MARITIME PIRACY IN COASTAL COMMUNITIES OF THE NIGER DELTA: IMPLICATIONS FOR SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Ibaba Samuel Ibaba
Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State.

Abstract
This paper set out to interrogate the impact of maritime piracy on the security and development of Nigeria. Using desk study, it demonstrated that piracy, defined as violent attacks on ships or sea vessels for commercial or related gains, within or outside the territorial waters of a country constitutes a risk to national security and also impedes development in Nigeria. It recommended as the way forward, the development of a strategic global framework with reflections on country and regional contexts to bring it under control.

Introduction
This objective of this paper is to interrogate the implications of maritime piracy on security and development in Nigeria. Described as “old wine in new bottles” by P’erouse de Montclos (2012), the literature has noted that piracy is not a recent phenomenon in Nigeria. Accordingly, Brume-Eruagbere, (2013: 7) has pointed out that:

Piracy in Nigeria started from small scale petty robbery of personal effects of crew and ship equipment onshore, but quickly became more organized and pirates began to operate in larger numbers and with faster crafts. Due to the oil production and trade in the Niger Delta region, oil theft, attacks on offshore installations as well as attacks on vessels carrying petroleum products became bigger targets.

However, the escalation of maritime piracy in terms of number and sophistication has attracted concern from stakeholders, including scholars; resulting in a debate centered on its impacts on security and development, causes, responses by states and the international community, and the poor outcomes of intervention (Neethling, 2010; Pichon and Pietsch, 2019; Osinowo, 2015; Lopez-Lucia, 2015; Kamal- Deen, 2015; Ukeje and Ela, 2013; Brume-Eruagbere, 2013). Fattah (2019: 1) captures the areas or regions of concern thus:

---

1 Ibaba is Professor of Political Science at the Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State. His research focuses on peace, security and development in the Niger Delta, African politics and development, and national security and integration in Nigeria. He can be contacted via e-mail: eminoaibaba@yahoo.com/ibabaibaba@ndu.edu.ng
Piracy is a global phenomenon negatively affecting the security of the entire maritime traffic in the world. There are three geographical areas which have become zones of concern. Piracy in South East Asia, specially the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea has been seen as problematic from the 1990s onwards. The coast of Somalia and the Horn of Africa achieves increasing attention since 2007 on the other side Piracy in West Africa, notably the Gulf of Guinea, has become the third major recognized area under threat since 2011. In all cases major international shipping routes are concerned and fairly extensive regional and international actions have addressed piracy.

But other scholars have in addition to the concern on trend and dynamics and focus on areas where the menace is more problematic, also noted its impact on countries (Neethling, 2010; Hassan Okoronkwo, Okpara and Onyihyechi ; 2014) and Hasan (2017). According to (Okonkwo, Okpara and Onyihyechi (2014:7):

Piracy is one of the most worrying issues to the global community today. The cost of piracy is human, economic, environmental and political. The manifestation of piracy constitutes a significant and direct threat to peace, security and the economic development of the affected countries and regions concerned. The negative impact of piracy has begun to affect the global interests. It has become a ...... source of concern for the international community (Hassan 2017: 36-37) .... For a long time, pirates operating in different parts of the globe have held the world shipping community hostage, threatened the economies of many countries, and relegate efforts to protect lives and citizens by many countries fruitless.

A number of issues are discernible from the three references above. First is that piracy is a dynamic phenomenon with history of development from lower levels of operation to sophistication and changing trends in location. Second is that maritime piracy occur more in specific geographical areas, and third, its impacts on affected countries are multidimensional, ranging from security, economy, politics, and related outcomes. This paper takes interests in these three points but focuses on maritime piracy in the coastal communities of the Niger Delta. The goal is to evaluate how the occurrence of maritime piracy in that region of Nigeria impacts on the security and development of the country. The focus on the Niger Delta is informed by the fact that maritime piracy in Nigeria occurs mostly in the area. of Nigeria.

The paper is developed into six sections, including this introduction. Section two which follows the introduction, Defining Piracy, reviews the various contentions on the meaning of piracy and provides contextual definition for the discourse in the paper. The third section, Identifying the Coastal Communities, situates the coastal communities in Nigeria in clear perspective. The fourth section, Piracy in Coastal Communities, provides notes in global piratical acts, trends in maritime piracy in Nigeria and the state-maritime piracy nexus. The section which follows interrogates the impact of maritime piracy on security and development; while the final section concludes.

