(Review Article)

Maritime security strategy and operational performance in the fourth republic

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Abstract

This study examines the maritime security strategies adopted by Nigerian government to ensure maximum security in the Nigeria maritime domain. The study looked at maritime security as the preventive and responsive actions to guard against threats and intended illegitimate acts in Nigeria. It tries to evaluate maritime security strategy and operational performance under the Fourth Republic. The study relies on secondary data with leverage on content analysis by examining literature concerning maritime security strategy and operational performance in the fourth republic through search for publicly available material and literature. The study engaged Routine Activity theory which explained that crime is the aftermath of combined result of three indispensable elements; motivated offender, suitable targets and the absence of capable guardians. The study revealed that Nigerian maritime security has a direct bearing on the State's capacity to secure its national assets from attack. The study also discovered that the threats, and the inability of the Gulf of Guinea countries to adequately manage their maritime security have led to a call for regional approaches and external support to enhance Security in the Maritime environment. The study reveals that there is yet no national maritime policy which would capture the elements of maritime security. The study submitted that the protracted process of considering a Bill for maritime security apparently is a pointer to the lukewarm attitude towards the subject which confirms the need for political commitment to maritime security matters. The study recommends an urgent review of the existing maritime security architecture and increased investment to secure port facilities, maritime assets and the entire maritime domain.

Keywords: Maritime Security; Insecurity; Operational Performance; Security Strategies

1. Introduction

Maritime Security can be seen as the grouping of preventive and responsive actions to guard the maritime sphere against threats and intended illegitimate acts (Feldt *et al.*, 2013). The maritime domain according to the United States Department of Defense includes all areas and the things on, under, relating to, adjacent to, or bordering on a sea, ocean or other navigable waterways including all maritime related activities, infrastructure, people, cargo and vessels and other conveyances. Tis domain's worth for states can be designated in terms of its natural assets, its importance for transport and trade, power forecast and defense, and the maritime atmosphere's intrinsic value (Lundqvist, 2013). Thus, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the sea (UNCLOS) was established as a basic legal instrument for oceanic affairs and as an offer of corollary rights for coastal states to ensure amongst others, sustainable use and defense of the marine environment and to guarantee the security of sea lines of communication (Jesus, 2003).

Africa is replete with security challenges which have continuously challenged continental development. Crises in Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and the Southern Sahara still persist. It has been generally acknowledged that Africa needs to do more for itself to control the security situation on the Continent. Accordingly, the

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African Union (AU) has set up the Peace Commission to work with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to pursue peace and security in Africa through regional integration. However, one area that continues to draw international attention and concern is the insecurity in the African maritime environment.

For the Gulf of Guinea, maritime crime and illegitimate activities at sea has led to regional loss of revenue, limitations on investment and caused an increase in crime rates. According to the report of the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) during the first three quarters of 2009, the coast of Nigeria was said to rank as the second most perilous in the world in terms of attacks, with 20 reported cases. This is more obviously linked to militancy in the Niger Delta with traces of spreading into adjoining countries through organized criminal groups and divergent separatist sects. Given the political raids since 2006 by militants both at sea and in the Niger Delta intended at Nigeria's hydrocarbon zone, the trend has received considerable awareness, since their net impact has been to cut the state's oil exports by nearly one-third from 2.2 million barrels per day to about 1.6 million or so today (though, production is on the rise again in the tenuous peace following an amnesty granted to militants in 2009), the events of piracy for mainly lawless motives are somewhat a weird phenomenon (GlobeSec, 2010).

