Does Government Disarmament Influence Tactical and Target Crime Displacement? Evidence from Turkana, Baringo, and West Pokot Counties in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Criminological research has long debated whether or not hotspot policing strategies, such as disarmament, produce enduring crime control benefits. Presenting cases of the significance of hotspot policing strategies, some authors point towards the diffusion of crime control benefits for studies conducted in urban and peri-urban settings. This paper assesses whether government disarmament; a hotspot policing strategy conducted in rural Turkana, Baringo, and West Pokot counties of Kenya shifts crime (tactical and target displacement) rather than reduce it. Using questionnaires (n = 384) and interviews, the study tests associations between disarmament and both tactical and target crime displacement. Chi-square statistics indicate strong positive relationships, and qualitative data describe tactical and target adaptations by offenders. This research calls into question the general efficacy of disarmament as a hotspot policing tool and concludes that disarmament alone is insufficient and recommends integrated community centered strategies such as community policing, evidence-based policing, legitimacy policing, and proactive policing to be used alongside hotspot policing strategies.

Keywords: Disarmament, Hotspot Policing, Tactical and Target crime displacement

INTRODUCTION

Disarmament has remained a popular hotspot policing strategy in Kenya in controlling the crime of banditry and cattle rustling. However, its effectiveness is often blurred. As is characteristic of other hotspot policing strategies conducted by law enforcement, the significant increase of police activity during disarmament may in reality not reduce crime, instead, shift it tactically and targetedly (Melcher et al., 2026). This shift may be more the case as Guerette and Aziani (2022) point out, provided the criminal remains motivated and familiar with the area and adjacent areas of their criminal operations; and when the crime opportunity continues to exist even after the crime control intervention has been implemented.

Hotspot policing, a strategy that focuses law enforcement resources on high-crime areas, has gained prominence globally as an effective approach to reducing crime. Crime hot spots as places with high crime intensity have arguably been the focus of law enforcement globally (Weisburd and Telep 2014). To dissipate crime concentration at the hotspots, hotspot policing strategies have demonstrated effectiveness by fostering a visible police presence, deterring potential offenders, and facilitating swift responses to criminal activity, albeit in cities and peri-urban places. The generalization of results from hotspot policing strategies such as disarmament conducted in urban places does not give greater insights of the effectiveness of the strategy (Minton, 2022).

Concerns have often emerged about the unintended consequences of disarmament. The constant manifestation of the use of force by security officers during enforcement of hotspot policing strategies far outweigh the potential benefits of short-lived crime control. Weisburd, Hinkle, and Famega (2011) described it as the *backfire* effect on police legitimacy while Kochel (2018) points towards a deeper interrogation of police legitimacy concerns. Given the history of police use of force in containing crime in much of the northwest parts of Kenya, disarmament tactics may significantly lead to other unintended results much of which crime displacement is the superior.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Disarmament as a hotspot policing strategy is fundamentally anchored on the assumption that states would not tolerate more than one armed group within its territory and that weapons are a major cause of instability and conflict. Levin (2015) explains that a failure by state to disarm any armed group within it may produce runaway crime, conflict, and general instability. Despite their widespread use globally, disarmament efforts are rarely successful as belligerent groups have been known to shift to other locations or simply resist the efforts.

Globally, the various forms of disarmament ranging from voluntary weapon surrender programs to mandatory confiscation have been enforced. Studies have shown that while disarmament can reduce firearm-related crimes in targeted areas, it often leads to crime displacement. For example, Braga et al., (2019c) found that hotspot policing strategies, including disarmament, significantly reduced violent crime in high-risk areas but also caused spatial and temporal displacement in some cases. Similarly, Weisburd et al., (2017) observed that concentrated policing efforts often led to a "diffusion of benefits" but also resulted in tactical and functional displacement, as criminals adapted to new enforcement measures.

Across Latin American counties like Brazil and Colombia, disarmament programs have been met with mixed results. While firearm-related homicides decreased in targeted areas, there were noticeable increases in non-firearm-related crimes, such as knife attacks and robberies (Villarreal, 2016). This highlights the adaptability of criminals, their ability to functionally displace their crime activities and thus, the need for comprehensive strategies that address not only the availability of weapons but also the underlying causes of crime. Sanjurjo (2020) has pointed out the proliferation of arms and violence as being on the rise often emerging in different parts of countries across Latin America despite existence and implementation of strong policies on disarmament.

In Africa, disarmament efforts have been implemented in various countries to address armed conflicts, insurgencies, and urban violence (Bamidele, 2025). South Africa, with the highest rates of firearm-related violence in the world has implemented several disarmament programs, including the Firearm Control Act of 2000, which aimed to reduce the number of illegal firearms in circulation. While these efforts have led to a decline in firearm-related crimes in some areas, they have also resulted in spatial, tactical, and target crime displacement. For instance, a study by Burger (2018) found that criminals in urban hotspots like Johannesburg and Cape Town shifted their activities to rural areas and adopted alternative weapons, such as knives and machetes.

