

# Application of Joint Peace Committees in Management of Cattle Rustling among the Residents of Turkana and West Pokot Counties, Kenya

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## Abstract

Cattle rustlings remain a major cause of insecurity and conflict among the pastoralists in Turkana and West Pokot counties. As a result of the fatalities and loss of properties, the Kenyan government has made concerted efforts to control the vice by forced disarmament of communities living in Turkana and West Pokot counties, increased deployment of police reservists, increased patrols by the government, awareness creation and sensitization of the residents. However, these efforts have not succeeded to control the problem within Turkana and West Pokot counties as they have been more reactive than proactive. Therefore, the study sought to assess the influence of joint peace committees in management of cattle rustling among the residents of Turkana and West Pokot counties, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey in design. The target population were individuals from Turkana and Pokot ethnic group living within Turkana and West Pokot border area who have been affected by cattle rustling. Systematic random sampling, snowballing and purposive sampling were used in selecting respondents. The findings indicated that the joint peace committee agreement variable had a statistically significant positive influence on the management of cattle rustling, evidenced by a regression coefficient of t-value of 8.863, and a *p*-value of 0.000. The study concluded that joint peace committees are a critical and effective mechanism in the management of cattle rustling in Turkana and West Pokot counties. The components of inclusivity and trust, structured dialogue platforms, and training and capacity building were found to significantly influence outcomes. The study recommended that the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, in collaboration with county governments, should institutionalize joint peace committees by embedding them in local governance structures. These committees

have proven effective in fostering dialogue, trust-building, and conflict resolution.

## Keywords

Joint Peace Committees, Management of Cattle Rustling, Turkana and West Pokot Counties

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## 1. Introduction

Cattle rustling which is an illicit act of stealing livestock is a complex challenge which has persisted in many regions of the world, particularly those with pastoralist communities (Allen, 2019). It is a deeply rooted social, economic, and cultural issue, often contributing to inter-community conflicts thus jeopardizing the livelihoods of those dependent on pastoralism (Fehr & Fischbacher, 2020). As a phenomenon with multifaceted implications, understanding and addressing cattle rustling demand a holistic approach that transcends conventional law enforcement strategies.

In the olden days cattle rustling were characterized by organized raids conducted by young warriors or “morans” from one community against another. These raids were often planned and executed with precision, involving stealthy tactics, coordination, and sometimes violence (Thiare & Pham, 2021). The stolen livestock, primarily cattle, were then herded back to the raiding community’s territory, where they would be integrated into the existing herd or traded for other goods and services. However, in contemporary society, cattle rustling has undergone a dramatic transformation, associated with organized criminal syndicates, armed militias, and illicit networks.

Cattle rustling has over the years been a universal problem. For instance, in Brazil, the problem has been common particularly in rural areas as an organized crime. In these regions, cattle theft is often linked to other illegal activities such as drug trafficking (Felizardo, 2020). The vast and diverse geography of Brazil, coupled with remote rural areas, provides opportunities for criminals to engage in cattle rustling leading to theft of thousands of cattle annually. This causes significant economic losses to the livestock industry in the country (Rocha, 2019).

In India, states such as Rajasthan have also been affected by cattle rustling. The theft of cattle has been a longstanding issue, affecting both small and large-scale farmers (Government of India, 2019). The cattle are often stolen for various reasons, including illegal slaughter and the sale of meat (Njoga, Njoga, & Guiné, 2021). In Nigeria, cattle’s rustling is common in the northern regions where the problem is exacerbated by inter-tribal conflicts, economic hardships, and the availability of illegal arms (Bello & Okorie, 2019). The pastoralist communities, such as the Fulani, have been affected by the theft of thousands of cattle annually. Both the small-scale herders and large commercial ranchers have been affected. The Nigerian government has made attempts to control the menace through law en-

forcement and community engagement (Yusuf & Akpor, 2021). However, the problem has persisted due to its many complexities.

In South Sudan, cattle rustling has been a challenge perpetuated by tribal conflicts and a history of inter-ethnic tensions. The problem has caused significant displacement and loss of lives (UNDP, 2019a). The pastoralist communities, such as the Dinka and Nuer, have been engaged in cattle raiding for centuries. Efforts to address the issue have been complicated by the overall security situation in the country. Therefore, incidents of cattle rustling continue to contribute to instability in the region (Manyok, 2017).

In Kenya, the problem of cattle rustling has been there for decades particularly among the pastoralist communities. The menace which has resulted in massive loss of lives and destruction of properties is deeply rooted in historical inter-ethnic conflicts, competition for resources, particularly water and pasture, and a cultural tradition that often glorifies cattle raiding (Ochalla, 2018). Various ethnic groups, including the Maasai, Samburu, Turkana, and Pokot, have historically been involved in cattle rustling incidents.

