

Water Bodies, Maritime Domains and National Security

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Abstract: Water bodies and Maritime Domains are repository of valuable resources with significant role in the support of the socio-economic growth and development of nation states. Nevertheless, it constitutes threat to national security. This Study therefore examined how water bodies and Maritime Domains threatened Nigeria's national security. The Study objective was to find out specific water bodies related activities that make national security vulnerable. Two questions were used to guide the study and data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Geopolitical theory was used as the framework of analysis. Thematic Analytical approach was used in analyzing data gathered for the study. The study identified Atlantic Ocean, Lagos Lagoon, Lake Chad, Benue River, Osun River, Oguta Lake as Nigeria's water bodies and, Exclusive Economic Zone, Territorial waters, Continental Shelf, Niger Delta water ways among others as its maritime domains. The study result shows that piracy, armed robbery, oil theft, human and armed trafficking, illegal fishing and poaching, including maritime pollution and environmental degradation are water bodies and maritime domains related activities that threaten Nigeria's National Security. The study further revealed that Gulf of Guinea, Continental Shelf, Lake Chad and Niger Delta water ways are major hotspots for these security threats. The increasing complex of globalized economic, ecological and cultural changes made these threats to endure. Based on these findings, the study concludes that an inclusive international cooperation over water bodies and maritime domains, with Nigeria's effective inter security agencies collaboration would reduce threat to its national security and also promote economic prosperity and environmental security.

Keywords: Water Bodies, Maritime Domain, National Security

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1. Introduction

Water bodies are essential to our everyday life, providing water supplies, recreational opportunities, and several ecological advantages. In the contemporary economy, the seas have gained significance, enabling all nations to engage in the global marketplace. Over 80 percent of global commerce is conducted via marine routes, establishing an international maritime connection. Approximately fifty percent of global commerce by value and ninety percent of general freight are conveyed in containers. Shipping is fundamental to the global economy. Despite the ongoing growth of the global economy, which enhances the seas' significance as commercial thoroughfares and resource suppliers, technology and globalisation have diminished their function as obstacles.

Nigeria relies on the ocean for its sustenance. Hydrocarbons from its marine region provide approximately 90 percent of the government's foreign currency revenues. Non-petroleum resources, such fish, prawns, and crabs, serve as protein supplies and provide additional economic advantages to the populace. The sea serves as the conduit for the majority of the nation's international commerce. The nation's reputation, security, and economy have been negatively impacted by piracy, with the IMB designating Nigerian seas as the second most perilous in Africa. Annually, piracy and maritime theft result in the loss of many lives, properties, and millions of dollars. Consequently, this persistent

domain functions as an extensive, accessible, and mostly unprotected platform for various threats posed by states, terrorists, and criminals.

The maritime domain serves as both a conduit for these threats and a diverse range of prospective targets that align with terrorists' operational goals of causing mass fatalities and inflicting significant economic damage. The increasing diversity of players posing threats to the maritime realm may be categorised into four primary groups: nation-states, terrorists, transnational criminals, and pirates.

Successful marine assaults provide chances to inflict substantial damage on national, regional, and global economy. Contemporary terrorists are enhancing their efficacy and scope by forging connections with analogous organisations worldwide. Certain terrorist organisations have used ships as a method for deploying their operatives, facilitating logistical assistance, and earning income. Terrorists have used criminal smuggling networks to bypass border security protocols. In this context, the research analyses water bodies, the marine domain, and Nigeria's national security to identify threats to the country's security.

2. Materials and Methods

The research used qualitative methodologies and a synthesis of scientific literature, relying on secondary data gathered from both published and unpublished books and journal articles, which were content analysed in accordance with the paper's aim. A thorough survey of literature on the importance of human security in national security.

3. Results

Conceptual clarification.

