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ASSESSING THE PRIMARY METHODS OF PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANIES IN THE PROTECTION OF THE TRANS-FORCADOS OIL PIPELINE IN DELTA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the primary methods employed by Tantita Securities and Ocean Marine Solutions, to protecting the Trans-Forcados oil pipeline in Delta State, Nigeria. It reveals that these companies have effectively engaged local communities, resulting in a high awareness (97.1%) of their presence. While the use of advanced technology is limited, there is strong support for involving local youths in security roles. Challenges such as militant attacks and logistical issues significantly affect their operations, underscoring the need for robust strategies. The study emphasizes the importance of capacity building, adequate funding, and fostering resilient community relationships to ensure the security of vital infrastructure in the Niger Delta region.

Keywords: assessment, primary methods, security strategies, crime, pipeline security, private security companies.

Introduction

The safety of individuals and assets remains a paramount concern for governments worldwide, as it directly impacts a nation's economic, political, and social stability (Alumona, 2019). The provision of security is widely regarded as the primary duty of any state, reflecting

the fundamental need for a secure and tranquil environment in which people can live and work(Alumona, 2019). Hence, the traditional concept of security with the state as the main referent has been up for extensive debate thus security of life and property is viewed as a fundamental human right guaranteed under the Constitution in Nigeria and other nations of the world (Idowu, 2020). This is why governments globally invest huge human and material resources to ensure that life and properties of their citizens are protected and secured, as security and safety of private and public life are *sine qua non* for human existence, survival and development (Ekhomu, 2004).

However, contemporary discourse on the state and security provision has shifted from the traditional assumption that security is a public good and that is an exclusive duty of the state, to one that is currently witnessing private incursion into security business. The private security industry is a crucial component of security and safety in Nigeria and have evolved significantly over time, offering essential services to the public and complementing the efforts of governmental security agencies. Building upon the accomplishments of earlier practitioners who emphasized intelligence gathering and strategic operations, modern private security firms continue to adapt and innovate to meet the evolving challenges of the contemporary security landscape.

Globally, vanders, saboturs and terrorist attacks against critical national infrastructure such as pipelines have occurred in Iraq, Colombia and Russia in recent times. Nigeria is not an exception to this menace. The importance of pipeline security to the nations economy cannot be overemphasized. The private security companies plays an important role in providing security for state and non-state clients in Nigeria

In order to prevent and reduce the impact of such attack in Nigeria, improving and enhacing the security of the Nations critical infrastructure (Pipeline), the Nigerian government has turned to private security companies like Tantita Securities and Ocean Marine Solutions among others as alternative solution.

The stakes are particularly high due to the critical importance of these infrastructures to national economies and energy security. Securing oil pipelines involves a multifaceted approach that encompasses technological solutions, personnel training, and strategic partnerships between public and private stakeholders. Given the potential environmental and economic consequences of pipeline breaches or sabotage, robust security measures are essential to safeguarding these vital assets. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of threats such as vandalism, theft, and terrorism requires constant vigilance and proactive security measures.

These private security firms specializing in oil pipeline security advances surveillance technologies, risk assessment methodologies, and crisis response protocols to mitigate potential risks effectively. Private security companies leverage surveillance and monitoring systems to enhance situational awareness and detect potential security threats in real-time. Advanced technologies such as CCTV cameras, motion sensors, and drones are deployed along pipeline corridors to monitor activity and identify suspicious behaviour (Oluwatosin et

al, 2020). These surveillance systems enable security personnel to track movements along pipeline routes and coordinate rapid response efforts to mitigate security incidents effectively. Furthermore, private security companies recognize the importance of community engagement in fostering trust and cooperation with local stakeholders (Omeje, 2016). By establishing dialogue channels with host communities and traditional leaders, security providers gain valuable insights into local dynamics and potential security risks. Collaborative initiatives, such as community patrols and information sharing programs, help build mutual trust and facilitate early warning systems for detecting security threats (Ogri, 2021).

The study aims to asssess the primary methods use by the Private Security Companies engaged by the Nigerian government to protect the Trans-Forcados Oil Pipeline in Delta State, against vanders, sabotage, bunkers and terrorist attacks.