Effective management of cattle rustling requires a multifaceted approach, tailored to the unique socio-economic and geographic dynamics of affected regions. Among the most impactful community-based strategies is the establishment of Joint Peace Committees (JPCs), which bring together diverse stakeholders including elders, youth leaders, local administrators, and security personnel to collaboratively address cattle rustling. These committees are particularly effective in regions where formal state presence is limited, and traditional structures hold significant influence. Joint Peace Committees leverage local knowledge, trust networks, and social cohesion to prevent, detect, and resolve conflicts related to cattle theft (Maina, 2019). By fostering dialogue and cooperation across communities, they reduce inter-communal tensions and promote peaceful coexistence. Moreover, JPCs enhance community ownership of security efforts, enabling proactive vigilance and rapid response to threats. Their cost-effectiveness and adaptability to cultural contexts make them especially suitable for pastoral regions, where sustainable, locally driven solutions are essential for long-term peace and security (Mutunga, 2018). Ultimately, the participatory nature of Joint Peace Committees not only strengthens social bonds but also builds a resilient, community-centered framework for managing cattle rustling. Given the importance attached to this strategy, the study sought to assess its impact on management of cattle rustling among the residents of Turkana and West Pokot Counties, Kenya.

## **2. Literature Review: Use of Joint Peace Committees in Management of Cattle Rustling**

Joint Peace Committees (JPCs) have emerged as vital mechanisms for conflict resolution and peace building in regions affected by cattle rustling. These committees typically comprise of representatives from rival pastoralist communities, local authorities, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders (Catley, Lind, &

Scoones, 2019). Through dialogue, negotiation, and mediation, Joint Peace Committees work to address underlying grievances, build trust between conflicting parties, and promote peaceful coexistence. UNDP (2019b) highlights the effectiveness of Joint Peace Committees in conflicts mitigation and reduction of cattle rustling incidents by fostering dialogue and reconciliation among communities. As platforms for dialogue and conflict resolution, Joint Peace Committees contribute to prevention of violence and promotion of sustainable peace in conflict-prone areas.

Chen and Wang (2020) assessed the impact of joint peace committees on conflict resolution in rural China. The study utilized a mixed-methods research design. The target population comprised residents of rural communities with and without Joint Peace Committees (JPCs). Stratified random sampling was used to select participants from both groups. The study found that communities with active Joint Peace Committees experienced lower levels of conflicts, enhanced social cohesion, and improved dispute resolution mechanisms compared to those without Joint Peace Committees. This study conducted in China looked at conflicts generally. However, the current study was conducted in Kenya and specifically focused on cattle rustling.

Osei and Ampofo (2021) researched on the effectiveness of joint peace committees in resolving inter-ethnic conflicts in Ghana. The study employed a qualitative research design. The target population included members of Joint Peace Committees and community leaders involved in conflict resolution efforts. Participants with relevant experience and knowledge were purposively selected. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative data. The findings indicated that Joint Peace Committees played a significant role in facilitating dialogue, mediation, and conflict resolution. The study focused on inter-ethnic conflicts while the current study looked into management of cattle rustling.

Suleiman and Ahmed (2018) did a study on the effectiveness of joint peace committees in mitigating tribal clashes and cattle theft in Northern Nigeria. The study employed a quantitative research design. The target population included members of tribal communities in Northern Nigeria affected by conflicts. Stratified random sampling was used to select participants from various tribal groups. Data was collected through structured surveys administered to members of Joint Peace Committees and community members. Statistical analysis was conducted using inferential techniques. The study revealed that Joint Peace Committees significantly reduced the frequency and intensity of tribal clashes, fostering peace and stability in the region. However, this study focused on both tribal clashes and cattle theft while the current study focused only on cattle rustling.

Ngugi and Kiplagat (2022) conducted a study on the role of joint peace committees in resolving pastoral conflicts in Kenya's Rift Valley utilized a participatory action research approach in their study. The target population included pastoralist communities in Kenya's Rift Valley region affected by conflicts. Convenience sampling was used to select participants, including community members,

elders, and representatives of Joint Peace Committees. Data was collected through community workshops, interviews, and focus group discussions. Content analysis was employed to analyse qualitative data. The study revealed that Joint Peace Committees facilitated dialogue, reconciliation, and conflict resolution among pastoralist communities, contributing to sustainable peace and coexistence. However, the study was conducted in the entire rift valley region while the current study was conducted specifically in the border of Turkana and west Pokot counties.

Kimani, Okemwa, & Masiga (2021) expanded on these findings by adopting a longitudinal approach to assess the sustainability of joint peace committees in West Pokot County. Over a period of five years, their study monitored the performance of these committees in terms of incident response times, recovery of stolen cattle, and overall community satisfaction with local security measures. The results underscored that the continued effectiveness of joint peace committees was highly dependent on consistent engagement with formal security agencies and ongoing training programmes. The study provided compelling evidence that, when adequately supported, these committees not only deter cattle rustling but also contribute to a broader decline in rural violence and inter-community conflicts. The study effectively demonstrates the long-term impact of joint peace committees in West Pokot but focuses narrowly on committee performance metrics without evaluating complementary strategies such as natural resource sharing agreements or disarmament efforts that could influence cattle rustling dynamics.

A cross-regional study by Iyela, Ikwuakam, & Jimoh (2023) further validated the importance of joint peace committees in cattle rustling management across multiple pastoral communities in Nigeria. By employing a comparative survey design, the researchers were able to analyse the performance of joint peace committees in diverse settings, thereby highlighting the influence of local contextual factors. Their findings revealed that while the structural framework of joint peace committees was generally effective, their success varied significantly based on community cohesion, local leadership dynamics, and the extent of governmental support. The study concluded that tailored approaches, which consider local nuances, are essential for optimising the function of joint peace committees. Though this comparative study emphasizes the importance of local context in the success of joint peace committees, it is geographically limited to Nigeria and does not address the unique socio-political and cross-border realities of Kenyan pastoral regions, thus necessitating contextualized research in Turkana and West Pokot.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

The research was guided by social learning and conflict transformation theories. Social Learning Theory was developed by Albert Bandura in the 1960s. Social Learning Theory (SLT) posits that individuals learn aggressive and violent behaviours through observing and imitating others within their social groups and environments (Bandura, 1971). The theory emphasizes that violence stems from so-

cialization processes rather than inherent human traits.

