

Maritime Piracy and Socio-Economic Development in the Niger Delta Zone

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Abstract

The socio-economic development of third world countries of Africa, have been impeded by plethora of criminal activities and corrupt practices by both the governed and the governors as well as non-state actors operating within those climes. The criminal activities range from banditry, militancy, crude oil bunkering, through to illegal mining, kidnapping, maritime piracy and several others. This paper examined maritime piracy and socio-economic development in the Niger Delta zone of Nigeria. The Structural Conflict Theory was adopted as theoretical framework. The mixed research approach was employed as a strategy for collecting and analyzing data for the study. Sample size for the study was 400 respondents derived from a population size of 44,112,908 through the use of the Taro Yamene formula. The main instrument for data collection was a 4-point modified Likert scale questionnaire which was supplemented with information gleaned from secondary sources such as books and other textual materials. Collected data were analyzed via the use of simple statistics, while the single hypothesis which guided the study was tested using the chi-square. Amongst others; the revealed that, maritime piracy attacks have led to economic stagnation, environmental degradation, loss of lives and property, and this have impugned on the socio-economic development of the Niger-Delta zone. Accordingly, the paper recommends amongst others; that the government and it's concerned agencies should strengthen anti-maritime piracy laws and forge a collaborative coordinated strategies with its neighbouring countries on how to tackle maritime piracy with the view to reducing or possibly eliminating its incidences in the waterways. This will help to not only restore economic sanity but also strengthen the nation's internal security.

Keywords: *Maritime, piracy, waters, socio-economic, developments*

Introduction

The Niger Delta zone is a network of states with similar characteristics which is largely situated around the Nigeria's sea environment with enormous economic resources (Ossai, Nsiegebe and Nnadozie, 2023). The security of the waterways is paramount for the maritime sector and coastal communities in Niger Delta while the waterways are a platform for transportation of goods and services. They also provide resources that support the livelihood of the coastal communities (Okoro, Asiagwu and Ejiofor, 2021).

Unfortunately, maritime piracy in the Niger Delta has turned into a social problem which is affecting virtually every member of the Nigerian society in one way or the other. According to Uzorma and Nwanego (2014), maritime piracy, kidnapping, sea robbery, etc are most pronounced terrorizing crimes in Nigeria. Practically, maritime crimes occur in the form of hostage taking or kidnapping, sea robbery, pipelines vandalism, maritime cult clashes and attacks, group-to-group conflicts for the control of sea waters and associated environment, fish pond attacks, destruction of marketable goods and most times death. People suffer sea robbery when they are attacked for the purpose of carting away their economic goods and monetary values. In the same vein, sea piracy occurs to vandalize crude oil pipelines for the purpose of wasting petroleum crude, burning of artisanal refineries, get-rich-quick and ultimately to sabotage government effort to raise revenue.

Agbai, Aliегда and Baban'umma (2023) opined that the coastal areas in the Niger Delta states have large deposits of oil and gas which contributes largely to the economic development of not only the states but of Nigeria generally. With pervasive international maritime security threats in the zone, especially sea piracy and oil theft, Nigeria loses about \$600 million in export revenues, and this reverberates on the wellbeing of residents of coastal areas whose major means of livelihood depends on the maritime sector (Shafa, 2011).

Maritime piracy is not a new order in the history of Niger Delta. It is a recurring phenomenon that has occurred in many dimensions such as hostage taking, sea robbery, cult formations, artisanal refining, pipeline vandalism and other associated crimes in the water ways. Unfortunately, this menace is a major contributor to ransom payment, environmental degradation and water pollution leading to hunger, starvation, economic deprivation, poverty and in most cases death. Due to this, government has put in place several measures such as the Suppression of Piracy and other Maritime Offences (SPOMO) Act in 2019, Amnesty programmes, Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), economic empowerment, award of scholarships, the establishment of gun-wielding paramilitary agencies such as the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), local vigilantes, the Military Joint Task Force (JTF), Nigeria Maritime And Safety Agency (NIMASA), National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) etc., to check the excesses of these maritime miscreants, curtail threats and restore the glorious days of socio-economic heavens in the country and Niger Delta. Despite these efforts by the government, maritime security threats continue unabated to impinge on the socio-economic development of the people.

The study is instituted on the objective of assessing the relationship between maritime piracy and socio-economic development of the Nigeria-Delta zone of Nigeria. The study posed a single

question; what is the relationship between maritime piracy and socio-economic development in the Niger-Delta zone of Nigeria? Accordingly the study was guided by the single null hypothesis; there is no significant relationship between maritime piracy and socio-economic development in the Niger-Delta zone of Nigeria.

The study is segmented into four interrelated parts. The first part, is the introduction; which was just concluded. The second part, encapsulates the theoretical framework and brief explanation relevant concepts to the study. The third part, covers the method adopted to collect and analyze data as well as data presentation and discussion of findings, while the fourth part, of course the final part is the conclusion/recommendations.

