning of terrorist attacks; Despite the fact that pirates lack many modern conveniences, such as GPS, night vision, and ladders for scaling oil rigs or supply boats, they have improved the technology of their weapons and vessels. Over the years, a wide range of tactics and strategies have been employed to achieve this goal, including public protests, international lobbying, sabotage efforts, and armed conflict as a result, piracy has moved from Lagos to the Niger Delta (Ukiwo, 2007). During the oil boom of the 1970s, the pattern was quite different. At a time when the IAPA called for a boycott of Nigeria, the Lagos anchorage had 51 attacks in 1980, compared to six in Port Harcourt and three in the rest of the Delta region. However, the Niger Delta is now the scene of the majority of terrorist attacks. Ateke Tom's Okrika gang, for example, has become politicized and more sophisticated thanks to its connections to the University of Port Harcourt's "cult societies."

This shows the militarization of the anti-oil protests in the NDPVF (Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force) in 2004 and the MEND (Movement for Emancipation of the Niger Delta) since 2006. There was a decrease in homicides compared to the Biafra War in 1967–70 or the Ogoni Crisis of 1995, but terrorist acts and "bunkering" increased in frequency. Oil platforms and large ships were among the targets of these offshore attacks, which spread as far south as the Bakassi Peninsula in Cameroon and north as Bata in Equatorial Guinea (Pérouse de Montclos, 2012).

Today, the Niger Delta's maritime piracy extends well beyond the realm of small-time transgressions. Kidnapping, the smuggling of weapons, and "bunkering," the illegal tapping, theft, and sale of large quantities of crude oil, are all included in this. Even if they occasionally hijack a fishing trawler to attack other vessels, as they did with the *Rose 4* in 2010, pirates rarely try to seize boats. Despite media attention, corporate hostage-taking is not a lucrative business. Because European firms are prohibited

from importing large amounts of hard currency, ransoms are typically paid in Naira. In other words, kidnapers don't need international connections to cash the ransom money.

They don't appear to operate like bunker-dwellers, drug dealers, or smugglers of weapons. A well-known arms dealer like Henry Okah, for example, began selling weapons to both the Itsekiri and the Ijaw during the 1997 communal crisis in Warri, Nigeria. Then he set up a base in South Africa, where he supplied the MEND and perhaps the Bakassi "freedom fighters" on the disputed border with Cameroon from a network of contacts in the British diaspora. Oil exports to countries like Ivory Coast and Senegal are financed by Lebanese or Eastern European "traders" who finance tankers.

This is not the same as the illegal tapping of pipelines in the Niger Delta for local refinement. Understating the amount of oil actually and legally lifted for export is common when bunkering for international sale takes place in conjunction with the forging of bills of lading on a much larger scale. To gain access to oil theft opportunities and negotiate an acceptable date for their operation, the Nigerian partners and bunkerers must "settle" (bribe) the local communities and pay a fee to the Navy (Von Kemedi, 2006).

Types of Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

There are three types of pirates on the shores of the Gulf of Guinea:

(i) The Deep Offshore Pirate Group: This class of pirates focuses primarily on attacking international shipping traffic and multinational crews. The primary purpose is to kidnap crew members in exchange for a ransom (K&R), and the equipment that they employ is constructed specifically to adapt to operating far offshore. For example, long-range speedboats are equipped with powerful outboard engines that are capable of reaching high speeds. On their speedboats, one may occasionally find colourful flags, such as white, black, or red ones.

These flags may symbolise membership in a particular pirate gang, ethnicity or cultism identification, or involvement in a variety of rituals. During an assault, Deep Offshore pirates often use two speedboats, although there are some organisations who just use one. When attacking a vessel in the Deep Offshore region with two speedboats, the pirates often approach the target ship from different sides. Two outboard motors, typically one with 75 horse power and the other with 200 horse power, are used to propel their boats. On rare occasions, two engines with a combined horsepower of 200 are employed, such as what was seen during the attack on the containership ROSA on April 20, 2021. If the waves are less than half a metre in height, a speedboat with two outboard motors each producing 200 horsepower can achieve speeds of more than 35 knots.

