Pontifícia Universidade Católica
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Anchored in the Shadows:

The Discursive Problematisation of Maritime Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

Dissertação de Mestrado

Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Mestre em Relações Internacionais by the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Relações Internacionais of Instituto de Relações Internacionais from PUC-Rio.

Advisor: Marta Regina Fernandéz Y Garcia

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While writing this Master's dissertation, I sometimes thought back to when I was a child, travelling for months with my father in Petrobras oil tankers along the east coast of Latin America. That child would never have imagined that, some 20 years later, he would be doing research specifically on maritime safety. In this sense, I also remember when I was around 5 years old and asked my mother if pirates still existed, and she said yes. At the time, I imagined the pirates I saw in films and cartoons, always with sailing ships, cannons and eye patches. I thought to myself, "how it would be possible for these pirates to invade or attack the ship we were on?" Surely, being centuries ahead of them, we were faster (were we?) and had much more technology than they did. However, I always found it strange to think that they had simply stopped in time. In other words, at some point I wondered why pirates had not evolved to modern ships and weapons. I probably asked my mother about it afterwards, but I do not remember her answer.

Moving forward to the 2010s, when I was still in primary school, I heard about the cases of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Aden from watching the newspapers. At that moment, I had my first contact with modern pirates. In fact, they had not stopped in time, as I had suspected many years before. They no longer had large sailing ships; they didn't even operate on ships in the news I saw. Their rudimentary pistols, cannons and swords have been replaced by countless AK-47s and RPGs. In fact, the piracy I saw on the news was fundamentally different from what I had imagined all my life up to this point.

Moving on a little further, a few months after getting my bachelor's degree in International Relations, I came across a YouTube video talking about maritime piracy in Africa and immediately remembered the pirates of Somalia. I thought to myself, "are they still attacking after all this time?". Watching the video, I realised that it was no longer Somalia, but the Gulf of Guinea. However, unlike before, at this point I was already a recent IR graduate. It would be impossible not to try to analyse this as a possible continental problem, given that the Gulf of Aden and the Gulf of Guinea are on opposite sides of the African continent.

But how could I study this now? I'd already graduated; I could not do a final year paper on piracy. Writing an article wasn't even a thought before talking about the topic with one of the great friends that my IR degree gave me. Immediately after the video finished, I texted him and told him I wanted to write about it. This friend had entered the Master's programme in IR at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) and answered me with another question: Why don't you do a Master's programme talking about this?

And that can be considered the beginning of my journey in postgraduate studies in International Relations. I was extremely excited about the idea of doing a Master's degree to write about piracy at the end. I did more research, looked for more videos and information, and read numerous articles and news about piracy in Africa. Until, after a few months, the selection process for the Master's at the largest and best IR research centre in Latin America opened. With the help of my friend, I researched the theoretical current I would be using and saw that I would fit in perfectly with the Institute and with one of its professors to guide me.

Throughout the whole process, three other people were crucial in getting me to the last stage, the dreaded interview. In the end, I was extremely nervous and had a complete breakdown when it came to speaking. Logically, I was not approved because of this nervousness. But after a few days, I realised that there really were flaws in my research, so I decided to study piracy for another whole year until the process opened up again. I refused to choose another institute, even though my friend at UERJ tried to convince me to go there with him. So, I tried again, and this time I succeeded. I was officially a Master's student at the Institute of International Relations at PUC-Rio (IRI/PUC-Rio)!

To my surprise, this great friend who had helped me the whole time over the two years was also approved for IRI, now as a PhD student. Octavio Oliveira and I entered in one of the most respected postgraduate programmes in the world together, how could it be better? Because of this, he is definitely the person who will stand out the most here. Without him, I would not have done my Master's, put together a good research project or had someone I could trust by my side from day one at IRI.

Likewise, the other three people who helped me throughout the two selection processes also deserve to be recognised above all others. My undergraduate colleague, and now a Master in International Relations from IRI (whom I had the pleasure of seeing presenting her research), Bruna Bandeira was another person who helped me a lot to have the confidence to take part in the process. As such, this research would not exist without her either, as I might not even have tried a second application at IRI if I hadn't had the confidence she gave me from the start.

Finally, I could not fail to thank two of my former teachers from undergrad, Professor Solange Goes, and especially my first advisor (whom I now dearly call my academic mother), Professor Beatriz Mattos! They were both responsible for filling in my recommendations letters for applying to the selection process. In other words, literally, without them, I would not have even completed the application process.

I feel very fortunate to have had contact with both of them during my two years at IRI, especially Beatriz, who was constantly present at various events at the BRICS Policy Center, and was always someone I could count on if I needed advice. I'll probably never forget the moment Beatriz told me I had been accepted at IRI, as I was on my way back to Brazil from Qatar after an exciting adventure watching the FIFA World Cup live and almost on the other side of the planet. To this day, I do not know how long I was on the plane, I saw the day dawn three times, and the night I left Doha was the night I had my interview for the selection process. As soon as I took my cell phone out of airplane mode, I received congratulatory messages from Beatriz on having been approved. At the time, I had no reaction, I was too tired from travelling and thought that perhaps I was still dreaming in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Little by little, I believed it and became more and more excited by the news.

At IRI, I met some absolutely incredible people. Because of this, my first thanks must go to my advisor, Professor Marta Fernandéz, who has always been my first choice for guidance. Now, at the end of my Master's degree, I can say that I could not have chosen a better person for the job! Marta has always been a safe haven in my research, helping me and organising my head whenever I thought it would be impossible. I cannot help wondering how Marta found the time to help me as well

as she did. This research definitely would not have existed without her, and I am deeply grateful for all the work we did (and it wasn't little) during these two years of my Master's degree. I really can't put into words all the confidence and support that Marta has given me in everything related to my research. Being advised by her was the best decision of my academic life so far!

Another professor who always supported and helped me a lot during these two years of research into maritime piracy was Professor Roberto Yamato. Ever since the first semester, Roberto has recommended various texts and books to me, and has always taken the time to listen and discuss how we should view pirates within the international system. I have no doubt that we will be talking a lot about piracy over the years, and that is something I am glad about as I finish this Master's programme. Thinking about piracy and being helped from the very first classes by someone who was so caring and dedicated to his work makes me think that IRI is not just a study centre, but an area where an IR student can find a welcoming place that he will remember for the rest of his life.

This feeling can also be remembered when thinking of Professor Isabel Siqueira, the person who many times made me feel comfortable at IRI and was always the one who saw the 'human side' in relationships. All the teachers at IRI showed great care for the postgraduates, but Isabel was the one who always made this clear by talking and trying to understand what was bothering us, always thinking about what would be the best way to help. And for that, I am sincerely grateful.

Apart from them, of course, the last professors from IRI to be mentioned here are Professors Monica Herz, Paula Sandrin, and Paula Drummond. Monica was responsible for the discipline that I enjoyed the most during the Master's programme, apart from always helping me with future researches whenever I needed. Paula Sandrin definitely taught the most enriching classes on the programme, always leaving me with a feeling of 'tell me more about this, please!' at the end of each one. Moreover, whenever I needed help, Paula was helpful and important, even recommending several texts used in Chapter 2 of this thesis before the research project was even assembled. And speaking of the project, Professor Paula Drumond definitely deserves a huge mention here, as she willingly went, in

the final stages of pregnancy, every Friday morning to IRI to help me and my colleagues put together the best possible project!

Speaking of my colleagues, there is no doubt that IRI wouldn't be a place where I feel so comfortable without their presence. Therefore, I need to thank my friends Christian Cantuária, Eduarda Lopes, Luiza Arruda, Ana Paulino (and our mutual friend, the other Anna), Maria Beatriz, Mylena Lucciola and Victor Cabral. Without you by my side, this Master wouldn't have been the same. I would also like to extend my thanks to Alexandre dos Santos, a student/ professor at IRI, whom I had the pleasure of sharing some post-graduate classrooms with, as well as an undergraduate classroom when I did a teaching internship under his supervision. Even though he is 'flamenguista', he was always willing to help me with anything I needed.

No less important, it is definitely out of question not to recognise the work of IRI's academic postgraduate office. Lia Gonzales and Janaína Nascimento were always the people who welcomed me to IRI. It would simply be impossible to imagine this marvellous Institute without the example of professionalism set by people like them!

Finally, there are people outside IRI and my academic life who deserve to be thanked here, especially 3: Mrs Camila Monteiro, Mrs Clara Trivelli, and Mrs Leticia Pasquarelli. They are the three people who know me the best and who have been with me for more than half my life. My Master's in IR also had unimaginable help from these 3 women in ways that would simply be too big to describe here.

To all these people, I would like to say my most sincere thank you so much for everything!

ABSTRACT

Rocha, Thiago Thierry de Queiroz; Garcia, Marta Regina Fernandéz Y. **Anchored in the Shadows: The Discursive Problematization of Maritime Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea**. Rio de Janeiro, 2025. 155p. Master's Thesis – Instituto de Relações Internacionais, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro.

This research seeks to explain the problematic of maritime piracy in International Relations from a critical perspective. Using authors from both the post-structuralist school, as well as those from the post-colonial one, the research opens with a contextualisation of maritime piracy in the contemporary world, followed by an analysis of British discourses in order to unveil a Eurocentric narrative in the fight against the practice on the African continent throughout the 21st century. In its final chapter, in order to demonstrate the Eurocentrism present in the system, a post-colonial perspective will be put forward based on the European Union's actions on the topic, which not only end up affecting the system's security logics, but also compromise the production of non-Western knowledge. The conclusion is a critique of the ways in which the system has found to marginalise and dehumanise pirates, using a problem-solving logic when it comes to the concept of what piracy is, as well as what is a pirate, and what they represent in international society: a constant danger to its hegemonic interests, therefore justifying their classification as an 'enemy of humanity'.

Keywords

Piracy; Pirate; England; Eurocentrism; Discourse; Gulf of Guinea; Post-Colonialism; Post Structuralism

RESUMEN

Rocha, Thiago Thierry de Queiroz; Garcia, Marta Regina Fernandéz Y. **Anclado en las Sombras: La Problematización Discursiva de la Piratería en el Golfo de Guinea**. Rio de Janeiro, 2025. 155p. Disertación de Mestrado – Instituto de Relações Internacionais, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro.

Esta pesquisa pretende desenvolver la problemática de la piratería marítima en las Relaciones Internacionales desde un punto de vista crítico. Recurriendo a autores de la escuela postestructuralista, así como a los de la escuela postcolonial, la pesquisa partirá de una contextualización de la piratería marítima en el mundo contemporáneo, para pasar después a un análisis de los discursos británicos con el fin de desvelar una narrativa eurocéntrica en la lucha contra esta práctica en el continente africano a lo largo del siglo XXI. En el últ capítulo, para demostrar el eurocentrismo presente en el sistema, se planteará una perspectiva poscolonial basada en las acciones de la Unión Europea sobre el tema, que no sólo acaban afectando a las lógicas de seguridad del sistema, sino que también comprometen la producción de conocimiento no occidental. La conclusión es una crítica a las formas que el sistema ha encontrado para marginar y deshumanizar a los piratas, utilizando una lógica de resolución de problemas cuando se trata del concepto de lo que es la piratería, así como lo que es un pirata, y lo que representan en la sociedad internacional: un peligro constante para sus intereses hegemónicos, justificando así su clasificación como «enemigo de la humanidad».

Palabras clave

Pirata; Piratería; Eurocentrismo; Discurso; Golfo de Guinea; Pós-Colonialismo; Pós Estructuralismo

RESUMO

Rocha, Thiago Thierry de Queiroz; Garcia, Marta Regina Fernandéz Y. **Ancorado nas Sombras: A Problematização Discursiva da Pirataria Marítima no Golfo da Guiné**. Rio de Janeiro, 2025. 155p. Dissertação de Mestrado – Instituto de Relações Internacionais, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro.

Esta pesquisa busca explicar a problemática da pirataria marítima nas Relações Internacionais sobre um ponto de vista crítico. Usando autores da escola pós-estruturalista, bem como os da escola pós-colonial, a pesquisa começará com uma contextualização da pirataria marítima no mundo contemporâneo, partindo, em seguida, para uma análise de discursos da Inglaterra a fim de desvelar uma narrativa eurocêntrica no combate à prática no continente africano ao longo do século XXI. Em seu último capítulo, com o intuito de demonstrar o eurocentrismo presente no sistema, será posta uma perspectiva pós-colonial a partir das ações da União Europeia sobre o tópico, o que não só acaba afetando as lógicas de segurança do sistema, mas também compromete a produção de conhecimento não-Ocidental. A conclusão parte para uma crítica às maneiras que o sistema achou para marginalizar e desumanizar os piratas, utilizando-se de uma lógica de solução de problemas quando se trata da concepção sobre o que é pirataria, bem como o que é um pirata e o que ele representa na sociedade internacional: um perigo constante aos seus interesses hegemônicos, justificando, portanto, sua classificação como um ‘inimigo da humanidade’.

Palavras-chave

Pirata; Pirataria; Eurocentrismo; Discurso; Golfo da Guiné; Pós-Colonialismo; Pós-Estruturalismo

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List of abbreviations

AICD	Africa Infrastructure Country Diagnostic, Africa Infrastructure Country Diagnostic
BMP5	Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea
CENTCOM	US Naval Central Command
CRIMGO	Critical Maritime Routes Programme, Critical Maritime Routes Gulf of Guinea
CSIS	Center for Strategic & International Studies
CTF150	Combined Taskforce 150
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
EUNAVFOR	European Union Naval Force
G20	Group of 20
GoG	Gulf of Guinea
GoGIN	Gulf of Guinea Inter-regional Network
ICC	International Chamber of Commerce
ICG	International Crises Group
ICS	International Chamber of Shipping
IMB	International Maritime Bureau
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IR	International Relations
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated
KAIPTC	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MIMA	Maritime Institute of Malaysia
MSPA	Maritime Security Patrol Area

MSTC	Maritime Security Transit Corridor
MTISC-GOG	Maritime Trade Information Sharing Center for the Gulf of Guinea
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDA	Niger Delta Avengers
NDLF	Niger Delta Liberation Front
NIMASA	Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency
NNPC	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
O20	Oceans 20
OBP	Oceans Beyond Piracy
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSC	Ocean Shipping Consultants Ltd.
PASSMAR	Support Programme to the Maritime Security Strategy in Central Africa
PEMP	Port Economics, Management and Policy
RO	Referent Object
RPG's	Rocket Propel Grenades
SAA	Secure Anchorage Area
SPM	Ship Protection Measures
SWAINS	Support to West Africa Integrated Maritime Security
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WeCAPS	West and Central Africa Port Security
YCC	Yaoundé Code of Conduct

We don't actually fear death, we fear that no one will notice our absence, that we will disappear without a trace.

T.S. Eliot

1
Introduction

Over the last two decades, there has been a progressive increase in the number of maritime piracy cases on the African and Asian continents. With this rise in cases in perspective, the system began to think of ways to combat pirates and protect the areas where they operate. However, piracy itself is not a new problem when it comes to global security, since it has been present as a practice since the expansion of the old European empires. Furthermore, Birnie (1987, p. 163) states that piracy is perhaps the world's third-oldest profession and can be understood as a common practice in International Relations (IR). Beyond this insight, a crucial question to consider when approaching piracy is not about the practice itself, but about how piracy has been problematised within the field of modern international security in IR.

First and foremost, it is essential to clarify how piracy will be addressed throughout this research. This turns important considering the multiple ontical manifestations of piracy across the centuries. Hence, the categorisation of piracy and modern piracy must be highlighted throughout their differences, here understood by the moment in time when the practice is committed. Therefore, the word 'piracy' can be related to historical crimes performed in the sea according to the legal framework of its time, while 'modern piracy' can be related to 21st century cases regarding the actions of pirates according to updated legislations on the topic. Notwithstanding, 'piracy' is a word that can be used in both senses throughout the literature on the topic, regardless of the period it contemplates. The importance of differentiating the terms will come to light throughout Chapter 1. However, as an introductory statement, this differentiation will be important for the reader as he/she proceeds to read this research. This is because the debate between the 'old piracy' and the 'new piracy' turns out to be essential in the understanding of how piracy has been seen as a threat to the international system, which explain why the definitions of the same practice in different moments of time had to be right at the beginning of this research.

Therefore, the practice of piracy itself can be defined in the 21st century according to authors from the field of IR, or by other international actors, such as States and Organisations, Conventions and Treaties. Starting with the authors,

Dawdy & Bonni (2012) attempt to provide an anthropological definition of piracy in a hobsbawnian sense, where pirates appear as folk heroes when contradictions and inequalities are inevitable and impossible to combat due to the political and economic situation of their lives, focussing more on the social qualities of piracy. The authors' definition is that piracy is a morally ambiguous form of property seizure committed by an organised group, which can include theft, kidnapping of people and/or vessels, smuggling, or counterfeiting (Dawdy & Bonni, 2012, p. 675). Thus, it would not be wrong to assume that if any of these crimes are committed at sea, they would automatically be considered piracy. On the other hand, the authors do not clarify the difference between piracy and maritime crime. Bearing in mind that all the crimes mentioned above can also be committed on land, the only difference would be the place where they are committed, making it unclear what a crime committed on a ship would be and how it differs from the crime of piracy.

Thus, the necessity to differentiate piracy from other maritime crimes must be addressed in other ways. This is where the concept of piracy can be understood by International Organisations, since the official definition of the practice and its countermeasures are present through Articles 100 to 107 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS),[1] with its Article 101 being the exact definition of piracy:

> (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, [*s.d.*], p. 41–42).[2]

[1] Article 101 of UNCLOS addresses piracy as something that can happen not only on ships, but also on aircraft. In order to facilitate understanding of this research, piracy will be considered to be actions committed exclusively by or on ships, or other types of vessels.

[2] UNITED NATIONS. **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea**. [*S. l.*]: United Nations Treaty Collection. [*s.d.*]. Available in: <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/CTC/Ch_XXI_6_english_p.pdf>. Accessed on February 13th, 2025.

However, the relevance of this definition[3] emerges when analysing the exact previous article, since UNCLOS Article 100 establishes that all states have an obligation to cooperate in the best possible way "in the repression of piracy on the high seas or in any other place outside jurisdiction of any state". This ends up granting the jurisdiction to seize pirate ships or those suspected of piracy, arresting the individuals responsible for it, and confiscating the property on board (United Nations, [*s.d.*], p. 41)[4] as long as it stays in high seas.

In the last 20 years, there has been a significant increase in the practice of piracy on the African continent, especially on the East Coast with Somalia. However, the situation is now repeating itself on the West Coast, this time in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) region,[5] where pirates from the Niger Delta dominate the region and organise themselves to plunder or hijack cargo ships passing through the Gulf. In addition, the region has a strong foreign presence due to long-term investments by large multinationals in the oil and gas sector, such as Shell BP, Agip and Chevron. In order to clarify the visualisation of the area, Figure 1 shows the region and the countries that are part of it.

[3] Although the UNCLOS was sign in 1982, it still being used as the definition of maritime piracy in 2025. Therefore, modern piracy will be understood according to the UNCLOS framework.

[4] The reference being utilised in this research is from the United Nations Treaty Collection, which does not provide the year or location of the document in its content. However, the UNCLOS was officially opened for signatures at the Montego Bay conference on December 10th, 1982, and entered into force on November 14th, 1994 (Treves, 2008, p. 1).

[5] The countries in this region are Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

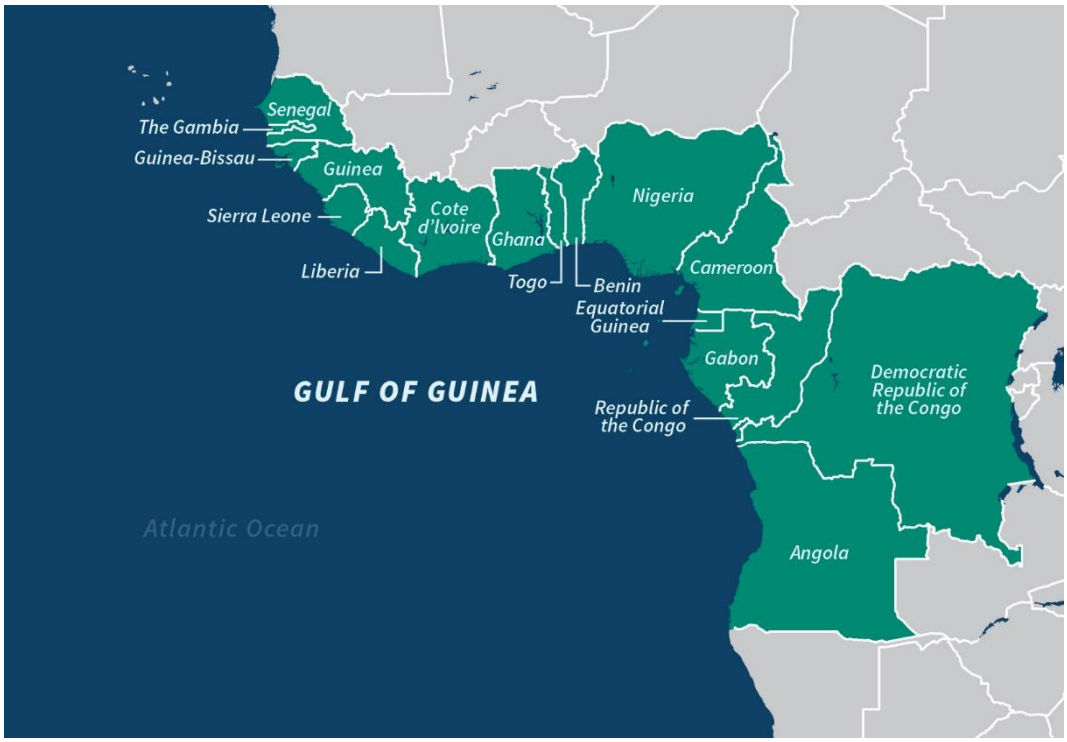

Figure 1 — The Gulf of Guinea area and its countries. Source: Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS).[6]

Given the current scenario, a suitable method of understanding what is happening in the region is to go back to the 1960s, when England began to explore oil in the region – where Nigeria is now located – and affected the local population's way of life, culminating in a revolt that motivated an organisation to fight to restore respect to the Nigerian people by plundering ships in the GoG and directly stealing the multinationals' oil pipelines in the country.[7] Thus, it can be supposed that the practice of piracy in the GoG was strongly influenced by colonialism, followed by neo-colonialism on the part of the British, resulting in an economic crisis that persists to this day, along with the securitisation of the issue and a discourse that legitimises anti-piracy actions by various international actors.

For that reason, the title of this research was carefully constructed to represent what piracy is in 2025. 'Anchored in the Shadows' make a clear analogy to the act of anchoring a ship to the bottom of the sea, with the anchor representing anti-piracy actions by the international system, and the shadows representing the pirates and

[6] THE GULF OF GUINEA MAP, **Center for Strategic & International Studies**. February 1st, 2021 Available in: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/transatlantic-approach-address-growing-maritime-insecurity-gulf-guinea>. Accessed on March 12th, 2025.

[7] See in: VICE NEWS, **The Battle Raging In Nigeria Over Control Of Oil**. YouTube, March 22nd, 2018. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAgw_Zyznx0>. Accessed on: 27 January 2024.

their perspectives. In other words, pirates are constantly under severe pressure of multiple international actors who seek to suppress them. Along with that, the fact that the anchor is cast with the intention to reach the bottom of the sea also points out that pirates and their motivations will never come to light, that is, they will always be destined to contemplate the darkness of the abyss as long as the anchor is above them, since the discourse on the ship is that the anchor is necessary to keep the vessel in place despite the force of the current (here translated as the problem that piracy creates to the system). Hence, while the shadow represents the pirates and their vision, it also represents the marginalisation of their existence in comparison to some international actors, who can control when (and if) the anchor will come back to the surface.

Therefore, a discursive problematisation of a topic is created, since the anchor has the intention to guarantee the stability and safeness of the vessel. With pirates being the shadow that will never come to light, and which is constantly crushed by the weight of the anchor, maritime piracy in the GoG is here represented as something that has to be under the anchor to sustain the security of the ship and the people within it. Otherwise, the ship would supposedly be attacked by the pirates and sunk right after it.

However, the aim of this research will not be to analyse the causes of piracy or to propose recommendations for solving the problem. Instead, the focus will be to show how a Foucauldian *problematic*[8] has been created on the subject in order to legitimise the anti-piracy actions of the actors, whatever they may be, and to answer the question: How England's discourses on piracy in the African continent can be read in the light of coloniality?[9] From the creation of a narrative through its discourses on the subject, which place the pirate as an 'enemy of humanity,'[10] it is possible to observe how these discourses are supplied with input from other anti-

[8] This research is not intended to address the problem of piracy and its solutions per se, but rather to focus on its problematisation – that is, how something is turned into a problem to be solved. In this sense, terms such as 'the piracy problem' and 'the piracy issue' will be put in italic when the intention is to show that it is not about the problem, but instead about its problematisation.

[9] Coloniality will be understood in this research from the perspective of Aníbal Quijano. For more information, see: QUIJANO, Aníbal. Colonialidade do poder, Eurocentrismo e América Latina. *In*: **A colonialidade do saber: eurocentrismo e ciências sociais. Perspectivas latinoamericanas**. Buenos Aires: CLACSO, Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales. 2005.

[10] See in: POLICANTE, Amedeo. **Pirate Myth: Genealogies of an Imperial Concept**. [*S. l.*]: Taylor & Francis Group, 2015. ISBN 9781317632528.

piracy discourses present in the international system, making it clear that it is not a matter of the problem itself, but of its problematisation.

This problematisation of piracy in the current scenario becomes important given that the modern international system sees the practice as a security issue in light of its impact on the global trade chain, almost always attributing the pirate as something that should be combated or eliminated. But what should be considered is precisely the discourses of colonial states and other international actors, since turning piracy into a 'problem to be solved' due to its impacts on the system demonstrates that there is a problematisation of the issue, requiring a critical analysis capable of separating the two.

In this sense, it is important to analyse the *problem of piracy* through the discourses and narratives created by former colonial metropoles. As seen in the following speech by England on the practice:

> The British Shipping industry is a vital part of both our economy and society. […] It is the Government's responsibility to promote and protect UK shipping interests, and the space in which they operate. These interest are affected today by a threat that has been around for centuries: I talk, of course, of piracy. […] Piracy and maritime security are global issues. In today's networked world, instability and disruption of trade in one area is not isolated to a particular country or region, but affects us all. Similarly, the increasing incidence of piracy and maritime crime off Africa's western seaboard illustrates that, wherever in the world pockets of insecurity exist, criminal elements will seek to exploit it for financial gain. We must be vigilant to such threats and act to neutralise them. We have demonstrated that when we work together we can thwart the intentions of those who would use threats and violence to extract financial gain. If we remain steadfast, we can eliminate the scourge of piracy from our seas. (UK Government, 2013)[11]

As a result, it can be argued that recent piracy cases on the African continent are being analysed from a Eurocentric perspective that has informed the mainstream of IR.[12] By looking at the *problem of piracy* in the GoG from a critical perspective, it is possible to reveal a clear British influence on the issue.

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[11] UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT. **Speech: International action Against piracy**. January 21st, 2013. Available in: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/international-action-against-piracy>. Accessed on: December 20th, 2024.

[12] The mainstream of international security studies is based on approaches that are theoretically biased by European logocentric thinking, so one must realise that this Eurocentric view is part of the conception of the Self/Other logic in IR. The definitions of this Eurocentric viewpoint will appear throughout this document, so as not to lose focus in this part of the text.

When it comes to security issues in IR, studies tend to use problem-solving theories based on liberal notions as a basic principle for solving the problem. However, authors such as Robert Cox (2021) show the importance of analysing historical factors, arguing that a critical approach is capable of taking a broader look at the whole, where "the part initially contemplated is only one component", seeking to understand the processes of change in which the parts and the whole are involved (Cox, 2021, p. 15. Translated by the author). With this perspective, the author shows how essential it is to use the Critical Theory of International Relations in contrast to problem-solving theories since the latter end up serving "particular national, sectoral or class interests that are comfortable within the given order," which indicates that they have a conservative bias (Cox, 2021, p. 15. Translation by the author) in their logic of Eurocentric stability.

This logic works precisely when an actor tries to solve a problem within the prevailing political, social and economic structure but without destabilising the current order. In other words, this actor sets out to address the problem to make the order more effective and functional. When analysing piracy, it is not difficult to find other discourses that frame the problem as something to be fought in order to re-establish commercial relations (or even to maintain a capitalist social order). However, these discourses do not question these relations but how piracy affects them, justifying their problematisation.[13] It is in this sense that Dawdy & Bonni (2012) point out the similarity between classic maritime piracy and digital piracy, claiming that "despite being separated by hundreds of years and a gulf in technology and social possibilities, [the pirates] are united in their attempt to resist the most monopolistic phase of capitalism's cycles" (Dawdy & Bonni, 2012, p. 695–696. Adapted by the author). In other words, "pirates should not be dismissed as goofy rogue individuals", but rather as a community movement that rebels "on the fringes in the hopes of fomenting a revolution in the center" (Dawdy & Bonni, 2012, p. 696).

In this sense, the research will be divided into three Chapters. The first will make an effort to introduce the reader to the main theme of this research. To achieve this, an analysis of contemporary cases of piracy on what became known as the 'pirate hotspots' will be made in order to challenge the superficial assumption that

[13] See in: GULF OF GUINEA DECLARATION ON THE SUPPRESSION OF PIRACY. May 17th, 2021. Available at: <https://www.bimco.org/GoGDeclaration>. Accessed on: May 12th, 2024.

piracy was something of the past. Along with that, a discussion that aims to understand the impact that the global maritime trade routes have on the *issue* will be held to introduce the reader to the main narrative created by a capitalist structure in the international system. The argument is revolved in the fact that neo-colonial capitalist relations/structures in Africa are being reproduced or transformed, and therefore, problem-solving theories are not sufficient to understand the situation. This is why this research does not seek to solve the problem of piracy, and using a critical approach can prevent the research to fall within the framework of such theories, as addressed by Cox (2021).

