

# Factors Impeding Government Security Agencies Responses in Combating Cattle Rustling in Baringo County-Kenya

Mwanasha H. Mazuri, Paul Mwaeke, and Eric Bor

## ABSTRACT

This study was necessitated by persistent Cattle rustling in Baringo County despite the security responses put in place by the government. Baringo County hosts a contingent of security personnel from the Kenya Police Reservists, General Service Unit, Administration Police Anti Stock Theft Unit and, more recently, Kenya Defense Forces. The study was guided by three objectives; to establish the impact of operational dynamics in impeding the government security agencies responses in combating cattle rustling in Baringo South Sub- County, Kenya; to examine the effect of local community dynamics in impeding the government security agencies responses in combating cattle rustling, and to examine the impact of cross-border militia incursions in impeding the government security agencies responses in combating cattle rustling in Baringo South Sub- County, Kenya. The qualitative data was analyzed thematically using NVIVO software and reported in a narrative form. The findings revealed that operational dynamics, local community dynamics and cross-border militia incursions were the major challenges faced in combating cattle rustling in the study area. Further, it was established that the success of the security operation largely depends on the cooperation and support of the local community but which was lacking according to this study. Additionally, networks of bandits were found to be so intricate and with established international and linkages, that made it difficult to sometimes recover the stolen cattle. The findings concluded that efforts by security agencies in combating cattle rustling in Baringo South Sub County have been futile as the challenge still persists more so among the Pokot. Major policy recommendations included deployment of modern state of the art virtual technology for aerial monitoring of cattle rustler's movements and activities, given the challenges presented by Baringo's inhibitive topography and poor transport network. This intervention may also save security officers from death traps in the lagas' (dry valleys) which were perceived by this study to be security agencies' killing ground. Aerial monitoring of cattle rustling may also enhance security operations and aptly police cattle rustling networks at all levels; local, national and international.

**Keywords:** Cattle Rustling, Cross-Border Militia Incursions, Local Community Dynamics, Operational Dynamics

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**M. H. Mazuri\***

Department of Peace Security Social Sciences, Egerton University, Kenya.

(e-mail: nashamazuri@gmail.com).

**P. Mwaeke**

Department of Peace Security Social Sciences, Egerton University, Kenya.

(e-mail: pmmwaeke@gmail.com)

**E. Bor**

Department of Peace Security Social Sciences, Egerton University, Kenya.

(e-mail: erick.bor@egerton.ac.ke)

*\*Corresponding Author*

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to Wolf *et al.* (2015a) cattle rustling remains a very pervasive global security problem in the world today. In the United States for example, cattle rustling continues unabated in Texas and Oklahoma, the top cattle producing states (Wolf *et.al*, 2015). The situation is not different in the United Kindom (UK). In 2019 for example, cattle worth Three Million Euros were stolen from the UK farms (Hederson, 2020). Further Hederson, (2020) argued that large scale sheep thefts over the past two years have contributed to a 19.4 % rise in value since 2017 making rustling the costliest crime for the UK farming sector. According to Azar (1990) an increase in sheep rustling incidents in the UK has transferred the crime from a local issue to a highly organized enterprise worth millions according to new data.

Notwithstanding the prevalence of cattle rustling in the West, the problem remains particularly severe in Africa due to circulation of illicit small arms and light weapons (Omondi & Alusala, 2018). According to the International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT) cattle rustling was historically rooted in cultural and socio-economic factors. Recently the practice is a large-scale criminal activity with strong security implications and direct and indirect effects on the groups involved (ISSAT, 2017). Cattle rustling has had a wide range of negative effects including loss of human lives, displacement of populations and destruction

of property (Osamba, 2000). The impact of livestock theft on marginalized communities is severe and it deprives people of their livelihoods and drives up poverty by undermining development.