Social Learning Theory is relevant to understanding cattle rustling between the Turkana and West Pokot communities. Within these societies, cattle raids are culturally legitimized as a display of masculinity, bravery and warrior prowess. Young men are socialized and incentivized to engage in cattle rustling. At the same time, SLT holds that behaviours can be modified through new learning experiences (Bandura, 1977). By bringing together Turkana and Pokot communities to interact in non-violent settings, there is potential to unlearn hostile attitudes and behaviours that fuel cattle rustling. Joint initiatives like peace dialogues, sporting events, and natural resource management can create opportunities for positive inter-group contact and cooperation. Through such experiences, the two communities can acquire skills and reinforcement for nonviolent strategies of addressing conflict.

A limitation of SLT, however, is its overly cognitive focus on the individual, devoid of context (Fox & DeLisi, 2018). The theory downplays structural drivers of violence like socio-economic and political marginalization of pastoralist communities. Further, SLT assumes behavioural change is rational, yet identity-based conflicts are laden with emotions, meaning and symbolic politics that persist beyond material interests. Overall, SLT offers useful insights, but requires complementing with other theories.

This research was similarly guided by Conflict Transformation Theory (CTT) developed by John Paul Lederach in the 1990s. CTT differs from conventional conflict resolution approaches by stressing the need to positively transform relationships, interests and discourses underpinning intractable, identity-based conflicts (Lederach, 2003). The theory recognizes that conflicts are socially constructed, and often rooted in unmet human needs, identities, and structural injustices that require long-term transformation.

The cattle rustling conflict between the Turkana and Pokot is deeply rooted in complex socio-cultural, economic and political grievances accumulated over time. CTT provides a lens for understanding how community partnership strategies can address core issues and transform hostile relationships between the two groups. CTT goes beyond resolving specific livestock raids or disputes; it aims at reconciling communities to co-exist peacefully and prevent future conflicts. However, critiques argue that CTT is too idealistic about achieving harmony between groups engaged in deep-rooted contests (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2005). Overall, Conflict Transformation Theory offers a helpful framework, alongside SLT, for evaluating community peace building initiatives between groups with a history of engrained conflict.

SLT, explains psychological and social processes through which positive attitudes and behaviours can be cultivated to reduce cattle rustling while CTT provides a model for transforming relationships to address root causes and build sustainable peace. Integrating these theories provides a robust framework for assessing the influence of joint peace committees in management of cattle rustling

among the residents of Turkana and West Pokot Counties, Kenya.

#### 4. The Study Area and Methodology

The research was conducted in Turkana and West Pokot counties border area. The border has been an epicentre of protracted cattle rustling conflict between the Turkana and Pokot communities (Kapoyon, 2019). The study areas were the two sub-counties; Turkana South Sub-County in Turkana County and Pokot North Sub-County in West Pokot County on each side of the border that have been most impacted by or involved in partnership initiatives to combat cattle rustling which has been most experienced in the two sub-counties compared to other areas.

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design enabled the researcher to systematically collect both quantitative and qualitative data from a wide range of respondents to gain an in-depth understanding of the current status and effectiveness of joint peace committees at curbing cattle rustling among the Turkana and Pokot communities. The target population were individuals from Turkana and Pokot ethnic groups living within Turkana and West Pokot border area who had been affected by cattle rustling. The study targeted the 2400 heads of these households residing in the selected divisions in the respective sub-counties in the Turkana-West Pokot border who had been affected by cattle rustling and involved in related cattle rustling control initiatives. The study also targeted 35 youth leaders, 15 local administration officials, 30 security agents, and 20 pastoral association leaders within the said area. It was expected that these individuals had direct experiences and first-hand knowledge on cattle rustling and related control initiatives within the Turkana-West Pokot border, thus could provide valuable insights on the challenges, dynamics, and effectiveness of current strategies. The sample size comprised of 331 households' heads who were selected from 2400 households. This number was guided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) which indicates that when a sample frame is 2400, the sample size should be 331. Pilot test was conducted at the West Pokot and Baringo border where 33 questionnaires were distributed, 2 interviews and 3 focused group discussions were conducted. This represented 10% of the study sample size.

The study collected primary data using questionnaires, key interview guide and focus group discussion guide. Questionnaires collected data from heads of households. Key informant interview guide was used to collect data from the key informants who were youth leaders, pastoralists association leaders, local administration officials and security agents. Focus group discussions were held to collect data from the elderly heads of households who were above 70 years of age and had experienced the cattle rustling menace for a long period of time during their life thus were more knowledgeable on all aspects of the problem.

Given the history of ethnic tension between the Turkana and Pokot communities, maintaining neutrality during Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) was a top priority throughout the study. To ensure a neutral and respectful environment, discussions were conducted separately within

each community to minimize suspicion and tension that might arise from inter-group interactions. This approach allowed participants to speak freely without fear of judgment or reprisal.

