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## Evaluating Strategic Solutions to Cattle Rustling from a Gender Perspective in West Pokot County

Andrew Gitau Kimani

Tutorial Fellow, Department of Criminology and Social Work,  
Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya

### **Abstract:**

*Cattle rustling has become a major concern in discussions about security. The study examined from a gender perspective the strategies that should be adopted to mitigate the effects of cattle rustling in West Pokot County. Given the influence of gender transformation on the cattle rustling practice, the researcher deemed it necessary the measures put in place to curb the problem of cattle rustling to include the gender perspective. The study involved 350 respondents stratified selected from adult residents of Pokot community, community elders, opinion leaders, political and administrative leaders, the local youth, women and men as well as local and international NGOs dealing with cattle rustling issues in West. Closed and open-ended questionnaires, key informant guide and field observations, were used for data collection. Results showed that the provision of education facilities, creating public awareness, holding peace meeting, deploying armed police, development of infrastructure, arresting and jailing of raiders and setting up police camps were used to deter cattle rustling. The study concluded that the direct engagement of both genders who were active participants in cattle rustling through the ages would serve as the solution towards the eradication of cattle rustling. The study recommended that introduction of cattle logbook with unique identifiers and chipping all livestock with RFID technology will help to curb cattle theft. Various permanent incentives including fair, unskewed infrastructural development, carried out in a participatory manner was also agreed to be the best way to curb cattle rustling activities. Lastly, the study suggests for more research to provide an updated view of cattle jacking which has become an emerging security in the region.*

**Keywords:** Cattle rustling, gender, cattle raids, gender transformation, transformation, raiding, strategies

### **1. Introduction**

Many researchers agree that cattle rustling is a major cause of insecurity in pastoralist North Rift including West Pokot County (Muiruri, 2009). Despite the Kenyan government efforts to build and restore peace, disarm local population, deploy many police officers, stop illegal trade and clamp on illegal livestock business in West Pokot County, cattle rustling activities seem not likely to end soon (Amene, 2009). Promotions of communal security may be difficult to achieve when there is no trust between the law enforcement agencies and the people. Building the bridges between law enforcement and the communities may establish good grounds for tackling the problem of cattle rustling.

Given the influence of gender transformation on the cattle rustling practice, the researcher deemed it necessary the measures put in place to curb the problem of cattle rustling to include the gender perspective. Different from the tenets of the cubism theory, religion in West Pokot despite being as strong influence is not an agent of polarization among the different groups.

For a very long time, cattle rustling have led to great suffering to the people of Pokot and it has defied all interventions from the local community, civil society and the state. Indeed, cattle rustling has existed in the area for countless generations but it took a deadly dimension in 1992 when 700 people including police officers lost their lives, 600 houses put to ashes, 39 schools closed, thousands of livestock stolen and many families displaced. Many of the displaced left the area to settle in safer places thus disrupting people's lives and development activities in the area. Since then the activity has become violent and many people have been displaced and farms have been left fallow due to increased intercommunity and cross border raids (KHRC, 2001). Guliye (2007) discusses the migration of pastoralists as both a pacifier and an igniter of conflicts. But the large-scale movement of people and changing of lifestyle to more sedentary ways of life like cultivation of crops drastically reduces cattle related conflicts. Men and women who farm and cultivate and see the benefits accrued from their crops are more likely to have peaceful and meaningful life. Therefore, scholars are in agreement that strategies that impact on both men and women are more effective than those that concentrate on only one gender.

But why are raiders highly motivated to steal cattle and even kill people including women and children? In northern Kenya, unemployed youths are willing to raid cattle, livestock businessmen are readily willing to sell arms to the raiders and buy the stolen cattle belonging to pastoralists, and there is no adequate police protection to deter cattle rustlers from committing the crimes. The cattle rustlers are also able to raid the cattle easily because they understand the

movement of the pastoralists during the dry and rainy seasons. Hence cattle rustling crimes are likely to continue so long as the police will not effectively protect the pastoralists.

