

# African Pirates in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Comparative Analysis of Maritime Piracy in Somalia and Nigeria

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Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Arts (International Studies) at Stellenbosch  
University

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March 2012

## Declaration

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## Abstract

This study concerned the piratical attacks occurring along the East and West coasts of Africa. Although maritime piracy along the coasts of Africa is not a new phenomenon, recent upsurges in piratical attacks have attracted a great deal of attention. Despite Nigeria being long considered as the hotspot for piratical activity in Africa, the greatest upsurge of piratical activity has been seen in the areas surrounding Somalia, including the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean.

The primary objective of this study is to identify the main causes of maritime piracy in Somalia and Nigeria. Also the correlation between state capacity (failed or weak) and the motivations for piracy (greed or grievance) is investigated.

The secondary objectives of this study are to investigate the direct manifestations of piracy, as well as the current counter piracy initiatives. This is done in order to evaluate the successes and failures of current counter-piracy approaches in order to create more viable and successful counter measures.

It is found that historical factors, as well as political, economic, social and environmental factors contribute greatly to the rise of maritime piracy in both Somalia and Nigeria. Furthermore, it has been found that there are numerous direct causes of piracy in these two countries. These differences and similarities have been investigated using a comparative analysis framework.

## Opsomming

Hierdie studie het betrekking tot die seerowery wat langs die Oos-en Weskus van Afrika plaasvind. Alhoewel seerowery langs die kus van Afrika nie 'n nuwe verskynsel is nie, het die onlangse oplewing van seerower-aanvalle baie aandag geniet in verskeie oorde. Ten spyte daarvan dat Nigerië lank beskou was as die probleem-area vir seerower aktiwiteit in Afrika, word die grootste toename van seerowery in die gebiede rondom Somalië, insluitend die Golf van Aden en die Indiese Oseaan ervaar.

Die primêre doel van hierdie studie is om die oorsake van seerowery in Somalië en Nigerië te identifiseer. Die verband tussen staat-kapasiteit (mislukte of swak) en die motiverings vir seerowery (gierigheid of griewe) word ondersoek.

Die sekondêre doelwitte van hierdie studie is om die direkte manifestasies van seerowery te ondersoek, sowel as die huidige teen-seerower inisiatiewe. Dit word gedoen om die suksesse en mislukkings van die huidige teen-seerower benaderings te evalueer ten einde meer lewensvatbare en suksesvolle teenmaatreels te skep.

Dit is gevind dat historiese faktore, sowel as die politieke-, ekonomiese-, sosiale- en omgewings- faktore baie bydra tot die ontstaan en opbloei van seerowery in Somalië en Nigerië. Dit is gevind dat daar talle direkte oorsake van seerowery in hierdie twee lande is. Hierdie verskille en ooreenkomste is ondersoek met behulp van vergelykende analises.

## Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank my academic supervisor, Mr. Gerrie Swart, for his assistance and guidance. His comments, suggestions and contributions to this thesis have been invaluable.

Secondly, I'd like to thank my parents. I am grateful for all the assistance, encouragement and opportunities they have given me throughout my life. This thesis would not have been possible without them.

I would also like to thank my colleagues and the staff of the Political Science Department of Stellenbosch University. A special thanks goes to my colleague, Mr. Byron Messaris, who helped with the initial drafts of this study.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends who supported my undertaking of this thesis, as well as my studies.

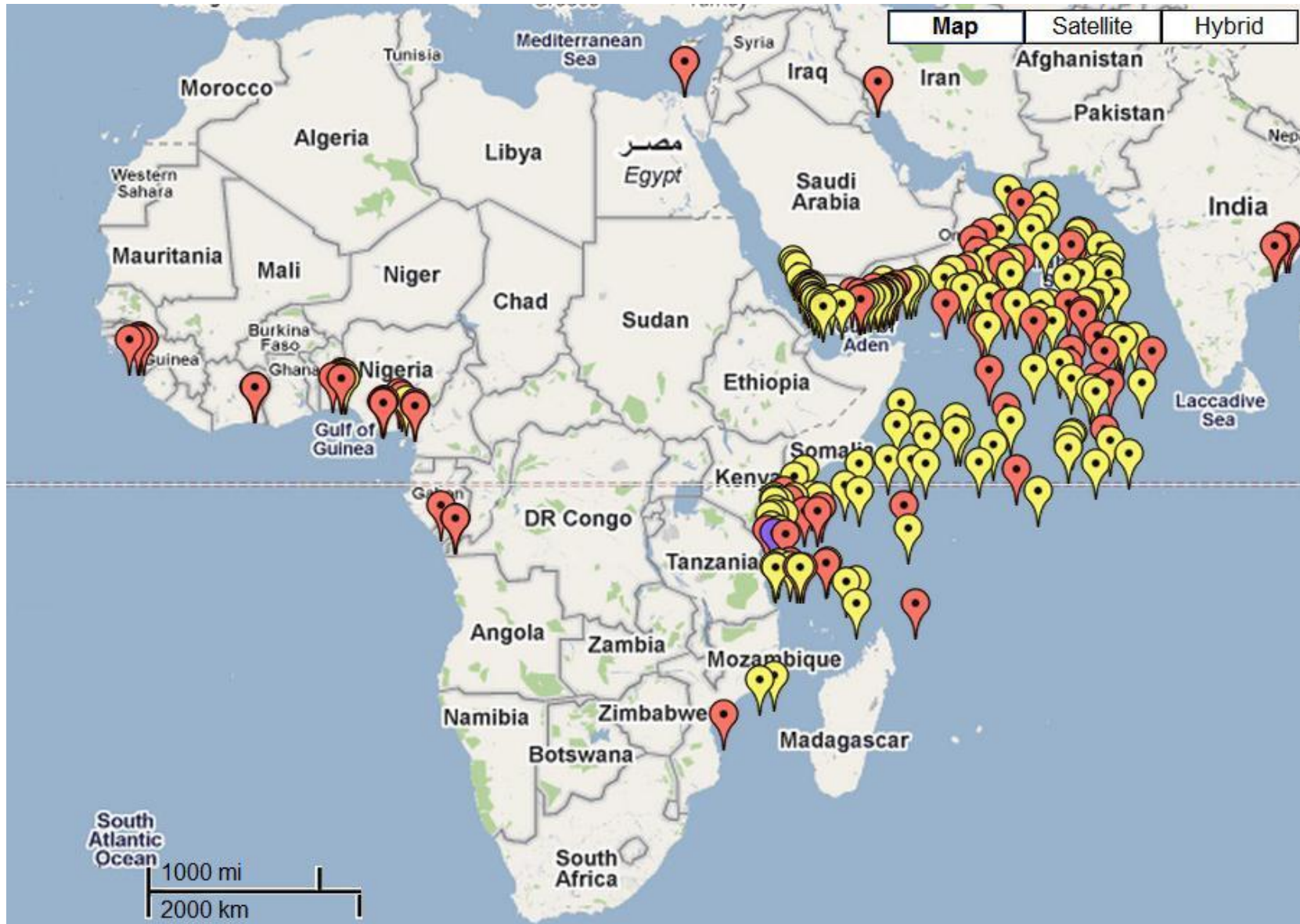
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<sup>1</sup> Red markers indicating actual attacks, yellow markers indicating attempted attacks and purple markers indicating suspicious vessels

Map B: Piracy Map 2010 (IMB, 2010)

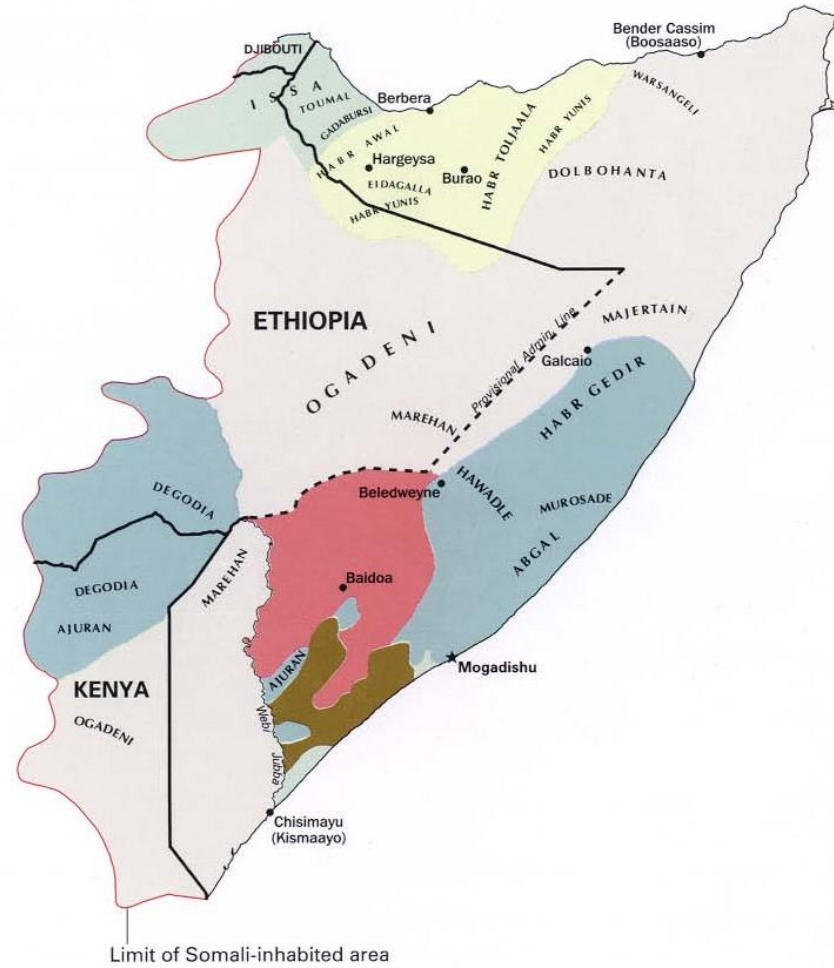
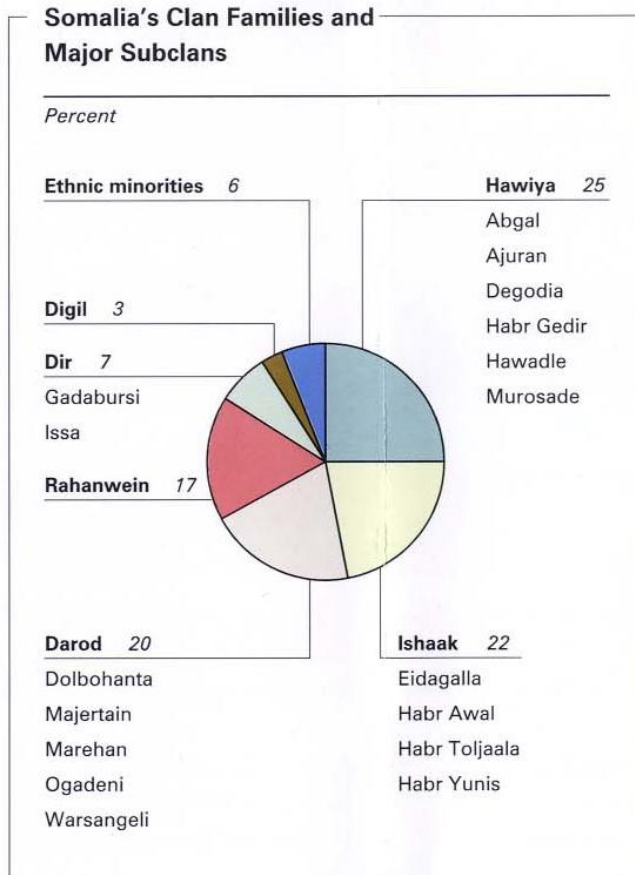








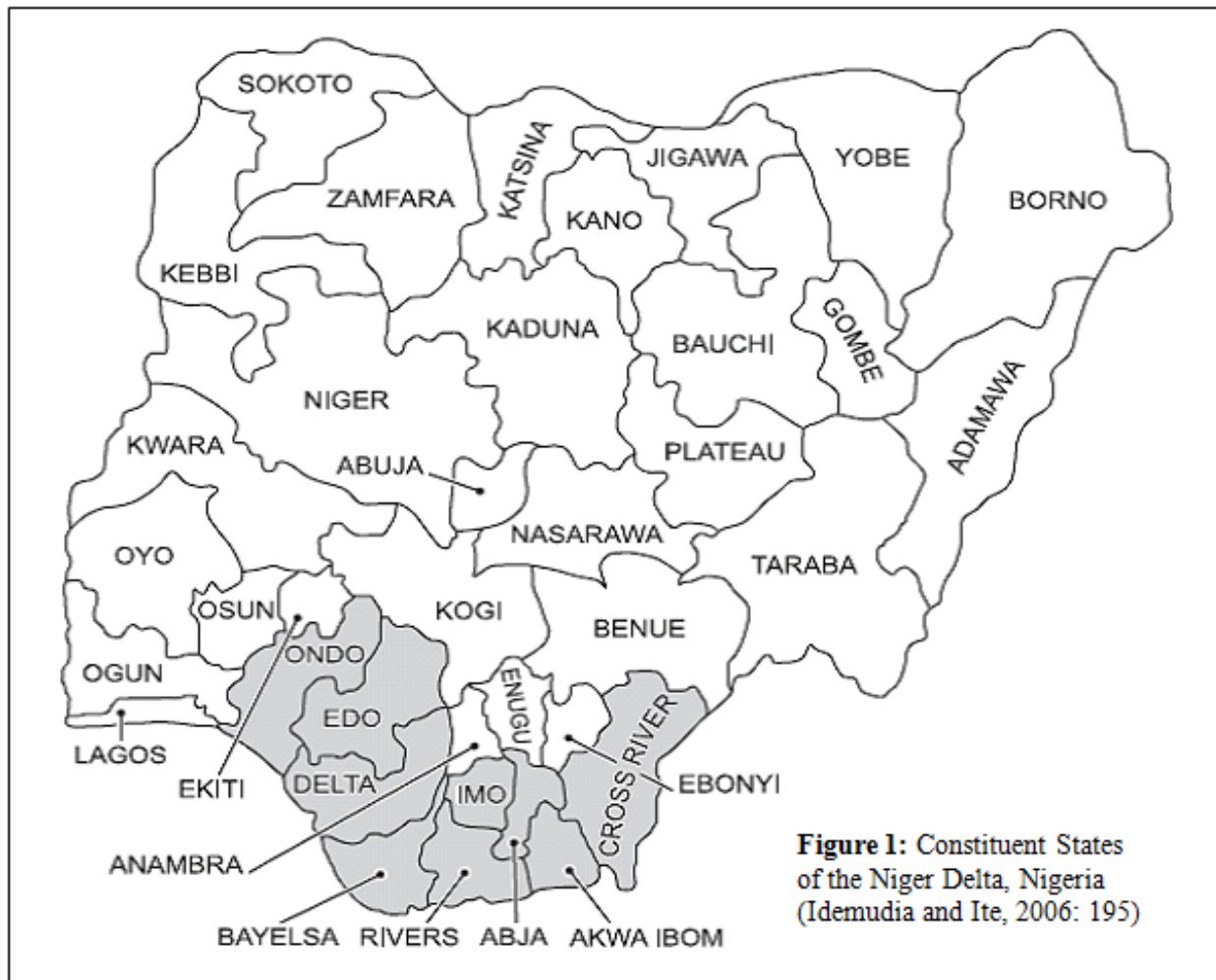
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## CHAPTER 1 – Introduction & Methodology

### 1.1 Introduction

This study concerns the piratical attacks occurring along the East and West coasts of the African continent. Maritime piracy on the coasts of Africa is not a new phenomenon. Recent piratical activity in the coastal waters of Somalia has received widespread attention from international media. Interestingly, until recently the hotspot for piratical attacks in Africa was considered to be in the Gulf of Guinea, or more specifically in the coastal waters of Nigeria and the Niger Delta.

In both Somalia and Nigeria various political, economic, social and environmental factors contribute to the rise of maritime piracy. In both countries the political situation is dire. Somalia is often described as a prime example of a failed state, while bad governance and institutionalised corruption are notable characteristics of successive Nigerian governments. Although massive deposits of oil in Nigeria generate enormous profits for the state, very little of the oil revenues trickle down to the masses, while the absence of a central bank in Somalia is indicative of a non-existing formal economy. Clan-based rivalries in both states, as well as tension arising between those in control of resources and the masses, fuels the fire of social unrest.

There is a consensus among academics that maritime piracy will only be eradicated effectively if the symptoms which lead people to engage in these illegal maritime activities have been addressed. The various factors that contribute to the rise in piracy did not develop overnight and neither will the situation be remedied easily. It is evident that neither country has the structural capacity or the political will to address these problems, shifting the responsibility to the international community. The primary focus of this study will be to identify the causes of maritime piracy. The correlation between state functionality (e.g. weak or failed) and piracy will be investigated, as well as the motives behind piracy (whether they are driven by greed or grievance). The ways in which these issues can be addressed will also be dealt with in this study.

As maritime piracy constitute such a big threat to international trade, it is also essential to find *short term* solutions to fighting the threat in order to minimise the negative consequences to international trade.

In order to establish a viable short-term solution for combating piracy, it is essential to analyse the patterns, character and nature of piracy in Somalia and Nigeria. By expanding our knowledge on piratical attacks in Africa, more effective and efficient countermeasures can be taken. The secondary objective of this study will focus on the direct manifestations of piracy in these two countries and how the problem could be dealt with. Secondary objectives will also include investigating current short term solutions to maritime piracy and evaluating its effectiveness. Lastly, the probability of maritime piracy escalating in other parts of Africa will be investigated.

## 1.2 Literature Study: Common Themes

Various themes can be identified in previous studies as to the consequences of piracy. Also, factors causing piracy, chief of which are political, economic, social and environmental issues, can be identified. Furthermore, similarities and differences in the nature of piracy can be observed. Various initiatives to combat piracy in Africa have also been noted by scholars in previous studies.

### 1.2.1 Maritime Piracy

The most immediate threat piracy poses is to that of the crew members, the vessels and its cargo. However, since 80% of world trade is conducted using maritime trading routes, the security of goods on these vessels concerns not only shipping owners, but consumers as well. Maritime piracy challenges the security of these routes. Consequently, the cost of operating vessels along these routes increases. Either the insurance cost of the vessels and their cargo increase or the ships have to find alternative routes which are often longer, increasing fuel costs and the time it takes to deliver their goods (Anderson, 1995:179; Anyu & Moki, 2009:114; Kraska & Wilson, 2008:42; O'Meara, 2007:7). This in turn increases the costs consumers have to pay for the products (Anderson, 1995:179; Anyu & Moki, 2009:115).

Although piracy in Africa is concentrated along the regions of Somalia and Nigeria, the impact of piracy on neighbouring countries is even more detrimental. Many African countries are already impoverished and the increased spending in protecting

their own Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) due to a spill over of piracy is straining on their economies. Also, vessels are discouraged to enter dangerous zones, and often avoid docking at harbours in these regions, depriving countries of a valuable income (Anderson, 2010:335).