Chapter 2 will be focusing on British discourse on piracy and its effects on the problematic of the *issue*. To achieve this, a post-structuralist methodology will be used, with one of the intentions of this analysis being to expose the logocentrism[14] present in British discourses, which continue to reproduce colonial binaries. The post-structuralist methodology will, therefore, be combined with a post-colonial perspective aimed at analysing how colonial imaginaries cross England's discourses and are found in some International Organisations actions, influencing their operations in African countries where piracy has thrived over the past 20 years. This argument will be better exploited in Chapter 3.

This last Chapter will better investigate the actions of Western European countries regarding piracy on the African continent. A comparison of how these states – along with some International Organisations – held the rise of piracy cases in Somalia and in the GoG can be useful to expose the Eurocentrism in security logics. Thus, the UK's discourses analysed in Chapter 2 can be mobilised to understand a narrative that is being sustained by other major players of the system. In addition, this Eurocentrism also impacts the knowledge production of the Global South, shaping the way in which History is being written itself given the lack of non-Western perspectives when it comes to security studies.

[14] The logocentrism of discourses will be understood in this research according to the definition proposed by Helle Malmvig (2006) in her work on sovereignty as a form of discourse. The author argues that discourses are capable of conferring positions on groups or individuals to speak authoritatively and meaningfully about certain objects and concepts. In the same sense, according to the author, actors such as diplomats, heads of state or international organisations are active agents allowed to act and speak about such objects and concepts, such as war, peace and cooperation (Malmvig, 2006, p. 3).

1.2. Relevance

This endeavour is motivated by the importance of a study that delves into British actions related to maritime security, showing how a hegemonic narrative on piracy unveils a relationship that disregards history and its systemic impacts on Somalia and Nigeria. In addition, the actions of other states and International Organisations, in terms of defining what is considered pirate and piracy, can also be a key factor in shedding light on Self/Other relations in the modern international system, since the overvaluation of Western[15] culture in comparison to everything that belongs to the East means that Western discourses reinforce each other in favour of establishing and maintaining a Eurocentric international order, outweighing all forms of non-Western alterity.

This alterity can be overcome not only through discourse, but also by establishing what piracy is and who is considered a pirate by the international system. According to Birnie (1987), international laws on piracy are based on establishing the pirate as an "enemy of humanity," to protect the interests of the international community according to humanitarian and economic development standards (Birnie, 1987, p. 164). In this sense, it is important to remember that these humanitarian and economic development models are seen from a colonial perspective since the dehumanisation of the Other and the idea that they are 'backwards' in terms of modernity were often used to legitimise the domination of Europeans over their colonies. From the moment that there is an attempt to maintain this Eurocentric order, a problematisation of piracy can be proposed in order to maintain a colonial logic that guarantees the position of Europeans as the Self and pirates as the *Other*.

In this respect, this research seeks an alternative view of piracy, where it is not seen as a 'problem to be solved' through international laws and measures to protect the seas but rather as a problem created in favour of sustaining neo-colonial control over those who dare to challenge the structure of the system. Therefore, this research is not about whether anti-piracy measures work or not, but it seeks to show

[15] The definitions of East and West used in this research will follow those given by Edward Said (2007) in his book *Orientalism*. The author claims that "the relationship between the West and the East is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (Said, 2007, p, 32. Translation by the author), which is the exact way to see the East when approaching Self/Other relations in the modern international system.

how pirates are capable of producing an anti-colonial resistance strong enough to make actors, such as England, start to create narratives and discourses that problematise the practice in order to maintain the current neo-colonial order.

1.3. Research problem

This work seeks a critical approach to a disturbance in colonial relationships/structures, not based on biased problem-solving theories, but on an analysis of the speeches made by England on piracy in the light of the thinking of authors from the post-colonial current and the methodology proposed by the post-structuralist perspective of IR, seeking to understand how England's actions on the problem of piracy influence the perpetuation of colonial thinking in the international system. Using discourses that propagate continuities and discontinuities on *piracy*, the research aims to observe the extent to which British influence acts as a perpetrator of colonial/imperial notions, as well as analysing how these discourses are retro-fed by different discourses from other international actors, such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU). In this sense, the research aims to answer one primary question, extending to two secondary questions, focusing on the practice of maritime piracy in the African continent and its consequences:

1.3.1. Primary question

How England's discourses on African maritime piracy can be read in the light of coloniality?

1.3.2. Secondary questions

1) How do the discourses of the leading global players on maritime piracy contribute to consolidating hegemonic thinking on the current international order?

2) How can maritime piracy be interpreted as a counter-hegemonic thinking when viewed from an African perspective?

1.4. General argument

Based on the elements considered so far, it can be assumed that the problematic of piracy legitimises anti-piracy actions through discourses and narratives on the subject. In this sense, a discomfort with this problematisation sheds light on how it is mobilised to serve the interests of one part of the system, such as maximising Western countries profits margins in global trade, the impacts on their national economy and society, the market share value of companies involved, the capitalist social order that regulates the international system, and the lowering of the price of insurance for ships passing through the region.[16]

When it comes to recent cases of piracy on the African continent, such as in Somalia and Nigeria, it is clear that there is a narrative created through discourse. The hypothesis is that this narrative can contribute to colonisation in the field of international security, where such discourses operate from a Self/Other perspective and consolidate European hegemonic thinking about Africans, leaving Europeans systematically stronger when it comes to global politics.

1.5. Literature review

Intending to uncover a colonial influence from discourses on piracy, this research aims to dialogue with authors from the post-structuralist school of IR to analyse the discourses and their implications, bringing in authors from the post-colonial movement to uncover the coloniality and how it manages to alter and shape the logics of power in the system. To carry out this analysis, authors who discuss the historical influences and actions that European countries have had in Africa are crucial to building a bridge between post-structuralist theory and the post-colonial

[16] See in: MARITIME PIRACY INCREASES BUSINESS COSTS IN THE GULF OF GUINEA. **Al Jazeera**. December 27th, 2019. Available in: <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2019/12/27/maritime-piracy-increases-business-costs-in-the-gulf-of-guinea>. Accessed on May 11th, 2024.

school, since both go against the mainstream theories of IR by analysing the system from a critical perspective.

In order to introduce the research to its audience, the first Chapter of the research aims to contextualise the modern piracy conceptions and show that the research will not try to solve the problem, but focus on a Foucauldian approach in relation to *piracy*. To this end, authors such as Robert Cox, Maj. Eero Tepp, Deborah Osiro, Matthew Fiorelli, James Pattison, Shannon Lee Dawdy & Joe Bonni, P.W Birnie, Theo Neethling, Amedeo Policante, Cristina Barrios, and J.N Mak will be used.

Chapter 2 will focus more on the discourses of the UK involving piracy on the African continent. In this Chapter, using a post-structuralist methodology, it will be possible to see how discourses manage to create and alter specific power dynamics by creating binaries in a logocentric European logic. This perspective can be found in authors such as Charlotte Epstein, Roxanne Doty, Jennifer Milliken, Helle Malmvig, and Debbie Lisle. Moreover, authors of the Copenhagen school, such as Barry Buzan, Ole Waever & Jaap de Wilde, will be mobilised along with others that have a critical approach towards security studies, such as Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey.

The last Chapter will focus on a post-colonial critique of the problematic of piracy and how it can promote a coloniality in international security and the system. In comparing Somalia's and Nigeria's cases, this relationship can be clearly observed, revealing a Self/Other relationship in contemporary times. To this end, authors from the postcolonial current, such as Marta Fernandéz, Akinbode Fasakin, Issac Odoom & Nathan Andrews, Neta Crawford, Meera Sabaratnam, Alina Sajed, Ebru Oğurlu and other postcolonial authors who follow the thinking of Edward Said will be encountered in an attempt to assess the extent to which a postcolonial critique could destabilise the main narrative.

1.6. Theoretical framework

When thinking about IR, the agency of actors and their interactions with the structure of the system is an important way of understanding the global dynamics that shape current policies. However, to understand the *problem of piracy*, it is

necessary to consider examples of how the discourses and narratives of these actors shape the architecture of the international system.

In taking a critical approach rather than problem-solving theories, this research will allow a proposition to the *problem of piracy* from a perspective that transcends that of the existing order, used by problem-solving theories as a starting point for their analyses (Cox, 2021, pp. 15–16). The a-historical view proposed by problem-solving theories hides from international analysts the influence that external factors have on the problematisation of certain issues, historically conditioning the form of analysis that actors use to make their decisions at the international level.

However, by taking a way of thinking derived from a particular phase of history (here thought of as the political context at the turn of the 20th to the 21st century), it is assumed that this phase is valid for all actors, which is the main flaw of any problem-solving theory (Cox, 2021, p. 19), since the British perspective on piracy seems to reject African (or non-Western) views on the topic.

This difference in temporality can be explained by the fact that England seems to ignore the consequences of its colonisation in countries such as Nigeria, while Nigerians see countless barrels of oil being extracted from their basins every day by British multinational companies, but fail to see a socio-economic return in the country. It is in this sense that Kate Manzo (2014) explains that colonialism implies some degree of foreign political control and command, regardless of the presence of colonisers in the region (Manzo, 2014, p. 314).

But how was England able to remain in control of an independent country? Using Jennifer Milliken's (1999) work as an example, it is possible to see that the author draws on Derrida's philosophical thinking to analyse discourses, claiming that these are expected to be constructed in binary terms, such as educated/ignorant and modern/traditional, thus establishing power relations where one of these binary elements will always be privileged (Derrida, 1981 apud Milliken, 1999, p. 229). The author goes further and shows another way of thinking about discourses, which is the *discourse productivity*, where regimes of truth act in the world through intelligible discourses while excluding other possibilities of action and modes of identity. In other words, these discourses end up defining who are the "subjects authorised to speak and to act" highlighting that people can be both destroyed and disciplined in controlled spaces or groups (Milliken, 1999, p. 229).

The use of *discourse productivity* can be seen in Roxanne Doty's (1996) analysis of colonial resistance in Kenya, where she analyses British actions about the Mau-Mau uprising, a movement that took place during Kenya's decolonisation process. Throughout her work, Doty says that one of the strategies of British domination was to frame the Mau-Mau as aberrations from normality, justifying policies aimed at restoring normality (Doty, 1996, p. 113). This ended up producing a discourse that legitimised British counter-insurgency policies, where the Mau-Mau were seen as infected people who needed to be 'cured' but without first being separated, enclosed and purified from the other members of their society (Doty, 1996, pp. 114–117).

In returning to Milliken's work (1999), it is possible to see once again how the two authors interact since Milliken begins by analysing the literature present in IR, more specifically in foreign policy, where the use of *discourse productivity* produces a regime of truth that enables specific courses of action by a state (Milliken, 1999, p. 236), something that can be observed precisely in the Mau-Mau insurgency discussed by Doty (1996). These regimes of truth help to reproduce a common sense among different populations in favour of state-centrism and its actions (Milliken, 1999, p. 237). After all, from the moment a discourse of 'infection' is created in a society, the social elites come to believe in the Eurocentric idea that it is the role of the 'developed' society to bring a cure to the 'infected' as they will not be able to overcome the situation on their own. In this sense, the act of analysing how policies are implemented (and not just formulated) also implies studying the operationalisation of discursive categories in the activities of the international, considering their effects on their targets (Ferguson, 1994 apud Milliken, 1999, p. 240), and thus, justifying the relevance of using post-structuralism in this part of the research.

Nevertheless, the question arises regarding how Eurocentrism is established in international security studies. Tarak Barkawi & Mark Laffey (2006) precisely address this point, arguing that security studies are perceived through categories and assumptions about global politics through a European experience. Such experience affects the relationship between the Global North and South and hinders security studies due to their dependence on reproducing histories and geographies (Barkawi & Laffey, 2006, pp. 330–331). One example the authors give of this is that world historical narratives revolve around Eurocentric periodisations, such as

the Napoleonic wars, the Concert of Europe, the rise of German Nazism and the Cold War (USA vs USSR). All these periodisations are accepted in global politics and show that, in spatial terms, (almost) all of them take place in Europe or, more recently, in the Northern Hemisphere (Barkawi & Laffey, 2006, pp. 334–335), thus disregarding everything that comes from other parts of the world.

Analysing theoretical critiques of Eurocentrism and how discourses employ a logic of power in the structure of the international system is not enough without a case to be analysed. When one considers how Doty (1996) mobilises her thinking to analyse British colonial action in Kenya's independence process, it shows that not only historical issues must be considered but also how forms of structural domination continue to be present even after the colony's independence. The case involving England and Nigeria exposes how the discourse of dehumanisation highlighted by post-colonial currents – and reinterpreted by Policante (2015) to frame pirates as "enemies of humanity" (Policante, 2015, p. xxi) – follows exactly the same logic as the discourses analysed by Milliken (1999), Doty (1996), and Manzo (2014).

The utilisation of Nigeria as one of the main countries to analyse in this research is due to its importance on the African continent, since its population of 150 million in 2010 accounted for 25% of the entire population of Africa – being the continent's biggest population to this day[17] – and its territory of 923,768 km^2 makes it the largest country in West Africa (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2010, p. 103). Besides that, Nigeria shares maritime borders with São Tomé and Principe, Benin, Cameroon, Ghana and Equatorial Guinea, having a coastline of about 853 kilometres long (Tepp, 2012, p. 185–186).

In a critical view of Eurocentrism, Meera Sabaratnam (2011) presents another understanding of IR, where what she calls "*decolonial strategies*" attempt to reconfigure the understanding of global politics by submitting its main perspectives to empirical and philosophical challenges (Sabaratnam, 2011, p. 782). According to the author, the strategy could raise public awareness of how the system of knowledge and political discourses objectify those who have become its subjects

[17] According to Statista, the population of Nigeria, as of July 25th 2024, is 229.521,409. The numbers and the demographics from 1950 to 2024 can be found at: POPULATION OF NIGERIA IN SELECTED YEARS BETWEEN 1950 AND 2024. **Statista**, [*S. l.*], July 25th, 2024. Available in: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1122838/population-of-nigeria/>. Accessed on: October 20th, 2024.

(Sabaratnam, 2011, p. 787). In other words, by detaching from the way Europeans tell history and considering the pluralities of pasts, presents and futures from other non-belonging European perspectives, one can see that an idea of the centrality of the European as 'the one who tells the story' is preserved, even when that story should be told from somewhere else (Sabaratnam, 2011, pp. 788–789).

The use of post-colonial theory to analyse the discourses of the central actors in the system makes it possible to understand how a discourse that operates from a logic of problem-solving reproduces privileges in the system. But what could be done to expand the political imagination on that matter? How can this hegemonic power be contested and the discourse destabilised? The use of the post-colonial perspective becomes significant in this regard given that it points towards colonial history. In other words, this means that this method is able to operationalise an approach to economic relations that are based on extractivist logic, placing everything that the central actors see as a threat and/or resistance on the plane of security to maintain the established order in the structure of the international system.

The preponderance of Eurocentric thinking in regulating the world's security logic while ignoring the history and influence that England has had in Nigeria on the problem of piracy makes this research seek an approach that is not based on biased problem-solving theories. Instead, the approach will seek a historical analysis that intertwines post-colonial and post-structural theories, using discourses that propagate continuities and discontinuities on piracy. Hence, discourse analysis will be used as its main methodology throughout this research by examining the role of the UK's discourses and narratives on *piracy* in the international system. In doing so, it will be possible to understand how the UK's discourses on the subject contribute to consolidate the hegemonic thinking on a Eurocentric international order.

In this sense, by casting light on the bibliography of authors from the fields of Political Science, International Relations and other areas of the Humanities and Social Sciences, it is possible to investigate in more detail the issues surrounding the architecture of the international system, as well as socio-economic problems on both the East and West African coasts, while also revealing a theoretical coherence between the post-colonial and post-structural currents of thought in IR. In addition, documentary research of treaties, reports, memoranda and English government

documents will also be used along with documents from International Organisations such as the UN, the EU, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Maritime Bureau (IMB). All of this will be combined with transcripts of official speeches made by such actors, as well as reports and articles produced by the international media, especially British, on England's relationship with piracy.

With this methodological approach, this research aims to review the works of various authors from these areas in order to build a bridge linking the different critical perspectives on the structure of the international system. In doing so, the purpose of unveiling the colonial influence on its architecture – and how the discourses and narratives of some actors contribute to its maintenance – will be revealed.

However, it is vital to emphasise that the use of the different theoretical approaches throughout the research will be proposed in an assemblage, with the aim of communicating between these theories and benefiting from the complementarity and synergy between them. The intention of dividing the work into three Chapters is precisely to make the reader aware that each Chapter has a purpose, and that this purpose will be fulfilled by using a post-colonial perspective combined with a post-structuralist methodology. In doing so, it is possible to make the research easier for the reader to understand, while also making it more organised and based on the same theoretical and methodological lens.

1.7. Objectives

The research will be guided by a general objective that is focused on the influence of piracy on maritime security. This objective will be combined with other three specific objectives that will be addressed, evaluated, and realised throughout the research.

1.7.1.
General objective

Analyse the British speeches on African piracy from the turn of the 20th to the 21st century.

1.7.2.
Specific objectives

The research will also seek to examine more specific aspects of the relationship between England's discourses and the actions of other actors of the system regarding the combat of piracy:

1) Identify how the exploitation of Africa's natural resources by Western European countries has influenced the lives of the population in regions affected by piracy on the continent.
2) Analyse how England's discourse reflects on a hegemonic notion of piracy in the international system.
3) Analyse, from a post-colonial perspective, the extent to which England's discourse on piracy is retro-fed back into other discourses by International Organisations, showing how a post-colonial critique could destabilise these discourses.

2
Chapter 1: Marauders on the Horizon

Within IR, studies about security have a key function in defining how the multiple actors in the system interact with certain topics. Throughout time, security problems in the international arena were becoming more and more relevant in shaping modern politics, casting light on the best way to solve such problems with minimal impact on the lives of societies, but one of those problems has been revolving IR for many centuries: maritime piracy.

In recent years, there has been a notable increase in the number of piracy attacks and operations in the seas,[18] which implies that piracy remains a real (and very contemporary) issue in the world. Until the alarming increase in attacks and hijackings in Somali waters – and the famous Maersk Alabama case in 2009, which became a movie afterward – few people were aware that piracy still exists to this day (Neethling, 2010, p. 90). Mingst, Karns & Lyon (2022, p. 117) are in line with that thought when the authors argue that piracy is an ancient problem that has become a contemporary one, especially after 2000, and the best way to clarify these arguments is to show how piracy attacks are being made, as well as its locations. In this sense, this research will be using data on piracy incidents according to the IMB Live Piracy Report, which provides data on all Piracy and Armed Robbery incidents reported to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre.[19]

The IMB is a specialised non-profit-making organisation established in 1981, acting as a division of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) to fight against all types of maritime crime and malpractice. With one of its main areas of expertise being the suppression of piracy, the IMB acts together with the IMO, multiple governments and other organisations to maintain and develop co-coordinated actions in combating maritime fraud and protect the integrity of international trade, maintaining a 24/7 watch on shipping lanes, reporting piracy

[18] INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. **International Maritime Bureau**, [*S. l.*], [*s.d.*]. Available in: <https://www.icc-ccs.org/icc/imb>. Accessed on: August 15th, 2024.; INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. **IMB Piracy Reporting Centre**, [*S. l.*], [*s.d.*]. Available in: <https://www.icc-ccs.org/piracy-reporting-centre>. Accessed on: August 15th, 2024.

[19] It is important to note that the incidents brought by the IMB are the ones that were reported to them, meaning that it does not contemplate every piracy action in the world, only those which were reported to the organisation.

attacks to law enforcement agencies and issuing warnings about piracy hotspots to shippers.[20]

Taking the number of incidents (occurred and attempted) between 2007 and 2024, as shown in Figure 2, it is possible to demonstrate how piracy is something that never went totally away from the international system despite the reduction in the number of cases.

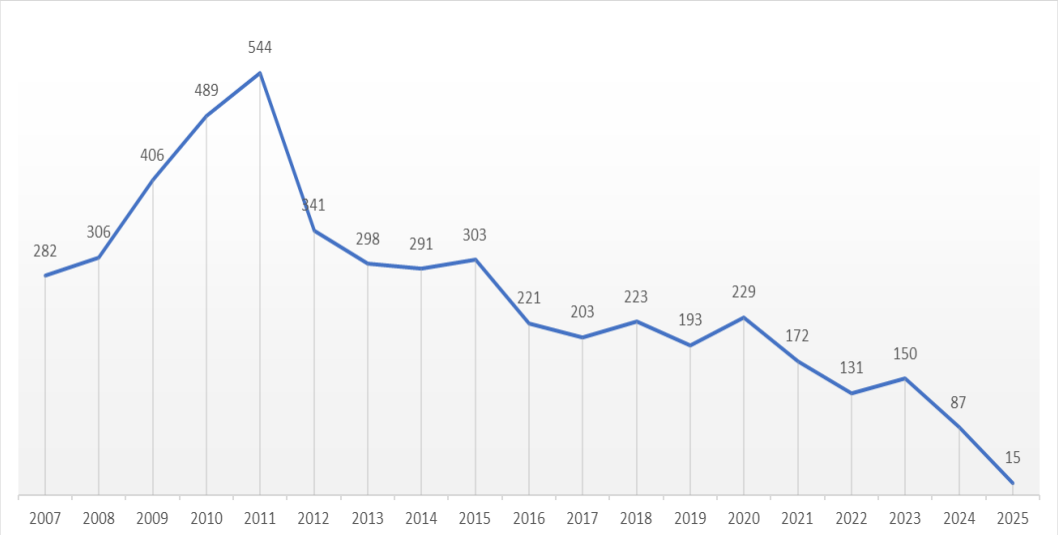

Figure 2 — Piracy incidents according to the IMO. Source: Made by the author using data from the International Maritime Organization Annual Piracy Reports, 2025. [21]

In light of these numbers,[22] one may ask how the everyday society did not notice that maritime piracy still happens to this date. The answer to that question can come from a practical experience that anyone can do: if the reader asks about piracy for anyone who does not study piracy or maritime security, the person asked will probably answer with something related to piracy centuries ago, when the 'New World' was beginning to be discovered by the European empires. More than that, it is very possible to hear an answer saying that pirates *were* (focusing on the past) criminals who acted on the sea, stealing from other ships and searching for buried treasures on some distant forsaken island somewhere in the world.

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[20] INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. **International Maritime Bureau**, [*S. l.*], [*s.d.*]. Available in: <https://www.icc-ccs.org/icc/imb>. Accessed on: August 15th, 2024.

[21] For monthly reports, see in: INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION. Maritime Security and Piracy. **Piracy Reports**. [*S. l.*], 2025. Available in: <https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/Pages/Piracy-Reports-Default.aspx>. Accessed on March 23th, 2025.

[22] The numbers presented in Figure 2 are the sum of the number of incidents that were allegedly committed and attempted per month in the correspondent year. In 2025, the number is referent only to January cases, since it is the most updated data at the moment of this research.

The main point of this experiment is to show the person how he/she only focuses on the historical practice of piracy. Once this vision is disrupted by the presentation of a simple newspaper article[23] on modern piracy, the person will notice that this historical vision can be related to a myth perpetuated in society for many years. Furthermore, Policante's (2015) book[24] will show that the origin of piracy dates back earlier than the commonly assumed stating point of the practice.

When thinking about piracy, the framing of the pirate can be very different from what the individual may think, since their first experience with piracy can be traced back to childhood in many ways, such as a costume, a book, a play, or a movie. It is in this sense that Birnie (1987, p. 163) argues that the image of the pirate and what piracy represents comes from a romanticised literature from the 17th and 19th centuries – when pirates operated from inhospitable islands and lacked the skills and equipment to dominate the oceans in the same way as the Europeans powers did. In addition, Aboh & Ahmed (2018, p. 1) are also in accordance with that, stating that, in the 21st century, piracy is way different from the cartoonish interpretations that revolve around popular culture, becoming a grave threat to national security and international trade. On top of that, Dawdy & Bonni (2012) also mobilise an anthropological definition of piracy throughout a hobsbawmian sense, where pirates appear as folkloric heroes when inequalities and contradictions are inevitable and impossible to fight due to the political and economic situation of their lives, focusing more in the social qualities of piracy.

2.1.
Outlaws of the sea: piracy incidents in the 21st century

Evidently, time passes, and the 17th and 19th centuries are way in the past right now. The popular vision of piracy can be sustained by the childhood myth of the pirate with a parrot on his shoulder. But as the European empires evolved throughout time, so did the practice of piracy. Turning our attention to the 21st century, piracy can be considered a well-organised crime perpetrated by individuals

[23] An example can be found in: WEST AFRICA HAS BECOME THE WORLD'S PIRACY HOTSPOT. **The Economist**. July 3rd, 2019. Available on: <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2019/07/03/west-africa-has-become-the-worlds-piracy-hotspot>. Accessed on August 15th, 2024.

[24] POLICANTE, Amedeo. **Pirate Myth: Genealogies of and Imperial Concept**. [*S. l.*]: Taylor & Francis Group, 2015. ISBN 9781317632528.

carrying high calibre guns[25] at distances between 100 and 200 nautical miles from the shore.[26] Tepp (2012, p. 190) argues that piracy is a criminal activity in places where anarchy and predation proliferate. For him, the practice of piracy is a symptom of conflict and disorder, usually thriving in regions with weak or non-existing governments.

As argued earlier, the IMB maintains an intensive watch on piracy activity and hotspots in the seas. The organisation registers not only the number of reports, but also the location and type of activity around the world, which can be used to understand where and how pirates attack. Figure 3 is a live map that shows all piracy and armed robbery incidents reported to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre during 2024, providing the exact coordinates of the incidents.[27]

Figure 3 — Incidents reported in 2024 according to the IMB Live Piracy Map.[28] Source: IMB Piracy Reporting Centre, International Maritime Bureau.

Using the information presented by the map, it is possible to show a good deal of crucial information about pirate activity. Firstly, concerning the types of the

[25] HAVE HIRED GUNS FINALLY SCUPPERED SOMALI PIRATES. **Reuters**. February 12th, 2013. Available in: <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/have-hired-guns-finally-scuppered-somali-pirates-idUSBRE91B19Z/>. Accessed on August 16th, 2024.

[26] KAIPTC; JAPAN GOVERNMENT; UNDP. **Maritime criminality in West Africa: Setting the periscope on maritime zones E and F**. p. 1–26, 2021.

[27] If exact coordinates are not provided in the report, estimate positions are shown on the map based on all other information provided.

[28] This is a daily updated map. The image presented in this research was gathered on August 16th, 2024. The most recent updated map can be found at <https://www.icc-ccs.org/index.php/piracy-reporting-centre/live-piracy-map>.

incidents, it is possible to see that most of them are boarding vessels, meaning that counteractions to prevent the pirates from boarding may not work so well. [29] Secondly, geographically speaking, it is possible to note that the attacks are centred in key points of the world, such as the Gulf of Aden, between Somalia and Yemen, and the Malacca Strait, between Malaysia and Sumatra, and near the South China Sea. Thirdly, and most importantly, all areas affected by piracy according to the map, have a major importance in maritime trade, since they are all within maritime shipping routes.

This turns relevant due to the fact that these shipping routes have a major importance in the global economy. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in 2021, over 80% of the volume of international trade in goods was carried by sea.[30] Given this fact, Figure 4 shows the main maritime routes and strategic locations regarding global trade.[31]

[29] In 2018, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) has issued a document to increase the security of ships threatened by piracy. The *Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea* (BMP5) is a guideline that help the ships to plan their voyage and to detect, avoid, deter, delay and report attacks (ICS, 2018). In its 5th section, the BPM5 highlights the ship protection measures (SPM) to reduce the risk of attack. These measures contain mechanisms to increase the ship defence against boarding, such as good vigilance, razor wire, water spray canons, motion sensors, defensive manoeuvring, placement of "well-constructed dummies" at strategic locations to give the impression of a greater number of crew on watch, internal door hardening and a safe muster point in the ship (BIMCO *et al.*, 2018, p. 11–18).

[30] UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT, **Review of Maritime Transport 2021**. November 18th, 2021. Available in: <https://unctad.org/publication/review-maritime-transport-2021>. Accessed on August 18th, 2024.

[31] According to PEMP, the routes presented in the map support the bulk of the traffic, although numerous other routes exist (namely for coastal shipping), depending on the origin and destination of the maritime shipment.

Figure 4 — Maritime Shipping Routes and Strategic Locations. Source: Port Economics, Management and Policy (PEMP).[32]

When comparing the piracy map by the IMB alongside the maritime shipping routes from PEMP, it is possible to see that most incidents occur in the strategic locations presented by the latter. This is by no means accidental, since, according to Bensassi & Martínez-Zarzoso (2012, p. 9), most of the routes connect economically intense regions, such as North America-Europe, North America-Asia and Europe-Asia. What is interesting is that some routes use narrow passages to avoid long voyages, i.e., the Strait of Gibraltar, the Suez Canal, the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb and the Strait of Malacca, explaining why these passages are considered primary choke points by the PEMP. These strategic choke points in the map are composed of straits, bays, estuaries and archipelagos, which makes the practice of piracy a recurring incident due to the necessity of the ships to sail slowly and close to the coast. This allows the pirates to use the maze-like waterways as hide-outs and to easily approach and board the vessels in their reach using their smaller, agile and quicker boats, since these conditions make less likely to the commercial ships to take evasive actions (Neethling, 2010, pp. 1–2; Tepp, 2012, p. 194; 198). Bensassi & Martínez-Zarzoso are also well aware of this, going further in their analysis and

[32] PORT ECONOMICS, MANAGEMENT AND POLICY, **Main Maritime Shipping Routes and Chokepoints**. Available in: <https://porteconomicsmanagement.org/pemp/contents/part1/interoceanic-passages/main-maritime-shipping-routes>. Accessed on August 16th, 2024.

claiming that "these passages suffer congestion problems and the countries flanking them are often politically unstable" (Bensassi & Martínez-Zarzoso, 2012, p. 9).