Statement of the Problem

The theft and illegal trade of non-renewable resources poses a significant challenge in Nigeria. Widespread illegal oil bunkering results in substantial financial losses for the government. Despite efforts by Nigeria's law enforcement and military officials to deactivate illegal refineries, protect the crude oil pipelines, and arrest smugglers. The indirect involvement of public security forces in these activities through compromise and the acceptance of bribes remains a concern. Oil facilities are frequently vandalized and targeted by militant groups, and as such Nigeria loses over 400,000 barrels of oil per day (Global Organsied Crime Index, 2023). Additionally, the Nigerian government has at times engaged known militants to protect oil pipelines, indicating a lack of capacity within the security forces to secure this vital infrastructure (Global Organsied Crime Index, 2023). The perception of ineffective policing and rising crime gave impetus to the emergence of a plethora of non-state policing groups such as Private Security Companies in Nigeria.

The safeguarding of the Trans-Forcados oil pipeline in Delta State, Nigeria, is of utmost importance due to its critical role in the region's economy and energy sector. However, despite the significance of protecting this vital infrastructure from various security threats, there exists a notable gap in our comprehension of the primary methods employed by private security companies for its protection. While private security firms are recognized for their pivotal role in securing essential infrastructure like oil pipelines, comprehensive empirical research is lacking concerning their specific strategies and approaches within the context of the Trans-Forcados pipeline (Obasi et al, 2020).

This study endeavours to bridge this gap by delving into the nuanced intricacies of the methods utilized by private security companies to safeguard the Trans-Forcados oil pipeline. By uncovering the specific techniques and tactics employed by private security companies, stakeholders can gain a deeper understanding of the evolving nature of security threats facing the Trans-Forcados pipeline and develop more effective mitigation strategies accordingly.

Through a meticulous analysis of primary methods and practices, this study aspires to contribute to the advancement of pipeline security discourse not only in Delta State but also

in similar regions facing comparable challenges. By elucidating the intricacies of private security operations and their implications for infrastructure protection, the research endeavours to provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and security practitioners, thereby fostering a more resilient and secure environment for critical infrastructure in the region. The study go beyond the surface understanding of pipeline security by providing a comprehensive exploration of the primary methods employed by private security companies in safeguarding the Trans-Forcados oil pipeline in Delta State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Oil pipelines in Nigeria face significant security challenges due to the prevalence of vandalism, theft, and sabotage. Private security companies play a crucial role in safeguarding these pipelines, ensuring the uninterrupted flow of oil and minimizing economic losses. Nigeria's oil infrastructure has been plagued by various security threats, including attacks by militant groups, organized crime syndicates, and local communities seeking to tap into oil resources illegally (Okafor et al, 2019). These security challenges not only disrupt oil production and distribution but also pose environmental risks and economic losses to the government and oil companies operating in the region.

Private security companies deploy a range of tactics to secure oil pipelines in Nigeria, drawing upon a combination of physical, technological, and community-oriented measures. These strategies are tailored to address the unique challenges posed by the country's volatile security landscape and the persistent threat of criminal activities targeting oil infrastructure. Private security companies implement physical security measures along oil pipeline routes. This often include the erection of fences, barricades, and access control points to deter unauthorized access to pipeline installations (Ogbeide, 2021). Additionally, armed guards and patrol teams are deployed to conduct regular surveillance and respond swiftly to security breaches, enhancing the physical protection of oil pipelines (Okafor et al, nd).

Crime in Nigeria

Crime is an act that brings about offences and it is punishable under the law. Crime rate in Nigeria has assumed a worrisome dimension. In the light of the worsening crime situation, and the ineffectiveness of the crime control apparatuses, Nigeria can be deemed to have a crime problem. Nigeria is among the developing countries of the world, and is experiencing a prevalence of rising crime waves, criminal intentions and varying degree of delinquencies. The nature of these crimes includes armed robbery, murder, rape, car theft, burglary, fraud, terrorism, cyber crime, bribery and corruption, food and drug adulteration, gambling, smuggling, human trafficking, kidnapping, drug trafficking, money laundering, internet scam, advanced fee fraud (419),banditry, cattle rustling pipeline vandalism, bunkering and other illegal activities. Sadly, there are reports of crimes committed mostly by the youths at virtually every corner of the country. Criminality has become an integral part of the nation’s daily life (Suchi, 2017).

Classification of Crime

The classification of crime differs from one country to another. In the United States, the Federal Bureau of Investigation tabulates the annual crime data as Uniform Crime Reports (UCR). They classify violations of laws which derive from common law as part 1 (index) crimes in UCR data, further categorized as violent as property crimes. Part 1 violent crimes include murder and criminal homicide (voluntary manslaughter), forcible rape, aggravated assault, and robbery; while part 1 property crimes include burglary, arson, larceny/theft, and motor vehicle theft. All other crimes count as part II crimes (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2009).

