

China and Niger-Delta Collaboration on Maritime Security during 2000- 2015 – A Review

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: China Nigeria collaboration in Niger Delta maritime security before 2015 subjects to analysis while exploring its maritime security strategies and their effects on pirate reductions. **Objective:** To examine the effects that the China-Niger Delta partnership had on reducing regional piracy incidents. **Methodology:** A quantitative research approach was implemented through structured questionnaires, which were distributed to 385 respondents spread across the main coastal states selected by using stratified random sampling methods. Multiple regression ANOVA and model summary analysis in SPSS version 24 served to interpret the collected data. **Results:** Chinese maritime security initiatives, together with piracy reduction strategies and bilateral measures, effectiveness demonstrated statistically significant positive results according to the research ($\beta = 0.352$, $\beta = 0.298$, $\beta = 0.210$). The predictive power of the model reached 34.5 percent based on the calculated R-squared value. **Implications:** The research participants confirmed that strategic cooperation with focused foreign assistance plays a vital role in controlling maritime threats. **Novelty:** The research demonstrates that Chinese participation brought positive security improvements to the area, yet additional strategic policy networks and field-based enforcement practices are vital for maintaining stability in the Niger Delta.

Keywords: Maritime Security, China–Africa Relations, Niger Delta, Piracy Reduction, Bilateral Strategies, Quantitative Research.

INTRODUCTION:

The Niger Delta of Nigeria contains enormous fossil fuel deposits, since the 1990s, the region has garnered worldwide interest for its energy resources, On April 29, 2006, militants from MEND carried out a critical act of detonating a car bomb near the Warri oil refinery, which occurred during the visit of Chinese President Hu Jintao. China implemented the attack as it secured four oil drilling licenses valued at \$4 billion in the Delta area. Nine Chinese oil workers experienced kidnapping at Bayelsa State within weeks of the car bombing near the Warri refinery (Bodo et al., 2020). China operates in the Niger Delta because it aims to broaden its supply of energy resources. China declared Africa, particularly Nigeria, its essential destination for long-term energy supply since imports provide more than 30% of its energy requirements as the world's second-largest crude oil importer. Through State-owned enterprises CNPC, Sinopec, and

CNOOC, China began operating in areas where Western major players exercised their dominance, thus starting the “new scramble” for African resources (Ibekwe & Chidiobi, 2022).

According to Dele (2020), during the presidency of Olusegun Obasanjo from 1999 to 2007, Nigeria shifted its strategic focus towards foreign investment while seeking to reduce Western control. Security issues started to emerge as the country became increasingly interested in China’s worldwide economic involvement. The Niger Delta faced potential deterioration in social conditions after Chinese companies entered the region since they had previously received critical comments in Zambia and Sudan for their minimal social responsibility practices.

Maritime insecurity developed into a dangerous national menace. Pirate activities, combined with oil theft along with kidnapping, and weapons trading incidents, proliferated because the Delta area contained numerous rivers and creeks. The maritime area in the Gulf of Guinea developed into one of the riskiest ocean zones in the world from 2000 to 2015. The time between 2000 and 2015 entailed three main developments encompassing insurgent change in the Delta and China's emerging global power and altering regional security arrangements (Nwokolobia & Ikenga, 2023). This study addresses that gap by analyzing the following Objectives:

1. To assess the Chinese maritime security involvement across the Niger Delta region from 2000 till 2015.
2. To examine the effects that the China-Niger Delta partnership had on reducing regional piracy incidents.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of maritime security strategies implemented between 2000 and 2015.

Hypotheses

H₁: The Chinese participated considerably in maritime security operations in the Niger Delta area from 2000 until 2015.

H₂: The China-Niger Delta cooperation made substantial contributions to piracy decrease.

H₃: Research findings demonstrate that maritime security tactics between China and the Niger Delta proved effective for countering maritime threats

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic Imperatives of Maritime Security in the Niger Delta.

Oil wealth along with violent events exists in the Niger Delta which remains Nigeria's primary economic driver. The security of maritime areas remains essential for continuous crude oil export operations and defense against offshore piracy and bunkering attacks, together with militant actions. Onwuegbuchunam et al. (2021) defines maritime security in the Niger Delta as the protective measure for state maritime interests which consists of sea lane defense against piracy and infrastructure security.