Comprehension of the concerns presented in some ideas requires meticulous scrutiny to eliminate related ambiguity. The ideas encompass

Water bodies

Waterbodies vary from little creeks to huge lakes (e.g., Great Lakes) and estuaries (e.g., Saint Lawrence). This research categorises water bodies into three sections: lakes, rivers, and estuaries. Historically, these water basins have been essential for transportation and economic endeavours, such as the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804–1806) and the fur trade in Canada conducted by the Hudson's Bay Company. Water bodies continue to be significant since they facilitate various fishing activities and serve as vital sources of water for supply, irrigation, recreation, hydroelectric power, and other uses. Comprehending the physical, chemical, and biological processes inside these aquatic environments has consistently been a difficulty primarily owing to the intricacy of these systems. Over the decades, human influences have rendered the comprehension of these aquatic bodies more vital for the conservation and management of both fisheries and water resources.

Water ways.

Analysing how Evans and Newnham articulated the significance of water in international relations is crucial for comprehending the notion of waterways. The writers see water as a significant element of international relations, using the sea as a crucial mode of communication and, moreover, as a reservoir of both living and non-living elements. Over the ages, a thorough legal framework has developed to regulate inter-state rivalry concerning maritime affairs (law of the sea).

The fragility of waterways across the African continent is a significant problem. The notion of waterways include linear aquatic features, including rivers, canals, and streams, in addition to water bodies such as lakes, reservoirs, and docks. Associated features include obstacles to navigation, including locks, weirs, dams, and rapids. The River Niger flows in a crescent pattern through Mali and Niger, along the border with Benin, and thereafter across Nigeria, culminating in a substantial delta, referred to as the Niger Delta (or the Oil Rivers), which empties into the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. The River

Benue runs westward, passing past the town of Garoua and the Lagdo Reservoir, entering Nigeria south of the Mandara Mountains, and across Jimeta, Ibi, and Makurdi before converging with the Niger River at Lokoja. This paper provides an informative examination of climate change and waterways as significant factors facilitating transactions and connections among the people of Nigeria and the global community.

Nigeria's Maritime Domains

Nigeria, as a State Party to UNCLOS, has a marine domain over which it holds certain rights and duties in accordance with the Convention. The maritime zones include internal seas, territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone (EEZ), continental shelf, and, under certain circumstances, the extended continental shelf. The maritime domains are crucial for security and economic reasons for Nigeria, a nation strategically situated on the West Coast of Africa in the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria's marine domains include its Exclusive Economic Zone, territorial seas, continental shelf, and the waterways of the Niger Delta, among others. The report indicates that piracy, armed robbery, oil theft, human and arms trafficking, illicit fishing, poaching, marine pollution, and environmental degradation are activities associated with water bodies and maritime domains that jeopardise Nigeria's national security. The research further indicated that the Gulf of Guinea, Continental Shelf, Lake Chad, and Niger Delta waterways are significant hotspots for these security issues. The growing complexity of globalised economic, ecological, and cultural developments has rendered these risks persistent. The study concludes that inclusive international cooperation regarding water bodies and maritime domains, coupled with effective collaboration among Nigeria's inter-security agencies, would mitigate threats to national security and enhance economic prosperity and environmental security.

Security

It is characterised by the absence of danger or the sensation of safety. It is also recognised as the actions undertaken to safeguard a nation, structure, or individual against assault, danger, etc. The condition of security instills trust in the population of a sovereign state. The primary value is seen to stem from a government tasked with managing the activities of a state. Evans and Newnham assert that security refers to the lack of dangers to valuable resources. In theory, security may be absolute, meaning that freedom from all threats equates to total security. Historically, security has been seen as a fundamental value and the paramount objective of governmental conduct. Following the Cold War, ecological and environmental factors emerged as significant security concerns due to the escalating danger of nuclear weapons.. Shortly after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the escalating danger of climate change became a significant subject in global discourse. Consequently, security is a critical issue for the development of any civilisation and must not be approached with negligence. Individuals give their mandate to a certain authority because to a strong belief that the protection of lives and property is assured. This research addresses internal security, which is similarly seen as a governmental framework for managing and regulating a nation's security infrastructure.