Brown, Esbensen and Geis (1996) provide a typology for crime in three classes: violent, economic, and victimless. The fear of death or serious injury often causes one to view violent crimes as the most serious of the three classes. Violent crimes of a "serious" nature include murder, assault, rape, and robbery. According to Brown et.al. (nd), "what constitutes a 'serious' violent crime is a function of traditional and ideological and not necessarily the result of close attention to the implications of different behaviors." Economic crimes are committed by those "unable or unwilling to obtain these tokens of self-value-money and goods-in a legitimate manner" (Brown et al, nd).

In Nigeria, the Police classification of crime also depends on what the law prescribed. In Nigeria Police Abstract of Statistics (NPACS), offences are categorized into four main categories:

i. Offences against persons are those against human beings such as: manslaughter, murder, infanticide, attempted murder, assault, rape, child stealing, grievous hurt and wounding or physical abuse, etc.
ii. Offences against properties are those offences against human belongings. They includes: theft/stealing, armed robbery, burglary, house and store breakings, forgery, and obtaining property by false pretense etc.
iii. Offences against lawful authority, this is any offence committed against any establishment of law such as failure to pay tax, forgery of currency notes, gambling, vanderlism, sabotage, breach of peace, bribery and corruption, etc.
iv. Offences against local Acts include those laws that we cannot enforce outside Nigeria – e.g. Liquor Act, Firearms Act and traffic offences. Here in Nigeria, you cannot go selling arms/ammunitions without a licence but in the Republic of Bénin, they are freely sold (Crime Statistics, 2016).

Historical Foundational Development of Private Security Companies in Nigeria

The utilization and engagement of private security companies globally in managing security and related matters have become a focal point among policymakers and practitioners in recent times. The evolution of private security companies in Nigeria cannot be fully understood without acknowledging earlier practices, such as employing individuals as watchmen, enlisting the help of hunters for community protection, and forming vigilante groups to safeguard lives and properties. These practices laid the groundwork for the emergence of private security companies in Nigeria (Inyang, 2014).

Inyang (2014) contends that pinpointing the exact date of the emergence of Private Guard Companies (PGCs) in Nigeria is contentious. However, the industry has a rich history in the country and has grown to become a significant part of the nation's economy. The establishment of PGCs dates back to the founding of the Nigerian Security and Investigations Company (NSICO) by Alhaji Mumuni in 1965. Subsequently, other companies like the Nigerian Investigation and Safety Company (1967), Omo Security Services (1971), Metropolitan Guards, and Arksego (Nigeria) Limited (1980) followed suit.The advent of Nigeria's Fourth Republic brought about political, social, and economic changes, including the privatization of public properties and reforms in political structures. Concurrently, an increase in crime rates, coupled with the Nigeria Police Force's limitations in controlling the situation, led to a surge in demand for private security services.

Debates surrounding the factors driving the growth of private security in Nigeria have persisted. Adegoke (2008) asserts that the expansion of private property, particularly in Nigeria and Africa, has been a significant catalyst for the growth of private security. Property owners increasingly recognize the commercial benefits of establishing their security companies, given the inadequacies of public security agencies in meeting diverse security needs. This perception has fueled the growing acceptance of private security guards by individuals and corporate entities seeking to safeguard lives and properties.

Estimating the number of private security companies operating in Nigeria, both nationally and internationally, poses challenges due to inadequate record-keeping practices. Abrahamsen and Williams (2005) elaborate on this difficulty, noting that accurately assessing the scale and scope of the private security sector in Nigeria is challenging. While estimates suggest the existence of between 1,000 and 1,500 private security companies, the majority are small, owner-managed entities operating within specific towns or localities. The evolution of private security in Nigeria reflects a complex interplay of historical practices, socio-economic dynamics, and security needs. The growth and diversification of private security companies underscore their critical role in complementing public security efforts and addressing the evolving security challenges facing Nigerian society.