States, wary of the instability of the Middle East have sought alternative oil supplies in Africa. The disruption of oil supply can have disastrous effects on world economies. While piracy in Nigeria threatens the access to and from oil fields, piracy in Somalia poses a threat to vessels transporting oil through the Gulf of Aden and eventually the Suez Canal (Anyu & Moki, 2009:101,103; Nodland, 2010:192; Paterson, 2007:29). A Saudi supertanker carrying 2 million barrels of oil, the Sirius Star, which was captured in 2008, illustrates the seriousness of the situation (Anyu & Moki, 2009:107).

#### 1.2.2 Political, Economic and Social Issues

While Hastings (2009:218) describes Somalia as “the most thoroughly failed country in the world”, Kraska & Wilson, (2008:52) proclaimed that Somalia is “the very definition of a failed state”. There is a consensus among scholars that the last functioning central government of Somalia ended with the ousting of the authoritarian leader Mohamed Siad (alternatively spelled “Siyad”) Barre in 1991 (Anderson, 2010:322,324; Kraska & Wilson, 2009:57). Since Siad Barre’s ousting, parts of Somalia have been declared as independent republics and several political actors (notably the Somalia Transitional Federal Institution and the Council of Islamic Courts) have tried to exercise political control over the country, but with little success (Anderson, 2010:324).

While Nigeria may not be a failed state in the likes of Somalia, it could be considered a “weak” state. One of the common characteristics Nigeria share with other “weak” states is the endemic, institutionalised corruption that reaches the highest levels of society (Paterson, 2007:29; Nodland, 2010:194). Politicians are renowned for abusing their political power to gain access to wealth that emanates from Nigeria’s oil reserves for personal gain.

Similar to the political vacuum that exists in Somalia, the absence of a central bank for nearly two decades indicates that there was no functional formal economy

(Anderson, 2010:322). Although the Central Bank of Somalia was re-established in 2009, it is yet to ensure a stable economic sphere. Poverty, the lack of employment, education and incomes further exacerbate economic problems which increase the incentives to partake in piratical activities (Kraska & Wilson, 2009:63).

The main cause of economic malaise in Nigeria is due to the endemic corruption. Although the country has ample resources, most of it is controlled by the political and business elites who are only interested in self-aggrandizement. This leaves little room for improvement in infrastructure and other services. Moreover, the reliance on a single commodity, namely oil, provides for an unstable economic environment.

The rivalry between clans in Somalia and Nigeria creates much instability. In both countries, people are more loyal to their clans than their respective countries. Both countries have been plagued by clan wars. In Nigeria access to different geographical regions has been the driving force behind the clan wars, while political control (and therefore access to resources) has been the main motive for various factions (Anyu & Moki, 2009:113; Nodland, 2010:193; Paterson, 2007:29). In Somalia some political actors have proclaimed their own independent states, notably Somaliland and Puntland, although they are not recognised by other governments (Anderson, 2010:324; Hastings, 2009:215).

### 1.2.3 Nature of Piracy

The rise in incidents of maritime piracy along the coasts of Somalia and Nigeria has been phenomenal, as can be seen in Maps A and B. In Nigeria the increase in petroleum-related activities means that maritime traffic in this region increased (Anyu & Moki, 2009:97; Nodland, 2010:191; Gilpin, 2007; Paterson, 2007:28). Although piracy in Somalia existed before 2008, since then it has gained a lot of momentum. As attacks became increasingly successful and ransoms were paid, a snowball effect took place (Anderson, 2010:332). An alternative theory for the increase in piracy holds that if piracy is curbed in one region, it manifests in another place. Piracy in Southeast Asia was largely contained during the late 1990's, just before piracy escalated in Africa (Anderson, 1995:179; Anderson, 2010:323; Govern & Winn, 2008:143; Kraska & Wilson, 2008:44). In a similar fashion, it would be possible for piracy to flare up along other African coastal regions if piracy in Somalia and Nigeria were contained.

In 2003 the IMB advised vessels to stay fifty nautical miles from the coast of Somalia. By 2005 the piracy situation in the Horn of Africa has deteriorated and vessels were advised to stay more than two hundred nautical miles from the Somali coast (Anyu & Moki, 2009:103). This indicates that piracy on the Eastern coast of Africa is no longer confined to the coast of Somalia. Reports have shown that attacks are spreading throughout the Indian Ocean, as far as the Seychelles and the coasts of Oman and India (Apps, 2011:18). In contrast to this, attacks on the West coasts of Africa have largely been in the territorial waters of Nigeria, especially the Niger Delta region (Nodland, 2010:196; also, see Maps A and B).

Initially pirates in Somalia claimed they only attacked illegal fishing vessels in their territorial waters (Anderson, 2010:327; Kraska & Wilson, 2009:58). Similarly, Nigerian Pirates accused oil companies of polluting the environment thereby endangering their fishing lifestyles (Anderson, 2010:338; Paterson, 2007:29). Although this might have been the case initially, the indiscriminate hijacking and looting of all vessels indicate otherwise. It is common for Somali pirates to capture oil and merchant vessels, vessels which have no interest in Somali maritime resources. In Nigeria piracy is not only limited to the vessels of multinational oil corporations, but even local fisherman are targeted (Paterson, 2007:29).

Differences exist between pirates in the two countries in obtaining their objective once the attacks have been completed. The objective for Somali pirates is purely economical in nature, therefore holding the captured vessels for ransom is common. Violence is not often employed since the safe return of vessels and their crew is important during the bargaining for ransom (Anderson, 2010:337; Anyu & Moki, 2009:108; Govern & Winn, 2008:135; Hastings, 2009:219). In Nigeria attacks seems to be not only economically motivated, but political as well. Violence is often employed to achieve their goals. Although crew members or foreign nationals are often captured for ransom purposes, ships are often only looted and not held for ransom (Anderson, 2010:338; Nodland, 2010:197; Paterson, 2007:29).

Numerous incidents in the preceding paragraphs indicate that although piracy in both countries might have originated in response to the legitimate grievances of the citizens, the line has sometimes been crossed and greed has often become the dominating motivation for piracy. The greed versus grievance theory suggests that

conflict is either motivated by people wanting to relieve their grievances, often arriving from real or perceived injustices, or their participation in conflict is motivated by their will to improve their material wellbeing (Collier & Hoeffler, 2000:2).

The sophistication of piracy in both states has steadily increased as their tactics have evolved and as newer technologies become available to mass markets (Anyu & Moki, 2009:97; Kraska & Wilson, 2008:41). The increasing use of mother ships have enabled Somali pirates to conduct their attacks further from the shore, as well as enabling them to stay at sea for longer periods of time. The use of modern powerboats affords the pirates manoeuvrability and speed, which most vessels lack (Anyu & Moki, 2009:108; Govern & Winn, 2008:131; Hastings, 2009:219). What is more, the increasing access to arms has increased their firing power vis-à-vis maritime vessels which are mostly armed with non-lethal deterrents (Anderson, 2010:322; Anyu & Moki, 2009:113; Govern & Winn, 2008:135).

Since the terrorist attacks in the United States of America in 2001, scholars have become increasingly aware of the terrorist threats posed in all industries, including the maritime industry. Specific focus is placed on radical Islamic terrorists. Not only could terrorism harm international trade, but attacks on oil supplies through the Suez Canal and Nigeria could be disastrous for most economies (Luft & Korin, 2004:64; O'Meara, 2007:5). In 2000 two incidences were recorded where speedboats, laden with explosives, were crashed into US Navy vessels in the territorial waters of Yemen in apparent suicide attacks (Luft & Korin, 2004:64). Although one cannot deny the threat posed by Islamic terrorists if they were to get involved in piracy, there have only been isolated cases of maritime terrorism and a definitive link between piracy and terrorism cannot be made (Anyu & Moki, 2009:116).

#### 1.2.4 Piracy Countermeasures

Ransom demands being met, as mentioned earlier, contributes to the escalating piracy, specifically in Somalia. Ransom amounts have steadily increased from tens of thousands to millions of dollars. Ship-owners, faced with the possibility of losing their crew, vessel and cargo, have given in to the demands of pirates (Anyu & Moki, 2009:104). However, this sets a dangerous precedent, spurring would-be pirates on to reap similar rewards. This further exacerbates the piracy problem, increasing the

danger to other crews and their vessels (Anyu & Moki, 2009:110; Kraska & Wilson, 2009:64).

International naval presence in the Gulf of Aden and waters surrounding Somalia is well-documented. The International naval presence consists of states from the developed (Denmark, France, Germany) and developing (Malaysia, India, Iran) world, in co-operation with the multinational coalition, the Combined Task Force 151 (Anyu & Moki, 2009:118; Kraska & Wilson, 2009:55). These forces have been ineffectual in meeting stated aims as the waters they must patrol are so vast (Anyu & Moki, 2009:118; Kraska & Wilson, 2008:41). Pirates often hijacked ships and sailed them back to the territorial waters of Somalia and navies were unable to take further action. The Transitional Federal Government of Somalia however, has via UN Resolutions given foreign navies permission to pursue pirates into their territorial waters, since they have no capacity to protect these areas (Hastings, 2009:218; Kraska & Wilson, 2008:48).

In Nigeria, the international community has taken a different approach. Foreign naval vessels are a rare sight in the Gulf of Guinea. Instead, high value has been placed on regional security initiatives, such as the recently re-established Coast Guard Network for the West and Central African region (MOWCA). These initiatives are often assisted by other major international actors (Kraska & Wilson, 2009:62; Paterson, 2007:31). This assistance includes training, technical and material support (Gilpin, 2007). Numerous countries in the Gulf of Guinea has also benefited from aid and training programs distributed by the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), an institution which aims to promote American national security objectives in Africa (Nodland, 2010:202).

The rising incidences of piracy along the coastal waters of Somalia and Nigeria are an obvious indication that not enough is being done in order to curb attacks. Many ship-owners have investigated alternative means to protect their crews, vessels and cargo. An alternative solution would be the use of private security companies to ensure their safety (Anyu & Moki, 2009:119; Kraska & Wilson, 2008:42; O'Meara, 2007:7). The use of such services has been rare though, since armed security personnel will likely have to face charges relating to mercenaries if they were arrested (Govern & Winn, 2008:145).



Shipping companies have largely avoided arming the crew members of vessels due to legal restrictions and the possibility that violent situations could increase (Govern & Winn, 2008:145). Non-lethal methods of deterring piratical attacks, such as increasing the speed, water hoses, barbed wire surrounding the perimeter of the vessels and electric fencing have been used (Anyu & Moki, 2009:119; Govern & Winn, 2008:144; Luft & Korin, 2004:65).

A last option which many maritime companies are hesitant to use, is finding alternative routes for their vessels to avoid potential dangerous zones. In the case of ships traveling through the Suez Canal it is possible to reroute ships around the Cape of Good Hope, but the nature of maritime activity in the Gulf of Guinea makes it difficult to avoid dangerous areas. The drawback of this option is the increased costs involved. Although insurance costs might be less, increase in fuel usage and the time it takes to deliver goods would increase operating costs (Anyu & Moki, 2009:115; Kraska & Wilson, 2008:42; Luft & Korin, 2004:66).

### 1.3 Methodology

#### 1.3.1 Problem Statement

Maritime piracy poses a great threat, both short- and long term, to international maritime trade. Since maritime trade is such an integral part of international trade, all countries and consumers will be affected negatively.

In order to combat maritime piracy in Somalia and Nigeria, the root causes of piracy needs to be identified. This includes the political, economic, social and environmental issues that influence actors to engage in piracy. Furthermore, by investigating the link between state capacity (weak, failed, etc.) and the motives behind piratical behaviour (whether pirates are motivated by greed or grievance factors) we can more accurately address this phenomenon. This will aid in developing and formulating viable long term solutions to piracy. Also, the likelihood of piracy, once curbed in these areas, spreading to other coastal areas on the African continent needs to be investigated.

Short term solutions are necessary to ensure the safe supply of goods and petroleum through these regions in order to minimise the immediate effect on international trade. By familiarising ourselves and expanding our knowledge on the

direct manifestations of piracy, more effective counter measures can be taken. This is essential to formulate viable short term solutions to combat piracy.

### 1.3.2 Objectives and Aims

In order to formulate viable long term solutions to combat piracy in Somalia and Nigeria, it is necessary to investigate the root causes of piracy in these two countries. Investigating the political, economic, social and environmental causes of piracy in these two countries will be the primary objective of this study. Also, the correlation between state capacity (weak, failed, etc.) and the motives behind piratical behaviour (whether pirates are motivated by greed or grievance factors) will be investigated.

Secondary objectives will include investigating the physical manifestations of piracy. Establishing the modus operandi of pirates will enable relevant actors to establish viable short term solutions to combat piracy. Lastly, the likelihood of piracy spreading to other parts of Africa will be investigated.

### 1.3.3 Research Design and Methods

This study will be of a descriptive nature, falling under the broader term of qualitative research. Furthermore, a thorough study will be done of the root causes and motivations of piracy, as well as the patterns, character and nature of piracy in these regions, before recommendations for feasible solutions can be made.

This study will take an inductive approach. Thus, there will be no initial hypotheses. Instead, the necessary comparisons regarding differences and similarities of the causes of piracy will be done, before formulating hypotheses. Specific focus will also be placed on the relation between failed/weak states and piracy, as well as whether pirates' motives are driven by greed or grievance factors. A comparative approach will be taken to analyse the findings of this study.

#### 1.3.3.1 Sources of Data

This study will make use of secondary data. Useful sources include the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), a specialised unit of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), which provides up to date and accurate data regarding piratical incidents, as well as annual piracy reports. This source is used extensively by academic and

media publishers for their information regarding piracy. Published academic and media articles will also be used.

### 1.3.3.2 Time Frame

In order to contextualise the current situation, it is necessary to have a comprehensive overview of the history and development of these countries. Therefore, a starting parameter will not be defined. However, it is necessary to limit this analysis to the end of 2010. This is due to the constantly changing dimension of piracy. The latter parameter was chosen to prevent the continuous revision of data.

## 1.4 Conclusion

This study concerns piratical activity along the East and West coasts of Africa. Although piracy is not a new phenomenon in Africa, recent upsurges in the areas surrounding Somalia and in Nigeria have received renewed attention.

Preliminary insights from the literature review suggest that numerous political, economic and social factors have an influence on the causes of maritime piracy in these regions. Furthermore, a basic understanding of the nature of piracy as well as current countermeasures has been established.

The first section of this study will deal with the theoretical aspects of this study, including the defining “piracy”, the comparative analysis framework being used and the greed and grievance debates concerning piracy.

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 will comprise of the case studies of piracy in Somalia and Nigeria, respectively. These two chapters will briefly focus on the history of the two countries before discussing the causes of maritime piracy in the respective regions. The modus operandi of pirates as well as the current counter piracy efforts in these two countries will be investigated.

A comparative analysis of the two case studies will be done in Chapter 5, focusing on the differences and similarities between piracy in Somalia and Nigeria. This chapter will also compare the physical manifestations of piracy in these two countries and investigate the current measures to deal with the issue.

Chapter 6 will conclude this study with a brief overview of the research and findings.

## CHAPTER 2 – Piracy & Theory

### 2.1 Historical Perspective

Popular culture often romanticises pirates of yesteryear. They are frequently portrayed as outcasts who nobly have to fight “the system” in order to survive. The most famous of these included Blackbeard, Calico Jack and Captain Kidd, among others. More recently, famous pirates like Captain Hook and Captain Jack Sparrow have graced the silver screens and added to the disillusionment people have of pirates. In reality however, pirates have looted and pillaged, murdered and raped, and brought about insecurity in maritime trade routes, gaining them the status of “enemies of all mankind.” Furthermore, the act of piracy has long been considered as a universal crime (Campbell, 2010:20).

Historically, the most active time for pirates in Africa was during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. During this period, pirates were mostly active in North Africa and the Indian Ocean, and to a lesser extent in West Africa.

Piracy flourished during the 17<sup>th</sup> century in North Africa in the region that was referred to as the Barbary States. The Barbary States typically included Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. Technically, the “pirates” that operated in this region were privateers. Privateers, as oppose to pirates, were given permission from their governing authority to attack foreign vessels. However, during this period the major European powers of the time refused to recognise the authority of the rulers of these states. Consequently, they viewed all maritime vessels that originated from these countries that conducted warfare as pirates (Konstam, 2008:76).

The chief motivation behind attacks of these pirates was looting and robbing of foreign ships. Later however, these pirates turned to the slave trade as their main source of income (Konstam, 2008:90). By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Barbary pirates largely abandoned the slave trade and focus more on extorting protection money from traders in the region. The American Navy succeeded in stemming piracy in this region by negotiating peace treaties with the various rulers (Turner, 2010:167). Eventually, the colonisation of these states by the major European powers during the 19<sup>th</sup> century largely eliminated piracy in this region (Konstam, 2008:94).

The latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century saw the rise of piracy in the Indian Ocean. The trading routes between India and Europe were becoming increasingly busy. This was largely due to the increasing demand of goods from the East, especially spices (Konstam, 2008:249).

At that time, Navies of the major European powers were occupied with pirates in other areas, notably around India and the Arab states, and could not effectively protect their ships in the vast Indian Ocean (Konstam, 2008:251). Furthermore, pirates could easily find refuge along the East coast of Africa, especially in Madagascar. Madagascar was an ideal location to launch attacks against ships that travelled between Europe and the East who navigated around the Cape of Good Hope (Konstam, 2008:266).

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, piracy around the coasts of Africa and in the Indian Ocean was effectively eradicated. The resurgence of piracy only came about after the Second World War (WW2). The post WW2-era saw a decrease in size of many countries' navies which meant their naval capabilities was limited. Also, numerous countries were unable to patrol their own coastal areas, let alone the high seas, due to a lack of financial resources. In addition, the rapid advances made in technology in the post-WW2 period has allowed modern day pirates access to radios, navigation systems and high-performance boats, which has made piratical attacks easier (Konstam, 2008:304).

## 2.2 Definitions

### 2.2.1 Piracy

The most commonly used definition of piracy is as defined by the United Nations (UN). The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) defines the term as follows:

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

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

(c) any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b) (United Nations, 1994).”

Although this definition is used often, it has a major drawback. According to this definition, attacks on maritime vessels can only be considered piratical if the attacks take place “on the high seas.” Most attacks however, takes place within 200 nautical miles of most countries thus falling within the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) and sovereign territory of the respective countries and not on the high seas (O’Meara, 2007:3).

What is more, acts are only considered piratical in nature if they are “committed for private ends”. Therefore, committing attacks on maritime vessels to achieve political goals would not be considered piracy (O’Meara, 2007:3).

The International Maritime Bureau (IMB), a specialised unit of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), has a broader definition:

“Piracy is an act of boarding any vessel with the intent to commit theft or any other crime and with the intent or capability to use force in the furtherance of that act (O’Meara, 2007:3).”