While the legitimacy of many grievances cited by various groups in justifying these assaults cannot be denied, there are also distinctive signs that there are organized misconduct, rather than partisan engagement at work as reported in so many instances. This means that Nigerian maritime security has a direct bearing on the state's capacity to secure its national assets, which are vital assets for the country (National Security Strategy, 2011). Added to the above, is the security of international assets (strategic, economic and political) which widens the scope of its importance. These threats, coupled with the inability of the Gulf of Guinea countries to adequately manage their maritime security have led to a call for regional approaches and external support to enhance Security in the Maritime environment in the Gulf. UNSC Resolutions "2018" of 31 October 2011 and Resolution "2039" of 29 February 2012, emphasizes the need for coordinated approach and broad strategy to counter piracy including international assistance to states and regional organizations, as well as instituting information-sharing network between countries (Smith-Windsor & Pavia, 2013).

On the account of these threats of insecurity on Nigerian waters, what value is Nigerian maritime security given the sensitive nature of Exports, Imports and Offshore facility, and what are the likely challenges that hinder the effective security of this sector from the Nigerian and Global perspectives, since it is not an internal problem alone? There are domestic challenges ranging from Corruption, ill Equipped Navy and Geography. While at the international level (Regional and Global), the international actors have shown signs of weak responses despite their interests and together with lack of effective coordination with the host Gulf of Guinea states especially Nigeria towards a collective strategy. The outcome of most reports and researches on maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea continue to make references to Nigeria as an international hotspot for illegal activities on sea.

Of the 107 piracies and armed robbery attacks on ships and crew members worldwide in 2018 Nigeria alone accounted for 31 of the incidences (International Maritime Bureau (IMB), 2019). This is aside from proliferation of arms, illicit drugs and narcotics in the country which records show comes in not only through our land borders but the maritime corridor as well. Nigeria with its current security challenges posed by the Boko Haram Islamic insurgents with proven links with the Al Qaeda in North Africa, militancy in the Niger Delta region, Banditry in the North West of Nigeria and Farmer-Herders crisis in the North Central, there is no doubt therefore that a safer and secure maritime domain would guarantee the much-needed national security and economic development of the country. This study will focus on piracy and armed robbery at sea, trafficking in illicit drugs and narcotics, human trafficking and illegal arms importation through Nigeria's maritime gateways, coupled with effort towards enhancing maritime security through operational requirements and maritime collaboration. This research work will endeavor to evaluate maritime security in the Nigeria maritime domain. It will then go on to determine the divergent perspectives thwarting Nigeria's efforts at maintaining effective maritime security.

This paper seeks to evaluate maritime security strategy and operational performance under the fourth republic (1999-2019). There is no doubt, that Nigeria depends heavily on the sea for food, sea borne trade particularly imports of consumer goods and export of industrial raw materials, agricultural commodities and crude oil which generates much needed foreign exchange revenue. What constitute insecurity in the Nigeria maritime environment include; trafficking in persons, narcotics trade and Illegal importation of arms, piracy and armed robbery at sea, kidnapping of crew and hijacking of vessels for ransom, theft of oil and other cargo, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. These illegitimate criminal activities, has made Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea in general the most dangerous area in the World.

Nigeria has a long coastline, shares maritime borders with six neighbors and land borders with four, two of whom being landlocked depend on her for maritime transit. She is the most populous country in the region and depends heavily on the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) for natural resources and trade. These benefits have in recent time dwindled due to insecurity

in the GoG thereby depleting expected revenue (Asuni, 2009). To effectively address these elements of insecurity at national levels, requires resolving not only internal socio-political causes but more importantly, resolving the challenges to the functionality of regional collective maritime security efforts. This calls for a more dynamic, flexible yet robust diplomacy approach in order to get the states and institutions working in concert.

However, the problem that informed the decision to embark on this study is the practical effects of the conflict in the Nigeria maritime domain that was primarily caused by the high-level sea crime and weak counter policies. The negative manifestation of the notorious activities at the seas constitutes a researchable problem in the sense that it threatens the sovereignty of Nigeria, thereby affecting development and Nigeria national security. It is against this backdrop that this research will attempt to assess maritime security strategy and operational performance under the fourth republic (1999-2019).