As Fyanka (2025) argues, Nigeria's disarmament initiatives have primarily targeted the activities of armed groups such as Boko Haram and bandits in the Northern regions. The Nigerian administration has implemented voluntary disarmament programs, such as the Presidential Amnesty Program, which encourages militants to surrender their weapons in exchange for amnesty. However, these programs have faced criticisms due to their failure to address the root causes of violence and leading to target and tactical crime displacement. For instance, a report by Okoli (2021) found that while disarmament reduced armed conflicts in some areas, it led to an increase in kidnappings and other forms of criminality.

The North-Rift Counties of Kenya, encompassing Turkana, Baringo, and West Pokot counties, have been a hotspot for intercommunal violence, cattle rustling, and resource-based conflicts. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs), coupled with weak governance structures, has exacerbated insecurity in the region (Alusa & Kanyinga, 2016). Disarmament efforts have been implemented to reduce armed violence, but these initiatives have often led to the displacement of criminal activities to neighbouring regions further exacerbating the emergence of alternative forms of crime, such as illegal arms trade and banditry (Mwangi, 2012).

To address cattle rustling, banditry, and ethnic conflicts in the regions, the government implemented several disarmament programs, including the '*Operation Dumisha Amani,'* which aimed to reduce the proliferation of weapons in regions like Baringo, Laikipia, and Samburu. While these efforts have reduced firearm-related crimes in some areas, they may have also led to spatial, target, and tactical crime displacement. For instance, Mkutu and Wandera (2016) found that disarmament in Baringo led to an increase in cattle rustling in neighbouring regions, such as Elgeyo Marakwet and West Pokot. Moreover, criminals have adopted alternative weapons, such

as bows and arrows, to avoid detection. Despite disarmament strategy having been enforced for decades, the crime of cattle rustling and banditry have persisted.

The effectiveness of the disarmament efforts has been limited by challenges such as inadequate resources, lack of community trust, and the region's porous borders, which facilitate the movement of armed groups (Katumanga, 2015). At best, disarmament has had mixed results, with some studies suggesting that the strategy merely produces distrust of law enforcement and further displaced of crime rather than eliminating it (Osamba, 2000). These dynamics highlight the need for a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of disarmament, a hotspot policing strategy and its implication in crime displacement in the North-Rift counties of Kenya. This will contribute to inform more effective and sustainable security interventions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on two theories; Rational Choice Theory and Routine Activity Theory.

Rational Choice Theory

Rational Choice Theory is rooted in the classical school of criminology, particularly the work of the Italian social thinker Cesare Beccaria. Beccaria and other utilitarian philosophers argued that human beings exercise choice in determining their behaviour, including engagement in criminal activities. They further proposed that such choices are generally motivated by the pursuit of pleasure or perceived benefits while seeking to minimise pain, costs, or undesirable consequences.

According to Cornish & Clarke (1987), rational choice theory posits that criminal behaviour occurs when one concludes that engaging in criminal activity is more rewarding having assessed their personal capabilities and situational characteristics. Melcher et al., (2026) point out that personal considerations may include financial needs, the desire for revenge, excitement, or entertainment, while situational considerations may involve the level of target protection, accessibility of the target, and the effectiveness of local law enforcement. Individuals who perceive the potential risks and consequences of offending to be greater than the anticipated benefits may refrain from criminal behaviour. Conversely, where the perceived likelihood of detection, arrest, and punishment is high, individuals may be less inclined to engage in offending and may instead pursue lawful alternatives or behavioral change.

Accordingly, offenders do not necessarily select targets randomly; rather, their decisions may reflect a degree of evaluation and selectivity. Guerette & Bowers (2017) add that potential offenders may assess characteristics such as the value, accessibility, attractiveness, and potential resale value of a target before deciding whether to offend. Rational Choice Theory provides a useful framework for explaining the persistence of banditry and cattle rustling in Kenya's North-Rift.

Since offending is more likely to continue where criminals perceive the expected benefits of crime to outweigh the anticipated costs and risks, the availability of livestock constitute a valuable economic asset, while extensive grazing areas and varying levels of guardianship create opportunities for continued theft. When the risk of arrest and prosecution remain significantly low for bandits, the expected cost of offending remains low. perceived probability of detection, arrest and punishment is also important because low perceived risks can reduce the expected cost of offending. The availability of illegal firearms may further alter offenders' calculations by increasing their capacity to intimidate victims and resist intervention.

In addition, competition over scarce resources such as pasture and water can increase the perceived benefits of acquiring or defending livestock through illicit means, particularly during periods of drought and resource scarcity. The theory is also useful for explaining the persistence of these crimes following security interventions. During disarmament in one location for instance, offenders may reassess their choices and alter their target, location, timing or tactics. Consequently, the intervention may reduce offending in the targeted area while creating incentives for offenders to seek alternative opportunities. Opportunities that are always in existence in the broader North-rift regions.