Local research assistants who were fluent in the local languages and culturally sensitive to the nuances of each community were recruited and trained in ethical data collection and conflict sensitivity. These facilitators were carefully selected to avoid any perceived political or ethnic bias. Neutral venues, such as schools, churches, or community halls, were used to foster a sense of safety and impartiality.

Before each session, the research team emphasized confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the non-political nature of the study. Open-ended questions were carefully framed to avoid leading language or assumptions. Additionally, triangulation of data across different groups and individuals helped to cross-validate perspectives and reduce the influence of any one-sided narrative. These measures collectively ensured that neutrality was upheld and that the data collected reflected authentic and balanced community voices.

The effectiveness of Joint Peace Committees in reducing cattle rustling was assessed through a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators. From the quantitative side, effectiveness was evaluated based on respondents' perceptions collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire. Key aspects included the extent to which the committee selection process was seen as inclusive, the level of trust built among communities, the usefulness of dialogue platforms in resolving disputes, the perceived reduction in cattle rustling incidents, and the adequacy of training and capacity-building initiatives. Responses that averaged above the midpoint of the scale indicated agreement and were interpreted as evidence of effectiveness.

On the qualitative side, effectiveness was gauged through insights drawn from key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Participants described instances where committees played a role in successfully recovering stolen livestock, resolving disputes without violence, and fostering peaceful coexistence between rival communities. The sustainability of committee operations and the level of community support they received also emerged as critical indicators of success. Together, these perceptions provided a holistic picture of how Joint Peace Committees were functioning and the extent to which they were contributing to the reduction of cattle rustling.

Qualitative data was transcribed, translated, coded and analysed thematically using NVivo software that helped to identify patterns and explanatory relationships. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS software. Descriptive statistics involved the use of percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviations. Inferential statistics involved the use of correlation analysis and multiple regression analyses. Pearson Correlation analysis was used to determine the nature of the relationship between variables. Multiple regression analysis was employed to analyse the relationship between a single dependent variable and several independent variables. After the analysis quantitative data was presented using tables and diagrams while qualitative data was presented in prose form.

## 5. Discussion of Findings

The following are the research findings on socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, and use of Joint Peace Committees (JPCs) in managing cattle rustling along the border areas of Turkana and West Pokot counties.

### 5.1. Response Rate and Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The following are the research findings on the response rate and socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

#### 5.1.1. Response Rate

**Table 1** presents the response rate, detailing the realized and non-realized sample sizes along with their corresponding percentages. Response rates are a critical indicator of survey quality; high rates tend to reduce non-response bias and enhance the representativeness of the findings.

**Table 1.** Survey response rate.

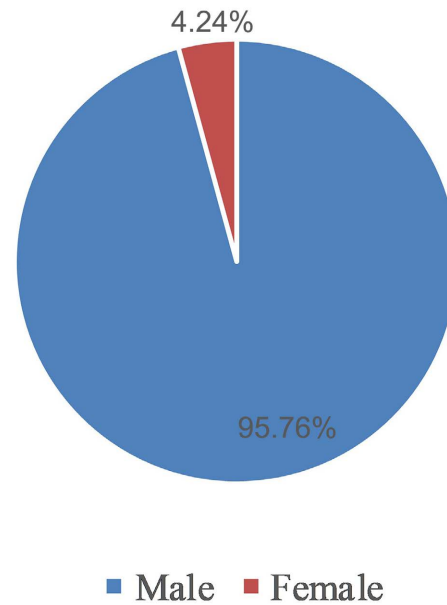
Sample Type	Frequency	Percentage
Realized Sample Size	283	85.5
Non-Realized Sample Size	48	14.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows that out of a total of 331 respondents, 283 completed the survey, resulting in an 85.5% response rate. This high response rate is indicative of strong engagement and suggests that the survey design and administration were effective. A high response rate typically enhances the reliability and validity of survey findings, as it reduces the likelihood of non-response bias.

In comparison, several studies have noted that response rates exceeding 80% are often considered robust, contributing to more representative and trustworthy data. For instance, research in criminology frequently highlights that higher response rate above 80% indicates that the data is strong to generate valid and generalized results (Chin, Pickett, Vazire, & Holcombe, 2023). Therefore, an 85.5% response rate in this study aligns favorably with best practices in criminology research. This indicates a high level of participant commitment making the study findings valid for answering the objectives.

#### 5.1.2. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The study sought to determine the gender distribution of the respondents. The results indicate that 95.76% of respondents were male, while only 4.24% were female. This pronounced gender imbalance was expected given the cultural context of Turkana and West Pokot counties, where traditional norms typically designate males as the heads of households and primary decision-makers. Numerous studies have documented similar trends in patriarchal societies. The findings are indicated in **Figure 1** below:



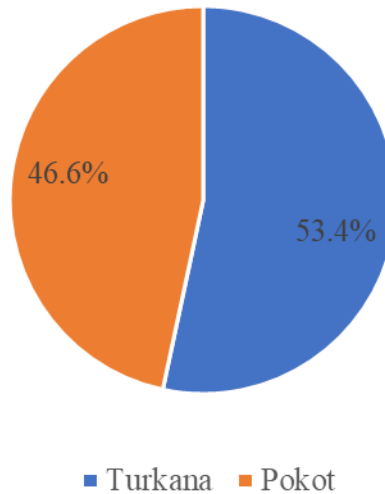
**Figure 1.** Gender of the respondents.