Defining Piracy
The word piracy is used in other contexts such as the stealing of intellectual property as it relates to copyright issues. Here, the term is used as maritime crime and would therefore be described as maritime piracy; although the words maritime piracy and piracy would be used interchangeably. Whereas piracy is a major concern to the security of the world in contemporary times, the menace has been with the world several years back. According to Johnson (2018:30):

The history of piracy can be traced back to 2000 years ago in Europe, in ancient Greece, when sea robbers threatened the trading routes of Greece. During the period between 1620 and 1720, piracy flourished and this period was known as the golden
In spite of the long existence of the phenomenon, its meaning and character is still a subject of debate. The conventional meaning of maritime piracy considers it as the forceful occupation or seizure of a sea vessel on the high seas (include contiguous zones and exclusive economic zones) outside the jurisdiction of a state with the criminal intent to kill, steal or rob, kidnap or take hostages for ransom or political reasons (Mbekeani and Ncube, 2011; Johnson, 2018; Mandada and Ping, 2016; Ezeozue, 2019).

This meaning of piracy defined by location in high seas or with respect to exclusive economic zones is adequately captured by Article 101 of the 1982 United Nations (UN) Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which defines maritime piracy as any of the following acts:

a. any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed:
   i. on the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft;
   ii. against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State;

b. any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft;

c. any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b).

Debates on this definition which is also the view of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has highlighted the following issues of concern. First is that maritime piracy can only take place in the high seas and outside the jurisdiction of any state. Implying that attacks on ships within the territorial waters or internal waters of a state or country are not considered to be acts of piracy; rather such acts of violence are considered to be armed robbery. Also, an act of piracy is considered to be associated with private gain and should involve the use of two vessels (Brume-Eruagbere, 2013; Pérouse de Montclos (2012).

However, the issue of location for an act to be considered maritime piracy has elicited debates and disputes. For example, Kamal-Deen (2015:2) insists that without prejudice to where piracy and armed robbery occurs, they pose similar threats to the safety and security of global shipping, and the drivers and motivations behind the two crimes are largely the same despite the legal distinction. Thus contending that no matter where an act of violence against a ship or vessel occurs, within or outside a country’s territorial waters or the high seas, such act of violence amounts to piracy. The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) defines piracy in a manner that is in sync with the perspective that ignores the location of acts of violence against a vessel in the description of piracy. In the view of IMB:

*The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) defines piracy and armed robbery against ship as—an act of boarding or attempting to board any ship with the apparent intent to commit theft or any other crime and with the apparent intentor capability to use force in the furtherance of that act.* (Ezeozu, 2019:57).

The categorical point discernible from the IMB’s definition is that “intent, specification, extent and the use of force are principal elements to be considered in what constitutes an act of piracy and not necessarily where or location of occurrence” (Fattah, 2017:3).

This paper adopts the IMB perspective of piracy, and so because it captures the reality of the coastal communities that are the focus of the paper. The justification is that the use of the IMO or UNO definition would exclude acts of violence against ships or vessels in coastal communities that are in sync with the core issues relating to piracy, such as considering it as an act of violence against a ship or sea vessel for criminal, private or economic/commercial gain. This extends to include acts of terrorism that are funded with proceeds realized from piratical acts or piratical acts that are carried out in pursuit of political goals. Although some scholars differentiate piracy from terrorism on account of

It is imperative to emphasize that piracy can be used as a means to terrorism. For example, pirates can use funds acquired from their activities to fund terrorism, just as terrorists can turn to piracy as a means to raise funds for their activities. The huge revenues from piracy makes this point important. The literature has highlighted piracy as a “millionaire pot” this way:

In dramatic fashion, pirates use fast-moving skiffs to pull alongside their prey and scamper on board with ladders or grappling hooks. Once on board, they hold crews at gunpoint until a ransom is paid, with amounts varying normally between US$1 million and US$2 million, but even as high as US$4 million. “All you need is three guys and a little boat, and the next day you’re millionaires”. Towards the end of 2008, the dramatic standoff between US naval warships and Somali pirates demanding a US$20 million ransom for a hijacked Ukrainian ship loaded with Russian tanks specifically highlighted and focused the world’s spotlight on piracy in the Gulf of Aden..... In this particular case, a ransom of $25 million for the release of the vessel was claimed, although an amount of $3 million was eventually paid to the pirates (Neethling, 2010:90)

It is discernible here therefore that locating piracy in this context would be very useful for this discussion which seeks to examine the security and development implications of piracy.