In Africa, cattle rustling is a cross border and transnational issue affecting regional security in the area. In Nigeria, for example, the crime remains a serious security issue, especially the Northern area. Cattle rustling in Nigeria has also evolved into a militarized criminal activity powered by proliferation of SALW (ISSAT, 2017). Furthermore, the government's response to cattle rustling has also been slow and generally reactive. One attempt involved the Nigerian Police Force, launching the Task Force on Cattle Rustling and Associated Crime. The task force was responsible for patrolling and intelligence gathering on anti-rustling and related crimes. It was also to investigate and possibly prosecute reported cases of such crimes. However, the task force has been relatively inactive since its creation (Olaniyan *et al.*, 2016)

In 2019, Chadian militia shot dead seven people and stole about 500 head of cattle in neighboring Sudan's West Darfur region. More than 50 people were killed in a month and 10,850 head of cattle, sheep and goats were stolen in just three separate clashes between Sudan's Misseriya and South Sudan's Dinka tribes (Gumba, 2018). The Karamoja in Uganda spread across Kenya, Ethiopian and Sudan have been engaged in violent cattle rustling for years, thus straddling the borders (Gumba, 2018).

South Sudan, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda have also continued to feature prominently on the list of African countries experiencing the crime (ISSAT, 2017). Furthermore, the East Africa region has no legal framework to deal with the crisis. Responses to cattle rustling by East African countries have so far been ineffective. A failure of security and justice systems to adapt to the threat has led to formation of new organized crime cartels (Omondi, 2020). Countries in the region responded, in the main, in two ways, using largely indiscriminate force and incentivized disarmament initiatives. However, neither of these approaches was particularly successful. Indiscriminate violence increased community resentment against state security forces, while the exchange of livestock for firearms and ammunition achieved the opposite effect making civilians acquire more firearms. (Gumbo *et al.*, 2019)

In Uganda for example, authorities recovered 400 head of cattle stolen by the Turkana rustlers from Kenya. The Turkana were responsible for increased raids in 2019, death of several people and theft of thousands of heads of cattle. (Omondi, 2020). In Kibish, Northern Turkana, Kenya which borders Uganda, Ethiopia and South Sudan which forms the "Ilemi triangle" communities attack one another without intervention by respective governments. This area is characterized by an influx of small arms mainly through the Ugandan South Sudan border. (NTV Kenya, 2019). These incidents give a glimpse into the devastating nature of cattle rustling in Eastern African countries and across their largely porous borders.

In Kenya, cattle rustling remains a fundamental security challenge and the main driver of insecurity in North Rift Kenya (Bunei 2017). Cattle rustling has been on the rise resulting in deaths both amongst cattle rustlers and security forces. Cattle rustling is no longer a cultural lifestyle by pastoralists living in Northern Kenya but a multi-billion commercial venture done by ruthless businessmen who collude with government officials, politicians and community leaders arming raiders to carry out the deadly attacks (Gumbo *et al.*, 2019). As a result of Cattle rustling, people have been displaced, impoverished and children's schooling disrupted. In areas like Baragoi, Samburu where forty-two security officers were killed in 2012 residents are still fighting and killing each other over cattle rustling. (NTV Kenya, 2019). Despite deployment of security agencies in the area, cattle rustling has remained unabated. It is against this background that this study was set out to investigate the factors impeding government security agencies responses in combating cattle rustling in Baringo County-Kenya.

## II. PROBLEM ANALYSIS

Cattle rustling continues to persist in Baringo County despite the security responses put in place by the government, a development that could paralyze the socio-economic well-being of the County if not contained. The growing incidences of cattle rustling in the County have not only led to loss of human lives and property, but have also fueled inter-ethnic conflict, impacted negatively on the local economy and fueled the proliferation of small arms. Ironically, Baringo County hosts a contingent of security personnel from; the Kenya Police Reservists (KPR), General Service Unit (GSU), Administration Police (AP), Anti Stock Theft Unit (ASTU) and, more recently, Kenya Defense Forces (KDF). However, despite the high presence of the government security agencies in the area cattle rustling is still prevalent in the area. This problem suggests that the current pattern of insecurity in Baringo County requires further investigation. Therefore, the underlying purpose of this research is to understand this dogma by attempting to highlight the weaknesses and inadequacies that engulf the security agencies in effectively responding to cattle rustling. While most studies seeking to analyze the persistence of the cattle rustling incidents have looked at causes of cattle rustling, no substantive study has been devoted to exploring factors impeding the response by security agencies. This study sought to fill this gap.