For instance, research conducted by (Wadei, Osei-Wusu Adjei, & Forkuor, 2023) found that in regions with deeply entrenched gender roles, males are more likely to participate in community decision-making processes, leading to higher response rates among men. Similarly, a study by Makomelo (2022), on community-based surveys in Pokot and Turkana highlighted those cultural perceptions often restrict female participation in public forums, thus skewing the gender composition of respondents towards males.

Additionally, the overall high survey response rate of 85.5% further highlights the engagement of the target population, particularly the male demographic. High response rates are generally indicative of strong interest and representativeness, which lends credibility to the findings. This phenomenon aligns with the literature which suggests that in contexts where males are culturally viewed as the authority figures, they are more actively involved in community surveys (Sutrisno, Akob, Navia, Nuraini, & Suwardi, 2020). Such engagement is crucial for ensuring that the data accurately reflects the perspectives of those who traditionally hold leadership roles within these communities.

In addition, the study sought to determine the ethnicity of the respondents. The results illustrated that 53.36% of the respondents are from Turkana, while 46.64% are from Pokot. This indicates a nearly balanced representation of household heads from Turkana and Pokot counties. This balance is noteworthy given that census data often report a higher overall population in Turkana compared to West Pokot. Such equilibrium in the sample implies that the re-search design successfully captured the perspectives of both communities, mitigating potential biases that could arise from over-representation of one group. A balanced sample enhances the credibility and external validity of the study, as it ensures that the findings reflect the distinct cultural, social, and economic contexts of each county. The

findings are indicated below **Figure 2**:



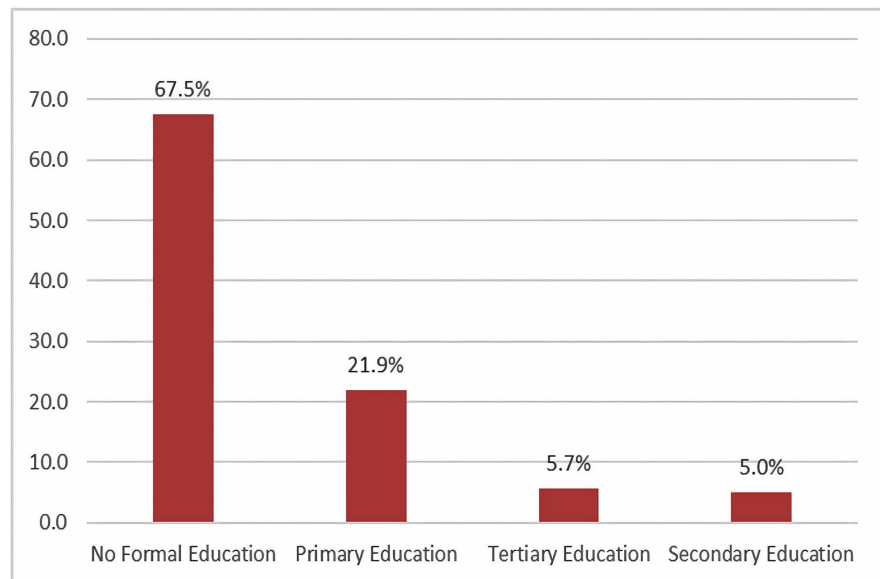
**Figure 2.** Ethnicity of the respondents.

Several studies, such as those by [Creswell & Creswell \(2017\)](#) and [Krosnick \(2018\)](#), emphasise that equitable group representation in survey research is critical for achieving comprehensive and unbiased insights. In the context of community-based studies, balanced representation enables researchers to make more robust comparisons between groups, leading to more nuanced interpretations of how community dynamics affect the management of cattle rustling. The near parity in tribal representation also suggests that targeted sampling efforts were successful in overcoming the potential disparities that might have arisen from Turkana's larger population. This balanced approach not only strengthens the findings but also aligns with previous research demonstrating the importance of representative sampling in capturing the full spectrum of community perspectives.

Finally on socio-demographic factors the researcher sought to determine the level of education among the respondents. The findings are indicated in **Figure 3**.

The results indicate that 67.5% of respondents had no formal education, while only a small fraction attained primary, secondary, or tertiary education. This high level of illiteracy in Turkana and West Pokot counties can be attributed to several factors. Insecurity in these regions has historically disrupted educational infrastructure and access, as reported in various Ministry of Education publications. Additionally, cultural practices in these communities often place greater emphasis on early marriage and livestock management over formal education. Such cultural norms may lead to a devaluation of education, particularly in remote and insecure areas ([Plapan, Okutu, & Situma, 2024](#)).

Supporting literature corroborates that regions with high insecurity and cultural barriers typically exhibit lower educational attainment ([Wadei, Osei-Wusu Adjei, & Forkuor, 2023](#)). Moreover, Ministry of Education reports have consistently shown that Turkana and West Pokot record some of the highest illiteracy levels in Kenya further supporting the results.



**Figure 3.** Household head's level of education.

The prevalence of non-formal education directly affected the data collection process. The research team had to adapt the data collection methodology to ensure effective communication and accurate responses. For instance, the questionnaire was translated into local languages, and trained local enumerators were employed to administer the surveys verbally. This adaptation helped bridge the literacy gap and improved respondents' understanding, thereby enhancing the reliability of the data collected.