Identifying the Coastal Communities
Nigeria has a coastline of approximately 853km. “This coastline lies between latitude 4 10' to 6 20'N and longitude 00 2 2 45' to 8 35' E. The terrestrial portion of this zone is about 28,000 km in area, while the two surface area of the continental shelf is 46,300km”. The Nigerian coastal area is divided into four ecological zones (1) “The Barrier Lagoon Coast which lies between Badagry and Ajumo east of Lekki town. (2) The Mahin mud coast lying between Ajumo and Benin river estuary in the north western flank of the Niger Delta. (3) The Niger Delta lying between Benin River in the West and Imo River in the east and (4) The strand coastline lying between Imo River and the Nigerian/Cameroon border in the east with the Cross River inclusive” (Adetunji and Oyeleye, 2018).

Nigeria is one of the Gulf of Guinea countries, the maritime area of West Africa with countries that share boundary with the Atlantic Ocean. Although sometimes disputed, other countries in the area include Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe (Ndukong, 2013). Some see the Gulf of Guinea in terms of an oil producing rather than a geographical area. Consequently, they only list oil producing countries’ as member states of the region. Other definitions which are seen as political includes countries such as Congo DRC, Chad, Niger Cote D’Ivoire, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Mali, Guinea- Conakry, Burkina Faso, and Liberia. This has resulted in the presentation of different maps to capture the Gulf of Guinea countries, which lies in the coast of West Africa. Two of such maps are presented in figure 1.
The Niger Delta accounts for about 450 km of Nigeria’s 853km coastal zone with over 75 per cent of the population living along the coastline (Onuoha, 2008: 123). Nine out of the thirty-six states in Nigeria are coastal states. These are: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo and Rivers States (Adetunji and Oyeleye, 2018:10)
Table 1: Coastal States in Nigeria showing their Land Mass, Population and Number of LGAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Land Area (km²)</th>
<th>Number of LGAs</th>
<th>Population (Projected figures for 2018)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akwa Ibom</td>
<td>6,900</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5,737,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayelsa</td>
<td>9,059</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>2,386,468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross River</td>
<td>21,787</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4,047,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>17,108</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5,894,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>19,187</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4,430,739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>3,671</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12,963,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ondo</td>
<td>16,400</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5,408,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogun</td>
<td>15,820</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4,863,334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers</td>
<td>10,575</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7,588,893</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The component states of Nigeria’s coastal region show the dominance of the Niger Delta, with the six of the states (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers) in the region taking six out of the nine coastal states and representing 52.8 percent of the total coastline. This is significant for this discourse given the instability in the Niger Delta region. The militia activities in the Niger Delta makes it risky to the Gulf of Guinea the way Somali pirates are to the Gulf of Aden. The Niger Delta has been characterized by an over two-decade long violence championed by protesting communities.

2 These six states are widely accepted as states in the Niger Delta based on geographic considerations. However, Abia, Imo and Ondo States are included as administration or political definition by the NDDC Act of 2000.
and militia groups demanding environmental protection and inclusion into the oil industry. The violence which slipped into insurgency in 2005 resulted in the proliferation of armed groups, small arms and sophisticated weapons as shown by the arms and ammunitions surrendered as part of the Nigerian Government Amnesty deal in 2009. In pursuance of the disarmament component of the Amnesty Programme, ex-militants surrendered arms and ammunitions ranging from rocket launchers, AK 47 Rifles, pump action guns, machine guns and gun boats. Given that the objective conditions that resulted in the violence are yet to be resolved, and also the reality of the conflict environment which is characterized by continuing proliferation of armed gangs and cult groups, arms and ammunitions, retention of the militia structure and high level of oil theft, the Niger Delta has remained the hotbed of piracy in the coastal communities.

Piracy in Coastal Communities
This section interrogates the occurrence of piracy in coastal communities as a build up to examining the implications on security and development. It dwells on global piracy, the trend in Nigeria, and the state-piracy nexus.