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Protracted Social Conflict Theory was advanced by Azar in 1990. In his theory Azar, notes that communal groups may experience deep-seated cleavages based upon racial, religious, cultural or ethnic lines. These cleavages are characterized by continuing hostility with sporadic outbreaks of violence; and caused by the frustration of human needs for security, recognition, and distributive justice. He argues that the denial of basic human needs to a large portion of the population initiates instances of protracted social violence. Azar isolates four preconditions as the predominant sources of protracted social conflict: communal content, deprivation of human needs, governance and the state's role, and international linkages.

Under communal content, Azar suggests that the significant factor that leads to formation of PSC are societies that can be characterized as having a multicommunal composition. Multi-communal societies, whether formed as a result of divide-and-rule policies of former colonial powers or whether through historical rivalries often results in the dominance of one group over the other. He further observes that with the state dominated by a single communal group or a coalition of a few communal groups that are unresponsive to the needs of other groups in the society, tension grows and usually erupts in form of violence. Efforts to reconcile these by enforcing integration or co-operation in the nation-building process, strain the social fabric and eventually breed fragmentation and Protracted Social Conflict.

The second component of Azar's theory relates to human needs. In this concept it gives us an insight of the identity groups and their accessibility to the developmental human needs. He argues that the most obvious ontological need is individual and communal physical survival and well-being. Individual or communal survival is contingent upon the satisfaction of basic needs. In the world of physical scarcity, these basic needs are seldom evenly or justly met. Whilst one group of individuals may enjoy satisfaction of those needs in abundance, others do not. Grievances resulting from need deprivation are usually expressed collectively. Failure to redress these grievances by the authority cultivates a niche for a Protracted Social Conflict (Azar, 1990). He further argues that the recurrence of violence can only be understood from human needs perspective. According to him, it is the rush to satisfy human needs that rarely provides a platform for peaceful communal existence among the communities.

Government and the states play role to govern and use force where necessary to regulate society, to protect citizens, and to provide collective goods. Thus, the government plays a leading role in the satisfaction or lack of satisfaction of minority and identity groups. Azar states that incompetent, parochial, fragile, and authoritarian governments that fail to satisfy basic human needs can characterize protracted social conflicts. It is said that governments, expected to be unbiased and impartial, tend to be dominated by the leading identity groups or those groups that have been able to monopolize power within a country or territorial entity. This creates a "crisis of legitimacy" which exacerbates the already existing competitive or conflictive situations diminish the states' ability to meet basic needs, and lead to further developmental crises. Thus, regime type and the level of legitimacy are important linkage variables between needs and protracted social conflict" (Azar, 1990). The structure of the government needs to be changed so that all citizens are equally cared for and equally represented without bias. International linkage is the fourth and final pillar of Azar's theory. He argues that the international linkages though social and economic aspects dictate the internal policy and regulation of a country. This theory forms the backbone of this study as it covers the factors impeding government security agencies responses in combating cattle rustling.

### IV. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative case study research paradigm. Bryman This design facilitated collection of firsthand information on the dynamics and problems of combating cattle rustling of security agents in Baringo South Sub County. This study was conducted in Baringo South sub-county in Baringo County. The area was purposely selected because of the high incidences of cattle rustling within the County and also from neighboring counties of Turkana and Samburu Counties. The study targeted community policing members, security agencies and National Government officers in Baringo South Sub-County. According to the 2019 census by Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2020), Baringo South Sub-County has a total of 156 community policing members. In a report by Kenya Police Service Annual report (2019) there are about 400 security agency personnel deployed to combat cattle rustling in Baringo South Sub County. There are four divisions in the Baringo South Sub-County; Marigat, Mukutani, Mochongoi and Ilchamus. In each division there is a security agency stationed there. These agencies include, Kenya Defense Forces (KDF), Kenya police Anti-Stock Theft Unit (ASTU), Kenya Police Reserve (KPR), General Service unit (GSU) and Administration Police Service Unit (AP).