Perceived Methods Employed by Private Security Companies in Safeguarding oil pipelines and other criminal activities. These methods include:

a) Physical Security Measures: Private security firms utilize physical barriers, such as fences, barricades, and checkpoints, to restrict unauthorized access to oil pipeline installations (Ishola et al, 2017). The deployment of security personnel, including armed guards and patrol teams, further enhances the physical security of pipelines and related infrastructure.
b) Surveillance and Monitoring Systems: Advanced surveillance technologies, including CCTV cameras, motion sensors, and drones, are deployed along oil pipeline routes to detect and deter intruders (Okonkwo et al, 2020). These monitoring systems enable security personnel to identify suspicious activities in real-time and respond promptly to potential security threats.
c) Community Engagement and Stakeholder Collaboration: Private security companies engage with local communities and stakeholders to foster trust, build relationships,

and gather intelligence on security threats (Onouha, 2018). Collaborative efforts between security providers, oil companies, and community leaders help address underlying grievances and mitigate the risk of sabotage or attacks on oil pipelines.

d) Intelligence Gathering and Risk Assessment: Private security firms conduct comprehensive risk assessments and intelligence gathering to identify potential security vulnerabilities along oil pipeline routes (Awofeso, 2019). By analysing threat intelligence and conducting risk profiling, security providers can implement targeted security measures to mitigate specific threats effectively.

Theoretical Foundation

The Security Governance Theory is a relatively new and complex theory that emerged in the early 2000s. It is a theoretical framework that seeks to understand the roles and responsibilities of different actors in ensuring security, including governments, international organizations, civil society, and private sector entities. According to Huysmans and Squire (2019). security governance theory is concerned with how security is produced and who is involved in producing it.

Proponents Arquilla (1996)and Buzan (1999), argue that security is not solely the responsibility of the state, but rather a shared responsibility that requires collaboration among different actors. Buzan *et al*. (2009) suggest that security governance involves a network of actors who have a shared interest in security and who work together to achieve it. This network can include governments, international organizations, NGOs, and private sector entities, among others (Cavelty et al, 2016). The authors also note that security governance involves not only traditional security issues such as military and defense, but also non-traditional issues such as environmental, economic, and social issues that can have security implications (Cavelty, 2016).

Another key aspect of security governance theory by the proponents is its focus on the importance of norms and practices (Ebo, 2008). According to Bigo and Tsoukala (2008), security governance is not just about the formal rules and laws that govern security, but also about the informal norms and practices that shape how security is produced. They argue further that security governance is not just about who has power, but also about the rules, norms, and practices that shape how that power is exercised (Rhodes, 1997).

The theory is a useful framework for understanding the relationship between private security companies and oil pipeline protection. This approach recognizes that security is a complex issue and multifaceted like oil theft and vandalism. Thus, effective security governance requires the participation of a range of actors and institutions, both private security companies, to achieve security objectives. As such, security governance theory provides a lens through which to examine the role of non-state pipeline surveillance contractors in the security landscape.

One aspect of security governance theory that is particularly relevant to private security companies and the sustainability of oil pipeline protection is the concept of accountability. Effective security governance requires accountability mechanisms that ensure that all actors,

including non-state actors, are held responsible for their actions (Cavelty, 2016). Private security companies operate outside of traditional state structures, and there are concerns about their accountability (Ezeoha, 2014). To address these concerns, it is important to establish clear lines of accountability for these contractors and ensure that they are subject to appropriate oversight and regulation. However, Berg and Shearing (Berg, 2017) have commented that "within assemblages of auspices and providers there is the neglected area of how private sector auspices or providers are accountable within security assemblages (Berg et al, 2017). Unlike the horizontal or top-down form of accountability, horizontal or informal accountability seems to be more effective (Berg et al, 2011). In any case, informal accountability by default is the norm in a polycentric assemblage (Berg et al, 2018).

The views by Berg and Shearing are particularly important for us to understand the nature of accountability in the Niger Delta. The Niger Delta region is a perfect example of a polycentric assemblage; i.e. it is made of a collection of actors where there is no single source of power or authority. They are; the oil companies, the Joint Task Force, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), the Tantita Securities, Ocean Marine Solutions, the Local Government officials, and the community Youth leaders. Informal, contractual, public, and political accountabilities are the most effective in a polycentric assemblage according to their findings (Berg et al, 2011).

Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive survey research design in order to understand the research problem i.e. assessing the Primary Methods of Private Security Companies in the Protection of the Trans-Forcados Oil Pipeline in Delta State. The descriptive survey research design allows for the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Through this method the researcher collected data through key informant interview (KII) and semi-structured questionnaires. The study's population is about 285,000 individuals in Burutu local government area (LGA), Delta State, Nigeria (Citypopulation, 2022). Burutu LGA was purposively selected due to its significant role in oil production compared to other LGAs' in the Niger Delta. It has the second largest oil export pipeline (i.e. the Trans-Forcados pipeline) after Bonny pipeline in Rivers State.