Theoretical Framework

Structural Conflict Theory

The structural conflict theory was propounded by Karl Marx in the 18th century. This theory argued that there is constant competition inherent in every society over scarce and limited resources. He used the theory to explain the exploitation of the working class in capitalist societies. He enumerated capitalism, contradictions, bourgeoisie, factors or means of production, the two main contradictions, surplus value, class consciousness, hegemony, feudalism, the final epoch, proletariat, false consciousness and alienation as the crux of societal conflicts. The theory which is sometimes known as the conflict theory or social structure theory was also adopted by Max Weber (1864-1920), Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) and Ralf Dahrendorf (1929-2009) to analyze gender inequalities, the functioning of societal structures, relationship between individuals and societies, causes of conflict and the impact on societies amongst others.

The theorists of structural conflict built their theories on their observations of societies. They observed that conflict occurred among groups and that groups have certain features that define them as groups. Karl Marx sees rigidly structured economies that had to be overthrown forcefully for the sake of a fairer, yet differently structured society. Weber believes that structures had to evolve peacefully to retain their legitimacy, or conflict would be the resultant effect. Weber sees class in economic terms. He argues that classes develop in market economies in which individuals compete for economic gain. He defines a class as a group of individuals that share similar position in the market economy and by virtue of that fact receive similar economic rewards. Thus, a person's class situation is basically his market situation. Those who share similar class situation also share similar life chances. Their economic position will directly affect their chances of obtaining the things defined as desirable in their society. Dahrendorf sees structures to be the cause of conflict but discerned substructures within society that could exert influence or be influenced in ways that might vary from the reactions of society.

According to the theory, social class and inequality emerges because the social structure is based on conflict and contradictions. Theory argues that those contradictions in interests and conflict over scarce resources between groups is the foundation of social society. He notes that the higher class will try to maintain their privileges, power, status and social position and therefore try to

influence politics, education, and other institutions to protect and limit access to their forms of capital and resources. Whereas the lower class, in contradiction to the higher class has very different interests. They do not have specific forms of capital that they need to protect. All they are interested in is in gaining access to the resources and capital of the higher class. For example, education: the lower class will do everything to gain access to the higher-class resources based on democratizing and liberalizing education systems because these forms of capital are thought to be of value for future success. The various institutions of society such as the legal and political system are instruments of ruling class domination and serve to further its interests.

In the light of the Marx's view on conflict, it is a fact that two classes of people or groups exist within the political space called Nigeria, the wealthy political class and poor masses, economic bourgeois and proletariat, government controlled multinational companies and the Niger Delta zone. Incidents of maritime piracy in Nigeria are directly linked to oil production in the Niger Delta, supporting roles of government or the ruling class in the management and disbursement of economic wealth and the negligible roles of the multinational companies. For many years of oil exploration and exploitation, the people of the Niger Delta have been clamouring for recognition in employment, compensation for environmental devastation, loss of economic opportunities and years of neglect. These situations have prompted the uprising of different militant groups to take up arms against the government, oil companies and opposing factions against their interest. When this happens, some pirates claim to be fighting for a fairer distribution of Nigeria's vast oil wealth and as a protest to the damage caused by oil production in the Delta zone of Nigeria. Later, it became a movement to steal, kidnap, damage goods, vandalize oil pipelines, illegal artisanal refineries, environmental pollution, etc. The causes of maritime piracy in the Niger Delta can be out rightly traced to unbalance class structure initiated by the government and its agents against the Niger Delta people where the economic fortune of the country is situated.

Conceptual Explanation

Concept of Piracy

The term has been variously defined by scholars and authors in various fields of discipline. It is synonymous with robbery at sea, seizure, hijacking, violation, and unauthorized duplication of goods protected by intellectual property law. According to Abubakar (2023), piracy has been a persistent issue throughout history. He opines that it has been a momentous problem in recent years, especially along Nigeria's coastline, which is regarded as the hub of piracy in the West African region.

Denton & Harris (2019) defined the term "piracy" as acts of robbery, hijacking, kidnapping crewmembers for ransom, theft of cargo, sabotage and other violence against ships or maritime infrastructure that are committed at sea. This has been a significant issue throughout history, affecting international commerce, maritime security, and seafarer safety. While there is an obligation for states to cooperate in curbing piracy (UNCLOS art. 100), states are not mandated to domesticate UNCLOS. The implication is that maritime enforcement agencies may not have the proper statutory imperative to combat piracy. Piracy is among the greatest and most challenging threats to maritime security, with a destabilizing impact on freedom of navigation. It primarily

involves attacks on commercial vessels, including cargo ships, oil tankers, fishing vessels, cruise ships, yachts and offshore support vessels, affecting maritime and international peace and security worldwide. Pirates frequently target ships to hijack them, take valuable cargo, or demand ransom for the crew's release. (Hassan & Hasan, 2017).