According to debriefings of hostages, the 75 HP engine is employed by the pirates to move slowly in order to preserve gasoline while they make their way to an onshore area of operation. Pirate gangs may transport up to 1,500 litres of fuel in cans ranging from 50 to 100 litres in capacity so that they can remain at sea for three to four days. They are capable of kidnapping more than ten captives in a single occurrence, as evidenced by the 15 crewmembers that were taken prisoner from the DAVIDE B on March 12, 2021. This is one of their primary aims, which happens to be the kidnapping of foreign seafarers. Deep offshore pirate bases can be found in the Niger Delta, primarily in the states of Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, and Cross River in Nigeria, as well as the Bakassi peninsula in Cameroon (Nwalozie, 2020).

(ii) The Coastal/ Low Reach Pirate Group: This organisation has operations both near and far from the coast. These groups conduct their operations primarily from the Andoni River, the Opobo River, and the Calabar River/Tom Shot, but they are also active from the New Calabar River, the Sambreiro River

on the west side of the Bonny River, and the Vampire, Brass, Middleton, and Dodo Rivers in Bayelsa. Tshey also attack passenger boats, fisherman operating along the coast, and occasionally local cargo/tankers/supply vessels operating along the coast without security support, kidnapping the crew and passengers of these vessels. This includes attacks, racketeering robberies, and barges and small tankers engaged in illegal business as well as local oil and gas supply vessels being targeted. In instances of piracy committed in coastal or low-reach waters, the chief suspects in these kidnappings are typically the ship's captain, chief mate, or chief engineer. These onshore hideouts are used to hold hostages and are maintained by these pirate groups. Approximately two weeks are spent in negotiations for the release of crew members kidnapped from local fishing vessels. These negotiations typically include the ship's captain and chief engineer. The ransom amount for the group of hostages is typically between three thousand and four thousand dollars' worth of Naira and ranges between one and one and a half million Naira. Hostages are typically citizens of Nigeria but may on occasion be citizens of other countries. The amounts of ransom demanded for the release of crewmembers kidnapped from freight ships engaged in cabotage are typically not very high. For instance, a case of kidnapping that occurred in December 2020 resulted in a ransom payment of \$18,000 being made in order to free five Ghanaian crew members. Ransom amounts do not appear to be changing significantly, both Coastal pirates and Low reach groups are likely involved in local illegal bunkering schemes and various other types of crime. They rarely venture far from their onshore hideouts or the communities in which they are embedded. (Kamal-Deen, 2015).

(iii.) The Riverine Criminals: This class is active in the creeks of the Niger Delta, namely in locations such as Oyorokoto River, Ngo (Rivers State), Queen's Town (Op obo LGA), the Bille area, Krakrama (Bayelsa State), Olon-Tombiama, and Bakana (Rivers State).

Empirical Review

Pirates Group Structures

1. High-Level Facilitators

i. The Investors and Sponsors: They partially or fully generate the funds which are being used to finance the operation. The sponsor may decide the target and can offer, directly or indirectly, critical intelligence regarding a vessel's name, position, and makeup of the crew. the range of 'acceptable' return on investment for a case or a set of cases." during hostage talks, delayed agreement on ransom sums can imply that pirate leaders report back to high-level sponsors on whether to accept or reject an offer. Sponsors are considered to have a key role in the pirate operation, "responsible for maintaining the model and re-investing money into equipment and supporting infrastructure." The investments are used to buy fuel, maintain engines, and the tools. Consequently, sponsors are said to earn the biggest percentage of ransom payments vis-à-vis other group members (Ibaba, 2020). (Ibaba, 2020).

(a) High-Level Ex-Militant: They are likely to have their hands-on piracy operations in numerous ways, from providing financial assistance or protection to pirate groups to greenlighting specific operations. They tend to have a lot of influence in an area based on their lead during militancy and financial strength. Their reason for partaking in the operation differs: to collect a fee for every illegal activity which is carried out in his area of control, for extra source of income as the pirates pay tribute to these ex-militants which in certain cases is the interest of their initial investment in the operation (Hastings, & Phillips, 2015). (Hastings, & Phillips, 2015).

(b) Protectors: High-Level Illegal Actors Offshore pirates are said to benefit from the protection of

former terrorist leaders. They “are ‘covered’ by ex-militants’ leaders who allow the pirates to act without limitation. This function may not primarily involve ex-militants: “high-level unlawful players (politician, militants) are not directly involved in the maritime pirate activities but can cover/support the groups engaging, as they are part of the armed groups allowing them to remain on their positions.” Protection arrangements between high-level ex-militants and pirate group members do not appear to be one-way; rather, group members appear to be sometimes recruited to help the illicit bunkering operation onshore. Moreover, local officials are alleged to occasionally engage armed organisations, most likely involving pirate group members, to provide armed protection, apply pressure to political opponents or voters, for example during “actions against voting stations.” (Wilson, 2014).

