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Community-Based Surveillance of Oil and Gas Pipeline Infrastructure in the Niger Delta: A Theoretical Analysis of Pipeline Infrastructure Nigeria Limited Through Structural Functionalism and Weaver Colony Theory

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Abstract: This article revisits the concept of community-based surveillance of oil and gas pipeline infrastructure in the Niger Delta, by analysing the reported experience of Pipeline Infrastructure Nigeria Limited (PINL) in two intentionally divergent analytical frameworks: Structural Functionalism and Jonjon's Weaver Colony Theory of Communal Living. This is the difference between the two and is at the heart of the argument. Weaver Colony Theory is the author's original conceptual contribution, using the metaphor 'Many Nests, One Tree' and centred on interdependence, differentiated roles, visible contribution, resilience and norm enforcement; Structural Functionalism provides an existing vocabulary for analysing differentiated institutions, interdependence, coordination, norms and system stability. The article does not assume that participation of the host communities is necessarily good, but rather asks the questions: How is participation organized? Who is involved? What do each of the actors contribute? How is information transferred? How is accountability ensured? The analysis is based mainly on Nigerian and Niger Delta scholarship and the Petroleum Industry Act and related regulatory documents and reported information on PINL; Tantita Security Services Nigeria Limited is used merely as an illustration for comparison. Company statements and press reports are considered evidence of reported practices and stakeholder claims, rather than independent evidence of causality and organizational success. The theoretical contribution of Weaver Colony Theory is that it places the company-community relationship at the centre of corporate social responsibility and into the structure of corporate performance, without compromising legal and professional boundaries. It suggests a Weaver Colony Organizational Framework and a nine-stage operational cycle – identify, assign, engage, listen, verify, act, report, review and adapt – which can be empirically tested. The article ends by stating that the framework is still a proposition and not yet a validated general theory and that the usefulness of the framework will be determined by the ability to measure its constructs and whether stronger Weaver characteristics are associated with better community relations, operational continuity and lawful infrastructure protection in different Niger Delta settings.

Keywords: Pipeline Surveillance, Niger Delta, Pipeline Infrastructure Nigeria Limited, Structural Functionalism, Weaver Colony Theory, Host Communities, Company-Community Relations, Organisational Resilience.

1. Introduction

Petroleum pipelines are not just hard to protect, as the problem addressed in this article is not just that. The real challenge is that pipelines in the Niger Delta traverse a social landscape where infrastructure, livelihoods, environmental risk, political power, community identity and national income all converge. In that environment, the protection of the oil and gas assets is an organizational issue as well as a technical and security issue. The Nigerian scholarship has always established that the activities of the oil industry in the area is inextricably linked to the nature of relationship between the companies, state institutions and the host communities. From different analytical angles, Idemudia and Ite [1], Jike [2] and Iyanam et al. [3] link the recurring tensions in the Niger Delta with the distribution of costs and benefits, environmental impacts, institutional effectiveness and the nature of corporate-community relations. For the pipeline surveillance, the implication is clear: an infrastructure-protection arrangement functions within an existing field of expectations, grievances, knowledge and authority. Any analysis that does not take that field into account is only half a surveillance analysis.

The literature also warns of a simple association between 'community engagement' and community ownership. As early as the corporate social responsibility debate, Ite [4] demonstrated that development interventions of multinational firms in Nigeria are not only determined by the amount of money they spend but also by the institutional and local context. More recently, Whiskey Obukowho et al. [5] found that Niger Delta respondents might be aware of the development strategies of companies but not necessarily have knowledge of or meaningful participation in the processes of designing and implementing the strategies. Amadi et al. [6] also identified gaps in community engagement, trust, accessibility and feedback in their study of community engagement in the detection and preparedness for oil spills in Rivers and Delta States. These findings are important as they move the focus from the presence of a programme or meeting to whether or not participation alters how an organization perceives problems, assigns responsibility, makes decisions and is held accountable by affected communities.

The distinction is important in the post-2021 regulatory environment in Nigeria. The Host Community Development framework is now institutionalised in the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), and the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) now oversees the structures for Host Community Development Trusts, community project management, grievance management, reporting and performance evaluation [7], [8]. There is no statutory validation of any specific surveillance contractor, nor of community participation leading to better production. It does, however, show that host-community relations are not anymore an adjunct to the governance of petroleum operations. They are an integral part of the institutional landscape in which operators and associated bodies have to operate.

In this context, PINL is analytically valuable as the surveillance model it shares publicly regularly highlights the importance of host-community engagement, local participation and regular stakeholder meetings along the Trans Niger Pipeline (TNP) corridor. The 2023, 2025 and 2026 reports speak of the involvement of traditional rulers, Community Development Committees, youth and women representatives, company personnel and institutional actors. These reports also include information on local recruitment, scholarship and empowerment programs [9], [10], [11], [12], [13]. The presence of these reports does not necessarily mean that PINL resulted in a change in national oil output nor that all host communities view the arrangement positively. It offers something less grandiose and more practical for a theoretical paper: an organizational context where the nature of company-community involvement has been documented.

The theoretical question is thus sharpened. Structural Functionalism can be used to understand the need for differentiated but interdependent actors in a pipeline-protection system: surveillance contractors, host communities, traditional institutions, regulators,

petroleum operators and statutory security agencies have different institutional roles. However, Structural Functionalism alone does not detail how an organisation should translate community proximity into a sense of responsibility, contribution, communication and trust, and collective resilience. It is here that Jonjon's proposed Weaver Colony Theory comes into play.

Jonjon's intervention is purposefully limited to not claiming to have replaced already existing sociological theory. The metaphor 'Many Nests, One Tree' is used in the Weaver Colony Theory of Communal Living to describe a communal living space where actors have their own identities and roles and rely on the integrity of the larger system. The original theory is based on five principles: interdependence, differentiated roles, visible contribution, resilience and norm enforcement. In this article, communication, representation, reciprocity and lawful accountability are elaborated as operational conditions where those five principles might be manifested in organizations. The difference is intentional: The five principles are the conceptual foundation; the other dimensions are ways of making the conceptual foundation work in an organization.