According to Otto (2014), piracy began in Nigeria as a small-scale and minor crime that occurred ashore, where the crew was robbed of their belongings and equipment aboard ships, and it developed into more organized operations run by gangs that purchased inside information from officials, particularly port authority officials, allowing for organised attacks on specific targets. Small boats with low freeboards and few passengers were the main targets at this point, and stolen goods started to show up on neighbourhood streets and marketplaces. Attacks from larger groups of up to 50 people that would attack as many as twelve vessels at once began to occur gradually. Such attacks had become routine by the early 1980s, but by the 1990s, the emphasis had changed from petty theft and robbery to kidnapping for ransom, as well as occasionally annihilation, and local organizations asserted that the attacks had political motivations (Otto 2014). Piracy in Nigerian waterways is linked to oil exploration in Nigeria's southern part of the Niger Delta region. The local communities of the region have long complained of marginalization and denial of the region's abundant mineral resources by the federal government, despite being the primary source of the nation's oil wealth. This has led to a variety of issues, including widespread poverty, unemployment, lack of access to basic services and environmental degradation due to oil spills and other pollution. Because of marginalization, some communities in the region have turned to piracy as a means of survival and a form of protest perceived injustice (Nwalozie, 2020).

Anele (2020) alluded to the fact that piracy in Nigerian territorial waters can be attributed to the importance of the maritime industry to the country's economy, particularly in the energy industry. Due to the nation's inability to refine crude oil domestically, the crude is exported for refining overseas, while refined products are imported, resulting in dense tanker traffic in Nigeria's territorial waters. This makes the crude oil tankers the main target of the attacks. Therefore, Nigerian maritime zones have become very attractive to pirates because of the heavy tanker traffic in their territorial waters. As a result of this, pirates target these tankers as well as the support vessels that operate in Nigeria's offshore oil fields (Anele 2020). Overall, piracy threatens international shipping and other maritime activities such as global trade, fishing, offshore oil exploration, maritime transportation, maritime security of riparian states, and yachting. Primarily, it entails the theft of cargo including natural resources such as crude oil and the kidnapping of seafarers for ransom (Anele, 2020). According to Jacobsen (2020), piracy and armed robbery at sea have continued unabated despite numerous efforts to combat them. Kidnapping for ransom has become the principal aim of pirates in recent years in Nigeria, as opposed to pirate groups targeting vessels to steal cargo oil. It further identifies three distinct categories of piracy in the Nigerian context such as:

Deep Offshore Pirates: These pirates can operate within and far from West Africa's coast and they target international shipping traffic. Their capacity to take more hostages per assault is an example of the deep-sea pirate organisations' growing sophistication. These organisations have broadened their geographical reach towards the Gulf of Guinea, where incidents were formerly confined to

the Nigerian coastline. It is estimated that there are between four and six factions of deep-ocean pirates based in various hideouts in the Niger Delta's creeks. The group is responsible for the kidnapping of international seafarers of various nationalities from ships transiting deep in the Gulf of Guinea (Jacobsen 2020).

Concept of Socio-Economic Development

There are many definitions of the term 'socio-economic development' which can be viewed from the perspective of Gross National Income (GNI), physical structures and capital, as well as access to modern luxuries. The transformation of the society and the emergence of new social and economic organizations are critical indicators of development (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013). Socio-economic development is a product of development and can be defined as the process of social and economic transformation in a society. Socio-economic development embraces changes taking place in the social sphere mostly of an economic nature. Thus, socio-economic development is made up of processes caused by exogenous and endogenous factors which determine the course and direction of the development. Socio-economic development is measured with indicators, such as GDP, life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment. Changes in less-tangible factors are also considered, such as personal dignity, freedom of association, personal safety and freedom from fear of physical harm, and the extent of participation in civil society. Causes of socio-economic impacts are, for example, new technologies, changes in laws, changes in the physical environment and ecological changes (Idakwoji, 2013). The scholar noted that in recent time, however, it was defined in relation to the quality of life of the population. Thus, United Nations Development Programme, (UNDP) observed that development should focus on human development, which UNDP argued that this should be soon from the perspective of how the social and economic growth is managed and wealth in the society distributed for the benefit of most of the people in the society. Central to this process of socio-economic and human development is the enlargement of people's choices, having long life through how planned development can affect human life (in terms of the quality of food, health care etc), have access to education and varied resources for a decent standard of living. While progress in human development can be measured by the degree of political freedom, guaranteed human rights and personal self-respect. Based on the foregoing, UNDP has evolved Human Development Index (HDI) which includes component variables such as standard of living (purchasing power based on real Gross Domestic Product) knowledge (level of adult literacy and more years of schooling, and life expectancy). Stephen (2016) noted that in arriving at the definition of socio-economic development, it will be rational to consider not only factors affecting economic growth that is increase in GNP per capita, but other variables in the HDI must be taken into consideration. That is why Walter Rodney (1969) said that development is a many-sided process, Rodney noted that at the level of individual, it implies increase skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, 'self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being.