According to the Kenya Police Service Annual report (2019) there are about 400 security agency personnel deployed to combat cattle rustling in Baringo South Sub County. According to Kothari (2014) 10 % - 30 % of the target population is an optimum sample which fulfils the requirements of efficiency, representativeness, reliability and flexibility. For the purpose of representativeness all the five security

agencies contributed 12 (15%) of the target population) respondents each. Additionally, other key respondents comprised of 24 respondents (15%) of the target population) from local community policing members were identified based on their roles, level of knowledge and community representation.

Data for this study was collected through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and Key informant interviews. Four focus group discussions were conducted with a total of 24 community policing committee members selected purposively. In-depth interviews were conducted with 60 security agencies selected through purposive sampling. Additionally, Key informant interviews were conducted with 4 Assistant County Commissioners in the region in order to inform the study. Secondary data was collected from the use of documentation and extensive literature review with respect to the research topic and objectives. Main method of data collection was the interview. The collected data was transcribed and coded using NVIVO software, computer software for managing qualitative and quantitative data. Although the categories of this research provide broad topics for initial coding, new codes were developed as unanticipated topics emerge from the data. Once the data was coded, comparisons were made between interviews. Insights generated from these comparisons were reported in narrative form and used to inform the study objectives.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Moreover, this study sought to understand how the relationship between the local communities and the security agencies affect the efficiency of security responses to cattle rustling in Baringo South Sub County. This was achieved by holding individual interviews with the security officers, national government administrators and the members of the communities (Pokot, Tugen and Ilchamus). The different communities in Baringo South Sub County held different beliefs and opinions on cattle rustling. The Pokot were against the measures taken by security agencies while the Tugen and Ilchamus communities supported the work by security agencies. The data obtained was analyzed thematically and the following themes emerged: Pokot Non-Cooperation, Ilchamus and Tugen Cooperation and mitigating community approaches. Interesting results were posted in as far as local community support is concerned. While Pokot which was identified by all the respondents as the aggressor in the matters cattle rustling did not support the security officers at all, the Tugen and the Ilchamus cooperated with the security teams. This is basically because the Tugen and Ilchamus were victims of cattle rustling.

### A. Pokot Non-Cooperation

Cattle rustling is perceived as a social cultural practice among the Pokot since the olden days. However, as explained by the respondents, the social cultural tradition is changing as more people from Pokot seek professional employment and venture into other economic activities. What was evident from the interaction with the Pokot respondents was that they did not appreciate being associated with cattle rustling only while there are other activities that they engaged in. One of the community members said; “yes, we Pokot people engage in cattle rustling to maintain our culture, however not all Pokot people engage in the activity yet we have been labeled by other communities as cattle rustlers. This has resulted in our victimization by security agencies and our neighboring communities.”

Most of Pokot respondents expressed reservations with the deployment of multiple security agencies as well as the selective labeling of all the Pokot as cattle rustlers. While acknowledging their culture's predisposition to cattle rustling, the Pokot respondents cited cases of cattle rustling perpetuated by the Ilchamus and Tugen. They not only accused the security agencies of selectively branding all Pokot's as rustlers, but also punishing all Pokot's without distinguishing between law abiding citizens and the criminals. As said one of the Pokot elders said, “We do not cooperate with the police; we see them as enemies because of the way they have treated us. We wish they were out of Baringo” A young person from the Pokot community also said, “If an opportunity presents itself, we would kill the police.”

The Pokot respondents added that due to the cultural predisposition that they are cattle rustlers, most security agencies fail to be diligent in their work in ensuring that cattle rustling is curbed in the region. The respondents argued that often of the times, security agencies do not engage in operations to curb cattle rustling in the region. This according to one of the respondents is because of the stereotypes held by majority of the security agents that all Pokot people engage in cattle rustling. The respondents explained that often times, the community members are left to solve the issue of cattle rustling. An effect that has resulted in increased groups of vigilante groups willing to combat the menace of cattle rustling. From the observations made in Pokot, majority of the respondents preferred the work done by the vigilante groups as compared to the security agents. They posited that often, the security agents respond once the cattle have been stolen, hence not as effective in curbing cattle rustling.