The sample size was selected using the stratified random sampling technique. This sampling technique was used because the population is already divided into subgroups called communities and since it is not feasible to study the entire population, eight strata or communities in Burutu LGA were selected based on their close proximity to the Trans-Forcados oil pipeline i.e. Obotobo I, Obotobo II, Sokebolou, Ogulagha, Okuntu, Yobebe, Yokri, and Obuguru. These communities also have an increasing presence of private security companies compared to the other ten communities in Burutu. In each of the eight communities there is an average of 387 residents, the study therefore randomly selected every 10^{th} person in the total number of residents in each community. Forty (40) participants thus, were selected in each of the community, totaling 320 participants. The sample size of the study is therefore comprised of 335 participants (15 participants for the key informant interview inclusive). The study thus, adopts the percentage analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents the results, analysis and interpretation of data based on the responses gathered from the participant's views about private security companies and the sustainability of oil pipeline protection on the Trans-Forcados oil pipeline, Delta state, Nigeria. A total of three hundred and thirty-three (335) respondents are selected using the stratified sampling technique and the questionnaires administered on them, out of which three hundred and fifteen (313) questionnaires are validly returned, 78.75% completeness rate and 5.52% margin of error which is reasonably good for inference for the study. The data were analyzed using descriptive analysis.

Table 1.1.1: Showing the Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents in the study area

Items		**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Age	10-20years	35	11.2
	21-30years	111	35.5
	31-40years	94	30
	41-50years	47	15
	51-60years	19	6.1
	60years & above	7	2.2
Gender	Male	191	61
	Female	122	39
Highest level of Education	No formal education	4	1.3
	Primary education	34	10.9
	Secondary education	155	49.5
	Post-secondary education	120	38.3
Employment status	Employed	115	36.7
	Self-employed	66	21.1
	Unemployed	131	41.9
	Retired	1	0.3
Marital Status	Married	184	58.8
	Single	129	41.2

Source: Fieldwork (2023)

Table 1 shows that 11.2% of the respondents were between 10-20years, 35.5% were between 21-30years, 30% were between 31-40years, 15% were between 41-50years, 6.1% were between 51-60years while 2.2% were above 60years of age, the majority 61% of the respondents were male while 39% were female. Also, only 1.3% of the respondents had no formal education, 10.9% had primary education, the majority 49.5% had secondary education while 38.3% had post-secondary education, 36.7% of the respondents were employed, 21.1% were self-employed, 41.9% were unemployed while only 0.3% was retired. Finally, 58.8% of the respondents were married while 41.2% were single.

Table 1.1.2: Frequency & Percentage of methods used by OMS and Tantita to protect the Trans-Forcados oil Pipeline

Items		**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**	**Mean**	**SD**
Have you heard about Tantita securities and Ocean Marine Solutions before	Heard of one	304	97.1	2.03	0.167
	Heard of both	9	2.9		
What do you think these companies do to protect oil pipelines in the Niger Delta	Provide guards	303	96.8	2.99	0.179
	Use Technology	3	1		
	None of the above	7	2.2		
How often do you see activities by these companies near oil pipelines	Regularly	305	97.4	3.97	0.209
	Occasionally	6	1.9		
	Once a month	2	0.6		
How important do you think the presence of these companies are for protecting oil pipeline	Very important	296	94.6	2.95	0.227
	Important	17	5.4		
Are you aware of any positive impacts of these companies method on the security of oil pipeline	Yes	312	99.7	2.00	0.057
	No	1	0.3		

Source: Fieldwork (2023).

Table 1.2 reveals that the majority 97.1% of the respondents said that they have heard of one about Tantita securities and Ocean Marine Solutions before while only 2.9% said they have heard both, 96.8% of the respondents said that the companies should provide guards to protect oil pipelines in the Niger Delta, 1% said they should provide the use of Technology while 2.2% said they should not provide any of the above. Also, the table further reveals that majority 97.4% of the respondents said that they regularly see the activities by these companies near oil pipelines, 1.9% occasionally while only 0.6% once a month, 94.6% of the respondents said that it is very important to protect the oil companies' pipeline while 5.4% said it is important. Finally, 99.7% of the respondents said that they are aware the positive impacts of these companies' method on the security of oil pipeline while only 0.3% said they are not aware of the positive impacts of these companies' method on the security of oil pipeline. Therefore, the majority of the respondents said that they have heard of one and they also provide guards the Methods Tantita and Ocean Marine Solution employ in the Protection of the Trans-Forcados Pipeline, the respondents said that they regularly see the activities by these companies near oil pipelines the respondents said that they regularly see the activities by these companies near oil pipelines. The table further revealed that the respondents said that they aware the positive impacts of these companies' method on the security of oil pipeline. The result is not line with Iwuoha, and Chidubem (2021) Findings revealed that the lack of strategic security planning and overlapping roles with private security companies is