National Security

National Security The notion of national security has historically been framed from a limited, military, and strategic viewpoint, particularly during the Cold War period. Hartmann defined national security as the aggregate of a state's vital national interests, noting that a vital national interest is one for which a nation is prepared to employ force or engage in war, either immediately or eventually. Consequently, the concept of national security will differ among states in direct relation to their respective willingness to risk conflict or war at any moment. The accumulation of armaments and munitions to enhance a state's military capabilities is seen as a fundamental approach for ensuring national security. The safeguarding of the state emerged as the principal priority that governed security discourse and policy worldwide. Despite the predominance of a state-centric and

military framework of national security throughout the Cold War, experts have long advocated for its reorientation to prioritise human concerns. The conventional state-centric understanding of national security has been critiqued for its inability to address or explain the rising non-military threats to security at individual, social, state, regional, and international levels. Following the Cold War, challenges such as poverty, sickness, terrorism, and natural catastrophes garnered significant attention, hence redefining the concept of security. Omotola defines national security as the protection from danger or the absence of threats to the various dimensions that could hinder a nation's capacity to safeguard and advance itself, uphold its core values and national interests, and enhance the welfare of its populace. Onuoha asserts that national security is defined as 'the ability of a state to advance and fulfil the essential needs and critical interests of individuals and society, while safeguarding them from threats that may be economic, social, environmental, political, military, or epidemiological.

Peterside asserts that national security is defined as the immunity from both actual and potential threats to national existence, which may stem from human actions or inactions, as well as from disasters such as famine, earthquakes, droughts, diseases, and other catastrophic events that lead to fatalities, human suffering, and material destruction'. The focus on national security arises from three core beliefs. The sanctity and inviolability of human life, the universality and dignity of human existence, and the existential requirement of individual protection among many challenges. Consequently, national security is founded on three fundamental instincts: self-preservation, self-extension, and self-fulfillment. National security encompasses not only the military defense of territory but also internal stability, socioeconomic growth, and the safeguarding of life, property, and economic resources by designated authorities using security agencies. According to McNamara, this leads us to the concept of national security from the Nigerian perspective.

Similarly, Nnoli concurs with the reevaluation of national security. He asserts that the notion of national security transcends military defense doctrine and encompasses the establishment and maintenance of democracy. He asserts: 'In a modernizing culture, security equates to progress.' Security is not synonymous with military power, although it may include it; security is not only military gear, though it may incorporate it. Security is contingent upon growth; without development, security is unattainable. The security of a country is not only or largely dependent on its military capabilities; it equally relies on the establishment of stable patterns of economic and political development.

Consequently, we deduce that the notion of national security extends beyond mere protection against foreign or internal assaults. It is not just a military or law enforcement matter that may be addressed with weaponry. It transcends these aspects to include government governance, the influence of media reporting, the availability of food for people, and the remuneration of troops, police officers, educators, and public workers. Jega has delineated the concept of national security to encompass the following aspects: the safeguarding and defense of the nation's territorial integrity, the fostering of peaceful coexistence within the polity, the eradication of internal security threats, the assurance of systemic stability, and the attainment of sustainable and equitable socioeconomic development. This explanation indicates that national security in Nigeria encompasses a guarantee of peace and stability, defined by ethno-religious and communal harmony, peaceful cohabitation, food security, sustained economical growth, and democratic progress. Enhancing national security involves fortifying the rule of law, cultivating a democratic political culture, fostering civility, and encouraging good governance, transparency, and structural changes conducive to democracy. These concerns are specific to Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

Consequently, national security in Nigeria cannot be fully elucidated just via the universal lens of state security; rather, many socioeconomic factors and difficulties that

affect both state and human life are essential components for comprehending national security. The act of maintaining peace inside the boundaries of a sovereign state or self-governing areas, often by enforcing national law and safeguarding against internal security concerns. The fundamental premise of internal security is the entitlement to personal liberty and safety, contingent upon two primary conditions:

- i. No one should be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention.
- ii. No individual should be deprived of liberty unless on reasons and via processes established by law, as interpreted and enforced by the designated authority on behalf of the state..