Notes on Global Piratical Acts
As noted earlier, maritime piracy is not a recent phenomenon, neither is it restricted to a particular part of the world. At the global scene, piratical acts have passed through several stages in the Caribbean Basin (1970s and ongoing), Gulf of Thailand (1980s), Straits of Malaca (1980s and ongoing), South China Seas (1990s), West African Coast (1990s and ongoing), and East Africa/Red Sea/Indian Ocean (2000 and ongoing). In all these phases the victims have been fishing vessels, transiting merchant ships, and oil tankers, with the objects of attack being money, valuables, equipment, cargo, oil and some times seizure of vessels to perpetrate other criminal activities of kidnap of crew for ransom. The perpetrators included drug smugglers, fishermen, local criminal gangs, militia gangs and rogue elements in the military (Williamson, 2014:342). Over the years, piratical acts have occurred in different parts of the world, with some regions being more vulnerable than others. Table 3 provides information on global piratical attacks for 2015-2019 to demonstrate the number of incidents and their spread. The distribution of the incidents of piratical attacks for 2015-2019 at the continental and sub-continental indicates that South East Asia had the highest number of attacks of 404. This was followed by Africa with 389 incidents. Figure 3 captures this graphically for easy comprehension.

Figure 3: Piratical Attacks at Continental and Sub-Continental Levels (2015-2019)
This shows that maritime piracy is an age long menace that is evident in different parts of the global with different actors, victims and goals. The high incidents in South-East Asia and Africa highlights the differences in location related to political, economic and environmental contexts. The discussion that follows captures the Nigerian reality or situation.

**Mapping Maritime Piracy in Nigeria**

Maritime piracy in Nigeria began as petty thief at the sea ports mainly in Lagos and later Port Harcourt. According to (P’Errouse De Montclos, 2012:532-533):

> Historically, pirates used to ambush passing vessels in places like the Cawthrone Channel near Bonny, in between the sea and the river proper....... In the 1990s, for instance, coastal communities of the delta regularly attacked passing boats on an ad hoc basis, following opportunities. These pirates were akin to sea robbers and were not very Corganized, unlike the smugglers who operated from Oron to run all sorts of trafficking (including arms and refined oil) toward Cameroon. Armed fishermen would stay close to the shore, steal any valuables available, and share the booty with their relatives in the villages nearby: radio equipment, cash, telephones, and so on. But the stolen vessels were not seized, and their crew were not kidnapped for a ransom. In other words, it was petty theft, a bit like the sea robbers who still operate today around the Lagos anchorage, without any relation to Niger Delta militants.

However, piracy later became an organized crime in the Niger Delta due to the conflict environment instigated by protesting communities and militia groups who were driven by agitations for inclusion in the country’s oil wealth, development attention and environmental protection. According to (Kamal-Deen, 2015) “full blown piracy is a post-amnesty phenomenon.” Available data on piratical attacks show that while this is not exactly correct, piratical attacks in the Niger Delta are linked to oil related violence and the activities of militia groups before and after the 2009 amnesty programme. Analysis of the timeline for piratical attacks in Nigeria show that from 1993-1998, which is a six-year period, Nigeria recorded 19 cases of piratical attacks. The number of attacks rose to 127 for the period 1999-2005 which represents seven years. From 2006-2009, which represents a four-year period, the country recorded 112 incidents. Significantly, the Niger Delta region which is the epicenter of piracy in Nigeria went into full blown insurgency in 2005 (Watts, 2007). The Nigerian Government
introduced the Amnesty Programme in 2009, and for the first six years which followed, 2010-2015, recorded 119 piratical attacks. The following four years, 2016-2019, recorded a total of 89 attacks. Figure 4 provides a graphical presentation to aid understanding.

**Figure 4: Trajectory of Piratical Attacks in Nigeria**

An examination of the phases or the trajectory of conflict in the Niger Delta highlights the nexus between piracy and conflicts in the Niger Delta. Table 3 presents information on the trend of conflict in the region to make this point.

**Table 3: The Trend of Conflict in the Niger Delta: 1967-2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of conflict</th>
<th>Characteristics of conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967-1970’s</td>
<td>Community litigations against oil MNCs and over compensatory payments due damages caused by oil exploration and production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 1980’s</td>
<td>Peaceful community protests against oil MNCs resulting to work stoppages and blockade of oil production facilities access roads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Early 1990’s</td>
<td>Violent community protests against oil MNCs which in addition to blockades, work stoppages and forceful occupation of oil production facilities, resulted in seizure oil MNC properties such as cars, tug-boats, etc. Violence was characterized by confrontation between security operatives and communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mid 1990’s-1994</td>
<td>Emergence of ethnic and pan-ethnic civil society groups, in response to state and oil MNCs repression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-2004</td>
<td>Emergence of armed militia groups who engaged the military in armed confrontation and engaged in oil theft as organized crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2009</td>
<td>Full blown insurgency with armed groups having established camps and engaging the military in attacks and counter attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2015</td>
<td>Lull in violence as evidenced by low confrontation with military and attacks on oil infrastructure by characterized by oil theft for commercial gain. But characterized by proliferation of armed cult groups and gangs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2019</td>
<td>Organized network for oil theft majorly by former militia group members who maintain their command structure in addition to proliferation of armed cult groups and gangs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by Author, 2020
The different phases of the Niger Delta conflict provided a fertile ground for arms proliferation and the use of violence for the resolution of disputes. The subsequent outcome was the incentivisation of violence which has aided maritime piracy.