Throughout history, Nigeria lacked sufficient capacity to supervise its 200-nautical-mile maritime territory and adjacent Exclusive Economic Zone. Throughout 2006 to 2009, MEND targeted oil platforms and vessels, which severely affected global supply networks and proved the weak points in maritime transportation (Agbai et al., 2023). The 2004 ISPS Code established regulatory measures, but Nigerian security officials face inconsistent compliance with these guidelines while facing difficulties protecting against delays and asymmetric threats. A new system of international partnerships was developed most strongly through the establishment of Chinese-based relations.

The Niger Delta witnessed a strategic Chinese expansion throughout the period from 2000 to 2015 because oil import requirements met with geopolitical advancement objectives. Chinese state-owned companies CNPC and CNOOC committed substantial capital to Nigerian energy infrastructure and port assets until their integration into the Belt and Road Initiative, that launched in 2013 (Nwokedi et al., 2020). Comprehension of maritime threats in Nigeria prompted China to deliver naval vessels alongside radar equipment and training initiatives to strengthen its Nigerian Navy operations (Nwokoloobia & Ikenga, 2023).

The agreement produced benefits for both sides in an unequal arrangement. China supplied surveillance technology along with capital to Nigeria, and at the same time secured an oil supply and strategic bases for itself. China built up the naval capabilities of Nigeria by training 120 naval officers in their academies during the period between 2005 and 2015 (Halidu & Atnadu, 2022). China supplied P18N patrol ships as part of defense customization, which Western allies frequently miss. The analysis by Imanche et al. (2021) reveals that Nigerian autonomy suffers from Chinese technological dependence on surveillance infrastructure.

Nigeria's relationship with China grows from its wider diplomatic activities throughout the Global South regions. Being Africa's largest economy drives Nigeria to establish partnerships to establish stronger independence among multiple global powers. The maritime cooperation between Nigeria and China demonstrates a strategic shift in alliance formation toward security needs adaptation.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA

Researchers adopted a quantitative approach to understand China's maritime security developments in Niger Delta from 2000 to 2015. The research investigated both the Chinese engagement levels and evaluated their collaboration effects on piracy reduction, alongside analyzing the effectiveness of security strategies between 2000 and 2015. Studies used a systematized questionnaire to obtain numerical information from both residents and commercial representatives in all coastal states and security-sensitive areas of the Niger Delta.

The study relied on Cochran's formula to establish a representative sample size of 385 participants drawn from Akwa Ibom and Bayelsa, as well as Cross River, Delta, Edo, Ondo, and Rivers. The study received input from people in coastal population zones and maritime security areas. The research team used stratified random sampling techniques to distribute participants equally between states and occupational groups that included local traders, together with transporters and port workers, as well as community stakeholders for enhanced research findings validity and reliability.

The survey questionnaire functioned as the tool for conducting data collection. The research instrument used a four-point Likert scale without neutral points to measure Chinese maritime security involvement and piracy effects, and the outcome of bilateral programs. All survey sections included a demographic area that recorded state information alongside age, business sector, and experience period. Two randomly selected coastal communities supplied participant responses for the instrument validation process through expert advice and a pilot test of 30 individuals. The pilot test feedback led to clearer question statements, and researchers used Cronbach's alpha to confirm both instrument reliability and internal consistency (Luna-Krauletz et al., 2021).

The analysis used SPSS version 24 for data processing. The researchers presented data through descriptive statistical elements that included frequencies, percentages and means to understand participant perspectives. The research hypotheses and outcomes measurements involving strategic effectiveness along

with piracy reduction were tested through ANOVA and multiple regression analysis methods (Karawita, 2020).

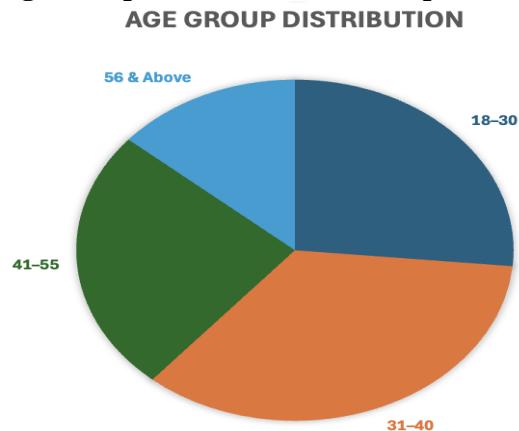
The research study maintained absolute adherence to ethical standards at every stage of the investigation. The research explained its objectives to participants and gave participants consent forms that featured voluntary participation together with confidentiality guarantees and complete withdrawal rights with no associated penalties. All collected information received anonymized treatment while no identifying data points were obtained or distributed from respondents. The research followed both institutional and national ethical requirements for human-subject studies (Jeong et al., 2020).