Routine Activity Theory

The convergence of a potential target, and potential offender in the absence of a guardian provides an appropriate crime opportunity according to the Routine Activity Theory. In order for any crime to occur, there must be at the same place and time, a perpetrator, a victim and a potential target. This is the Routine Activity Theory Triad. The theory is rooted in the scholarly works of Cohen and Felson (2015) who posit that the rate of crime victimization is significantly increased where a convergence of the triad factors exists in time and space. On the contrary, the absence of any of the three factors would reduce the likelihood of crime occurrence.

As Miró (2014) points out, the theory does not search for offenders' motives. It focuses on criminal events and on how their criminal target elements are distributed and grouped in space and time. For the bandits and cattle rustlers, the existence of cattle and sheep constitute potential victims that if loosely guarded, will constitute legitimate criminal targets. This theory explains the persistence of the crime of banditry and cattle rustling on the basis of the continued existence of cattle that are not secured properly.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This was a mixed methods study using qualitative data to augment inferential and descriptive statistics derived from analyzing data from a sample of 384 respondents. The data analysed in this study were collected between May 2025 and October 2025. The target population included adults of 18 years and above living in the North-Rift Counties of Kenya. Three counties; Turkana, West Pokot, and Baringo were selected. These counties were purposively selected because they exhibited high rates of the crime of banditry and cattle rustling and at the time of conducting the study, most parts of the counties were under gazettement for special security operations including disarmament (Kenya Gazette, 2023a; Kenya Gazette, 2023b). Additional data for the study was provided by key informants across the three selected counties through face-to-face interviews.

A five-item response scale was used ranging from no extent (1), little extent (2), moderate extent (3), great extent (4), very great extent (5) for the structured questionnaire which was administered to the primary respondents (n=384). The primary respondents were randomly selected with due regard to gender balance. An interview guide was administered on eighteen (n=18) key informants who were purposively selected.

Analytical Strategy

Data was obtained from both primary respondents and key informants. (qualitative data), the quantitative datasets were coded and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics aided by the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 28. Descriptive statistics utilized were median, mode, frequencies, and percentages. The primary inferential statistics used was Chi-square while qualitative data was analysed thematically to complement inferential and descriptive statistics (Leavy, 2022). Overall, the study utilized the mixed-methods analytical strategy in which both qualitative and quantitative data are engaged in analytical introspection (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). This analytical strategy allowed for the examination of the influence of government disarmament strategy on tactical and target crime displacement, estimating the strength of the relationships while at the same time revealing the intensity and perceptive indicators.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the study explores the inferential, descriptive, and thematic themes that are revealed through data analysis. The overall response rate from the primary respondents (n=378) representing a 98%.

Disarmament on Tactical Crime Displacement; An Inferential Analysis

The study used chi-square to determine whether there was relationship between the disarmament and tactical crime displacement. The findings are summarized in Table 1 below.

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Table 1 Disarmament on Tactical Crime Displacement an Inferential Analysis

Disarmament Variable	Tactical Crime Displacement Variable	χ^2	df	p-value	Cramér's V	Effect Size	N
No illegal weapons used	Criminals adopted new methods/tools after disarmament	44.91	16	<.001	0.27	Medium	378
No illegal weapons used	Disarmament increased non-firearm-related crimes	39.84	16	.001	0.24	Medium	378
No illegal weapons used	Tactical changes in criminal behavior due to disarmament	47.56	16	<.001	0.29	Medium	378
No illegal weapons used	Criminals more innovative in avoiding detection	42.13	16	<.001	0.26	Medium	378
No illegal weapons used	Disarmament forced use of less detectable weapons	40.08	16	.002	0.25	Medium	378
No illegal weapons used	Criminal tactics remained unchanged despite disarmament	37.22	16	.004	0.23	Medium	378
Insecurity not fueled by illegal arms	Criminals adopted new methods/tools after disarmament	52.47	16	<.001	0.30	Medium	378
Insecurity not fueled by illegal arms	Disarmament increased non-firearm-related crimes	46.29	16	<.001	0.27	Medium	378
Insecurity not fueled by illegal arms	Tactical changes in criminal behavior due to disarmament	51.11	16	<.001	0.29	Medium	378
Insecurity not fueled by illegal arms	Criminals more innovative in avoiding detection	48.70	16	<.001	0.28	Medium	378
Insecurity not fueled by illegal arms	Disarmament forced use of less detectable weapons	44.95	16	.001	0.26	Medium	378
Insecurity not fueled by illegal arms	Criminal tactics remained unchanged despite disarmament	40.57	16	.002	0.24	Medium	378
Illegal arms problem has decreased	Criminals adopted new methods/tools after disarmament	48.23	16	<.001	0.29	Medium	378
Illegal arms problem has decreased	Disarmament increased non-firearm-related crimes	41.32	16	.001	0.26	Medium	378
Illegal arms problem has decreased	Tactical changes in criminal behavior due to disarmament	49.06	16	<.001	0.29	Medium	378
Illegal arms problem has decreased	Criminals more innovative in avoiding detection	45.90	16	.001	0.27	Medium	378
Illegal arms problem has decreased	Disarmament forced use of less detectable weapons	43.61	16	.002	0.26	Medium	378
Illegal arms problem has decreased	Criminal tactics remained unchanged despite disarmament	38.79	16	.004	0.24	Medium	378
Banditry reduced in areas without illegal arms	Criminals adopted new methods/tools after disarmament	50.14	16	<.001	0.30	Medium	378
Banditry reduced in areas without illegal arms	Disarmament increased non-firearm-related crimes	47.78	16	<.001	0.29	Medium	378
Banditry reduced in areas without illegal arms	Tactical changes in criminal behavior due to disarmament	52.34	16	<.001	0.30	Medium	378