The State and Maritime Piracy in Nigeria

Maritime piracy has attracted the attention of states, and consequently, several interventions have been made by different states and global bodies to checkmate its occurrence. In Nigeria, agencies such as the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) is estimated to have spent about $217.8 million on counter-piracy (HSNW, 2018, www.hellenicshippingnews.com) in a bid to contain the menace and reduce its impact on the economy and security of the country. Perhaps more significantly, the Nigerian Government was the first country in the West African sub region to enact an anti-piracy legislation. Known as the Suppression of Piracy and Other Maritime Offences Act 2019, it seeks to “prevent and supress piracy, armed robbery and any other unlawful act against a ship, aircraft and any other maritime craft, including fixed and floating platforms.” It also gives effect to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982 (UNCLOS) and the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, 1988 (SUA)” (Ogbonnaya, 2020; UNODC, /www.unodc.org/nigeria).

Despite these and other efforts, including stage government initiatives such as the establishment of the Water Ways Security Committees by the Bayelsa and Delta State Governments, and collaborations with the United States Military Africa Command (AFRICOM), the menace has continued unabated due to a number of factors, and understanding of these issues is important for this work. Matthias (2015) and Ezeozue (2019) have noted categorically that:

“All along the coast, but particularly in the Niger Delta, insecurity at sea is a consequence of poor governance on land and an extension of land-based activities, such as drug trafficking, kidnapping, and “bunkering” - the illegal siphoning of oil”

(Matthias 2015: 49)……………….. It is evident that increased pirate attacks and illegal activities on Nigerian waters can be traced to underdevelopment and poverty in the Niger Delta area, corruption, underfunded law enforcement, legal and jurisdictional weakness, lack of legitimate employment, and weak security apparatus (Ezeozue, 2019: 64)

It is discernible here that the development question in the Niger Delta, the resultant violent agitations and the consequences are considered key causal factors of maritime piracy in contemporary Nigeria. However, the literature identifies governance deficits and the resultant poor service delivery as one major cause. The point is that poor service delivery by government results in infrastructure decay, poor industrial growth, poor availability of social/basic amenities, among others, which complicates the problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality creates a fertile ground for crime. Although there is no absolute agreement on the cause and effect relationship, the consensus is that poor service delivery by government makes individuals vulnerable to crime.

Also, inequitable resource distribution by government which most often results in horizontal inequalities creates social grievances, resulting in dissention and rebellion against the state. Inequality is either vertical or horizontal. Inequality is vertical when individuals or households are the units of measure. It is however horizontal, when it measures inequality among different social or ethnic groups. This inequality can be measured with level of socio-economic growth; access to political power measured with number and strategic political appointments each group has and the control of state machinery; and culture, in terms of prominence, acceptance and patronage by the state.

Horizontal inequality is important in conflict analysis because it creates ethnic consciousness and thus serves as a rallying point of mobilization against the state or one ethnic group by another. The point to note here is that Horizontal inequality creates feelings and perceptions of domination of one group by another; thus creating feelings of hatred and antagonism that pitches one group against another. This results in violent conflicts, sometimes armed conflict or rebellion; thus creating an environment for
arms proliferation and heightened crime. The Niger Delta insurgency that has created an fertile environment for piracy, as evidenced by the fact that most piracy offences in Nigeria occur around the region (Nwalozie, 2020) is a consequence of horizontal inequality created by deficits in governance at all levels (federal, state and local government).

One other crucial point to note is the lack of capacity by some states to provide maritime security in addition to the lack of capacity by some states to govern the totality of their territory, thus leaving some areas ungoverned and occupied by criminal gangs, militias and insurgent groups who turn to piracy to for commercial gain or attention to their goals and demands on the respective state. Thus insurgents and other armed groups use piracy to secure funds for their activities, and engage in primitive accumulation of wealth or personal aggrandizement.