This article thus does three things. First, it highlights what already exists in the literature and from the Nigerian evidence with respect to interdependence, participation and institutional coordination. Second, it separates the contribution of Weaver Colony Theory from what Jonjon adds to it, instead of giving credit to the literature for the contribution of Weaver Colony Theory. Third, it draws on the experiences reported by PINL (and, to a limited extent, Tantita) to test the proposed concepts for their coherence with real organizational practices, rather than using them as empirical validation. The argument is thus one of disciplined theoretical development: evidence limits the claims, and the author's framework structures a set of propositions that can be accepted, modified or rejected in future research.

Central Argument: Community participation becomes organizationally significant not merely when communities are present, but when roles, information, benefits, representation and accountability are deliberately structured so that the organization and the host environment can pursue legitimate interests without undermining one another.

2. Analytical Foundations: What The Literature Explains and What Jonjon Proposes

Structural Functionalism: The Analytical Lens in Place

Here, Structural Functionalism is employed as a well-known sociological perspective, rather than as the author's own theory. Durkheim's theory of the division of labour highlighted the significance of specialization and interdependence: no part of the system can function independently to recreate the whole system [14]. This insight was taken to the level of a theory of the social system by Parsons [15] where roles, norms, integration and adaptation play a crucial part in continuity. Later Merton [16] made functional analysis more discriminating by distinguishing manifest functions, latent functions and dysfunctions. All of these ideas together give a vocabulary for the questions of who is doing what and how is it related to what and what happens if it doesn't work out as expected and what happens if one part of the system fails to work as expected.

This vocabulary is organizational, not metaphoric, for pipeline surveillance. Not all of the functions can be lawfully performed by a surveillance contractor in the pipeline-security environment. Operational responsibility lies with petroleum operators; regulatory control and compliance is set and monitored by regulators; local legitimacy and representation is mediated by traditional and community institutions; and host communities have local knowledge and social relationships. It is not, then, the question of whether one actor is 'successful' alone that is relevant to the functionalist question. Whether differentiated actors are connected in a manner that helps to maintain infrastructure integrity while avoiding role confusion, exclusion or institutional dysfunction.

It is an analytical move with local flavour, Niger Delta scholarship. Jike adopted a functionalist/holistic perspective to oil-company and host-community relations, and proposed a two-way empowerment instead of a one-way response of the oil company to

community's demands. Agunyai and Ojakorotu [17] connected governance failure in the Niger Delta with the lack of ability of component institutions to effectively serve the expected functions and instability emerged where institutional relationships failed. Iyanam et al. also highlight the relationship between government, multinational oil companies and oil producing communities. While not providing a pipeline-surveillance model, these studies do lend credence to the more limited claim that petroleum security and stability are relational products created by a variety of institutions, not by a single institution alone.

However, there are also weaknesses to Structural Functionalism which need to be acknowledged. It tends to downplay unequal power, contested representation, historical grievances and the fact that what is stabilizing an institutional arrangement may not be perceived as legitimate by all. This tension is still a topic of discussion in modern reviews [18]. A theory of coordination without questions about who sets the goals of the system would be incomplete in the Niger Delta where access to the benefits of petroleum has been politically disputed, as well as the environmental burdens and representation. Therefore, Structural Functionalism is considered a first lens in this article as it illuminates the process of differentiation and interdependence, but not the normative or practical issue of how reciprocal community participation should be organized.

The Findings of Nigerian and Niger Delta Studies Regarding Community Involvement

The empirical and policy literature is most robust against symbolic participation. As Idemudia and Ite demonstrate, conflict in the Niger Delta is not a one-issue affair, but rather a combination of corporate practices, governance failures, material deprivation and environmental damage. Whiskey Obukowho et al. throw in a communication element: knowing about company programmes does not mean knowing how to influence them. In petroleum governance, Amadi et al. state it more explicitly, demonstrating that community-engagement mechanisms can be felt as ineffective if there is low level of community involvement, trust and feedback. The literature thus suggests that there is a conditional claim: community participation can make a difference, but the way that it is organized can make at least as much difference as its formal presence.

The PIA builds an institutional dimension on this literature, as it seeks to incorporate host-community development into petroleum governance. The promise and the questions of implementation of the Host Communities Development Trust framework are discussed by Alex and Ebipumere [19] and Eze and Okonkwo [20]. The current administrative structure of NUPRC also highlights the needs assessment of the community, monitoring of projects, grievance handling and reporting. These sources help to create a regulatory expectation of structured relationships, but do not extend to the idea that the law supports Jonjon's framework. The linkage established in this article is analytical: the legal architecture and literature make it more difficult to defend an organizational model in which the host communities only appear after conflict or only as recipients of the corporate philanthropy.

Another implication of the literature is that benefits and legitimacy are not synonymous. While employment, scholarships, infrastructure or social investment can be valuable, benefit delivery doesn't necessarily address who was represented, how priorities were determined, whether there was two-way communication, or what occurs when a company and a community disagree. This is where an author-driven theory ought to do more than just summarize previous research. The literature sets up the problem of participation and trust; it is Jonjon's job to clarify the logic of the organization that might make participation reciprocal, role-bound and accountable.

Weaver Colony Theory of Communal Living: Jonjon's Theoretical Intervention

Weaver Colony Theory is the author's suggested conceptual framework. It does not purport to be a law of social behaviour that has been discovered, nor a biological account of human communities. It begins with an analogy: A weaver-bird colony has numerous nests that are all linked to a common supporting environment. Many Nests, One Tree is an organizational proposition based on that observation. The nests represent the actors with their identities, interests and responsibilities, while the tree represents the social, economic, institutional and physical environment on which the actors rely. The analogy is only as good as the ideas that it can produce that can be defined and tested without the birds involved.