Method

The survey research design was adopted for the paper. This method gives room for the adoption of both primary and secondary data in selecting representative samples or respondents for the study.

The nine Niger-Delta States have an estimated or projected population of 44,112,908. This population was the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2022).

Table 1 State-by-State Projected Population in the Niger-Delta

| S/N | States | Population |
|-----|--------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Abia | 3,841,943 |
| 2 | Akwa Ibom | 5,451,581 |
| 3 | Bayelsa | 2,934,725 |
| 4 | Cross Rivers | 4,175,020 |
| 5 | Delta | 5,636,100 |
| 6 | Edo | 4,461,137 |
| 7 | Imo | 5,167,722 |
| 8 | Ondo | 4,969,707 |
| 9 | Rivers | 7,474,973 |
| | TOTAL | 44,112,908 |

Source: National Population Commission and National Bureau of Statistics, 2022

The Taro Yamane's formula is adopted to determine the sample size below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where: N is the population (44112908)
1 is constant
e is the sampling error
n is the sample size

Adopting substitution method

$$n = \frac{44112908}{1 + 44112908(0.05)^2} = \frac{44112908}{1 + 44112908 \times 0.0025} = \frac{44112908}{1 + 110282.27} = \frac{44112908}{110283.27} = 399.99$$

Sample size (n) = 400

The major instrument for data collection was the questionnaires, secondary data collected from books, periodicals, magazines, journals, internet materials etc. The questionnaire was structured in 4 point Likert scale type of: strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, and strongly disagreed.

The use of table was employed to analyse data generated from the social survey. The responses from the respondents were be arranged, grouped, tabulated and analysed using the simple percentage statistical method. Thus:

$$\frac{f}{N} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

Where:

f = frequency of response

N = number of respondents

By this method, it means that the degree of percentage score of one response to another or others was determined by the acceptability or rejection of a particular statement while hypotheses was tested using Chi-Square (X^2). The formula for Chi- Square

$$X^2 = \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where:

O = Observed frequencies

E = Theoretical or expected frequencies

The degree of freedom for Chi-Square is calculated using $df = (R-1) (C-1)$ at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of Data

Table 2: Socio-demographic Analysis of Response Rate

| Administration of Questionnaires | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Number of questionnaires administered | 400 | 100 |
| Number of questionnaires not returned | 5 | 1 |
| Number of questionnaires retrieved | 395 | 99 |
| Number of questionnaires wrongly filled | 5 | 1 |
| Number of questionnaires valid for the paper | 390 | 99 |

Source: Field Work, 2024.

The table above reveal that out of the 400 questionnaires administered to respondents, 5 respondents making 1% of the questionnaires were not returned, 395 respondents representing 99% were retrieved, 5 of the questionnaires making 1% were mishandled, roughed and wrongly filled while 390 were successfully completed and valid for proper analysis. The response rate is 99% which is a mark of excellence for the paper.

Table 3: Socio-demographic Analysis of Age Bracket

| Age bracket of Respondents | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 18 – 29 | 100 | 26 |
| 30 – 49 | 200 | 51 |
| 50 – 60 | 90 | 23 |
| Total | 390 | 100 |

Source: Field Work, 2024.

Table 3 above shows that 100 respondents representing 32% are within the age bracket of 18 - 29 years; 200 (51%) are within the age bracket of 30 - 49 years; 90 representing 23% fall in the age bracket of 50 – 60 years and above. This indicates that the paper has a productive number of respondents that fall within the age brackets of 18 - 29 and 30 - 49 years in terms of age. It also implies that those within the age bracket of 50 – 60 years are still very useful because they have witnessed the flow of maritime piracy and its effect on socio-economic development in the Niger Delta. Based on their age and experience in the region, their responses enable them to provide vital information making their views highly regarded in this paper.

Table 4: Socio-demographic Analysis of Gender

| Gender of Respondents | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Male | 190 | 49 |
| Female | 200 | 51 |
| Total | 390 | 100 |

Source: Field Work, 2024.

Table 4 above shows that 190 respondents representing 49% are male while 200 respondents representing 51% are female. This indicates that respondents are mainly female. Irrespective of

their genders, their responses do not in any way interfere with the outcomes of the paper as they are not bias in their views. This indicates that the issue (maritime piracy and socio-economic development) under investigation is not limited to gender bias but has a general effect on the Niger Delta region.

Table 5: Socio-demographic Analysis of Academic Background

| Educational Qualifications | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| FSL Certificate/Testimonial | 5 | 1 |
| WASSCE/NECO/GCE | 5 | 1 |
| ND/NCE | 100 | 26 |
| HND/BSc/PGD | 200 | 51 |
| MSc/MPA/MBA/PhD | 80 | 21 |
| Total | 390 | 100 |

Source: Field Work, 2024.