However, whereas piracy is a global phenomenon, its predominance in less developed countries draws attention to the State. Noting the State in this discourse is important for a number of reasons (1) The security and development implications of piracy impacts on the State (2) The State is the instrument that creates the conditions for piracy to thrive (3) The inability of a State to curb piracy is a reflection of its character (4) The severity of the implications of piracy on security or development is defined by the strength and character of the state.

Notes on the Impact of Maritime Piracy on Security and Development in Nigeria
This section of the paper evaluates the impact of Maritime piracy on the security and development of Nigeria. Whereas the region of occurrence of the crime is in the Niger Delta, the focus of its impact on the entire country is informed by the strategic position of the Niger Delta. The region is host to the oil and gas industry that is the pivot of the nation’s economy, and also, a large section of the maritime economy of the country.

The Impact of Maritime Piracy on Security in Nigeria
Although national security has been defined, described and explained in differing ways, the congruence of views consider it as the protection of state sovereignty and territorial integrity, infrastructure and natural assets and citizens welfare/safety (Ushe, 2015; Oghi & Unume, 2014; Nnaa, Gbenegbara, & Kia, 2017: Belo, 2015; Orji, 2012; Osakwe, 2013; Femi & Ngozi, 2014; Ozoemena, 2016; Orikpe, 2013; Robert-Okah, 2014).

Given their use of arms and linkage with insurgency and terrorism, pirates pose a danger to state sovereignty. Given their primary interest in making commercial gains, pirates turn to any opportunity provided by their activities. Consequently, they engage in arms trafficking and subsequently, collaborate with other criminal gangs to move arms and ammunitions from one point to another. In Nigeria, this has helped to strengthen and empower terrorists and insurgent groups whose activities have put state sovereignty and security at risk. The access to arms and weapons by militia groups in the Niger Delta and Boko Haram via Lake Chad Basin has aided their violent activities in the country. The proliferation of arms facilitated by pirates has also infiltrate the mainland and becomes sources of arms for criminal and cult groups that perpetrate violent crimes such as armed robbery and kidnapping.

As noted elsewhere in this paper, piracy and terrorism/insurgency are most often interwoven in the area of financing. Terrorists, insurgents and militia groups that have access to the seas most often result to piracy as a means of raising funds to fund their activities. This means that piracy serves as a “golden pot” for insurgents and terrorists who threaten national cohesion and security. Again, due to the cost of piracy to business, ship owners and other operators in the maritime sector most often hire private security guards, who because they bear arms and are not properly regulated, constitute a risk to national security. In 2019, the National Assembly alluded to this fact when it questioned the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) on the propriety of hiring foreign security firm (HSL International Limited) to secure the Nigerian waterways (Ships & Ports, 2019).
Furthermore, piracy puts human security at risk. For example, piracy accounted for 187 deaths between 2006-2014 in Nigeria (Ezeozue, 2019: 64). Related to deaths is the loss of livelihood that is caused by the insecurity which comes with attacks on the seas and waterways. This robs people of income and creates conditions which are associated with such occurrence such as crime; meaning that piratical attacks not only threaten human security but also drive people into crime, including piracy. It is important to reiterate the security-poverty nexus here in order to clearly capture how maritime piracy impacts on Nigeria’s national security. Although the debate in the literature is still contentious on the relationship between poverty and terrorism, there is consensus that poverty creates a fertile environment for terrorism; particularly when it combines with other factors such as lack of freedom and governance deficit (Piazza, 2011; Whitehead, 2007; Goodhand, 2001). Consequently, the disruptions in oil supplies and production, one of the effects of maritime piracy in Nigeria has contributed to the conflict environment that supports maritime piracy and insecurity in Nigeria. The section which follows discusses this further as it looks at the impact of maritime piracy on Nigerian development.

The Impact of Maritime Piracy on Development in Nigeria

Although development literature holds different perspectives on the meaning of development, it agrees that it is a multidimensional process that improves on the quality of standards of living; which seeks to achieve the following three objectives:

1. To increase the availability and widen the distribution of basic life-sustaining goods such as food, shelter, health, and protection
2. To raise levels of living, including, in addition to higher incomes, the provision of more jobs, better education and greater attention to cultural and human values, all of which will serve not only to enhance material wellbeing but also generate greater individual and national self-esteem
3. To expand the range of economic and social choices available to individuals and nations by freeing them from servitude and dependence, not only in relation to other people and nation-states, but also the forces of ignorance and human misery” Todaro and Smith, 2015: 24).