The first principle of Jonjon is that of interdependence. The idea is not that business and community interests are the same. That their interests can be linked materially in a common operating environment. While pipeline integrity is important for continuity of operations and national revenue, pipeline integrity failures have the potential to have environmental, livelihood and safety impacts to the surrounding communities. On the other hand, the hostility of the community, exclusion or information failure can increase the risk of operation of organisations. Interdependence thus refers to interconnected results, rather than harmony. It enables the theory to acknowledge conflict and to question if the relationship can be structured in a way that is dependent on each other.

Differentiated roles is the second principle. Weaver Colony Theory is not about the sameness of function to participate. Interchangeable authority should not be given to a community member, a traditional ruler, a company manager, a regulator and a statutory security officer. Their involvement can be supplementary as long as it is within the scope of their competence and the law. This is where the theory most closely resembles Structural Functionalism, but Jonjon adds a community-organizational twist: differentiated roles must be apparent and comprehensible to those who are involved to prevent role confusion and the lack of inclusion.

The third principle is contribution that is seen. When the participants can observe what each actor contributes to the shared system, reciprocal relationships get more credible, Jonjon suggests. Contribution can be a valid job, open dialogue, training, or taking care of the environment or responding to accepted issues. Contribution for communities can be in the form of local knowledge, cooperation, participation in agreed forums, early reporting (via lawful channels) and support for lawful operations. The concept of visible contribution is not a theory of quid pro quo. It is a theory of organizational intelligibility: reciprocal obligations are easier to assess if they are observable as opposed to implied.

Resilience is the fourth principle. It is here that the theory goes beyond stability. Resilience is what happens after a disturbance, a system can be stable but until it is disturbed. When a disruption happens, the company-community systems are stronger if they are able to detect, respond, learn and recover due to enough communication, knowledge and responsibility being distributed. In this context, recurrent engagement with stakeholders is not necessarily interesting because it is good to meet stakeholders, but because recurrent channels can help maintain relationships and the flow of information before, during and after an incident.

The fifth principle is enforcing the norms. The original metaphor suggests that there needs to be behavioural boundaries in collective systems, and in the human translation, it needs to be legally limited. For the purposes of this article, norm enforcement refers to the expectations shared by all, organizational codes, grievance mechanisms, traditional mediation (where applicable), contractual obligations and lawful referral to competent authorities. It is not a form of informal punishment, vigilantism or devolved coercive power to communities. This restriction is not an add-on to the theory but rather a

fundamental part of it: a community-based model that confuses lawful authority would not be legitimate.

From Five Principles to Organisational Conditions

Weaver Colony Theory is based on the five principles. Communication, representation, reciprocity and lawful accountability are not considered as additional core principles, but as operational conditions. This separation ensures that the framework doesn't grow with each and every organizational problem that is identified. Interdependence is made actionable through communication, representation gives voice to interdependence in collective forums, reciprocity makes contribution interdependent rather than philanthropic, and lawful accountability provides a procedure for norm enforcement.

This separation renders the theory more testable as well. In a future study, the five core constructs could be measured and then the relationship between the constructs and organizational outcomes could be examined for mediation and/or moderation by communication quality and/or representative legitimacy and accountability mechanisms. A design like this would allow for empirical studies to test the framework instead of just portray it. The theory is strengthened, not weakened, if it can be stated what evidence might suggest that the theory is incomplete.

Table 1. Structural Functionalism and Weaver Colony Theory: Analytical Distinction

Dimension	Structural Functionalism	Weaver Colony Theory	Implication for this article
Status	Established sociological tradition	Jonjon's proposed indigenous conceptual framework	The article does not treat the two as equivalent bodies of theory.
Primary concern	Functions, interdependence and system continuity	Reciprocal communal organization in a shared environment	One explains institutional differentiation; the other proposes how company-community relations may be organized.
Unit of analysis	Structures, institutions and roles	Organization-community relationships and participating groups	The Weaver lens moves closer to the community interface.
Contribution	Explains differentiated functions and dysfunctions	Adds visible contribution, resilience and communal norm logic	The author's novelty lies in the second column of this distinction, not in restating functionalism.
Main limitation	Can understate power and conflict	Unvalidated and dependent on operationalization	Both lenses require explicit attention to contested representation and evidence limits.

Analytical Approach and Evidence Base

This is a theoretical and interpretative article and not an impact evaluation. That distinction is what the evidence can support. The article does not attempt to quantify the causal impact of PINL or Tantita on crude-oil production, pipeline losses or national revenue. It poses another question: can the reported organizational practices in the Niger Delta be cohesively understood in terms of the Weaver concepts and do the concepts provide something recognisable to the existing functionalist reasoning?

Four source categories are employed and these are not assumed to be evidentially equivalent. The historical and conceptual context of company-community relations, participation, governance and conflict is established using peer-reviewed Nigerian and Niger Delta studies. The formal host-community governance environment is set up based on statutory and regulatory sources. How companies describe their own structures, values and initiatives are identified using company materials. Stakeholder meetings, claims, disagreements and initiatives publicly reported in the press are documented in Nigerian press reports. Company and press materials can show that a practice or claim was reported, but not, in the absence of independent evidence, that the practice was followed consistently or that it led to a specific national result.

The main reason is that the title and central problem of the article is about its reported community-based surveillance approach along the TNP corridor. For one reason, Tantita is included as a comparative illustration: If Weaver Colony Theory is an organizational theory, as opposed to a description invented around a single company, its concepts should be understandable when juxtaposed with another indigenous surveillance organization operating in the same regional environment. It is therefore a conceptual comparison, not a contractor rankings.