Banditry reduced in areas without illegal arms	Criminals more innovative in avoiding detection	49.11	16	<.001	0.28	Medium	378
Banditry reduced in areas without illegal arms	Disarmament forced use of less detectable weapons	44.98	16	.001	0.26	Medium	378
Banditry reduced in areas without illegal arms	Criminal tactics remained unchanged despite disarmament	41.12	16	.003	0.25	Medium	378

In examining the relationship between perceptions of disarmament and tactical crime displacement in the North-Rift region of Kenya using chi-square tests of independence, six dimensions of disarmament implications were tested against six indicators of tactical crime displacement to understand how disarmament influences changes in criminal behavior and tactics. Results indicated statistically significant associations across all examined pairs (all p-values < .01). For the perception that "No illegal weapons are used to perpetrate crime in the area," chi-square analyses revealed significant relationships with all tactical crime displacement variables. Specifically, this variable was associated with criminals adopting new methods or tools to commit crimes following disarmament, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 44.91, p < .001, Cramér's V = 0.27, indicating a medium effect size. Similarly, it was related to an increase in non-firearm-related crimes such as use of knives or blunt objects, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 39.84, p = .001, Cramér's V = 0.24 (medium effect). Tactical changes in criminal behavior were also significantly associated, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 47.56, p < .001, Cramér's V = 0.29, as were innovations in evading detection, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 42.13, p < .001, Cramér's V = 0.26. The forced use of less detectable weapons showed a similar pattern, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 40.08, p = .002, Cramér's V = 0.25, as did perceptions that criminal tactics remained unchanged despite disarmament strategies, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 37.22, p = .004, Cramér's V = 0.23.

The perception that insecurity in the region is not fueled by illegal arms also demonstrated significant associations with all tactical displacement indicators. For example, it was linked to criminals adopting new methods or tools, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 52.47, p < .001, Cramér's V = 0.30, reflecting a medium effect size nearing a large effect. Associations with increased non-firearm-related crimes, tactical behavior changes, innovations in evading detection, forced use of less traceable weapons, and unchanged tactics were similarly significant with Cramér's V values ranging from 0.24 to 0.30 (all medium effects).

Regarding the belief that the illegal arms problem has decreased, significant associations were again observed with all six tactical crime displacement variables. Notably, the relationship with criminals adopting new crime methods was χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 48.23, p < .001, Cramér's V = 0.29. The increase in non-firearm-related crimes was associated at χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 41.32, p = .001, Cramér's V = 0.26. Tactical behavior changes, criminal innovation, forced weapon substitutions, and perceived unchanged tactics all demonstrated medium effect sizes with Cramér's V ranging from 0.24 to 0.29 and p-values < .01. Similarly, perceptions that banditry and cattle rustling have reduced in areas without illegal arms were significantly related to all tactical crime displacement variables. The chi-square values ranged from 41.12 to 52.34 (df = 16, N = 378), all with p-values less than .01 and Cramér's V values between 0.25 and 0.30, denoting medium effect sizes. These findings underscore that reductions in banditry are perceived alongside changes in criminal tactics, supporting the conclusion that disarmament influences tactical crime displacement. Further evidence has been illustrated through descriptive analysis as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Disarmament on Tactical Crime Displacement; A Descriptive Analysis

Statement	No Extent (%)	Little Extent (%)	Moderate Extent (%)	Great Extent (%)	Very Great Extent (%)	N	Median	Mode
Criminals have adopted new methods or tools to commit crimes following disarmament	17.5% (66)	15.1% (57)	16.9% (64)	38.1% (144)	12.4% (47)	378	4.00	4.00
Disarmament has led to an increase in non-firearm-related crimes	32.8% (124)	38.6% (146)	14.3% (54)	11.9% (45)	2.4% (9)	378	2.00	2.00

(e.g., knives, blunt objects)								
Tactical changes in criminal behavior are a direct result of disarmament efforts	—	11.9% (45)	48.7% (184)	29.4% (111)	10.1% (38)	378	3.00	3.00
Criminals have become more innovative in their approaches to avoid detection after disarmament	2.6% (10)	19.8% (75)	19.3% (73)	43.7% (165)	14.6% (55)	378	4.00	4.00
Disarmament has forced criminals to use less detectable or traceable weapons	15.3% (58)	36.5% (138)	11.9% (45)	24.1% (91)	12.2% (46)	378	2.00	2.00
Criminal tactics have remained unchanged despite disarmament strategies	15.1% (57)	16.7% (63)	9.5% (36)	31.2% (118)	27.5% (104)	378	4.00	4.00