The internal security arrangement determines level of security which people enjoy in the state.

Nigeria's Location

Nigeria is totally located inside the tropical zone, positioned between latitudes 4° and 14° North of the Equator and longitudes 3° and 15° East. It is bordered to the west by the Republic of Benin, to the north by the Republic of Niger, to the east by the Republic of Cameroon, and to the south by the Atlantic Ocean. The overall land area is around 924,000 km², with a population of 88.5 million. The land is characterized by many vast plateaus. Nigeria has two main rivers: the Niger, from which the nation derives its name, and the Benue. They converge at the Lokoja confluence and access the Gulf of Guinea via a system of creeks and distributaries that constitute the Niger Delta. Nevertheless, many other tributary rivers flow into the Niger-Benue valley and Lake Chad. The rivers include Sokoto-Rima, Kaduna, Anambra, Gongola, Hadejia, Jama'are, and Yobe. The basins of these major rivers and their tributaries form the country's drainage pattern. Other significant rivers, like as the Cross, Imo, Ogun, Osun, Benin, and Qua Iboe, discharge straight into the Atlantic Ocean. Most tiny rivers are seasonal. The principal rivers, covering around 10,812,400 hectares, constitute about 11.5% of Nigeria's total surface area, estimated at roughly 94,185,000 hectares. Thirteen lakes and reservoirs, with surface areas ranging from 4,000 ha to 550,000 ha, together cover 853,600 hectares, constituting about one percent of Nigeria's total area.

Maritime Domains Threats

Piracy

Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea continues to be a significant worry for nations in West and Central Africa, particularly impacting Nigeria, Togo, and Côte d'Ivoire. In 2013, for instance, 29 out of 47 pirate incidents occurred off the coast of Nigeria. Six vessels were commandeered but later liberated. In 2011, the Organization documented 62 assaults on vessels in West and Central Africa, followed by 60 in 2012. Since 2002, there have been 610 attacks in the area.. Most pirates operating in and around the Gulf of Guinea mostly initiate their assaults from Nigeria. These assaults guarantee that the pirates appropriate and pilfer cargo, equipment, or precious possessions from a ship and her crew.

Siebels furthered his understanding of maritime security in West Africa by emphasizing piracy and armed robbery as persistent challenges impacting West African waterways and the Gulf of Guinea. Piracy involves the theft, destruction, and seizure of vessels on the high seas. Piracy is a prevalent menace in Somalia and some regions of Nigeria's Niger Delta, as well as along the coastlines of Benin Republic, Angola, and Togo. It has evolved into a profitable enterprise. In 2021, 32% of the 68 pirate events happened in the Gulf of Guinea. Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is prevalent because to its role as the maritime route connecting West Africa with markets in Europe and America. This highlights the need for a cooperative regional maritime strategy which UNOWA has been supporting through its political leverage and experts contributions as well.

Armed Robbery

This is another significant concern impacting the security of the Gulf of Guinea. In 2020, it was reported that maritime robbers operated in at least eight nations in the Gulf

of Guinea: Nigeria, Benin, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, and Gabon. Their primary targets include boats, tankers, container ships, general cargo vessels, fishing vessels, passenger ships, and oil drilling or production vessels. This has posed a significant threat to the substantial economic advantages presented by the Gulf of Guinea. Maritime Armed Robbery is associated with piracy and both fall under the same classification of maritime crimes in this area. The International Maritime Bureau, a subsidiary of the International Chamber of Commerce, said that in 2017, the Gulf of Guinea had the greatest incidence of piracy and armed robbery at sea.