The table above depicts the educational qualifications of respondents and thus revealed that 5 of the respondents making 1% of the total respondents have FSLC; 5 (1%) have WASSCE/NECO/GCE; 100 respondents making 26% of the respondents possess National Diploma (ND) and National Certificate of Education (NCE); 200 respondents making 51% possess the Higher National Diploma (HND)/Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) and Postgraduate Diploma (PG.D) while 80 respondents representing 21% are holders of Master of Business Administration (MBA)/Master of Public Administration (MPA)/Master of Science (M.Sc) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). This shows that the respondents are dominated by different levels of graduates with various degree of certificates. This suggests that the respondents have good knowledge about the maritime piracy and socioeconomic development issues.

Table 6: Socio-demographic Analysis of Length of Stay in the Region

| Number of Years | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 0 – 10 | 5 | 1 |
| 11 – 20 | 55 | 14 |
| 21 – 30 | 100 | 26 |

| | | |
|---------|-----|-----|
| 31 – 40 | 140 | 36 |
| 41 – 50 | 80 | 21 |
| 51 – 60 | 10 | 2 |
| Total | 390 | 100 |

Source: Field Work, 2024.

The table above shows that 5 (1%) of the respondents have been engaged or stayed in the region for a period between 0 to 10 years while 55 (14%) of the respondents have spent between 11 – 20 years. 100 respondents representing 26% fall between 21 – 30. 140 respondents representing 36% have spent between 31 – 40 years, 80 respondents representing 21% have spent between 41 – 50 years while 10 respondents representing 2% have spent between 51 – 60 years. By this presentation, most of the respondents fall within the youthful age who have also spent some reasonable number of years in the region, whereas some were birthed or indigenes of the region, others are migrants from other regions in search for greener pastures. Be that as it may, they have all experience both the gains and pains of maritime piracy in the Niger Delta region. Thus, their responses have very serious implication to this paper.

Question 2: What are the socio-economic consequences of maritime piracy in the Niger Delta Zone?

Table 7: Computation of percentage response of socio-economic consequences of maritime piracy in the Niger Delta Zone

| Questionnaire | Gender | SA | A | D | SD | Total |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| | | f (%) | f (%) | f (%) | f (%) | |
| Maritime security threats largely hamper job creation in the coastal areas while more industries/businesses are relocated out of the Niger Delta region. | Male | 80 (21%) | 60 (15%) | 20 (5%) | 30 (8%) | 190 (49%) |
| | Female | 120 (31%) | 40 (10%) | 30 (8%) | 10 (2%) | 200 (51%) |
| | Total | 200 (51%) | 100 (25%) | 50 (12%) | 40 (10%) | 390 (100%) |
| Maritime piracy demotivates self-sufficiency in agricultural and aquatic production in socioeconomic development. | Male | 90 (23%) | 60 (28%) | 10 (8%) | 30 (18%) | 190 (49%) |
| | Female | 90 (23%) | 50 (13%) | 20 (5%) | 40 (10%) | 200 (51%) |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| | Total | 180 (46%) | 110 (43%) | 30 (12%) | 70 (28%) | 390 (100%) |
| Maritime piracy negatively affects human development index in wealth creation. | Male | 65 (17%) | 100 (26%) | 20 (9%) | 5 (1%) | 190 (49%) |
| | Female | 65 (17%) | 110 (28%) | 25 (2%) | 0 (0%) | 200 (51%) |
| | Total | 130 (34%) | 210 (54%) | 45 (11%) | 5 (1) | 390 (100%) |
| Maritime piracy results to abandonment of social infrastructural facilities. | Male | 60 (15%) | 100 (26%) | 5 (1%) | 25 (7%) | 190 (49%) |
| | Female | 100 (26%) | 95 (24%) | 5 (1%) | 0 (0%) | 200 (51%) |
| | Total | 160 (41%) | 195 (50%) | 10 (2%) | 25 (7%) | 390 (100%) |
| Health care treatments were abandoned by multinational companies due to maritime piracy. | Male | 65 (17%) | 95 (24%) | 15 (4%) | 15 (4%) | 190 (49%) |
| | Female | 70 (18%) | 105 (27%) | 15 (4%) | 10 (2%) | 200 (51%) |
| | Total | 135 (35%) | 200 (51%) | 30 (8%) | 25 (6%) | 390 (100%) |

Source: Field Work, 2024.

Table 7 shows the views of respondents on how maritime security threats largely hamper job creation in the coastal areas while more industries/businesses are relocated out of the Niger Delta region.