This paper is a summary of a study that sought to evaluate from a gender perspective the strategies put in place to curb cattle rustling.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Site Selection and Description

The study was carried out in West Pokot County in Kenya which is home to 512,690 people. It is mainly occupied by the Pokot people and other groups such as the Turkana and Marakwet in smaller populations. It borders Uganda, extends from the plains on the Eastern boundary, the highlands of North Western Kenya to the plains of Lake Baringo. Most Pokot reside in Kenya's West Pokot District, a pestle-shaped administrative unit of approximately 9,135 square kilometres stretching from 1°07'N to 2°40'N and from 34°37'E to 35°49'E. West Pokot is the northernmost County in the Rift Valley Province. Situated alongside the Uganda border, West Pokot abuts the Counties of Turkana to the North and the East, Baringo and Elgeyo Marakwet to the Southeast, and Trans Nzoia to the Southwest. Cool, rugged highlands that form part of the western wall of the Rift Valley run through the centre of the County, separating the dry, hot plains.

### 2.2. Target Population

The study targeted the wider Pokot community members. Only adults above the age of 18 years were involved in the study. Community elders, opinion leaders, political and administrative officers were the key informants. Residents and members of the community were sampled according to the Sub-county, Division, Location and Sub-location. Local and international NGOs domiciled in West Pokot and concerned with cattle rustling and security issues were also involved in the study. Residents of the region have witnessed a transformation of the cattle rustling tradition since the pre-colonial years to date (Gachihi, 2014). The study population included men and women in contact with the cattle rustling practice.

### 2.3. Sampling Methods

The research used various combinations of sampling methods. Multi-stage sampling was applied in the identification of the specific areas for collecting data. Sampling was done at the National Government administrative units which were as follows; sub-county, division, location and sub-location

## 3. Data Analysis

Data for the study was collected through questionnaires, interview guides, and observation of social, economic and cultural institutions in the area. The questionnaires constituted both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The interview guide was used to collect information from the key informants. The researcher ensured the reliability of the questionnaire by careful structuring and logical sequencing of the questions. The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS software version 2.0.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The findings of this study examined the bio-data considered to have meaningful influence on patterns and systems that have shaped gender transformation in cattle rustling practice in West Pokot. The variables including gender, ethnic community or clan, religion, education level, marital status, age and source of livelihood are therefore considered.

### 4.2. Gender

Findings from the study indicate that men constituted of the largest proportion of participants. As shown in table 4.2, 75.45% of the participants were men while only 24.55% were women. The researcher observed that women were significantly underrepresented.

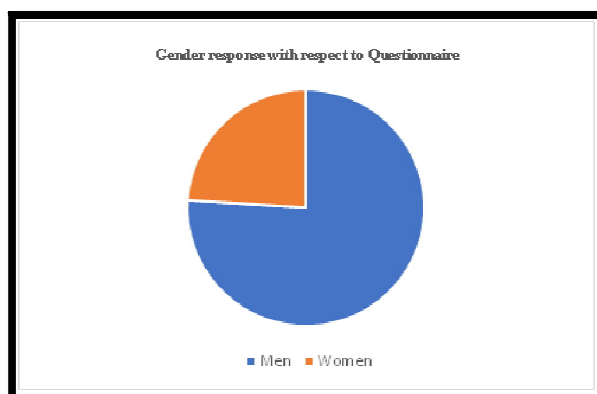


Figure 1

	FGDs	KIIs	Total	Percentage (%)
Men	10	6	126	75.45
Women	8	3	41	24.55
Total	18	9	167	100

Table 1: Response Rate with Respect to Fgds and Kiis

From the table 1 and the figure 1, it can be depicted that there were fewer women in cattle rustling than men. The variance in the roles of men and women explain the wide gap between the participation of men and women in the study. A major problem is the low status of one gender in pastoral societies is because women have no inheritance right, and are isolated from decision-making concerning them directly or indirectly. They are deemed to be property and are engendered from early ages to respect any male authority and submit to them. (Cheserek et.al 2007). The data provides evidence that both men and women had different roles with regard to the use of cattle obtained from raids.

#### 4.3. Religion

According to the table 2 , a majority of the respondents, (94.3%) ascribed to the Christian religion , Muslim (3.6%) and Traditionalist (2.1%); which gradually replaced the traditional religion that was practiced by the ancestors (Kimaiyo, 2016).