The Pokot respondents also condemned the over-militarization of their area and the excessive responses by security agencies. They cited the establishment of a number of security camps, which stretched into their grazing areas. They also decried the conduct of unlawful and unprofessional operations by security agencies deployed to the area, citing the ‘shoot to kill’ orders. The Pokot also accused security officers of meting



violence on innocent civilians after failure to apprehend cattle rustlers or recover stolen cattle. They equally censured security officers for 'stealing' cattle from their villages and presenting it to their seniors as 'recovered' livestock. A bitter Pokot elder lamented, "these officers are bad, they do not distinguish between thieves and law-abiding citizens, they punish all of us [Pokot's] – innocent or guilty. Instead of tracking and recovering the stolen livestock, they take animals from innocent citizens and declare them as recovered."

The Pokot respondents also decried their lack of inclusion in security operations. They alleged that their community leaders had not been consulted prior to deployment of security agencies in their area. It is for this reason, as well as the above-mentioned reasons, that the respondents pointed at the minimal information sharing between the Pokot and the security agencies. Some of the respondents also acknowledged sharing information with security agencies with little recourse. A Pokot youth said, "We don't share any information with the police, and even when we share, the police do nothing with it, and they do not act on it to stop cattle rustling."

The lack of inclusion in decision making on strategies to curb cattle rustling also contributes largely to the lack of effectiveness by security agencies. The security officers indicated that the fight against cattle rustling cannot be accomplished by the agency only. They explained that it has to involve collaboration between both the community members and the security agents. However, the mistrust between the Pokot people and the security agencies hindered collaboration in curbing cattle rustling. Acknowledging that community intelligence is an important aspect in curbing cattle rustling, the security agent explained that they would appreciate getting help from the Pokot where cattle rustling has been a challenge for years.

The non-cooperation among the Pokot community and the security team in Baringo South Sub County is a serious impediment to the fight against cattle rustling. As depicted by the respondents, the Pokot see the police as enemies and would not share any intelligence or information regarding cattle theft. This is a serious jeopardy to the war against cattle rustling in Baringo South Sub County. The involvement of state security agents has at times been reported to fuel the tension and conflict in these regions as their intervention almost always involves the perpetration of human rights violations, especially among the most vulnerable members of the community, notably, the women and children.

In addition, from the responses of the Pokot respondents, there was a lack of cohesion between the Pokot and neighboring communities; the Ilchamus and Tugen. According to the respondents both communities blamed each other over the increased case of cattle rustling. A young community policing committee member noted that, "the Tugen blamed the Pokot solely for cattle rustling. The respondent explained that other Tugen community members also engaged in cattle rustling, but the blame was never placed on them. The Pokot respondents felt it was unfair that their community was always blamed for any incidences of stolen livestock, an element that has increased the animosity between the two communities".

### *B. Ilchamus and Tugen Cooperation*

The Ilchamus and Tugen respondents applauded security responses against Pokot, who they described as the aggressors. They also reported that the security responses, though not significantly, had helped reduce cattle theft in the County. The respondents acknowledged that though there was a serious rise in the number of security officer's camps within the sub county, the successes posted in as far as curbing cattle rustling is not commensurate.

The Tugen and Ilchamus respondents equally acknowledged sharing information on impending and ongoing raids as well as paths used by raiders after stealing the animals. The respondents also reported that the security agencies conducted themselves professionally. A senior security officer also corroborated with these statements when he noted,

"We have no problem with the Tugen and Ilchamus communities." Additionally, one of the interviewed chiefs from the Tugen community reiterated, "we share information with security agencies so that they are able to recover our livestock from the Pokot thieves". The Tugen and the Ilchamus communities work hand in hand with security agents with the effort of combating cattle rustling. The community members indicated that they enjoyed working with the security agents since it implied, they got the necessary help needed in protecting their livestock. The support from the Tugen and Ilchamus communities in combating cattle rustling improved the effectiveness of the security agencies. As indicated early, the fight against cattle rustling cannot be achieved by police officers only, rather it requires working hand in hand with community members who experience the vice directly. The Tugen and Ilchamus communities have embraced the importance of working with the security agencies. This according to one of the respondents, "collaboration of the two communities and the security agencies has resulted in reduced rate of cattle rustling in the region unlike in Pokot."