2.2.
Nautical charting: the piracy "hotspots" of the world

2.2.1.
The Malacca Strait

Focusing attention on the Strait of Malacca and the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb nowadays, it is possible to identify how piracy activities happen in this region. Starting with the Strait of Malacca, piracy has affected the area for centuries. In fact, in the 1820s, the Dutch and the British drew a line in the sea to hunt down pirates on their respective sides – a line that became the modern-day border between Malaysia and Indonesia.[33] Nowadays, as well observed by Leeson (2007, p. 1088), piracy *modus operandi* chooses to plunder ships in areas where commercial activity is vigorous and state presence (as an enforcer of the order) is weak,[34] going along with the argument presented by Bensassi & Martínez-Zarzoso (2012, p. 9).

The importance of the Malacca Strait in commercial activity must be highlighted here. Being a 1,000-kilometre passage between the Malay Peninsula and Singapore to the north, and Sumatra and other Indonesian islands to the south,[35] almost half of all global trade and one-third of the world's crude oil passes through the Strait, making it one of the most important shipping lanes in the world.[36]

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[33] STRAIT OF MALACCA IS WORLD'S NEW PIRACY HOTSPOT, **NBC News**. [*S. l.*], March 27th, 2014. Available in: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/strait-malacca-worlds-new-piracy-hotspot-n63576>. Accessed on August 16th, 2024.

[34] It is important to note that, throughout this research, this weakness or lack of state presence will be considered as the result of colonialism. In other words, there are differences between internal and external interference in the cases of piracy that will be analysed here. Such weakness does not concern their lack of power, but rather how their own development in maritime security terms was compromised by the European powers.

[35] In order to clarify the visualisation of the area, Figure 5 shows the region according to the UN.

[36] THE NIPPON FOUNDATION. **Safety in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore**, [*s.d.*]. Available in: <https://www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/en/what/projects/safe_passage>. Accessed on September 15th, 2024.

Figure 5 — Southeast Asia. Source: United Nations Southeast Asia Map.[37]

According to the Maritime Institute of Malaysia (MIMA), the Strait serves nearly 80,000 ships annually,[38] proving the importance of the Malacca Strait according to Mak (2016, p. 66):

> Malacca Straits runs parallel to the industrial heartland of Malaysia, serving the so-called 'Western Corridor' of Malaysia. Every major Malaysian port is located along the Straits, which provides a critical transport link for highly trade-dependent Malaysia. Singapore's small size, restricted sea space and its dependence on its port, maritime trade and sea lines of communication for survival makes its extremely vulnerable to maritime incidents in the Straits of Malacca (Mak, 2016, p. 66).[39]

[37] SOUTHEAST ASIA MAP. **United Nations**. March 1st, 2012 Available in: <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/southeast-asia>. Accessed on March 12th, 2025.

[38] MARITIME INSTITUTE OF MALAYSIA. **The prosperity of the straits of Malacca**. [*S. l.*], [*s. d.*]. Available in: <https://www.mima.gov.my/news/the-prosperity-of-the-straits-of-malacca>. Accessed on August 16th, 2024.

[39] MAK, J.N. Securitizing Piracy in Southeast Asia: Malaysia, the International Maritime Bureau and Singapore. *In*: CABALLERO-ANTHONY, Mely, EMMERS, Ralf & ACHARYA, Amitav. **Non-Traditional Security in Asia: Dilemmas in Securitisation** [*S. l.*]: Taylor & Francis Group, 2016. p. 65–92. ISBN 0754647013.

That said, it is not unusual to think that piracy in this region could be a major problem. In fact, according to Raymond (2009, p. 37), piracy in the Malacca Strait came to the attention of the international community in the late 90s due to the Asian financial crisis.[40] The author argues that it is believed that the economic collapse and widespread political instability forced many people living in coastal areas in Indonesia and Malaysia to pursue illegal methods of income generation.

Since the latest IMB map shows that piracy still happens in the region, it is important to note that the actions taken by both the IMB and IMO in the 90s were not sufficient despite the decline in the number of cases. The key point in this discussion is the fact that the IMB considers socio-economic measures – such as poverty mitigation programs and illegal immigration – as only secondary importance, putting pressure on littoral states to take action against piracy using its own regular reports and data (Mak, 2016, p. 73).

The proof of that being a historical measure can also be traced back to the fact that the IMB concentrates its efforts on piratical depredations on international shipping as its only issue (Mak, 2016, p. 75). In returning to the 90s Asian financial crisis, the Malaysian government had to deal with another problem in the Strait regarding mass "illegal immigration". The countermeasure for that was the instruction to its police to set up a string of posts along the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia to ensure that migrants would not come from Sumatra searching for jobs and economic security. These intensified patrols target not only "illegal migrants", but also sea robbers in the Straits of Malacca (Mak, 2016, p. 75). The key point here is that the IMB did nothing to mitigate the issue, since this problem was of secondary importance to the organisation. Nevertheless, piracy cases decline once state presence becomes more significant in the region.

2.2.2. The Gulf of Aden

Although this research recognises the importance of the Malacca Straits in modern studies of piracy, its main focus is on piracy cases on the African coasts. According to Bueger (2013, p. 312), maritime security in Africa has become a major

[40] INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND. The Asian Crisis: Causes and Cures. **Finance & Development**. [*S. l.*], v. 35, n. 2, June 1998. Available in: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/1998/06/imfstaff.htm>. Accessed on September 16th, 2024.

challenge that was significantly intensified with the growing concerns about Somali piracy from 2005 onwards. This turns the attention to another choke point in the PEMP map: the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb.

This Strait is formed at the end of the Red Sea, between the eastern coast of Djibouti and the western coast of Yemen, leading to its exit in the Horn of Africa in the Gulf of Aden (between the north coast of Somalia and the south coast of Yemen).[41] The PEMP map points to the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb as a choke point due to its strategic location right next to busy sea routes that feed the maritime trade between Europe and Asia, as it goes through the Mediterranean Sea and the Suez Canal all the way to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

[41] In order to clarify the visualisation of the area, Figure 6 shows the region according to the UN.

Figure 6 — Horn of Africa region. Source: United Nations Horn of Africa Map.[42]

Such importance of the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb made African maritime security gain significant importance throughout the years. In fact, according to Bueger (2013, p. 312), it has become a major challenge for the African continent, intensifying the concern about it since 2005 due to the Somali piracy growing

[42] HORN OF AFRICA MAP. **United Nations**. March 1st, 2012 Available in: <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/horn-africa>. Accessed on March 12th, 2025.

number of cases, which has led to a diverse set of institutions to address maritime security. According to Osiro (2011, p. 2), piracy attacks in the region have increased because of several factors, including inadequate law-enforcement in Somalia, ambiguous jurisdiction, attractive geographic location and the potential of high financial returns to the pirates with low risk of significant consequences.

Being a major shipping route where nearly 20% of the world trade and maritime shipping pass through,[43] Middleton (2008, p. 6) argues that around 16,000 vessels pass through the Gulf of Aden each year, which when combined with its funnel-like shape, means that ships are easier to locate and hunt down in the sea off Somalia's coast. According to a report in October 2010 by the IMB,[44] Somali pirates have expanded their operations and were responsible for 44% of the 289 piracy incidents on the world's sea only in the first nine months of the year.

However, one may ask a vital question when thinking about these facts: Why Somali pirates engage in piracy? This research does not intend to find what *causes* piracy (since it can be traced back to multiple factors). Still, the Somali perspective on the pirates' actions must not be ignored when considering African maritime security. As mentioned above, the lack of an effective government can be used as leverage to the pirates' attacks. In the Somali case, this stateless presence contributed to the absorption of a growing number of people joining pirate activity – including fisherman with expertise in boat handling[45] – which enhanced the seriousness of the threat to navigation in the region (Treves, 2009, p. 400).

In returning to the question, it may become clear why people are joining the case and risking their lives to analyse how Somalia's maritime overexploitation by other countries is happening due to the lack of government presence. This exploitation can be traced back to two factors: illegal fishing and toxic waste.

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[43] HORN OF AFRICA SEA PORTS GATEWAY TO TRADE, INVESTMENT. **Trademark** Africa. [*S. l.*]. December 16th, 2019. Available in: <https://www.trademarkafrica.com/news/horn-of-africa-sea-ports-gateway-to-trade-investment/>. Accessed on August 29th, 2024.

[44] INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. Maritime Piracy. **Pirates intensify attacks in new areas, with first Somali hijacking reported in Red Sea**. London & Kuala Lumpur, October 18th, 2010. Available in: <https://www.icc-ccs.org/icc_test/index.php/315-pirates-intensify-attacks-in-new-areas-with-first-somali-hijacking-reported-in-red-sea>. Accessed on August 29th, 2024.

[45] Although the growing number of fishermen joining piracy, most of the pirates are just impoverished people seeking for better life conditions.

Beginning with the illegal fishing, a *Time* magazine article[46] highlights a report by the UN in 2006 claiming that the non-presence of the Somali coastguard contributed to the framing of the Somali waters as a site of international "free for all" due to the number of fishing fleets from around the world illegally exploiting Somali biome. Conjoined with that, Osiro (2011, p. 4) argues that around 700 foreign-owned vessels (most of them armed and engaged in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) operations) are related to unsustainable fishing in Somali waters, causing considerable loss to the Somali fishermen who utilise much less advanced equipment. In addition, the *Time's* article goes on to claim that, according to another UN report, an estimated $300 million worth of seafood is stolen from the country's coastline each year. Figure 7 shows an estimated catch by foreign and Somali vessels in Somali waters between 1981 and 2013.

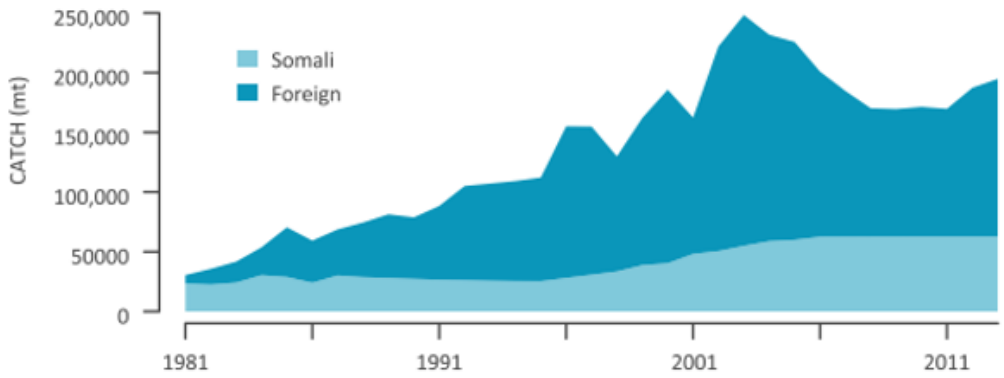

Figure 7 — Estimated catch by foreign vessels and Somali vessels in Somali waters (1981-2013). Source: Brookings, using data from Securing Somali Fisheries and Secure Fisheries, 2015.[47]

To fully understand the impact of the foreign presence in Somali waters, analysing Figure 4 and comparing with what Glaser, Roberts & Hurlburt (2019, p. 1) estimate, foreign fishing vessels can catch much more fish than the Somali fleet – taking into consideration that Iran and Yemen accounted for the vast majority of foreign fish catches, with 48% and 31% of the figures respectively. These facts turn important in analysing piracy activity when combined with what Middleton (2008,

[46] THAROOR, Ishaan. How Somalia's Fishermen Became Pirates. **Time**, [*S. l.*], April 18th, 2009. Available in <https://time.com/archive/6946406/how-somalias-fishermen-became-pirates/>. Accessed on August 29th, 2024.

[47] SOW, Mariama. Figures of the week: Piracy and Illegal fishing in Somalia. **Brookings**. [*S. l.*], April 12th, 2017. Available in: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/figures-of-the-week-piracy-and-illegal-fishing-in-somalia/>. Accessed on August 19th, 2024.

p. 4–5) argues in his work. According to the author, most illegal activity originating in the Gulf of Aden is connected to fishing and the protection of fishing grounds.[48] In that sense, Neethling (2010, p. 95) states that the Somali fisherman were dismayed by the inability of the central government to protect the country's resources, which made them take matters into their own hands. Thereby, once they realise that robbing the foreign vessels was a lucrative way of making up the loss of income, their *modus operandi* began as the pirates claimed that they were authorised 'coastguard' patrolling the Somali Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and protecting the country's resources.[49]

With that being said, the second factor of foreign presence in Somalia re-entered the global spotlight in 2004, when a tsunami hit the Somali coast and re-ignited the conversations about the toxic waste that was being dumped on the region. More than that, due to the lack of a functioning central government in Somalia, investigations on both the source of the toxic waste and its impact on communities were few.[50] Although this was a problem well known by the international community since the late 1980s, it only became relevant when rusting tanks of unidentifiable ooze showed up on the beaches and villagers began to die of unexplained illnesses, besides severe birth defects and widespread cancers.[51]

The reason for that dumping can be explained according to Rucevska *et al.* (2015, p. 41) in a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report, where the authors claim that "illegal disposal of waste can offer savings of up to 200 to 300%, compared to legal and safe disposal of the same waste" (Baird *et al*., 2014 apud Rucevska *et al*., 2015, p. 41).

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[48] Although, in 2024, there have been reports about pirate attacks done by the Houthis against Israeli connected vessels. These attacks can be considered as another type of piracy or even terrorism, since they seem not to be seeking for profit or any kind of money. More on this subject on: DANOS A CABOS SUBMARINOS DE TELECOMUNICAÇÃO NO MAR VERMELHO LEVANTAM SUSPEITA DE SABOTAGEM DOS HOUTIS. **O Globo**. Sanaa, March 4th, 2024. Available in: <https://oglobo.globo.com/mundo/noticia/2024/03/04/danos-a-cabos-submarinos-de-telecomunicacao-no-mar-vermelho-levantam-suspeitas-de-sabotagem-dos-houthis.ghtml>. Accessed on August 26th, 2024.

[49] In early 2006, this 'Somali coastguard' was able to capture nine Yemeni fishing boats, claiming that they were illegally fishing in the waters off Somaliland. Nonetheless, according to their view, they were only protecting their own resources and 'fined' the perpetrators for their actions (Neethling, 2010, p. 95).

[50] MILTON, Chris. Somalia used as toxic dumping ground. **The Ecologist** [*S. l.*], March 1st, 2009. Available in: <https://theecologist.org/2009/mar/01/somalia-used-toxic-dumping-ground>. Accessed on August 26th 2024.

[51] Ibid.

With both factors in mind, it is not unreasonable to think that people would eventually mobilise themselves to protect their livelihoods. This is why, according to the Global Atlas of Environmental Justice,[52] some authors have linked the origins of piracy in the region to the efforts of the communities that live alongside the Somali coast to protect themselves from toxic dumping and illegal fishing. This can go in line with what the Somali poet and singer K'naan (2008) points out in an interview.[53] According to him, people either consider pirates to be characters of childhood imagination or dangerous criminals who terrorise the oceans. But K'naan (2008) also argues that piracy in Somalia could have a reason, claiming that "most Somalis can't readily condemn pirates" due to the nuclear technology toxic waste that has been dumped in Somali waters by Western private companies, which he claims that are being hired by governments.[54]

The point is that this toxic waste changed the lives of the Somalis who depend on the fishing industry, given that this toxic waste was so present that it kills most of the fish on the Somali coast. This can be verified by what Osiro (2011, p. 3) has to say in her work, arguing that the internal dynamics of Somalia contribute to the rise of violent insurgency, political instability and the inability of the government to deliver essential services, such as protection of its coastline as well as for the Somali fishermen who operate in the region.

K'naan (2008) continues by saying that the fisherman community was actually able to bring this issue to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). However, since the problem was not properly treated and continued to happen, these fishermen reunited with street militias to protect the Somali waters. Eventually, they started doing piracy acts on the coast. The attacks, as discussed

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[52] GLOBAL ATLAS OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE. **Somalia toxic waste dumping**. Somalia, 2014. Available in: <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/somalia-toxic-waste-dumping-somalia>. Accessed on August 30th, 2024.

[53] The full interview can be found at: HARD KNOCK TV. **K'naan on Somali pirates – There is a Reason Why This Started**. YouTube, December 30th, 2008. Available in: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTxJLlQCe4U>. September 30th, 2024.

[54] This was verified by a Greenpeace investigation published in a 1997 article in the Italian magazine *Famiglia Cristiana*. Greenpeace had shown that the dumping can be traced back to the late 1980s, and exposed Swiss and Italian companies as brokers for the transportation of hazardous waste from Europe to dumps in Somalia. Subsequent research by the Greenpeace has also shown that the company employed to transport the waste was owned by the Somali government, exposing even more the corruption that lies in the country. For more on that, see MILTON, Chris. Somalia used as toxic dumping ground. **The Ecologist** [*S. l.*], March 1st, 2009. Available in: <https://theecologist.org/2009/mar/01/somalia-used-toxic-dumping-ground>. Accessed on August 26th 2024.

above and pointed out by K'naan (2008), have become increasingly sophisticated. Still, it does not change the fact that the UN only begins to address the issue when it becomes an issue that threatens the stability and safety of the vessels that pass through the region. At the end of the interview, K'naan recognises that the military forces are being sent to combat piracy, but still, "nobody is talking about those ships that are dumping nuclear toxic waste on (Somali) shores.".

2.3. From East to West: the piracy incidents in the Gulf of Guinea

One of the things that has to be pointed out by analysing the piracy cases in the world, is that piracy not only happens on Africa's East coast, but also on its West side, according to the IMB map. The region of the GoG is of great importance to global trade and maritime security, not only because of its vast resources, but also due to the strategic maritime routes that are crucial to oil transportation (as well as other energy commodities) and to connect the Americas and Europe to sustain their development (Neethling, 2010, pp. 94; 98; Aboh & Ahmed, 2018, p. 12). This is why Barrios (2013, p. 1) states that piracy attacks in the GoG can pose a security threat to the international community. The importance of this information is proved by a report of the Africa Infrastructure Country Diagnostic (AICD), made by the Ocean Shipping Consultants Ltd. (OSC) in 2008, claiming that container traffic in West African ports has annually grown 14% since 1995, being the fastest of any region in Sub-Saharan Africa (OSC, 2008, p. 3).

This is why it turns relevant to understand what is happening in the region, where recent events and available statistics can prove the shift in the spike of piracy from the Gulf of Aden to the GoG,[55] especially on the Nigerian coast (Aboh & Ahmed, 2018, p. 2). According to the executive director of Youths and Environmental Advocacy Centre Nigeria, Fyneface Dumnamene, pirates of the GoG are from the delta of the Niger River and carry heavy and more sophisticated

[55] Since 2012, the GoG has surpassed the Gulf of Aden as the region with the highest number of reported piracy attacks in the world. However, it is important to emphasise the fact that most of the events are not reported in order to avoid increased shipping costs or a reputation for insecurity (Osinowo, 2015, pp. 1–2). Barrios (2013, p. 2) goes in line with this claiming that the IMB estimates that only 1/3 of attempted attacks in the area are reported, masking the true extent of the problem. This can imply that the exact number is impossible to know for sure, but certainly higher than what is reported.

guns compared to the ones possessed by the security forces (Vice, 2021).[56] In addition, the IMB is aware of the unprecedented level of kidnappings in the region, advising all ships to be extra vigilant when transiting through the GoG.[57] More than that, a UNSC report about piracy in the GoG estimates that piracy in the region can cost up to "an annual loss of $2 billion to the economy of the West African subregion" (UNSC, 2012, p. 11).

The increasing concern about piracy activity in the GoG can also be related to the rampant use of violence of the pirates, who attacked 1,726 seafarers in 2017, taking 100 of them as hostage (Osinowo, 2015, p. 3; Oceans Beyond Piracy (OBP), 2018). To put in perspective the situation of the GoG in comparison with the rest of the world, the ICC (2019, p. 6) reported a total number of 201 actual and attempted attacks in 2018, with 87 of them being in the African continent, 81 being in the GoG countries, and 48 only in Nigeria. Although there was a drastically reduced in the numbers in 2023,[58] the violence and sophistication of the pirates in their attacks must be analysed due to the various economic factors within Nigeria, and the minimal maritime security in the region before the international response, which only came after a hike in maritime insurance cost and increased prices of oil products (Fiorelli, 2014, p. 7; Tepp, 2012, pp. 186; 190–191; 193–194; 196).

This lack of security in the GoG waters contributed to the region also being categorised as "the new danger zone", "high-risk area", "a war risk zone for shipping", and "the piracy hotspot of the world" (International Crises Group (ICG), 2012; OBP, 2014a; Fiorelli, 2014, p. 6; The Economist, 2019).

Given the rise of piracy in the region, one of the many ways to understand the situation is to focus on Nigeria's relationship with its natural resources, since the country accounts for over 90% of the piracy cases in the GoG (Aboh & Ahmed,

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[56] According to Aboh & Ahmed (2018, p. 5), GoG pirates often use high caliber automatic rifles (such as the AK47) and Rocket Propel Grenades (RPG's), not hesitating to use them in case of resistance or confrontation with the coast guards.

[57] INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. **Gulf of Guinea Kidnappings**, [*S. l.*], [*s.d.*]. Available in: <https://www.icc-ccs.org/icc/imb>. Accessed on: October 20th, 2024.

[58] The latest report by the ICC shows 120 actual and attempted attacks in the world. 26 of them were in the African continent, 22 in the GoG, and only 2 in Nigeria. The full report can be found at: INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. International Maritime Bureau. **Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships | Report for the period 1 January – 31 December 2023**. [*S. l.*], January, 2024. Available in: <https://www.icc-ccs.org/reports/2023_Annual_IMB_Piracy_and_Armed_Robbery_Report_live.pdf>. Accessed on October 21st, 2024.

2018, p. 8). With that in mind, it becomes necessary to go back to the Shell BP's discovery of oil in Nigeria in the late 1950s.

2.3.1. The Nigerian oil

According to Shell, the company was the first to export oil from Nigeria in 1958, besides being the country's oldest private company in the oil and gas sector.[59] The main point in this information is that Shell claims to have a long-term strong commitment to Nigeria and its population due to its presence in the country, which in 2023, according to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), stood as the seventh country with the most production of oil, and the first in the African continent, figuring a staggering 1,187 thousand barrels per day.[60]

However, even with the vast exploitation of oil in its territory and the amount of money it earns, Nigeria is ranked as the 15th weakest state in the world according to the Fragile States Index (2024). This can be explained by the most underdeveloped, unstable and conflict-prone part of its territory: The Niger River Delta, directly connected to the GoG (Fiorelli, 2014, p. 6) and its oil production. The situation in the Delta can be clarified by the systemic corruption in the Nigerian government, given that little of the oil revenue – which is the government's biggest source of income, according to Al Jazeera (2020) – actually benefits the inhabitants of the region (Tepp, 2012, p. 186). This is because Nigeria, until January 2024,[61] was unable to refine its crude oil, giving margin to the foreign companies that operate in the country to sell it abroad, resulting in the importation of around US$67 billion of dollars of refined oil by the Nigerian government in 2022 (Al Jazeera, 2020; The Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2022).

This corruption begins at the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), the government corporation that signs contracts with all the international companies to exploit Nigerian oil, giving their money to the country's national

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[59] SHELL. **The History of Shell in Nigeria**. [*S. l.*], [*s.d.*]. Available in: <https://www.shell.com.ng/about-us/shell-nigeria-history.html>. Accessed on October 20th 2024.

[60] CRUDE OIL PRODUCTION OF THE OPEC IN 2012 AND 2023, BY MEMBER STATE. **Statista**. [*S. l.*], 2024. Available in: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/271821/daily-oil-production-output-of-opec-countries/>. Accessed on October 20th 2024.

[61] The Dangote Oil Refinery, located near Lagos, was the first Nigerian refinery. It was designed to process 650,000 barrels of Nigerian crude oil per day, although it still cannot secure enough crude oil locally (Kaledzi & Omeire, 2024).

treasure. However, the problem is that NNPC also regulates this relationship, not providing the transparency to all transactions and creating the perfect place for corrupt activities (Al Jazeera, 2020). The values of these transactions can prove the extent of the corruption in Nigeria. A government audit said in 2016 that around US$16 billion sent to the NNPC was missing from the national treasure. This finding was so common that it resulted in the firing of a central bank governor who pointed out the missing money by the NNPC a few years before this (BBC, 2016). Besides that, the taxes that the oil companies have to pay to the NNPC are also involved in corruption, since these companies are accused of reporting lower profits in order to pay fewer taxes,[62] as well as underreporting the volume of oil they produce (Al Jazeera, 2020).

Even though it has been advancements by the Nigerian government in tackling corruption – including the splitting of the NNPC commercial business from its regulator (Al Jazeera, 2020) – the consequences of the impact that this has in Nigeria can be proved by the information provided by the World Poverty Clock, claiming that 31% of the Nigerian population (70.834,207 people) lived in extreme poverty in 2024,[63] something that, for Barrios (2013, p. 3), puts the federal, state and local authorities in all parts of the problem. This has led to two different historic approaches by the Niger Delta people, the first being the Ogoni movement – that demonstrate a strong culture of collective agency and a non-violent approach – and the second being the Ijaw movement – that claims that the government has denied the agency of the Niger Delta people, recurring to violence as their way to get proper attention (Mai-Bornu, 2019, p. 1282).[64] Since this research focuses on the piracy acts on the GoG, the differences in both approaches throughout history (as well as its events) will not be explored. However, it is important to understand their thinking.

One of the main assumptions of the Ijaw community is that the government promotes policies that expropriate the people and does not benefit them from the

[62] The scheme happens by the companies selling the oil to their own subsidiaries at a lower price before selling to other buyers at full price.

[63] WORLD POVERTY CLOCK. World Poverty Clock, 2024. Nigerian data. Available in: <https://worldpoverty.io/>. Accessed on October 20th 2024

[64] Both the Ogoni and the Ijaw communities share common lived experiences, including the inequality and marginalisation by the government. The difference between them is the different reaction to the same regional problems that affect the Niger Delta people (Mai-Bornu, 2019, p. 1282–1283).

wealth that lies underneath their feet, since the region once had a very prosperous soil for agricultural practice, as well as abundant seafood provided by the many affluents of the river (Mai-Bornu, 2019, p. 1284). Despite their differences, for both the Ijaw and the Ogoni, oil exploitation has been utilised to the benefit of a handful of people while harming the vast majority in the process (Mai-Bornu, 2019, p. 1284). For them, the oil in their territories is a blessing and a major reason for their troubles at the same time (Idemudia, 2014; Obi, 2014; Iwilade, 2017; Tantua *et al*., 2018 apud Mai-Bornu, 2019, p. 1284).

Throughout the years, oil exploitation by companies like Shell greatly compromised both the environment and the everyday life of those who lived in the region, which can be proved by the case of Elder Friday Akpan, a successful fish farmer and community leader who, in 2013, came out as the winner of a judicial dispute against Shell at Hague Tribunal. In an interview,[65] Akpan shows the reporter some of the dried lakes where he used to manage his business, blaming Shell for the now lifelessness of his lakes due to the many oil spills by the company. He goes on to state that before going to the Hague Tribunal, he reported the spills to Shell but did not receive any answer, and therefore, he was put against the wall. A strong phrase said by Akpan in the interview referring to Shell is: "Why do you come to kill me? I have nothing to live with against, and you have pushed me into indebtedness" (Vice, 2014).

However, although Elder Akpan won the judicial dispute against Shell, it is necessary to point out that his case was an exception, not the rule, since most of the people of the region still suffer from oil exploitation. According to Vice (2014), considering that oil in Nigeria was discovered in 1956, more than 500 lawsuits related to oil spills were registered in the Nigerian justice system, with only a handful of them resulting in compensation for the victims.

In another village, Vice (2014) was able to exhibit the precarious conditions in which people live, including the fact that in areas like these, one in five children die before the age of five. Moreover, the energy supply is rudimentary and daily activities, such as bathing and laundering, are done in the river, which makes the population sick. According to Neethling (2010, p. 99), the government of Nigeria

[65] The whole report can be found at VICE NEWS. **Chiraq & Nigeria's Oil Pirates | VICE on HBO.** YouTube, February 18th, 2014. Available in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01Xa2oKKVR0>. Accessed on October 20th, 2024.

and the oil companies split profits in a 60/40 proportion, but the money that is supposed to benefit the Delta inhabitants rarely reaches their communities. Ergo, the village chief, Ebere Asaga, tells the Vice reporter that:

> Our people are suffering. Most of the fish we have in the river have been damaged as a result of the rampant pollution […]. Shell is supposed to develop our area, but nothing has been done. But we are the host community producing 235,000 barrels daily to the federal government and Shell […]. We have 21 operating oil wells, but nothing else has been done for our community (Vice, 2014).[66]

Given the devastation in the everyday lives of local farmers and fisherman, Vice (2014) went after the other side of the story, contacting Shell to find out what they had to say about what they call "operational spills." In an interview, the managing director of Shell in Nigeria at the time, Mutiu Sunmonu, claims that these "operational spills" were a minimal percentage compared to the sabotages and illegal refineries of crude oil arranged by oil thieves. Shell estimated that the losses were between 55 and 60 million barrels of oil a year, causing a loss of US$7 billion per year (Vice, 2014). In early 2019, 22 million barrels of oil were stolen and illegally sold (Al Jazeera, 2020). In other words, for Sunmonu, most of the spills were caused by criminal individuals. To prevent that from happening, he argues that Shell spent around US$250 million, directly or indirectly, on community development projects. However, for Sunmonu, the scale of the development needed in these regions can only be provided by the government. In any case, the communities around the Niger Delta, to this date, have not seen this development.

The mentioning of sabotages and illegal refineries of crude oil were by no means unfunded at the time, since one of the piracy activities in Nigeria is the 'bunkering' practice. According to Al Jazeera (2016), 20% of the oil extracted from the Delta is directly stolen from the oil ducts and stored in huge wooden boats that act like makeshift tankers. This stolen oil is rudimentary refined by the locals into diesel and kerosene, sold in the Delta communities' streets. Besides that, this refinery process is extremely dangerous for those who work in the operation, since

[66] VICE NEWS. **Chiraq & Nigeria's Oil Pirates | VICE on HBO**. YouTube, February 18th, 2014. Available in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01Xa2oKKVR0>. Accessed on October 20th, 2024.

it does not have any safety measures. The ground, the clothes used by the workers, and everything around it, are soaked in fuel, needing only a spark to cause large-scale fires and explosions.