ii. Leaders and Negotiators

(a) Onshore Group Leaders: Pirate organisations normally consist of a group of 30 to 50 individuals with one designated leader and the leader may have one or two deputies. The leaders direct initial strikes against warships, but eventually transfer onshore activities to deputies, often offering instructions for negotiations. The Group executives usually have dual strategic and operational tasks, including obligations to oversee operations and equipment sourcing. However, they are not personally involved in logistics on land or in attacks at sea. The group leader is typically responsible for leading negotiations, however in most situations does not serve directly as the negotiator. The pirate group commander also distributes money from a ransom payment among lower-ranking members (Nwalozie, 2020).

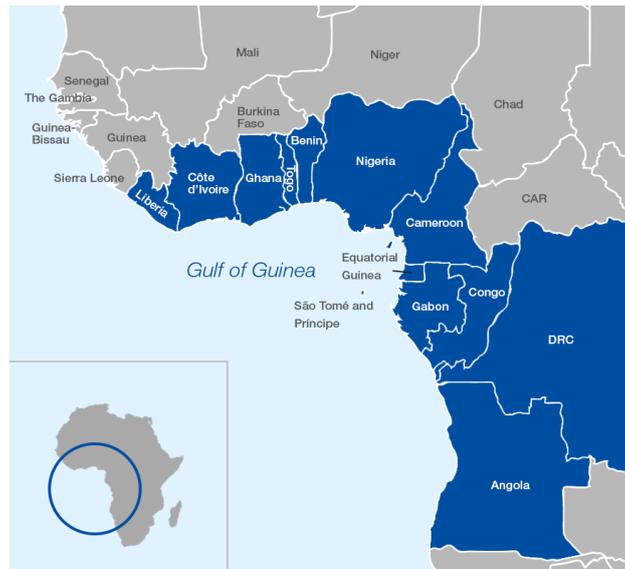
(b) Negotiators: Pirates organisation makes use of a negotiator, who is in charge of the release of hostages, they have a wealth of experience and understanding about the maritime business.

Negotiators presumably operate on commission and do not appear to have direct working contacts with lower-ranking group members. Despite the idea that organised crime groups engaging in piracy are tightly hierarchical, there is a certain level of flexibility with the establishment of functions inside the group (Nwalozie, 2020).

(c) The Special Function Pirate Group Members: The attacking team (i.e. the seven to ten, generally armed, pirates aboard speedboats that carry out the attack at sea) is a specialised team within the group organisation. The weapon often employed is the AK47. Members with specific skillset may be considered as special function members like the vessels pilot or engineer, specific function role exists in every pirate group like the informants and spies and also a medical team who is in charge of treating wounds and when abducted seafarers are in a bad health condition as well (Nwalozie, 2020).

The Gulf of Guinea (GoG): This is the North-Eastern part of the tropical Atlantic Ocean from Cape Lopez in Gabon, North, and West to Cape Palmas in Liberia. Its basin countries include Nigeria, Togo, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe, Liberia, Cameroon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Benin. Its surface area is 2,350,000km²(910,000 sq. mi) among the many rivers that drain into the Gulf of Guinea are the Volta and the Niger. It is an important shipping zone transporting oil and gas to several places around the world. Islands include Bobowasi, Annobon, Corisco, Elobey Chico Bioko, Sao Tome, Principe, and Ilheu Caroco. The coastline on the Gulf includes the Bight of Benin and the Bight of Bonny. The main river shedding its waters in the Gulf is the river Niger and its ocean source is the Atlantic Ocean (Ezeozue, 2021)

A Map Showing the Gulf of Guinea



(Okafor-Yarwood, Walker and Reva, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Relative Deprivation and Frustration-Anger-Aggression theory as its theoretical framework in order to empirically analyze and assess piracy and human insecurity in the people of Bayelsa state.

Relative Deprivation Theory

The relative deprivation theory is relevant to the field of Social sciences. The theory is commonly credited to American Sociologist Robert K. Merton, whose study of American soldiers during World War 2 indicated that military Soldiers were significantly less satisfied with their possibilities for advancement than others. Walter Runciman, a British lawmaker, and sociologist proposed the first explicit definition of relative derivation, including four requirements:

- A person does not have something
- A person is aware other persons own something
- The person is desperate to get their hands on the item
- The individual believes they have a good chance of obtaining the item.