The community members from Tugen and Ilchamus participated often in operations to combat cattle rustling. This was contrary to the Pokot who felt sidelined by the security agencies in the war against cattle rustling. The frequent participation of the Tugen and Ilchamus communities in combating cattle rustling was attributed to the fact that the security agencies were more lenient to the two communities unlike the

Pokot. Although, the Tugen and Ilchamus communities participated in cattle rustling, it was not as rampant as the Pokot communities. Therefore, the two communities felt that they could easily engage with the security agencies and offer any information of cattle rustlers in the two communities. In essence, there seems to be some positive energy provided to the security officers by the Tugen and the Ilchamus communities. The collaboration between the two communities and the security agencies goes a long way in combating the cattle theft menace in the sub county. Apart from important intelligence necessary to pre-empt a looming raid, the two communities also assist the police during livestock tracking and recovery.

### C. Community Approaches towards Cattle Rustling

Different approaches can be adopted by the community members to enhance the efforts of combating cattle rustling. The Assistant County Commissioners explained that the communities need to approach cattle rustling as a vice since its effects trickle down to the community members' economic and social status. The respondents argued that approaching cattle rustling as a crime can facilitate efforts towards combating cattle rustling. One key informant explained that if all communities in the region view cattle rustling as a crime, it would be easy for them to work hand in hand with the security officers by reporting criminals. Emphasis on reconciliation between the two communities is made since failure to redress these grievances by the communities cultivates a niche for a Protracted Social Conflict.

In addition, the respondents called for collaboration between the three major communities in Baringo South Sub-County. According to the participants, the animosity between the Pokot and Tugen and Ilchamus has derailed efforts by security agencies and community policing committees in combating cattle rustling. Acknowledging the existence of community policing committees, it was observed that if the three communities would actively engage in such operations, the issue of cattle rustling can be solved. However, with the different perspectives and level of participation in community policing by the three communities continues to prolong the fight against livestock thieves. Such traditional conflicts have become increasingly destructive and less manageable.

## VI. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

### A. References Effects of Operational Dynamics on Cattle Rustling in Baringo South Sub County

Operational dynamics that included; inhibitive topography such as the stiff hills and poor transport network, political incitements meted by the local politicians, proliferation of arms that enhanced the sophisticate of bandits and morale issues among the Kenya Police reservists generally thwarted security operations in Baringo South Sub County. The stiff hills and the poor road network were said to undermine the turn-around time of security responses, and by-extension the efficiency of security responses to cattle rustling in the area. As one of the respondents observed, "the terrain is so unfriendly, and the bandits who were born in the area can maneuver better than us because they know the area. This gives them some advantage."

As another respondent observed, most of the roads in study area, even the few tarmacked, do not have bridges. The roads meander through dry valleys that are often filled with water during rainy seasons. And even in the dry season, the police vehicles have to slow down to maneuver through the rocky valley full of debris deposited during heavy rains. These sections of the roads have become ambush points for the security personnel. As put by one of the security respondents, "those 'lagas' (dry valleys) are very dangerous, the bandits wait for the security officers at these points and kill them there as the vehicles slows down. I have lost many of my colleagues."

The implication here is that the above two scenarios would only be discounted by engaging the locals (National Police Reserves-NPR). This finding lends support to findings by Omondi (2020), Gumbo, Alusala and Kimani (2019) and Bunei (2017). This study however established that the NPR lacked the requisite training, equipment and are deeply demotivated. As one of the NPR asserted, "we have not received any form of training on weapon handling or fighting, we were just given a gun each and deployed to pursue the bandits who are more experienced in weapon handling than most of us."