Religion	Men	Women	Total	Percentage (%)
Christian	105	27	132	94.3
Muslim	3	2	5	3.6
Traditionalist	2	1	3	2.1
Grand Total	110	30	140	100

Table 1

Religiosity in West Pokot has grown since the 1960s with majority of the people who ascribed to traditional beliefs converting to Christianity and other religions. This was as a result of translating the new testament into local language. It was observed that in this region men were more religious than women. Based on these wide-ranging and comprehensive datasets, this study finds that, globally, women are more devout than men by several standard measures of religious commitment. After the introduction and set-up of missionary schools and churches in the region, many community members who embraced Christianity encouraged their children to get formal education and shun the culture of cattle raiding. Religion has helped in reconciling warring groups and ensuring harmony among the people.

#### 4.4. Education Level

From the study results, only 12.9% of the participants had attained a university degree as presented. A majority of the participants attested to having a primary or secondary certificate as their highest level of academic certification which was not the case about half a century ago.

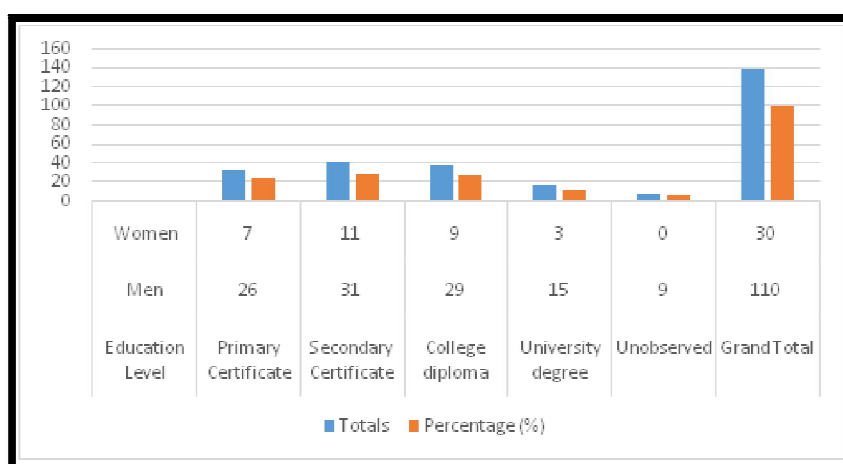


Figure 2

Education has played an important role in reducing cattle rustling practice. Tepilit (2006) associates education with modernity and change of perspective in the roles of men and women in the community. Through education the communities in West Pokot have become illuminated on the issues of wealth accumulation especially owing to contact with other modernised communities

#### 4.5. Source of Livelihood

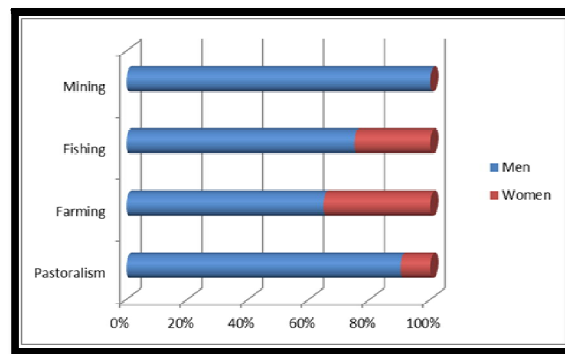


Figure 3

According to the figure 3, the main source of livelihood among the Pokot is pastoralism, however in recent times it has been observed that they have alternative sources of livelihood. This includes; farming, fishing and mining. According to FAO (2017), increasing effects of El-Nino and climate change has increased and made droughts more widespread and severe. FAO points out that “drought-hit pastoralists face reduced milk production, rising malnutrition and have limited income-earning capacity and severely constrained access to food.” Alternatives to keeping livestock such as growing drought resistant crops are being seen as the panacea. Sorghum, wheat and chilies are being introduced as alternates and touted as game changers (AGRA). Galvin (2009:193) states that “As pastoralists become sedentary, cultivate and diversify their livelihoods, the move to increase control over land becomes understandable.

#### 5. Strategic Solutions Employed in Curbing Cattle Rustling

The objective of this study was to evaluate the strategic solutions employed in curbing cattle rustling in West Pokot County. As discussed below are the strategies that have been put in place to prevent cattle rustling crimes.