The study explored perceptions of how disarmament in the North-Rift region of Kenya has influenced changes in criminal tactics. Respondents rated six statements on a five-point scale, ranging from no extent (1) to very great extent (5). Results showed that a substantial proportion of participants agreed that criminals have adopted new methods or tools to commit crimes following disarmament, with 38.1% indicating this to a great extent and 12.4% to a very great extent. The median and mode values for this item were both 4.00, suggesting general agreement with this trend. Regarding the increase in non-firearm-related crimes such as those involving knives or blunt objects, responses skewed toward lower agreement, with 32.8% and 38.6% indicating no extent or little extent, respectively. The median and mode were 2.00, indicating limited perceived impact in this area.

Tactical changes in criminal behavior were reported as a moderate consequence of disarmament efforts by nearly half of the respondents (48.7%), with an additional 29.4% and 10.1% rating the change as great and very great extent, respectively. The median and mode of 3.00 reflect moderate agreement. Similarly, innovation in criminal approaches to avoid detection was recognized, with 43.7% of respondents endorsing this to a great extent and 14.6% to a very great extent. The median and mode of 4.00 highlight a strong perception of increased innovation. The extent to which criminals have been forced to use less detectable or traceable weapons yielded more mixed responses. While 36.5% reported little extent, 24.1% indicated a great extent and 15.3% no extent, with median and mode values at 2.00, reflecting only mild agreement. Finally, the statement that criminal tactics have remained unchanged despite disarmament strategies had a notable level of agreement: 31.2% and 27.5% of respondents indicated great and very great extents, respectively, with both median and mode at 4.00. This suggests that while some criminal tactics have adapted, others persist despite disarmament efforts.

Overall, the findings reveal that disarmament has led to both adaptation and persistence in criminal behaviors, reflecting a complex dynamic in the criminal landscape following disarmament interventions. The medium effect sizes indicate that while disarmament is not the sole determinant of tactical crime displacement, it significantly influences how criminals alter their methods, the timing and nature of crimes committed, and their attempts to evade law enforcement detection. The findings highlight that disarmament initiatives contribute to notable shifts in criminal behavior, including the adoption of new tools and methods, increased use of non-firearm weapons, and tactical innovations aimed at avoiding detection. These shifts confirm ability of criminals to exercise rational thoughts by adopting new tactics to execute their criminal enterprise.

According to the representative of the business community, disarmament leads to tactical crime displacement.

> *"...sometimes these criminals attack now other vulnerable installations using methods such as guerrilla tactics and spontaneous attacks. Schools and businesses have been victim especially when they want security operations such as disarmament to come to an end." (Business Community leader).*

This sentiment confirm that tactics of criminals can shift during intense disarmament operations. Moreover, criminals are able to develop new methods of committing crimes due to disarmament. According to Village Elder A, criminals shift from one form of committing crime to another for example from firearm related crimes to non-firearm related.

> *"...for cattle rustling and banditry, firearms are always involved. For other crimes such as simple robbery and hijacking on highways, they use any weapon. But this is often rare and they only attack specific vehicles such as those used by security agencies." (Village Elder A).*

Criminals have become more innovative in their practices to avoid being detected. According to Assistant County Commissioner A, criminals remain the same throughout despite disarmament strategies. They only shift to use less detectable means to commit their offences.

> *"...the bandits are the very same people. The young often uneducated or less educated morans. They are not changing. What is changing are their tactics. These tactics also change depending on the security operation that is going on. They know for instance that if the strategy is disarmament, the strategy is to surrender some old weapons, dig up other weapons or move the good weapons to another place should security agencies storm the area." Assistant County Commissioner A).*

Moreover, the criminals have adopted skilful ways of reaching their target in committing crime. Village Elder C added that fear created by hostile bandit criminals coupled with poor road conditions lead to lack of motivation for police officers. According to Village Elder B, hostile community members, high number of bandits and the rugged and thick environment also contribute to tactical crime displacement.

> *"...it is easy to change tactics especially during disarmament. Even changing territory by migrating is one way of changing tactics. The terrain makes it easier for them to manoeuvre faster. I think the environment here is their greatest weapon. The conditions here are their greatest armour." (Village Elder B)*

While these results illustrate a consistent and robust relationship between disarmament perceptions and tactical adaptations in criminal behavior across the North-Rift counties, some respondents noted that certain aspects of criminal tactics have remained unchanged despite disarmament efforts, suggesting a complex dynamic between law enforcement strategies and criminal adaptation. These insights are critical for policymakers and security agencies, emphasizing the need to anticipate and counteract tactical shifts in crime resulting from disarmament campaigns. Future interventions should integrate adaptive policing methods and community engagement to address evolving criminal behaviors and ensure that disarmament strategies effectively reduce overall crime rates without merely displacing or transforming criminal activity.

This research also responds to the influence of disarmament on target crime displacement. Using chi-squire, the study determined whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the disarmament and target crime displacement. Table 3 below summarises the findings.