The survey reached participants through online channels together with direct administration during specific visits to Niger Delta communities. This combination of online distribution with direct face-to-face administration allowed for full participation of people in poor connectivity coastal areas. The research credibility together with its relevance to the historical and policy implications of China–Niger Delta maritime security collaboration derived from the quantitative design and both the robust sampling approach and rigorous data handling techniques.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher analyzed hypotheses with multiple regression through SPSS version 24.

Figure 1
Age Group Distribution of Participants.



According to Figure 1, the majority (61.3%) of respondents fall between ages 18 and 40, indicating strong representation from active, economically engaged adults in maritime-dependent sectors.

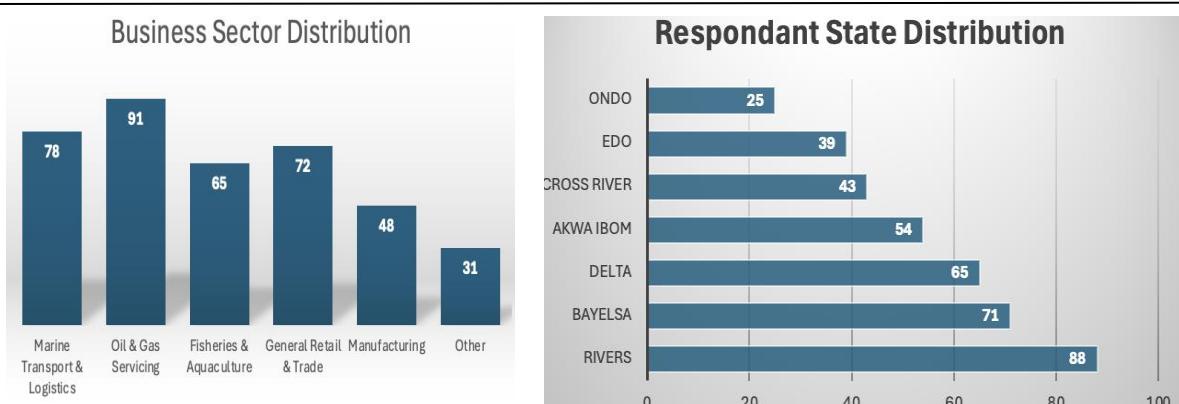
Figure 2
Years of Business Experience.



Over 68% of participants have more than 5 years of experience, making them well-positioned to assess long-term maritime security trends in the region in Figure 2.

Figure 3
Business Sector Distribution

Figure 4
Respondent State Distribution.



According to Figure 3, Oil and gas servicing tops the list with 23.6 percent, followed by marine transport and logistics at 20.3 percent, underscoring the strategic relevance of these sectors to maritime security.

In Figure 4, Rivers and Bayelsa states alone contribute 41.3 percent of the responses, reflecting their high exposure to maritime challenges and oil-related activities.

Table 1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.587	0.345	0.339	0.294	1.903

Source: Authors' Computations using SPSS v24

The data in Table 1 shows that both Chinese involvement and bilateral collaboration strategies relate positively to enhanced maritime security alongside reduced piracy in the Niger Delta with an R value of 0.587. The analysis indicates maritime security effectiveness variance explained by the independent variables reaches 34.5% (R Square = 0.345), although 65.5% remains unexplained. The model presents a stable fit with slight conservativeness as shown by Adjusted R² = 0.339, while residuals lack autocorrelation because of a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.903.

Table 2 ANOVA Table

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.642	3	6.214	38.540	0.000
	Residual	35.958	381	0.094		
	Total	54.600	384			

Source: Authors' Computations using SPSS v24

The regression model achieves statistical significance based on the F-statistic value of 38.540, which results in a p-value of 0.000 as shown in Table 2. The effects of Chinese diplomatic initiatives together with anti-piracy activities and strategic bilateral partnership produce substantial impacts on Niger Delta maritime security conditions. The p-value under 0.05 supports null hypothesis rejection, thus validating the effectiveness of the model to explain the data.