The Kenyan government, the local community and the civil society have implemented some methods to stop cattle rustling crimes, namely: building of border schools, further disarmament initiatives, development of infrastructure, introduction of cattle logbooks and electronic identification devices, settling land disputes, intermarriages, diversified job opportunities, eradication of corruption and as well provision of free education.

##### 5.1. Building Border Schools & Provision of Free Education

Cattle rustling disrupted education due to closure of schools and displacement. According to Kennedy (2008), empowering the community through education reinforces the government’s position as a contributor and not an intruder in the community. It was a humble plea by the community that education be promoted to curb the involvement of the school going group from actively getting involved in the raids. In addition, young people who have acquired education through the help of the government could serve as ambassadors against retrogressive practices such as cattle rustling. Developmental NGOs have also encouraged the community to embrace education by helping build schools and paid school fees for children who have enrolled in schools. Furthermore, instilling knowledge in the community would expose them to the downsides of cattle rustling. Tansel & Gungor (2012) cites education as one of the long-term solutions to the problem of cattle rustling in West Pokot and the North Rift. The low levels of education in the area also helped perpetuate cattle rustling. Poorly educated young men become cattle raiders due to their inability to get formal employment and better opportunities.

##### 5.2. Community Policing

The government and the community are using community policing strategy to fight against cattle rustling. Community policing was launched in Kenya in 2005 but was not fully entrenched in pastoralist northern Kenya till 2010 (Kenya Police, 2010). The community policing strategy allows for citizens and police to work together in identifying security problems in an area and also collaborate in seeking workable solutions to the problem (Broghden and Nijhar, 2005). Using churches as avenues for providing adult education would enlighten women on ways of generating and accumulating wealth and reduce their chances of being accomplices in cattle raiding ventures.

##### 5.3. Peace Meetings

The local community leaders from Pokot community have made several peace building efforts intended to stop the cattle rustling phenomenon, with little success (Amene, 2009). Actively engaging local leaders and allowing them to assume leadership in the operations since they are trusted by their fellow tribe’s men. The local leaders can lead the people in peace talks to facilitate cohesive coexistence

##### 5.4. Deploying Armed Police and Disarmament

The government has recruited police reservists and deployed Administration police officers in all chief’s camps in the area after the 2001 raid (Kenya Police, 2005). Police reservists are volunteers from the local community who are

armed by the state and assume police powers while on duty. The main function of the police reservists is to protect the local community in areas where police presence is minimal or ineffective (Hiltermann, et al, 2002).

Lack of Government presence and security officials thinly spaced out exacerbated the cattle rustling menace. According to Kimani (2019), in neighboring Uganda, their Uganda People's Defence Forces has a greater presence along the common border than the Kenya Defence Forces, which has only one camp at Kacheliba, with limited border patrols.

Progress in resolving the problem of cattle rustling may require fostering of a better relationship between the law enforcement agents and the locals. For instance, actively engaging local leaders and allowing them to assume leadership in the operations since they are trusted by their fellow tribe's men.

### *5.5. Development of Infrastructure*

The absence of or poor infrastructure, notably roads and telecommunication, tend to compromise effective border control severely, especially in situations of hot pursuit, where security agents need to cross borders or exchange information with their counterparts across the border. According to Kaprom (2013), poor economic development and lack of social amenities triggers conflict as people attempt to fight over limited resources. The Kenyan side of the border in West Pokot, there is poor or non-existent investment in infrastructure. The poor state of roads and the limited access to water and telecommunications remain major impediments to combating cattle rustling and contribute to general insecurity in that remote and expansive region, with its difficult terrain and harsh climatic conditions. In contrast, infrastructure on the Ugandan side of the common border was visibly more advanced. (Kimani, et.al, 2019)

Development of infrastructure in West Pokot will help promote economic development hence providing a wide range of opportunities to the residents. Encouraging development in the region will reduce dependency on livestock and hence the need to raid from other communities. With more alternatives to cattle rearing and farming, many young people can productively utilize their time instead of engaging in criminal activities such as cattle rustling.

### *5.6. Arrest and Jailing of Raiders*

Today, the cattle rustling practice is seen as an act of taking another's property or possession forcefully and without their consent. As such, offenders can be arrested and prosecuted by law. According to Hope (2019), cattle rustling is considered a crime according to the Kenyan constitution.