Furthermore, a report by Vice (2018), shows that when the Nigerian army seizes illegally refined fuel in the communities, they dump hundreds of litres of it in the ground and in the river, since they do not have anything to do with it and cannot allow it to be sold. This practice, along with the poor waste dumping in the bunkering process, has a huge impact on the environment, contributing to the killing of fish.

2.3.2. Piracy in sight

Regardless of having billions of dollars in oil revenue since its independence, Nigerians are still living in poverty. At the same time, various ethnic groups from the Delta claim that these ravenous are mismanaged by the government (Neethling, 2010, p. 99). As a consequence, one key point in history – and a turning point to the beginning of the piracy movement in the GoG – happens with the establishment of insurgent armed groups that fight opposed to the exploitation and oppression of the Niger Delta people against the oil companies and the Nigerian government (Neethling, 2010, p. 99). The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), founded in 2004, the Niger Delta Liberation Front (NDLF), founded in 2005, and the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), founded in 2016, are three examples of groups following the Ijaw approach.[67] This is not accidental, given that the enrichment of foreign companies and increased in poverty in the region have led Hobin-Hood groups to organise themselves to combat this.

According to Tepp (2012, p. 190) MEND has been one of the "largest and most powerful militant faction fighting against environmental degradation, oil profiteering and state neglect" since its foundation. In this approach, MEND had conducted attacks against oil pipelines of multinationals, such as Chevron, likewise on vessels off the Nigerian coast that were charted by other oil companies. Moreover, MEND also inducted sporadic campaigns against the Nigerian government, claiming that all government facilities, as well as personnel,

[67] Other notable groups that worth a mention are the Egbesu Boys of Africa, The Niger Delta Vigilante and The Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (Tepp. 2012, p. 187).

infrastructure, aircraft, and vessels of foreign oil companies, were subject to attacks (Tepp, 2012, p. 190). Although Nigeria does not have a culture of piracy in its history, the decades of exploitation, widespread corruption and mismanagement, along with many social, political and economic problems, such as poverty and unemployment, contributed to an environment unfavourable to stability and prosperity and very fruitful for piracy (Tepp, 2012, pp. 186; 192), which also seems to be the motivation for the NDA actions.

In an interview, some of NDA members claim that:

> We are sick and tired of this […]. I feed you, you get fat, you make money, you live large, and you keep me in the poverty stage […]. This trouble is not all about me, it is all about the Niger Delta people. We have kids coming up […]. We are not looking at the present, we are looking at the future. If this continues, what do you expect for my son? What do you expect for my child? We are there to stop the operation. We blow up the pipelines, we are not out there to kill humans, just the pipelines […]. You have veins running in your body, and if I should cut this place off, what will happen? You die (Vice, 2018). [68]

In another interview[69], John Togo, the notorious NDLF former leader, states that his targets were refinery stations, oil pipelines, as well as companies like Shell, Agip and Chevron. When asked about his motives, Togo said that it was because these companies are not sincere, not giving them what belongs to them and collaborating with the "evil leaders" who are in the Nigerian government. One of Togo's most impactful lines in the interview was: "God has sent me to justify the people of Niger Delta; therefore, I will not die, I will live, I will rejoice with them".[70]

By these interviews, it is possible to assume that these groups care about the lives of the people of the Niger Delta, but with the fall in oil prices in 2016, following a setback on an amnesty program between the government and the

[68] VICE NEWS. **The Battle Raging In Nigeria Over Control Of Oil**. YouTube, March 22nd, 2018. Available in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAgw_Zyznx0&ab_channel=VICENews>. Accessed on October 20th, 2024.

[69] The whole interview can be found at: AL JAZEERA ENGLISH. **Piracy in Nigeria | People & Power**. YouTube, November 17th, 2016. Available in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=866fXIAZsDk&ab_channel=AlJazeeraEnglish>. Accessed on October 20th, 2024.

[70] This interview is the last footage of John Togo alive. Only 10 days after the interview, he and a dozen of his men were killed by a Nigerian army attack (Al Jazeera, 2016).

rebels,[71] these groups began kidnapping ships and sailors for ransom (Vice, 2021). Piracy in Nigeria won the approval of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta due to the money it brings to the communities (Tepp, 2012, p. 192). In light of that, a pirate known as 'Black Devil' agreed to do an interview with Al Jazeera in 2016, stating that his team is composed of 45 men on land, combined with some more who were on the operation of seafarer kidnappings on sea at the moment of the interview. His attacks, he argues, are made by 2 speedboats with 8 pirates in each boat (7 of them heavily armed and the last one as the driver), concentrating their targets on vessels with low security. He claims that this is because some vessels open fire against them, starting a high-sea gunfight. When they finally board the vessel, the pirates go straight to the engine room and to the bridge, maybe killing from 3 to 5 people of the usually 20 seafarers. To the 'Black Devil', this is part of the job to get the money within the vessel and to kidnap the seafarers.

A key point mentioned by 'Black Devil' is that he only attacks vessels with specific nationalities, such as American and French, avoiding Indians and Filipinos ones because they are "cheap people". 'Black Devil' claims that he uses the money from the ransoms to buy ammunition and more speedboats, distributing what is left among the pirates to take care of their families. Even though he acknowledges that what they do is a "dirty job", he argues that the well-being of their families is the reason why they do it, which gives them no choice, but piracy. The impact of the interview, and a tense moment for the reporter,[72] comes with the final words recorded:

> You come to exploit it here, and you don't want to employ me. That is the major reason why we are doing this. You don't want to employ us, and you are exploiting from us. Any

[71] The amnesty program was a presidential pardon, disarmament, rehabilitation, education and training programme offered to the militants of the Niger Delta (i.e., MEND and Niger Delta Vigilante Movement) to stop refining and selling the oil from the bunkering practice. The militants should submit their arms and stop operations, and the government would be responsible to send them to school. Only after that, the government payment to the militants would be done. But at the end, the programme derailed due to the corruption in the government, which made the people who were supposed to be rehabilitated end up being neglected (BBC, 2009; VOA, 2009; Vice, 2018).

[72] It is important to highlight the fact that the reporter is a white Frenchman.

> expatriate companies (that) are coming to operate here, if you don't settle with us, you won't operate! I swear to God, the Black Devils are always stand(ing) by (Al Jazeera, 2016).[73]

The claims revealed by the interviews done by Vice (2018) and Al Jazeera (2016) can help to put the pirates' actions into perspective. Even if violent, their way of thinking can be clarified by Pattison (2014), who argues about the "*justa piratica*", the principles of just piracy. For him, the permissibility of piracy can be put in some cases, the first being *starving*, when the pirate has no choice but to be a pirate. He does not desire personal enrichment, only the commodities required to survive (Pattison, 2014, p. 635), which seems to be the Somali case. The second case is *theft* – when necessity forces individuals to become pirates. Pattison gives the example of a fishing community that is subject to periodic theft of crops by a rich, neighbouring state, denying the possibility of their survival and counting on the defenceless position of the community to fend off the thefts (Pattison, 2014, p. 635).

This can also be applied to the Somali case, but putting the GoG in perspective, the neighbouring states do not necessarily need to share a state limit with Nigeria. It can also be related to the colonial or imperial exploitation of resources, and with Shell being a British multinational company, the colonial legacy can be put into the spotlight. Taking into consideration that Shell not only denies the possibility of farmers to grow crops, but is also responsible for the oil spills that killed the fish in the region (Amnesty International, 2018) (as well demonstrated by Elder Akpan case), the *theft* circumstances proposed by Pattison (2014) can be used in this situation, since the Niger Delta people could not avoid the exploitation, neither can count on their own government to help them. Therefore, piracy becomes a valid option for them, since they see themselves as freedom fighters against the political marginalisation of these communities (Aboh & Ahmed, 2018, p. 9).

Pattison (2014, p. 635) argues that the just cause for resorting to piracy derives from the right to basic needs, which can be protected by those willing to use

[73] AL JAZEERA ENGLISH. **Piracy in Nigeria | People & Power**. YouTube, November 17th, 2016. Available in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=866fXIAZsDk&ab_channel=AlJazeeraEnglish>. Accessed on October 20th, 2024.

force to guarantee the resources by the community.[74] Nevertheless, the author points to the fact that piracy is not permissible if the pirates can meet their basic needs by pursing other legitimate forms of employment (Pattison, 2014, p. 636), which turns the attention back to another case of poverty in a Nigerian village.

As in Somalia, there is no shortage of people wanting to join the cause motivated by the poverty in the Niger Delta (Vice, 2021). The pirates usually come from small remote villages in the Delta, where communities live in abject poverty (Al Jazeera, 2016). In an Al Jazeera field report,[75] the state of poverty in the villages is shown with one resident stating: "I have no toilets, no chain, no water. Now, we are hungry".

This is due to the fact that next to the village, there is an oil station by the Italian multinational Agip, but none of the residents of the village work there. The community chief, Fred Obuguru, believes there is no benefit in having Agip so close, since there are no jobs, and the only thing they can do to survive is fish. Nevertheless, there are fewer and fewer fish in the rivers due to the oil spills. For Obuguru, piracy in the Niger Delta is a consequence of the lack of jobs and the lack of anything to do after the locals graduate from school, since they can no longer fish. To prove his point, one of his catchphrases in the interview is: "If you die there (in the sea), well, it is the will of God, let it be. So jobless lead to this piracy" (Al Jazeera, 2016). In accordance with that, the high rate of unemployment among the youths has made maritime criminal activities (including kidnapping, piracy and bunkering) a prosperous option for those seduced by the financial opportunities, the sense of leadership and the 'social belonging' feeling, especially in the Niger Delta (Neethling, 2010, p. 100; Barrios, 2013, p. 3; Biziouras, 2013 apud Aboh & Ahmed, 2018, p. 8).

[74] The author claim that the basic needs can be protected by a defensive force. Even though the majority of piracy cases in Somalia and in the GoG can fit into Pattison examples, not all of them can be guaranteed to be motivated by the conditions presented so far. In accordance to this fact, this research is also considering piracy cases motivated by peer greed among those motivated by necessity.

[75] The whole report can be found at AL JAZEERA ENGLISH. **Piracy in Nigeria | People & Power**. YouTube, November 17th, 2016. Available in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=866fXIAZsDk&ab_channel=AlJazeeraEnglish>. Accessed on October 20th, 2024.

Added to that, the growing lack of fish in the river (and the "hot fire" sensation[76] caused by the oil that the locals taste when eating them) due to the oil spills is also aggravated by European and Chinese trawlers that exploit more and more the fish in the GoG, even attacking local fisherman by the fear of them being pirates (Vice, 2021). This can go in accordance with what Dumnamene says in an interview: No one wants to risk its life to be a pirate, but they do it because of hungry (Vice, 2021) – similarly with the explanation of the *justa piratica* provided by Pattison (2014). In other words, the degradation of the environment caused by the foreign exploitation activities hugely impacts the everyday life of those who depend on agriculture and fishery. With the severe poverty rising and the infrastructure lacking, piracy was condoned or encouraged as a good opportunity for livelihood in the Niger Delta region (Aboh & Ahmed, 2018, p. 10; Fiorelli, 2014, p. 7).

In this regard, taking into consideration the favourable geography, vastly natural resources, the conflict-prone region of the Niger Delta, the lack of state presence in the waters by the GoG countries, the promise of rewards and profit for the youth, the unemployment, the corruption of the Nigerian government, and abject poverty of the communities around the Niger Delta, it was not a surprise that piracy thrive in the region, which led to a strong reaction of the international system to tackle the situation.

2.3.3. The International Response

The circumstances that give rise to the piracy actions in the GoG are complex and multi-faceted, meaning that a list of factors that foster piracy cannot be put into motion (Tepp, 2012, p. 188). In any case, piracy and armed robbery have been threatening vital sea lines of communication and maritime trade in the 21st century, resulting in relevant role-players in the international community trying to pursue solutions to the problem (Neethling, 2010, p. 90). The maritime insecurity in the

[76] This sensation is translated as a "burning sensation" when the locals eat the fish caught in the river that is polluted by the oil. This example can be found at: VICE NEWS. **The Battle Raging In Nigeria Over Control Of Oil**. YouTube, March 22nd, 2018. Available in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAgw_Zyznx0&ab_channel=VICENews>. Accessed on October 20th, 2024.

region due to the lack of state presence in the waters is also a regional issue that encompasses many transitional organised crimes – with piracy being only one of them – as demonstrated throughout this Chapter. In that sense, the GoG strategic location as an important shipping route, combined with its vast natural resources and poor government management and presence, makes the region an environment where maritime crimes easily flourish (OBP, 2014b, p. 65). According to the ICG (2014), piracy activity in the GoG has affected the trade of over 455 million people and the shipment of over 5 million barrels of oil per day.

Notwithstanding, prior to the rise of piracy activities in the GoG, only Nigeria and Angola had some sort of maritime security regimes, which were clearly ineffective (Fiorelli, 2014, p. 5; Ukeje & Mvomo Ela, 2015 apud Aboh & Ahmed, 2018, p. 6). That means that even with security, the weak presence of the state in the area contributed to the growing number of piracy attacks.

For that matter, one can interconnect the security problem in Somalia to what happen in the GoG. In fact, Biziouras opines that similar to the overfishing in Somalia, the Europeans did the same in West Africa, which ended up stimulating the evolution of piracy in the GoG (Biziouras, 2013 apud Aboh & Ahmed, 2018, p. 7). The failure in this though is revealed by Aboh & Ahmed (2018, pp. 7–8), claiming that the fishing by European fleets was indeed in agreement with the states of the GoG, but the overfishing was not monitored by the surveillance system, pointing out, once more, to the lack of state presence in the area. To prove this fact, Tepp argues about the lack of equipment available for proper surveillance:

> Nigeria is a prime example of underfunded and inadequate security. The failure to fund and train cost guards, navies and police has created a situation where the readiness of the Nigerian Navy is low, the coast guard is ineffective and the vast network of river transportation routes is poorly policed […]. In order to be effective, maritime law enforcement requires a substantial number of vessels equipped with radars and communications gear and crewed by reliable and trained personnel. Likewise, shore-based command and control and maritime aerial surveillance capability are imperative (Tepp, 2012, p. 191).[77]

Consonantly, Barrios (2013, p. 2) argues that there is no sufficient protection by the state or other regional authorities within regional waters, as well as poor

[77] TEPP, Eero. The Gulf of Guinea: Military and Non-Military Ways of Combatting Piracy. **Baltic Security and Defence Review**, v. 14, n. 1, p. 181–214, 2012.

official training and a lack of equipment for onboarding operations. However, Tepp (2012, p. 191) acknowledges that poor countries cannot afford this type of equipment and need international help in the surveillance, as well as a network of information-sharing about the pirates' activity in the GoG. This is because the global economy relies on increasingly interdependent shipping and energy supply networks. Since the GoG holds an important position in those two factors, maritime threats in the area constitute a collective challenge to the international system (Osinowo, 2015, p. 2).

According to Neethling (2010, p. 103), the rise of piracy as a challenge to the international community contemplates the absence of effective navies and lack of cooperation among the coastal states in the continent, making African maritime security very fragile. As a result, the early countermeasures adopted in the GoG trace back to 2010 with the improvements in the collaboration between the Nigerian Navy and the Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), which have a positive effect by reducing the attacks around Lagos harbour (Osinowo, 2015, p. 3). However, this was a national decision by the Nigerian government, meaning that the pirates only changed the location of the attacks once the state presence became to grow and posed a risk to their operations. Nigerian neighbour, Benin, suffered a rise in of incidents in 2011 compared to 2010 due to the collaboration between the Nigerian navy and the NIMASA (UNSC, 2012, p. 3).

This pointed out that piracy in the GoG could not have been tackled unilaterally, since single-state solutions were insufficient to encompass all the strategies adopted by the pirates, and the system acknowledged that in 2013. That year, two private maritime security firms collaborated with the Nigerian Navy to launch the Secure Anchorage Area (SAA), providing armed protection and security to the vessels wishing to anchor or do transfer operations offshore in a specific area near Lagos. This was not a new approach, since a similar operation was held in the Gulf of Aden a few years prior. The Maritime Security Patrol Area (MSPA) was an initiative involving a coalition of navies to patrol the Somali coast, creating security zones of military assistance to the shipping industry and providing help if the vessels were threatened (Middleton, 2008, p. 8).

Besides that, it is possible to make an analogy with the Maritime Security Transit Corridor (MSTC), which consisted of a two-way route internationally recommended transit corridor through the Gulf of Aden, Bab el-Mandeb Straight,

Southern Red Sea and associated waters. Its purpose was to provide a recommended route for merchant vessels under the protection and surveillance of warships and aircraft that focus their attention on counter-piracy patrols. [78] This standard route made it easier for the international forces to monitor the area and to respond to distress calls (Middleton, 2008, p. 10). Barrios (2013, p. 2) states that an equivalent should be proposed in the GoG since beatings and tortures, as well as the hostage killings are a common practice in piracy operations in the region.

In parallel, the Combined Taskforce 150 (CTF150) was another operation made by the international community on the East African coast, which its main responsibility was to assist in the 'war on terror'. Nonetheless, even with piracy not being its priority, the CTF150's 15 warships have been involved in deterring piracy in the region. This combined with the resolution 1816 of the UNSC from 2008 – which gives the right of foreign warships to enter Somali waters to pursue pirates – tried by "all necessary means" to repress the acts of piracy and armed robbery at the Gulf of Aden by strengthening the international naval forces in the Somali waters (Middleton, 2008, p. 8; UNSC, 2008, p. 3). This combination of an international armada of warships (with vessels from the United States, the EU, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Japan, South Korea, China and other nations), and onboard security measures (such as the BMP5) eventually brought the problem under control (Neethling, 2010, p. 96; Fiorelli, 2014, p. 9; BIMCO, 2023).

All things considered, the success in containing Somali piracy came at the price of extensive international naval presence in the area, as well as significant investments in private security (Bueger, 2013, p. 298). This can be explained by the UN actions in 2008 calling for sterner military action to eradicate piracy, increasing the surveillance done by local naval forces, enforced maritime codes and improved port control (Fiorelli, 2014, p. 5). Even though the SAA, the MSPA, the MSTC, the CTF150, and the resolution 1816 were not the same, all five contributed to reducing the number of attacks. On the other hand, according to Barrios (2013, p. 3), a deployment of warships in the GoG would be diplomatically tricky (since Nigeria does not seem to want its sovereign violated the same way as in Somalia) and

[78] COMBINED MARITIME FORCES. **Maritime Security Transit Corridor (MSTC)**. Available in: <https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/maritime-security-transit-corridor-mstc/>. Accessed on October 21st, 2024.

economically costly due to the figure of a 1 million euros per month for each warship deployed.

However, Fiorelli (2014, p. 10) uses an example of a former US Naval Central Command (CENTCOM) commander, who claimed in 2011 that the international community created unprecedented cooperation, having the authority and legitimacy of the UNSC to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden. Fiorelli (2014, p. 10) points out that this thinking led to a multilateral response by creating the conditions in which individual nations' maritime policies could make a strong coalition force, succeeding in the quelling the piracy threat in the region.

According to the author (2014, p. 10), the key point here is that, similar to the piracy on the Somali coast, the international community will act when the GoG piracy reaches a critical threshold. In other words, piracy will turn into a problem once it hits something that can disturb the balance of the system. This becomes relevant here due to the fact that this can point out to a pattern by the international community when considering how to handle piracy.

Fiorelli (2014, p. 10) points to the fact that, for the US, this critical threshold will likely involve the rise in the price of oil and its derivatives. This is due to the fact that insurance costs for commercial shipping that passes through the GoG will become higher and higher, a fact that several other authors also have pointed out. In the same sense on the Gulf of Aden, Barrios (2013, p. 4) suggested the adoption of the BMP5 practices in the GoG due to its success in the Gulf of Aden, mimicking the actions taken by the international community on the East African coast, but now on its West side. However, when taking into consideration the information provided by the IMB map on piracy, most of the attacks reported in the GoG were boarding the vessels, pointing out the fact that these practices may not be working because the pirate's *modus operandi* is different, as well as the situation and countermeasures needed. Essentially, these actions mean that the perpetrated vision is that what counted for Somalia, should count for Nigeria.

Therefore, the lessons learned from the Gulf of Aden needed to be put into practice in the GoG differently, and this is why the international community now seems to be focusing on surveillance countermeasures. One of the methods adopted was the creation of the Maritime Trade Information Sharing Center for the Gulf of Guinea (MTISC-GOG), a dedicated focal point for incident reporting, information sharing and 24/7 maritime security guidance (Osinowo, 2015, p. 4), which helped

in monitoring the waters and enhancing the surveillance against pirate attacks. Furthermore, in 2013, the Critical Maritime Routes Programme (CRIMGO) was implemented with a budget of 4,500,000 euros by a consortium of seven EU member-states, specifically focusing on training systems for security forces, enhanced legal framework understanding, cooperation mechanisms, and information-sharing system by the countries involved to develop maritime security strategies. (Barrios, 2013, p. 3; EU, 2015; FIIAPP, [*s.d.*]; Bueger & Edmunds, 2023, pp. 69–70).

The growing awareness of the need of cooperation is supporting counter-piracy efforts be supported by global powers, like the US, China, and several others European countries; besides that, the UN and NATO are also contributing to the measures taken to reduce the number of incidents. The result of these international and multilateral actions is an assortment of military and non-military activities (Tepp, 2012, p. 195); nevertheless, all actions seem to ignore the internal situation in Nigeria. The very conclusion of some authors like Middleton (2008, p. 12), who points out that piracy will be solved when containing the Somali problems with peace and opportunity, can be proof of that since other countries did this containment that ignored what happened in land once the commercial shipping routes were safe again.

This confronts the thinking of Neethling (2010, p. 99) about the situation in the Niger Delta since the author argues that piracy off the Nigerian coast should be put into perspective throughout "the context of poverty, political disenfranchisement and the easy availability of firearms and armed conflict over oil." Moreover, he cast light on the fact that the previous governments of Nigeria largely ignored the Niger Delta due to its geographic location (being in a relatively inaccessible position), followed by poor governance and corruption scandals during years of military rule. This is in accordance with the perspective of Fiorelli (2014, p. 4), who claims that poor governance, high levels of corruption, and lack of meaningful economic opportunities in the region were determinants of the flourishing of piracy.

But although Fiorelli's and Neethling's perspectives are in line on this point, Fiorelli focuses on the increased maritime insurance costs and higher global oil prices, not giving proper attention to the socioeconomic situation in Nigeria besides acknowledging that there is something going on there. The author concludes that

the actions taken in the Gulf of Aden cannot be replicated in the GoG due to budget constraints and differences in the nature of the attacks, while also recognising that nothing will work until the development of stable institutions, good governance, and economic opportunities happens (Fiorelli, 2014, p. 11; 14), things that, not surprisingly, are conveniently 'offered' by European countries (and were relatively close of what the EU tried to do in Somalia).[79]

In the same sense, Barrios (2013, p. 1; 4) acknowledges that superficial comparisons between the Horn of Africa and the GoG should be avoided due to the different realities that exist in Somalia and Nigeria, recognising that these actions are only short-term measures that will improve the protection of the ships at least until long-term solutions are found. But in the end, she (as well as many other scholars) falls into the trap of using a colonial vision when she points out the fact that a global approach is needed to tackle the root causes of piracy, resulting in increased pressure on the EU on West African states using what she calls "a legal reform" based on European standards to tackle the corruption and organised crime.

This suggests that the EU wants to take care of West African countries' legal system when it comes to maritime security, showing a colonial legacy in helping the GoG states 'achieve the order and development' of the European countries. This vision also goes with the one by the CENTCOM commander used by Fiorelli (2014, p. 12), who holds that "the real solution to prevent piracy is good governance on shore, the rule of law, and competent and capable coast guard". In the end, the actions taken upon the practice of piracy in the 21st century follow the vision of Donald J. Punchala, who claims that the only efficient method to eradicate pirates is to hunt them down and destroy them (along with their strongholds) with a great power capable of exerting firm sea control (Punchala, 2005 apud Tepp, 2012, p. 183). The very importance of this region to the US and other European countries can explain this position by both of them, which will be better explored in Chapter 3.

As said before, the purpose here is not to solve piracy in the African continent but to critically analyse the security actions taken by the international community in the situation. When considering the actions and discourses of important players

[79] More on the historical relationship between the EU and Somalia can be found at: OĞURLU, Ebru. European Neo-colonialism in Africa. **International Journal of Political Studies**, v. 4, n. 2. August 30th, 2018.

in the system when it comes to combating piracy, a colonial perspective can be put into view in the current security logic of the system. Maritime security is framed as a regional challenge, with the 'region' defined as an object of securitisation.[80] The perspective that puts piracy as a problem that comes from the 'outside' of the system – by those who are the enemies of all states (i.e., *hostis humani generis* or 'enemies of the human race') – puts a strong dimension of 'othering' in security studies (Tepp, 2012, p. 183; Bueger, 2013, p. 310).

According to Schmitt, the ruling of the sea involved the process of outlawing the pirate, having a strong influence of the British empire on this matter. Framing the pirate as the 'enemy of human race' contributed to the pirate's ostracisation and expulsion of societies, along with the denying of all his rights, making him a definitive *outlaw*, and latter, an "*inhuman* unperson exposed to abject forms of violence" (Schmitt, 2003 apud Yamato, 2019. p. 225; Yamato, 2019. p. 229).

This is why it turns relevant to dive deeper into the British participation in combating piracy, since England has a strong connection to its former colony, Nigeria, where most of the piracy attacks in the current 'hotspot' happen.

[80] This research understands the term 'securitisation' according to the perspective of Buzan, Waever & Wilde (1997, p. 23). For the authors, security is something that take politics beyond the traditional rules and frame them as special politics or above. Thus, securitisation is an enhanced version of this politicisation process.

3
Chapter 2: The Threat Perception of the Piracy “Problem”

In the social sciences, there is a growing body of literature and academic research dealing with the impact of colonial and imperial legacies on the international system. Recognising the influence of the US and some Western European countries has been important not only to understand the consequences of their actions but also to perceive how some things are treated the way these countries desire.

When arguing about maritime security, one can think about multiple things needing protection to maintain an ordered space shared by most countries in the world. Furthermore, the survival of hundreds of millions of people – who live in countries with no contact with the sea at all – is also a recurrent concern when something disturbs global maritime routes. Therefore, what can be considered the most significant thing to be protected when it comes to ocean security? And what can be done to guarantee order in the seas around the world?

The short answer to these questions may be the global maritime trade chain or the world economy, both protected by some sort of multilateral alliance. These two answers can actually be true, but considering the system as a whole, the use of critical thinking by Robert Cox can expand the horizon and detail things that may be hidden between these two answers. This is because the critical approach used by the author takes into consideration a wider perspective, in which the initial piece is only a component of the total, being a vital part of understanding the changing processes that involve all parts considered (Cox, 2021, p. 15). This also implies that a multilateral alliance may not be the only answer to the second question since, according to Cox (2021, p. 15), it would fall under the problem-solving theories, being a perfect scapegoat to serve the national interests of some countries in the system.

The very fact that these countries are comfortable in a given order points out that the problem-solving theories seek to stabilise the functioning of the whole (Cox, 2021. p. 15). Hence, other terms can appear as possible answers as well, such as the profit achieved by global commerce, the national economy of certain powerful countries, the impact of/in society, the companies that are involved in the

processes, the capitalist social order (including its neo-colonial relations and/or its structures) and the insurance prices of the vessels and its cargo.

The process of defining what *has* to be secured is vital to a critical security approach, especially when it comes to the seas. With the impacts of piracy activities being identified in Chapter 1, understanding how the practice is being framed in the system is of essential importance in the problematisation of the topic inside the modern international system.

The fact that piracy can influence the global commerce chain puts the practice as a security problem that needs to be solved as soon as possible. However, understanding the framing of piracy in that sense can begin with using the conceptual apparatus of security presented by Buzan, Waever & Wilde (1997) since, for the authors, security is a matter of survival of a referent object. When the existence of this object is threatened, extraordinary measures are put into motion to secure it (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1997, p. 21). This is because the referent object needs to be something that *has* to survive no matter how, which can justify any emergency actions taken by the system to secure it. Put differently, the survival of the referent object is based on the assumption that nothing else would matter if it were lost.[81]

As a result, an international security issue would be proposed when the condition of the referent object becomes more important than any other problem, justifying its absolute priority (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1997, p. 24). Considering that international commerce – which guarantees the necessary resources for the survival of other states and their populations – uses maritime routes that go through the choke points analysed in Chapter 1, it is not difficult to imagine the motive of maritime trade being the referent object regarding piracy.

Nonetheless, the authors claim that the securitisation of a theme depends solely on its audience, meaning that the acceptance and transformation of the topic on a political act – in this case, the combat of 'the enemy of humankind' – depends on the actions of certain players (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1997, pp. 25–33). In the acceptance of the securitisation of a referent object, a given actor can operate in a way that it would not operate in any other circumstances (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1997, p. 30), showing how the problem-solving theories logic analysed by Cox

[81] In other words, things like humanity and the environment can easily be considered referent objects.

(2021) sustains itself when addressing the fight against maritime piracy. In other words, it is the actor (in most cases, states and international organisations) that decides if a referent object is under existential threat and if it should be securitised (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1997, p. 34).

This is why Cox (2021) and Buzan, Waever & Wilde (1997) agree on the fact that it is necessary to analyse other parts of a whole. This critical thinking about the logic of security must be put into motion not only to understand how some things are being framed on the system (i.e., the pirate) but, most importantly, how they are being problematised by the global hegemonic order. Hence, one way to analyse this in practice is to cast light on the discourses of the actors about *piracy*. Focusing the attention on the African continent, it is clear that the maintenance of a close relationship of some countries with Western powers can be related to the uprise of resistance movements against foreign activities. Therefore, the discourses on the topic must be highlighted, especially those of the UK.