In multinational institutional bodies such as the UN, definitions will tend to be broad, so as to accommodate as many actors as possible. However, in autonomous private entities, such as the IMB, definitions tend to be too narrow due to the specific use the definition is applied for. Therefore, in order to compensate for this, I will define maritime piracy as follows:

Maritime piracy involves private citizens launching offensive acts from one vessel against crews or property of another vessel in territorial or international waters. These acts can be considered piratical in nature irrespective of their personal or political agenda. Piratical acts include, boarding, extorting, hostage taking, kidnapping for ransom, murder, robbery, sabotage, seizure or intentional shipwrecking.

Unlike navies or coastguards, private citizens cannot exert force legitimately, therefore the specific reference to “private citizens”. Also, as mentioned, a great number of attacks on crews and vessels happen close to the coasts and not necessarily on the high seas.

It should be noted that mutiny, the act where sailors take over control of the ship from the captain, is not considered piracy under this definition. Therefore specific reference is made of two vessels being involved. If this was not the case, a passenger on a passenger liner, who stole from a fellow passenger, could be labelled as a “pirate”, which would not be accurate.

Although it is hardly ever the case in Somalia, attacks on vessels in Nigeria and specifically the Niger Delta is often done to further political goals. Active militant groups in the Niger Delta include the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and the Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force. This definition however, still deems politically motivated acts as “piracy” due to the offensive and disruptive nature of the action. Additionally, these actions, irrespective of their political agendas, hinder the operations of crews and vessels. However, political motives with regards to Jihad are omitted from this definition (see following section).

### 2.2.2 Maritime Terrorism

Since the September 11 attacks in the USA in 2001 by Al-Qaeda, renewed attention has been paid to all forms of terrorism, including maritime terrorism. Of particular interest is radical Islamic terrorism. Terrorism can be described as the use of violence to further political aims. Therefore, maritime terrorism would be politically motivated acts in the maritime environment. Thus, this study will not deem maritime terrorism, with jihadist motivations, as piracy.

Preliminary insight into piracy in Somalia indicates that economical, rather than political motives are responsible for the piratical attacks. Although political grievances might be the motives of groups such as MEND and the Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force, ideologically (i.e. religiously and politically), they do not share the same goals as radical Islamic groups such as Al-Qaeda. Therefore, political motives related to Jihad should be considered a factor apart from other



political motives. And as indicated earlier (see page 6), conclusive links between Islamic terrorism and piracy is yet to be found.

### 2.3 Comparative Analysis

One of the aims of a comparative study is to compare similarities and differences between different actors or situations. The advantage of this is to gain a greater perspective, or a “bigger picture” of the situation. By comparing two or more case studies, one can gain greater insight into certain phenomena, as well as explaining certain hypothesis. Explaining certain social phenomena and arriving at generalisations is the ultimate goal of comparative studies (Caramani, 2008:4).

Traditionally, nation states and their governments were considered to be the main actors in the political sphere. Therefore, the actions, inactions and policies of governments were considered to be the main variables in comparative studies (Caramani, 2008:6). Given that the field of comparative politics originated in Western-scholarly circles, the focus on states and incumbent governments is natural due to the encompassing role these actors perform in these political systems. However, just as the field of comparative politics evolved post-WW2 to include non-Western forms of governance, it once again needs to evolve in the post-Cold War era to include other non-governmental actors (Caramani, 2008:7).

In numerous cases, states and incumbent governments are no longer the most important political, economic or social actors in their respective environments. Additionally, non-governmental actors often transcend the boundaries of nation states. Increasing technological advancement and increasing integration of political, economic and social interactions between actors in the international sphere has allowed non-governmental actors to engage in functions that were traditionally performed by states. These actors include non-governmental organisations, multinational corporations, armed groups and criminal organisations, among other.

In Africa, the rise of non-governmental actors who performed tasks traditionally reserved for states came about for various reasons. Chief of which was the illegitimacy, inefficiency and inadequacy of incumbent regimes. Often, this was a direct result from weak post-colonial political institutions, as well as the increasing laissez-faire attitude governments adopted in line with Structural Adjustment

Programs (SAPs) proposed by international financial institutions (Bratton, 1989:408-410). Also, people often had a greater loyalty towards their respective clans than to their governments. Governments could no longer provide the necessary services to their citizens. Therefore, citizens looked towards other actors that could fill particular vacuums (Bratton, 1989:411). This was especially the case in African countries, including Somalia and Nigeria.

The last functioning central government of Somalia, which was recognised by the international community, was that of Mohamed Siad Barre, which collapsed in 1991. Since then, citizens have relied on warlords and other regional actors for providing services that is traditionally considered to be the domain of the state, such as security (Bradbury, 2008:47). Similarly, in Nigeria, citizens have increasingly relied on groups such as MEND to voice their political, economic, social and environmental grievances towards companies involved in the oil-extraction industry in Nigeria. Institutionalised corruption in Nigerian political structures prevents governments of taking effective action against companies who does not act in a responsible manner (BBC, 2011).

Thus, it is evident that nation states and their incumbent governments are no longer the only important actors in domestic and international spheres. Contemporary comparative analyses need to take into account other relevant actors as well (Neethling, 2010:93). In accordance to this, this study will not only focus on government or state actors, but other relevant actors as well.

#### 2.4 Greed and Grievance

Numerous theories exist to explain the phenomenon of civil war. One of the most prominent of these theories is the one developed by Collier and Hoeffler (2000). Their theory suggests that economic considerations, i.e. greed, motivates civil war, as oppose to motivating factors arising from political, economic, social or environmental grievances.

Although the greed versus grievance theory in their study is specifically applied to civil wars, the core principles of their theory (whether greed or grievance is the principle motivation behind conflict) can be applied to various forms of conflict and

more importantly, the actors involved in the conflict (Murshed & Tadjoeeddin, 2009:88).

As previously mentioned, actors involved with piracy in both Somalia and Nigeria claims to be acting in a piratical manner due to injustices they have suffered. And in both cases their claims have some legitimacy. In the case of Somalia, illegal fishing by other countries in their territorial waters is a reality, thus depleting their natural resources without compensating them. In the case of Nigeria, the environmental damage caused by the oil drilling and leaking oil-wells has caused considerable environmental degradation and a rapid decline in fish stocks, which threatens the livelihood of the local populace. Also, citizens of the Niger Delta feel that they are not adequately compensated for the petroleum resources extracted from the region.

Yet, in both of these case studies, pirates have attacked vessels indiscriminately, not only foreign fishing vessels or oil tankers. Therefore, this study, looking at the root causes of piracy, will use these two concepts to identify whether piratical attacks are motivated by greed or grievance.

## CHAPTER 3 – Case Study: Somalia

### 3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to give a brief overview of the political, economic and social issues that shaped modern Somalia. These events provide significant insights in the rise of maritime piracy in Somalia.

Somalia is situated in east Africa, bordering Djibouti to the northwest, Ethiopia to the west and Kenya to the southwest. The northern parts of the country borders on the Gulf of Aden, while the eastern and western parts faces the Indian Ocean (see Map C). This entire coastline stretches more than 3000 kilometres. The population of Somalia is almost 10 million with the capital, Mogadishu, the most populous.

Contrary to most other African states, the homogenous people of Somalia were divided during the Scramble for Africa resulting in numerous ethnic Somalis spread out in different countries. A democratic form of governance was created upon independence in 1960 but was replaced by military rule after one decade. After the exodus of the long-time military ruler Mohammed Siad Barre in 1991, the country was left without an effective central government upon which numerous political actors vied for control over different parts of the country. The political actors vying for political power evoked clan loyalties in order to garner support.

The economy of Somalia relied heavily on foreign aid after independence. Due to the lack of natural resources and developed industries the economy relied on foreign aid in order to be sustainable. One of the few natural resources that sustained the economy, the abundant fishing industry, was often threatened by over fishing especially by illegal commercial fleets.

Although piracy in Somalia waters is not a new phenomenon, the acts of piracy have greatly increased since 2008. Due to the geographical position of the country along the Gulf of Aden, one of the busiest maritime trading routes, it has become a great threat to international maritime trade.

## 3.2 Background

### 3.2.1 Colonial Occupation

Contrary to most other countries in Africa, Somalia is ethnically homogenous. Unlike most other African countries where colonial powers created artificial states consisting of numerous different ethnic groups, the largely homogenous population of Somalia was split up between different colonial powers (Britain, France, Italy and Abyssinia, also known as Ethiopia).

The primary interest of the main colonial powers during the 19th century was to control the Horn of Africa. Strategically, it was important so as to protect the trading routes between Europe, Asia and the Far East, and even more so after the Suez Canal opened in 1869 (Bradbury, 2008:25). Additionally, Britain wanted to safeguard the mutton-trade between Somalia and Yemen, since British troops were stationed in Yemen (Lewis, 2008:30).

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the Somali people were divided into 5 different sections by the colonial powers. The area surrounding Djibouti was controlled by the French. The British controlled the section that is currently known as Somaliland (with Hargeisa as capital), while the Italians occupied the east and east-western part (with Mogadishu as its capital). The other two sections which were located in the Northern parts of Kenya and the Eastern parts of Ethiopia were controlled by Kenya (which was a British colony) and Ethiopia, respectively (Lewis, 2008:29) (see Map C).

All of the colonial rulers aimed at creating a bordered centralised state within their respective territories. However, each of them had their own style of ruling which would leave marked differences between the territories after independence. They had developed different administrative systems, as well as security and financial systems – they even had different official languages (Bradbury, 2008:32).

The Italians were more active in Italian Somalia, e.g. having Italian expatriates in Mogadishu governing the country and actively promoting joint agricultural ventures between the locals and the expatriates (Lewis, 2008:30). The British however, did not develop a colonial administration. British Somaliland had no colonial population or valuable resources to protect. The strategic importance British Somaliland played vis-à-vis trading routes through Aden and later the Suez Canal only marginally

increased their willingness to govern. Instead, a system of indirect-rule was present, where British officials signed various treaties with the different clans in the area (Bradbury, 2008:24,25).

Shortly before the Second World War (WW2), Italy invaded and annexed Ethiopia, as well as the Somali region of Ogaden that was under Ethiopian control. However, after the Allied victory over the Italians, Haile Selassie was reinstated as the ruler of Ethiopia. He was also rewarded with the Ogaden area and the Italian colony of Eritrea (Lewis, 2008:33).

After the Italians were defeated in WW2, Italy lost her colonies and Italian Somalia was placed under the British administration. Later however, Italy regained control of their former colony, but Italian Somalia was administered by the Italians under UN Trusteeship (Lewis, 2008:32). British Somaliland gained independence from the Queen in June 1960 and Italian Somalia's independence followed shortly thereafter in July 1960. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1960, former British Somaliland and Italian Somalia united to form the Somali Republic (Lewis, 2008:33). The duality of their colonial legacies would prove to complicate cooperation within the new republic.

### 3.2.2 Independence (1960-69)

The dual colonial legacy that the newly formed Somali Republic inherited was only one of the challenges the newly independent state had to deal with. Some of the other challenges Somalia faced included a largely uneducated populace, a politicised clan system, poor economic performance, hostile neighbours (notably Ethiopia) and weak institutions (Abdullahi, 2007:42,43). Furthermore, the British and the Italians as well as the UN realised the prominence of the economic problem and donated generous amounts of financial aid to assist the new government (Lewis, 2008:34).

Initially citizens of both the former colonies were optimistic about the unification. The earlier excitement quickly faded when the authorities of the two former regions experienced problems with the amalgamation of the two territories and their institutions. The distance between the capital of former British Somaliland, Hargeisa, and the new capital of Mogadishu increased this strain (Bradbury, 2008:33).

Less than a year after the unification, friction between citizens of the two former colonies became evident. In 1961 a referendum was held in order to approve the provisional constitution of the new republic. The voter turnout of the former British Somaliland was low, and almost half of them rejected the union (Lewis, 2008:35). One of the clans that had considerable influence under British colonial rule, the Isaq, now only had minor influence in the new government. This affected the relationship within the new Somali Republic (Bradbury, 2008:33).

Despite this, the new democratic government survived. However, clan loyalties prevailed and nepotism, corruption and economic decline prevailed. One of the ways in which the new state tried to instil Somali nationalism, as appose to clan loyalties, was to propagate the annexation of other Somali territories that was occupied by Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti (see Map D). This eventually led Somalia to a closer relationship with the Soviet Union in order to procure military assistance (Abdullahi, 2007:43). Between 1963 and 1967 Somalia had to contend with two conflicts – one between guerrilla groups in Kenya and one between Ethiopian forces (Lewis, 2008:37).

By 1969 Somalia had their third democratic election within the first decade of democracy and was hailed by the West as an example of a successful African democracy (Bradbury, 2008:34). The 1969-election however, was marred by corruption and the election was rigged. After the election, all the elected members of opposition parties crossed over to the ruling party, effectively turning the republic into a one-party state (Abdullahi, 2007:43).

Shortly after the election, the newly elected president, President Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, was assassinated by one of his bodyguards. Before the parliament could elect a new leader, the military became involved and took control of the government in what has been described as a “bloodless revolution”. For the next two decades, the country would be run by Major-General Mohamed Siad Barre (Bradbury, 2008:35).

### 3.2.3 Mohamed Siad Barre (1969-1991)

As with the earlier years of the democratic government, the government of Siad Barre also initially enjoyed widespread support from Somalis. Improved economic



performance, more social services and less nepotism and corruption ensured support for Siad Barre's regime (Abdullahi, 2007:43). In addition, citizens could relate to and approved of the military government's rhetoric regarding anti-imperialism, pro-Islam and pro-Marxist-Leninism (so-called Scientific Socialism) (Bradbury, 2008:36).

However, the suspension of the constitution, banning of opposition parties and increased clampdowns on political dissidents largely turned the populace against the military government. Furthermore, the execution of ten prominent Islamic scholars and prosecution of numerous others who opposed Siad Barre's regime affected its popularity negatively (Abdullahi, 2007:44). Apart from his oppressive authoritarian rule, numerous other factors also contributed to the demise of Barre's regime. Chief of which includes his renewed pan-Somali ambitions, the 1974-75 drought, the refugee crises of 1978-1980, general economic failure due to dwindling aid supplies and ultimately the civil war of 1988. As we will discuss later, many of the causes of maritime piracy in Somalia can directly be linked to these issues.

### 3.2.3.1 Pan-Somali Ambitions

Mohamed Siad Barre's regime initially enjoyed great support. This support was in part due to his renewed efforts to reunite all the Somalis that were situated in Ethiopia and Kenya.

One of the remnants of the conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia during the democratic regime was the establishment of the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF). The WSLF actively fought for the reunification of Somalis living in the Ogaden area of Ethiopia (Lewis, 2008:43). Shortly after Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia was overthrown in 1974, Siad Barre decided to take advantage of the political instability and launched a military attack in support of the WSLF in reclaiming the Somalis and the Ogaden area (Bradbury, 2008:38).

Although the Soviets initially supported Somalia, they switched sides. Since Ethiopia was the regional superpower, the USSR thought Ethiopia to be the better ally. With the support of the USSR and their military resources, the new leader of Ethiopia, Mengistu Haile Mariam, soon overpowered Somalia's forces (Bradbury, 2008:39). This humiliating defeat is commonly noted to be the end of Siad Barre and his regime's popularity (Abdullahi, 2007:45; Bradbury, 2008:39; Lewis, 2008:44). Not

only did the conflict affect Siad Barre's popularity negatively, but it also proved to be a huge economic burden on the state, which was largely financed by foreign aid.

### 3.2.3.2 1974-1975 Drought

One of the foremost scholars on Somali history, I.M. Lewis, contends that the drought in Somalia had a great impact on social and political life during the mid-1970s (Lewis, 2008:62). Since the majority of the population were subsistence farmers, the death of most of their livestock due to the drought had a devastating impact on their lives.

Assisted by financial aid, the military government managed to resettle these pastoralists in state farms and fishing villages. Some farms consisted between 20-30,000 people and largely relied on irrigation and mechanisation (Lewis, 2008:63). These villages placed a great economic strain on the government.

After the drought, a great number of people, especially men, returned to their nomadic lifestyles. However, a great number of people remained in these villages, relying rather on a constant supply of fish for their survival than an unpredictable pastoralist lifestyle (Lewis, 2008:64). Thus, the fishing villages created a sizable part of the population that relied on maritime resources for their survival. If, as later happened, the survival of these communities were threatened by illegal fishing in their territories, Somalis had legitimate cause for being distressed. This issue will be discussed in greater detail later.

### 3.2.3.3 Refugee Crises 1978-1980

One of the consequences of the Ogaden War, in which Somalia supported the WSLF in reuniting the Ogaden with Somalia, was the great outpour of refugees from Ethiopia into Somalia. By the end of 1980 it was estimated that almost one out of every four people in Somalia was a refugee. Ironically, these "refugees" considered themselves Somalis, thus being refugees in their own home country (Lewis, 2008:65).

Despite the generous amounts of financial aid that the Somali government received annually, the huge influx of refugees placed a strain on the economy that was already destabilised by the drought of 1974-1975. What is more, the refugee camps

proved to be a useful resource for anti-government forces to recruit young males for their cause. Groups such as the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) and the Somali National Movement (SNM) would later launch attacks against the military regime (Lewis, 2008:67).

#### 3.2.3.4 Economic Failure, Reduction of Financial Aid

From the preceding three sections, it is evident that Somalia's economy, which was largely sustained by foreign financial contributions, was increasingly struggling. The conflict with Ethiopia, the drought and refugee crises stretched the government's budget to the limits. The level of foreign aid Somalia received becomes evident when one considers that, between 1972 and 1989, they had the highest number per capita beneficiaries of aid in Africa (Bradbury, 2008:42).

During the Cold War, Somalia's strategic position on the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea ensured continued support from opposing sides of the Cold War. Somalia first received aid from the USSR and after the USSR allied with Ethiopia, the US and Italy (Osman, 2007:101).

Unlike the USSR, the Western powers often had conditions attached to their aid. One of these that was particularly crippling to Somalia's economy, were the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) proposed by the International Financial Institutions. These SAPs aimed at liberalising the economy by implementing structural reforms such as deregulating the economy and privatisation (Bradbury, 2008:42).

As the Cold War came to an end, the US had less incentive to give foreign aid to Siad Barre's regime. Since the Cold War ended, Somalia was no longer strategically important for the national security of the US. The rise of the civil war (see following section) saw the evacuation of numerous aid organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, numerous NGOs and the UNHCR (UN refugee agency) (Bradbury, 2008:44). The peak of the economic crises was reached in 1990 when the Central Bank ran out of money (Bradbury, 2008:46).

### 3.2.3.5 Civil War 1988

During the late-1980s Somalia and Ethiopia signed a peace agreement. The Somali National Movement, which had their bases in Ethiopia, was afraid of losing their ally, Ethiopia, and thus their bases as well. They attacked Somali military bases in the north-western parts of the country. Soon other dissidents such as the Somalia Patriotic Movement and the United Somali Congress joined the fight against Siad Barre's government, plunging the country into a protracted civil war. Eventually, in January 1991, Mohamed Siad Barre fled Somalia (Bradbury, 2008:46). Since Siad Barre's exodus, Somalia has not had an effectively functioning central government that was recognised by the international community.