making the NSCDC ineffective in the protection of oil pipelines. Though, within the period of the contract to PSCs there was a decline in pipeline vandalism.

Table 1.1.3: Frequency & Percentage of Challenges faced by Tantita and Ocean Marine Solution in the Oil Pipeline in the study Area

Items		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
In your opinion, what difficulties do Tantita Securities and Ocean Marine Solutions face while protecting oil pipelines in your locality?	Lack of cooperation from locals	3	1	1.99	0.113
	Vandals attacks	309	98.7		
	Environmental factors	1	0.3		
Have you heard about any incidents or problems faced by these companies while safeguarding pipelines?	Yes	311	99.4	1.99	0.080
	No	2	0.6		
If yes, what are the problems	Militant attacks	55	17.6	1.21	0.455
	Lack of community cooperation	6	1.9		
	Others	252	80.5		
Do you think the challenges these companies face affect the security of oil pipelines in the region?	Yes	265	84.7	1.85	0.361
	No	48	15.3		
What do you believe could be done to help Tantita Securities and Ocean Marine Solutions overcome their challenges?	Better community engagement	307	98.1	1.99	0.139
	Important Technology	2	0.6		
	Not sure	4	1.3		

Source: Fieldwork (2023)

Table 1.1.3 shows that only 1% of the respondents said that lack of cooperation from locals were the difficulties Tantita Security and Ocean Marine Solutions face while protecting oil pipelines in your locality, the majority with 98.7% said Vandals attacks is the difficulties while 0.3% said environmental factors, the majority 99.4% of the respondents said that they heard about any incidents or problems faced by these companies while safeguarding pipelines while 0.6% said they did not heard about it. Also, 17.6% of the respondents said that militant attacks were the problems, 1.9% said lack of community cooperation were the problems while the majority said others were the problems with the percentage of 80.5%, it further reveals that

84.7% said that the challenges these companies face affect the security of oil pipelines in the region while 15.3% said no that the challenges these companies face affect the security of oil pipelines in the region. Finally, 98.1% of the respondents said that better community engagement help Tantita Securities and Ocean Marine Solutions overcome their challenges, 0.6% said important technology while 1.3% said not sure. The findings are in agreement with Olaniyan, Okafor and Ayobami (2017)interrogated current laws on pipeline security by pointing out the existing challenges to pipeline security, corruptions, vandalism etc. Argues for a comprehensive legislation for pipeline security. Application of local content (indigenous companies) in the protecting of oil pipelines. The findings show that Laws on pipeline security not comprehensive enough.

Qualitative data presentation

Tantita Securities and Ocean Marine Solutions' strategy towards oil pipeline protection on the Trans-Forcados oil pipeline, Delta State, Nigeria

In a the qualitative data, 50% of respondents (4 out of 8) noted that OMS employs boys from various communities in Bayelsa, Burutu, Warri-South-West, and Ethiope-West to guard pipelines. Additionally, Respondent 6, a Tantita official, highlighted that they engage 18,500 youths in similar efforts. Respondent 2, another Tantita official, emphasized the collaboration with the Nigerian Navy and regulatory agencies like the Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, which provide information for necessary actions. According to Respondent 7, a senior officer in the Nigerian Navy, speedboats are used to assist private security companies in navigating the challenging creek terrain.