The analysis is done in five questions based on the original Weaver principles. First, does the reported arrangement acknowledge that there is material interdependence between organization and community? Secondly, is there a distinction or a blurring of roles? Thirdly, can the reciprocal contributions be seen and assessed? Fourth, do there exist mechanisms that facilitate continuity, learning and recovery after disruption? Fifth, are the systems of behaviour and accountability organised and legal? Three cross-cutting questions – communication, representation and reciprocity – are then applied to determine if the five principles function as an organizational system or as stand-alone initiatives.

This evidence rule is significant because a lot of the public debate on pipeline surveillance is advocacy. Those who have been satisfied with the current situation point to a drop in vandalism and the return of jobs and production; those who are not satisfied with the current situation worry about concentration, exclusion, accountability and geographic coverage. For instance, in 2026, the groups pushing for decentralisation pointed out that the existing framework failed to include all the relevant oil-producing communities, while other leaders in the Niger Delta and a panel of the National Assembly called for continuity and coordination [21], [22], [23]. The disagreement is not noise that is to be filtered out of the analysis. It's proof that representation and legitimacy are variables that are not given and thus must be constructed into any viable community-organizational theory.

Evidence rule: When a company, stakeholder or public official gives an operational result as being due to surveillance, the article reports the attribution as a claim. It does not make the attribution an autonomous causal statement.

Pipeline Infrastructure Nigeria Limited (PINL): Primary Case Analysis

Interdependence: From Stakeholder Contact to Operational Dependence

According to the official profile of PINL, the company is a Nigerian engineering, maintenance and security-services company in the oil and gas industry [24]. But for the purposes of this article, it is not corporate identity that is analytically significant, rather it is the fact that stakeholder engagement around the TNP has been a recurring public record. In April 2025, PINL staff engaged with representatives of the host communities in Rivers, Imo and Abia States, where they explained that community intelligence and cooperation are crucial to the task of surveillance and that the meetings are opportunities to review performance and enhance operations. Previous reports of fights in Rivers and Bayelsa also noted the involvement of traditional rulers, CDCs and youth leaders. The limited but significant inference that can be drawn from these reports is that PINL's reported model does not consider community relationships to be solely corporate communication after the project, but rather as part of the operational environment.

That is evidence for a potential interdependence mechanism, not for interdependence as an accomplished state, as Weaver Colony Theory suggests. The theory suggests that it is important to ask if the company is actually reliant on community-generated information and cooperation in ways that affect decisions, and if communities perceive continued integrity of the infrastructure as related to legitimate local interests. Public reports demonstrate regular engagement with local intelligence and a reliance on it, but they do not indicate the quality of the intelligence, the extent of engagement across communities, or the extent to which the intelligence alters surveillance practice. Those

questions would be the empirical questions that would have to be addressed to test the first Weaver principle.

Differentiated Roles: Participation without Substitution

The PINL material also aligns more closely with Jonjon's differentiated role principle than a general 'community ownership' story would. The reported model shows community structures as sources of local knowledge and representation and coordination, and professional surveillance and statutory security functions as institutionally separate. This distinction is important because the term 'community-based security' can otherwise suggest that the community should be an informal security force. Weaver Colony Theory is not making that assumption. A legitimate system provides communities with clear participatory roles and retains the professional, regulatory and coercive roles of legitimate institutions.

That is evidence for a potential interdependence mechanism, not for interdependence as an accomplished state, as Weaver Colony Theory suggests. The theory suggests that it is important to ask if the company is actually reliant on community-generated information and cooperation in ways that affect decisions, and if communities perceive continued integrity of the infrastructure as related to legitimate local interests. Public reports demonstrate regular engagement with local intelligence and a reliance on it, but they do not indicate the quality of the intelligence, the extent of engagement across communities, or the extent to which the intelligence alters surveillance practice. Those questions would be the empirical questions that would have to be addressed to test the first Weaver principle.

This role boundary is also in line with the overall institutional logic of Structural Functionalism. The complementarity of the value of differentiation is that local actors might know the social and physical environment better than external actors, and that professional organizations have formal procedures, equipment, reporting responsibilities and organizational accountability. Thus, the theory does not glorify local knowledge, nor does it glorify external knowledge. It asks if the two are linked by a role architecture that does not allow for exclusion and substitution.

Visible Contribution and Reciprocity

PINL's reported employment and community programmes can be used as a good indicator of visible contribution. The company said it had recruited over 35,000 Niger Delta youths to guard oil and gas installations and other assets in September 2025, quoting Punch [11]. The company announced in June 2025 that it would be providing scholarships in TNP host communities; subsequently, scholarship and women empowerment commitments were reported as paid [10], [13]. These reports illustrate the type of concrete impact that the Weaver framework anticipates participants will have the opportunity to observe. Nevertheless, they should be reported as what they are: company initiatives, not independently audited measures of overall social impact.

The author-driven point is not just to list out corporate social responsibility. The principle of visible contribution of Jonjon is one of reciprocity. If the company is in the picture but the community responsibilities are not, it is still a philanthropic relationship and not organizational. The test is theoretical: does employment, education or community programmes exist in a reciprocal architecture where communities also understand what types of participation are expected, how information should be shared, which behaviours are threatening to the shared environment, and how both parties are held to agreed standards? The Weaver concept thus redefines the term 'benefit' as one side of an observable exchange of legitimate contributions, rather than as evidence of loyalty and as a replacement for rights.

Resilience, Communication and Organisational Learning

Resilience is manifested during disturbances of the system. In a June 2026 report on the attack on the TNP at Odau in Rivers State, it was noted that a stakeholder engagement was held later on, where community vigilance, reporting and coordination among community leaders, youths and security agencies were highlighted. The article does not attempt to evaluate operational tactics, or to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of any particular response from the incident. Theoretically, it is less relevant: the reported sequence demonstrates that stakeholder channels may not be closed due to disruption, and can be used to re-establish communication between actors.