### 3.2.4 Post-Siad Barre (1991-2010)

The civil war in Somalia did not start with Siad Barre's fleeing, as noted above. However, after he left the country, even more chaos ensued as various political and business elites scrambled for power and territory. Within months of his exodus, Siad Barre's dictatorship was replaced by numerous warlords most of which had a similar dictatorial governance style. The widespread looting of public and private property, as well as the destruction of infrastructure, raping, killing and population evictions were characteristics of the period shortly after Siad Barre's exodus (Bradbury, 2008:47).

Although NGOs such as the International Committee of the Red Cross recognised the crises and established aid programmes shortly after Siad Barre left, the UN only responded in 1992. The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 751 which authorised the establishment of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM). Operation Restore Hope, consisting of 28,000 US troops, was sent in by US President G.H. Bush to assist the UNOSOM mission, after UN troops were attacked and looted. The aim of UNOSOM was to "create a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian relief" (Bradbury, 2008:48).

In 1993 the UN Security Council adopted a further resolution which established UNOSOMII. UNOSOMII created a large civilian and military peace force to assist in the reconstruction of the political, economic and social institutions of Somalia. After the infamous "Black Hawk Down" incident where a number of US soldiers were

killed, the US withdrew its troops. Other countries soon followed and UNOSOMII withdrew from Somalia in 1995 without managing to achieve any form of stability (Bradbury, 2008:48).

After the UNOSOM missions failed, various warring factions continued to control different areas of Somalia. In 2000 the Transitional National Government (TNG) was established by the Inter-Governmental Authority and Development (IGAD) organisation, a regional cooperation organisation, and was acknowledged by various international and regional organisations (such as the UN and the OAU). However, the TNG failed and was later replaced by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in 2004 (Beri, 2011:453).

The TFG did not manage to consolidate their power and by 2006 the Islamist Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) managed to gain control over most parts of Somalia, except Somaliland. One of the main advantages the UIC had over other warring actors was their ability to unite Somalis under the greater banner of Islam, while other warring parties operated according to clan-based identities. Fearing the rise of another Islamic republic, the US and Ethiopian forces managed to overthrow the UIC and reinstate the TFG (Beri, 2011:453).

In 2007 the AU established the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Since its inception, AMISOM has been hampered by insufficient funds for the operation. In 2008 a splinter group of the UIC, Al-Shabaab, has gained widespread control over the Southern parts of Somalia. By 2010, despite electing a moderate Islamist leader as President (Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, previous leader of the UIC), the TFG still has not managed to gain widespread support among Somalis and only controlled the capital of Somalia, Mogadishu (Beri, 2011:453).

It should be noted that piracy in Somalia have been present since the waning years of Siad Barre's regime, but that the UNOSOM missions managed to limit piratical attacks due to their naval presence in the region (Weir, 2010: 17). After UNOSOM left, warlords managed to limit piracy by selling fishing license to foreign fishing vessels and ensuring their safety in Somalia's waters (Weir, 2010: 19). During the short reign of the UIC, they proclaimed piracy as "Haraam" (against Islam) and acted proactively to end piracy by raiding known pirate ports and prosecuting known

pirates. With the ousting of the UIC however, piracy has flourished (Hansen, 2009:27).

### 3.3 Causes of Maritime Piracy

Numerous factors that contribute to maritime piracy in Somalia can be identified. The majority of these factors are land-based political, economic or social problems. These factors include the country's strategic position, the instability within Somalia, illegal fishing and dumping of toxic waste, economic deprivation, ineffective security, the social acceptability of piracy by fellow Somalis, the easy access to weapons and equipment and the increasing sums of ransoms pirates successfully acquire.

#### 3.3.1 Strategic Position

During the Cold War, both the USSR and later the US allied themselves with Somalia, providing military and financial assistance, and in return gaining access to strategically significant ports in Somalia. Given the country's geographical position on the bottle neck between the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea (which leads to the Suez Canal), it is still relevant today for security reasons regarding the maritime trade via the Suez Canal (see Map A & B).

Various figures place the number of maritime vessels travelling through this region between 20-30,000 vessels annually. Considering that the furthest point between Yemen (the opposite coast on the Gulf of Aden) and Somalia is only 170 nautical miles, all ships travelling through this region could be attacked from Somalia's shore (Beri, 2011:455).

Recent piracy trends off the coast of Somalia indicate that attacks in the Indian Ocean is increasing. The coastline facing the Indian Ocean is more than 2,500 km in length, thus presenting a great area from which attacks can be launched from. Since Somalis are familiar with the geographical landscape, they can easily move around to different places along this coastline to avoid capture (Yu & Piao, 2010:85).

#### 3.3.2 Instability within Somalia

The earlier analysis of the post-colonial history of Somalia highlights the political instability within the country. The lack of a central government for more than two decades has left the country in control of warlords. Currently, different areas of

Somalia are occupied by different warring factions and the TFG controls only parts of the capital, Mogadishu. Piracy is no longer committed by independent small gangs of outcasts. Instead, the level of planning and execution with which they operate are similar to those of sophisticated criminal organisations (Fouche, 2009:71).

Numerous actors play a part in the process of maritime piracy. Some actors are responsible for planning the operations, others for executing the plans, financiers of the operation, people who conduct negotiations, actors involved in supplying arms and equipment and actors who collect information on possible hi-jacking vessels (Yu & Piao, 2010:80). Although similar criminal organisations exist in other countries as well (e.g. Italian and Chinese Mafias or Islamic Terrorists groups), the absence of a central government has made it easier for Somali groups to operate.

One of the characteristics of Somali piracy after hi-jacking vessels is keeping them for ransom. They are only able to do this due to the safe sanctuaries they have on land (Baniela, 2010:198). In other countries where piracy is rife, such as Nigeria and those surrounding the Malacca Straits, some form of central governance, even weak, ensures that pirates do not have permanent and safe enclaves to operate from. The absence of a governance actor that is responsible to the international community in Somalia, allows for these safe and permanent enclaves.

### 3.3.3 Illegal Fishing/Dumping of Toxic Waste

Somali pirates often try to legitimise their attacks on foreign vessels in their EEZ by claiming that they protect their maritime resources. Contestation exists regarding this claim. Little doubt exists that illegal fishing and dumping of toxic chemicals took (and perhaps still do take) place in Somali waters. However, since Somali pirates started attacking various kinds of maritime vessels and not only illegal fishing vessels, the greed versus grievance debate regarding their motives have escalated (Baniela, 2010:196; Beri, 2011:456; Fouche, 2009:67; Ho, 2009:502; Ikken, 2009:34; Weir, 2010: 20; Yu & Piao, 2010:83).

As noted earlier, during the drought of 1974-1975, Siad Barre's government established numerous fishing villages. The fishing villages provided a great number of citizens with a sustainable living. Although many of the people returned to their pastoralist lifestyles after the drought, a great number remained in these fishing



villages. During this period, investment also ensured the creation of infrastructure for these villages, such as harbours (Ho, 2009:502).

During the initial period following Siad Barre's exodus, actors that were governing the South and Northern territories engaged in selling fishing licenses to foreign companies. Piracy developed slowly in the post-Barre era, since the warlords did not want anyone to undermine their lucrative business of awarding fishing licenses. Piracy only escalated in the Central part of Somalia where the Mugdug clan ruled. The herding of livestock and agriculture plays a major part in the lives of the inhabitants of the Northern and Southern parts of Somalia. However, the lack of any resources apart from fishing in the central part of Somalia made inhabitants of this area extremely reliable on Somalia's marine resources. During Siad Barre's rule, the Somali maritime forces protected the EEZ and in the short period (1991-1995) that the UN peacekeepers were stationed in Somalia, their navy protected the EEZ. But since the ruling Mugdug clan did not intervene in clashes between pirates and commercial fishing operations, the incidences of piratical attacks escalated (Weir, 2010: 17-19).

Many of the commercial fishing vessels that operated in the area had huge vessels and used technology that helped with finding the fish. In contrast to this, Somalis only had small vessels with no technology (Ikken, 2009:34,35). Illegal fishing methods, such as using dynamite, which lead to the degradation of fragile coral reefs, were often employed by foreign fishing vessels (Beri, 2011:456). Moreover, foreign vessels often dumped illegal toxic chemical waste in Somali waters that destroyed the marine resources and posed a health hazard for local communities (Ikken, 2009:34,35). Given the importance of the maritime resources to the livelihood of a great number of Somali citizens, it is clear that Somalis had legitimate grievances towards these foreign vessels.

Initially, numerous fishermen claimed to be "coastguards", protecting Somalia's marine resources and levying taxes on those deemed to be fishing illegally. Some of these groups included the National Volunteer Coastguard, The Guards of Somali Marine Resources, the Central Regional Coastguard and the Somali Coast Guard. Whether these "taxes" that were enforced were distributed among the populace

onshore or whether these “coastguards” were merely opportunistic thieves is still debateable (Baniela, 2010:197).

Although it is established that Somalis had legitimate concerns regarding the illegal fishing vessels in their territory, the indiscriminate attacks on all maritime vessels defeats their “grievance” motives for piratical attacks (Yu & Piao, 2010:83). Eventually, pirates not only captured and held foreign fishing vessels for ransom, but other commercial vessels as well. According to the IMB’s annual report on piracy “vessels attacked [in Somalia] included General Cargo, Bulk Carrier, all types of Tankers, Ro Container, Fishing Vessel, Sailing Yacht, Dhow and Tugboat, indicating [the] opportunistic nature of the attacks” (IMB, 2010:19). The bigger rewards that could be accrued by holding commercial vessels (e.g. oil tankers or cargo vessels) for ransom, enticed the pirates. This is a strong argument made by those who view the motives of Somali-pirates as predominantly greed-orientated.

### 3.3.4 Economic Deprivation

The collapse of the Central Bank at the end of Siad Barre’s rule is indicative of the dire economic situation the country is in. It has already been noted the extent to which Somalia was dependent on foreign aid for its survival, as well as how the end of the Cold War influenced the flow of financial aid to Somalia. Apart from Somalia’s rich marine resources, it has little to offer in terms of natural resources. Also, the decades of mismanagement, corruption, looting and conflict has prevented industries from developing. Other socio-economic problems related to the collapsing economy were the perpetual famine and unemployment problems.

Numerous factors play a part in the perpetual famine problem of Somalia. As already mentioned, the 1974-1975 drought and the refugee crises of 1978-1980 had a great effect on the lack of food. Another of these factors was the establishment of the Agricultural Development Corporation under the socialist regime of Siad Barre. Ironically, this corporation did not foster the “development” of the agricultural sector, instead it had the opposite effect. This corporation prohibited the private sale of any agricultural products, most notably staple diets such as maize, sorghum and sesame. The result was that production declined. Before this practice was in place, Somalia was self-sufficient in grain production. However, after a couple of decades

of this policy, grain production dropped and Somalia had to import this commodity (Osman, 2007:100).

Unemployment, together with famine, is another factor that contributed greatly to the rise of Somali piracy. Some estimates place the unemployment of urban Somalis at more than 65%. Although unemployment is not a new phenomenon in Somalia, the illegal fishing in Somali waters exacerbated this problem. The depletion of marine stocks due to the overfishing by commercial fishing vessels, lead to the decreased catch and thus increased unemployment for local fisherman. Fishing villages, together with people from other desperate areas, proved to be fertile grounds for recruiting pirates (Beri, 2011:456).

### 3.3.5 Ineffective Security

The lack of security around the coasts of Somalia has ensured that piracy is a low-risk, high-reward activity. The vastness of the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, together with the limited number of security forces to patrol the area has decreased the likelihood of the pirates getting caught. In contrast to this, the high ransom payouts received after the successful hi-jacking of a vessels, as well as successful negotiations for its release, has encouraged other would-be pirates to engage in piratical activities.

The difficulties in prosecuting pirates once they are caught, has decreased the risk to pirates. Numerous incidents have been recorded where pirates have been caught by foreign navies either in Somali waters or on the High Seas, but no countries were willing to bring charges against them. In once such incident in May 2010, the US navy apprehended 10 pirates while they were trying to hijack an Indian cargo ship. After being held captive for six weeks, they US navy set the pirates free, since no country was willing to prosecute them (Pham, 2010:332).

I.M. Lewis (2008:55) notes that “in this uncertain [pastoral] environment a man’s riches may disappear almost overnight in the wake of some natural calamity. Thus the Somali nomad is by temperament and practice a gambler who appreciates the transitory nature of success and failure.” This gives us great insight into the character of Somali people. And given Somalis’ tendency to “gamble” it is not surprising that they partake in this low-risk, high-reward activity.

### 3.3.6 Social Acceptability

The grievance orientated motive for engaging in piratical attacks has often been rejected due to the indiscriminate nature of hijackings. However, it is important to note that the Somali people might not share these sentiments. Whether outside actors believes the threat of illegal fishing is real or only perceived is irrelevant. To the local populace, the threat of the depletion of their marine resources is *real* and thus the acts of piracy are legitimised in the eyes of the local populace (Yu & Piao, 2010:84). And in the absence of a governing state that would normally resist piratical behaviour, the pirates have the support instead of resistance of the Somalis.

Although some Somalis complain about the insecurity they feel due to the weapons pirates carry with them, or their excessive consumption of alcohol and khat (a natural stimulant that is chewed), many residents benefit from the influx of capital. It is often the case that pirates pay Qaaraan to the local people, a sort of social welfare, gaining their favour (Hansen, 2009:26). Furthermore, the great influx of capital has created jobs and economic opportunities that did not previously exist. Many towns that are infamous for their pirate activity within the international community (such as Kismayo, Mogadishu and Eyl, see Map C) are famous in Somalia due to the booming nature of their economies (Ho, 2009:503).

Initially, after Siad Barre took power, his new regime was welcomed by the Somalis. The regime's sentiments regarding anti-imperialism and pro-Islam were shared by the Somalis who had extensive experience of foreign involvement in their sovereign affairs. Recent involvement of foreign navies in Somalia's EEZ and attacks by US forces on Somali soil against suspected Islamic terrorists has increased (Pham, 2010:331; Swart, 2009:55). Such actions could lead to renewed sentiments of anti-interference by external forces among Somalis. Moreover, such sentiments could fuel the support by locals of pirates who "protect" their territory.

### 3.3.7 Access to Weapons/Equipment

Almost since independence Somalia has been flooded with weapons. During the democratic era, the government armed for the pan-Somali struggle, and later Siad Barre did the same. During the Cold War the USSR and the US supplied military aid to Somalia at various times during their alliances. In the post-Siad Barre era the

weapons accrued by the Siad Barre regime became spoils for the contesting groups. Groups who were well represented in the security forces benefitted the most from the military hardware (Osman, 2007:105). Additionally, during the protracted civil war, militias had the opportunity to establish illicit weapon trading structures that still endures (Yu & Piao, 2010:85). In 1992 the UN imposed an arms embargo on Somalia, but the illicit trade structures had by then been well established and arms continued to flood in. The main source of weapons in Somalia is from Yemen (Beri, 2011:461).

Therefore, the level of weapons proliferation in Somalia is great and pirates could easily gain access to weapons. And the kind of weapons they most commonly use, AK-47s and Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs), is indicative of the sort of weapons that were widely used during the Cold War era.

The vessels Somali pirates use most often includes high speed skiffs and motherships. Traditionally, fishermen used these small skiffs, together with motherships. The motherships allowed fisherman to stay at sea for longer periods of time and allowed for more fuel, food and a place to fix their fishing nets. Modern Somali pirates use similar methods and often it is difficult for patrol ships or commercial vessels to distinguish between fisherman and pirates. Only after patrol ships board the “suspicious” vessel could they learn the true motives behind the occupants. While fisherman’s vessels would carry the tools of their trade, pirate vessels would typically include ladders, weapons and sophisticated navigation equipment (Weir, 2010: 20).

As noted earlier, piracy in Somalia no longer consists of small bandits. Instead they much closer represent organised crime groups. For pirates to gain access to sophisticated navigation equipment such as Global Positioning Systems (GPSs) and mobile or satellite phones via these networks would not be a problem. Also, part of this network is the informers at various ports in the region that provide information to the pirates on the activities of vessels in return for a cut of the ransom (Beri, 2011:454).

### 3.3.8 Ransom

Most ship owners, faced with the loss of their seafarers, vessels and its cargo, gives in to the ransom demands of pirates. Although the response by ship owners is logical, it sets a dangerous precedent. The more successful piratical attacks become due to increasing ransom pay-outs, the more people engage in this activity, creating a snowball effect. Therefore, the increasing pay-outs might lead to more piracy, which in turn increases the danger to other seafarers and vessels navigating through the region.

This is evident when one observes the rapid increase in piracy during 2008. In the first quarter of 2008, only 11 attacks were recorded in Somalia and the Gulf of Aden. This number rose to 28 in the second quarter, 50 in the third quarter and 51 in the last quarter (Yu & Piao, 2010:79). The ransom demands also increased from a couple of thousand dollars to millions of dollars. Most companies, as well as pirates tend to keep ransom negotiations quiet, but a record deal was reached in 2010 between Somali pirates and the owners of a Greek supertanker for US\$9 million (Beri, 2011:455).

### 3.4 Modus Operandi

Focusing on the direct manifestations of piratical behaviour in Somalia can be useful when developing anti-piracy measures. From the analysis above is it clear that the symptoms leading to piracy did not develop overnight, neither will the solution be. But given the great threat Somali-piracy poses to maritime security and international trade it is necessary to investigate these direct manifestations and develop more efficient and viable short-term countermeasures.

Thus far, the use of skiffs and motherships has been identified, as well as the use of sophisticated navigational and communications equipment. Recently, a more worrying trend has developed where pirates hijack commercial vessels and use them as motherships. Traditionally, the motherships that were used were similar to those used by fisherman. However, an additional surprise factor could be added to attacks from commercial vessels that act as motherships, since they will be less suspicious (IMB, 2010:19). Another tactic pirates have used to lure in unsuspecting targets is by fainting distress calls. Other seafarers, unaware of the motives of the pirates, gets

lured in and then attacked (Yu & Piao, 2010:85). Also, reports have shown that pirates sometimes conduct dummy attacks in an attempt to divert warships' attention from real attacks (Baniela, 2010:194).

Somali pirates are more likely to carry out attacks on vessels when it is not the monsoon season. The strong winds and rough seas are difficult to navigate with small skiffs. Somalia has two monsoon seasons, one running from December until March and another one running from June until September (Hansen, 2009:22). Furthermore, the time of day pirates are most likely to attack are between 2200 and 0600 hours. During these times it is more difficult to spot pirates, making it easier for them to operate and more difficult for self-defensive actions from vessels or deterrence from warships (Baniela, 2010:194).

The use of AK47s and RPGs is well known. However, little attention has been given regarding the level of violence the pirates employ during a hijacking or during ransom negotiations. According to IMB statistics, a total of 219 piratical incidents took place in the areas surrounding Somalia (including the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean) during January and December 2010. Of these attacks, 1016 seafarers were taken hostage, 13 were injured and 8 killed (IMB, 2010:19). Killing hostages are less likely to occur during Somali hijackings since that would affect ransom negotiations negatively (Baniela, 2010:195). The loss of lives is always unfortunate for those involved. But the loss of life is relatively low when one considers the number of attacks that took place. Also, in comparison to other conflict areas, the loss of lives is considerably less.