Kidnapping

Adesanya, while establishing a connection between piracy and abduction, defines kidnapping as the unlawful confinement of individuals for financial gain. Hostages are freed only upon the payment of ransoms. This problem is prevalent in the Niger Delta of Nigeria, characterized by reports of Niger Delta militants abducting citizens and employees of major oil corporations operating in the area. Kidnapping is often prevalent in the coastal nations in the Gulf of Guinea. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reports that kidnapping has been a significant news topic in the Gulf of Guinea. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime stated that in 2018, there were 41 documented kidnappings in the seas off Nigeria's coast. Numerous international publications connect the phenomenon of maritime abduction with piracy. Many of these pirates at sea also function as armed robbers and kidnappers for ransom. The UNODC said that kidnappers and pirates at sea target a diverse array of vessels, including bulk carriers, container ships, general cargo vessels, as well as local tankers, oil sector support ships, and fishing boats. The projected economic impact of piracy in West Africa is around \$777.1 million per year from 2015 to 2017, excluding the human costs and the broader economic repercussions for the Gulf of Guinea nations.

Drug Trafficking

The significant use and demand for cocaine in Europe have become drug trafficking a possible danger to marine security in the Gulf of Guinea. Adeleye stated that drug trafficking along the West African coastline has been progressively escalating over the last thirty years, primarily because, during the 1990s, numerous South American drug traffickers, facing stringent European laws and enforcement actions, redirected their focus to the vulnerable and notorious South American-West Africa maritime route to establish a connection to Europe for cocaine distribution.. West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea have emerged as a worldwide nexus for piracy and drug trafficking. Nigeria is becoming regarded as a primary conduit for cocaine in the Gulf of Guinea, with expanding collaborations with South and Central American drug trafficking syndicates. In a 2006 assessment, the UNODC estimated that around 40 tons of cocaine, valued at \$1.8 billion, transited across West African waters to Europe. The South American-West African route, known as "Highway 10," was prominent during the 16th and 17th centuries in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, facilitating the shipment of many Africans as slaves to South America. The maritime route between West Africa and South America is the most direct passage for a vessel. The drug trafficking industry along the West African route flourished from the 1970s, with countries like Nigeria, Mali, and Senegal serving as main actors in the small-scale intercontinental transport of illegal substances, including heroin and cocaine. Drug trafficking across the West African waterways yields substantial financial gains, with narcotics often transported via several routes, including bulk ships and cargo at prominent West African seaports. Drug traffickers are known to pay protection fees to safeguard their shipments from seizure. Ebo also said that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime study indicated that drug trafficking had transformed into a multinational criminal enterprise, governed by West African networks. These networks use tiny fishing boats from Togo, Ghana, Benin, and Nigeria as decoys to facilitate the smuggling of narcotics originating from Latin America. Additional offenses associated

with drug trafficking including money laundering, illicit weapons smuggling, marine pollution, crude oil theft, piracy, people trafficking/smuggling, and unlawful disposal of hazardous waste. Illicit, Unrecorded, and Unregulated Fishing.

Maritime Domain Threat to Nigeria's National Security.

Archipelagic States, like Cabo Verde and São Tomé, possess extensive Exclusive Economic Zones and depend significantly on the marine environment for their businesses and populations; these issues provide substantial obstacles to prosperity and social growth. In this research, economic growth is defined as the enhancement in the output of economic products and services when contrasted across two distinct eras. The overall economic growth of an economy during a certain timeframe is most accurately assessed by its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or Gross National Product (GNP). Consequently, we define economic growth in this research as the augmentation of total output of commodities and services inside a certain economy. It also includes the enhancement of capital goods, labor force, technology, and human capital, which together contribute to economic growth, quantified as the total value of goods and services generated in the economy and/or Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Public opinion supports the notion that GDP development and economic expansion enhance buying power, income levels, job opportunities, and overall living standards, which therefore leads to a reduction in crime and violence, including maritime piracy and sea robbery targeting vessels engaged in global commerce. In this context, sustained long-term economic growth or GDP growth leads to economic development, which is the process of transforming impoverished countries into affluent, modern, civilized, and industrialized ones. We assert that economic development results from sustained GDP growth and/or economic growth that leads to comprehensive transformation of an economy, encompassing both qualitative and quantitative enhancements in economic and non-economic indicators such as social welfare, employment and unemployment rates, income levels, early childhood education and literacy, criminal justice reform, and other human capital development metrics.