It is here that Jonjon's notion of resilience moves away from a stable notion of stability. A Weaver-type system is not a system that has no breaches; it is a system that has relationships that are functional under stress for detection, communication, response, review and adaptation. The nine-stage operational cycle outlined later in this article is a logical extension of that. Recurring stakeholder forums are thus important only if they contribute to organizational learning. When meetings are held and nothing changes, including the decisions, role definitions or feedback, they are ceremonial and not resilient.

Representation: The Unresolved Test in the PINL Model

The broadest contestation of a celebratory reading of PINL is the overall 2026 discussion on representation in pipeline-surveillance contracts. While some Niger Delta groups demanded decentralization due to the inability of a few contractors and middlemen to represent the diversity of oil-producing communities, others supported the status quo and underscored continuity, coordination and benefits to youths [21], [22], [23]. The debate is about the surveillance framework in general and cannot be used to determine a failure by PINL. It can be used, however, to point to a theoretical limitation in any model that assumes that community representation is complete when attendance is by recognized leaders.

Thus, Weaver Colony Theory requires a Representation Test. A community interface should be assessed not only in terms of the frequency of meetings, but in terms of who is involved, how representatives are chosen or identified, whether there are credible channels for women and youth, how minority and dissenting views are dealt with, and whether the information is fed back to the wider community. Representation is not one of the five core principles of Jonjon, but it is an operating condition of all five. If some affected groups are not visible, there can be no interdependence; if some benefits and responsibilities are not visible, there can be no reciprocity; if rules are set by actors whose mandate is not accepted, there can be no legitimate enforcement of the norms.

What the PINL Case Does - and Does Not – Demonstrate

As the PINL case illustrates, the Weaver concepts can be used to structure questions about an actual surveillance situation. Examples of recurring practices are publicly reported practices for engagement, community-based recruitment, local information, benefit programmes and post-incident coordination. These practices align with interdependence, differentiated roles, conceptual fit contribution and resilience.

The theory is not supported by the case. The sources do not offer a representative sample of host communities, independent measurement of trust, audited estimates of local employment outcomes or a causal model that connects specific engagement practices to pipeline integrity. Nor do they create any indication that every community along the corridor is represented or equally satisfied. An appropriate theoretical conclusion, then, is the following: PINL is a potentially valid empirical location for testing Weaver Colony Theory because the practices reported there are some of those proposed by the theory. That's a more defensible contribution than saying that the theory has already been proven in the case.

Tantita Security Services Nigeria Limited: A Comparative Illustration

Tantita is added to avoid the theory becoming a PINL specific vocabulary. It highlights values of asset protection, intelligence, risk management, technology and community in its public profile. Tantita is also linked to the community recruitment and local knowledge in the public discourse. These characteristics are enough to make a conceptual comparison: as in PINL, the organization works in a context where professional surveillance and relations with host communities and formal institutions are intertwined, at least in its public descriptions.

The comparison also reveals the significance of contested legitimacy. In March and April 2026, decentralisation was called for by organisations and institutions in the Niger Delta, while others argued for more host-community involvement, while others supported the current system and stressed the need for coordination and continuity [21], [22], [23]. It is precisely because of these opposing positions that Tantita is of theoretical value: it does not allow for an uncritical association of indigenous ownership and communal legitimacy. Even if a contractor is indigenous, he or she may be asked about who is involved, who benefits, and who is responsible for the arrangement.

The comparative lesson from a Weaver's point of view is that local embeddedness is not needed for proof, nor for immunity from criticism. Interdependence needs to be shown through working relationships; differentiated roles need to be lawful; contributions need to be reciprocal and visible; resilience needs to involve learning; and norms need to be backed up by legitimate procedures. The theory, thus, focuses on the nature of the relationship, not the identity or reputation of a specific contractor.

Therefore, PINL and Tantita should not be ranked in this paper. The available sources are too diverse for this and the organisations are in different contractual and geographical setups. They are both analytical in that they allow one to see that community-based surveillance is not one variable. It is a collection of relationships of representation, local knowledge, employment, communication, authority, benefits and institutional coordination. Weaver Colony Theory is suggested as a means of dividing and re-knitting those dimensions.

Table 2. Conceptual comparison of the reported PINL and Tantita cases

Weaver dimension	PINL: reported evidence	Tantita: reported evidence	Analytical caution
Interdependence	Recurring stakeholder meetings and stated reliance on host-community information.	Public descriptions emphasize local participation and community-oriented relationships.	Public statements show orientation, not uniform outcomes.
Differentiated roles	Community structures appear alongside company and statutory actors.	Local participation is described within a wider professional surveillance structure.	Role boundaries require independent study.
Visible contribution	Reported local employment, scholarships, skills and empowerment initiatives.	Reported employment/community initiatives and local participation.	Company-reported benefits are not independent impact estimates.
Resilience	Recurring engagement and post-incident coordination are publicly reported.	Public descriptions emphasize intelligence, risk management and community embeddedness.	Operational performance cannot be inferred from descriptions alone.
Representation/accountability	Recurring forums create channels, but broader debates raise inclusion questions.	Decentralization debate directly raises concentration and representation concerns.	Contested views should be treated as evidence of unresolved legitimacy questions.

The Proposed Weaver Colony Organizational Framework

The intent of the Weaver Colony Organizational Framework is to transform the metaphor into a series of propositions that can be explored outside of the metaphor. The organizing image is still 'Many Nests, One Tree' but the framework does not presume that human communities are like bird colonies. It poses the question of whether it is possible for organisations in resource-producing communities to intentionally design reciprocal relationships around a shared space, while maintaining separate interests and legal jurisdictions.

The starting point is a simple distinction in the framework. Community relations can be peripheral, meaning that there is episodic engagement with community, and little or no integration with operational decision making, or it can be integrated, meaning that there is community information, representation, agreed responsibilities and feedback linked to the organizational processes. Weaver Colony Theory suggests that the second configuration will be more resilient if it also includes role clarity, visible reciprocity and lawful accountability. This is a hypothesis, not a statement that integration always works.