Several national initiatives have been embarked upon over the years by government to curb the security challenges in the Nigeria's maritime domain as well as more recent bilateral and multilateral initiatives leading to some degrees of sub-regional maritime security cooperation. It is within this framework that this paper will to provide answers to the following questions;

- To investigate how illicit trades affects national security in Nigeria maritime domain.
- To examine the maritime security strategies adopted by Nigeria government to ensure maximum security in the Nigeria maritime domain.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual Framework

2.1.1. The Nature of Maritime Security in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

In accordance with UNCLOS, Nigeria ascribes to a Territorial Sea of 12 nm from the baseline, a Contiguous Zone of 24nm from the shore, an Exclusive Economic Zone up to 200nm from the shore and a Continental Shelf up to 200-350nm (conditional) from the shore. With a coastline of 420nm, the zones together cover 84,000sq nm of maritime area over which Nigeria exercises sovereign rights to all living and non-living resources within this maritime environment (Jonah, 2010).

However, in line with her Foreign and Defense Policy objectives, her security concerns project her maritime areas of interests to extend from Dakar in Senegal to Luanda in Angola. Her position which straddles the western and equatorial axes of the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) as well as her vast offshore oil and gas deposits define her regional geo-strategic disposition and threat perception. The formation of the earth's crust of Nigeria's coastal line extends in such a manner as to conflict with those of some other neighboring littoral states (Adewuyi, 2004). Consequently, the delimitation of maritime boundaries is a real issue in the GoG. Accordingly, Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) limits of Nigeria could only be resolved when complete delimitations are effected between Nigeria and Benin, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe and Gabon, of course, guided by the provisions of UNCLOS (Ezeoba, 2009).

Nigeria's proven reserves of oil of 37.5 billion barrels (2010 estimate) and natural gas of 5.246 trillion cubic meters (2010 estimate) make the country the 10th and 8th respectively in the world ranking (CIA, 2011). Her oil and gas exports of 2.327 million barrels/day (2007 estimate) and 20.55 billion cubic meters (2008 estimate) respectively are all dependent on safety and security of maritime traffic (Barkindo, 2009). Her fisheries capture of 541,368tons (2008 estimate) is derived from and dependent on maritime traffic in the GoG (FAO, 2011).

Nigeria exports shrimps, crabs, oysters, periwinkles, shark fins and oil as well as live ornamental fish of indigenous species. About 7000tons of fish valued at about US$53 million were exported in 2004. With other resources and activities from the sea, the maritime sector is the second largest revenue generating sector, contributing 30% of non-oil export and more than 85% of the country's import and export trade (Usman, 2009). By 2009, her total value of fish related exports stood at US$337.038 million (ITC, 2011). Nigeria's Vision 20:2020, a strategic development plan, anticipates to make her one of the twenty most developed countries by Year 2020 with a GDP of not less than US$900 billion and a national per capita income of not less than US$4000/annum.

These lofty objectives are couched on the Millennium Development Goals and the maritime sector is a major player in these calculations, hence maritime security is on the front burner of Nigeria's developmental concerns (Adekeye, 2006).

Nigeria sees security as a pre-condition for attaining Vision 20:2020 as well as a necessary factor in managing the consequences of achieving the Vision. In the light of these Nigeria sees herself as key to and plays a leading role in the affairs of the GOG (Nodland, 2008).

The Atlantic Ocean serves as one transit route with little impediment from West African policing authorities. On the western edge of the Gulf of Guinea, Guinea Conakry offers a weakly policed maritime space, allowing drug syndicates (from the Caribbean and South America in particular) to move freely from the sea into West Africa. Geographic location and unstable political conditions alongside a tolerance for smuggling activities form attractive features for the drug traders (Ifesinachi, 2003). West Africa serves as a transit region for cocaine from South America into Europe and heroin from the Middle East to the USA. While Guinea Bissau appears to be the focal point, it masks Nigerian involvement in the drug trade through and from West Africa. Weak jurisdiction at sea tying in with a similar landward weakness facilitates drug trafficking from the sea into West African countries, and syndicates exploit this void to the full with indicators of a further link to the Tuaregs and even one suggestive of al Qaeda in the Maghreb connections (Ifesinachi, 2003).