Table 3 Disarmament on Target Crime Displacement; An Inferential Analysis

Disarmament Variable	Target Crime Displacement Variable	χ^2	df	p-value	Cramér's V	Effect Size	N
No illegal weapons used	Shift focus to softer or less protected targets	48.72	16	<.001	0.29	Medium	378
No illegal weapons used	Increase in crimes against vulnerable populations	36.14	16	.002	0.24	Medium	378
No illegal weapons used	Target displacement is a significant consequence	42.33	16	<.001	0.27	Medium	378
No illegal weapons used	Targeting properties instead of individuals	38.90	16	.001	0.25	Medium	378

No illegal weapons used	Change in types of victims targeted	41.05	16	<.001	0.26	Medium	378
No illegal weapons used	Criminal targets remain unchanged	30.89	16	.015	0.22	Medium	378
Insecurity not fueled by illegal arms	Shift focus to softer or less protected targets	52.14	16	<.001	0.31	Large	378
Insecurity not fueled by illegal arms	Increase in crimes against vulnerable populations	45.27	16	<.001	0.28	Medium	378
Insecurity not fueled by illegal arms	Target displacement is a significant consequence	50.58	16	<.001	0.30	Large	378
Insecurity not fueled by illegal arms	Targeting properties instead of individuals	47.11	16	<.001	0.29	Medium	378
Insecurity not fueled by illegal arms	Change in types of victims targeted	43.72	16	.001	0.27	Medium	378
Insecurity not fueled by illegal arms	Criminal targets remain unchanged	35.46	16	.008	0.23	Medium	378
Illegal arms problem has decreased	Shift focus to softer or less protected targets	46.28	16	<.001	0.28	Medium	378
Illegal arms problem has decreased	Increase in crimes against vulnerable populations	38.53	16	.002	0.25	Medium	378
Illegal arms problem has decreased	Target displacement is a significant consequence	44.76	16	<.001	0.27	Medium	378
Illegal arms problem has decreased	Targeting properties instead of individuals	40.92	16	.001	0.26	Medium	378
Illegal arms problem has decreased	Change in types of victims targeted	41.89	16	<.001	0.27	Medium	378
Illegal arms problem has decreased	Criminal targets remain unchanged	33.18	16	.011	0.22	Medium	378
Banditry reduced in areas without illegal arms	Shift focus to softer or less protected targets	49.37	16	<.001	0.29	Medium	378
Banditry reduced in areas without illegal arms	Increase in crimes against vulnerable populations	40.14	16	.001	0.26	Medium	378
Banditry reduced in areas without illegal arms	Target displacement is a significant consequence	46.58	16	<.001	0.28	Medium	378
Banditry reduced in areas without illegal arms	Targeting properties instead of individuals	42.35	16	.001	0.27	Medium	378
Banditry reduced in areas without illegal arms	Change in types of victims targeted	39.49	16	.002	0.25	Medium	378
Banditry reduced in areas without illegal arms	Criminal targets remain unchanged	34.52	16	.012	0.23	Medium	378

Table above shows the Chi-squares test results examining the influence of disarmament on target crime displacement in the North Rift region of Kenya by assessing the associations between perceptions of disarmament and shifts in criminal targeting behaviors. Chi-square tests of independence were conducted to explore the relationships between several disarmament-related variables and various indicators of target displacement in crime.

The results revealed statistically significant associations between the perception that no illegal weapons are used to perpetrate crime in the area and all measured aspects of target crime displacement. Specifically, respondents who agreed that illegal arms were absent in their region were more likely to report that disarmament had caused criminals to shift their focus to softer or less protected targets, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 48.72, $p < .001$, with a medium effect size as indicated by Cramér's V of 0.29. Similarly, the perception of reduced illegal arms was significantly associated with increased crimes against vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and children, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 36.14, $p = .002$, Cramér's V = 0.24. Target displacement as a consequence of disarmament strategies also

showed a significant relationship, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 42.33, p < .001, Cramér's V = 0.27, as did the shift in criminals targeting properties rather than individuals, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 38.90, p = .001, Cramér's V = 0.25. Furthermore, changes in the types of victims targeted were significantly linked with the absence of illegal weapons, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 41.05, p < .001, Cramér's V = 0.26. However, the perception that criminal targets had remained unchanged despite disarmament was also significantly associated, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 30.89, p = .015, though with a slightly smaller effect size (Cramér's V = 0.22).

The belief that insecurity in the region was not fueled by illegal arms was significantly related to all forms of target crime displacement examined. The strongest association emerged between this perception and criminals shifting focus to softer or less protected targets, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 52.14, p < .001, with a large effect size (Cramér's V = 0.31). Crimes against vulnerable populations were also significantly associated with this variable, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 45.27, p < .001, Cramér's V = 0.28. Target displacement as a consequence of disarmament was notably linked as well, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 50.58, p < .001, Cramér's V = 0.30. The shift toward targeting properties rather than individuals followed suit, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 47.11, p < .001, Cramér's V = 0.29. Changes in victim types were also statistically significant, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 43.72, p = .001, Cramér's V = 0.27, and the perception that criminal targets remained unchanged was equally statistically significant, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 35.46, p = .008, Cramér's V = 0.23.