Significantly, piracy affects the achievement of these objectives in a number of ways. Firstly, because it “threatens the global flow of goods and services across the world’s shipping lines” (Johnson, 2018), thus contributing to costs of good and increased spending on insurance and security. For example, a report by Ocean Beyond Piracy (cited in HSNW, 2018)) showed that:

The economic cost of piracy to Nigeria has been on the increase since 2015, reaching over $818.1 million in 2017, while about $213.7 million was spent to contract maritime security personnel protecting vessels in the region…. The report further that Nigeria spends about $6.6 million yearly to protect its security anchorage area…. the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) is estimated to have spent about $217.8 million on counter-piracy…. On insurance cost, the report states: “In addition to war risk insurance premiums, a number of ship operators take out risk insurance as additional protection for their crew. OBP further estimated that in 2017, approximately 35 per cent of all ships transiting the Gulf of Guinea Listed Area carried this insurance at a cost totaling $20.7 million. It added that “the threat of piracy may lead to increased cargo insurance premiums…. “it was increased more than six times this 2018. At a time, it was increased by $500 or $600. Now, it’s over $5,200, from $2,200 for one container. This increase is affecting the prices of commodities because…cost of shipment determine market price,” (HSNW, 2018, www.hellenicshippingnews.com)

These adds to the cost of goods and services (Mbekani and Ncube, 2011) with implications for rising inflation, reduction in purchasing power of individuals and the consequent declining profits of industries. When profits decline, industries are unable to re-invest in production; meaning that production would not expand or shrink. Without expansion or shrink in production, the capacity utilization of industries falls, leading to redundant employees and subsequently layoffs that add to
unemployment and consequently poverty. Increasing poverty further reduces purchasing power and capacity utilization, thus setting off a cycle of productivity losses, unemployment and poverty.

Also, maritime piracy has impacted negatively on maritime economic opportunities such as fishing, tourism, port services, and communication sub-marine cables that helps to generates huge revenues for the funding of development infrastructure, social services and the creation of employment (Mbekeani and Ncube, 2011). This point is not difficult to understand when considered against the background that maritime trade plays a key role in Nigeria’s economic development and accounts for about 95% of the vehicular means of Nigeria’s International Trade (Faith, 2019).

Furthermore, it had been noted earlier that piracy results in oil theft of natural resources. In Nigeria, it has aided oil theft that has denied the economy huge sums of money that could have been invested in socio-economic and educational infrastructure, among others. Data or statistics on oil theft is difficult to get or incoherent as different sources provide different figures. One of such sources estimated in 2015 that about 15 percent of the country’s daily output of 2.4 million barrels are lost to oil theft (Campbell, 2015). This figure gives about 360 thousand barrels per day, and at the revised budget oil bench mark of 30 USD, this would give a total loss of 10.8 million USD per day. At 380.00 naira to a dollar, this would be a total figure 4.104 billion naira per day. If you multiple this by the 365 days in a year, it would give rise to a total of 1.5 trillion naira that is stolen for a year. In 2018, Ships and Ports reported that Nigeria lost 995 billion naira to oil theft in 2017 (www.shipsandports.com.ng). Another estimate by Mahundla (2019) put the monetary cost of oil theft at 1.35 billion USD in the first six months of 2019. Quoting Governor Godwin Obaseki who heads a Federal Government Committee on Pipeline Vandalism, it stated that ‘at least 22.6 million barrels of oil were “stolen” between January and July, and there is the risk of $2.7 billion worth of oil being stolen in two years’. The Nigeria Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (NEITI) reported that the country lost 41.9 billion USD to oil theft (2019: 1). The details of the economic costs of oil are graphically captured in figure 5, to demonstrate how maritime piracy hurt the nations’ economy.

Figure 5: Total Loses from Crude Oil Theft

Also Adamolekun (2020) estimates that Nigeria lost 4.6 trillion naira to oil theft from 2015-2018. Quoting the Nigeria Natural Resource Charter (NNRC), Adamolekun(2020) highlighted that:

_Nigeria officially became the oil theft capital of the world when the NNRC released data, suggesting that the highest ever reported crude oil theft in the world took place in Nigeria. The sobering statistics emphasized that Nigeria, as the most notorious_
country in the world for oil theft, lost roughly 400,000 barrels per day (bpd), dwarfing the figure (between 5,000 and 10,000 bpd) posted by Mexico, who came distant second by at least 3,900%. By implication, more than one fourth of Nigeria’s average daily production (1.57 million bpd as of December 2019) is currently lost to oil theft. According to the NNRC October 2019 study, revenue lost by the Federal Government between 2011 and 2014 ranged from $7 billion to $12 billion (between N2.545 trillion and N4.362 trillion) every year.