Smuggling People wanting to leave Africa, or who are forced to do so by criminal syndicates face a journey by sea, whether across the Mediterranean or the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden. Human trafficking and smuggling people who are desperate to leave the continent involve criminal syndicates in West Africa, North Africa and East Africa. Weapon smuggling takes place as well and often serves to fuel African armed conflicts. The large illegal arms shipment found in the port of Lagos in 2010 attests to suspicious or smuggled arms shipments through African waters and an incident not yet fully settled by the Nigerian and Iranian authorities. Pirates, poachers, armed militant groups and governments under international arms sanctions have a need for arms and thus offer a market for illegal arms shipments through weakly policed African waters (Onuoha, 2012b).

Rising pollution off the West African coast, off the South African coast, and potential pollution in the busy shipping lanes off the Horn of Africa are on record. The terrorist attack on the MV Limburg spilling oil into the Red Sea, waste dumping from the sea taking place into the interior of the Ivory Coast, and very dangerous toxic waste discovered on the Somali coast are some examples of deliberate maritime pollution. Within the lexicon of good order at sea, pollution threatens the African seas (as a source of food and an important environment) and in addition is a transgression perpetuated by rogue actors exploiting or sailing the seas and living on the shores (Shafa, 2011). The threat affects African populations and their dependence upon pristine coastal waters as well as the right to live in an unpolluted coastal environment. Whether intentional or not, pollution is a constant threat in African waters with its weak or absent policing. The Brenthurst Foundation Discussion Paper is rather explicit about the pollution threat to the safety and security of Africa's seas – both for the seas as well as for its beneficiaries, entailing threats that affect areas much wider than the immediate coastal environments. Unsettled maritime boundaries (Vrey, 2013).

The growing importance of the sea to African developmental and security futures is bound to question the status quo on maritime boundaries. As African attention moves offshore, unsettled maritime boundaries could well become contested. A host of maritime boundary disputes, unclear offshore demarcations and tentative agreements between parties are on record (Gilpin, 2007).West Africa shows a particularly unsettled profile commencing in the northwest between Morocco, Western Sahara and Mauritania regarding maritime boundaries. Further south, ongoing tribulations center on the Gulf of Guinea and its littoral states. The DR Congo, Congo Brazzaville, and the Cabinda–Angola interface also reflect unsettled maritime boundaries in a known resource-rich offshore location (Ukeje & Ela, 2013).

The maritime boundary between Namibia and South Africa seems to be tolerated, but the low-level dispute in the presence of gas, diamonds and possibly oil holds a certain conflict potential. Off the east coast, the maritime boundaries between South Africa, Mozambique and Madagascar straddle newly discovered gas deposits, while further north Kenya and Somalia also have not ironed out their maritime boundary. The majority of these boundary disputes and settlements unfold around marine resources of which oil and gas are catalysts of possible future interstate disputes (Walker, 2013). Accordingly, the international community has reacted to maritime security threats to develop a legal and procedural framework within which States must work to combat maritime threats and to remove pre-existing impediments to the prevention of maritime

Piracy as a phenomenon is neither recent, nor ahistorical. There is no disputing the fact that no maritime nation has not at one point in history suffered from piracy. In the 16th and 17th centuries it had flourish with a significant record of the capture of Julius Caesar (Tepp, 2012). The Gulf of Guinea (GoG) is no exception, but only that these nefarious activities have taken a dimension highly detrimental to the prosperity not just of its coastal states but also pose a threat to global trade and security. The increase in piracy in GoG and Nigeria in particular was occasioned with the 1970s and 1980s oil boom where export of oil and import of others goods were at all-time high. This was met with lack of capacity

of the port regimes to clear products on time, as vessels stay longer in the harbor local gangs saw in it an opportunity to perpetrate criminal acts on vessels (Uadiale, 2012).