As already mentioned, pirates are no longer small gangs operating independently. The vast network of pirate organisations includes numerous actors. However, those actors who are involved in the actual piratical attacks can be divided into three groups. First are the local fishermen whose knowledge of the terrain and seafaring capabilities are useful. Secondly are the ex-militiamen who can be viewed as "the muscle" behind the attacks. Their knowledge of firearms and tactics are useful during attacks. The last group which can be identified are those who are responsible for operating the high-tech navigation and communication equipment used (Ho, 2009:504). This "job specification" leads to teams which are more capable and more effective.



Currently, there are four active pirate groups (or organisations) operating from Somalia. These include the National Volunteer Coast Guard (operating around Kismayo), the Marka Group (operating around Mogadishu), the Puntland Group (operating from Puntland) and the Somali Marines (operating around Central Somalia) (Swart, 2009:53). However, little is known about these pirates' organisations. More knowledge of figureheads and the organisational structure of these organisations would allow more effective combating against these organisations (e.g. placing targeted sanctions against several key leaders).

Contrary to most other piracy prone areas, hijacking ships and keeping them for ransom occurs often in Somalia. Two main reasons for this trend can be identified. Firstly, the lack of central government in Somalia (and thus security forces) allows pirates to operate from enclaves. After hijacking ships, they can safely dock them in these areas without fear of prosecution while they engage in ransom negotiations (Baniela, 2010:194). Furthermore, as noted earlier, pirates receive little resistance from the local populations due to their benevolent behaviour.

The second reason why Somali pirates prefer keeping ships for ransom rather than robbing them is due to the lack of infrastructure. In other areas where piracy is rampant (such as the Malacca Straits and Nigeria), some form of government is still present, maintaining the infrastructure. Moving massive amounts of goods or oil requires harbour infrastructure to unload the stolen commodities as well as road networks to transport them (Pham, 2010:333).

Apart from maritime security, another major concern regarding Somali piracy is the connection between piracy and maritime terrorism. However, the major difference between piracy and terrorism is the different motives of the actors involved. It has been noted that greed (as oppose to grievance) have lately been the main motivations of Somali pirates, which is evident by the various ships hijacked and held for ransom. In contrast to this, jihadist terrorism aims to inflict damage upon the West by disrupting the world economic order (Swart, 2009:49). Therefore, one can argue that the modus operandi of these differing actors would not be the same. Instead of hijacking vessels, jihadist terrorist groups' attacks would rather reflect that of suicide bombings. This was the case in one attempted and one successful attacks against US warships docked in Yemeni ports during 2000. In both suicide missions,

speedboats laden with explosives were used. While the attack against the USS Sullivans failed due to the speedboat sinking, the attack against the USS Cole left 17 sailors dead (Luft & Korin, 2004:64). A similar incident occurred in 2002 when a French Oil tanker, the MV Limburg was bombed (Swart, 2009:45).

However, a counter argument for the involvement of radical Islamic terrorism can be made. The possibility that jihadist movements participate in piratical activities off the coast of Somalia in order to finance their terrorist activities cannot be denied. Waging a physical war against “infidels” is only one part of the holy war. Al-Jihad bi-al-Mal, also known as Financial Jihad, concerns the raising of funds to support jihad soldiers (Swart, 2009:62). However, despite some plausible arguments made that identifies links between Somali pirates and jihad terrorism; no substantial links have been found (Anyu & Moki, 2009:116).

Recent trends of maritime piracy in Somalia also suggest that piracy is spreading out. Initially, most attacks occurred along the narrow corridor of the Gulf of Aden. However, the extensive use of motherships has allowed the pirates to attack further out in the Indian Ocean. One case that illustrates the reach of pirates was the hijacking of the MV Winfar 161, a Taiwanese fishing vessel, close to the EEZ of the Seychelles (Swart, 2009:49). This is also evident from the statistics in the IMB’s annual piracy report. During 2009 117 attacks were carried out in the Gulf of Aden, while only 80 were carried out in Somali waters. In 2010 these figures changed dramatically. While only 53 attacks took place in the Gulf of Aden, the figure for Somalia was almost three times that with 139 attacks (IMB, 2010:5).

This shift in attacks of the pirates is largely attributed to the extensive naval presence in the Gulf of Aden. With the increasing naval presence in the Gulf of Aden, successful attacks in Aden has decreased from one in three to one in four vessels successfully attacked (Ho, 2009:511). During 2010, almost 50 warships from various nations under different operations were present in the region (Baniela, 2010:201). The extent of the naval presence will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

### 3.5 Contemporary Anti-Piracy Efforts

Altogether, almost 50 warships provide security in the Gulf of Aden and the areas surrounding Somalia. The three major operations currently are the Combined Task Force-151, 2009 (US), Operation Ocean Shield, 2009 (NATO) and Operation ATLANTA, 2008 (EU). Operating alongside them are various warships from countries that are not aligned with any of these institutions, such as Russia, China, India, Japan, Singapore and Pakistan among others (Beri, 2011:457).

Amid the rapid rise of piracy during 2008, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution (1846) that allowed foreign navies to enter Somalia's EEZ to conduct anti-piracy missions. The TFG consented to this, since they do not have the ability or the resources to ensure the safety of their own territorial waters (Ho, 2009:508).

One of the main criticisms against these anti-piracy issues is that they engage with the problem only in the maritime sphere, while they essentially ignore the land-based origins of the problem (Baniela, 2010:199). One of the few operations that engage with the land-based issues is AMISOM, established in 2007, which has been ineffective mainly due to a lack of resources (Beri, 2011:461). The lack of other land-based initiatives could be ascribed to the previous failures of the UN's UNOSOM I and UNOSOM II, along with the US's Operation Restore Hope (Beri, 2011:453). Therefore, these forces seem to be addressing only the short-term problem and not the root causes of piracy in Somalia.

Other critics note that the warships seem to ignore the only legitimate motivation for piracy Somalis pose - that of illegal fishing and dumping (Ikken, 2009:34). Also, as noted earlier, these forces focus mostly on maritime traffic in the Gulf of Aden, leading to the spread of piracy throughout the Indian Ocean.

Regionally, numerous conferences has been organised in order to formulate policies regarding maritime piracy in Somalia. In 2008 the Arab League held meetings in Egypt with several countries (including Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Sudan, Jordan, Djibouti and Somalia's TFG) in the region to coordinate their anti-piracy strategies. A similar conference was held later that year in Nairobi, Kenya. This conference was supported by the UN and included delegates from 45 countries. In 2009, numerous governments adopted the Djibouti Code of Conduct Concerning the Repression of

Piracy and Armed Robbery in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, after a conference organised by the IMO (Ho, 2009:509).

Most commercial vessels navigating through the region employ self-protection, rather than anti-piracy measures. These measures include non-lethal deterrents (such as water cannons and electric fencing) and more sophisticated technologies (such as satellite tracking devices and the Long Range Acoustic Device) (Baniela, 2010:201). Other vessels mitigate the risks involved by navigating around the Cape of Good Hope. Although this option is more time-consuming and less fuel efficient making it more costly, shipping companies save on insurance costs and danger pay to seafarers (Ho, 2009:505).

### 3.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to give a brief overview of the political, economic and social issues that shaped modern Somalia, as well as the direct causes of maritime piracy in Somalia.

Although the historical developments in Somalia did not have a direct effect on modern day piracy, it did create favourable conditions for piracy to flourish. One of the historic factors that played a role in maritime piracy was the political, economic and social instability that was created during colonisation. The platform from which the post-independent governments had to operate was unstable and the democratic form of governance was soon after independence replaced by an autocratic leader.

Despite initial popularity, Mohammed Siad Barre's suppressing regime became increasingly unpopular. Furthermore, harsh environmental conditions such as the 1974-1975 drought, the refugee crises and the civil war plunged the country into deeper instability.

The direct causes of maritime piracy in Somalia have also been identified. These included the country's strategic position, the current instability within the country, illegal fishing and dumping by foreign vessels and on-going economic deprivation, as well as the lack of effective security in the maritime and domestic domains. Furthermore, the social acceptability of piratical activities have allowed pirates to engage in such activities unhindered from local populations while easily being able to access weapons and equipment have allowed them to engage in piratical activities.

Lastly, the increasing amounts and increasing number of ransom pay-outs have created a snowball effect which led to more people engaging in piratical activities.

In accordance with the secondary objectives set out in this study, this chapter focussed on the modus operandi of pirates, as well as current initiatives to counter piracy. From this chapter it became evident that pirates employ the same tactics for piratical activities that fishermen use. Also, pirates in Somalia are no longer small groups of bandits. Instead, they are highly organised criminal groups. And despite the huge international naval presence in the areas surrounding Somalia, limited success has been achieved.

## CHAPTER 4 – Case Study: Nigeria

### 4.1 Introduction

Nigeria, officially known as the Federal Republic of Nigeria, is situated in West Africa. Nigeria shares a border with Cameroon and Chad to the east, Niger to the north and Benin to the West (see Map E). The southern part of Nigeria is comprised of a coastline spanning 853 kilometres, situated in the Gulf of Guinea. The state is comprised of 36 federal states with a total population of 138 million people, the most populous in Africa. The capital of Nigeria is Abuja and the most populous city is Lagos.

Nigeria has an extensive history of contact with Europeans. Since the 15<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese (and later Dutch and British) merchants were trading with the inhabitants of areas that fall within the modern borders of Nigeria. During the “Scramble for Africa” and the period following it, different parts of West Africa were unified under British occupation and a unified colony was established. Nigeria gained independence from Britain in 1960. The post-independence period has largely been characterised by military rule, with only brief stints of civilian rule.

The long history of the involvement with European powers is attributed to the slave trade industry on the west coast of Africa. Later, trade in agricultural products became more prominent. Although Nigeria is rich in mineral resources (natural gas, gold and coal among others), the greatest source of revenue for the state is through the extraction of petroleum resources. Most of the petroleum resources are concentrated in the Niger Delta, a conflict prone area in the South East of the country.

Like most other African countries, borders drawn by colonial powers did not take into account the various ethnic groups of the local inhabitants. Thus, like most other African countries, Nigeria does not represent a homogenous population. The main ethnic groups are the Hausa and Fulani (about 30% of the population, inhabits the northern parts of Nigeria), Yoruba (in the south west, 17%) and the Igbo (inhabiting the eastern parts of Nigeria, 33%) and numerous other minority clans. Furthermore, the country is also roughly divided in half by the Muslim-dominated north and the Christian-dominated south.

Although piracy in Nigeria has not reached the same levels as in Somalia, it has become a major threat to maritime security. The areas surrounding the Niger Delta and Lagos are the most prone to piratical attacks. This study will mainly focus on piracy in the Niger Delta. Most of the attacks in the Niger Delta can be attributed to the conflict in the area (see Map F).

Following this brief introduction will be a more detailed discussion on the modern history of Nigeria and the Niger Delta. The second section of this chapter will deal with the factors attributing to maritime piracy in the Niger Delta. This section will be followed by a discussion on the direct manifestations of piracy in Nigeria. Finally, an analysis and evaluation will be done of current counter-piracy activities in the area.

## 4.2 Background

### 4.2.1 European Involvement

Initial European involvement along the west coast of Africa was primarily concerned with the slave trade industry. During the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, an estimated 3.5 million Nigerians became victims of the slave trade. During the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Portugal was the dominant European power involved in Nigeria. Later, during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the French and the British became more involved. Eventually, in 1807, the British banned the trade in slaves largely due to the pressures of Christian and business groups (Gordon, 2003).

Another significant development came after 1850 when quinine was discovered. Before quinine was discovered European expansion inland was limited. Quinine provided the first effective treatment for malaria. Upward expansion along the Niger River increased rapidly as more trading posts and missionaries were established. During this time, the palm oil trade became so valuable to the British that they established a consulate in the Niger Delta region (Gordon, 2003). Later, in 1891, the areas surrounding the Niger River formally became a protectorate of Britain (Crowder, 1978:161).

Although Lagos has long been involved in trade with the European powers, it was only colonised in 1861 by the British. This was done by the British in order to establish their dominance in the palm oil industry. Later, after the northern parts of Nigeria were colonised, Lagos would become the capital (Gordon, 2003).



In 1886, a Royal Charter was granted to the Royal Niger Company to administer the areas in Nigeria. The Royal Niger Company established a headquarters, as well as a constabulary, courts and the necessary administrative institutions to manage the area. They also expanded their territory inland by signing treaties with the local groups (Burns, 1972:158-168). In 1899 the British government revoked the Charter, largely due to complaints of unfair trading practices by the Royal Niger Company. Also, the threat of other European powers necessitated more direct involvement by the British government (Crowder, 1978:171).

During 1900 and 1903 Frederick Lugard, the High Commissioner, managed to consolidate British power over the northern territories of Nigeria. He achieved this goal via treaties with local leaders. These diplomatic measures between the British administration and the local leaders would later become known as indirect rule and would be used effectively across northern Nigeria. When diplomatic measures failed, Lugard merely coerced groups into submission (Library of Congress, 2008:3). The northern and southern territories of Nigeria were eventually unified to form the new nation of Nigeria in 1914 (Crowder, 1978:191).

#### 4.2.2 Colonisation

Economic viability was the main motive of the unification of the northern and southern protectorates. The northern region placed increased strain on the British government and taxpayers because it was not economically viable. The north did not have access to maritime trading routes because it had no access to the oceans. Furthermore, the lack of transport infrastructure ensured that trade was limited in the north. Contrary to this, the southern region was prosperous. By amalgamating the two territories the excess monies of the south could be redirected to sustaining the north (Crowder, 1978:196). It should be noted that the southern part of Nigeria comprised two different administrative regions (commonly referred to as the eastern and western regions).

Despite the merger of some government departments, such as the treasury, the railways and the post and telegraph departments, not much political integration took place. While the southern parts were governed more directly, the north was still governed according to the ideology of indirect rule (Falola, 1999:69). Colonial rulers left the governance of groups up to their traditional leaders and their respective

governance methods, as long as they accepted British authority, cooperated with British officials and did not engage in slave trade (Library of Congress, 2008:3).

Under the administrative methods the colonial rulers applied in the north, indirect rule, traditional rulers were more powerful. Since these rulers were employed by the colony and responsible only to the colony (as opposed to their people), traditional checks and balances faded away. Local kings and chiefs tended to abuse their powers for self-gain (Falola, 1999:72). Furthermore, the leaders exempted family members and friends from taxes, creating a system of patronage. The rest of the local populations however, had little avenue for complaints against their leaders (Gordon, 2003). Corruption in all its various forms (bribery, theft, extortion, nepotism and patronage) is still a major characteristic of contemporary Nigeria.

In order to avoid competition for British firms, industrialisation needed to be avoided in British colonies. Economic activities in colonies often merely involved extracting natural resources and transporting it to Britain while also serving as markets for finalised goods. This was also the case in Nigeria. The only industry that was developed to some extent was the agricultural industry, of which the surpluses were exported (Falola, 1999:74). The underdevelopment of Nigerian industries was prevalent in the post-independence era.

#### 4.2.3 Nigerian Nationalism

During the 1930s the economic depression that started in the United States spread throughout the world. The increasing pressure on the financial situation of Nigerians and their increasing disillusionment of the colonial authorities led to the creation of organisations which represented the local populace and their issues.

One of the early movements that rejected the inherent racism of the colonial education structure was the Nigerian Youth Movement, formed in 1936. Students of the Yaba College, which were merely educated to become civil servants, wanted the curriculum to include numerous professions. Although their initial concerns regarded education, this mandate later expanded to include broader issues such as anti-imperialism, economic exploitation and social inequality (Gordon, 2003).

During WW2 about a 100 000 Nigerians were recruited to serve in the British forces. Throughout the war they were exposed to Allied propaganda regarding freedom,

liberty and equality. These principles were also expressed in the Atlantic Charter of the newly formed United Nations. Upon return the Nigerian soldiers propagated these views to fellow Nigerians, which exposed the double standards of their colonial power (Gordon, 2003). Unlike in most other African countries, the transfer of power in Nigeria between the colonial power and its colonies was peaceful. Between 1945 and 1960 numerous constitutional changes led to the independence of Nigeria.

#### 4.2.4 Independence (1960)

Upon independence in 1960, Nigeria had numerous political, economic and social issues that needed to be addressed. These issues were largely as a result of the administrative policies employed by the colonial administration. The main problems included the disparities created between the northern and southern (collectively the eastern and western region) territories, the underdevelopment of the economy and the legacy of corruption. Throughout the next section, it will become evident that these issues can be directly linked to the failures of the post-independence governments, civilian and military, as well as to the factors that led to the rise of piracy in Nigeria. One of the colonial legacies that did not last in the post-independence era was the Nigerian nationalism.

##### 4.2.4.1 First Republic (1960-1966)

At the time of independence, foreign companies were still the dominant force in the economy. Therefore, many actors wanted to gain political power in order to gain access to public funds for self-enrichment (Gordon, 2003). For the duration of the first republic a fierce political rivalry existed between the northern parts of the country (the dominating political force) and the southern parts (which dominated the economic sphere). In their quest to gain power, politicians often evoked ethnic, religious and regional identities in order to gain public support. During this period methods of bribery, theft, extortion, nepotism and patronage were employed by politicians to increase their sphere of influence. This increased the divisions among Nigerians, as well as delegitimised the government (Falola, 1999:102).

The first democratic election of the post-independence period was held in 1964. In the run up to the elections, unsurprisingly (given the north-south divide), two coalitions emerged. While the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) represented the

majority of northerners, the United Progressive Grand Alliance represented the southerners (Falola, 1999:105). Although the NNA won the elections, the election process was marred by fraud and political violence was widespread. Similar conditions and practices were present in the 1965 regional elections (Gordon, 2003). In January 1966, the military successfully executed a coup, which was followed by a counter-coup in July of the same year when Lieutenant-colonel Yakubu Gowon became the new head of state (Falola, 1999:119).

#### 4.2.4.2 Military Rule (1966-1979)

The initial period after the First Republic was dominated by the Nigerian civil war. In 1967 the eastern part of Nigeria unilaterally declared their independence. Immediately after this, Gowon declared a state of emergency and assumed full power over the government. The main cause of the conflict had its origin in the fragmented nature of the Nigerian society, the unequal distribution of political and economic power, corruption and oil.

It should be noted that the extraction of oil began in all earnest during the first period of military rule. Most of the oil was situated in the eastern parts of Nigeria, around the Niger Delta. At independence, Nigeria only produced 17000 barrels of oil a day. A decade later, this figure increased to more than a million barrels a day (Falola, 1999:132). Access to these resources would dominate the political agenda of most actors in the following decades.