It is evident to state and anticipate that economic progress and development should result in a reduction in the young unemployment rate, while simultaneously enhancing production, income, and the living standards of the workforce. The decreasing young unemployment rate and improved income and living standards should therefore lead to a reduction in youth participation in criminal activities, maritime piracy, and armed robbery targeting vessels engaged in seaborne commerce inside Nigerian national waters. Investments in marine transport constitute a standard activity and operation intended to enhance a state's economy and foster economic growth. Consequently, transit is often seen as a precursor to economic growth and development. Nevertheless, crime and violence manifested as maritime piracy and sea robbery targeting vessels engaged in global trade undermine the economic growth associated with transportation in national economies. For example, studies by Percy and Shortland, and International maritime Bureau, note that violence and pirate attacks against ships in the Somali region for example costs millions of dollars annually for cost of ransoms alone and this has far reached negative impacts on the economic growth and development of the economy of the region.

The findings of this investigation further corroborate this assertion. The most evident and immediate danger to national security arises from the repercussions of piracy, armed robbery, kidnapping, drug trafficking, oil theft, and environmental damage, among others. Nigeria incurs an annual economic loss over \$25.5 billion due to piracy in its coastal seas. A significant portion of this loss pertains to the theft of crude oil across marine territories. Over 300 barrels per day, or 12 percent of its daily output, are illicitly appropriated or stolen. Otto asserts that from 2003 to 2008, illicit marine operations resulted in a \$92 billion loss for Nigeria. Furthermore, the Nigerian government allocated substantial funds to address insecurity on its waterways. All these expenditures, in

addition to the substantial billion-dollar loss from oil theft, might have been allocated to provide necessary resources for her inhabitants.

Piracy has an indirect influence on the Nigerian economy by disrupting the commercial fishing sector. The domestic fish market constitutes just 20 percent of the total fish consumption in Nigeria. This proportion has significantly decreased over the last decade due to the increase in piracy and maritime theft. A research by the United States Department of Agriculture indicates a significant reduction in fish intake, now estimated at 7.5 kg yearly, well below the FAO's recommended 13 kg. Nigeria now imports between 700,000 and 900,000 metric tons of fish yearly, incurring costs above N50 billion to compensate for this deficit. The disruption of the class and the loss of employment.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the multifaceted security threats posed by water bodies and maritime domains in Nigeria, particularly in the Gulf of Guinea. The prevalence of piracy, armed robbery, oil theft, human and arms trafficking, illegal fishing, and environmental degradation underscores the vulnerabilities inherent in Nigeria's maritime environment. These threats have severe socio-economic implications, including loss of revenue, disruption of trade, and heightened insecurity in coastal communities. The study aligns with previous research that emphasizes the role of geopolitical dynamics, economic disparity, and weak governance structures in exacerbating maritime security challenges. Notably, the presence of multinational corporations engaged in offshore oil drilling has contributed to environmental pollution and economic marginalization, fueling grievances among local communities and providing a recruitment base for criminal networks. Furthermore, the increasing interconnectivity between transnational crime syndicates and terrorist organizations raises concerns about the potential exploitation of maritime routes for illicit activities. Addressing these security threats requires a comprehensive approach that combines international cooperation, robust legal frameworks, and enhanced inter-agency collaboration within Nigeria. Effective maritime governance, investment in advanced surveillance technology, and sustainable economic policies will be crucial in mitigating risks and ensuring the long-term security of Nigeria's water bodies and maritime domains.

5. Conclusion

It is evident that maritime instability in the Gulf of Guinea poses a rising danger to global economic stability. This is attributable to the elevated crime rate in the area, resulting from the instability of the waters in the region. This study emphasizes that, in addition to maritime crimes in the Gulf, the region faces numerous challenges, including pollution from multinational companies engaged in resource extraction and offshore oil drilling, as well as the ongoing neglect of communities impacted by these activities. Numerous towns with oil and natural gas deposits often exist in deteriorated circumstances, despite the substantial riches concealed inside their territories. This has been the struggle of the Niger-Delta militants and several freedom fighters across West Africa.

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