3.1.
The enemy of the system

For the last twenty years, piracy activity in Africa has grown in importance, and discussions have been held on reducing the number of cases. Hence, it is not difficult to find discourses or speeches that frame piracy as a problem to be solved by the system. For that reason, in order to delimit the scope of analysis done in this research, only the discourses made by the UK about *piracy* will be used. Although the Somali case is also important, piracy in the GoG may be directly related to the UK has influence in Nigeria. Therefore, the British framing of piracy is crucial to understanding the situation.

In analysing discourses and speeches, something that must be observed is that the image of the pirate is always assigned to a *thing* that has to be fought and/or eliminated. In this sense, the discourses of some states (especially the ones coming from former colonial powers, such as England) can be considered tools capable of transforming piracy into a ‘problem to be solved’ due to the impacts on the system. This can demonstrate the problematisation of the theme, which motivates the proposition of a critical analysis capable of separating the two things.

When establishing a romanticised vision of piracy to the society (as argued in Chapter 1), the categorisation of the pirate as a sea bandit by Dawdy & Bonni (2012, p. 678) can demonstrate a narrative that made the society perceive pirates based on Derrida's binaries. In this sense, Jennifer Milliken (1999, p. 229) mobilise these binaries to analyse discourses as systems of signification to construct social realities, claiming that they are "expected to be constructed largely in terms of binary oppositions – educated/ignorant, modern/traditional, Western/Third World.", following Derrida's approach when arguing that "one element in the binary is privileged" (Derrida, 1981 apud Milliken 1999, p. 229).

Milliken's (1999, p. 229) work also points out a second theoretical approach, *discourse productivity*, where the discourses can act in the world intelligibly to operationalise a particular regime of truth, excluding any other form of identity and action. In other words, she argues that *discourse productivity* is how some discourses can define which subjects are "authorized to speak and to act", putting the agency mainly in the hands of state officials, intellectuals, or experts (Milliken 1999, p. 229). According to her, this process emphasises the fact that some people "may be destroyed as well as disciplined," ending up in a social space that is organised and controlled by those discourses (Milliken 1999, p. 229).

Putting *piracy* in perspective here, it can be argued that the states are denying the agency of the pirates since they frame the pirate as something (not someone) that is not authorised to speak or to act due to its violent, ignorant, and uncivilised nature. All of this enables the possibility of certain measures by the system to combat piracy and sustain an ordered, organised and controlled social space. Since piracy occurs in strategic positions, the categorisation of multiple 'hotspots' – as seen in Chapter 1 in the GoG and straits of Malacca and Bab el-Mandeb – points to a discursive practice given the sense of danger put into these regions.

Thus, the legitimation of anti-piracy actions throughout narratives can cast light on how this narrative is mobilised to attend to the maximisation of the protection of the multiple referent objects listed before, especially the lowering of the insurance price of the ships that sail through piracy-affected regions (Al Jazeera, 2016), the maintenance of the global supply chain, and the profit in global commerce by Western countries. However, one may consider that the categorisation of the pirate as *something* that should be eliminated is precisely how some colonial states transform piracy into a 'problem to be solved' due to its

impacts on the system. In light of that, it turns crucial to analyse some discourses done by the UK about piracy in Africa, which frames the practice according to Milliken's (1999) perspective:

> The British Shipping industry is a vital part of both our economy and society. […] It is the Government's responsibility to promote and protect UK shipping interests, and the space in which they operate. These interest are affected today by a threat that has been around for centuries: I talk, of course, of piracy. […] Piracy and maritime security are global issues. In today's networked world, instability and disruption of trade in one area is not isolated to a particular country or region, but affects us all. Similarly, the increasing incidence of piracy and maritime crime off Africa's western seaboard illustrates that, wherever in the world pockets of insecurity exist, criminal elements will seek to exploit it for financial gain. We must be vigilant to such threats and act to neutralise them. We have demonstrated that when we work together we can thwart the intentions of those who would use threats and violence to extract financial gain. If we remain steadfast, we can eliminate the scourge of piracy from our seas. (UK Government, 2013).[82]

Analysing what the British Government has to say about piracy can prove that not only is notable the importance is given to commerce – as perceived in the first phrase – but the marginalisation of the pirate using the term "scourge". In this sense, it is not unreasonable to assume the existence of a preponderance to the Eurocentric way of thinking in regulating the world's logic of security.

The key point of this discourse is that piracy is proven to be considered a threat that needs to be neutralised, turning the attention to the 'problem-solving' theories analysed by Cox (2021), as well as the good maintenance of global trade as a referent object in Buzan, Waever & Wilde (1997) terms. At the same time, the "scourge" and "criminal elements" are being completely silenced, since the discourse does not say anything about why piracy is flouring in West Africa. This points out not only to the binaries analysed by Milliken (1999) – as the state being privileged as 'the good' and the pirates being marginalised as 'the evil' – but also to the *discourse productivity* in the attempt of the government to maintain an ordered space while denying the agency of the pirates.

[82] UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT. **Speech: International action Against piracy**. January 21st, 2013. Available in: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/international-action-against-piracy>. Accessed on: December 20th, 2024.

According to Epstein (2008, p. 2), discourses are what confer meaning to social and physical realities. Without it, individuals, societies, and states are not able to make sense of themselves, their way of living, or the world around them. This is why pirates are framed the way they are, since states need to confer meaning to what they represent. Therefore, its categorisation as the *hostis humani generis* (enemies of humankind) is based on the fact that they are not conventional criminals. The system perception that pirates not only act in a different environment than usual criminals, but also tend o be more violent in their actions, put the states in a need to make sense of themselves by fighting against this enemy. In following Epstein's (2008) line of thinking, this would be the only way to give meaning to states reality (violent individuals fighting the state).

According to Policante (2015, pp. 104–105), the pirate has always been represented as a transgressor of some sort of universal ethical code that dates back to the early 16th century Christian philosophers. Their defiance of the divine law made them the enemies of the universal Christian community, which was carried on by the fathers of modern international law. Policante (2015, p. 105) argues that by the 18th century, the international system saw them as a threat and started treating them as "enemies of all civilised communities". This, along with the framing as *hostis humani generis*, made the pirates considered universal criminals "since they transgressed not only the laws of civilised society but also the universal laws of nature". Framing the pirates in such manner would legitimate the reason they had to be condemned, excluded and killed, since it would be the only way to guarantee the interests of all and the ordering given by the "inviolability of the norms of the Universal Christian community, the international community of civilised states or the Universal human community of natural law" (Policante, 2015, p. 105).

In highlighting another discourse done by the UK, it is possible to notice the framing of the practice as something horrendous. This fact points out to the maintenance of the universal standards from 15th and 18th centuries used by Policante (2015) in his arguments, which are still defining how the actors treat piracy. The only difference compared to the 21st century is who is the one that dictates the order in the system:

> The British Prime Minister David Cameron […] described Somali piracy as "a complete stain on our world". He was absolutely right. What began 20 years ago as a small scale problem in the coastal waters around the Horn of Africa has […] grown into a highly sophisticated and lucrative business… threatening shipping throughout the Western Indian Ocean, and costing the international economy an estimated $7 billion a year. But […] it's the human victims of Somali piracy who are paying the biggest price. In recent years, thousands of seafarers have been attacked, assaulted, used as human shields, or kept in extended confinement in Somalia. It is reported that in the past 4 years alone, more than 60 have died. […] Through their indiscriminate and brutal aggression, the pirates have made clear that any crew member on any vessel is a target. Whatever your nationality, faith, or business; and whatever flag your ship is flying, you are seen as fair game. So we are all in this together. And it's clear to me that if we want to find an effective and lasting solution to the global threat of Somali piracy, we need a global response. […] there is absolutely no room for complacency. […] Despite all the progress we've made, the pirates still have it too easy. […] So until regional stability is assured, and while the profits from hijacking ships outweigh the perceived risks in the minds of the pirates, these gangsters of the sea will pose a continuing threat. […] So, to conclude, we face a very resolute and aggressive enemy, based in one of the poorest nations on earth, facing some of the greatest challenges. […] So we need to make the very best use of the strengths and resources we have. […] united in our determination to stamp out the menace of piracy for good. (UK Government, 2012).[83]

At this point, the use of terms such as "a complete stain", "indiscriminate and brutal aggression", "global threat", "no room for complacency", "gangsters of the sea", "resolute and aggressive enemy" and "the menace of piracy" are all put into sense to legitimate a global response to piracy.[84] The speech, several times, also make use of an imaginative sense of violence by the pirates. If someone hear those words, he/she will think that the pirates are acting more to cause pain and suffering to the seafarers than to profit.[85] In that sense, authors such as Helle Malmvig (2006, p. 2) claims that the understanding of reality is not possible in the absence of speech and its interpretation. Since people need to understand the world and what is

[83] UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT. **Speech: Armed guards to tackle piracy**. May 16th, 2012. Available in: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/armed-guards-to-tackle-piracy>. Accessed on: December 20th, 2024.

[84] In this case, the speech is supporting the use of armed guards in the vessels. This point out that the objective is to protect its cargo no matter what, even if it means to kill another human being.

[85] Although this may be true in the Somali case, authors such as Leeson (2007, p. 1064) will argue that classical pirates from the 17th and 18th centuries require some kind of authority in order to achieve their ends. The difference between modern piracy is that the pirates do not have to live with each other on their ships, therefore, they do not constitute a cooperative society (Leeson, 2007, pp. 1088–1089). According to him, modern pirate crews are so small that they "do not require rules for creating order, rationing provisions, or assigning tasks", they all have different functions, but none of them is a captain as it used to happen in the 18th century (Leeson, 2007, p. 1089).

happening, framing the pirates in a way that the interpretation of the speech turns them into enemies may be the best way to legitimate state actions against them.[86]

This legitimation comes from the production of subject positions. As argued by Milliken (1999) on the *discourse productivity* practice, Malmvig (2006, p. 3) also claims that these positions "grants individuals or groups a position to speak authoritatively and meaningfully about certain objects and concepts", going directly in line with the thinking of Milliken (1999, p. 229) of who are those 'authorised to speak' in the system. Both authors converge on the fact that this practice ends up organising states, International Organisations or its members as the ones allowed to speak about certain objects and concepts, and with piracy, it is not different. The use of discourses to frame them as enemies and delegitimise their action is precisely how states are able to silence their voices and condemn their actions. This is how the enemy of the system is equally framed as the *hostis humani generis*.

3.1.1. The pirate and its (non)human treatment

Given that piracy countermeasures are a political topic, it is not unusual to see discourses made to achieve specific objectives. Until now, the discourses were only able to justify and legitimate these countermeasures, but none of them actually say anything about what is going to be done, and most importantly, how. Focusing the efforts to marginalise the pirates also works to silence them, which contributes to the fact that the common understanding of their reasons, objectives, and motivations is totally shaped by what the states want to reach the population. In other words, none of the issues that may be related to the increase in piracy activity discussed in Chapter 1 are being presented to the public in Western states.

In light of that, it is possible to find some ambiguities in UK discourses about *piracy*. In the previous section, the focus was on framing them as the *hostis humani generis* due to the violence of their attacks and the impacts it causes on the economy (which affects the world in a bigger extent). Since the discourse has to be shaped to attend the government interests, it may become clear that public opinion on the

[86] Malmvig (2006, p. 2) explains this perspective using examples like the understanding of the Holocaust or the Gulf War. According to her, such things does not entail meaning before articulations, but they are understood through discourse and its articulations. The same perspective can be applied when thinking about piracy.

subject may change according to how pirates are being treated when (in most cases, if) they were captured and prosecuted rather than killed.

After showing why piracy should be fought to its own population, as well as other actors in the system via speeches in International Organisations, the UK seems to change the focus to highlight the international legislation about how the system is supposed to deal with piracy, and most importantly, the pirates. Therefore, some discourses will recognise the pirates as human beings, acknowledging their situation in land and trying to make them stay in prison for their crimes rather than dead:

> I would like to make three brief points today. Firstly, the United Kingdom is pleased to note the decline in incidents and the strength of regional cooperation in tackling the issue. We are proud of our own collaboration with partners to promote security and stability – from putting the issue at the heart of our G7 Presidency, to the naval visit by HMS Trent to defer attacks on maritime trade. Secondly, as the Secretary General's report notes, the drivers of piracy are complex and multi-faceted. We encourage a continued focus on the impact of poverty, youth unemployment and environmental degradation in contributing to criminal activity. Engagement is needed at all levels, including community-based responses, and the UK will continue to work closely with partners in support to a holistic approach in the Gulf of Guinea. Finally, we reiterate the importance of any efforts to tackle piracy and armed robbery complying with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which is the legal framework within which all activities in the ocean and seas are carried out, and aligning closely with the provisions of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct. (UK Government, 2022).[87]

Casting light on such discourses can demonstrate the first ambiguity in the narrative. How can the UK frame them as *hostis humani generis* to chase and *eliminate* them, and right after that, try to guarantee their survival and dignity while recognising their situation? The answer to that question may lay in the fact that no state wants to be recognised by the system (and by its own population) as a state that denies basic needs and kills those who are asking for it. Therefore, such discourses will be addressed to change the focus to protecting the *human* rather than the system. What should be noticed is that (1) they are still directly talking about the impact on commerce, and (2) they (maybe without noticing) are trying to protect humanity (following Policante's (2015) vision) in recognising pirates' motivations

[87] UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT. **Speech: Supporting a holistic approach to tackling piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea**. November 22nd, 2022. Available in: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/supporting-a-holistic-approach-to-tackling-piracy-and-armed-robbery-in-the-gulf-of-guinea>. Accessed on: December 20th, 2024.

after dehumanising them. Along with that, Treves (2009, p. 49) argues that "the British Foreign Office reportedly warned the Royal Navy against detaining pirates since this might violate their human rights and could lead to claims to asylum in Britain".

Hence, the British concern about what to do with captured pirates is visible in some discourses:

> The prosecution and incarceration of captured individuals is a crucial deterrent to would-be pirates and demonstrates that they cannot act with impunity.[…] We are also resolute in our ambition to facilitate the prosecution of pirate leaders and enablers […] The successful prosecution of pirates inevitably leads to a demand for facilities where they can serve out their sentences. To alleviate pressure on prison space, we are working with the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime and their excellent counter-piracy programme to improve regional prison capacity. Crucially, we are also funding the construction of prisons within Somalia, with the aim of rebuilding the country's justice system from the ground up. […] Seychelles transferred 17 convicted pirates to Somalia. This was, in part, made possible with the support the UK has provided for its refurbishment. We anticipate further transfers from Seychelles […] and hope to continue to work towards a position where pirates convicted in regional states are imprisoned in Somalia as a matter of routine. (UK Government, 2013).[88]

According to Epstein (2013, p. 313), language can provide access to a whole other source of human agency, since speeches and discourses can shape public opinion and legitimise the use of force, violence or any other countermeasures that states can use against those who challenge their structural order. When it comes to *piracy*, the most straightforward approach is to create a discourse in which pirates are considered evil criminals who commit terrible acts, while never showing why they are doing so, only the ways in which they operate. Once this perspective is fixed in the public, states can change the discourse to frame themselves as 'the good-guy' that provides some sort of salvation for those in need, while punishing those who deserve to pay for their actions.

This discourse overlapping can be explained by the *predicate analysis* of Milliken (1999, p. 234). According to her, the *predicate analysis* focuses on the practices of predication in nouns, since they can construct subjects with specific capacities and characteristics in their way of acting and interacting (Milliken, 1999, p. 232). Hence, in analysing the UK discourses about piracy, it can be seen that

[88] UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT. **Speech: International action Against piracy**. January 21st, 2013. Available in: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/international-action-against-piracy>. Accessed on: December 20th, 2024.

pirates are framed by both the capacities of their acts (violent criminals), and their characteristics when interacting with other players (poor and unemployed). Thus, the structure created by different discourses meanings about piracy is explained.

As argued by Roxanne Doty (1996, p. 6), the exterior limits of discourses are constituted by other discourses that are always open to the process of being articulated. In other words, they are always "open-ended and incomplete" (Doty, 1996, p. 6). This mean that even when they are ambiguous, they still relate to one another due to the construction of the subject within it. Thus, the *discourse productivity* of Milliken must be used to understand how such discourses "selectively constitutes some and not others as privileged storytellers to whom narrative authority is granted" (Milliken, 1999, p. 236).

Therefore, it must be highlighted how (and not why) the UK is always in some sort of pedestal when it comes to piracy.[89] Firstly, they frame themselves as the educated and modern (following the Derridean binaries), secondly, they construct their image as the ones who will take care of the situation by *helping* in the alleviation of poverty while (now) punishing – and not killing – those who disturbs the peace. Hence, the logic of the implementation of certain policies capable of changing people's condition of living is rendered by the 'authority' (Milliken, 1999, p. 236).

In this sense, according to Resende (2009, p. 140), a discourse analysis is capable of offering the knowledge and the tools from which it is possible to identify and question the dominant discourse. This is how some articulations between a privileged *self* can be opposed to a marginalised *other*. Besides that, the ambiguity in the UK discourses can analysed by according to Andersen & Vuori (2018, p. 2) work, where the authors focus on visual security studies and how they influence certain security policies and practices. Their work on the spectacularisation of security and the making security visual can be used as an example to explain the framing of the pirate in the international system by the UK.

According to the UK discourses analysed so far, the narrative created by the British is able to make a spectacle of an issue that involves systemic inequality, setting up the UK as the 'hero' who fight against the 'enemy of humankind'. In

[89] Doty (1993, p. 299) points out that 'how-questions' are important due to the aspect of power often neglected by 'why-questions'. This is because 'how-questions' puts power as a tool to "constitute particular modes of subjectivity and interpretive dispositions" (Doty, 1993, p. 229).

using Andersen & Vuori's (2018, pp. 4–5; 8) perspective on visual security, it can be said that what is shown in these 'spectacles' are pictures and videos of heavily armed pirates attacking foreign vessels and threatening their tripulants. This makes the audience of the 'spectacle' see the issue only through the eyes of the 'director': Heavily armed pirates stealing ships and kidnapping (when not killing) people.[90]

Therefore, the framing of the pirates as the enemy justifies the treatment as such. But as mentioned above, it is never shown to the public why the pirates act or the local and global inequalities that have led them to do such things, as this does not contribute to the 'director's' plot for his 'show.' In other words, the UK tells the audience what to see and how to see it, and subsequently, they frame themselves as the ones who are going to *save* the endangered poor and unemployed by capturing and properly prosecuting the pirates. Although, it must not be forgotten that lethal force still permissible by the audience, it is only avoided to not harm the image of the 'hero'. All this means that pirates will never be considered freedom fighters by the UK or its population, they will only be portrayed as violent rebels, or in some cases, something close to terrorists.[91]

Milliken (1999, p. 236) will argue that extending the analysis of foreign policy studies via *discourse productivity* will address how the "regimes of truth" were made possible "while excluding other policies as unintelligible or unworkable or improper". Hence, only the solutions proposed by the UK (or in a bigger extent, other International Organisations such as the UN) are taken as valid, pointing, once more, to the binaries analysed by the author (Derrida, 1981 apud Milliken 1999, p. 229; Milliken, 1999, p. 236) and to a Eurocentric perspective of security studies.

In that sense, Doty (1993, p. 301) claim that it is necessary to cast light on "what foreign policy making *is*", since what policy makers *do* "goes beyond merely making choices among various policy options". This means that they have

[90] One of the best examples of this practice can be the 2013 Hollywood movie 'Captain Phillips', which tells the story of the hijacking of the cargo ship Maersk Alabama by Somali pirates. In the movie, the pirates board the ship despite the crew's efforts to protect the vessel and immediately open fire with AK47's aimed to the bridge. For a better understanding of the situation, the boarding scene can be found at: MOVIECLIPS. **Captain Phillips (2013) - Pirates On Board Scene (3/10) | Movieclips**. April 19th, 2017. Available in: <https://youtu.be/j21idqW08wU?si=rwA_cmyANslluxZE>. Accessed on February 11th, 2025.

[91] Although some scholars attach piracy to terrorism, maritime terrorism is categorised as something different. An example of it can be the hijacking of the Italian cruise ship, Achille Lauro, by Palestinian militants, in 1985. The terrorists were pretending to be normal passengers before taking control of the vessel and demand the release of 50 Palestinian prisoners held by Israel (Smit, 1985). This is fundamentally different from what pirates use to do or demand throughout history.

something bigger to be concerned about, and they have to perform according to a social script that regulates social order. In other words, in producing and reproducing marginalised subjects and modern selves, a social order is constructed using Milliken's (1999) 'regimes of truth', since "language works to produce subjects and their relationships (Doty, 1993, p. 301; 305; Milliken, 1999, p. 229).[92]

The fact that the UK is engaged in a 'noble cause' has fixed its identity as 'the good-guy' in opposing to the ignorant, non-human, criminal-scourge pirate, being a good example of Doty's (1993, pp. 307; 310–312) *predication*[93] due to the constitution of particular kind of subjects. Besides that, in verbalising Somalia as a country without a justice system (as seen in the last discourse), Doty's (1993, p. 312–313) *presupposition*[94] can also be put forward, since the UK frame themselves as the ones who will bring order to the chaos and juridical instability that was happening in Somalia at the time.

In trying to get rid of the "menace of piracy" framing the pirates as *hostis humani generis*, the UK is able to put themselves as the superior player in a 'regime of truth' created by the imaginative image of the pirate. Although this has worked so far, the ambiguity is found when some discourses claim that pirates must be properly sentenced and incarcerated by their crimes following international legislations on piracy. These legislations tend to have non-violent approaches and focus on the capturing (not the killing) of the pirate. It is simply not possible to frame the pirate as *something* that should be eliminated while recognising the vulnerability of *someone(s)* conditions on the same land where the pirates came from. This is because, as seen in Chapter 1, these are the people that potentially becomes pirates due to the lack of food, money, and employment.

As said above, no state wants to be considered a state that denies the basic needs of (some) people. This is why the UK follows the UNCLOS definition of piracy and its course of actions. It is not because they want to, it is because they

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[92] One thing to bear in mind when thinking about subjects is that Doty (1993, p. 309) understands them as something different from individuals. For the author, and individual could have multiple subjectivities, while there could be multiple individuals who constitute a single object (Doty, 1993, pp. 309–310).

[93] According to the author, *predication* will involve the affirmation of a quality, attribute, or property to particular subjects (person or thing) using predicates, adverbs and adjectives that modifies them. This would construct their identities, therefore telling what the subjects are able to do (Doty, 1993, p. 306).

[94] According to the author, *presupposition* is the mechanism that turns some things into true in a particular kind of world. This world would be constructed by some sort of background knowledge that used *presupposition* as a tool to validate such 'truths' (Doty, 1993, p. 306).

must be seen as ‘the good-guy’, since it is what Western countries tend to be in most of the narratives involving security studies. Once again, the ambiguity is shown when trying to capture – and not kill – *something* (the pirate) that the state directly says it should be eliminated, but this require discipline in some extent, since the UNCLOS definition on piracy is not the only one used in modern international system.

3.1.2. The hegemonic discourse

As pointed out above, one thing in common between the approaches is the fact that both talk directly about commerce. In other words, one of the anchors of the narrative lay on the fact that piracy disturbs maritime commerce, and therefore, it should be tackled in order to reestablish the flow of the system.

In doing an analysis of the piracy problematisation in the modern international system, the perception of some actors when dealing with a security issue necessarily will pass through the impacts on the global maritime trade chain. It is with this thinking that Policante’s (2015) book traces back piracy as an influent practice in global commerce since the Roman Empire – not only because of the cost of it, but also due to the places where the attacks have happened throughout history.

At this point, it has to be pointed out that multiple referent objects may appear in the same narrative, most of them having something to do with the maritime routes disturbed by piracy. Given that piracy impacts global economy, one can list some of them: (1) the profit margin of Western countries in global maritime trade, (2) the impacts on their national economy and society, (3) the shares of companies involved in the processes, (4) the capitalist social order that regulates the international system, and (5) the variation on the insurance prices of the vessels and its cargo. The protection of these 5 referent objects (RO)[95] is a *must* to many Western states given that they sustain their hegemonic order. Hence, the foreign policy of most of these Western states will try to protect, at least, one of these topics.

Beyond the thinking of Policante (2015), some authors acknowledge the importance of global commerce. Leeson (2007, p. 1053) argues that in the 17th and

[95] In order to facilitate the understating throughout the reading, until the end of this Chapter, all of these 5 referent objects will be written as: RO1, RO2, RO3, RO4 and/or RO5.

18th centuries, pirates occupied major trading routes in the Americas, Africa and Europe.[96] Nevertheless, when considering modern piracy, the increased danger in maritime routes ended up affecting things such as the payment of the seafarer, which means that higher premiums must now be paid to the crews who sails through what is considered dangerous waters (Bensassi & Martínez-Zarzoso, 2012, p. 3). Besides that, the insurance cost of the goods has also increased (Neethling, 2010, pp. 94–95, 101; Tepp, 2012, p. 193; Fiorelli, 2014, p. 4). This alone can involve RO's 1, 2, 3 and 5, as will be discussed further in this Chapter. Since the total cost of the operation became higher, it is not a surprise that the states aggressively tackle piracy at the choke points in the PEMP map. They may not hang pirates nowadays, but the killing has never stopped.[97]

In that sense, expanding the historic connection between piracy and maritime commerce can help in understanding how pirates went from a political threat to an economic one. This is where Leeson's (2007) work becomes relevant, since the author traces back the history of piracy and their operations. Notwithstanding, in certain periods of time, pirates could be seen as criminals or privateers[98] working for European empires to plunder other ships. What this proves is that, when it was convenient, piracy was institutionalised and used as a foreign policy tool, pointing out to yet another ambiguity in the narrative.

Putting the UK in perspective here, maybe the most famous pirate of the British society was Captain Francis Drake. His importance still perpetrated as one of the most influent Englishmen to live, proved by a replica of his ship permanently anchored in an exposition in London.[99] Although Drake is considered a heroic figure, he is still a pirate. The only difference is that he was authorised to do it. His legitimation to raid Spanish and Portuguese ships[100] came from Queen Elizabeth I

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[96] In fact, the presence of pirates in these regions made the trade routes connecting the Caribbean, North America and Madagascar be called the 'pirate round', a loop where "many pirates traveled in search of prey" (Leeson, 2007, p. 1053).

[97] Leeson (2007, p. 1078) argues that pirates have been killed by England since piracy was considered a capital offence in the 18th century. By the time, England's campaign against sea banditry was successfully capturing pirates and regularly punishing them (or any other sailor who was found guilty of piracy) by hanging.

[98] The definition of privateer can be understood according to Leeson (2007, p. 1054) as state-sanctioned sea robbers that attack enemy ships (or other nations ships) (Leeson, 2007, p. 1054; Dawdy & Bonni, 2012, p. 678).

[99] THE GOLDEN HINDE. The Golden Hinde, [*s.d.*]. Visitation schedule. Available in <https://www.goldenhinde.co.uk/visit>. Accessed on December 23rd, 2024.

[100] ROYAL MUSEUMS GREENWICH. **Sir Francis Drake facts**. [*S. l*]., [*s.d.*]. Available in:

in a clearly action taken by the UK to establish itself as the dominant power of the sea. As a result, RO's 2, 3, and 4 are being mobilised in some extent for centuries.

Drake's actions earned him the higher civilian condecoration by the Crown. Sir Francis Drake, now lies in the imaginary of British society as one of the most iconic figures throughout the UK. But the use of privateers as a foreign policy tool reflects a very clear political strategy. Since pirates are not soldiers, nations could not declare war against the UK if their ships were attacked. Pirates, thus, ended up acting as some sort of agents in the sea while the European naval powers did not involve themselves directly in conflict against one another.

In this sense, it is important to highlight that although Drake is considered a hero in the UK, in other former European naval powers, such as Spain, Drake is "portrayed as the worst enemy Spain had ever faced" (Vallaro, 2021, p. 233), much of it due to economic losses in maritime routes in ships attacked by Drake. In spite of that, regardless of whether the attacks were committed by pirates or privateers, the fact is that they all affected international trade. Most importantly, another ambiguity can be found given that pirates do not possess a positive agency in the system, unless they are working *for* the system.

In analysing modern piracy, however, there is no room for privateers. When combining the romanticised vision, along with the 'enemies of humankind' sense, and the multiple 'piracy hotspots', the attention on how the problematisation of the theme is proposed becomes evident. With this narrative, it is possible to observe some anti-piracy discourses that turn their focus to a 'greater-good' in international relations given the impacts it has, according to the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) (2021, p. 11), on the global commerce. The focus on the commerce can be explained by Rauch's classification about different goods, claiming that insecurity affects trade flow no matter what type of good is being traded (Rauch, 1999 apud Bensassi & Martínez-Zarzoso, 2012, p. 6).

As explained above, the securitisation of the topic must begin with the framing of the pirate as a violent enemy. In the Somali case, Osiro (2011, p. 4) argues that this approach denies the voice of the pirates – following Doty's (1993) perspective and, once again, taking away the agency of the pirate – while enhancing the articulation of countermeasures in order to protect commercial interests of the

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/sir-francis-drake-facts>. Accessed on: December 22nd, 2024.

international community (RO's 1, 2, 4 and 5). The author goes on and claim that the shipping industry have a major responsibility in the dehumanisation of the Somali pirates, since it worked alongside the media to portray them as "bloodthirsty and merciless sea thieves", which eventually ended up with them as the *hostis humani generis* (Osiro, 2011, p. 4). This argument is backed by Treves (2009, p. 400), who states that the pirate's success in their operations have made them able to be categorised as some kind of subspecies. Therefore, the fighting against a non-human enemy would legitimate its killing.

This power dynamic between the pirate and the international system could be explained by Yamato's (2019, p. 223) work, since the author uses Schmitt's notion of giving political concepts, images and terms a polemical meaning. Therefore, the binary friend/enemy is dominated, exposed and determinated by "whoever has real power", meaning that the very concept of the word can be politicised by the one who is in power (Schmitt, 2007 apud Yamato, 2019, p. 223). In other words, the capability to define the meaning of things and words is held by the one who has the real power in hands, thus, the dehumanisation of the pirate, in this context, can be remarkably easy to accomplish. Moreover, Schmitt concerns about this legitimising process of discrimination would lead his thoughts to how humanity become a type of counter-concept to the 'enemy'. The process of turning the "negatively valued person" into an "unperson" who's life is worthless could end up in "incalculable, negative effects", which means justifying the existence of an "outlaw of humanity" (Schmitt, 2007 apud Yamato, 2019, pp. 218; 219).