Since the eastern parts of Nigeria consisted merely of federal states, the greatest proportion of revenue generated by the oil extraction in this region was transferred to the central government. The inhabitants of eastern Nigeria resented this practice, while the northerners supported this system. This allowed them access to the windfalls that often accompanies the discovery of oil (Falola, 1999:126).

The conflict endured for almost 3 years, in which time an estimated one million Nigerians lost their lives. The conflict ended in 1970 after Gowon's forces defeated the dissidents in the eastern territories (Falola, 1999:123).

During the 1970s Nigeria entered a period of relative political stability, largely due to the increasing revenues accumulated during the 1973/1974 oil crises. Nigeria, who had joined the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), joined other

oil producers in manipulating the oil markets by regulating the exports of oil. While the state enjoyed generous profits from the oil industry, excessive spending ensued. However, the drop in demand of oil during the late 1970s again brought about instability. The Gowon regime was also accused of being excessively corrupt and allowing inflation to go unchecked, which led to declining living standards for the majority of people (Falola, 1999:138). Eventually, Lieutenant-General Murtala Mohammed took power in a bloodless coup in 1975 (Library of Congress, 2008:5).

In 1976 Mohammed was assassinated in a failed coup attempt, upon which Lieutenant-General Olusegun Obasanjo succeeded Mohammed. Before his death, however, Mohammed implemented wide ranging programs to address corruption, to overhaul the civil service, as well as a four year program for the transition from military rule back to civilian rule. Obasanjo carried out these initiatives and in 1979 Nigeria again held democratic elections (Library of Congress, 2008:5; Falola, 1999:152,154,161).

#### 4.2.4.3 Second Republic (1979-1983)

The parties and politicians that contested in the 1979 election were very similar to those that ruled during the First Republic. The presence of the military ensured that the elections were devoid of political intimidation and fraud. The only controversy surrounding the 1979 election regarded the presidential elections. The presidential candidate, Alhaji Shehu Shagari did not fulfil the criteria of becoming president, but the issue was cleared up by the Judiciary and Shagari was declared the winner (Gordon, 2003).

Since the political parties and politicians closely represented that of the First Republic, similar issues led to its downfall. The major difference between the two republics was the windfalls brought about by the petroleum extraction industry. Not only did conflict between the oil producing and nonoil producing states increase, corruption spread to virtually every section of society as politicians increased their patronage networks (Gordon, 2003).

Once again, the 1983 elections were plagued by fraud and political intimidation was widespread as more actors vied more actively for the spoils that government

positions bring. On New Year's Eve 1983, Major General Muhammadu Buhari seized power in a military coup (Library of Congress, 2008:5).

#### 4.2.4.4 Military Rule (1983-1998)

The last period of military rule, before Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1998, was characterised by stricter authoritarianism, more corruption, more violence and less accountability. Three military rulers dominated this era, Major General Buhari (1983-1985), Major General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1992) and General Sani Abacha (1993-1998) (Falola, 1999:179; Library of Congress, 2008:6). During their regimes, it became evident that Nigeria had become a rentier state.

Rentier states are often classified as those states who relies almost exclusively on profits from external financial sources (as opposed to taxes) to finance their regimes and the state. Accountability towards citizens in rentier states is often low, since governments feel they have no responsibility towards citizens because they are not reliant on their financial support (taxes) to uphold the state and the government. The development of other sectors of the economy is often low, due to the easy access to funds from the external source (Falola, 1999:143). This was the case in Nigeria where oil acted as the external financial resource.

Throughout his regime, Buhari gathered little public support and Major General Babangida used this to his advantage to oust Buhari in 1985. Babangida proved equally unpopular largely due to the weakening economic situation of both working and middleclass Nigerians. The rising national debt led to the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) which had a devastating effect on the Nigerian Economy (Library of Congress, 2008:6).

One of the consequences of the implementation of the SAPs was the devaluation of the Nigerian currency, the Naira. As the currency weakened, imports became increasingly expensive. Due to the rentier nature of the Nigerian state, local industries never developed and the vast majority of commodities were imported. The problem was so severe that even the middleclass experienced financial woes (Falola, 1999:185).

Babangida implemented political reforms to allow a return to civilian rule, but throughout the process he acted as a spoiler, due to his unwillingness to relent his

power. However, fearing the possibility of a coup, he installed an Interim National Government and vacated his office in 1993 (Falola, 1999:193).

Of all the military rulers General Sani Abacha, who took office in 1993, is seen as the most corrupt and most despotic. He also half-heartedly implemented democratic reforms due to mounting international and domestic pressures. After his sudden death in 1998, his chief of defence, Major General Abdulsalami Abubakar assumed control and oversaw the change to civilian rule (Library of Congress, 2008:6).

#### 4.2.4.5 Third Republic (1999-Present)

In 1999 the previous military ruler, Olusegun Obasanjo, was elected as president. The election process was flawed and the former US president, Jimmy Carter, who monitored the election, refused to endorse the results (Gordon, 2003).

One of the major problems that faced the Obasanjo regime was the ethnic strife in the eastern states, where insurgents launched attacks against foreign oil companies and their workers. Obasanjo was re-elected in 2003 but his reign ended in 2007 when his mandated term as president ended. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua won the 2007 presidential elections (Library of Congress, 2008:7). Vice-President Goodluck Jonathan succeeded Yar'Adua early in 2010, after he fell ill. After Yar'Adua passed away, Goodluck Jonathan was inaugurated as the 14<sup>th</sup> president of Nigeria (BBC, 2011).

It is important to note that piracy was largely contained during the military regimes, mainly by the use of force. In the Third Republic however, piracy had greatly increased. This can be attributed to various factors, which will be discussed in a following section.

#### 4.2.5 Niger Delta

The area known as the Niger Delta is situated in the south-eastern part of Nigeria and constitutes nine of the 36 states in Nigeria. About 30 million people inhabit this region. The vast riches of petroleum resources in the Niger Delta are in stark contrast to the heightened levels of poverty and underdevelopment of the area. The extraction of petroleum resources contributes almost 80% of government revenues,



yet a fraction of this is reinvested in the area while extensive environmental damage threatens the lifestyles of the Niger Delta inhabitants (Ikelgebe, 2005:208).

Political, economic, social and environmental grievances led to the rise of militias in the Niger Delta. Most militias operating in the Niger Delta claim to be fighting these injustices of the Niger Delta people. It is important to note the difficulty of differentiating between militias and pirates. Ibaba and Ikelegbe (2010:10) notes that “there is a strong linkage between militias, armed gangs and cultists, the pirates and the bunkerers (the illegal siphoning of fuel). The boundaries between them may be fluid as one group could easily merge into the other.” Ibaba and Ikelegbe (2010:10) continues: “to separate pirates from militias would be like separating Siamese twins rather than separating sheep from goats.” According to Vreÿ (2009:24) “aggressors like MEND use a deliberate campaign at sea to influence decisions about landward matters, and the oil industry with its maritime footprint offers lucrative opportunities.” It is thus safe to conclude that piracy is often a “tool” used by militias to further their political or personal agendas. Thus, in order to adequately address the factors attributing to maritime piracy in the Niger Delta, a holistic historical view of the *conflict* in the Niger Delta is necessary.

#### 4.2.5.1 Resistance Pre- and Post-Independence

As already noted, oil was discovered in the Niger Delta in 1956 and extraction began in 1958. Initially, conflict in the Niger Delta centred on the marginalisation of the minority groups in the Niger Delta. Later, after the extraction of oil began, control over the revenues generated from the oil industry dominated the conflict. Due to the political division created during the colonial era, the politically dominating northern regions had the power to allocate funds from the oil extraction industry resulting in great flows of capital towards the northern areas of Nigeria, neglecting the development of the Niger Delta. During the First Republic, protests in the Niger Delta were largely peaceful. This changed after the military coup by Lieutenant-colonel Yakubu Gowon in 1966.

In 1966 the Niger Delta Volunteer Service (NDVS) emerged under the leadership of Adaka Boro. The NDVS was a secession movement and unilaterally declared the Niger Delta independent. Gowon reacted to this by declaring a state of emergency and launching a war against the Niger Delta dissidents, embroiling the country in a

civil war. The war ended almost three years later after Gowon's forces defeated the NDVS (Ibaba & Ikelgebe, 2010:6).

In subsequent years political dissidents were successfully oppressed by military rule. During the 1970s oil-boom, the communities in the Niger Delta redirected their grievances towards Multinational Oil Companies (MNOOC) operating in the region that were profiting heavily from the oil-crises. They demanded adequate infrastructure as well as remuneration for the environmental damage caused by the industry. Protests however, were largely non-violent and manifested in ways such as blocking access to roads and occupying oil facilities (Bischoff, 2010:42).

Violent protests in the Niger Delta only emerged during the early 1990s. The increased oppression by military forces was met with increasing violent action against the state and MNOOCs by Niger Delta inhabitants. In 1995 the leaders of one the most prominent resistance group, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), including the leader Ken Saro Wiwa, were executed. Instead of stemming the conflict in the Niger Delta as the state had hoped, the execution of MOSOP leaders merely increased the opposition to political and economic oppression (Bischoff, 2010:43). The period after the late 1990s and especially after the transition to democratic rule saw the increase of militias fighting for the political and economic control of the Niger Delta.

#### 4.2.5.2 Third Republic (1999-Present)

Numerous militant groups have arisen in the Niger Delta since the return to civilian rule in 1999. Most of them were organised along ethnic, regional or cultural lines, such as the Ijaw National Congress, the Egbesu Boys of Africa and The Atangbala Boys (Courson, 2009:14). The first organisation to transcend these divisions was the Movement for the Emancipation for the Niger Delta (MEND), which emerged at the end of 2005.

Despite uniting various non-state warring factions of the Niger Delta, MEND is not a unified, coherent organisation. Instead, MEND acts more as an umbrella organisation for various dissident-groups in the Niger Delta. Jomo Gbomo, spokesperson of MEND, notes: "MEND is an amalgam of all arm bearing groups in the Niger Delta...", and he continues by stating their objectives: "...fighting for the

control of oil revenue by indigenes of the Niger Delta who have relatively no benefits from the exploitation of our mineral resources by the Nigerian government and oil companies over the last fifty years (Gbomo quoted in Obi, 2009:122).” MEND attempts to achieve these objectives by using military force to attack the oil industry. During their first major attack in January 2006, MEND kidnapped foreigners who were involved in the oil extraction industry and held them for ransom. Since then kidnappings for ransom became a regular tactic of MEND. Other tactics include, attacks on MNOCs infrastructure (including offshore oilrigs, pipelines, production facilities, transport vessels and vehicles), attacks on Nigerian soldiers and on government buildings (BBC, 2011).

Since the return to civilian rule in 1999, numerous efforts have been made by successive governments to resolve the conflict in the Niger Delta. Some of these initiatives include the establishing of the Niger Delta Development Board (1961), the Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (1992) and the Niger Delta Development Commission (2001) (Ibaba & Ikelgebe, 2010:27). In 2009 the government offered all militants an amnesty deal and a similar deal was offered in 2010 by President Jonathan, both of which have failed to establish a viable end to the conflict (Risk Intelligence, 2010:2). Instead of addressing the root causes of the conflicts the government merely tries to buy off the militants in order to regain easy and uninterrupted access to oil supplies, which inevitably leads to the failure of these programs.

#### 4.3 Factors Contributing to Maritime Piracy

The following section aims to identify the main factors attributing to piracy in the Niger Delta. Due to the interconnectedness of piracy and the militias, it is inevitable that some factors that lead to the conflict in the Niger Delta could also lead to maritime piracy in the region. As noted earlier, piracy is often an instrument used by militias to further their political or personal agendas.

The main factors contributing to piracy in the Niger Delta includes the political marginalisation of the Niger Delta inhabitants, economic deprivation, corruption, ethnic conflict, environmental issues, social acceptability of piracy, ineffective security of the region and the favourable geography of the Niger Delta, increased

maritime traffic in the region, ransom demands that are being met and the easy access to weapons.

#### 4.3.1 Political Marginalisation

The colonial legacy of political dominance by the major ethnic groups endured in the post-independence era. While the southern states were economically prosperous, the northern states enjoyed the greatest political power after independence. Most states in Nigeria were dominated by one of the three major ethnic groups, the Hausa-Fulani, the Igbos or the Yoruba. Those who held office were mainly from these ethnicities and distributed government funds according to their respective ethnic ties. This meant that the more than 140 minority groups which inhabit the Niger Delta had very little control over the revenues that were generated in their territory (Asuni, 2009:5).

In a political system that is dominated by a majority, it is difficult for minority groups to effectively change the constitutional imbalance via legitimate means. Due to the strong hold on power and the advantages of said power, the majority group will be unlikely to willingly secede some of its power.

One example where the northern states used their political power to their advantage was regarding the allocation of resources, often withholding resources. During the era that agriculture formed the greatest part of the economy, the fiscal policies favoured the states in which these products were obtained, i.e. the northern states. However, these fiscal policies do not apply to petroleum resources, which are considered to be a federal asset, and not belonging to those communities in which they are extracted, i.e. the Niger Delta (Akpan & Ering, 2010:149). The people of the Nigerian Delta perceive this to be an injustice and a source of grievance.

#### 4.3.2 Economic Deprivation

As mentioned above, the allocation of government revenues is dominated by the central government and the majority groups which are in power and due to the marginalisation of minority groups this often leads to the underinvestment and underdevelopment of their regions. The minority groups of the Niger Delta perceives their situation particularly unjust, since the petroleum resources extracted in their region constitutes up to 80% of government revenues.

During the successive military regimes the percentage of oil revenues attributed to the Niger Delta states were increasingly adjusted downwards. While 50% was attributed to the oil producing states in 1966, the Niger Delta states' share of oil revenues declined to as low as 1.5% during the 1990s (Obi, 2009:115). Added to this the increased costs of developing the region due to its swamp-like geography, it is clear why the region still lacks adequate infrastructure, why unemployment rates are high, and why high levels of poverty persist. After the return to civilian rule in 1999 the oil producing states' share of the revenue was increased to 13%, but this is still far from the 50% groups such as MEND demands (Obi, 2009: 116).

Adding to the underdevelopment of the region is the lack of employment opportunities, especially for the youth, in the Niger Delta. Many of the youths who do get the education opportunities often have to go to other regions to receive their education. Upon their return to their homelands they have little employment opportunities. These youths often find the financial incentives posed by militia groups and their various activities such as piracy, bunkering, and kidnap for ransom attractive (Afinotan & Ojatorotu, 2009:195). Despite the size of the petroleum extraction industry and the numerous MNOCs involved in the Niger Delta, they pose few employment opportunities for the locals. The MNOCs often only employ highly educated people in specialised posts. These individuals are often foreigners who earn high salaries. It is easy to see why pirates predominantly kidnap foreigners to hold for ransom. The resentment towards these individuals as well as the high value placed on them by the MNOCs makes them attractive targets (Nodland, 2010:194).

#### 4.3.3 Corruption

Adding to the economic woes of the Niger Delta is the extensive, institutionalised corruption that persists in Nigeria. Actors' vying for political power in order to gain access to public funds for their personal enrichment started in the colonial era, but it was more significant after 1960. It is estimated that more than \$380 billion dollars has either been stolen or wasted by Nigerian governments since independence (Courson, 2009:16). In addition it is estimated that 80% of the wealth generated by the petroleum industry in the Niger Delta only benefits 1% of the population. Most of this private wealth is invested abroad, as appose to Nigeria, which contributes to the underdevelopment of the country and the region (Obi, 2009: 124).

The rise of piracy in the Niger Delta is largely attributed to corrupt government officials and their involvement with illegal bunkering starting in the early 1990s. Bunkering is an expensive exercise that requires sophisticated equipment. Often, only the elites (mostly government officials) were able to supply this equipment as well as the political connections which allowed such activities to go unnoticed. These corrupt elites often supplied militias with the necessary weapons and vessels in order for them to siphon off fuel, which would then be sold on the black market (Ikelgebe, 2005:226). This practice not only ensured that militias have the necessary tools to engage in piratical acts, but they also gained the experience of operating in the maritime domain. Furthermore, militias also secured funds which they could use to expand their own operations.

Interestingly, piratical attacks in the Niger Delta increased after the return to civilian rule in 1999. This is largely attributed to corrupt politicians who employed militias during their electoral campaigns to intimidate their opponents. After the elections, these skilled and armed militias were no longer needed by the politicians and they turned to other activities such as bunkering, kidnapping for ransom and piracy to fulfil their financial needs (Ibaba & Ikelgebe, 2010:13).

#### 4.3.4 Ethnic Conflict

Another indirect manner in which corrupt politicians' practice of hiring militias during elections led to an increase in piracy, was by fuelling ethnic rivalries. As noted earlier, militias are often organised along ethnic lines. The perceived favouring of one ethnic group over another by influential politicians led to increased ethnical tension. The competition to access the limited resources available to the Niger Delta inhabitants increased the conflict. The three most prominent groups in inter-ethnic fighting in the Delta were the Urhobos, the Itsekiris and the Ijaws (Asuni, 2009:11). This in turn led to more piracy as the militias needed to fund their inter-ethnic conflicts.

Adding to the ethnic conflict and indirectly to the increase in piracy is the practice of MNOCs to pay off militias in order to gain their favour and possibly mitigating the risk of sabotage attacks. This in turn increased competition among various ethnic groups in the region, which in turn led to an increase in piracy to fund the conflict (Obi, 2009: 124).

#### 4.3.5 Environmental Issues

Environmental degradation caused by the oil extraction industry is one of the main motivations behind militant groups such as MEND. This issue is exaggerated by the fact that the Niger Delta populations receive few benefits while their livelihood is destroyed. Not only do militias use piracy and kidnapping for ransom as political tools to further their ideology, but fishermen and farmers increasingly turn to piracy as a financial source due to the destruction of their lifestyles caused by the environmental disasters. In Nigeria, similar to Somalia, the environmental issues is a legitimate cause for grievance which can be exploited by opportunists to indulge their greed.

The Niger Delta is a delicate ecosystem containing freshwater swamp forest, mangrove forest, brackish swamp forest and lowland rainforests (Imoobe & Iroro, 2009:56). Some of the ways in which the Niger Delta inhabitants benefit from the region is by picking medical herbs and bark, fish and shrimp, crabs and clams and collecting wood for energy and shelter (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009:194). Due to the underdeveloped nature of the Niger Delta, the majority of inhabitants are either fisherman or agriculturalists and these resources are vital to their lifestyle.

There are various ways in which the oil extraction industry contributes to the environmental degradation of the Niger Delta. Environmental degradation starts with the exploration of oil, when explosive mechanisms are used as well as chemicals which are harmful to the environment. Furthermore, the transportation of the extracted oil often leads to oil spills due to old or sabotaged infrastructure. Adding to this is the extensive networks of pipelines that transport the oil, which occupy great areas, denying locals access to agricultural land (Courson, 2009:9). It is estimated that up to 13 million barrels of oil have been spilled in the Niger Delta in the last five decades (Imoobe & Iroro, 2009:55). Additional damage is done to the environment by flaring – the process in which excess gasses are burned. This often leads to the occurrence of acid rain, which in turn destroys the fertile soil, as well as respiratory problems, especially among children (Courson, 2009:10; Ninic, 2009:6).