Biziouras (2013) opines that similar to the case of Somalia, overfishing by European fleets in the West African coast stimulate the evolution of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. As a result of this phenomenon occasion by underreporting, the depletion of fishing stock within the region impoverished local fishermen. Subsequently the local fishermen started attacking and robbing vessel in return. However, it should be noted that the act of fishing itself by the European fleets was in agreement with coastal states of the Gulf of Guinea. Though the overfishing made it illegal and was occasioned by lack of effective monitoring, compliance and surveillance system. Biziouras (2013) further argues that the high rate of unemployment among youths in this region has made the economic mobility of piracy especially in the Niger delta and Bakassi peninsula prosperous. Also, the lack of subsidies as well as support from the states, couple with environmental degradation occasioned by oil exploration have made a breeding ground for the recruitment youths to this criminal networks. Since these activities requires low capital and technical knowledge.

Whereas monies gotten from piracy can be reinvested into legal businesses in local economies (Biziouras, 2013). This obviously is the case in Nigeria where a former militant warlord, Government Ekpemupolo, notoriously known for insurgency and malicious businesses at sea was, after the amnesty program, his company "Global West Specialist Vessels Limited was awarded a contract of $326 million for countering maritime crime (Ocean Beyond Piracy, 2014). This scenario explains the last factor as argued by Biziouras (2013) as the persistence of corruption among state officials in these countries has crippled the credibility of state enforcement as a deterrence to piracy.

Murphy (2010), and Tepp (2010), proposed a number of causes ranging from "legal and jurisdictional weakness; favorable geography; conflict and disorder, underfunded law enforcement/inadequate security; permissive political environments; cultural acceptability; and promise of reward" (Murphy, 2010; Tepp, 2010). Jacobsen and Nordby (2015) identify, sea blindness; youth unemployment and poverty; political disputes; corruption and weak governance; legal challenges and the eminent influence of globalization has added a new dimension and sophistication to the piracy in the Gulf of Guinea which has far reaching impact on the success of these criminal activities.

2.1.2. Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA)

One of the prime agencies established by government in the fourth republic toward enhancing maritime administration and security was the Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA). A product of the merger of National Maritime Authority and Joint Maritime Labor Industrial Council, a former parastatal of the Federal Ministry of Transport. Two previous acts of Parliament, the Nigerian Merchant Shipping Act 2007 and the Coastal and Inland Shipping (Cabotage) Act of 2003 were merged to yield the NIMASA Act 2007 (Ahamefule, 2011).

This Act empowers NIMASA as the primary regulatory maritime organization in Nigeria to pursue the development of shipping and regulate matters relating to merchant shipping and seafarers, to administering the registration and licensing of ships, to regulate and administer the certification of seafarers, to establish maritime training and safety standards, to regulate the safety of shipping as regards the construction of ships and navigation, to provide search and rescue services, to provide directions and ensure compliance with vessel security measures, to carry out air and coastal surveillances, to control and prevent maritime pollution, and to provide direction on qualification, certification, employment and welfare of maritime labor.

2.1.3. The Roles of the Nigerian Navy – Policy Framework

The provisions of the 1999 Constitution by virtue of Section 217, as well as section 4 of the Armed Forces Decree (AFD) 105 of 1993 as amended stipulate the roles and functions of the NN. Sub-section 4 (a) further tasks the NN with enforcing and assisting in coordinating the enforcement of all customs laws, including anti-illegal bunkering, fishery and immigration laws of Nigeria at sea. Additionally, it is responsible for enforcing and assisting in coordinating the enforcement of national and international maritime laws ascribed or acceded to by Nigeria. Furthermore, the making of charts, coordinating of all national hydrographical surveys, promoting, coordinating and enforcing safety regulations within the territorial waters and EEZ are within her jurisdiction (Ahamefule, 2011).