In their view on whether maritime security threats largely hamper job creation in the coastal areas while more industries/businesses are relocated out of the Niger Delta region, the table shows that 200 respondents which represent 51% of the 390 respondents strongly agreed with 100 respondents representing 26% agreed that maritime security threats largely hamper job creation in the coastal areas while more industries/businesses are relocated out of the Niger Delta region. However, 50 (13%) “disagreed” while 40 (10%) “strongly disagreed” that maritime security threats largely hamper job creation in the coastal areas while more industries/businesses are relocated out of the Niger Delta region. This infers that maritime security threats largely hamper job creation in the coastal areas while more industries/businesses are relocated out of the Niger Delta region.

The table also reveals that 180 (46%) and 110 (28%) respondents confirmed to “strongly agreed” and “agreed” that maritime piracy demotivates self-sufficiency in agricultural and aquatic production in socioeconomic development. 30 respondents representing 8% disagreed with 70 respondents which represents 18% strongly disagreed with the claim that maritime piracy demotivates self-sufficiency in agricultural and aquatic production in socio-economic development. It indicates that maritime piracy demotivates self-sufficiency in agricultural and aquatic production in socio-economic development.

On whether maritime piracy negatively affects human development index in wealth creation, 130 (33%) respondents strongly agreed, with 210 respondents representing 54% agreed that maritime piracy negatively affects human development index in wealth creation. While 45 respondents represent 18% disagreed with 5 respondents representing 1% strongly disagreed. This implies that maritime piracy negatively affects human development index in wealth creation.

On whether maritime piracy results to abandonment of social infrastructural facilities, the table above shows that 160 (42%) respondents strongly agreed and 195 (50%) agreed that maritime piracy results to abandonment of social infrastructural facilities. 10 representing 2% and 25 representing 6% of the respondent’s state that maritime piracy results to abandonment of social infrastructural facilities. This implies that maritime piracy results to abandonment of social infrastructural facilities.

The question of whether health care treatments were abandoned by multinational companies due to maritime piracy, the table above also displays 175 respondents representing 45% “strongly agreed” and 190 which represents 49% “agreed” that health care treatments were abandoned by multinational companies due to maritime piracy. 20 respondents which represent 5% disagreed while 5 respondents with 1% strongly disagreed on health care treatments were abandoned by multinational companies due to maritime piracy. Most of the respondents agreed that health care treatments were abandoned by multinational companies due to maritime piracy.

Hypothesis : There is no significant relationship between maritime piracy and socioeconomic development in the Niger Delta. Item 3 of table 7 of the questionnaire which states that maritime piracy negatively affects human development index in wealth creation was employed with chi-square (X^2) thus:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(of-ef)^2}{ef}$$

Table 8: Shows the various responses for calculating Expected Frequency (ef)

| Gender | Frequency of Response | | | | Total |
|--------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------|----------|------------|
| | SA | A | D | SD | |
| Male | 65 | 100 | 20 | 5 | 190 |
| Female | 65 | 110 | 25 | 0 | 200 |
| Total | 130 | 210 | 45 | 5 | 390 |

Source: Survey Data, 2024

Expected Frequency (ef) = $\frac{(\text{Row total}) (\text{Column total})}{\text{Cumulative total}}$

Computation of Expected Frequency (ef)

| | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|-------------|---|-----|---|-----|
| a. | ef | = | (130 × 190) | ÷ | 390 | = | 63 |
| b. | ef | = | (130 × 200) | ÷ | 390 | = | 67 |
| c. | ef | = | (210 × 190) | ÷ | 390 | = | 102 |
| d. | ef | = | (210 × 200) | ÷ | 390 | = | 108 |
| e. | ef | = | (45 × 190) | ÷ | 390 | = | 22 |
| f. | ef | = | (45 × 200) | ÷ | 390 | = | 23 |
| g. | ef | = | (5 × 190) | ÷ | 390 | = | 2 |
| h. | ef | = | (5 × 200) | ÷ | 390 | = | 3 |

Source: Survey Data, 2024

Computation of Chi-Square (X²)

| Cells | of | ef | of - ef | (of - ef) ² | $\frac{\sum (of - ef)^2}{ef}$ |
|-------|-----|-----|---------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A | 65 | 63 | 2 | 4 | 0.063 |
| B | 65 | 67 | -2 | 4 | 0.060 |
| C | 100 | 102 | -2 | 4 | 0.039 |

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----|----|---|--------------|
| D | 110 | 108 | 2 | 4 | 0.037 |
| E | 20 | 22 | -2 | 4 | 0.181 |
| F | 25 | 23 | 2 | 4 | 0.174 |
| G | 0 | 2 | -2 | 4 | 2 |
| H | 5 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 1.333 |
| X² | | | | | 3.887 |

Source: Survey Data, 2024

Degree of Freedom (df) = (R-1) (C-1) = (2-1) (4-1) = 3.

Level of Significance = 5% (0.05)

Table Value = 7.81

Chi-Square (X²) = 3.887

Decision Rule: The null hypothesis is rejected if the value of X² is greater than the critical value. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between maritime piracy and socioeconomic development in the Niger Delta since the calculated value of X² (3.887) is less than the critical value of 7.81.