According to these study, operations of this nature may be won by a motivated NPR with modern state of the art weapons, and requisite training supported by security agencies combat orientations in ground to air and air to ground supported operations.

### B. Effects of Local Community Dynamics on Cattle Rustling in Baringo South Sub County

This study sought to understand how the relationship between the local communities and the security agencies affect the efficiency of security responses to cattle rustling in Baringo South Sub County. Cattle rustling is perceived as a social cultural practice among the Pokot since the olden days. While Pokot which was identified by all the respondents as the aggressor in the matters cattle rustling did not support the security officers at all, the Tugen and the Ilchamus cooperated with the security teams (Bunei, 2017; Kaprom, 2013). According to this study however, this is the point at which this war against cattle rustling

is lost; Distrust between Baringo Sub county communities and between the one of the hostile communities with security agencies perceived as selective enforcement of law an issue that exacerbated the war against cattle rustling and further endangered security agencies lives. As said one of the Pokot elders said, “we do not cooperate with the security agencies; we see them as enemies because of the way they have treated us. We wish they were out of Baringo.” A young person from the Pokot community also said, “if an opportunity presents itself, we would kill the security agencies.”

The implication here is that to people who highly esteem cattle rustling as a favorable ideology and at the same time treat security agencies as their enemies, winning such battle may start by winning the locals’ hearts first and coming up with a more favorable ideology than theirs.

### *C. Effects of Cross Border Militia Incursion on Cattle Rustling in Baringo South Sub County*

Lastly, the study sought to understand the effects of cross border militia incursion into Baringo South Sub-County on the efficiency of the security response to cattle rustling in the Baringo South sub-county. The incursion of militia from the neighboring countries, counties and sub counties has made the fight against cattle rustling far difficult. This has seen the security team post dismal results and receive serious criticism from the political class, media as well as the local communities. As one of the senior security officers noted, “when cattle are stolen, they could be driven in any direction. This is because there is collaboration among the bandits within the North Rift.”

The implication here is that this complicates the recovery of the stolen livestock. As one community policing committee member indicated, “there are fears that the network of bandits is organized at local, national and international level with nodes in the criminal justice system. There is information indication that the stolen cattle are sometimes transported by air to international markets with the help of local politicians.” As reported by one of the respondents from the security team, “in some case, cattle have been stolen in Baringo south and ended up in Uganda.”

One of the key respondents pointed that the gun culture in the North Rift originated from Pokot and Marakwet communities then demand was gradually created in other neighboring counties seeking to protect their lives and livestock from the already armed communities. As agreed by the existing literature, the Pokot and Marakwet communities, bordering Baringo are the origins of these guns (Bunei, 2017; Welimo; 2017; Murkomen, 2015; Kaprom, 2013 & Wambughu, 2011)

There is therefore no doubt that the presence of sophisticated weapons in the region has been facilitated by the cross-border militia. A respondent from the security agencies in the study area reiterated that, “guns are sold and distributed all over the North Rift by criminals who are borderless in nature. They move one county to the other.”

Additionally, as a result of several militia incursions into the sub county, police officers in the study area noted interesting sophistication by the cattle rustlers. One of the senior security respondents noted, “the bandits use disguises, I remember when the rustlers from Pokot stole cows from Arabal in Baringo Sub-County and they were wearing Samburu (another tribes) attire to hoodwink security agencies. So, the locals whose cattle were stolen reported to us that the Samburu had stolen their cows. Weeks later we realized that they were the Pokots. We could not recover those animals.”