It is apparent therefore that the NN roles which cover military, policing and diplomatic are primarily concerned with the protection of the nation's maritime interests and activities. Notably, also, the NN was the only institution charged with responsibility for maritime security by the Constitution, other related agencies evolved with contemporary developments. The principal roles assigned to the NN are splitted along;

- Military Role: The military roles include projection of force and balance of power functions.

- Diplomatic Role: Diplomatic role includes negotiation from the position of strength, manipulation and prestige.
- Maritime Security Strategies adopted by Nigeria Government to ensure Maximum Security in the Nigeria Maritime

There is yet no national maritime policy which would capture the elements of maritime security. A National Transport Policy was emplaced in 2010 but only related to the maritime with respect to inland waterways. However, a Maritime Security (MASECA) Bill 2009 has been before the National Assembly for consideration for two years (Ahamefule, 2011). The Bill is enmeshed in controversy but if passed, may signal the advent of a Maritime Policy for Nigeria.

Presently, the legislation that established the existing maritime supervisory agency; NIMASA, mandated it to ''establish the procedure for implementation of conventions of the IMO and other international conventions to which the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a party on maritime safety and security, maritime labor, commercial shipping and for the implementation of codes, resolutions and circulars arising there-from''(NIMASA,2011). Within this context, it could have been possible for NIMASA to produce a draft Maritime Policy. Meanwhile, in the throes of the controversy and the arguments, a vast vacuum remains gaping and the Nation and associated maritime components continue to suffer for a lack of policy. The protracted process of considering a Bill for maritime security apparently is a pointer to the lukewarm attitude towards the subject which confirms the need for political commitment to maritime security matters (Ahamefule, 2011).

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Theory of Differential Association

The theory of Differential Association was propounded by Sutherland (1939) an American Sociologist. The principle of Differential Association asserts that a person becomes delinquents because of an "excess" of definitions favorable to violation of law, over definitions unfavorable to violation of law. What this means is that, an individual will become a criminal because they are exposed to more persons that are favorable to criminal behavior. That is when one is exposed to more criminal influences rather than more favorable legal influences. In other word, criminal behavior emerges when one is exposed to more social message favoring misconduct than pro positive social messages (Sutherland, 1939). This can be seen in environments with poor socio-economic conditions such as Nigeria, which may encourage negative views towards the law and authority. Hence, giving rise to maritime insecurity in Nigeria's maritime domain.

The internet and social media can provide such an environment to corrupt the minds of some users, who can as well be tutored online on the basis of hacking or phishing for fraudulent financial gains. A good example is the "yahoo ,yahoo boys" in Nigeria. Most of these folks got the negative attributes from associating with other morally corrupt hackers/scammers online.

According to Sutherland (1939), criminal behavior is learned through interaction with other persons in a process of communication. This would mean an individual is influenced to participate in criminal behavior through watching and interacting with other individuals who are engaging in the criminal behavior. The principal part of the learning of criminal behavior occurs within intimate personal groups. When criminal behavior is learned, the learning includes techniques of committing the crime, which are sometimes very complicated, sometimes simple and they learn the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations and attitudes for committing a crime. This means that an individual will be influenced into believing that the behavior which they may have previously believed was wrong, into believing that it is right through rationalization of their action.

Furthermore, an individual will be pushed into deviant behavior depending on their view of the legal code as being favorable or less risky. Therefore, an individual will break a law if they see more reasons to break it than to stay in compliance with it. Differential Associations may also vary in frequency, duration, priority and intensity.

The weakness of this theory is that, the process of learning criminal behavior by association with criminal and anti-criminal patterns involves all of the mechanisms that are involved in any other learning. This means that individuals learn criminal actions and lawful through the same way. This theory states that while criminal behavior is an expression of general needs and values, it is not necessarily the fulfillment of these needs and values which causes deviant behavior since non-criminal behavior is an expression of these same needs and values.