The perception that the illegal arms problem in the area had decreased demonstrated statistically significant relationships with all measures of target displacement. Criminals shifting focus to softer or less protected targets was significantly related, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 46.28, p < .001, Cramér's V = 0.28 just as much as the increase in crimes against vulnerable populations was also significant, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 38.53, p = .002, Cramér's V = 0.25. Target displacement remained a notable consequence, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 44.76, p < .001, Cramér's V = 0.27, as did the shift in targeting properties over individuals, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 40.92, p = .001, Cramér's V = 0.26. Changes in victim types were significantly linked, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 41.89, p < .001, Cramér's V = 0.27, as well as the perception that criminal targets had remained unchanged despite disarmament, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 33.18, p = .011, Cramér's V = 0.22.

Lastly, the perception that banditry had reduced in areas without illegal arms was significantly associated with all indicators of target crime displacement. The shift to softer or less protected targets yielded a significant association, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 49.37, p < .001, Cramér's V = 0.29. Increased crimes against vulnerable populations were significantly related, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 40.14, p = .001, Cramér's V = 0.26. The overall significance of target displacement as a consequence of disarmament was thus supported, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 46.58, p < .001, Cramér's V = 0.28. The shift in focus to properties instead of individuals was also significant, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 42.35, p = .001, Cramér's V = 0.27, as was the change in victim types, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 39.49, p = .002, Cramér's V = 0.25. Finally, the perception that criminal targets remained unchanged showed a significant association, χ^2 (16, N = 378) = 34.52, p = .012, Cramér's V = 0.23. These findings have further been enhanced through descriptive analysis as illustrated in Table 4 below.

Table 4 Disarmament on Target Crime Displacement; A Descriptive Analysis

Statement	No Extent (%)	Little Extent (%)	Moderate Extent (%)	Great Extent (%)	Very Great Extent (%)	N	Median	Mode
Disarmament has caused criminals to shift their focus to softer or less protected targets.	2.6% (10)	2.4% (9)	4.8% (18)	46.8% (177)	43.4% (164)	378	4.00	4.00
There has been an increase in crimes against vulnerable populations (e.g., elderly, children) due to disarmament.	10.3% (39)	32.5% (123)	31.0% (117)	19.0% (72)	7.1% (27)	378	3.00	2.00
Target displacement is a significant consequence of disarmament strategies.	—	2.6% (10)	48.4% (183)	36.8% (139)	12.2% (46)	378	3.00	3.00

Criminals are now targeting properties instead of individuals due to disarmament.	5.0% (19)	42.3% (160)	23.8% (90)	19.0% (72)	9.8% (37)	378	3.00	2.00
Disarmament has led to a change in the types of victims targeted by criminals.	10.3% (39)	29.6% (112)	19.0% (72)	33.9% (128)	7.1% (27)	378	3.00	4.00
Criminal targets have remained unchanged despite disarmament strategies.	11.9% (45)	16.9% (64)	16.7% (63)	21.4% (81)	33.1% (125)	378	4.00	5.00

The study examined the implications of disarmament on target crime displacement in North-Rift Counties of Kenya by analysing respondents' perceptions across six key statements. The findings indicate statistically significant agreement with the assertion that disarmament efforts have influenced contributed to target crime displacement, showing both the intended and unintended consequences of these strategies. The statement "Disarmament has caused criminals to shift their focus to softer or less protected targets" recorded the highest agreement, with 46.8% (n = 177) of respondents indicating "great extent" and 43.4% (n = 164) reporting "very great extent." A minority of 2.4% (n = 9) chose "no extent" while 2.6% (n=10) chose "moderate extent." The median and mode were both 4.00, suggesting strong consensus on the target crime displacement effect.

Similarly, strong agreement was found with the statement "Target displacement is a significant consequence of disarmament strategies", where 36.8% (n = 139) selected "great extent" and 12.2% (n = 46) chose "great extent." Only 2.6% (n = 10) reported "no extent,". Majority of the respondents chose "moderate extent" at 48.4% (n=186). The median and mode for this item were 3.00, indicating an even feeling overall. For the item "There has been an increase in crimes against vulnerable populations (e.g., elderly, children) due to disarmament," the highest proportion of respondents selected "little extent" (32.5%, n = 123), followed by "moderate extent" (31.0%, n = 117), while a smaller share (7.1%, n = 27) indicated "very great extent." The median and mode remained at 3.00, showing general lack of agreement or disagreement with the statement.

The statement "Criminals are now targeting properties instead of individuals due to disarmament" elicited more divided responses. 42.3%, n = 160) selected "little extent," and 23.8% (n = 90) chose "moderate extent." Only 28.8% combined indicated "great" or "very great extent." Both the median and mode for this item were 3.00 and 2.00 respectively, implying general disagreement with the notion that disarmament has led to target crime displacement. The assertion "disarmament has led to a change in the types of victims targeted by criminals" was not positively received either, with 10.3% (n = 39) selecting "no extent" and 29.6% (n = 112) indicating "less extent." However, combined 60% affirmed this claim, with 19.0% (n = 29) selected "moderate extent." 33.9% (n=128) selecting "great extent" and 7.1% (n=27) selecting "very great extent". The median and mode were 3.00 and 4.00 respectively, demonstrating overall agreement.