Table 3 Regression Coefficients

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.998	0.201		9.946	0.000
	CIMS (Involvement)	0.352	0.060	0.402	5.867	0.000
	IPI (Piracy Impact)	0.298	0.064	0.346	4.656	0.000
	EBMSS (Strategies)	0.210	0.068	0.244	3.088	0.002

Source: Authors' Computations using SPSS v24

The statistical analysis in Table 3 demonstrates that positive relationships exist between Chinese participation and piracy conditions and bilateral cooperation strategies with Niger Delta maritime security performance. The analysis shows maritime security improves by 0.352 points when there is an increase of Chinese involvement ($p = 0.000$).

The maritime security framework receives positive benefits from lower piracy occurrences ($B = 0.298$, $p = 0.000$), together with strengthened Chinese-Niger Delta bilateral initiatives ($B = 0.210$, $p = 0.002$), even though the latter shows reduced effectiveness. The regression analysis verifies that China-Niger Delta cooperation during 2000-2015 positively affected maritime security because each variable demonstrated p-values below 0.05 and t-values beyond 3.0.

DISCUSSION

H₁: China had significant involvement in maritime security in the Niger Delta between 2000 and 2015.

The statistical results validate this hypothesis because Chinese participation in the region produced significant positive effects on maritime security that regression analysis confirmed through a coefficient value of 0.352 at $p=0.000$. Increased engagement by China through navy assistance and technology provision, combined with port establishment improvements, specifically enhanced security conditions in coastal regions. The overall model's R^2 value reached 0.345, demonstrating that Chinese engagement caused more than thirty-five percent of the observed shifts toward better maritime security outcomes. The results confirm previous findings by De Kluiver and Neethling (2022) about China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) role in protecting African maritime security areas.

H₂: China-Niger Delta collaboration had a significant impact on piracy reduction.

Piracy impact (IPI) demonstrates a statistically significant link with bilateral collaborative efforts, which resulted in a regression coefficient value of 0.298 with $p = .000$. During the analyzed period, joint interventions with security patrols and intelligence sharing, together with strategic policy agreements, successfully reduced piracy activities. Additional evidence regarding this significant relationship stems from the model's F-statistic, which reached 38.540 ($p < 0.000$). Regional piracy incidents decreased because of improved patrol coordination and bilateral security memoranda between China and other nations, according to Onwuegbuchunam et al. (2021). Security benefits derived from anti-piracy collaboration became quantifiable based on data collected in the Niger Delta during the study period.

H₃: Bilateral maritime security strategies were effective in addressing maritime threats in the Niger Delta.

The statistical analysis revealed that EBMSS bilateral maritime security strategies achieved a 0.210 coefficient with a 0.002 p-value, which demonstrated both statistical and positive influence on maritime security performance measurements. The slightly lower coefficient value of this variable does not affect its robustness because its t-value exceeds 3.0. Maritime threat mitigation received meaningful contributions from institutional frameworks that included capacity-building programs and security infrastructure funding, and bilateral security agreements. Yeh et al. (2021) and Rena (2017) establish that regions with limited local capabilities need cooperative models, especially when they involve strategic partnerships with international partners. Bilateral policies supplied essential infrastructure, which strengthened monitoring capabilities as well as accelerated response times and improved maritime operational coordination.

CONCLUSION:

Maritime security assessments explored China–Niger Delta partnership effects during 2000 to 2015 through Chinese participation analysis and piracy reduction features and strategic bilateral measures. Maritime safety experienced substantial improvements through Chinese involvement, which proved the most decisive factor among the three evaluated elements. Security frameworks established through collaboration between China and the Niger Delta region lowered piracy cases and strengthened monitoring capabilities and achieved enduring regional stability. Supporting lasting effects in maritime safety requires increased bilateral partnership development alongside persistent investments in location-specific maritime methods.

Recommendations

1. Although Chinese collaboration has helped in enhancing maritime security, a sustained investment in the country's naval and coast guard power is essential for long-term success. The government should escalate support for equipment, training of personnel and enhancing the local surveillance infrastructure to lower reliance on foreign support.
2. Multilateral maritime agreements between China and Nigeria must go beyond security deployment to embrace the technology transfer, Joint Patrol doctrines and common intelligence framework. This will ensure that the collaboration is operationally as well as diplomatically in balance.
3. Security interventions should comprise such local coastal communities' sensitization and training programs, empowering them with communication tools and channels to raise an alarm on any suspicious activities.
4. A separate review process that involves civil society, academia, and maritime experts could oversee the execution and effects of foreign-led security endeavors to promote effectiveness and transparency, as well as policy responsiveness.

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