Apart from environmental damage that endangers the livelihood of fisherman in the Niger Delta, the illegal commercial fishing also poses a risk. Although this seems to be a less prominent grievance of local militias and pirates, illegal fishing is still a



regular occurrence in the Niger Delta area. Together with illegal fishing, the practice of corrupt government officials selling fishing licenses illegally exaggerates the problem. Pirates often target Nigerian flagged, but foreign owned fishing vessels (Risk Intelligence, 2010:2). It is estimated that more than \$350 million of revenue is lost each year due to illegal fishing in the region (Paterson, 2007:30).

#### 4.3.6 Social Acceptability of Piracy

The increasing illegitimacy of the state and the breakdown of the social contract have led to the increase of militias, as well as piracy in the Niger Delta. According to Ibaba and Ikelegbe (2010:5) “the nature and character of the state and corporate governance have been so inequitable and unfair that violent appropriation of resources has become the norm.” Thus, since elections are almost always flawed and the state no longer fulfil its three basic functions (to maintain law and order, to facilitate development and to promote social welfare) to the people of the Niger Delta, they are looking at alternative actors as legitimate power (Ibaba & Ikelegbe, 2010:23).

Numerous militias have taken over functions that are usually associated with governments in their communities. These functions include obtaining drugs for hospitals, paying medical staff and teachers, providing energy by means of generators, awarding scholarships and paying school fees, providing potable water to citizens and providing financial assistance to entrepreneurs (Ibaba & Ikelegbe, 2010:24).

Although the locals might not approve of the high levels of violence and the methods in which these militias operate, they tolerate and in many cases even support them. Militias often claim to be freedom fighters, fighting for the political and economic freedom of the Niger Delta. In addition, militias provide an inflow of capital into the communities. This inflow of capital allows for the stimulation of local industries, creating employment opportunities for the locals. Thus it is often the case that locals would protect and provide militias with a safe haven, away from military forces (Asuni, 2009:12).

Apart from support from local communities, organisations such as MEND have also been able to garner international attention in support of their aims against the state

and the MNOCs. They have done this through the widespread use of the internet, as well as communication with international media and taking journalists to their camps in the Niger Delta. Although they have gained some sympathy from international actors, some militias have become infamous for their threats of destroying the Niger Delta petroleum industry (Obi, 2009: 122).

#### 4.3.7 Ineffective Security and Favourable Geography

Together with corrupt government officials and the protection from the Niger Delta inhabitants, piracy flourishes due to the inability of the Nigerian armed forces to effectively combat insurgency on land and in the maritime domain in the Niger Delta. This inability, coupled with the numerous rivers, creeks, swamplands and forests has enabled militias to successfully conduct piratical attacks in the region.

Many militias in the Niger Delta rival the force of the Nigerian military. In 2006 Nigeria's military budget constituted only 1% of the Gross Domestic Product. The result is that the military often lack the necessary equipment to adequately deal with insurgents (Library of Congress, 2008:21). Furthermore, many of those involved in the military forces are hesitant to serve in the Niger Delta due to the high levels of violence and deaths of soldiers and police forces in the area (Nodland, 2010:196). Further weakening the land-based attempts to deal with militias and piratical activities is the lack of political will. According to IMB Director, Pottengal Mukundan, "unlike Somalia, Nigeria has an effective central government and the strongest navy in the region. What is worrying is the lack of political will to combat the problem of piracy off their coast... (Mukundan quoted in International Maritime Bureau, 2009)." Lastly, the religious conflict in the northern region of Nigeria has divided the focus, as well as the limited resources, of the military forces.

Similar problems plague the attempts at curbing piracy in the maritime domain. The lack of financial resources and political will hamper anti-piracy efforts. Sophisticated equipment such as radars and communications gear, as well as adequate aerial surveillance is necessary for effective anti-piracy operations (Dunn, 2009:35). Although the figures vary, the Nigerian naval forces only have a small number of ill-equipped naval vessels, as well as limited aviation capability and most of this equipment is badly maintained (Nodland, 2010:201; Library of Congress, 2008:21).

This lack of naval capability can largely be prescribed to the traditional focus on land-based security (Gilpin, 2007).

The natural geography of the Niger Delta is also conducive to piracy. Despite the numerous rivers, creeks, swamplands and forests, the Niger Delta also has numerous sections where vessels must navigate through constrained areas. Vessels have to navigate through strong currents and shifting mudflats which affect their speed. Due to the slow speeds at which these vessels travel, they are easy targets for pirates (Dunn, 2009:32).

#### 4.3.8 Increased Maritime Traffic

Due to the rentier nature of the Nigerian economy, little has been done by the government in order to develop local industries. The result is that Nigeria has to import the majority of its commodities. This ensures that a high level of maritime trade and numerous vessels pass through Nigerian waters, which poses ample opportunities for pirates.

An increase of interest in Nigerian petroleum reserves also leads to the increase in maritime traffic. Many countries have started to diversify their oil supplies in order to prevent wild fluctuations of oil prices. Instability in oil producing countries, such as the Spring 2010/2011 uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa, resulted in wildly fluctuating oil prices. Developed nations, specifically the United States, as well as emerging countries such as China and India has shown increasing interest in the petroleum reserves of countries in the Gulf of Guinea (Nodland, 2010:192). And since the majority of proved petroleum reserves are situated in the Niger Delta, an increase in maritime traffic to this region is to be expected (Ibaba & Ikelgebe, 2010:27).

#### 4.3.9 Ransom

Just as in Somalia, ransom demands are also often involved in piratical activities in Nigeria. Although Somali pirates often hold vessels and crews hostage, the pirates of the Niger Delta often only kidnap people and hold them hostage. However, in a similar fashion as in Somalia, as ransom demands are increasingly met, more potential pirates view this practice as a lucrative financial opportunity and the number of piratical incidents increase. Recent trends indicate that kidnappings for ransom

are on the increase, more than doubling between 2009 and 2010 (Risk Intelligence, 2010:1). Also, as mentioned earlier, in the post-elections period illegal activities such as piracy and kidnapping for ransom increases due to the absence of politicians who support militias.

The most prominent targets pirates aim to kidnap are foreign employees of MNOCs. While they are able to justify these actions to local communities in the Niger Delta by fronting the Niger Delta struggle, it is also a lucrative business. According to MEND, it does not kidnap people in exchange for financial rewards. Instead, according to the organisation, they kidnap people in order to apply political pressure on the government and MNOCs to adhere to their demands. However, since MEND is an umbrella organisation with various different factions, it is possible that some of these militias engage in kidnappings for ransom for personal enrichment (Bischoff, 2010:3). Furthermore, the distinction between the motivations for these actions, whether they are based on greed or grievance factors, becomes murky when people not related to MNOCs are abducted. Foreigners unrelated to MNOC and political elites have also been taken as hostages (Ehwarieme, 2009:95-99).

#### 4.3.10 Access to weapons

Armed insurrection in the Niger Delta, despite the short-lived conflict during the 1960s, only emerged during the 1990s. Since then various factors have led to the increase of weapons in the region. Already discussed is the ethnic rivalry that fuelled the arms race, as well as the various illegitimate practices that led to funding this arms race. The proliferation of arms plays an integral part in piracy in the Niger Delta, since pirates have superior firing power vis-à-vis their targets which mainly consist of vessels related to the oil extraction industry and fishing vessels.

In addition to the ethnic-rivalries that fuel the arms race in the Niger Delta, is also the increasing presence of the military in the region. During the 1990s, peaceful and non-violent resistance from Niger Delta residents was increasingly met with violent suppression from the Nigerian security forces (Courson, 2009:14). In some cases, such as in Bayelsa state in 1999, whole villages were destroyed. It is estimated that almost 2500 people, mostly women and children, lost their lives in this particular incident (Courson, 2009:15). In another incident in 2006 in the village of Okerenkoko, military helicopters fired down indiscriminately on the villagers, leaving numerous

dead (Courson, 2009:21). As the military increased their troops and firepower in the region, the militants reacted in a similar manner to gain equal firepower vis-à-vis the military (Ibaba & Ikelgebe, 2010:11).

Most of the arms in Nigeria come from smugglers in Guinea-Bissau, Cameroon, Gabon, Liberia and Sierra Leone. All of these countries have been involved in extensive periods of conflict during which time elaborate arms-trading networks have arisen. The weapons most often used include sophisticated assault rifles, rocket propelled grenades as well as explosives and grenades (Ikelgebe, 2005:228).

This weapons build-up is difficult to stall, once it has engaged. With the amnesty deal in 2009 more than 8000 militants surrendered their weapons. However, the failure of the amnesty program inevitably led militias to rearm (Akpan & Ering, 2010:151).

#### 4.4 Modus Operandi

Although the current situation in the Niger Delta is not as threatening to international trade as the piracy in Somalia, it still poses a great risk for the oil-economy of the world. By diversifying oil resources wild fluctuations in the prices of petroleum can be minimised. Piracy also threatens the economic welfare of Nigerian people due to the increasing costs involved in the import of commodities. Thus, viable short term solutions to counter piracy are needed. In order to achieve such solutions, the direct manifestation of piracy in the Niger Delta needs to be investigated. This will allow for more effective and efficient counter-piracy measures.

The vessels pirates in the Niger Delta most commonly employ are speedboats. This greatly increases the pirate's manoeuvring capabilities vis-à-vis their targets which are often large oil tankers or cargo ships. Furthermore, speedboats also allow for easy navigation through the myriad of rivers, creeks and swamplands that is the Niger Delta. Machine guns are often mounted on these speedboats (Obi, 2009: 105).

In addition to the machineguns mounted on their speedboats, pirates in the Niger Delta are heavily armed with automatic and assault rifles and rocket propelled grenades launchers. Other equipment often employed includes radio communication devices, night-vision equipment and anti-aircraft missiles (Obi, 2009: 105).

Pirates in the Niger Delta tend to target big, slow-moving ships such as oil tankers, supply ships, general cargo ships and container ships (Risk Intelligence, 2010:1). The most common practice among pirates is to kidnap workers on these vessels which they then use as bargaining tools to achieve their political goals (Bischoff, 2010:3). Recent trends however, indicate that hostages are commonly held for ransom. This indicates that pirates are no longer only interested in political bargaining, but that financial gain has become a motivation for their activities.

These criminal tendencies manifest in a similar fashion in the looting that is increasingly present during piratical activities, as well as the targeting of legal fishing vessels. The looting of vessels indicates the financial motives behind piracy. In a similar fashion, the attacking of legal fishing vessels, which has little to do with the political struggle in the Niger Delta, indicates that piracy is less concerned with political goals and more interested in the financial rewards involved in the activity (Ninic, 2009:7).

Initially, foreign workers associated with the MNOCs were the main targets when pirates kidnapped victims. The political motives behind kidnapping these targets were clear. However, kidnapping victims have over time expanded to include expats unrelated to the MNOCs, Nigerian politicians and Nigerian elites. Although the kidnapping of politicians can further political goals, it is often not in line with the Niger Delta struggle. And once again, the indiscriminate kidnappings and making financial-orientated ransom demands for the safe return of these hostages indicate the criminal motives behind the attacks or to gain funding to keep up the armed threat (Ehwarieme, 2009:98,99).

According to Nodland (2010:197) there are three kinds of actors involved in maritime piracy in the region: piracy by political militias, piracy by criminals or piracy by community activists. Together with above mentioned indications of criminalities, such definition of the motives behind piracy can aid in formulating better counter-piracy initiatives, as well as developing solutions for the Niger Delta conflict.

Contrary to Somalia, Nigerian pirates are more willing to act violently in order to achieve their goals. According to the IMB "the [pirate] attacks... [in the Niger Delta] are notable for the attackers' willingness to use violence against crew members. In all of the most recent attacks reported to the IMB's Piracy Reporting Centre the

heavily armed pirates, at the very least, threatened crew members with deadly weapons (International Maritime Bureau, 2009).”

Pirate attacks most typically occur along the rivers of the Niger Delta and close to shore (Pham, 2011:3). The geography of the region favours the pirates since they can easily hide from suspecting targets as well as easily disappear after the attacks. Recently however, pirates have begun to launch attacks further out to sea. In one instance in 2008, MEND claimed responsibility for an attack on the Bonga oil platform. This facility, which was previously assumed to be well outside the striking distance of pirates, is located 120km off the Niger Delta coast (Courson, 2009:23).

During the last decade religious conflict in the northern parts of Nigeria erupted due to the Muslim-dominated northern states adopting sharia law in their regions. There seems to be no connection between radical Islamist groups and piracy in the Niger Delta. This can largely be attributed to the great divide that exists between the Muslim-dominated northern states and the Niger Delta (Library of Congress, 2008:23).

One of the main objectives of militia groups and pirates such as those belonging to MEND is to disrupt oil production in order to pressure the Nigerian government and the MNOCs to adhere to their grievances. Often they launch attacks against (government or private) armed forces that protect oil producing facilities. Furthermore, pirates routinely “patrol” some of the rivers in order to prevent activities relating to the oil industry (Ibaba & Ikelgebe, 2010:9). It should be noted that these “patrols” are not considered to be acts of piracy. Piracy only occurs when attacks are launched against other vessels.

#### 4.5 Current Anti-Piracy Efforts

Pirates in the Niger Delta have received much less international attention than their counterparts in Somalia. While piracy in Somalia threatens international trade which affects all countries, piracy in the Niger Delta largely only affects the Nigerian government, Nigerian citizens and the United States directly. The Nigerian state experiences financial losses due to the politically unstable climate while Nigerian citizens experience increasing economic hardship due to the rising costs of imported commodities. Meanwhile the import of oil to the US, which is Nigeria’s largest oil



exporter, could experience a shortage of petroleum reserves. Consequently, unlike in Somalia where there is widespread participation in the naval forces ensuring a safe maritime environment, anti-piracy efforts in the Niger Delta is largely driven by the Nigerian government and the US.

Two of the initiatives that the Nigerian government have often used in an attempt to pacify the region is the amnesty and development programs. The latest attempt of an amnesty program was initiated by the former President Yar'Adua in October 2009. This initiative included the disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and the reintegration of militias. More than 17000 militiamen accepted this offer (Ibaba & Ikelgebe, 2010:28). This amnesty program, as well as most previous development programs, failed. Often these initiatives aim to pacify the region in order for the state and MNOCs to gain uninterrupted access to the oil reserves and they neglect the underlying factors of the conflict in the Niger Delta (Courson, 2009:23).

This failure of the Nigerian government to adequately address the underlying conditions of the Niger Delta conflict was illustrated in the allocation of funds in the 2008 budget of the Nigerian state. While ₦69 billion was allocated to the development of the region, ₦444 billion was allocated to security in the Niger Delta (Courson, 2009:23). This indicates the increasing oppressive attitude favoured by the Nigerian government. The most prominent of the security operations in the Niger Delta is the Joint Task Force, which aims to combat insurgency in the region and includes elements from the army, the navy, the air force, as well as civil security forces (Garuba, 2010:12).

As already noted, the United States aims to diversify their sources of oil exports in order to minimise overreliance on Middle Eastern oil which aims to reduce wild fluctuations in oil prices. An increased interest in oil exports from African countries led to the creation of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) under the Bush administration in 2007 (Nodland, 2010:202). AFRICOM is increasingly involved in security operations in the Niger Delta, protecting oil facilities and inspecting incoming maritime traffic in the region. In addition to their increased physical presence in the Niger Delta, AFRICOM also assist the Nigerian armed forces in offshore surveillance, providing training to the naval forces, as well as providing equipment to support the anti-piracy efforts (Akpan & Ering, 2010:152).

#### 4.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to give a brief overview of the political, economic and social issues that have shaped modern Nigeria, as well as to identify the direct causes of maritime piracy in Nigeria.

It has been identified that the historical events that have shaped modern Nigeria has had a significant impact in the contemporary issue of maritime piracy. The regional division that was created under colonial rule still has a great impact on contemporary politics. Furthermore, conditions under colonial rule allowed for the institutionalisation of corruption in Nigeria, which contributes greatly to piracy, directly and indirectly. Although piracy was largely contained during the post-independence period, it has resurfaced as a major issue since the 1990s. It has been identified that conflict in the Niger Delta and the militias involved in this conflict are the main actors in piratical activities.

Numerous direct causes of piracy in Nigeria have been identified in this study. The direct causes include the political marginalisation of the Niger Delta people and the economic deprivation they experience. Other direct causes include the institutionalised corruption and the ethnic conflict in the Niger Delta. The environmental degradation caused by the oil extraction industry has led to the great support of pirates by local populations, which has increased the local legitimacy of piratical activities. Pirates in the Niger Delta have benefited greatly from the lack of security in the region, while the geography of the Niger Delta has allowed them to easily engage in piratical activities. Furthermore, the increasing amounts of ransoms that have been paid out have encouraged more would be pirates to engage in piratical activities. Lastly, the easy access to weapons in the region has allowed pirates great firepower vis-à-vis their targets, making their attacks easier and more violent.

In accordance with the secondary objectives set out in this study, this chapter focussed on the modus operandi of pirates, as well as current initiatives to counter piracy. It has been found that Nigerian pirates rely greatly on the geography of the Niger Delta when engaging in piratical activities. Unlike in Somalia, it is evident that piracy in Nigeria has not attracted as much attention and the current counter-piracy activities are very limited.

## CHAPTER 5 – Comparative Analysis

### 5.1 Introduction

The political, economic, social and environmental factors that relates to the causes and factors attributing to maritime piracy in Somalia and Nigeria has been extensively documented in the preceding two chapters. This chapter aims, with the aid of a comparative analysis framework, to investigate the similarities and differences of maritime piracy of the two case studies. As indicated in the introduction, this study takes an inductive reasoning approach. Thus, significant insight into piracy and the correlations between piracy in Somalia and Nigeria will only be evident upon completion of this chapter

The objectives identified in the introductory chapter of this study regard the relation between maritime piracy in Somalia and Nigeria. The two primary objectives of this study is to investigate the correlations between state functionality in Somalia and Nigeria and how state capabilities impact on maritime piracy, as well as the motivations for piracy - whether they are greed or grievance orientated.

The secondary objectives set out in this study included investigating the direct manifestations of piracy in Somalia and Nigeria, as well as evaluating the current counter-piracy initiatives in place, in order to devise viable short-term solutions that counter maritime piracy.

### 5.2 Political Regime and Maritime Piracy

From the two case studies it is evident that one of the most significant differences between Somalia and Nigeria which directly affects the maritime piracy situation regards the political stability or lack thereof. It has been noted that Somalia has had no central governance authority for the last two decades that enjoyed widespread domestic and international legitimacy. Instead, various regions of the country have been run by different warring factions. Somalia is often classified as a “failed” state. In contrast to this, Nigeria has a central government. However, it should be noted that the Nigerian government is consistently described as “weak” due to the lack of legitimacy in notably the Niger Delta region, as well as due to the endemic, institutionalised corruption.