Clearly, data on oil theft in Nigeria is incoherent and inconsistent. In spite of this however, it adequately demonstrates that oil theft, which implicates piracy is a “cruel drain pipe” on Nigeria’s national resources. What are the implications?

Firstly, the huge revenues lost to oil theft could have been invested in national development; meaning that piracy constrains national development by diverting valuable resources from national coffers to private pockets. Secondly, it distorts national revenue projections and mobilization, and by implication contributes to poor budget performance and poor service delivery by government. This clearly defeats the achievement of the three key objectives of development outlined above. Secondly, it contributes to poor growth of the Gross Domestic Product and its negative impact on economic stimulus and growth. Also, the oil theft economy has created an enclave in the Nigerian economy, resulting in two markets in one economy. This has contributed to distortions in macro-economic planning, fiscal, and monetary policies of the government.

In addition to oil theft, piratical acts contributes to disruptions in oil and gas supplies chains, and subsequently impacts on production and income levels that also hurts the economy (Yakubu-Wokili et al., 2015) ; given its heavy reliance on oil and gas. It is clear therefore that piracy constrains economic development in Nigeria, and this inevitably has added to the challenges of national development.

One significant impact of piracy on coastal communities is the loss of fishing grounds and time by fishermen/women who out of fear abandon their activities or fish in areas with low catch. This results in loss of income or occupational displacement. Without viable alternatives, they are unable to meet their family and social obligations; leaving children to fend for themselves with the consequent loss of parental control over children. In the Niger Delta, the loss of parental control over children has created a conducive environment for the recruitments of youths into militia and cult groups. Also, the loss of income and means of livelihood contributes to rural-urban migration, adding to urban congestion and pressure on social activities and unemployment that adds to insecurity in the country.

Conclusion
This paper examined the issues of piracy in coastal communities in the Niger Delta and the implications on security and development in Nigeria. The discourse shows that the Niger Delta accounts for six of the nine coastal states in Nigeria, and occupies about 450 km or 52.8 percent of Nigeria’s coastal zone. Given the contestations on the meaning and character of piracy, the paper reviewed the literature and anchored the discourse on three pillars. First is that piracy is a dynamic phenomenon with history of development from lower levels of operation to sophistication and changing trends in location. Second is that maritime piracy occur more in specific geographical areas, and third, its impacts on affected countries are multidimensional; ranging from security, economy, politics, and related outcomes.

The analysis show that from 1993-1998, which is a six-year period, Nigeria recorded 19 cases of piratical attacks. The number of attacks rose to 127 for the period 1999-2005 which represents seven years. From 2006-2009, which represents a four-year period, the country recorded 112 incidents; most of these attacks occurred in the Niger Delta. The paper demonstrated that piracy constitute a risk to national security and impedes development in Nigeria. Pirates engage in arms trafficking and subsequently, collaborate with other criminal gangs to move arms and ammunitions from one point to another. This has helped to strengthen and empower terrorists and insurgent groups whose activities
have put state sovereignty and security at risk; including human security, as evidenced by 187 piracy accounted deaths between 2006-2014. Piracy has also undermined economic development in Nigeria through several impacts. For example, it has made the country vulnerable to economic sabotage and stealing of oil resources. This has aided oil theft that has resulted in the loss of huge national revenues running into billions of naira. The work shows that the security and development impact of piracy works in a dialectical manner, as they either influence or reinforces each other.

This necessitates actions by Nigeria to deal with the causal factors with a view to controlling the menace. Although the country has taken some initiatives to tackle the issues, the outcome is meagre. The paper recommends a strategic global framework that would be in sync with regional/country case contexts to contain it. To be sure, the menace cannot be controlled by a single country, and therefore, global collaboration is essential.

References
Femi, A. & Ngozi, N. (2014) From militancy to terrorism: Need for a fresh perspective to Nigeria’s national security. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 19 (10): 01-07


Acknowledgement
The initial draft of this paper was presented as a lecture delivered to participants of the Executive Intelligence Management Course (EIMC) 13.), National Institute for Security Studies (NISS), Abuja, 13th May, 2020