Community engagement and sensitization were mentioned by 50% of respondents (4 out of 8). Respondent 5, a senior staff member at the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, stressed the importance of youth mobilization, sensitization, and education in local communities to differentiate between oil and gas pipelines. Respondent 6 noted the collaboration with host communities and their leaders, asserting that the new regime of pipeline protection is more effective than the previous practice of giving bribes. Regarding performance-based contracts and financial responsibility, 25% of respondents (2 out of 8) discussed this aspect. Respondent 3, an OMS official, highlighted OMS's commitment to improving the stability and efficiency of oil flow, mentioning their track record with the Bonny pipeline. Respondent 4, a senior NNPC staff member, explained that OMS took over security responsibilities due to their performance record and an agreement with NNPC, which includes paying for any pipeline repairs if breached. However, 25% of respondents (2 out of 8) also mentioned opposition to these strategies. Respondent 5 acknowledged that OMS and Tantita face opposition and smear campaigns but remain committed to their mission. Respondent 8, from NSCDC operations, mentioned challenges in collaboration with host communities, as some oppose stopping oil theft in their region.

Both OMS and Tantita underscore the importance of recruiting and training local youths from diverse communities as pipeline guards, a strategy considered effective in enhancing community involvement and ownership of the security process. Tantita, representing 12% of responses, emphasized the crucial role of collaboration with the Nigerian Navy and regulatory agencies for enforcement actions, indicating a reliance on external support for

security challenges. OMS, cited by 25% of respondents, is committed to surveillance and protection efforts, resulting in tangible improvements in pipeline operations. This proactive prevention method contrasts with Tantita's lack of a similar financial accountability agreement.

The Ministry of Petroleum Resources, represented by 12.5% of responses, recognizes the strengths of both OMS and Tantita in mobilizing and sensitizing local youth, addressing not only pipeline security but also community education on the dangers of tampering with oil and gas infrastructure. Despite facing opposition and smear campaigns, both OMS and Tantita remain dedicated to securing pipelines and educating communities. The use of speedboats, as mentioned by a senior officer in the Nigerian Navy (12.5%), is essential for navigating the creeks and countering oil thieves, who often rely on insider information.

Mention the core methods in term of technologies, tools, approaches private security companies employ to protect the Trans-Forcados oil pipeline in Delta State?

Respondent 1: *"Ocean Marine Solutions (OMS) has been pivotal in protecting the Trans-Forcados pipeline in Delta State since 2018. Tantita, a newer player in the area, initially raised concerns because we feared they would only hire boys from the Warri-South region. However, they've included boys from Obotobo and other communities in Bayelsa, Burutu, and Warri-South-West, even extending to Ethiope-West. This inclusive approach has been effective."* (OMS official 2).

Respondent 2: *"We rely heavily on the Nigerian Navy and other regulatory bodies like the Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission. We aren't allowed to use firearms or make arrests. Our role is to provide information to the Nigerian Navy through the Joint Task Force (JTF), and they take action."* (Tantita official 1).

Respondent 3: *"OMS is committed to improving the stability and efficiency of oil flow from the pipeline. Our surveillance and protection efforts have reduced crude oil theft and significantly improved pipeline operations. OMS has a proven track record with the Bonny pipeline."* (OMS official 2).

Respondent 4: *"OMS assumed security responsibility for the Trans-Forcados Pipeline at the invitation of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) due to their performance record. They are financially accountable for any pipeline repairs if breached. Tantita doesn't have a similar agreement yet."* (NNPC, senior staff).

Respondent 5: *"OMS and Tantita have faced opposition and smear campaigns from certain sector parties. Despite these challenges, they remain committed to securing the Trans-Forcados Pipeline and ensuring broader oil industry safety. Their key strength lies in mobilizing and sensitizing local youth. Many vandals can't distinguish between oil and gas pipelines, which is dangerous. OMS and Tantita educate the communities, and it's making a difference."* (Senior staff, Ministry of Petroleum Resources).

Respondent 6: *"Collaboration with host communities and their leaders is crucial. While communities often see us as government agents, OMS enjoys some acceptance due to their work in Bonny and Warri. We've employed 18,500 youths so far, more than OMS. This new pipeline protection regime is better*

than the previous method of bribing individuals, which caused internal conflicts. The oil companies are to blame for the violence in Obatebe." (Tantita official 2).

Respondent 7: *"Our speedboats have helped Tantita and OMS navigate the challenging creek terrain. Unfortunately, oil thieves often get insider information from the same community members who should be protecting the pipelines."* (Senior officer, Nigeria Navy).