## 5.2. Findings on Use of Joint Peace Committees in Management of Cattle Rustling

The Joint Peace Committees (JPCs) play a critical role in managing cattle rustling along the border areas of Turkana and West Pokot counties, Kenya. This section presents descriptive statistics on respondents' perceptions of JPC effectiveness using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. The analysis focuses on three key areas: Inclusivity and Trust, Dialogue Platforms, and Training & Capacity Building. Respondents provided their views on the inclusivity of committee selection, trust-building, effectiveness of dialogue platforms, and the impact of capacity-building initiatives on peace efforts. Understanding these perceptions helps evaluate the extent to which Joint Peace Committees contribute to reducing cattle rustling and fostering long-term peace among communities.

The respondents' perceptions were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, and the interpretation of the mean scores followed a standardized range. A mean score ranging from 1.0 to 3.4 was interpreted to indicate disagreement or neutrality toward the statement, suggesting that respondents either disagreed or were uncertain about the effectiveness or relevance of the concept being measured. Conversely, a mean score ranging from 3.5 to 5.0 was taken to indicate agreement,

reflecting a positive perception and general approval of the concept or intervention in question. This classification provided a clear basis for evaluating the effectiveness of Joint Peace Committees in various thematic areas such as inclusivity, dialogue, and capacity building (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Descriptive results on joint peace committees.

Statements	Strong Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std
The process of selecting joint peace committee representatives is inclusive of all affected communities	19 (6.71%)	37 (13.07%)	65 (22.97%)	100 (35.34%)	62 (21.91%)	3.53	1.16
Representative selection fosters trust within the community	11 (3.89%)	45 (15.9%)	85 (30.04%)	90 (31.8%)	52 (18.37%)	3.45	1.08
Representative selection contributes to building trust among communities	11 (3.9%)	37 (13.12%)	85 (30.14%)	98 (34.75%)	51 (18.09%)	3.5	1.05
Trust among communities reduces cattle rustling	7 (2.49%)	37 (13.17%)	62 (22.06%)	109 (38.79%)	66 (23.49%)	3.68	1.05
Dialogue platforms established by joint peace committees are useful in promoting community cohesion	19 (6.74%)	47 (16.67%)	69 (24.47%)	94 (33.33%)	53 (18.79%)	3.41	1.17
Dialogue sessions foster mutual understanding among communities	14 (4.98%)	39 (13.88%)	70 (24.91%)	98 (34.88%)	59 (21.0%)	3.64	2.08
Disputes are peacefully resolved through dialogue platforms	19 (6.79%)	39 (13.93%)	64 (22.86%)	99 (35.36%)	58 (20.71%)	3.6	2.16
Joint peace committee members are adequately trained to mediate and resolve conflicts	19 (6.74%)	38 (13.48%)	79 (28.01%)	97 (34.4%)	49 (17.38%)	3.42	1.13
Capacity-building initiatives equip members with essential livelihood skills	19 (6.74%)	39 (13.83%)	76 (26.95%)	99 (35.11%)	48 (17.02%)	3.52	2.09
Soft skills gained from capacity building improve negotiation and conflict resolution	19 (6.74%)	34 (12.06%)	74 (26.24%)	104 (36.88%)	50 (17.73%)	3.61	2.66
Average						3.54	1.56

The Joint Peace Committees (JPCs) play a critical role in managing cattle rustling along the border areas of Turkana and West Pokot counties, Kenya. This section presents descriptive statistics on respondents' perceptions of JPC effectiveness using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. The analysis focuses on three key areas: Inclusivity and Trust, Dialogue Platforms, and Training & Capacity Building. Respondents provided their views on the inclusivity of committee selection, trust-building, the effectiveness of dialogue platforms, and the impact of capacity-building initiatives on peace efforts. Understanding these perceptions helps evaluate the extent to which Joint Peace Committees contribute to reducing cattle rustling and fostering long-term peace among communities. For the purpose of analysis, any mean score above 3.5 is

considered to indicate agreement with the statement, whereas a mean between 3.00 and 3.49 is considered neutral.

The first thematic group under consideration was Inclusivity and Trust, which comprises four items: 1) the inclusivity of the selection process for joint peace committee representatives; 2) the degree to which representative selection fosters trust within the community; 3) the contribution of representative selection to building trust among communities; and 4) the extent to which trust among communities reduces cattle rustling. The mean scores for these items are 3.53, 3.45, 3.50, and 3.68, respectively, with standard deviations ranging from 1.05 to 1.16. The first item, with a mean of 3.53, slightly exceeds the threshold for agreement, suggesting that respondents generally agreed that the process of selecting representatives is inclusive of all affected communities. However, the second item, with a mean of 3.45, falls into the neutral range, indicating that while there is some trust fostered by representative selection, the sentiment is less robust. The third item, at a mean of 3.50 also showed agreement. This implies that respondents recognize that the selection process contributes to building inter-community trust. Most notably, the fourth item revealed a mean of 3.68. This indicates clear perception that trust among communities contributes to reducing cattle rustling incidents.