Core Principle One: Interdependence

Interdependence should be defined as a two-way causality and institutionalized dependence, rather than as a rhetorical partnership. An organization would score higher on this construct if it could point to specific decisions or processes that require credible community input and community participants could point to legitimate interests that

require the continuity and responsible conduct of the organization. These might include the presence of formal community-interface mechanisms, evidence of documentation of response to community issues, regular joint identification of problems and evidence of information flowing from community channels to decision-makers.

The construct should also allow for negative interdependence. A company and community can be linked by the fact that each can impose costs on the other. Weaver Colony Theory is not about harmony; it is about whether those connected consequences are organized into a relationship that is able to negotiate and learn. This renders the theory more appropriate for the Niger Delta than a consensual partnership model.

Core Principle Two: Differentiated Roles

The clarity of authority, function and limits is a measure of role differentiation. A Weaver-type organization would define what is management's, what is operational staff's, what is community's, what is traditional institutions', what is regulators' and what is statutory security actors'. Ambiguity is seen as a risk within the framework, as unclear authority can lead to duplication, exclusion and/or informal coercion. The most successful participation occurs when actors are aware of what they can and can't do.

The bottom line is that a community-based approach must not be justified by informal enforcement. Local knowledge and communication can be used in conjunction with professional surveillance; however statutory security powers are vested in lawful security authorities. The colony operates via complementary nests, not by one nest replacing the function of the other nests.

Core Principle Three: Visible Contribution

The assessment of visible contribution should take place from both sides of the relationship. For the organisation, indicators could be clear employment procedures, community programmes agreed to, prompt feedback, environmental awareness and delivery of community promises. Indicators for communities may be: participation in agreed forums; lawful reporting; local problem identification; support for legitimate operations and adherence to agreed behavioural expectations. The goal is not to charge for each contribution, but to make reciprocity visible for an evaluation.

This is a conscious shift from corporate philanthropy. Scholarship can be a great gift, but it's not enough to establish organizational reciprocity. The theoretical question is whether the benefit is within a relationship where community knowledge, participation and accountability are also acknowledged and where benefits do not buy silence and displace statutory responsibilities. Visible contribution is thus a tangible and ethical contribution.

Core Principle Four: Resilience

Resilience is about continuity of relationships and learning in the face of disruption. Signs of observability might be multiple legitimate communication channels, documentation of incident review, continuity plan for community engagement, ways to transfer knowledge when community representatives change, and evidence that lessons learned from disruptions result in changes to practice. The construct is thus dynamic. It is not measurable simply by asking whether the number of incidents in an organization has decreased during a given time.

This distinction is important in the Niger Delta context. Security, community leadership, economic and environmental factors can shift rapidly. A one-to-one relationship or a one-to-one meeting structure can seem stable but is fragile. Weaver resilience occurs when the broader system can still communicate and coordinate in the event of a node being disrupted.

Norm Enforcement and Social Accountability

Legitimate procedures need to be established for norm enforcement. Indicators could include agreed codes of conduct, complaints procedures, complaints are investigated openly, mediation procedures, referral procedures to competent authorities and clear sanctions within the lawful powers of the organisation. Community norms can be used to protect assets, but no aspect of the theory allows for any coercion of the community or for any circumvention of Nigerian law.

Most critical theoretical step is to link norms to mutual accountability. The relationship can be broken by the companies' failure to live up to their promises, by lack of transparency in their procedures or by their lack of respect for the community, by the community's failure to abide by their agreements, or by agreed misconduct. Thus, a Weaver system is not a way to discipline a community for the companies. It is a system to make the expectations for behaviour transparent throughout the relationship.

Operational Condition: Communication

The circulatory mechanism of the framework is communication. If observations can't be made available to the actors that have the authority to respond, then there is not much operational value in interdependence. Communication should therefore be two-way, credible, accessible and connected with feedback. Having a hotline, a town-hall meeting or a community liaison officer is only a structural indicator; substantive indicators are whether information is acknowledged, verified, routed and acted upon appropriately.

Trust should be here as a condition of communication and not as a standalone slogan. The more people feel the communication channel is credible and that confidentiality is respected and that past communications have not resulted in arbitrary retaliation or indifference, the more likely they are to share accurate information. Future empirical studies should thus assess communication quality and trust, as well as the frequency of interaction.

Operational Condition: Representation

Representation is a question of who has the authority to translate the various interests of the community into organizational discussion. Traditional rulers, CDCs, youth bodies, women's groups and other known structures may be relevant, but cannot be taken for granted to represent every community. Therefore, the framework suggests that the representation mapping be done periodically and not permanently dependent on one set of intermediaries.

A measurable representation construct would involve inclusiveness, perceived legitimacy in selection, ability to report back to constituents and mechanisms for dissenting voices. This is one of the most significant additions brought about by the 2026 public debate on decentralisation. The debate is not about who is right or wrong, but rather that a theory of communal organization must have an explicit account of who speaks and how their authority is challenged.

Operational Condition: Reciprocity and Community Wellbeing

The 'tree' in the Weaver metaphor is NOT the company. It's the common ground where company and community seek to advance legitimate interests. That separation ensures that the framework doesn't use community wellbeing as a means of ensuring corporate compliance. Economic opportunity, skills, education, environmental responsibility and local procurement can bolster the common space, but they must be able to be defended as social and organizational outcomes in and of themselves.

Reciprocity thus does not imply parity in the exchange of resources between actors with unequal resources. It implies that the relationship should not be structured as a flow of commands, benefits or obligations, in one direction only. Companies have formal and financial responsibilities that are greater in many aspects, and communities have different types of responsibilities that are not financial or formal but are rather of knowledge,

legitimacy and cooperation. Weaver Colony Theory takes that asymmetry into account, but keeps both sides' contributions and responsibilities apparent.

The Nine-Stage Weaver Operational Cycle

The framework translates these principles into a recurring organizational cycle. The cycle is not a security tactic and does not prescribe operational surveillance methods. It is a governance sequence for organizing relationships and decisions around community interfaces.