But one thing can be observed in all of that. In many of the articles and books about piracy (including some of those used in this research), the focus on maritime trade is evident. The objective here is not to deny this, but to show that, even in the academic field, the political perspective of piracy is not properly contemplated. In looking at pirates as political actors, a reflection about their social, economic and political situation can be interpreted inside a dynamic of resistance, where their actions try to defy the powerful players on the system. In analysing *piracy* in a critical way, it becomes clear that not only the UK and other International Organisations can have multiple referent objects, but also the fact that many other authors that analyse piracy tend to consider only one: maritime trade.

As a consequence, some of the authors used until here can recognise the socioeconomic situation that happens in the 'hotspots' mentioned above, but this

does not change the fact that most of them will put maritime trade as the main thing to be analysed rather than understanding how the narrative is made to sustain a global hegemonic order, or how a socioeconomic problem in some African countries became so cruel that people chose to risk their lives to do piracy. Hence, the hegemonic discourse is always the protection of the maritime trade network, not only because it is mentioned in every discourse done by the UK regarding to piracy, but also because the academic research on it falls in the trap and follow the narrative created by those who marginalise the pirates:

> Of special importance is that maritime insecurity in general, and in African waters in particular, has been growing at a disturbing rate and threatens the global flow of goods and services across the world's shipping lines. In this regard, globalisation and maritime trade show a close interface since the bulk of international goods and services – more than 80 per cent – travel by sea. […] This makes the sea lanes off the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden as well as the Gulf of Guinea of the utmost importance as much of the flow of maritime traffic along the African coast travels through these busy lanes or regions (Neethling, 2010, p. 91).[101]

Having a critical approach towards security studies, this Eurocentric viewpoint is highly criticised by authors such as Barkawi & Laffey (2006), who will claim that "security studies derives its core categories and assumptions about the world politics from a particular understanding of European experience" (Barkawi & Laffey, 2006, p. 330). The authors can agree with Milliken's thoughts when claiming that some international institutions, such as the UN, are a product of interstate diplomacy by Western powers. This is because the 'regimes of truth' can be understood as a result of the Eurocentric way of thinking security, which means that Europeans are the only ones authorised to speak due to their understanding of the world.

To that extent, a decolonisation of security studies is needed and it will be better explored in Chapter 3. At this moment, however, it is necessary to understand how UK discourses on piracy can be an example of the Eurocentrism in security studies. Barkawi (2016, p. 14) claims that order and disorder functions as a binary

[101] NEETHLING, Theo. Piracy Around Africa's West and East Coasts: A Comparative Political Perspective. **Scientia Militaria. South African Journal of Military Studies**, v. 38, n. 2, p. 89–108, 2010.

such as war and peace. The point is that disorder is associated with war, which, according to the author, is able to "make and sustain social orders". It is in this sense that he argues that "under the spell of the war/peace binary, we often fail to see all around us wars and their consequences" (Barkawi, 2016, pp. 11; 15).

The disorder caused by piracy, and the consequence of it being the disruption of maritime trade, is making piracy a problem that has its motives on the periphery and outcomes in the international system. The marginalisation of the subaltern in post-colonial societies has made the peripheral become central once the former started to strike back (Barkawi & Laffey, 2006, p. 330) against exploitation.

Hence, in analysing the discourses regarding piracy, it has to be highlighted that UK perspective towards the issue is in line with other International Organisations. The combat of piracy in Africa can be seen following Barkawi & Laffey (2006) perspective, since the actions taken by the actors are framing piracy in the GoG in the same way as piracy in Somalia. Therefore, piracy can be an example of how this Eurocentric vision is being replicated in two different cases. In other words, Western countries are trying to solve two problems using the same solutions, but ignoring the specificities of each one.

3.2. The Eurocentric logic

According to Epstein (2008, p. 2), discourses are an ensemble of ideas that frame a specific object to "delimit the possibilities for action in relation to it". Notwithstanding, International Organisations tend to be the only places where the discussions of what should be done are held. Mingst, Karns & Lyon (2022, p. 114) argues that despite the promotion of peace and security, the UN has never been able to enforce itself, since it does not have a standing military force. Rather, it authorises member states – such as the UK – to imply coercive armed forces to do what the UN cannot do itself. This is not only proven by the discourses from the UK Government mentioned above, but also by the actions taken by other countries regarding the piracy cases in Somalia. This is also aligned with the thinking of Epstein (2008, p. 2) that a powerful discourse is the one that makes a difference.

The best example of that can be a discourse at the UNSC in 2010, when its former Executive Director, Yury Fedotov, spoke about the counter-piracy programme in Arica:

> It is clear that the only viable long-term solution to the Somali piracy problem is to restore law and order in Somalia, including in its waters. It is also clear that this solution is some years off and will require concerted and coordinated international effort (UNODC, 2010).[102]

Even with this research focusing on the UK discourses, it must not be unnoticed the similarities when compared to UN' position. To prove that, a discourse in 2017 by the former UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, mentions the cooperation between the UK and Nigeria military forces against piracy in order to create prosperous conditions for both governments to thrive:

> Nigeria is a country of huge promise and big ambitions. British businesses such as Diageo and Unilever are thriving here and I want to see even more British companies succeeding in Nigeria, and more Nigerian companies in Britain. […]. Our military links are close and longstanding. I am honoured to have dedicated the new Commonwealth war memorial to the memory of the thousands of Nigerians who fought side-by-side with Britain in the First and Second World Wars. And today, British military training is helping Nigeria to take on Boko Haram and to fight back against piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. This close military cooperation is the cornerstone of our joint efforts to defeat terror and to create the conditions for peace, stability and prosperity (UK Government, 2017).[103]

Once again, it is possible to see that the UK is framing pirates as *something* that creates terror and threatens the peace, stability and prosperity. The mentioning of Boku Haram is precisely what creates fear in some people, since terrorists' groups are known for their violent attacks, which can imply that pirates operate in the same sense. As argued by Birnie (1987, p. 164), international legislation on

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[102] UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME. **Speech: Security Council Briefing on Piracy**. New York, November 9th, 2010. Available in: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/about-unodc/speeches/2010-11-09-security-council-briefing-on-piracy.html>. Accessed on December 27th, 2024.

[103] UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT. **Speech: Foreign Secretary champions UK-Nigeria trade and partnership**. August 31st, 2017. Available in: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-champions-uk-nigeria-trade-and-partnership>. Accessed on: December 26th, 2024.

piracy is based on establishing the pirate as the 'enemy of humanity'. This is done to protect the interests of the international community according to economic development and humanitarian standards, touching RO's 2 and 4.

The relevance of this is justified by the numbers of UK and Nigeria bilateral trade (forecasted to be around £7 billion by 2030), and the number of attacks reported in the Gulf of Guinea (UK Government, 2017). According to the UK Government (2017), piracy attacks have costed around US$800 million and the taking of 43 hostages of various nationalities. Besides that, more than £6 billion of West African trade with the UK, and around 15% of the oil imported by them, passes through the GoG annually. Therefore, a discourse analysis to understand the narrative – and ambiguities – created by Western powers about piracy is relevant to expose not only how the system reacts to it, but also the Eurocentric logic of security studies.

Besides establishing the (multiples) referent object(s), it is important to define who is the securitising actor (the someone, or the group who says that something is a referent object) (Buzan, Waever & Wilde 1997, p. 40). Mak (2016, p. 66) argues that the IMB has claimed piracy as an increasing danger to shipping.[104] It turns relevant to remember that the IMB is a non-governmental organisation that represents the shipping interests of the ICC. Therefore, as Mak (2016, p. 67) points out, the IMB indulge consistent speech acts[105] that frames piracy as a security issue to a target audience, this being the general public and the governments.

This relationship created between the IMB and the governments can be explained by Lisle (2016) as a necessary need to recognize the negative sovereignty of the pirate. In other words, the speech acts help in constructing the pirate image, as Lisle (2016) argues in her work:

> As a result, our contemporary condition is characterized by new rhetorics of crises, catastrophe, and apocalypse that enable the exclusions constitutive of liberal rule to be imposed with more force, legitimacy and violence (Grove, 2015). For example, the threat of inevitable apocalypse from any number of sources (e.g., terrorism, climate change, recession)

[104] The IMB defines piracy as an "act of boarding any vessel with the intent to commit theft or other crime and with the capability to use force in the furtherance of the act" (Mak, 2016, p. 72).

[105] Onuf (2015) defines 'speech acts' using two different notions. The first one, 'directive speech acts', is where the speaker wants the listener to believe that he should do something in an imperative way (in this case fighting the pirates). The second one, 'commissive speech acts', is where the speaker makes promises that the listeners accept (in this case promising a better and safer world if the pirates are neutralised).

> is used to discipline populations in the present: obey *this* form of governance and the horror will be alleviated (by technological solutions), managed (by cultivating resilience), outsourced (by building barriers against it), or postponed (by assuming that future generations will sort it out). (Lisle, 2016, p. 426).[106]

This can map the nexus of vulnerability, fear, and danger of global populations, producing responses aimed at neutralising these vulnerabilities (Lisle, 2016, p. 428), making international society feels safer when pirates are being killed. The ample definition from the IMB is used to categorise crimes like thefts and boarding attempts on ships in ports as piracy. This reflects in a wider number of cases only for statistical purposes, since this would "shock the world into taking more vigorous action against maritime depredations" (Mak, 2016, p. 72). The objective of a speech act by a securitising actor is to indicate priority over all other issues. Hence, succeeding in transforming a security problem into an existential threat necessarily involves the audience accepting such speech act (Mak, 2016, p. 67).

Mak (2016, p. 68) goes on in his analysis and argues that speech acts are located in a complex social environment, where the narrative is "moderated, developed and even modified as events unfold over time as other actors affect the discourse or create alternate discourses". This can be proven right as the examples of how the UK celebrate a former pirate because he starts to work *for* the Crown – which is an ambiguity itself – and nowadays, is recognising the poor conditions of people in Somalia and Nigeria while tries to eliminate the locals who fight against neo-colonial practices:

> But you cannot have prosperity without security. Strengthening peace and security in Africa is therefore critical to unlocking our full joint potential. […] We will continue to focus on strengthening African countries' resilience against threats, as well as addressing the drivers of conflict and instability. Strategic security and defence partnerships – like those we have

[106] LISLE, Debbie. Waiting for International Political Sociology: A Field Guide to Living In-Between. **International Political Sociology**, v. 10, n. 4, p. 417–433, December. 2016.

> with Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya – are a powerful means of achieving this goal. (UK Government, 2023).[107]

But to piracy be accepted as a threat according to Buzan Waever & Wilde (1997) thinking, an authority figure must be recognised to engage in a speech act. This is how the IMB claims are accepted by the system. The fact that they are the only source of continuous data regarding piracy attacks since 1995 (Mak, 2016, p. 71) – and updated each year – points to an excellent scapegoat for the states, as well to the shipping industry. They fold the narrative throughout discourses according to what the IMB presents as data.

In addition, the IMB also considers socio-economic measures as secondary. In other words, programmes of poverty alleviation are being despised in comparison to military actions. Therefore, IMB's strategy consists in producing speech acts – as a recognised authority – by issuing its own regular reports on piracy, while pressuring littoral states to take action against 'piracy hotspots' highlighted by the media (Mak, 2016, p. 73). These military actions can be a proof of what Bueger (2013, p. 301) defines as a securitisation process, since measures or scripts of action to protect the referent object are proposed once the threat is constructed. Given that the IMB represents the interests of the shipping community, and its narrative favours Western countries ordering system, all five RO's can be putted as the referent object in this case due to the reliance of global economy on expanding independent shipping and energy supply networks (Osinowo, 2015, p. 2; Neethling, 2010, p. 101; Tepp, 2012, p. 193). In light of that, Young (2012, p. 62) perspective can be applied, since she argues that the use of repressive violence – in this case, to fight pirates – is evilly motivated by the desire of rulers to maintain their power through a coercive tool.

Furthermore, Fiorelli (2014, p. 10) claims that similar to the international response against piracy in Somalia, the 'pain' caused by piracy in the GoG will lead to states and International Organisations to take action when a critical threshold is reached. Hence, if the number of attacks in the GoG continue to disrupt maritime

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[107] UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT. **Speech: UK partnerships with Africa: Foreign Secretary's speech in Lagos**. August 1st, 2023. Available in: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/foreign-secretary-speech-in-lagos>. Accessed on: December 29th, 2024.

trade, insurance costs to commercial shipping will rise in the same way as it did in when Somalia was the 'hotspot'. This would reflect not only in the system itself, but mostly on the oil exports from Nigeria and the impoverishment of the Nigerian population, since the country depends on these exports for its economic balance, strongly pointing to RO2.

According to Tepp (2012, p. 196), NATO is also taking steps toward the security and safety of maritime trade routes in the GoG. This is justified by the possibility of an energy supply crisis in cause of the pirate attacks on oil tankers and platforms, as well as the bunkering practice discussed in Chapter 1.[108] Moreover, the impacts on the population of developed countries are also pointed out by Tepp (2012, p. 202), who claims that "by having a detrimental impact on the local industry and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, piracy can influence the everyday life of ordinary and unsuspecting citizen thousands of miles away".[109] This points, once again, to the interest of Western countries in fighting piracy as a menace, framing it as an existential threat to the livelihood of its citizens, and to the global economy due to its impacts in maritime trade.

As a result, a Eurocentric perspective is established in the system when it comes to *piracy*. This is making the international system take action based on the interest of the Western powers, who are using speech acts as a way to legitimise the framing of the pirate as *something* to be fought, and to protect their own economic interests in African countries using market prices to its citizens as a motive. For that reason, it is crucial to understand the issue contemplating the other side of the coin.

[108] Tepp (2012, p. 197) also argues that the US interest in the GoG grew in the last years given the American desire to decrease its dependence on Middle Eastern oil (Nodland, [*s.d.*] apud Tepp, 2012, p. 197). The fact that the Niger Delta has one of the largest reserves in the world can be motivating the US to secure control over the sources of supply to the global market (Cyril, 2008 apud Tepp, 2012, p. 197), which can be confirmed by the US Department of Defence claiming that one key mission of US forces in Africa is to ensure that Nigerian oil is secure (Ploch, 2011 apud Tepp, 2012, p. 197).

[109] This is explained by the author as a result of the impact of piracy in insurance prices, sailor's salaries, ships reroute, and commissions for extra risk involved. According to him, this would lead to an elevate cost of transport, and therefore, the cost of these goods in the marked for ordinary citizens of developed countries (Tepp, 2012, p. 197).

3.3.
The parts of a whole

When talking about security nowadays, it is normal to think about classical military security. This is why Buzan, Waever & Wilde (1997, p. 1) claim that it is easy for traditionalists to identify security issues given that they equal it with military problems and the use of force. But once this concept is widened, intellectual and political dangers may appear. This wider range of possible issues can be related to what Fyneface Dumnamene said in his interview on Vice (2021). The world needs to change the focus when it comes to security, this means that the use of guns and helicopters to aid boats in the sea should not be the only thing discussed in International Organisations. Human security, food security and social security are also in need to be putted in perspective (Vice, 2021).

Buzan, Waever & Wilde criticism about traditional security studies in evident when the authors define international security as how human collectivities relate to each other when facing threats and other vulnerabilities, even if, sometimes, "it addresses the ways such collectivities relate to threats from the natural environment" (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1997, p. 10). Putting piracy in perspective here, it can be argued that pirates face a social vulnerability that makes them want to fight for their survival. This becomes a security threat once another human collectivity (Western citizens) starts to feel the impact of the disturbance of maritime routes in their everyday life. Only then, discourses to create the narrative of '*hostis humani generis*' becomes possible. This is why Waever try to make the shift for desecuritisation, that is, "the shifting of issues out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining process of the political sphere" (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1997, p. 4), since this would englobe the perspective from multiple human collectivities.

The authors explain collective actions against piracy by the security complex theory. This can be understood as the definition of a set of states (Western countries) whose perceptions and concerns about security are so interlinked that their own national security cannot be solved separately from one another (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1997, p. 12). Thus, they are "formed from the inside out, by the interactions

among their constituent units" (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1997, p. 15).[110] As argued throughout this Chapter, the disruption of maritime routes can affect multiple things that can be framed as referent objects, and due to globalisation, these things are deeply involved in the economy of such set of states. This is another reason why piracy is framed as an issue that has to be solved as soon as possible.

As argued at the beginning of this Chapter, Buzan, Waever & Wilde (1997, p. 21) claim that security is a matter of survival of a referent object. In the process of constructing the multiple referent objects analysed here, the threat posed by pirates becomes a progressively destabilising factor within the international system. This is due to its presentation as an existential threat to these multiple referent objects. Buzan, Waever & Wilde (1997, p. 25) argues that this is precisely the role of a discourse, since such existential threat depends on the acceptance of the referent object by the public.

Thus, piracy combat is legitimised no matter what happen – or happened to the pirates in land. For this reason, piracy can be determined as an international security issue precisely because it is presented as an issue. In other words, this could be an example of security as a self-referential practice, as argued by Buzan, Waever & Wilde (1997, p. 24).

The use of critical studies can be expanded beyond the field of security when analysing piracy in the African continent. Hence, the critical thinking of Robert Cox can also help in understanding the whole situation, since it considers a wider perspective of the changing processes that happen in the international system (Cox, 2021, p. 15). Cox's Critical Theory is focused on the search of an alternative order, historically evaluating the human action towards conflicts. This is how his proposal of a criticism in relation to problem-solving theories can be put into action.

The fact that Western countries are comfortable in the hegemonic order they create in the system can be the explanation of why their action against piracy are so profound. Nonetheless, as argued earlier, the crucial question to be made is not *why*, but *how*. Cox (2021, p. 15) tries to answer this by claiming that problem-solving

[110] According to the authors, security regions have 4 characteristics: (1) they need to be composed out of two or more states; (2) they need to be a geographically coherent group (in this case, Europeans trying to secure maritime routes that are close to their territory); (3) the relation among the members must have a (positive or negative) interdependence in terms of security; (4) the interdependence between them had to be deep and durable, but may not be permanent (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1997, p. 15).

theories seek to stabilise the functioning of the whole, that is, all the actions taken by the UK and other International Organisations – such as the IMB and UN – are trying to sustain an order created by themselves for themselves. Cox claims that this is an example of institutionalisation – "a way to stabilise and perpetuate a given order" (2021, p. 22. Translated by the author).

It is logical that this does not involve helping countries from the Global South to achieve development out of good will (although some speeches may also say that). This is because investing in them is simply not part of the economic interests of Western countries, unless this aid for development means a significant potential return for the financier, as in the case of Nigerian close relationship with England regarding its oil.

Therefore, Cox (2021, p. 14) argues that as reality change, old concepts must be adjusted or rejected for new concepts to be forged. This dialogue would be the *problematic*, thus, old concepts of security must be revised to understand *how* the problematic of piracy is being held by the system, and *how* this is emerged as an existential threat. And for that, the theory must start with an historic investigation of human experience given that the theory itself is shaped according to the problematic (Cox, 2021, p. 21).

Cox (2021, p. 19) analysis of why problem-solving theories fail can be used to understand the actions done by the system against African piracy. As argued in this Chapter, the solutions proposed for the Somali case were similar to the ones suggested for the Nigerian one. This means that the thinking of the actors is being focused on a particular phase of history, compromising their actions due to their assumption that this phase is universally valid (Cox, 2021, p. 9). However, to guarantee the interests and policies of actors, the author claims that material power relations can possess enforcement potential through institutions, especially when the powerful seek to dominate the weaker parties. But for that to happen, the latter will have to neglect such power relations as legit.

Translating that to piracy affairs, the UK, and other International Organisations, can use force to defeat piracy, but this becomes a possible solution only when pirates started to strike back against the power relations sustained throughout the years (Cox, 2021, p. 23). Bringing Buzan, Waever & Wilde (1997, p. 34) in this can enhance this perception once the authors argue that it is the actor (here translated as the UK, UN, and IMB) who decides if a referent object is under

existential threat, and if it is, all institutions will mobilise their policies to dominate the weaker part.

Nonetheless, if resistances can be considered a representation of power against the status quo of the structures, power itself can be considered emerging from a social process rather than a result of it (Cox, 2021, p. 27). The fact that pirates are delegitimised due to their lack of knowledge on how to make foreign policy makes them powerless in relation to states and their institutions. On the other hand, as argued in Chapter 1, piracy can be presented as a movement, a protest, and an insurgency that brings together all the people who are willing to risk their lives to obtain better conditions for themselves and their families. In addition, piracy might also be seen as a social process, and this characteristic is what makes piracy a powerful tool for confronting the order created in the system.

The actions taken by the UK and the IMB are shaped in a way that makes easy for states to deal with pirates, but they struggle to stop piracy for the simple fact that piracy has all the ingredients to be something that cannot be confronted by the enforcement of the institutions, which is why piracy as a movement has lasted for centuries. Until states stop neglecting their part in the design of a socio-economic problem that the capitalist model has created in piracy affected regions, resistance will always come from those who cannot endure the inequality in their lives.

Piracy as resistance can be understood as a counter-hegemonic movement. If it succeeds in demonstrate how exploited countries (especially in their regions) were dominated by discourses, narratives, meanings, and other signifiers from the international hegemonic order throughout history, it is not delusional to think of a Third World coalition against this hegemonic order, seeking the autonomous development of peripheral countries after some time, and ultimately, the end of the centre-periphery relationship (Cox, 2021, p. 37). In other words, piracy as a movement can be able to exert enough pressure to disrupt the structure and question the agency of major international actors.

Although, public opinion will always think about what piracy is in their childhood imaginaries or by what is presented by the media with images of terrible acts committed by dangerous people. But can it be possible to make someone think about why piracy exists, or why pirates do what they do? This may be the start of the bigger questioning: How do the discourses of the main global players on piracy

contribute to the consolidation of hegemonic thinking about the current international order?

Thus, the objective here was to analyse how British discourses reflects a hegemonic notion of piracy in the international system, pointing out the necessity of analysing the other parts of a whole. Following Cox's (2021) thoughts, alongside Buzan, Waever & Wilde (1997) critical security perspective, it is possible to understand why there are multiple referent objects and how they relate each other with the threat of piracy. Therefore, Buzan, Waever & Wilde (1997, p. 45) question of "who can do security in the name of what" can be answered throughout a critical discourse analysis of the UK narrative on pirates, since it was possible to identify the potential existential threats, the emergency actions, who securitises on what issues, for whom, why, under what conditions, and its effects on the system by the politics of top leaders (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1997, pp. 26; 29; 32). In framing all parts of the whole, one cannot fall into the trap of thinking about folklorically pirates. Therefore, the ambiguous discourses from the UK against the *hostis humani generis* will eventually fall apart.

In order to understand *piracy* throughout British lenses, it is necessary to analyse each discourse without any bias, that is, remembering that they are the same government that praise Sir Francis Drake, a former *pirate* who ended up as a national *hero* after he became a Queen's privateer.

4
Chapter 3: From Gulf to Gulf – Western Narratives and African security

In traditional security studies, Western perspective about what should be securitised – or at least discussed among other actors – most of the time ends up being a legitimation of their policies in continents such as South America, Africa, and Asia. Hence, an effort to revisit the marginality of these continents in comparison to Europeans can be a fundamental process to understand modern international security. Since this research is focusing on piracy cases in the Gulf of Aden and the Gulf of Guinea, the African perspective is the only one that is going to be analysed throughout this Chapter.

As argued in Chapters 1 and 2, piracy is framed as an existential threat by the system. Therefore, when thinking about a contestation of traditional security studies, an analysis of the role of some International Organisations may be constructive in understanding the relationship between all parts involved. Thus, a post-colonial approach is able to cast light on what is at stake when considering piracy in maritime security, since it could be seen as a demonstration of power by former colonial states against those who offer some kind of resistance to neo-colonial practices. In other words, on one hand, piracy can be considered a criminal movement to legitimise the 'needing for salvation' and/or intervention by Western states. On the other hand, it also can be considered a resistance movement by those who are willing to risk their lives exposing the structural violence imposed by the same states.

In order to criticise this power structure, first, it should be clarified what it means. Cox (2021, p. 16) claims that periods of stability in power relations favour the problem-solving approach used to sustain the structure. Thus, it is necessary to amplify the authority of norms and international institutions to regulate relations among certain actors. Cox (2021, p. 25. Translation by the author) argues that the theory of hegemonic stability from Keohane points to these structures as "more propitious to the development of strong international regimes, in which its rules are more precise and well complied." An alternative to this perspective can begin by redefining the stability of global orders, putting them in comparison to a concept of hegemony that is perceived by the sum of material power, collective image of the

order (including norm making[111]), and the institutions who manage this order with a universal perspective (Cox, 2021, p. 25). This would disrupt the narrative analysed in Chapter 2, and therefore, change the course from the use of problem-solving theories to the use of Critical Theory.

Nevertheless, the intention here is to think about how the status quo of the system can be criticised by those who are aware of the intentions of Western powers to preserve the global order. The fulfilment of Western power's own objectives necessarily passes through this stability, but they do not involve the development of the Global South unless there is something to be earned in that. This is why piracy can be an excellent example of power dynamics between the Global North and South. In focusing on the marginalisation of African perspective – given the universality proposed by Western discourses – the colonial legacy and the creation of Western narratives about what is happening should be analysed in modern security studies since such narratives tend to favour Western powers and marginalise local perspectives of Global South states.

Therefore, if such analysis uses a post-colonial perspective, it will be possible to see the influence of British discourses in other International Organisations to perpetuate a vision about the *problem of piracy*, being the best way to expose how a critique of this discourses can destabilise the problematisation.

4.1.
The (non)African Historiography

In international security studies, the African role and its perspectives have rarely been put into perspective. Authors such as Odoom & Andrews (2016, p. 1) show that the academic community in IR categorised its own studies as some sort of hegemonic view of things, putting the knowledge from a unidirectional perspective even with the improvement in diversity. Others, such as Fasakin (2018, p. 15), will argue that IR is not an American social science; it is only permanently influenced by it. Anyhow, African perceptions and opinions about things that

[111] The process of norm making can be understood according to Finnemore & Sikkink (1998, p. 895) work about the *norm cascade*. The point here is in accordance with the first phase of *the norm cascade* – the *norm emergence* – where the norm starts as a persuasion technique from the ones who create the norms in order to convince the critical mass of states. For more on that, see in: FINNEMORE, Martha; SIKKINK, Kathryn. International Norm Dynamics and Political Change. **International Organization**, v. 52, n. 4, p. 887–917, 1998.

happen in their own continent are being neglected and marginalised by this hegemonic view (Odoom & Andrews, 2016, p. 6). This is proven in other works, such as Barkawi & Laffey's (2006, p. 334), when the authors claim that Eurocentric periodisation of the world is always in evidence in the common narratives that underpin security studies. This means that history is being told according to the "very conventional and widely accepted periodisations" that make world politics almost exclusively European or in the Northern Hemisphere (Barkawi & Laffey, 2006, p. 334). In the same sense, Sajed & Seidel argue that the Western imperial way of framing the world always put itself as the centre/core, making it evident the hierarchical ways in which Western imaginative geographies take over the periodisations and historiography (Sajed & Seidel, 2023, p. 3)

This is why Odoom & Andrews (2016, pp. 2; 3) claim that IR theories are peripheral to the insights and experiences proposed by Africans, who are always challenging these dominant constructs of knowledge, but are trapped in a vortex of an epistemic imperialism in the academic field that ends up influencing certain stories and perspectives, since, most of the time, their publications are not either edited or located in Africa. In other words, it is possible to agree with Almeida (2012, p. 26) that IR is a discipline claimed to be "international" by giving relevance to all people and states but has its origins traced back to the heart of European imperialism. Moreover, Sajed & Seidel (2023) state that "we are *all* Eurocentric" due to the ways in which history is told, always being a reference to the master narrative about the non-West created by Europe (Mufti, 2005; Roy, 2016 apud Sajed & Seidel, 2023, p. 2). Therefore, the necessity to uncover which discourses exist in Africa within IR should be evocative to rethink the dominant narratives offered by the hegemonic view since it is simply not possible to contribute to the change without deeply engaging with these dominant perspectives (Fasakin, 2018, pp. 9; 28).

In dealing with security studies, it is noticeable that military history is concentrated in the Western part of the world (Black, 1998 apud Barkawi & Laffey, 2006, p. 335), putting Europeans and North Americans as the *self* in the history books, while the Global South is framed as the *other*. Hence, security studies must focus on critical approaches that contest this dominant view. In this perspective, authors such as Meera Sabaratnam (2011, p. 782) argue that a *decolonising strategy* must aim in the articulation of subject-positions, starting a type of dialogue between

the taken for granted everyday academic practice and the reconfiguration of the understanding of world politics in order to the "realisation of more equal relations between and within diverse political communities".

The use of post-colonial theory, in this case, can be a good entry point for this type of engagement since it can be considered a strand of Cox's Critical Theory, given its approach to issues such as "identity, poverty, underdevelopment, and civil wars" – things that, "most of the time, are ignored or taken for granted by the problem-solving theories." (Fasakin, 2018, pp. 26; 27. Translated by the author). In contrast to a perspective that takes into account the extent of these problems, Crawford points out that Africa is always seen as a bad place:

> The problems of Africa are many; they are as intractable and mysterious as they are shameful. In images that are as beautiful as they are brutal, we see and read about tribal war, bloated bodies floating in rivers, disease, machetes, limbless children, swollen stomachs, flies, spear-carrying warriors, bare-breasted woman, witches, shifting yellow eyes, black slime and unnamed informants (Crawford, 1996, p. 30).[112]

These are a few things that are associated with the African continent. Nonetheless, "perhaps the drastic images are *not* about marginalization, but about paving the way and providing justifications for "benevolent" interventions into Africa's political and economic affairs" (Crawford, 1996, p. 31). As argued in the previous Chapters, piracy is not different. Therefore, a *decolonising strategy* in Sabaratnam (2011) terms is necessary since they are what problematise the Western *self* and offers an alternative to the recognition and possibility of other subjects to speak across different positions in a *dialogic* mode (Sabaratnam, 2011, p. 785).