The implication here is that such disguises render efforts by security agencies combating cattle rustling in Baringo South Sub County futile unless supported by the locals who may be engaged to police their communities as National Police Reserves.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The findings indicated that cattle rustling is not a new phenomenon, rather it has existed in communities since the colonial period. Baringo South sub-county is one of the regions where cattle rustling has been practiced to date posing a great challenge to the community members. The practice of cattle rustling may be attributed to social cultural beliefs among the communities in Baringo South Sub County. Considering the traditions of various communities, and the effects such practices have in society, different government security agencies have taken up the role of combating cattle rustling. In as much as the security agencies place themselves in dangerous positions, the issue of cattle rustling still persists. Inadequate resources, complex and sophisticated cattle rustling networks, mistrust between the communities and security agencies are some of the challenges faced in combating cattle rustling. To date, Baringo South Sub County still grapples with the challenge of cattle rustling. Moreover, although community policing committees have been established, they have failed in solving the issue of cattle rustling. Therefore, the study recommends that more effective strategies need to be employed to combat cattle rustling in Baringo South Sub County and other affected regions in Kenya. The study was anchored on the protracted social conflict theory that notes that communal groups may experience deep-seated cleavages based upon racial, religious, cultural or ethnic lines. According to the theory, the government and the states play role to govern and use force where necessary to regulate society, to protect citizens, and to provide collective goods. From the findings, it was

evident that the government officers were perceived as the sole organ whose responsibility is to protect the rights of the citizens. However, from the findings, the government has failed to protect the citizens of Baringo County as they are biased on ethnic lines and use excessive force. Moreover, the officers are poorly equipped to undertake the necessary actions in the fight against cattle rustling. Therefore, based on the theory, the government officials have failed in protecting their citizens.

## VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government should also consider deploying state of the art virtual technology for aerial monitoring of cattle rustler's movements and activities, given the challenges presented by Baringo's inhibitive topography and poor transport network. This will also save security officers from death traps in the lagas' (dry valleys) which were perceived by this study to be security agencies killing ground. Given the magnitude and intricate nature of cattle rustling, aerial monitoring of cattle rustling will also enhance security operations and aptly police cattle rustling networks at all levels; local, national and international. Besides, the government should ensure that the security agencies are well prepared to be a match against the cattle rustlers who have proved to be more sophisticated and complex in their operations.

The study recommends that the security agencies need to familiarize themselves with the terrain in which they operate. One challenge identified by the findings was that the cattle rustlers were more familiar with the terrain which they operated, thus knew how to dodge the police. In the same way, the security agencies need to familiarize themselves with the terrain so as to gain an advantage against the bandits making it easier to arrest the cattle rustlers. The study recommends that the Government should consider developing a framework for NPR, which guarantees monthly remuneration, provision of uniforms and boots, as well as skill at arms training. This is because, one of the challenges identified in responding to cattle rustling incidences was the lack of resources among the NPR officers.

The Government should consider bridging the trust deficit between the local communities living in Baringo, particularly the Pokot, and security agencies deployed to the area. This should increase liaison and information sharing between the Pokot and the security agencies and in the long run curb cattle rustling. This can be done by creating awareness on the need for security agencies in the fight against cattle rustling. Government officials need to work hand in hand in gaining the trust of the communities and assuring them that the efforts by the security agencies are aimed at ensuring their protection and that of their livestock. Failure to this assurance, it is likely that the Pokot community will remain distant to security agencies and opposed to efforts by security agencies in combating cattle rustling. The Government should consider matching coercive state responses to cattle rustling with non-militaristic developmental interventions, particularly in Pokot areas. Ideally, the development of roads and schools should; increase the turn-around time of security responses, afford young people the requisite education and skills needed to pursue other sustainable livelihoods, and provide a sustainable solution to cattle rustling in North Rift.

In consideration to the mistrust between the security agencies and the communities, the study recommends that the security agencies deployed to Baringo South Sub-County should reconsider use of excessive force against the Pokot Community. The agencies should also establish mechanisms for investigating and redressing grievances leveled by the community. The use of excessive force was condemned by the communities and in particular the Pokot who felt that it violated their basic human rights. Therefore, the security agencies need to be more effective by applying their investigative techniques rather than using force in arresting the cattle bandits. Lastly, the management of the security agencies need to create a corruption free zone in the work place. This can be done by ensuring that no officer receives any bribe from the cattle rustlers. An investigation needs to be conducted so as to root out the security officers who engage in corrupt activities at the expense of the same communities they are needed to protect. This will increase effectiveness of the security agencies and ultimate decline in the incidences of cattle rustling.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.



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