1. IDENTIFY. Map affected communities, institutions, stakeholder groups, shared assets and legitimate interests.
2. ASSIGN. Define the role, authority, limits and accountability of each participating actor.
3. ENGAGE. Maintain regular and appropriately inclusive contact with recognized community and institutional representatives.
4. LISTEN. Receive concerns, observations, local knowledge and feedback without assuming that all reports are equally reliable.
5. VERIFY. Route information through appropriate organizational processes before decisions or external action are taken.
6. ACT. Respond through the professional, managerial, regulatory or statutory authority competent to address the issue.
7. REPORT. Provide proportionate feedback to relevant stakeholders so that engagement does not become an information dead end.
8. REVIEW. Examine what worked, what failed, whose interests were missed and whether roles or representation remain adequate.
9. ADAPT. Modify structures, communication channels or responsibilities in light of evidence and documented learning.

Testable Propositions

A theoretical framework becomes useful when it can generate propositions that are capable of being contradicted. The following propositions are therefore offered as the empirical bridge from Weaver Colony Theory to future research. They are not findings of the present article.

- Organizations with clearer differentiation of company, community and statutory roles will report fewer role-conflict problems than organizations with ambiguous participation structures.
- Higher perceived reciprocity and visible contribution will be associated with stronger trust in company-community engagement, controlling for the material value of benefits alone.
- The relationship between community participation and organizational resilience will be stronger where communication is two-way and linked to documented feedback and learning.
- The association between community engagement and perceived legitimacy will depend partly on the representativeness and accountability of community intermediaries.
- Norm enforcement will be associated with stronger legitimacy only where rules and consequences are viewed as procedurally fair and consistent with law.
- Organizations displaying higher combined scores on interdependence, role clarity, visible contribution, resilience and lawful accountability will exhibit stronger community-relations outcomes than organizations displaying community contact without those structural characteristics.

Table 3. Operationalization Matrix for Future Empirical Testing

Construct	Jonjon's proposition	Illustrative indicators	Possible outcomes
Interdependence	Organization and community face linked consequences within a shared environment.	Formal interface structures; documented use of community input; joint problem identification.	Trust; cooperation; continuity.
Differentiated roles	Participation works best where functions and limits are clear.	Role descriptions; referral pathways; perceived role clarity; absence of role substitution.	Reduced conflict; accountability.
Visible contribution	Reciprocal contributions must be observable.	Fulfilled commitments; transparent benefits; documented community participation; feedback.	Perceived fairness; reciprocity.
Resilience	Relationships should continue, learn and adapt after disruption.	Multiple channels; incident review; continuity of representation; documented adaptation.	Recovery; organizational learning.
Norm enforcement	Shared expectations require lawful and fair procedures.	Codes; grievance mechanisms; mediation; lawful referral; procedural fairness.	Legitimacy; rule adherence.
Communication	Information must move both ways and produce feedback.	Accessibility; response time; verification; feedback quality; trust.	Information quality; responsiveness.
Representation	Participants must be viewed as legitimate by those they represent.	Inclusiveness; selection transparency; constituent feedback; dissent channels.	Legitimacy; participation quality.

3. Discussion

The Argument is About Organizational Design, Not the Celebration of Participation

The main analytical conclusion of this revision is that there is a more distinct separation between participation and organisation. As the literature tells us, communities are important, exclusion can have a negative impact on trust and local participation can be low despite the presence of formal programmes. To reiterate those points would not be a new theory. What Jonjon brings is the concept that the critical factor is the architecture of participation to roles, reciprocal contribution, communication, resilience and accountability. A meeting can take place without interdependence; a benefit can be provided without reciprocity; local workers can be recruited without representative legitimacy; and local norms can be used without legal process. Weaver Colony Theory is only useful if it can be used to make those distinctions.

This interpretation also alters the way in which PINL should be discussed. The article should not be a "success" story for the company. PINL's public record is useful as it includes practices that bring the framework to life: regular stakeholder engagement, local recruitment, educational and empowerment pledges, reliance on community information and post-incident conversations. Each practice is considered as a potential mechanism and an evidential limitation is provided for each. The theoretical argument thus remains valid even if subsequent empirical studies reveal that the claims of a specific company were exaggerated, since the theory is about the definition and testing of the mechanisms, not about the merits of a given company.

Structural Functionalism and Weaver Colony Theory are complementary but not Interchangeable

Differentiated interdependence is the most similar aspect of the two frameworks. There is an established body of work that can be used to analyse the way in which specialised parts relate to a larger system and how a dysfunction in one part can impact on another, such as that of Durkheim, Parsons and Merton. Weaver Colony Theory carries that insight and shifts the emphasis to the company/community interface. It inquires about how interdependence becomes visible for the participants, and about how responsibilities are set up in practice in a reciprocal manner.

It's more pronounced with visible contribution and resilience. The visible-contribution principle is explicitly relational, whereas functionalism can classify intended and unintended functions. Similarly, resilience in the Weaver framework isn't just about balance, it's about the ability to communicate, learn and adapt following disruption. The points are where the proposed theory needs to be empirically distinct. The framework should be adjusted if future studies indicate that they do not contribute to the explanation of the phenomenon, in addition to other theories of stakeholder engagement, social capital or institutional coordination.

Corporate Social Responsibility to Organizational Capability

One implication is that community relations cannot be considered as a cost of corporate social responsibility. As the Niger Delta literature illustrates time and time again, that is too narrow a way to think about benefits—benefits can coexist with distrust—and projects can coexist with limited participation. Weaver Colony Theory suggests that the community interface can be an organizational capability if it enhances the quality of information, role coordination, legitimacy, learning and resilience and if it generates legitimate community value.