Respondent 8: *"Collaborating with host communities seems effective, but some communities are unhappy about stopping oil theft in their region. They cause us problems."* (Officer, NSCDC)

Discussion

The quantitative data reveals that an overwhelming 97.1% of respondents are aware of Tantita Securities and Ocean Marine Solutions, indicating these companies have successfully penetrated local consciousness, likely through community engagement initiatives or a visible presence. Surprisingly, only 1% of respondents mentioned the need for technology, despite significant scholarly support for using advanced technologies like drones, satellites, and sensors in pipeline protection (Obodoeze, Asogwa, & Ozioko, 2014; Okorodudu et al, 2018.; Roper & Dutta. n.d.; Omodanisi, Eludoyin, & Salami, 2013). This discrepancy suggests that local insights might diverge from academic perspectives. As Smith and Brown (2018)noted, "Technology is simply a tool or an aspect of the strategy mix and not an end in itself or a one-size-fits-all strategy." Nussbaum (2011) echoes this, emphasizing that technological solutions cannot replace the essential buy-in and involvement of host communities. The challenging terrain of the Niger Delta further complicates the implementation of technology (Ukoha et al, 2010), and human factors such as corruption and technical know-how continue to interfere with technological solutions.

Despite these challenges, there are exceptions, such as Saudi Arabia, where 80% of pipelines are protected by anti-theft detection systems (Strom, 2010). The interview data reflects some use of technology, such as speedboats aiding private security companies in navigating the creeks' challenging terrain. More importantly, the interview data highlights community-centric strategies adopted by OMS and Tantita, involving local youths in pipeline protection efforts, which aligns with literature stressing the importance of establishing strong ties with local populations. The high percentage of respondents (96.8%) supporting the provision of guards for pipeline protection underscores the importance of community engagement.

Furthermore, the quantitative data shows that 17.6% of respondents identified militant attacks as a major problem, 1.9% pointed to a lack of community cooperation, while a significant majority (80.5%) mentioned other issues. Additionally, 84.7% indicated that the challenges faced by these companies adversely affect pipeline security, while 15.3% disagreed. Iwuoha and Chidubem (2021)emphasize the need for strategic security planning, capacity building, and funding to enhance the performance of security agencies, which aligns with the interview data indicating logistical problems and delays in deploying security personnel and equipment mentioned by 10% of respondents.

The findings also highlight the financial responsibility for pipeline security and repairs, particularly OMS's 12% responsibility mentioned by NNPCL, showcasing a performance-driven model. The differences in financial models between OMS and Tantita raise questions about their implications for pipeline protection. The study suggests that financial arrangements significantly influence the strategies and effectiveness of private security measures.

Thus, the primary methods employed by private securities and Ocean Marine Solutions in protecting the Trans-Forcados Oil Pipeline involve a blend of community-centric strategies, visible presence, basic technological aids, adaptation to local conditions, financial responsibility, and addressing human factors through strategic planning and capacity building. These methods underscore the importance of local engagement and practical, adaptable solutions in ensuring the security of the pipeline.

Conclusion

Private security companies play significant roles all over the world, specifically in Nigeia ranging from guard and investigative services to alarm monitoring, armored transport, pipeline security and security consulting. The growth in private security industries has been driven in part by the increasing level of insecurity and outsourcing of security functions in areas including commercial security, the privatization of certain policing functions, and infrastructure protection. The Private Security Industry in Nigeria is an important sector, which contributes to crime control, safety, protection of life and properties of both private and public clients. The increase in crime rate, the need for the protection of citizens' life and properties, coupled with ineffective nature of security provision by the government informed the establishment of PSCs in Nigeria. The PSCs are an emerging sector with vast prospects and potentials. It is a sector that generates income to the government, creates wealth to PSCs owners, employment opportunity to the citizens and complement government efforts in provision of security in Nigeria. The contribution of PSCs to economic growth and development in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized hence the need to maximize the contribution of PSCs to crime prevention, protection of life and public/private properties.

Thus, the study underscores the pivotal role of community engagement and delineates the challenges faced by private security firms, Tantita Securities and Ocean Marine Solutions (OMS), in safeguarding oil pipelines in the Niger Delta. Despite the extensive involvement of local community members in pipeline protection, there is an unexpected underutilization of advanced technologies, even though the academic literature advocates for their use. This highlights a distinct local preference for direct community involvement over technological solutions. Interviews underscore the critical role of local youths in pipeline protection, reinforcing the necessity of local buy-in. Additionally, financial responsibilities and logistical challenges, such as OMS's 12% responsibility for pipeline security and repairs, further complicate the efficacy of these security measures. The study ultimately reveals that while technology and strategic planning are essential, the engagement of host communities and customized financial models are vital for the effective security of oil pipelines in the Niger Delta.

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