These results (**Table 2**) indicate that respondents agree that inclusivity and trust is central in promoting cohesion in the communities. Research by [Goodson, Wicks, Morgan, Hashem, Callinan, & Reites \(2022\)](#) has long emphasized that inclusivity in community decision-making not only fosters trust but also enhances cooperation among stakeholders. Moreover, studies indicate that trust is a critical ingredient in conflict resolution and community resilience. In the context of Turkana and West Pokot, where historical grievances and insecurity have shaped social dynamics, the agreement highlights that inclusivity is at the forefront of all peace committees. This pattern aligns with findings in other findings on local peace committees that demonstrate that inclusivity is at the heart of local peace committee governance by bolstering community confidence and collaborative problem-solving ([Makomelo, 2022](#)).

Qualitative responses highlighted that the selection process for Joint Peace Committees is largely based on community respect, influence, and credibility. Several key informants emphasised that representatives are chosen from among those who are highly respected within the society. For instance, one respondent noted,

*“They are selected from those who are respected in the society because they are influential”* (KII 2).

This response suggests that the community values leadership attributes and the capacity to influence, thereby linking respect with the legitimacy of the selected representatives. Another respondent explained that,

*“Joint peace committees are detected via public participation and put in place, the selected members should undergo positive vetting to ensure they are more*

*effective in their issues*" (KII 3).

This process of public participation and positive vetting reinforces the idea that the selection process is designed to ensure that only individuals with a proven track record and community approval are chosen, which can significantly enhance trust. Several responses emphasised the importance of diverse representation in the selection process. One informant remarked,

*"The committees cut across sectors like education, religions, NGOs who have knowledge in peace matters"* (KII 4), while another stated,

*"The peace committee is mainly composed of local leaders and representatives from social groups including women and youths. They are mainly selected based on their influence, leadership, and qualities and commitment to fostering peace within the communities"* (KII 6).

These verbatims reveal that the process not only values traditional leadership but also actively seeks to include a range of voices from different sectors, thereby enhancing the overall inclusivity. This approach aligns with the theoretical framework proposed by Zulueta-Fülscher (2018), which posits that participatory selection processes lead to enhanced legitimacy and community ownership of peace initiatives.

The second thematic area of the study was on Dialogue Platforms which included three items: 1) the usefulness of dialogue platforms in promoting community cohesion; 2) the extent to which dialogue sessions foster mutual understanding among communities; and 3) the efficacy of dialogue platforms in peacefully resolving disputes. The mean scores for these items are 3.41, 3.64, and 3.60, with standard deviations ranging from 1.17 to 2.16. The mean of the first item, 3.41 falls within the neutral range. This shows that respondents are ambivalent about the role of dialogue platforms in promoting community cohesion. However, the second and third items, with means of 3.64 and 3.60 respectively, indicates agreement among respondents that dialogue sessions help foster mutual understanding and facilitate the peaceful resolution of disputes. It can be deduced that the respondents generally agree that dialogue platforms are considered important tools for addressing conflict. This is supported by the literature on conflict resolution that has often highlighted dialogue as a key mechanism for achieving reconciliation (Chiluwa, 2021). The findings of the study align with results by (Osinde, Mulu, & Hamasi, 2023) that demonstrated that dialogue has been effective in reducing conflicts and tensions between Turkana and Pokot communities.

Dialogue platforms play a pivotal role in resolving conflicts that lead to cattle rustling by fostering communication, trust, and collaborative problem-solving among warring communities. Respondents noted that *"dialogue helps in bringing communities together and in recovery of stolen animals"*, and that *"talks among the rivalling communities' tempers down" hostilities*. These verbatims indicate that dialogue platforms not only promote reconciliation but also facilitate the recovery of stolen livestock, thereby directly addressing cattle rustling.

Several participants emphasised that dialogue platforms *"promote understand-*

*ing and trust*” and “*encourage peaceful negotiations*” by involving community leaders and elders (conflict resolution, community engagement). This is consistent with the results from household head that revealed that dialogue platforms promote community cohesion. Another respondent remarked that dialogue “*creates mutual trust and understanding among warring communities, fostering peaceful coexistence*” (trust-building), highlighting its role in breaking the cycle of retaliation and violence.

The FGD participants unanimously affirmed the effectiveness of dialogue platforms in fostering peaceful coexistence. For example, FGD-1 remarked, “*Dialogues are good because they help build trust among communities,*” while FGD-2 observed that these platforms “*help rival communities interact and agree easily on issues.*” FGD-3 added that “*participants share ideas on prevention of raids and recovery of stolen stock,*” and FGD-4 noted they are “*mind opening by sharing ideas which help resolve conflicts.*” These verbatims underscore that dialogue platforms not only build trust but also encourage active participation and generate long-term solutions to reduce violence. This qualitative evidence aligns with literature highlighting the critical role of communication in conflict resolution.

The third focus area of the study was on training and capacity building with emphasis on the preparedness of joint peace committee members to mediate conflicts, the effectiveness of capacity-building initiatives in providing essential livelihood skills, and the role of soft skills in improving negotiation and conflict resolution. The mean scores for these items are 3.42, 3.52, and 3.61, with standard deviations ranging from 1.13 to 2.66. The first item, which evaluates whether committee members are adequately trained to mediate conflicts, had a mean of 3.42. This indicates neutrality from respondents on adequacy of joint peace committee members for conflict mediation. The second item with a mean of 3.52 indicates agreement. This shows that respondents consider capacity building initiatives essential in promoting livelihood skills. The third item, with a mean of 3.61, demonstrates clearer agreement that soft skills gained through capacity building improve negotiation and conflict resolution.