This does not imply that community development should be a secondary priority to security objectives. The framework makes it clear that the 'tree' is not just the company's asset, but is also the shared environment. The wellbeing of the community is thus of its own value. The relationship is legitimate and resilient and the organization benefits; however, the community should not be made into a tool for the protection of corporate infrastructure. If the theory is going to work in resource-producing areas where there has been a history of environmental and distributive grievance, this moral limit is essential.

The most critical issues in the framework that remain unresolved are representation and power. The traditional weakness of Structural Functionalism with regard to conflict and power resurfaces as a problem for Weaver Colony Theory. The metaphor of a colony can suggest a greater unity than an actual Niger Delta community has. There are class, gender, generational, political and chieftaincy differences in the communities. Contractors and petroleum organizations also have more financial and institutional power than most community actors. A theory of interdependence which fails to take those asymmetries into account, might make unequal bargaining look like consensus.

The representation condition is thus not superficial. Future empirical research needs to focus on who determines the common interest, who's knowledge is actionable, who benefits, who is not included in meetings, how dissent is handled and whether grievance procedures lead to credible results. Weaver Colony Theory should not be considered complete until these questions are operationalized. The importance of the 2026 decentralization debate is that it makes the theory face these questions, and not presume that indigenous contractors are the answer to them.

Theoretical Contribution

The proposed contribution is more precisely formulated than in the original manuscript. Weaver Colony Theory provides the organizing metaphor of 'Many Nests, One Tree' conceptually and maps it to five basic constructs. It separates the question of

whether there is community participation from the question of what the community organization is like. It is created from the institutional reality of Niger Delta resource producing communities and not as a generic stakeholder model. It provides nine stages of operation and measurable constructs which can be applied to design empirical studies.

Not that companies need communities is its most unique claim. That's a fact that's already well-known. It has a unique focus on the need to intentionally structure interdependence between companies and communities into visible, resilient, differentiated and accountable roles, as a prerequisite for sustainable company-community relationships. Whether this is novel enough and of empirical utility is still an open question. The theory only becomes a general theory when research indicates that these constructs can be measured in a consistent manner and they are able to account for outcomes that are not already accounted for by other well-established theories.

Limitations

There are four limitations of the article. Second, it is largely based on secondary and publicly reported information for the company cases. Those sources can be used for conceptual illustration, but not for causal inference. Second, media reports by stakeholders are partial, and can be influenced by advocacy, by the communication of the organisation or by political contestation. Third, the Weaver metaphor is derived from a biological colony, human organizations are formed through law, power, culture and historical conflict, so the analogy cannot go beyond the point of no further testable concepts. Fourth, the model has not yet been tested using interviews, surveys, longitudinal observation or comparative organizational data.

These constraints outline a research programme and do not detract from the conceptual exercise. The first empirical study should create scales for interdependence, role clarity, visibility of contribution, resilience, procedural accountability and communication quality and representative legitimacy. A second phase should be done to compare several organizations/communities. The third should investigate the extent to which Weaver's predictions of trust, grievance frequency, and operational continuity or perceived legitimacy hold after accounting for community socioeconomic and regulatory conditions and organizational size.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This article has viewed community-based pipeline surveillance, not as a slogan, but as an organizational relationship. Nigerian and Niger Delta literature confirms the relevance of host-community relations, local participation, trust and institutional coordination, but also reveals that formal involvement may go hand in hand with exclusion, weak feedback and contested legitimacy. Structural Functionalism can be used to understand why there are differentiated actors that must play complementary roles in the broader petroleum-security system. The Weaver Colony Theory of Jonjon proposes a more specific addition to this: the more interdependence is deliberately structured through differentiated roles, visible reciprocity, resilience, lawful norm enforcement, communication and legitimate representation, the more sustainable those relationships are. PINL offers a credible primary context for exploring the proposition as it has been reported to have a model with regular community engagement, local recruitment, benefit programmes, community information and ongoing stakeholder engagement. Tantita is a useful comparator because the same questions of local embeddedness, representation and accountability are raised in the public critique and public support for its surveillance role. Both of these cases fail to support Weaver Colony Theory and neither can be used as a stand-in for a causal statement regarding national production. They have an analytical value in that they demonstrate that the theory can give rise to specific questions regarding real organizational arrangements.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

Institutionalize community interfaces. Pipeline-surveillance and other petroleum-related organizations should have formal community-interface mechanisms that endure leadership transitions and during times of crisis, not just occasional meetings.

Establish roles and legal parameters. The role terms should include community participation. The role of local knowledge and dialogue should not replace the role of trained personnel, regulators and statutory security institutions.

Check attendance; check representation. It is important for organisations to regularly check on who is involved in stakeholder structures, who is recognised as a representative and whether women, youth and less powerful groups have credible platforms for input and feedback.

Distinguish between benefits and evidence of legitimacy. Benefits, such as employment, scholarships and empowerment programmes should be measured in terms of delivery and impact, but not as a measure of community consent, trust or representation.

Incorporate two-way feedback in engagement. There should be a clear structure within the organisation for the receipt, verification, action and feedback on community reports and concerns.

Conduct post incident review for learning. Following disruptions or significant disagreements, organisations should consider the communication, representation, role clarity and response processes and record changes made as a result.

Empirically, Measure Weaver builds. Validated instruments for interdependence, role clarity, visible contribution, resilience, communication and representative legitimacy and procedural accountability should be developed.

Compare test the framework. Before general claims of applicability are made, future research should be conducted to compare the performance of several surveillance contractors and petroleum operators and non-security organizations in several Niger Delta communities.

Make comparisons to known alternatives. The Weaver Colony Theory should be examined against the stakeholder theory, social-capital approaches, institutional theory and existing community-engagement frameworks to assess its explanatory power.

Maintain evidence in line with claims. Causal claims about production, losses or national revenue should be supported by appropriate empirical designs; company-reported achievements should be cited as reported evidence unless they are independently verified; and stakeholder testimonials and media reports should be cited as reported evidence.

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