The Strength of the hypothesis/relationship: According to Onuoha (2016), owing to the attacks on critical infrastructure, Nigeria’s oil production has plummeted from 2.2 million bpd to about 1.4 million bpd. Nigeria is already losing about N2.79 billion (\$14 billion) daily to the closure of the ExxonMobil-operated Qua Iboe terminal, following the evacuation of Exxon-Mobil’s workers. This has compounded government revenue losses caused by the fall in global oil prices since mid-2014. In addition to crippling oil exports, the new wave of militancy in the Delta has also choked the supply of gas to local power plants, thus hobbling Nigeria’s power grid. Electricity generation in Nigeria has declined from about 4,800 megawatts in August 2015 to 1,000 megawatts in May 2016, seriously undermining overall productivity and service delivery in the economy. The violence has also impacted maritime security in the GoG. Pirate attacks emanating from the Niger Delta remain a major threat to the socioeconomic development of the people as an estimated 70 percent of all piracy-related incidents in the GoG are directly related to the Niger Delta. Consequently, the interests of foreign investors will be further compromised as their facilities come under destructive attack, their staff threatened, and safe navigation in the GoG undermined by militant pirates.

Socio-Economic Consequences of Maritime Piracy in Niger Delta: Data analysis indicates that 180 respondents which represent 77% of the 390 respondents infers that maritime security threats largely hamper job creation in the coastal areas while more industries/businesses are relocated out of the Niger Delta region. Also, 290 respondents representing 74% indicates that maritime piracy demotivates self-sufficiency in agricultural and aquatic production in socio-economic development. On whether maritime piracy negatively affects human development index in wealth creation, 250 respondents representing 87% implies that maritime piracy negatively affects human

development index in wealth creation while 335 respondents representing 83% implies that maritime piracy results to abandonment of social infrastructural facilities. Finally, the question of whether health care treatments were abandoned by multinational companies due to maritime piracy, the table above also displays 175 respondents representing 45% “strongly agreed” and 190 which represents 49% “agreed” that health care treatments were abandoned by multinational companies due to maritime piracy. 20 respondents which represent 5% disagreed while 5 respondents with 1% strongly disagreed on health care treatments were abandoned by multinational companies due to maritime piracy. Most of the respondents agreed that health care treatments were abandoned by multinational companies due to maritime piracy.

In line with the above, an interviewee reveals that:

Even though oil companies suffer the brunt of maritime piracy, we also suffer the effect. As soon as some of the companies left, the pirates resulted to local dwellers. They do come here to cart away our fish, farm produces and other socioeconomic products. They do chase economic boats of local traders, rape our women, loot our belongings, kill opposition or those that can identify them, and sometimes kidnap for money/ransom. This absolutely undermine our socioeconomic existence (O. Ikpomwonsa, personal communication, April 22, 2024).

Reacting to the above, Chimezule and Kinikanwo (2023) opine that the crime of piracy involves violence, theft, and hostage-taking. It affects not only the safety of seafarers and vessels but also the social well-being of the affected countries. One of the major socio-legal implications of piracy in Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea is the erosion of the rule of law. It creates an atmosphere of lawlessness, which leads to the breakdown of legal institutions and systems. This can have a significant impact on the ability of affected countries to maintain law and order, as well as their ability to attract foreign investment and trade. Another implication is the impact on the socio-economic well-being of affected countries. Piracy disrupts economic activities, particularly maritime trade, which can lead to loss of revenue, reduced employment opportunities, and increased poverty. Supporting this view, another interviewee reveals that:

Due to activities of maritime pirates, most of the oil companies have stop doing business here. Foreign investors no longer come here to do business; our local traders have stop selling for fears of pirates; local investors are scared; visitors are running away. The area is almost deserted. Government revenue has dropped drastically, and source of livelihood has reduced momentum (O. Osaghae, personal communication, April 26, 2024)

It creates a negative image of affected countries, which can deter foreign investment and tourism. Furthermore, piracy has a significant impact on the safety and security of seafarers and vessels and

can lead to physical harm, kidnapping, and human trafficking which can metamorphose into forced labour, including use of fraudulent means, or coercion to compel a person to work against his/her will, often in hazardous or abusive conditions. It can further extend to sex trafficking including recruiting, transporting, or harbouring of a person for the purpose of sexual exploitation, prostitution, pornography, and sex tourism. It also includes child trafficking for forced labour, sex trafficking, or other forms of exploitation. Piracy attacks have disrupted the livelihoods of fishermen, seafarers, and other workers who depend on the sea for their income. This has increased poverty and further led to insecurity in the waterways, and economic hardship. Maritime piracy has created fear and trauma among seafarers and their families with significant psychological impact that has led to stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues.