Further, since the practice does not benefit the members of the community, it is only fair that cattle rustlers are arrested to allow peace-loving citizens to live in harmony.

### *5.7. Stopping Illegal Livestock and Arms Trade*

There have been traders in illegal livestock and arms trade among the politicians and some leaders of the Pokot who make it difficult for the police to apprehend and charge them in a court of law. The Kenyan government ought to police her borders with neighbouring countries of Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia to curb the infiltration of light arms from those countries.

### *5.8. Women Empowerment*

Educating women has been cited as a long-term strategy in addressing the problem of cattle rustling in the areas. Women have great influence on the roles of men in cattle rustling. While they encourage them, they also help the men by hiding weapons and sharing intel about law enforcement. To achieve success, the government must look at the problem through the lens of gender relations as it is the interplay of gender and dynamics of cattle rustling that is keeping the practice alive

## **6. Conclusion**

The study concluded that the direct engagement of both genders who were active participants in cattle rustling through the ages would serve as the solution towards the eradication of cattle rustling. Cattle rustling has defied all interventions from the local community, civil society and the state for a long time.

## **7. Recommendations**

The study recommended the following:

More police officers to be deployed on the borders to prevent cross border cattle rustling and entry of illegal arms into the country.

Provision of free education should be made compulsory to enable the young men and women from the disadvantaged families access education in order to secure formal employment opportunities.

Governments around the cattle prone areas should adopt various technologies to ensure efficient livestock identification and movement recording. These technologies can be listed as the ones below and more complex ones.

- The use of Radio Frequency Identification (RIFD) is one important system that can be introduced gradually or on the lead herd. RIFD uses electromagnetic waves to identify tagged animals when they go grazing and when they come back. Tagged missing animals can then be followed using these radio frequencies by security officers
- Biometric identifiers-include; retinal scans, muzzle patterns in cattle, facial recognition, immunological labelling and DNA analysis. They are considered more reliable because they cannot be falsified. When animals

are born, these features are captured in a retrieval system that is accessible to livestock officers, abattoir managers, security officials among others

- Special recognizable universal branding should be introduced- These permanent marks should be on the animal skin and non-transferable. The marks not only play a role in identifying the animal but also having it accepted in registered abattoirs.
- The introduction of a Cattle logbook- This document will not only help cattle owners to keep records of the number of cattle each owns, but the indelible marks, brands, unique feature among other identifying features. This cattle logbook will precede any formal transaction either buying or selling and must be stamped by officials of both Kenyan County and National Governments to make a transaction legal. This logbooks will facilitate the slaughter of any cattle presented to any abattoir as it is counterchecked by veterinary officers, abattoir managers and the local security official like the area Chiefs. No cattle can or should be transported across any border without this document.
- Cattle can also be put a Micro-chip. This is an electronic transponder that is inserted directly under the animal skin where it remains a permanent identifier that can be read with an appropriate electronic reader. These chips can be manufactured en-masse and any cattle that goes for early vaccination, can also have this chips implanted in them
- Tattoos-applied on the cattle's skin using a tool and a head bearing the tattoo pins which is slapped firmly against the shoulder of the animal. Cattle from various groups are given different labels and this helps to control cattle theft. These unique tattoos should be distributed and be well known to all players in the cattle industry. The tattoos can even be County-specific or Region specific and be applied from the birth of a calf to when it matures and is ready for slaughter.
- Use of tags-Variety tags are prepared written in form of numbers or letters and are placed on the animal to move around with it. Similar to tattoos, these tags can be region-specific.

Contemporary violent cattle rustling can only be reduced by introducing modern methods of tracking and tracing but most important thwarting attempts to conceive to steal livestock. Governments should nonetheless put focus on coordinated humane disarmament procedures. Equitable and targeted infrastructural development in these marginalized areas should be encouraged. This is to enable them to come at par with other 'modern' urban areas.

It is noted however that disruption of a market to sell and consequently slaughter stolen livestock will ultimately be the panacea to cattle rustling. If these markets and abattoirs can have streamlined automated systems that are not prone to manipulation and those that follow the pattern of growth of an animal (livestock) right from when its born up-to when it is going to the slaughter then plate. This kind of official Livestock Logbook to be issued by the Government can be used to be able to track the growth and development of any stock and every transaction is entered therein.

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