It is a term that is used to express the sensations that come along with being economically, politically, or socially deprived. It has been considered as the possible cause of social movements and deviance leading, in extreme situations, to political violence such as rioting, terrorism, civil wars, and other types of social deviance such as the crime. In addition, it has been seen as the potential cause of social movements and deviance. When an individual's resources do not meet the aims they have set for themselves, they will engage in deviant activities (Smith, Pettigrew, Pippin, & Bialosiewicz, 2012).

People who believe they are deprived of something essential in their society, such as money, rights, political voice, or status), will organise or join social movements dedicated to obtaining those things. An example of this is the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s in the United States, which was rooted in the struggle of black Americans for social and legal equality with white Americans. Relative deprivation theory was developed by social scientists. An alternative viewpoint on the concept of

relative deprivation was provided by Tedd Robert Gurr, an American novelist and professor of political science. In his book *Why Men Rebel*, which was published in 1970, Gurr investigates the relationship between relative poverty and political violence. Gurr studies the possibility that the frustration-aggression mechanism, which is triggered when an individual experiences feelings of relative deficiency, is the basic basis of human beings' capacity for violent behaviour. Gurr argues that the longer people or groups are forced to relative deprivation, the greater the likelihood that their dissatisfaction may evolve into wrath and finally lead to acts of violence. This is despite the fact that such irritation does not always lead to violent behaviour (Gurr, 2015). Runciman continues by drawing a line of distinction between egoistic and fraternalistic forms of relative deprivation. According to Runciman, the thoughts that a person has of being treated unfairly in compared to others in their group are what drives egoistic deprivation in that individual. Absolute deprivation, on the other hand, describes a circumstance in which a household's income is lower than the amount that is necessary to fulfil essential necessities like securing food and a roof over their heads (Edokpolor, & Egbri, 2017). On the other hand, the term "relative deprivation" is used to describe a level of poverty that occurs when a household's income falls below a specific fraction of the median income of the country (Runciman, 2010). According to the notion of deprivation, individuals who are deprived of things that are perceived as valuable in society, such as money, justice, position, or privilege, are more likely to participate in social movements. When considering the reasons why people participate in social movements, this is the place to begin. However, the relative deprivation theory is even more important to take into consideration. This theory asserts that people participate in social movements based on their evaluation of what they believe they should have in comparison to what others have. On the other hand, relative deprivation refers to what people believe they should have in comparison to what others have or even in comparison to their own history or imagined future. Absolute deprivation describes people's actual poor circumstances, while relative deprivation describes people's perceptions of what they should have. Improved circumstances can pave the way for revolutions because they fuel humans' insatiable desire for even better living conditions.

Application of the theory

Bayelsa state was where oil was first discovered in a small town Oloibiri (1956). The inhabitants of Oloibiri community are mainly fishermen and farmers. Relative deprivation theory is applicable to this study as it provides a basis for examining how the people of Bayelsa state had been affected. The people of Bayelsa state had been deprived in countless ways. It is a fact oil is being drained from its water bodies to the extent that the fish in the rivers are being affected and their farms are being harmed due to the effect of the oil spillage in such water bodies due to the pollution which is taking place there. It has been clearly stated that unemployment and poverty are the major reasons for piracy in the coastal communities. It would appear striking that discovering oil would mean instant fortune, rather it frequently results in conflict, corruption and poverty. Government officials may mismanage or embezzle revenue from the extraction of raw materials or foreign corporations may siphon it off. The local population may be left with more than a degraded environment to show for their resources.

Conclusion

The history of piracy in the GoG, and particularly Nigeria, is extensive. Even though it predates the trans-Atlantic slave trade, it can be traced back to that period. In some regions of the world, there appears to have been an impressive decline in piracy over the past few years. However, it appears to have increased in the Gulf of Guinea, specifically in Nigeria, which has become a source of concern for

the marine environment and global community. As stated previously, the magnitude of the problem appears to have been grossly neglected; consequently, few Nigerians appear to be aware of it. In order to solve the problem of piracy in Nigeria, it is essential to combat the scourges of corruption, poverty, youth bulge and youth unemployment. Piracy has a lengthy history in the GoG, particularly in Nigeria. Generally, a visionary and competent government is often considered as a cure for all societal ills. As a result, given the occurrences of piracy, which generally bedevils the GoG and particularly Bayelsa waterways, and the immeasurable damages done in terms of personal security as explored in this study, the preceding policy recommendations suffice in the search for a long-term solution on how piracy incidents can be circumvented.

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