4.1.1 The Gulf of Aden

To contemplate the Western *self* in security studies, African piracy cases can be an example of how Europeans try to bend the narrative in their favour while neglecting peripheral viewpoints. Starting with the East coast, as argued in Chapter

[112] CRAWFORD, Neta. Imag(in)ing Africa. **Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics**, v. 1, n. 2, p. 30–44, 1996.

1, Somalia gained attention from the international community since its government collapsed in 1991, but piracy became the centre of attention only in 2005, especially after the attacks on the Gulf of Aden (Bensassi & Martínez-Zarzoso, 2012, p. 18). Since then, the many operations regarding piracy attacks analysed in Chapter 1 were putted into motion. Nonetheless, it is important to highlight the one that could be the most important of all.

In November 2008, the EU – throughout the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) – launched the Operation Atalanta[113] intending to secure the sea against blue crimes[114] while also guaranteeing "peace, stability and maritime security"[115] to a key maritime region (Bueger & Edmunds, 2023, pp. 68; 71; Germond & Smith, 2009, p. 573; EUNAVFOR, [*s.d.*]). But the operation was made possible by the framing of piracy as a threat. Thus, an external force was needed to 'save' Somalia from itself, and "to increase the EU's scope of action and spread European/EU values" (Germond & Smith, 2009, p. 583).[116]

However, this practice is not new inside international security. In fact, since the Roman Empire, military interventions, occupations, and conquests were made claiming to be "necessary for the eradication of piracy and the maintenance of free trade in the Mediterranean" (Policante, 2015, pp. 21–22), being a good historical example that shows how the system started to act in the same way as it does nowadays. Translating that to modern history, Atalanta is based on the EU's monopoly of the legitimate use of violence in Somalia's territorial waters (Germond & Smith, 2009, p. 573), which can be seen as a statement saying that European countries *will* use force if some conditions are fulfilled. When considering the claiming by the EU (2003, pp. 7; 11) that "it is in the European interest that

[113] Being the first maritime security operation by the EU, as in 2025, Operation Atalanta is completing 15 years, being EU longest-running maritime operation, and the most significant European naval operation (Bueger & Edmunds, 2023, p. 71).

[114] According to Bueger & Edmunds (2023, p. 68), blue crimes are perceived as one of many security issues by the EU. The organisation holistic understanding of maritime security pays attention to state and non-state threats, with blue crimes being known as a type of transnational organised crime. Examples of blue crime are "piracy, smuggling of various types, and environmental crimes such as illegal fishing" (Bueger & Edmunds, 2023, p. 68).

[115] EUROPEAN NAVAL FORCE. EUNAVFOR, [*s.d.*]. European Union Naval Force Operation Atalanta – EUNAVFOR ATALANTA: The EU operation to contribute to the maritime security in the North Western Indian Ocean. Available in: <https://eunavfor.eu/>. Accessed on: January 22nd, 2025.

[116] Atalanta was the first operation to deploy military forces under the EU flag to *directly* defend its members' interests. In addition, even being different from other operations – such as in the Balkans where the objective was to stabilise neighbouring countries – Atalanta also serves EU interests *indirectly* by stabilising non-EU countries (Germond & Smith, 2009, pp. 576; 587).

countries on our borders are well governed" and "with […] new threats the first line of defence will often be abroad", a clear power relation can be observed between Europe and its neighbours. In other words, these kinds of statements prove that even if maritime frontiers are not legally situated within the EU, they function inside the EU strategic zone of interest. Hence, its stability is vital to member states, justifying, once again, why this space has to be protected against threats such as piracy (Germond & Smith, 2009, p. 579).

The rise of blue crimes and other maritime security issues was the tipping point for European states to try to prove themselves (to their own citizens and outside actors) as capable political actors (Germond & Smith, 2009, pp. 574–575), even if it means *invading* other countries. However, this invasion was actually authorised by the UN despite UNCLOS Article 100 claims that piracy should only be repressed in high seas or any other place *outside* jurisdiction of any state. This legitimation came by a unanimously decision by the UNSC in December 2008, which agreed to use force to take control of the situation in order to reestablish the well functioning of shipping routes. This decision was well analysed by Mingst, Karns & Lyon (2022, p. 117) when the authors state that Chapter VII of the UN charter was revisited by the UNSC to frame piracy as a threat and address the Somali case with more intensity.

> In 2008 [..], more than 100 pirate attacks were launched on ships in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia, significantly disrupting major shipping routes. For the first time, in December 2008, the Security Council unanimously authorized the use under Chapter VII of "all necessary means" against piracy and armed robbery at sea by states and regional and international organizations (Resolutions 1846 and 1851). (Mingst, Karns & Lyon, 2022, p. 117).[117]

Moreover, Germond & Smith (2009, pp. 573; 581) work makes an excellent explanation of how European interests were interwoven in the formulation, actions, and narrative that justified Atalanta, arguing that besides Atalanta mission to protect the EU's own interests (i.e., maritime trade), the protection of the Somali population is also put into motion, since the operation helped to deliver UN's humanitarian aid

[117] MINGST, Karen; KARNS, Margaret; LYON, Alynna. **The United Nations in the 21st century**. 6th ed. New York: Routledge, 2022.

to millions of Somalis who depended on the World Food Programme. Therefore, pirate actions could make the humanitarian disaster much worse.

Although Atalanta may have helped in this sense, it is not surprising that the media framed the Europeans as the ones alleviating the chaos in Somalia and its waters. This is why states must demonstrate that they are doing something to protect not only the 'poor people in Africa' but also their citizens (Germond & Smith, 2009, p. 580), especially those who enjoy sailing through these waters in yachts and cruise ships.

Since this was better discussed in Chapter 2, here, it turns relevant to give an example of how a kidnapping of European citizens by pirates was able to influence Atalanta and two very important actors: France and the UK. The hijacking of the French luxurious yacht *Le Ponant* in April 2008 received massive coverage by the media, making former French president Nicolas Sarkozy authorise a relentless chase to the pirates (Le Monde, 2008a)[118] – even being in Somali waters – after the ransom was paid, and the hostages were freed.[119] In September, President Sarkozy asked for "a sort of maritime police" to act as a preventive measure (Le Monde, 2008b. Translated by the author),[120] demonstrating the French policy to show no mercy to those who disturb their citizens. This came not long after the UN authorised France – along with other nations – to prosecute pirates in European courts on the condition that the Somali Transitional Government agrees with the decision to let these other countries assume responsibility for captured pirates.[121]

However, the UK's historical relevance in maritime security makes them act to maintain its credibility as a maritime power. Therefore, the longstanding British-French antagonism proved crucial in pushing England firmly into the fight against piracy (Germond & Smith, 2009, p. 585) – something that, as argued in Chapters 1 and 2, remains relevant to this day. This is why the UK could not allow

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[118] OTAGE DU "PONANT": PARIS A ENVOYÉ UNE ÉQUIPE DU GIGN EN SOMALIE. **Le Monde**. April 7th, 2008. Available in: <https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2008/04/07/otages-du-ponant-paris-a-envoye-une-equipe-du-gign-en-somalie_1031671_3224.html>. Accessed on January 31st, 2025.

[119] FRANCE TO CHARGE ALLEGED PIRATES. **Al Jazeera**. April 18th, 2008. Available in: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2008/4/18/france-to-charge-alleged-pirates>. Accessed on January 31st, 2025.

[120] LA FRANCE VA PROPOSER À L'ONU DE CRÉER UNE "POLICE DES MERS". **Le Monde**. September 17th, 2008. Available in: <https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2008/09/17/la-france-va-proposer-a-l-onu-de-creer-une-police-des-mers_1096173_3210.html>. Accessed on January 31st, 2025.

[121] Ibid.

France to take over a battle that influences the British shipping interests (Germond & Smith, 2009, p. 585). Ultimately, even with British former Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, claiming that the Royal Navy was coordinating the European response to piracy and contributing to the international mission in Somalia, "the entire effort was engineered by France" (BBC, 2008; Germond & Smith, 2009, p. 585).

Therefore, Atalanta as a whole could be considered an example of how European countries discussed among themselves how to intervene on an African maritime security issue, mostly motivated (and legitimised by the public) by the hijacking of the *Le Ponant*. Their willingness to spread their values while defending their interests and increasing their visibility and role in the system highlights how European geopolitical objectives and ambitions can go way beyond their borders (Germond & Smith, 2009, pp. 588–589).

Although the number of cases significantly dropped after it began, their actions probably ignored all Somali perspective apart from hunger and violence. This contributed to the establishment of Atalanta as a successful operation, once again putting the Europeans in the spotlight, even with their actions being clearly invasive. Nonetheless, one can say that Europeans really did not have other option given that Somalia strongest institution at the time was its Transitional Federal Government, which was desperate for help to regulate internal order. But as argued in Chapter 2, this could be a coincidence that contributed to the 'director plot', meaning that Atalanta serves exactly what the audience wanted to see: Europeans saving less fortunate people from dangerous pirates, while also giving Somalis food and security. Once again, history was written according to what Europeans wanted to tell.

However, the Somali case was not precisely repeated on the other side of the continent. This does not make Europeans change the strategy, since UK discourses analysed in Chapter 2 makes clear that they still see piracy as a continental problem rather than a regional one.

4.1.2
The Gulf of Guinea

The approach to the GoG's piracy cases is somewhat similar to that used in the Gulf of Aden; however, unlike Somalia, the West African coast has some states with strong governments that are formally functional. Even though it suffers from some structural challenges visible in most states in the world – such as corruption, poverty, and inequality – GoG countries are not willing to authorise military foreign activities in its waters in order to protect what is left of their natural resources, and most importantly, their sovereignty (Vice, 2021).

Even with the EU (2016, pp. 2; 9; 12; 2022, pp. 2; 5) identifying blue crimes as a challenge for maritime security and ocean governance that needs international cooperation, their actions on the GoG have only a supportive role to other regionals alliances between countries that are affected by it, being possible to categorise them as significant investments in capacity building (Bueger & Edmunds, 2023, p. 72). Table 1 provides an overview of these actions, followed by what exactly they are supporting.

Acronym	Full Name	Duration	Focus	Total Budget (in euros)
CRIMGO	Critical Maritime Routes Gulf of Guinea	2013–2016	Institutional setup, regional cooperation, counter-piracy, law enforcement	4.500.000,00
GoGIN	Gulf of Guinea Inter-regional Network	2016–2021	Regional information sharing	9.285.000,00
SWAINS	Support to West Africa Integrated Maritime Security	January 2019–January 2023	Maritime law enforcement, legal reform, information sharing	6.000.000,00
WeCAPS	West and Central Africa Port Security	2019–2022	Port security	8.500.000,00
PASSMAR	Support Programme to the Maritime Security Strategy in Central Africa	July 2019–July 2023	Maritime law enforcement, legal reform	4.700.000,00

Table 1 — EU's maritime security projects in the Gulf of Guinea. Source: Bueger & Edmunds (2023, pp. 69–70).[122]

When the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia authorised interventions on its waters by the UNSC and the EU to deal with piracy, its sovereignty was not contested by other countries. However, Somalia was one country with a large coastline, different from the other side of the continent. West African states prefer less invasive modes of international engagement (Reva, Okafor-Yarwood & Walker, 2021). This is why, in 2013, multiple West and Central African states[123] signed the Yaoundé Architecture, a "regional strategy to prevent

[122] BUEGER, Christian; EDMUNDS, Timothy, The European Union's Quest to Become a Global Maritime Security Provider. **Naval War College Review**, v. 76, n. 2, p. 1–20, 2023.

[123] The "code of conduct concerning the repression of piracy, armed robbery against ships, and illicit maritime activity in west and central Africa" has signatures from the governments of Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, The Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, São Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. The full document can be found at CENTRE INTERREGIONAL DE COORDINATION. **Code de Conduite Relatif a la Prevention et a la Répression des Actes de Piraterie, des Vols à Main Armée à L'encontre des Navires et des Activités Maritimes Illicites en Afrique de L'ouest et du Centre**. p. 1–17, Yaoundé, Cameroon, July 25th, 2013. Available in: <http://icc-gog.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CodeofConduct-FR.pdf>. Accessed on January 22nd, 2025.

and prosecute illicit activities[124] in the waters of Gulf of Guinea". It creates three different mechanisms to deal with blue crimes: the Heads of States Declaration, the Memorandum of Understanding between regional organisations, and the Yaoundé Code of Conduct (YCC) (Centre Interregional de Coordination, [*s.d.*]).[125]

Since this section is focused on the Yaoundé Architecture, the work of Hüseyin Yücel (2021) will be mobilised to show exactly what the Architecture is. According to the author, it resembles a network due to its organisational setup, given that "the participants are independent actors with a common problem". This not only offers a mechanism to handle blue crimes in the GoG, but also recognise and respect the sovereignty of all its members (Yücel, 2021, p. 147). Moreover, the contribution of Yücel thinking comes to light when considering that the Yaoundé Architecture is necessary because blue crimes are "inherently cross-jurisdictional" (Bueger & Edmunds, 2017, p. 1301) and are done in a "communal, rather than divided" space (Jacobsen & Larsen, 2019, p. 1038).[126]

Even if the Architecture tries to enact a regional multilateral alliance against blue crimes, criticism about it has come from other actors claiming that it is too focused on piracy (Yücel, 2021, p. 148). This criticism can be from countries that want to have some sort of influence on the region, arguing that these states need more help to tackle more crimes. The thing is that, once again, the African perspective and attempts to be a major player in international security is being neglected. Arguments against the limitations of legal frameworks for prosecuting blue crimes were putted into motion (Yücel, 2021, p. 150), justifying some of the EU operations latter on – as presented in Table 1. In addition, the inclusion of some actors – such as the oil and shipping industries – were also suggested, given that they face the same problems. However, if such industries were included, this could become a deal to exclusively exploitation of natural resources of certain areas by these companies, jeopardising African countries financial gain with such resources.

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[124] In its 1st article, the Yaoundé Code of Conduct defines these activities as "(a) money laundering, (b) illegal arms and drug trafficking, (c) piracy and armed robbery at sea, (d) illegal oil bunkering, (e) crude oil theft, (f) human trafficking, (g) human smuggling, (h) maritime pollution, (i) IUU fishing, (j) illegal dumping of toxic waste, (k) maritime terrorism and hostage taking, and (l) vandalism on offshore oil infrastructure" (Yücel, 2021, p. 148).

[125] CENTRE INTERREGIONAL DE COORDINATION. Yaounde Architecture. [*S.l.*], [*s.d.*]. Available in: <https://icc-gog.org/?page_id=1575>. Accessed on January 22nd, 2025.

[126] Since this communal space is the sea, the thinking of Policante (2015) can also be applied here.

Besides that, Yücel (2021, p. 153) also argues that there is a lack of trust between these companies and the African countries involved in the Yaoundé Architecture. According to him, commercial actors are hesitant to share information due to 4 different reasons: (1) the fear of retaliation from blue criminals (i.e., pirates), (2) the fear of leaked information about ships location on sea to perpetrators of maritime crimes, (3) the lack of their trust in anti-blue crime responses and capacities, and (4) the rise of time-consumption and costs embracing the bureaucracy of involving authorities. Such things not only reflect a lack of trust in authorities, capacities, and states in the Gulf of Guinea (Yücel, 2021, p. 153), but also a prepotency in the belief that they are better off without the help of African states, preferring to create ties with the Global North. In other words, African states – as a community – are being marginalised, underestimated, and framed as clumsy or not worthy of any sort of trust.

Another thing that has to be pointed is that Yaoundé Architecture strictly follows UNCLOS definitions in combating piracy. Article 19 of the YCC acts to prohibit the chase of pirates, which can be seen as an attempt to protect themselves against UNSC decisions that legitimate pursuits in their territorial waters (and done in Somalia). This is justified by the desire of its members to not allow any violation of their sovereignty and protect them against criticism by Western powers, Article 9 of the YCC tries to balance that by authorising it only with a liaison officer of the state accompanying the vessel. However, Article 2 prohibits the extradition and the exercise of multinational jurisdiction when the pirates are captured (Centre Interregional de Coordination, 2013. pp. 6; 9; 14), opening a gap to a criticism by the Global North of what is happening to pirates after they are being captured. In addition to that, “only a few countries in the Gulf of Guinea have ratified standout legislation criminalising piracy” (Bisson, 2019; UNODC, 2019 apud Yücel, 2021, p. 150). This was once proven in Chapter 2 UK discourses, and here by 3 out of 5 operations by the EU listed in Table 1.

The Yaoundé Architecture is an excellent example of how African states are able to unite themselves in order to solve a common problem while respecting each other. Some may argue that it did not work and they still need outside assistance. But would it be possible to blame African states for their reluctance to accept such help? Given the centuries of exploitation they suffered – along with what they saw happening in Somalia – it is not a surprise that they chose to defend their

sovereignty and tried to handle the problem by themselves. But the most important thing in analysing this attempt is that all actors and stakeholders that tried to 'help' them have some interest behind it. They too have a lot to lose with blue crimes, but would it be different if such crimes were committed on their coasts instead of African? Would they underestimate their neighbours' capacities and criticise their legislations? Given history, would they try to protect themselves from foreign exploitation over fear?

This is what the Global North are seeming to miss in their quest against piracy. As argued in Chapters 1 and 2, conditions are not the same in Somalia and Nigeria, the drivers of piracy are different in both coasts. Political and socioeconomic conditions are entirely different in both countries. So why the combat should be the same? Even with the decline in number of cases, the question that should be asked is why piracy still exist after centuries? The hypothesis to answer all these questions is that the system is trying to fight piracy in the same way for hundreds of years, but it has never listened to the other parts. According to Ifesinachi Okafor-Yarwood – an expert in Maritime Governance and Security from the University of St Andrews – replicating what worked in Somalia is bound to fail without the understanding that the context is entirely different (Vice, 2021). This is why Cox (2021) perspective is important here; problem-solving theories do not contemplate all parts of the whole.

4.2.
The 'Salvation' by the Western

The construction of an African continent that depends on Europe to succeed is not new in IR studies. The Western narrative about politics is definitely what the mainstream sustains as the common practice of the states. This is why, according to Barkawi & Laffey (2006, p. 331), some international institutions, such as the UN, are a "product of interstate diplomacy dominated by Western great powers". This narrative points to a colonial practice when dealing with countries that are not included in these "Western great powers" (i.e., the UK, France, Germany, and the US).

One example of this narrative practice is given by Kate Manzo (2014, p. 316), who argues that slavery has never disappeared from the working regimes, only

changing its form. Hence, violence, control and economic exploitation still the defining characteristics of contemporary slavery (Bales & Robbins, 2001 apud Manzo, 2014, p. 316). The relevance of this is explained by Manzo (2014, p. 317) when she claims that millions of modern slaves exist today, but it was only when 15,000 trafficked children from Mali were discovered as slaves in Cote d'Ivoire cocoa farms that the issue become an international concern. In other words, only when the fundamental human right to freedom from enslavement were violated, an African regional problem became an international one (Manzo, 2014, pp. 317; 318), justifying the discourses claiming's that those children must be freed 'by the only possible way to do it': Western intervention.

It is obvious that something has to be done about this situation, but why Cote d'Ivoire is not trusted to do it by itself? Even if international help is needed, why can't African states cooperate to handle the case without the participation of a Global North country? The hypothesis here still that Western powers did not trust and underestimate the capacity of African states. They tend to try solving all the problems in the world because they still see themselves as 'superiors' and owners of the legitimate way to be human. Therefore, the binaries still present to this day, and the slavery case brought by Manzo (2014) is another example of how African perceptions are being neglected.

Turning the attention back to piracy cases, Policante (2015, p. xii–xiii) have an excellent contribution about how the Western is destined to free the world from pirates and those who support them:

> Over and over again in history, hegemonic forces have tried to legitimize their claims to some form of global Imperial authority by appealing to the existence of pirates. If there are international criminals threatening international society, disrupting the legal order that sustain the global economy, endangering the security of all humankind, then we will need a 'global police force' and some 'international criminal justice', 'judges trained in international legal thought', a whole Imperial bureaucracy and, maybe, a global emperor on top. As we will see, since the days of the Roman Empire, the claim to serve humanity, extirpating those who threaten its welfare, has played a fundamental role in Imperial rhetoric (Policante, 2015, p. xii–xiii).[127]

[127] POLICANTE, Amedeo. **Pirate Myth: Genealogies of an Imperial Concept**. [*S. l.*]: Taylor & Francis Group, 2015. ISBN 9781317632528.

The need for this "global police force" could be justified by the claim about the importance of global maritime routes, as well as the safety of maritime travellers. In any case, this police force is provided by International Organisations – such as the UN and the EU – with Western countries generally having a leadership role. As for the "international criminal justice" and "judges trained in international criminal justice," both could be proved influenced by Western assumptions in some UK discourses analysed in Chapter 2. This means that Western countries dominate the legal structure when dealing with piracy, although such legislation belongs to the UN through the UNCLOS.

As argued earlier, this is due to the lack Western confidence of what Africans can do. In their thinking, there could be Africans judges or courts, but they *must* be in European standards to even being considered reasonable enough to conduct some cases. This is the "imperial bureaucracy" argued by Policante (2015, p. xii–xiii). Western claims to 'save humanity' while dehumanising pirates is part of the plot to 'save' those in need. Therefore, process of marginalisation of the pirates could be one of the most dangerous forms of oppression, since it is not evident that they are still human beings who were "expelled from useful participation in social life and thus […] subjected to severe material deprivation and […] extermination" (Young, 2012, p. 53).

However, not only the marginalisation of the pirates is perpetuated in this narrative. According to Policante (2015, p. xv), most of the time, historical reflections of pirates have, framed them as a body that "opposes the state, the merchant class and sometimes an entire human civilization", forcing society to choose sides between the pirate and the state. Not surprisingly, the former is categorised as the criminal, irregular, violent marauder of the sea, while the latter is the image of a strong state and its annihilating power combined with the discipline of the navy (Policante, 2015, p. xv). Thus, the moral discourse is set to abominate the pirates no matter what they do – and most importantly, why – otherwise the subject will be considered a supporter of the *hostis humani generis*.

Therefore, as piracy being one of the problems that *needs* to be addressed by Western powers to 'save and protect' the global society, a clear politicisation and colonisation of international maritime security is settled, needing a critical approach towards the dominant discourses of the system, and an epistemological movement that puts subaltern perspectives – at least – as equal as the Western ones. This is

how it would be possible to fully understand the environment that revolves African piracy.

4.3.
Against the Eurocentrism

In order to address the issue from a different perspective, postcolonial authors, such as Edward Said, can be useful to understand how the Western countries shape the international system around themselves. His work on the "Orientalism" – the study of the Orient[128] – could be considered as a political vision of reality, where the binary structures of Milliken (1999) presented in Chapter 2 are once again proved by the "opposition between the familiar (Europe) and the strange (Orient)" (Ambesange, 2016, p. 48). Putting Europe in a privileged position compared to the Orient makes other important postcolonial authors, such as Gayatri Spivak, join Said's perspective.[129]

Being one of the most important authors in postcolonial theory, Said influenced many other authors to think throughout his lenses. The work of Alina Sajed (2022, p. 75) states that postcolonial perspectives are able to provide the opportunity to understand the roots of the colonial past as well as its continuity in modern IR. This is relevant given the fact that, according to Sabaratnam (2011, p. 787) "the various objectifying representations of the South as backward, developing, failed or 'new' states continually reproduce the hierarchical self-imagery that underpinned European colonialism", showing the importance of raising the consciousness about how the system objectifies those who become its subjects (Sabaratnam, 2011, p. 787), and to critique the Eurocentric perspective in IR.

The needing of understanding this opposing dynamic between the European and South visions can be explained according to what the society acknowledges as modern injustices. Given that they are generally revolved around inequalities of

[128] According to Sajed (2022, p. 76), Orientalism can be defined by Said as a system of authority by the West over the Orient in order to control it. In other words, Orientalism is "a system of representation of the East/Orient by the West according to a set of stereotypes that frame the former as inherently irrational, backward, steeped in tradition, despotic and feminine". On the other hand, the West is framed "as rational, civilized, modern, democratic and masculine".

[129] Although Spivak focuses on the feminist approach, her thoughts converge with Said's by their criticism of the way in which Western discourses have been putting the Third World as a subaltern (Ambesange, 2016, p. 48).

wealth and income, public discussions often tend to think about what the state can (or should) do to "mitigate the suffering of the poor" (Young, 2012, p. 19). As argued above, this is precisely the type of thinking that legitimates imperial/colonial actions by Global North states in countries such as Somalia. The narrative is that they are helping the people who do not have minimal resources to live. In this perspective, authors such as Marta Fernandéz (2019, pp. 462; 466) argue that this opposing dichotomy between the order provided by the states, and the disorder of any other alternative political, economic and cultural organisations tends to be reduced to a non-state category. Therefore, this structure is able to conduct the logical thinking to assume that every political community that deviates from the state is somewhat dysfunctional, failed, or fragile, needing an intervention by those who represent the highest form of order.

Since a critical approach to European perspectives is needed, Said's Orientalism becomes crucial to understand and study different ideas, cultures, and histories. However, the idea to criticise the epistemological Eurocentric thinking needs to start with a proposal by the South (or Orient) to change the ways in which IR is being taught – contemplating, now, these different ideas, cultures, and histories (Almeida, 2012, pp. 14; 15; 17). Therefore, postcolonial theories try to make visible "the white supremacist perspectives" in IR, how colonialism established the modern state system and continues to be influential, and how this became rooted in the disciple of IR and world politics (Sajed, 2022, pp. 61; 62; 70).

Once again, the work of Sabaratnam (2011) makes a significant contribution to this debate. Her *decolonising strategies* in IR act to criticise the particular European way of writing History itself, always putting them as the moderns and telling their trajectories towards modernity, while "excluding the significance of the pluralities of pasts, presents, and futures that were and are happening elsewhere" (Sabaratnam, 2011, p. 788). The thing is that this perspective never emphasises the fact that Europeans reach modernity by denying it to other cultures. Hence, these pluralities, ideas, cultures, histories, and representations argued by Sabaratnam (2011), Almeida (2012), Fasakin (2018), Odoom & Andrews (2016), and Sajed (2022) are never put into the spotlight. History has always preserved the centrality of Europeans as the subjects who *tell* the history, even if these histories happen elsewhere (Sabaratnam, 2011, pp. 788–789).

In one section of Sabaratnam's (2011, p. 795) work, she asks about the nature and structure of international power and authority, arguing that "the West remains predominant in various spheres" because of its powers. But how is this power exerted? One empirical example is presented by Doty (1996) when she details how the British were able to manipulate public opinion throughout history/storytelling to legitimate its dominance in colonial Kenya. In her work, Doty shows how the British dismantled the Mau-Mau rebellion against European empires through the construction and reconstruction of identities and hierarchical relationships in a textbook counterinsurgency case that exposed a "mosaic of North-South relations" (Doty, 1996, p. 100).

The first step by the British was the declaration of a state of emergency (similar to what happened in Somalia and the multiple piracy 'hotspots'), followed by multiple arrests after a series of political activities to challenge the laws and institutions of the colonial government.[130] Those arrests lead to a proper armed resistance, initiating the counterinsurgency program to "destroy Mau-Mau and win over the people" (Doty, 1996, p. 104). Doty (1996, p. 105) analyse this encounter as a reproduction of a social order that, without a proper strategy (one that was not *though* to be a strategy), illustrates a Western notion of state and the establishment of the global capitalist system.

In order to secure the British vision and justify policies to restore 'normality', the rebellion was re-signified by them as a synonym of evil, darkness, aberration of normality, political immaturity, irrationality, and criminality. More than that, perhaps the strongest one was to "constitute the Mau-Mau rebellion as a form of collective mental breakdown or social disease", needing the mobilisation of military power to separate the "infected from those merely susceptible to infection", that is, the ones who agree with Western values (Doty, 1996, pp. 106; 113; 114). Not coincidently, the same could be said about how they are dealing with piracy.

The ending of this story was with the British 'benevolence' to rehabilitate the Mau-Mau rebels, *forcing* them to confess (meaning that the use of force by the British army was authorised to grant a confession) and then through a "cleaning

[130] Those political activities involve, but were not limited to, roadblocks at night, telephone wires cut, and machines and other equipment of European farmers being sabotaged by resistance members (Doty, 1996, p. 104). The demands of the rebels were "liberty, democracy and immediate independence", challenging the heart of Western liberal values (Doty, 1996, p. 105).

process" (Doty, 1996, p. 117). Those who do not confess were treated with more "severity until they saw the error of their ways" (Edgeron, 1989 apud Doty, 1996, p. 118). However, Doty uses Foucault to clarify that the confessions were not taken as the actual truth. The truth would consist in the Mau-Mau rebel that "listens and say nothing" (Foucault, 1980 apud Doty, 1996, p. 118), being the perfect example of how Western power has always been capable of marginalising and silencing South perspectives.

The history of the Mau-Mau rebellion, if thought by the British, can prove the argument that "the *self* constructs the *non-self*, depriving it of its full humanity or the attributes that define it as a *self*, such as self-control, culture, development, and progress". In other words, the neglected humanity of the Other, as well as its capacity to produce Western approved culture, turns the European in the legitimate superior (Carneiro, 2005 apud Fernandéz 2019, p. 466–467. Translation by the author). Thus, the inequalities caused by colonial/imperial historical relations require some sort of social justice, which, according to Young (2012, p. 15), "means the elimination of institutionalized domination and oppression." Once again, the need to contemplate all parts of the whole are evident since this domination and oppression are not being brought to discussion in traditional IR studies or modern global politics. This perspective ends up reaffirming a dependency dynamic that sustains the system's status quo, in which the Global North continues to exert influence over the Global South.