3.2. The Routine Activity Theory

The Routine Activity Theory was propounded in 1979 by Cohen and Felson in their work entitled "Social Change and Crime Rate Trends" In the "Routine Activity Approach", Cohen and Felson proposed that crime is the aftermath of combined result of three indispensable elements: First there must be a motivated offender who is competent of committing an offence. Second it is not sufficient for the potential offender to be motivated; he must also be capable to execute his criminal intention.

According to Cullen & Agnew (2006), the routine activity approach is based on two rather simple ideas. First, for crime to occur, motivated offenders must meet with suitable targets in the absence of qualified guardians. Secondly, they noted that the likelihood of this situation occurring is influenced by their routine activities including the work, family, leisure, and consumption activities. For example, if we spend more time in public places such as bars and on the street, we increase the likelihood that we will come into contact with motivated offenders in the absence of competent guardians. Brown & Okorie (2015a) noted that for a crime to occur, a motivated offender must also identify and engage a suitable target. Suitable targets can take a number of forms depending on the nature of the crime (i.e. the particular intent of the offender) and the situational context (i.e. the available opportunities). A suitable target might be an object, such as a piece of valuable property to steal or a home to burglarize.

Routine activities theory suggests that the existence of these agents might avert a crime from happening. Many potential offenders, despite being motivated to commit a crime, would be hesitant to engage in criminal behavior with a police officer's presence. The routine activity theory is relevant to the study on sea robbery and tourism development because it assists to explain the existence of the crime in the littoral states of Niger Delta Region. First, unemployed youths in the region are a pool of persons who are ready and capable of committing crime of the nature of sea robbery. Vulnerable targets are in the form of international and domestic tourists, oil tankers, fishing crafts, trawlers, speedboat operators, passengers, and local businessmen and women that ply the waterways. Most of these targets are not always well guarded.

The numerous mazes of creeks in the littoral states of Niger Delta provide hiding places for suspects or offenders who usually lay ambush for their targets in waterways that are not well protected. The absence of protection for these targets exposes the latter to incessant attacks by these motivated offenders. Besides, when faced with threat to life, such target usually panics enough to promise their assailants instant wealth reward. Such offers are quite appealing to sea robber and fuel their appetite for maritime criminality. However, routine activities theory does not explain why an offender is motivated to commit a crime, but instead assumes that motivation is constant. Based on the weakness of the theory, the securitization framework will be adopted for the study as it answers the gaps in the two hitherto theories discussed.

4. Conclusion

There is yet no national maritime policy which would capture the elements of maritime security. A National Transport Policy was emplaced in 2010 but only related to the maritime with respect to inland waterways. However, a Maritime Security (MASECA) Bill 2009 has been before the National Assembly for consideration for two years (Ahamefule, 2011). The Bill is enmeshed in controversy but if passed, may signal the advent of a Maritime Policy for Nigeria.

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Recommendations

The port's security apparatus including control towers needs urgent upgrade of facilities to meet with international standard. State of the art modern equipment are required for long range ship detection and rescue of vessels in distress. Agencies operating in our seaports such as the Nigeria Customs Service, Nigeria drug Law Enforcement Agency, Nigeria

Immigration Services should be well equipped and trained in order to counter effectively the activities of illegal arms smugglers, narcotic and drugs merchants and human traffickers. CCTV and cargo scanners should be provided in all port locations to achieve this.

Inter- agency cooperation between the Nigerian Navy and the Nigeria Maritime administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) should be strengthened to ensure effective security and patrol of all navigable channel and approaches to our ports. More investments should be made to acquire modern patrol boats with higher capacity and efficiency than those used by pirates. Conscious and deliberate efforts should be made by government to domesticate all conventions and international treaties that would have positive impact on securing Nigeria's maritime domain. In relation to this Nigeria should explore more the benefits of being a frontline member of the Gulf of Guinea commission with a view to strengthening security in the Gulf to curtail piracy, robberies at sea and indiscriminate dumping of wastes by incoming and outgoing vessels.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest.

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