This distinction between “failed” and “weak” states is helpful in explaining why Somalia pirates can hijack vessels and keep them for ransom for months, while Nigerian pirates often only loot vessels or kidnap the passengers. The lack of any central authority allows Somali pirates to mobilise and operate from enclaves. After hijacking vessels Somali pirates can dock them in these enclaves without fear of prosecution from authorities, while they are negotiating a ransom with the ship owners. Nigerian pirates are not afforded this opportunity. The resistance of government forces will make it extremely difficult for Nigerian pirates to hide vessels, especially large vessels like oil tankers or cargo ships. The kidnapping of passengers on board vessels and keeping them for ransom is a much more practical option for Nigerian pirates. While the financial or political rewards for kidnapped passengers are much smaller than can be accrued by hijacking entire vessels, it is more practical for Nigerian pirates.

Although it is not the only contributing factor, the distinction between “failed” and “weak” states is also helpful in explaining why maritime piracy is much more prevalent in Somalia than in Nigeria. Once again, while the actions of Nigerian pirates are to some extent constrained by the state, Somali pirates do not experience similar restraints. Instead, the international community has to act in Somali waters to stem piratical activities. The efforts of the international community however, are often hampered by legal restrictions due to the sovereignty of the Somali state.

In both countries ineffective security on land and in the maritime spheres contributes greatly to the occurrence of piracy. However, the sources of ineffective security in Somalia and Nigeria are different. While the main source of insecurity in Somalia can be attributed to the lack of a central government, ineffective security in Nigeria is largely due to the lack of political will to address these issues, as well corruption. While a domestic solution to insecurity in Somalia seems unlikely, the Nigerian state has the capacity to address the issues. Despite revenues from the petroleum extraction industry ensuring that Nigeria is potentially one of the wealthiest African countries, the lack of political will to address the conflict in the Niger Delta hampers the effective curtailment of piracy. This view is supported by the IMB Director, Pottengal Mukundan, who claims that “unlike Somalia, Nigeria has an effective central government and the strongest navy in the region. What is worrying is the lack

of political will to combat the problem of piracy off their coast... (International Maritime Bureau, 2009).”

### 5.3 Greed or Grievance

Whether the motivation for conflict, in this case piratical attacks, emanates from perceived injustices (i.e. grievance factors) or for personal gain (i.e. greed factors) is relevant to the discussion on maritime piracy in Somalia and Nigeria.

As observed in both case studies, there are legitimate causes of concern among Somalis and the inhabitants of the Niger Delta. Illegal commercial fishing and the illegal dumping of toxic chemicals in Somalia endangered the lifestyles of a sizeable portion of the population. Similarly the extensive environmental degradation caused by the oil extraction industry has had similar effects on the lifestyles of the inhabitants in the Niger Delta. In both countries pirates claim to act in the best interest of the people by combating these injustices. And although the populations do not always agree with their actions or methods, they sympathise with the pirates.

During the initial stages of piracy in Somalia the main targets of pirates were illegal commercial fishing vessels. Similarly, kidnappings of foreign oil workers by Nigerian pirates in return for political concessions were common during the initial period of piracy in Nigeria. However, as piracy in these two countries progressed and developed targets not only included illegal fishing vessels or employees of MNOCs. Instead pirates in Somalia pirated ships indiscriminately, whether they were linked to illegal fishing or not. And the kidnapping victims of pirates in Nigeria were no longer only employees from MNOCs, but included Nigerian politicians and Nigerian elites. However, the most significant action by Nigerian pirates that indicate greed motivations for conflict, as appose to grievance motivations, was the financial rewards associated with the safe return of kidnapping victims. While pirates who merely demanded political concessions in return for kidnapping victims could claim to act on their grievances, the exchanging of victims for financial rewards indicates that the motivation for these actions would rather be greed orientated.

A counter argument can be made that although Nigerian pirates gain financial incentives from kidnappings, it can be justified by the financial injustices done to them by the MNOC and the state. It can be argued that inhabitants of the Niger Delta

are not properly compensated for the environmental damage occurred to their region by the oil extraction industry and that financial gain from kidnappings can be considered as an alternative form of financial compensation for the populations of the Niger Delta. However, this argument is defunct when the victims of Nigerian pirates include those who are not directly involved in the oil extraction industry.

Thus, to conclude, initially the factors behind maritime piracy in Somalia and Nigeria might have been driven by legitimate grievances, but as piracy progressed and developed these grievance motivations were transcended and trends indicate that the main motivation for piracy in these two regions are dominated by greed.

#### 5.4 Similarities

Together with the debate on the legitimate environmental grievances of pirates, one has to discuss the other economic grievances between the populations of the two regions. It has been identified that the environmental degradation caused by external actors has a real possibility of endangering the lifestyles of not only the pirates, but most citizens in Somalia and Nigeria. This threat to their lifestyle, coupled with the widespread poverty, unemployment and overall low living standards leaves these populations desperate.

Taking into account the desperate situations most people are in, it is not surprising that they often support pirates. From the case studies it is evident that in Somalia and Nigeria the influx of capital emanating from piratical acts are welcomed by the local populations. The influx of capital creates economic opportunity for local communities, which in turn leads to the creation of employment opportunities. In addition to this, the pirates also seem to garner support from local communities by fulfilling roles that the state cannot provide or has neglected. While Somali pirates often pays Qaaraan, a sort of social welfare, to the local people, the Nigerian militias in some cases provide financial support for medications, education and energy generation.

One of the significant contributing factors towards increased piracy in both countries has been the clan- and ethnic conflicts. In both Somalia and Nigeria these conflicts has created arms races. In response to this, more actors took to piracy to increase

their financial means in order to gain access to weapons to compete with rival factions. This in turn contributed to the increase in piracy.

When ship owners or MNOCs are faced with losing their vessels, its cargo and their crewmembers or their employees, they often give in to ransom demands. Although their response seems logical, it sets a dangerous precedent. The more piratical attempts that end successfully, the more would-be pirates engage in similar activities in order to reap similar rewards. Thus, the paying of ransoms ensures a snowball effect which increases the problem of piracy and makes the regions more dangerous for other seafarers.

Interestingly, the Nigerian militias have made widespread use of technology, especially the internet, to raise awareness about the environmental degradation caused by the oil extraction industry. MEND have often interacted with the media, releasing press statements and granting interviews. Although MEND might have succeeded in gaining sympathy for their cause, most people might not support the methods they employ to achieve their goals. The use of technology to garner sympathy for their cause is not often employed by the Somali pirates. A possible explanation for this is due to the country's lack of infrastructure that such actions would necessitate.

One possible explanation for the different methods employed by pirates regarding capturing vessels for ransom and merely kidnapping victims has been attributed to the different political natures of the states (failed and weak). An alternative theory suggests that the lack of infrastructure in Somalia prevents pirates from looting vessels. In order to successfully loot a vessel, the necessary infrastructure needs to be in place to transport the goods, as well as markets to sell the stolen goods to. While the lack of infrastructure cannot be circumvented, the unavailability of markets can be addressed by exporting these products via maritime vessels to other regions. However, this poses more problems in accruing the appropriate tools and equipment.

Even though piracy in Nigeria has long been considered to be the hotspot of piracy in Africa, media and academic attention seems to be much more focused on piracy in Somalia. Two possible explanations can be presented for this trend. Firstly, piracy in Somalia is more prevalent than in Nigeria. While 196 piratical incidents were



recorded in the Gulf of Aden and Somalia during 2010, only 19 incidents were recorded during the same time in Nigeria (IMB, 2010:6). Secondly, while the negative effects of piracy in Nigeria is largely contained to the Nigerian state, MNOCs and the local populace, piracy in Somalia affects almost all nations, corporations and citizens in the world. Due to the high volume of maritime traffic via the Suez Canal, numerous actors are affected negatively. The rise in transportation costs due to an increase in insecurity will eventually place an additional burden on all the actors involved in consumption of the goods passing through these routes.

Although a strategic location is not the only factor to consider when considering other areas where piracy might possibly flare up, it plays a significant role in piracy in Somalia and Nigeria. While Somalia is situated along one of the busiest trading routes between Europe and Asia, the Niger Delta, situated in the Gulf of Guinea is a key trading route for petroleum resources. The high amount of traffic through these regions allows pirates plentiful opportunities for piratical acts. In addition, the geography of the Niger Delta (numerous rivers, creeks, swamplands and forests) has been favourable for piratical activities, as well as increased the ease with which militias can carry out such activities.

### 5.5 Modus Operandi

The methods employed by pirates in Somalia and Nigeria differ significantly. What is clear is that they often employ methods and use equipment with which they are familiar.

In both Somalia and Nigeria the crafts most often employed by pirates are small, agile and fast vessels, such as skiffs with high powered engines or speedboats. This allows them to easily outmanoeuvre their targets which are often big, slow-moving vessels. In addition, the crafts used by Somali pirates easily blend into their environment, looking very similar to those used by local fisherman, offering additional coverage. Also, in the case of Nigerian pirates, these speedy vessels allow them to escape easily into the myriad of rivers, creeks and swamplands of the Niger Delta.

In both Somalia and Nigeria access to weapons has played an instrumental part in the modus operandi of pirates. In both case studies, protracted conflicts in the

country or the region have ensured established weapon-trading routes which ensure easy access to sophisticated weapons. In almost all piratical incidents, pirates have superior firepower since most vessels are only armed with non-lethal deterrents.

Despite the significantly higher number of piratical attacks in Somalia than in Nigeria during 2010, piratical attacks in Somalia were much less violent. While only 13 citizens got injured out of 196 incidents in Somalia, 15 people got injured during the 19 attacks carried out in Nigeria in the same time (IMB, 2010:11). An explanation for this occurrence is not immediately available and more research needs to be done in order to explain this phenomenon.

If we regard the milieu in which pirates operate, we once again note a marked difference. While Somali pirates make use of motherships to allow them to attack as far out as Seychelles and the coasts of Oman and India, piracy in Nigeria is largely contained in the Niger Delta area. One explanation for this phenomenon is that Nigerian pirates take full advantage of the coverage provided for them by the environment of the Niger Delta while Somali pirates take advantage of the vastness (and therefore difficult to police) of the Indian Ocean.

From the available data it is clear that there is a marked difference in the organisational structure of pirates in Somalia and Nigeria. While the organisational structure of Somali pirates closely resembles that of large, organised criminal groups, Nigerian pirates tend to be organised into smaller groups which are closely related to the militias.

One of these aspects in which Somali pirates resemble the organisation of large criminal groups, is by the clear division of labour employed. This is also evident from the way in which they fund, organise and distribute the financial rewards of their operations. However, from the case study it is clear that very little is known about the organisational structure. More primary research needs to be done on this topic. This will allow for more effective measures against these organisations, for example by implementing targeted sanctions on the leaders of these organisations.

## 5.6 Counter Piracy

In both case studies the counter-piracy measures that are in place has been discussed. One of the biggest criticisms in both cases was the dedication towards

curbing piracy at sea while largely neglecting the land-based issues that gave rise to piracy. While little has been done to address the land-based political, economic and social issues of Somalis (apart from the ineffective UNOSOMI and UNOSOMII), the lack of political will in Nigeria has hampered the progress in addressing similar issues Nigerians have.

What is noticeable is the great extent to which international forces are present to combat Somali piracy, but it is almost non-existent in Nigeria (apart from the US). This can largely be ascribed to the actors which are affected by piracy in these areas. It has been noted that while Somali piracy affects an extensive number of actors the negative effects of Nigerian piracy is largely limited to the US, the Nigerian state, MNOCs and Nigerians. Also, the greater number of piratical incidents in Somalia and surrounding areas warrants a greater response.

During 2010 more than 50 warships from numerous international organisations, as well as independent navies were patrolling the areas around Somalia in order to combat piracy. Although the number of piratical attacks has declined, the area that these warships have to cover is still too great and piracy continues. It would be interesting to see whether or not counter piracy measures would be more effective if they employed similar methods to those used by the pirates. Often the big warships, despite providing aerial support with helicopters, are too slow to act against pirate attacks that take place. Instead, if they used warships as “motherships” and deployed numerous smaller, more agile and faster craft, they would be able to cover greater distances, have a greater presence in the area as well as being able to respond quicker to piracy situations.

One of the most common themes regarding piracy in Africa is the connection between pirates and radical Islamic terrorists. Although the danger posed by the cooperation of pirates and Jihadist terrorists is great, no definitive links has yet been found between Jihadist terrorists and pirates in either Somalia or Nigeria.

## 5.7 Piracy in Africa

This study has identified numerous historical and direct causes of maritime piracy in Somalia and Nigeria. This assessment could assist in possibly identifying other regions in Africa where piracy could flare up. Some of these regions might include

other states in the Gulf of Guinea, given the increasing activity relating to oil extraction. Another possibility could be North African region, given the current political instability regarding the Arab Spring 2010/2011. However, accurate forecasts will only be possible after doing similar analysis of other African countries that was done in this study. Lastly, in order to identify whether these causes that were identified in this study are unique to Africa or common for piracy across the globe, more research needs to be done.

### 5.8 Future Studies

This study has identified numerous causes of maritime piracy in Somalia and Nigeria. From this assessment it is evident that these causes developed over an extended period of time. It will be impossible to resolve most of these issues in the short term. However, as stressed earlier, maritime piracy poses a grave threat to international trade. Therefore, viable and effective short term solutions need to be found. In order to do this, more research needs to be done on the modus operandi of pirates. This will allow for more effective counter measures.

Furthermore, a great deal of attention is being paid to combatting piracy in the maritime domain. However, the majority of the causes identified in this study indicate that the origins of piracy are due to land based issues. Therefore, more research needs to be done on how to combat these land based issues, in order to have viable solutions to piracy.

## CHAPTER 6 – Conclusion

### 6.1 Conclusion

This study concerned the piratical attacks occurring along the East and West coasts of Africa. Although maritime piracy along the coasts of Africa is not a new phenomenon, recent upsurges in piratical attacks have attracted a great deal of attention. Despite Nigeria being long considered as the hotspot for piratical activity in Africa, the greatest upsurge of piracy has been seen in the areas surrounding Somalia, including the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean.

From the literature review it was evident that many factors had an influence in the causes of maritime piracy in these regions. The root causes of maritime piracy in these regions had their origins in the various political, economic, social and environmental insecurities that were evident in the countries. By employing a comparative analysis framework, it was possible to analyse the similarities and differences between these various factors in Somalia and Nigeria, as well as the root causes of piracy.

However, before it was possible to analyse the similarities and differences between the two states, it was necessary to construct a relevant framework for the study, as well as discussing the numerous theoretical frameworks that would be applicable. The primary objectives of this study were to investigate the correlation between state functionality (i.e. failed or weak) and piracy, as well as investigating the greed versus grievance framework in relation to piratical activities in Somalia and Nigeria.

The third and fourth chapters of this study constituted the case studies of piracy in Somalia and Nigeria, respectively. In the case study of Somalia it became evident that the causes of piracy in this country had its roots in the historical development of the country. Although these causes did not necessarily start with the colonisation and the actions by post-independence leaders, the actions of these actors played a significant role in the contributing factors of contemporary piratical activity.

The more immediate factors that attribute to maritime piracy in Somalia included the country's strategic position, the current political instability, environmental degradation due to illegal fishing and dumping which often contributed to already existing economic deprivation. Furthermore, the lack of effective security, the easy access to

weapons and technology and the social acceptability of their acts had a huge effect on escalating piracy. Lastly, the increasing number and the increasing size of ransoms being paid out created a snowball effect which made the business extremely lucrative.

The secondary objectives of this study, as stated in the introduction included investigating the physical manifestations of pirates, as well as contemporary anti-piracy efforts. This was done in order to create more viable counter piracy initiatives to deal with the immediate threat piracy poses to international trade. In the case of Somalia it became evident that pirates often employ the same methods that they have been using for decades in order to procure fish. Furthermore, it was discovered that despite the great international naval presence in the waters surrounding Somalia, piratical activity was not necessarily stemmed; it merely spread out throughout the Indian Ocean.

From Chapter 4, the case study on Nigeria, it became evident that colonisation and the actions of post-independence leaders also had a significant contribution to the causes of contemporary piracy. The most enduring legacy of the colonial era in modern-day Nigeria was corruption. The legacy of corruption, together with the great spoils brought along by the oil-extraction industry has led to the lack of political will by political elites to address the grievances of the populace, especially in the oil-rich Niger Delta states.

Other factors present in Nigeria that contributes more directly to contemporary piracy included the political marginalisation of the Niger Delta people, the economic deprivation experienced by these people, the on-going endemic corruption and the ethnic conflict between various ethnic groups in the Niger Delta. Furthermore, the devastating environmental damaged, caused by the oil-extraction industry, threatens the lifestyles of the populations situated in the Niger Delta, while the people are not adequately compensated for their losses. These perceived grievances often lead to the social acceptability of piracy as these people feel that they are being treated unjustly. Lastly, the lack of political will of Nigerian leaders to effectively combat piracy has led to ineffective security, which combined with the geography, have led to increased piratical activities.

Regarding the modus operandi in Nigeria, it is evident that it differs from Somalia. While Nigerian pirates also make use of small, fast crafts, as well as sophisticated weapons, they seem to be much more violent than their Somali counterparts. Pirates in Nigeria also take great advantage of the environment in which they operate. The myriad of rivers, creeks and swamplands that is the Niger Delta makes for difficult navigation for large, slow moving vessels, making them easy targets and it also assist pirates in escaping easily. Thus, piracy in Nigeria is limited to the Niger Delta and the coastal waters.

Contrary to the great international naval presence in the waters surrounding Somalia, counter piracy operations in Nigeria is almost exclusively the domain of the United States Navy and the Nigerian Navy. While Somali piracy threatens international trade (maritime traffic operating between the East and Europe via the Suez Canal), piracy in Nigeria largely affects only the Nigerian state and its people and the United States (due to their extensive involvement in the oil-extraction industry). This explains the lack of involvement by other international navies.

The most significant part of this study is concentrated in the second to last chapter, Chapter 5. This chapter extensively investigates the comparison of the two case studies. From this chapter it is evident that there is a relation between the efficiency of a regime (i.e. weak or failed) and maritime piracy. While it is common for pirates in failed states to capture vessels and hold them for ransom, the presence of a central government (albeit weak one) ensures that pirates cannot hold vessels at random. Instead, they have to kidnap their victims and instead hold them for ransom.

Furthermore, in Chapter 5 it has been established that populations in both Somalia and Nigeria had legitimate grievances. However, it has also been established that while pirates initially might have been acting on these legitimate grievances, their involvement in piracy eventually went beyond fighting these injustices. The financial rewards of piracy is great and it seems that most contemporary pirates are more concerned with the financial rewards than fighting the grievances the populations have.

This study has identified numerous historical and direct causes of maritime piracy in the two regions of Africa where piracy is the most prevalent. This can be useful in identifying possible future regions where piracy might flare up.



Lastly, this study has also identified possible avenues for future research. Although it has been identified that the long term solutions to combat piracy necessitate more intensive land-based approaches, it is necessary to further investigate the modus operandi of contemporary pirates in order to find more viable short term solutions.

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