The results revealed that respondents were in agreement that training and capacity building are pivotal joint peace strategies. These results suggest that there is recognition of the benefits of training and capacity building to fully meet the needs of committee members. The findings resonate with the work of scholars like [Asare \(2023\)](#) who argue that effective conflict resolution requires not only the acquisition of technical skills but also the development of interpersonal and soft skills. The results echo the findings by ([Rewayi Muchanyuka, 2022](#)) which found that capacity building, when tailored to local needs and supplemented with ongoing support, can significantly enhance the effectiveness of community-based conflict management mechanisms.

Capacity-building for peace committee members has significantly enhanced their ability to control cattle rustling by improving conflict resolution, increasing skills and knowledge, and boosting empowerment and confidence. Respondents

highlighted that capacity-building initiatives have “*enhanced conflict resolution skills, strengthened early warning and response systems, and improved community engagement and trust*” (KII2). One participant explained, “*By enhancing conflict resolution, negotiation and mediation skills, it empowers them to facilitate dialogue, enforce agreements and engage the community effectively*” (KII3). Furthermore, several informants noted that training has enabled members to gain critical technical knowledge: “*Capacity building has seen them gaining knowledge and required resources in the fight against banditry*” (KII4). This enhanced knowledge base enables peace committee members to sensitise community members on the disadvantages of cattle rustling and to better coordinate with law enforcement. Literature supports these findings, with (Hallward & Tarkhani, 2019) asserting that targeted capacity-building not only improves conflict resolution but also fosters sustainable community engagement. Enhanced skills and increased self-confidence, as noted by KII2 and KII3, are therefore pivotal in reducing cattle rustling and promoting long-term peace.

Despite the importance of capacity building as highlighted from KII and questionnaires, the FGD participants identified three key areas where peace committee members require additional skills and resources. First, several respondents emphasised the need for enhanced conflict resolution and mediation skills. For instance, FGD-2 noted that “*communication and dialogue facilitation, conflict resolution and mediation, cultural sensitivity and inclusivity*” are essential. Literature by Chambers (2005) supports that advanced mediation skills are vital for sustainable peacebuilding.

Second, participants stressed the importance of improving community preparedness and response. FGD-44 mentioned that “*more seminars to empower them*” and “*mediation to every village*” would significantly boost their capacity to manage conflicts. This aligns with findings by Ingram (2011), who argue that proactive community engagement strengthens conflict prevention mechanisms.

Lastly, respondents highlighted the need for tangible resources, such as transport, allowances, and communication tools. One participant remarked, “*They should be supported, for example given resources to disseminate information further.*” Such support not only facilitates effective outreach but also builds trust among communities.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The researchers make the following conclusions and recommendations.

### 6.1. Conclusions of the Study

The findings indicate that joint peace committees play a crucial role in managing cattle rustling in the study area. Respondents demonstrated strong agreement that effective joint peace committees contribute significantly to reducing cattle rustling incidents. The analysis revealed that improvements in the operations of these committees are associated with enhanced outcomes in managing the issue. In es-

sence, when the effectiveness of joint peace committees increases, there is a corresponding positive impact on controlling cattle rustling.

This suggests that joint peace committees, by facilitating dialogue and fostering collaboration among community members, help to build trust and promote conflict resolution. Their role in providing a platform for community engagement enables local leaders to address disputes and mediate conflicts before they escalate into theft or violence. The study's results reinforce the idea that community-driven initiatives, such as joint peace committees, are vital to maintaining security and order in regions affected by cattle rustling. The evidence supports the view that strengthening these committees could lead to more effective management strategies, ultimately contributing to improved community safety and reduced incidents of cattle rustling.

The study concludes that joint peace committees are a critical and effective mechanism in the management of cattle rustling in Turkana and West Pokot counties. The components of inclusivity and trust, structured dialogue platforms, and training and capacity building were found to significantly influence outcomes. Their impact underscores the importance of community-centered and participatory approaches in addressing insecurity. These committees facilitate structured communication, enhance mutual understanding among rival communities, and act as a bridge between local populations and formal security agencies. Their success reflects the potential of hybrid governance models that combine traditional structures with formal institutional backing.

While the majority of respondents acknowledged the effectiveness of Joint Peace Committees (JPCs), some initiatives encountered resistance or failed to gain traction. Qualitative responses revealed instances where committee activities were hindered by local political interference, distrust between communities, or perceived bias in the selection of committee members. In particular, a few key informants cited that some peace initiatives collapsed due to political interference and inconsistent engagement by local authorities. For instance, a Key Informant Member Number 3 (KII3) observed:

*“Joint peace committees would have been more effective in resolving the problem of cattle rustling if politicians did not interfere particularly in tracing and returning stolen livestock, some politicians also protect the rustlers.”*

## **6.2. Recommendations of the Study**

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, the study recommended that the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, in collaboration with county governments, should institutionalize joint peace committees by embedding them in local governance structures. These committees have proven effective in fostering dialogue, trust-building, and conflict resolution. To sustain and enhance their impact, the government should provide dedicated financial resources, formal legal recognition, and clear operational guidelines. Capacity building through regular training on mediation, conflict analysis, and peacebuilding strategies should also be prioritized.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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