Another respondent notes that:

As investors are running away, pirates have discovered a new wave of business, the oil bunkering and oil dumps. This new business has attracted oil marketers to purchase their illegally refined product since there is scarcity of petroleum products in the region. This has also resulted to oil spill and mismanagement of oil mineral and destruction of the ecosystem (T. Olowokere, personal communication, May 3, 2024).

The position of the respondent above indicates that piracy attacks have led to oil spills, damage to marine ecosystems, thereby depriving individuals within the region their rights to a clean environment. Loss of life and injury to crew members in Nigerian waters, resulting to legal claims for compensation and damages by the victims and their families. Piracy attacks can also result in damage to vessels and their cargo, which can lead to legal claims for compensation and damages by the ship owners, charterers, and cargo owners. Piracy attacks in the Gulf of Guinea region have led to increased insurance costs for vessels operating in Nigerian waters. This is because insurance companies consider the risk of piracy when setting their premiums, which can have a significant financial impact on ship owners and operators. Piracy is a complex crime that can be difficult to investigate and prosecute. The legal challenges involved in prosecuting pirates can result in delays and difficulties in bringing perpetrators to justice. In summary, piracy in Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea has significant legal implications, including loss of life and injury, damage to vessels and cargo, increased insurance costs, negative impact on trade, and legal challenges in prosecuting pirates. Addressing these legal impacts requires a concerted effort by government agencies, international organizations, and other stakeholders to enhance maritime security, improve legal frameworks and enforcement, and promote regional cooperation and collaboration.

Many lives have been taken, properties destroyed and criminality such as oil bunkering, kidnapping, armed robbery and piracy seems to be on the increase on the coast for decades. As the leader of the “NDPVF”, Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari once said:

There is nothing wrong if I take the crude oil found in our land, refine it and sell to our people at NGN 15 per litre. The real ‘bunkerers’ are the Federal Government, which has been stealing oil from Ijaw land since 1958. This is an indication that the oil belongs to us not the Federal Government and the real criminal here is the Federal Government (The Guardian, October 17, 2004).

However, Ikelegbe (2005) notes that the Niger Delta region persistently calls for development, but it is disappointing that the Federal Government is not doing much for the benefit of the indigenous people. The radical decision of the local youths has become apparent if they do not benefit from the oil output, then they will stop the oil from being produced. Therefore, when the locals see the spread of oil platforms, pumping stations, and other oil installations and infrastructure across the region, they express their displeasure by obstructing the extraction process (Oyefusi, 2006). Their overt reactions have taken different patterns over the years. They are the consequences of calculated injustice and neglect of a people whose naturally endowed resources have been the “lifeblood” of the entire nation.

Conclusion/Recommendations

The paper investigated maritime piracy and socioeconomic development in the Niger Delta concludes that maritime piracy is a product of historical factors ranging from political, economic, environment and others. Political in the sense that government’s inability to prosecute perpetrators suggest connivance while economic depicts hunger, neglect, and poverty. Environmental involves degradation, and pollution, and this do not engender socioeconomic development in the Niger Delta. Maritime piracy attacks have led to economic stagnation, environmental degradation, loss of lives and property, and these do not engender socioeconomic development in the Niger Delta and Nigeria at large. Also, 80% of the respondents who identified UNOCLS, SUA, Merchant Shipping Act and NIMASA as institutions legally assigned to administer maritime business environment also conclude that international maritime laws have provided a solid ground to manage maritime safety, provide military support by a way of joint military patrol, provision of military hard wares, offer travel advise and exact sanctions on countries that seem to support activities of maritime piracy while over 90% of the respondents conclude that weak governance structure, corruption, political influence, have weakened the strength of maritime laws, inadequate resources and infrastructure have impeded the existing legal framework aimed at enhancing maritime security and improving socioeconomic development in the Niger Delta.

Based on foregoing, the paper recommends as follows:

- i. Government should set up a commission to tackle issues of economic marginalization, environmental degradation and repatriation of profit by multinational oil companies and political corruption which is the beginning of these anomalies in the Niger Delta zone. The issues of bad governance, poor policy implementation, political reward to thugs and pirates should be addressed by clear-cut laws and ensure that politicians and their agents who commit this fraud are not spared but prosecuted.

- ii. A robust environment policy should be initiated and implemented by the government to stop gas flaring, environmental degradation, water, land and air pollution that have destroyed the crops, aquatic organisms and other means of livelihood, and the lives of many people in the oil-rich region.
- iii. The government and all its agencies concerned should strengthen its anti-piracy laws such as the SPOMO Act that deals primarily with maritime piracy and sea robbery in the maritime domain. The government should also strengthen collaboration with neighbouring countries in the aspect of military and other operations that would lead to curtailing the menace of sea piracy in the Niger Delta. This collaboration would reduce the rate of corruption, political interference, implementation problem and legal gaps to enable a hitch-free prosecution of offenders within the maritime cover.

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