In light of that, the necessity to raise awareness in IR literature is within the scope of Said's Orientalism (Sawant, 2011, p. 2). Sajed (2022, p. 62) affirms that the postcolonial theory can also be considered "the products of struggles for liberation and emancipation of societies in Africa", which can be proved by the Mau-Mau rebellion presented by Doty (1996). Thus, this emancipation can be achieved "through the effective use of Eastern literature" (Sawant, 2011, p. 2) proposed by critical IR schools. This is another reason why Sabaratnam (2011, pp. 794; 801) insists on her *decolonising strategies*. According to her, they are capable of exposing the roots of the European way of thinking within the discipline since this can have severe analytic and political consequences in research due to the lack of engagement with alternative subject positions.

These are the perspectives that can help in the understanding of certain human groups taken as non-human, such as the pirates. Fernandéz (2019, p. 468) thinking

about epistemicides can be used here to argue that the lack of their presence in modern history contributed to the perpetuation of the common thinking that they still the one-legged man with a parrot on his shoulder, even in 2025, as argued in Chapter 1. Non-human modern pirates are cast outside History by the process of dehumanisation, which continues to this day following European racists logics. Thus, not only the epistemicides argued by Fernandéz (2019, p. 468) still happening in knowledge production, but this practice reflects on empirical issues such as piracy, since the loss of the pirate's rights over his own body and his home ends up legitimating its genocide by the same Europeans that once colonised piracy affected regions.

If, on one hand History justified the European right to colonise (and frame) primitive societies and legitimise the European 'civilising missions'– as seen in the Mau-Mau case – on the other hand, the (re)production of the colonial difference naturalised the inferiority of the colonised people in comparison to the Europeans (Fernandéz, 2019, p. 468). The objective of using Fernandéz's (2019) logic here is to demonstrate how coloniality still impacts both knowledge production in IR as well as modern security logic in international relations. In both cases, the difference of the Other is understood as a deviation from the Western way of thinking. Therefore, this difference must be eliminated in order to protect the Western peace project (Fernandéz, 2014 apud Fernandéz, 2019, p. 473).

This argument can be proved by Sabaratnam (2011, p. 796), claiming that the dialogic perspective that she proposes works to critique this very multilateral intervention "in the name of peacebuilding". According to her, these actions "powerfully cements and advances Western control and transformation of these societies" using economic and political liberalisation, as well as the control of foreign aid flows and promotion of liberal values (Richmond, 2005 apud Sabaratnam, 2011, p. 796). This is why her *decolonising strategies* have been productive in thinking about a critical narrative on international peacebuilding operations. They can expose how important and contemporary critical theories in IR can be. (Sabaratnam, 2011, p. 796).

4.4.
Piracy and neo-colonialism in the Gulf of Guinea

Although the marginalisation of the African perspective is being tackled by some authors used in this Chapter, it turns necessary to cast light specifically on the perspective of the main subject of this research: The modern relationship between European countries and piracy activity in the GoG. In this sense, when it comes to the 21st century, the European influence over African countries is visible not only in poor countries such as Somalia but also in (what should be) rich countries such as Nigeria. This is why Oğurlu (2018, p. 17) claims that Europe increased its wealth by exploiting African poverty, with this being possible given the "neo-colonial domination and imperial intervention in the region." But how could piracy be related to one of the most fruitful maritime regions when it comes to economic affairs?

As argued throughout this research, being an important source of crude oil and gas and an essential route to global maritime trade, the GoG presents itself as a high-value region in the African continent. Therefore, when considering the colonial legacy established in most African countries, it is not surprising that the GoG has a strong foreign presence. Given the specificities of piracy activity in the region argued in Chapter 1, Imoh-Itah, Amadi & Akpa (2016, p. 16) argue that "corruption and economic plunder are sets of colonial legacies," going further in their analysis when claiming that policies of reparation of such colonial plunder do not exist, having a direct impact on the "poverty of the colonized periphery societies" who has been exploited throughout the years.

However, as argued above, such policies would only come to light when the European countries have something to gain from a close relationship with their former countries. Therefore, Oğurlu (2018, p. 2) work analyses how this dynamic ended up in a development cooperation strategy by the Europeans. According to her, such cooperation between the EU and Africa would clearly expose the neo-colonial ambitions in regions such as the GoG, resulting in an uneven power relationship between its parts due to the perpetual inequality caused by the capitalist world economy.

In the same sense, Young (2012, p. 49) is precise in her analysis of capitalist societies:

> The injustice of capitalist society consists in the fact that some people exercise their capacities under the control, according to the purposes, and for the benefit of other people. Through private ownership of the means of production, and through markets that allocate labor and the ability to buy goods, capitalism systematically transfers the powers of some persons to others, thereby augmenting the power of the latter. In this process of the transfer of powers, according to Macpherson, the capitalist class acquires and maintains an ability to extract benefits from workers (Young, 2012, p. 49).[131]

The private ownerships argued by the author could be translated into the presence of multinational oil and gas companies like Agip, Total, and, most notably, Shell BP. As argued in Chapter 1, Shell dominates the oil sector in Nigeria and does not compensate the locals enough for the use of their lands. The lack of employment of Nigerians in their factories, along with the Eurocentric way of thinking used to underestimate Africans, as detailed in the last section, could explain how they control the means of production. Hence, the power that usually comes with oil reserves is transferred from Nigerians to the British, proving the final part of Young's (2012, p. 49) statement. Moreover, Roland Kiente – a community resident in a village in the GoG – argues in an interview that:

> If an oil well is found on your land in America, you become a millionaire or billionaire, isn't it? But [here] the reverse is the case. You become a very poor man. You don't have anywhere to farm (Vice, 2014).[132]

This dynamic can also be found in Walter Rodney's (1975, p. 26–27) work *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.[133] According to him, the concept of underdevelopment comes from an exploitative relation between a country over the other, meaning that "every country in the world taken as underdeveloped are exploited by others", with this exploitation being a product of the capitalist, imperialist and colonialist societies (Rodney, 1975, p. 26–27. Translation by the

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[131] YOUNG, Iris Marion. *Five Faces of Oppression*. *In*: YOUNG, Iris Marion. **Justice and The Politics of Difference**. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. p. 39–65. DOI: 10.1515/9781400839902-004.

[132] VICE NEWS. **Chiraq & Nigeria's Oil Pirates | VICE on HBO**. YouTube, February 18th, 2014. Available in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01Xa2oKKVR0>. Accessed on October 20th, 2024.

[133] Since the version used in this research was a Brazilian one, the reference at the end is on its Portuguese name "Como a Europa Subdesenvolveu a África".

author).[134] Rodney (1975, p. 27. Translation by the author) continues with this thought when stating that many countries in Africa and other continents are more and more submerged into underdevelopment due to the exploitation of the colonisers. Hence, according to him, the colonialist dynamics have never stopped; only "has been progressively intensified and adopted new forms."

Bringing the attention back to piracy, Dawdy & Bonni (2012, p. 676) claim that piracy and social banditry are intimately linked. In their work, it is argued that "if social banditry is caused by the capitalist expansion into the countryside" (Blok, 2001 apud Dawdy & Bonni, 2012, p. 676) – here translated by the sea – piracy cases "can be understood as a response to monopolist incursions and restrictions". Therefore, piracy would not be *just* a criminal activity; it would be born as something close to an anthropological counterculture sustained by the pirate's self-conscious of protest against the dominant social structure that he is into (Roszak, 1969 apud Dawdy & Bonni, 2012, p. 677). This could be why the pirate's motives are not difficult to support (Dawdy & Bonni, 2012, p. 677), which could also be related to one of the questions proposed at the end of Chapter 2: why pirates do piracy?

Thinking about these facts, Young (2012, p. 48) argues that domination in pre-capitalist societies was accomplished through political means, that is, the right of appropriation of the labour of the Other ended up defining class privileges. Given the argument presented by Policante's (2015) book that piracy predates the capitalist models of the 18th century[135] (Jahan & Mahmud, [*s.d.*]. p. 2),[136] it could be said that pirates have been in the bottom of the social pyramid for centuries, while those who dominate African societies later on were able to draw mechanisms of "natural superiority and inferiority" to maintain this power relationship and legitimate the domination they impose (Young, 2012, p. 48). Thus, Oğurlu (2018) ideas are precise. Development has always been a political action, with implicit conditions (Crawford, 2001 apud Oğurlu, 2018, p. 15).

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[134] This is so relevant that it can be applied beyond the situation on the GoG, since it is exactly what happens in most of the countries that were colonised by Europeans in some part of its history.

[135] According to Rediker (2004), piracy caused disruptions in the capitalist model since the 1710s and 1720s, affecting multiple trading expeditions with the attacks and destruction of cargos and vessels. Such actions posed a direct threat and an "all-out war on capitalism itself" (Rediker, 2004 apud Dawdy & Bonni, 2012, p. 681).

[136] The authors of this work just give a brief history of capitalism in the world economy.

Therefore, the appropriation of GoG natural resources by European countries is translated into a modern colonial drain[137] (Rodney, 1975, p. 38). As Rodney (1975, p. 38. Translation by the author) correctly argues, "as long as the land, the mines, the factories, banks, insurance companies, methods of transportation, power stations, etc. belong to the foreign, African assets will be funnelled directly abroad". Without the political control argued by Young (2012, p. 48), foreign investments in things – such as oil – will continue to promote the exploitation of cheap African labour and its resources that would benefit only those in the top of the system (Rodney, 1975, p. 38). Thus, in order to exploit societies free themselves from the bonds of colonial domination, the control over their own development will be granted when they put themselves on a more advanced economic plan than the one which the dominant power is (Rodney, 1975, p. 23). This means that countries in the GoG – especially Nigeria, since it is the strongest one – will start writing their own development history only when their economy surpasses the Europeans. Considering this fact, it can be said that the root of pirate ideals is found in his "desire to reverse the overwhelming forces of globalization and the tyranny of neo-imperial monopolies", as well as confront the extractive industries (Dawdy & Bonni, 2012, p. 695) that operate in their reach – as demonstrated in Chapter 1 with the MEND, the NDA, and the NDLF.

In essence, taken together the arguments presented in this Chapter, it becomes clear the importance of rethinking the African role in modern IR. Not only by the fact that the current configuration of the international economy is exploiting a historical inequality between Africa and Europe but also because their perspective is being constantly marginalised and neglected in international security operations, as well as in the academic field. Thus, it urges the necessity to recognise – and accept – the agency of African countries in more situations (such as their own initiative to combat piracy in the GoG). A critical view of how neo-colonialism is perpetuated in modern international relations can help to cast light on the obscure and ambiguous complexities created by colonialists' narratives and discourses, affecting, therefore, both knowledge production in the Global South, along with

[137] Gurminder Bhambra (2021, p. 313) defines the term "colonial drain" as "the tax and other revenues raised within a colony, but which were not spent there being appropriated, instead, by the metropolis for its own use". For more on this subject, see in: BHAMBRA, Gurminder K. Colonial global economy: towards a theoretical reorientation of political economy. **Review of International Political Economy**, v. 28, n. 2, p. 307–322, 2021.

international security issues. As well argued by Sajed & Seidel (2023, p. 4), translocality allows the anti-colonial intellectual or theoretical communities to be explored without the authorisation of the metropole. Hence, these alternative forms of thinking, periodisation and spatiality can take different reference points to challenge the dominant/established orders.

Using the post-colonial approach can deepen people's understanding of how piracy is framed throughout discourses related to international security. Movies such as Disney's 'The Pirates of the Caribbean' series and Tom Hanks' epic rescue from Somali pirates in 'Captain Phillips' are two contemporary examples of how pirates, even in different moments of time and space, are still being framed as one of the most dangerous criminals that can exist to society (both national and international). One of the main objectives of this research was to show that piracy is not *just* a threat. Piracy is an alternative form of rebellion against hegemonic forces of an asymmetric international system. The claims of authors who value the structural anarchy of the system, such as Kenneth Waltz, could not be more wrong if considering situations such as African maritime security issues. This type of situation demonstrates the clear hierarchisation of this anarchic system pointed out by such classical theorists, necessitating a decolonisation of the field of IR to democratise and pluralise different perspectives since classical theories have always tried to legitimise the colonising action of the West.

Hence, using a critical perspective, piracy turns itself not into a problem that has to be solved according to problem-solving theories but as a natural reflex of global inequalities perpetuated by centuries of exploitation, finally being faced with a resistance movement.

To end this Chapter, the last phrase of Dawdy & Bonni's (2012, p. 696) work summarises perfectly what pirates really are:

> Pirates, then, should not be dismissed as goofy rogue individuals. In their most oracular moments, and in our fantasy life, they serve as community organizers rebelling on the fringes in the hopes of fomenting a revolution in the center.[138]

[138] DAWDY, Shannon Lee; BONNI, Joe. Towards a General Theory of Piracy. **Anthropological Quarterly**, v. 85, n. 3, p. 673–699, 2012.

5
Conclusion

In the attempt to cast a new light on maritime piracy studies, this research has contributed to the thinking about how piracy and the pirates are being framed in modern IR. When definitions of piracy can be utilised in a problem-solving logic, it becomes easy to create a problematisation of the subject to promote any actions against it in order to maintain the status quo of the system.

The contextualisation about the issue given in Chapter 1 had the objective to present contemporary piracy to the reader. As argued throughout this research, the common understanding and imaginary of the pirate figure by the general public is revolved around the idea that piracy – as a practice – is something that only belongs to the past, mostly on histories that happened between the 15th and 17th centuries. Meanwhile, the figure of the pirate itself still much influenced by childhood stories and historical representations, being a man with an ugly beard, usually with an eye patch, a sword in one hand and a pistol in the other, possibly with a wooden leg and a parrot on his shoulder – all of them always looking for some lost treasure buried on some uncharted island from the period of the Great Navigations.

This is why Chapter 1 have attempted to break this common understanding. Presenting piracy as a very contemporary problem – along with numbers, maps and explanations – sets up the stage for a deeper analysis in Chapters 2, and 3. Notwithstanding, presenting the choke points of maritime trade in comparison to where the attacks were happening was a form to start the contemplation of the whole in an empirical way. A fast, but important contextualisation of piracy attacks in the Strait of Malacca was to show that piracy still a global phenomenon, but given the fact that this research focused its attention on the African continent, an initial analysis of piracy attacks in the Gulf of Aden (Strait of Bab el-Mandeb) and in the GoG was made, followed by a deeper perspective of the situation in the following Chapters.

In order to begin in one of the main criticisms pointed throughout this research, the last section of the Chapter 1 was focused on the international response about piracy. The intention in this section was to demonstrate how the *problem* was being treated by the system, analysing some actor's decisions on the topic. The emphasis on information sharing operations and other multilateral actions is putted

into perspective but is also presented with some degree of colonial thinking due to the fact that the solutions proposed by the actors (and most of the authors used here) were based on Somalia's case. That means that GoG piracy specificities are ignored by the system, contributing to the maintenance of the practice in the region despite the reduction in the number of cases.

Nonetheless, one can think about how the number of cases continually dropped throughout the years. This is where the discourse analysis made in Chapter 2 becomes relevant in this research, since the objectives of the Chapter was to expose how one of the most powerful nations on the system contributed to the framing of the pirate as *hostis humani generis*, and how the practice of piracy was perpetuated as a horrendous crime. Therefore, making use of Milliken's (1999) *discourse productivity*, combined with Buzan, Waever & Wilde (1997) concepts of security, the creation of an 'enemy of the system' was possible through Derridean binaries, where the pirate was always subjugated when in comparison to any other actor or members of national societies.

In an endeavour to prove this with empirical evidence, the usage of UK's discourses about African piracy was crucial to demonstrate how the power of words can create the perfect narrative to dehumanise the pirate. This not only legitimated any actions to eliminate them but also contributed to the framing of the pirate as some sort of subspecies that, due to its inferiority, could never defy the structure of the system and should not disrupt any major maritime route. With this in mind, the use of Policante's (2015) historical examples were mobilised to expose how the problem-solving theories criticised by Cox (2021) were being mobilised since the Roman Empire. The very definition of the pirate as *hostis humani generis* was the perfect scapegoat for maritime powers, such as the UK, to deal with a problem that directly affected their economic balance.

However, it is obvious that simply killing persons that are claiming for better life conditions is not exactly a very good example of humanity itself. Hence, the ambiguity in UK's discourses started to be analysed in this research by questioning how the British narrative was carefully shaped according to what they wanted to show. Here, the usage of Andersen & Vuori's (2018) work on visual security studies was essential to demonstrate how the 'director' conducts the perception of a threat to its 'audience' in his show. As argued in Chapter 1, no matter which timeline, the pirate is always pictured as a violent, despicable and horrendous criminal. The UK's

discourses only reinforce that vision, along with global media coverage showing heavily armed pirates stealing ships or hijacking its tripulants to receive money from ransoms.

Nevertheless, the problematisation of the piracy issue has a bigger motive other than just an effort to reduce the number of cases. Thus, in analysing the UK's discourses, it is possible to notice that all of them mentioned, directly or not, the maritime chain of commerce, pointing to what can be considered the hegemonic discourse within this research. Nonetheless, when considering the arguments presented throughout the research, it is possible to notice that this hegemonic discourse can be used to cover a bigger objective of Western powers: the global hegemonic order. Therefore, even with maritime trade being putted into evidence, it is possible to uncover the attempt to sustain the dominant structure of the system.

In light of that, all the multiple referent objects highlighted in Chapter 2 have been threatened by piracy in some degree. Thus, the definition of a threat is something to pay attention. This is where the work from Buzan, Waever & Wilde (1997) becomes relevant, since the authors provide the definitions of what is a threat, and who are the ones who define a threat. Using the authors concepts, it was possible to build a bridge between critical security studies and Milliken' (1999) *discourse productivity*, exposing, in security terms, who were authorised to speak (Milliken, 1999, p. 229), in name of what (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1997, p. 45), and with the intention to sustain the comfortable given order of the system in utilising problem-solving theories (Cox, 2021, p. 15).

The last section of Chapter 2 starts the analysis on piracy as a resistance movement, showing how the structural dominance of Western countries was being defied by Third World habitants who can no longer stand the inequalities they suffer. This is why it is necessary to pay attention to all parts of the whole. In following Cox' (2021) ideas on why problem-solving theories do not work, his usage of a critical approach can be vital to contemplate all parts involved in a relation of structural domination. Hence, the use of the post-structuralist school in a discourse analysis could also be combined with the use of other critical currents that address this domination relationship, especially those that work with the Self/Other binary. As such, Chapter 3 utilises the post-colonial thinking to look specifically at how Europe was able to maintain control over piracy in Africa – both on its West and East coasts.

In order to understand the impacts caused by Western narratives on *piracy*, it is important to highlight how they are able to influence History itself. Therefore, Chapter 3 starts with a reflection on how Europeans tend to shape historiography according to their major events, most of the time ignoring what happens in Third World countries except when these countries have some impact on such events. Moreover, the academic research is also compromised due to a Eurocentric vision that was established in IR, necessitating a *decolonising strategy*, following Meera Sabaratnam (2011) terms, to embrace a critical perspective when analysing the international system and its multiplicity.

Following this contextualisation, the Chapter explores some counter-piracy operations of certain International Organisations, starting with an exposure of how EU actions regarding the EUNAVFOR operation Atalanta in Somalia had some degree of a Eurocentric logic of security. The objective was to demonstrate a clear violation of Somalia's sovereignty by some European countries in their quest to 'save the unfortunate people of Somalia', imposing themselves over foreign territory – legitimised by the UNSC resolutions on piracy – while ignoring anything else that was not in their own perspective. This not only proved an empirical situation where European countries discussed among themselves how to intervene on an African maritime security issue, but also their will to spread their values and defend their interests on the system.

However, on the opposite coast, African efforts to combat piracy in the GoG can be putted into evidence. The Yaoundé Architecture is an example of how African states can cooperate between themselves to achieve a common goal without the participation of Western countries. However, this initiative was criticised by other major actors that wanted more influence in the GoG, arguing that the Yaoundé Architecture was too focused on piracy and the GoG states need more help to combat other types of blue crimes (Yücel, 2021, p. 148). Hence, it can be said that African attempt to solve its own problems was denied by European countries that insisted on having influence in regions that are way beyond their borders. This can be proved given the 5 EU operations presented in Table 1, since the argument to justify most of them was the limitations of legal frameworks for prosecuting blue crimes in the Yaoundé Architecture (Yücel, 2021, p. 150).

This is the point where the postcolonial school have more preponderance in this research. In comparing the situation in both African coasts, it was possible to

observe a tendency from the Europeans to ‘save the ones in need’, whether by incursions on foreign territory, or by projecting their vision through international operations. Either way, in both cases, a deviation from the European understanding of political community is being held, needing an intervention to restore the order.

The *decolonising strategies* proposed by Sabaratnam (2011) act to criticise this thinking, casting light on what (and who) has been excluded from History by the ‘moderns’. In doing so, the pluralities of non-Western perspectives can be putted into evidence, which not only works to challenge the dominant Western European structure, but also to raise the awareness in IR literature about Self/Other relations nowadays. The epistemicides analysed by Fernandéz (2019) due to the lack of presence of non-Western perspectives ended up contributing to the continuous framing of the modern pirate as the folklorical one, legitimising their killing by Europeans. Thus, the lack of knowledge production from the Global South due to a Eurocentric periodisation and control of academic researches, along with modern security logics that underestimates non-Western perspectives, justified the ‘European right to civilise the Other’ throughout peacebuilding operations.

With this explained, the last section of this research dives into how this affects the capitalist world economy. The situation regarding piracy in the GoG can be related to some sort of counterculture of the pirate against the dominant social structure that he is inserted (Roszak, 1969 apud Dawdy & Bonni, 2012, p. 677). Therefore, piracy would not be *just* a crime in their view, but rather a form of resistance against colonial practices that has been going on for centuries, especially in Nigeria. These historical inequalities are being anchored in the shadows of History by the Global North as a form to sustain the global hegemonic order (as explained in the Introduction about the title of this research). In other words, piracy can be presented as a reflex against the silencing, marginalising, and outcasting suffered by the exploited societies of Somalia and the GoG by the West.

Therefore, it urges a necessity to recognise that Global South perspectives are important to the IR as a whole. Critical perspectives such as Cox’s Critical Theory and the postcolonial school can cast light on what has become a modern colonial relation between the Self (Global North) and the Other (Global South). Once again, the argument to sustain this claim is that the narratives and discourses made by Western European countries seek the maintenance of the status quo of the system, meaning that the hegemonic order they created throughout centuries of exploitation

must to be sustained for their control of the outcomes. Piracy is one of the multiple examples that can be found to prove this logic, given that pirates are dehumanised by the way they fight against an international system that repress them. Hence, the necessity to contemplate all parts of the whole is clearly what should be brought into perspective in critical studies. To put it simply, it is just not possible to think History without thinking about the connected unities that exist within the North/South relations. The Eurocentric way of writing History is neglecting the importance of non-Western perspectives, and therefore, how the multiple identities that exist in the world are intertwined and co-constituted.

The connection between modern piracy and the neo-colonial practices that happened in the African continent are a result of the modern colonial drain. Thus, a resistance movement that tackles these practices reflects the legacy of inequalities, corruption, and structural dominance in the system. Even being dehumanised by discourses such as England's ones, pirates still people, and therefore, they are not satisfied in seeing African assets being drained by former metropoles and have (almost) nothing in return.

This can be considered one of the main contributions of this research to IR. In critically analysing piracy as some sort of resistance and a counter-hegemonic logic against social inequalities and economic exploitation, it is exposed how the actions from European countries in Africa conduct the perpetuation of a structure of power created centuries ago through African exploitation. The relevance of a critical (especially post-structuralist) perspective in modern security issues can also expose these actions when analysing the discourses and narratives that exist in the system. In addition, postcolonial thinking can be able to challenge the standard and accepted way to write History according to European perspectives, decentralising the dominant narratives that exist within IR and contributing to the rise of academic research coming from the Global South.

Moreover, a reflection of how interdependent the Global North and Global South can be points to a co-constitution between both in the formulation of international security logic. In analysing African role in the international system, it is possible to observe this co-constitution given that their maritime security issues are used to justify interventions by Western European countries. Therefore, the power of the Global North is consolidated through this logic of security, while resistance movements are done to defy that exact logic. In making use of the piracy

examples, a critical perspective approach can also help African states to reimagine their own relations with Europeans, focusing on a more autonomous and less dependent connection with Western powers ideals of development and security, as seen in the Yaoundé Architecture initiative.

Countries in the Global South such as Somalia and Nigeria are often represented as victims of their own underdevelopment and/or internal chaos. However, in understanding that piracy could be a consequence of the exploitation practices in the GoG, and intervention of Western powers in everyday affairs in Somalia, the system's dynamics that sustain security logics can fall apart once it becomes visible that the problem is not piracy itself, but the structural conditions that make it possible. Nonetheless, even when piracy is not involved, other examples can be found in the world. Hence, it is essential to pay attention whenever any military operations are done in Global South countries, especially those under the 'humanitarian help' or 'peacekeeping' flags.

As argued before, piracy is just one of many possibilities of resistance. The Mau-Mau rebellion analysed by Doty (1996) is another example of how an insurgence can be understood if the right historical context is given. If Global South perspectives are silenced, the outcome will be the same as the Mau-Mau people: *forced* to accept the conditions in which the Western power (England) frames itself as the 'saviour' of the Other. Put it differently, non-traditional or non-conventional forms of resistance by exploited societies will always have some motive behind them. Therefore, some effort is necessary to look beyond what the narrative is telling to the public, and to achieve that, one question may help to start a critical thinking: why are the rebels doing this? Or, better yet, how the narrative is being controlled in this situation? After all, the social movements used in this research were an attempt to regain control over African resources or spaces that were invaded by European Western countries.

However, as argued sometimes throughout the Chapters, piracy can have different purposes that not necessarily contemplate these motives. Piracy as a political tool in a war or as a terrorist movement can also happen depending on the circumstances. This is one of the limitations that was found throughout this research, given that only piracy cases in the GoG, and the Straits of Bab el-Mandeb and Malacca were approached. Hence, for the last time now, the objective of this research was not to solve the piracy problem, but to show that different perspectives

must be considered in the equation. Doing that with British discourses on *piracy* was the perfect way to exemplify this critical approach.

Nevertheless, although the focus of this research was based on UK's actions and speeches, it must also be highlighted that this perspective is not limited to British discourses. The transition between Chapters 2 and 3 exemplify that, since one of its points was to show that resolutions proposed to piracy in the Gulf of Aden were similar to the ones utilised in the GoG, thing that can also be found at the end of Chapter 1. In addition, by focussing on British policies, another limitation appears during the development of this research, which is the impact of Brexit. To put it differently, it is possible to raise questions about the EU's own perspective on piracy after Britain's withdrawal, something that was not found in depth in any of the literature used in the production of this research.

However, paying close attention to the authors and the works used in this research can prove an argument that was explored in Chapter 3: the silencing of non-Western perspectives. This is because most of the authors used to talk about piracy were from Europe or the US, and logically, most of them also gave a significant relevance to the impacts on the global maritime commerce. Naturally, there were a few great exceptions such as Dawdy & Bonni (2012), Bueger (2013),[139] Pattison (2013), and Policante (2015), nonetheless, it was considerably hard to find contributions that put piracy as a resistance movement, or contributions where it was recognised that the Europeans do have a significant influence over the rise of piracy cases. The best scenario was found in Vice's interviews with African specialists, residents, and the pirates itself, but it must be highlighted that these interviews were not within IR academic field.

In the same sense, although this research was focused on exposing the European influence over the *piracy problem*, it has to be recognised that it too fell into the trap of giving too much attention to the maritime commerce due to the recurrent use of the subject through its bibliographical survey. The dilemma of trying to expose the impacts of the global hegemonic order through the piracy narrative, and the maintenance of the status quo of the system via the protection of maritime trade, was one of the major difficulties encountered in this research.

[139] Bueger & Edmunds (2023) work must also be highlighted as an exception here.

Nevertheless, the author expects that this fact did not interfere in the understanding of the research purposes and objectives.

In addition, another trap that the author recognises he fell into was that it was not possible to escape the argument of a hegemonic construction of the pirate as violent. In other words, even though criticising, this view was endorsed in some points in the research by recognising that pirates indeed can (and eventually will) be violent if their demands were not fulfilled. After all, they would not be posing a considerable threat if their actions were not feared by the states, the seafarers, and the general public. However, as mentioned in the last paragraph, this endorsement could be explained by the influence of the archives used in the construction of this research, as they all offer a similar view of the pirate as a highly dangerous maritime criminal. In this sense, the author concludes this research proposing a questioning of to what extent other files about the pirate anthropology exist or not. This is important due to the existing anthropological limitation to study the pirate, which eventually will be influencing the studies of piracy itself.

Despite of that, this research also opens the possibility to other academics who analyse piracy in a critical way to approach topics such as the national and international legal frameworks in which piracy is inserted, the possible outcomes and impacts that piracy activities around the world could have on the economy of the sea (blue economy), how the piracy movement in political ways (i.e., the Pirate Party) influence national politics and its society, how small arms and light weapons illegal sales are related to insurgent groups in the African continent, and how maritime piracy can be related to digital piracy as a form of resistance against the capitalist world order. This multiplicity of possibilities can be well debated in the academic field for many years to come, justifying the reason why most of them are going to be the author's following steps as an IR scholar.

Furthermore, the growing concern about maritime affairs in global politics in the past years can also be putted in perspective here. Things such as the blue economy are increasingly gaining traction on international politics, as well as discussions about blue sustainability and biology. This can be proved by the recent addition of the Civil Society Engagement Group, Oceans20 (O20), as one of the social groups discussed during the Brazilian presidency of the Group20 (G20) in 2024.

To conclude this research, the last words of it will be regarding the future of security logics and how the system should rethink it. Rather than thinking about piracy as a ‘problem to be solved’, it would be better for Global South population to make an effort to expose what piracy represents: a resistance movement against neo-colonial practices in the 21st century. The theme has a massive relevance on international security studies – especially the critical ones – and therefore, a significant change in the way of thinking, as well as how History *should* be written, could not only explain *why* the problem of piracy exists, but also *how* to dismantle its conditions in favour of a more equal international system.

6
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