Lastly, the statement "criminal targets have remained unchanged despite disarmament strategies" received a general agreement reaction, with 11.9% (n= 45) indicating "no extent" and 16.9% (n = 64) reporting "little extent." Meanwhile, 74.2% reported either "moderate extent", "great" or "very great extent." With a median and mode of 4.00 and 5.00, the results suggest general agreement that disarmament could contribute to target crime displacement. These findings correspond with those of a study by Kinyondo and Pelizzo (2018) which found that disarmament led to target and tactical and crime displacement. Criminals shifted their focus from armed robberies to cybercrime and fraud.

In response to the influence of disarmament on target crime displacement, a member of the County Assembly A stated that disarmament has caused target crime displacement. Criminals have changed their target to less protected targets.

> *"…even here, schools have been targeted and churches sometimes torched. The bandits perceive such institutions to be going against their ways of life and challenging their traditional cultural practices." (Member of County Assembly A)*

Village Elder B indicated that crimes had increased against the weak populations due to disarmament.

> *"...the bandits often attack these schools and women only as a last resort to disorient security operations. They want the police to abandon the disarmament exercise to go back in guarding schools, hospitals, highways, government offices and installations and such other things. Many times, the criminals succeed." (Village Elder B)*

The number of crimes committed in the area have generally remained the same even though the criminals may be targeting different victims. The representative of the business community A observed that disarmament enforcement faced challenges of implementation.

> *"...the crimes are just the same year-round, the challenge is lack of cooperation by the community. The community fear retaliation attacks once the police have retreated and they are left behind. Even Chiefs and elders have been killed for cooperating with security agencies." (Member of Business Community A)*

According to Village Elder A, disarmament officers encountered challenges such as language barrier, lack of familiarity of the terrain and political interference. Ward Commander A stated that some hotspot areas are inaccessible making it difficult to carryout disarmament effectively and an added advantage to the criminals.

> *"...while police officers are using the road, the criminals have no use of the road. They use the forest and the shrubs. They have some "panya routes" that lead to nowhere according to the police but lead to some destination for the bandits and the rustlers. These people can attack here at Kambi Karaya today and in 24 hours or less, they will be in Laikipia more than 300Kms away. They move day and night in the hills and gorges and valleys. They don't use the road." (Ward Commander A)*

Village Elder A stated that when carrying out disarmament, new strategies need to be employed to ensure the safety of the vulnerable populations such as women and children because these criminals will deflect their crime on such soft spots to create a situation of chaos and pandemonium. Moreover, women, children, the elderly, and families bear the force of the security agencies while the morans have all run away leaving behind such people who cannot move, or move fast enough.

> *"...they want to ensure that the strategy does not work by simply creating conditions of lawlessness all over the place. Attacking everything that will shift the attention of people to the victims. In their mind, the criminals know that this is a clever move. But for you and I, we know it is a stupid move that only increases attention and focus on them. Then, the police move in to disarm the people and force is used. The cattle rustlers are gone and only the vulnerable people such as women, children, and the elderly suffer." (Village Elder A)*

According to Chief B: criminals at times shift their target to police officers and this has increased their fear.

> *"...instances when police have been targeted are well documented. Today, when police officers are transferred to Tot, Kerio, Ortum, Kainuk, Barwessa, Tiaty, Nginyang' Todonyang' Mukutani and such places, fear grips them. Even us as administrators, we have a problem accepting such deployments. You fear that the criminals may just turn against you as they have done previously." (Assistant County Commissioner, C)*

A representative of the business community B added that there is need to enhance community engagements and improve community cooperation in restoring security in the North-Rift region.

> *"...these regions should be treated as a unit. One single unit because their cultures resemble, their socio-economics also resemble. Piecemeal actions are not helping. See how Uganda dealt with the banditry and cattle rustling among the Karamoja clan in Uganda. President Museveni created an entire government department. A ministry in charge of the Karamoja. These days we rarely hear cattle rustling among the Karamoja of Uganda and Toposa of South Sudan and the Merille of Ethiopia." (Member of Business Community B)*

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, these sentiments confirm that crime in traditional rural societies have generally remained unchanged despite disarmament efforts by government. Instead, tactical and target crime displacement are highly likely. This study has reported how criminals continue to outsmart law enforcement by shifting their tactics and changing their targets in agreement with the routine activity theory of crime that assert that crime will occur at the confluence of a perpetrator and a victim in time and place (De Melo et al., 2018). In the case of North-Rift Counties of Kenya, the existence of cattle, goats, and camels with motivated criminals can only lead to crime.

Based on the findings there is an association between disarmament and tactical and target crime displacement in the North-Rift counties of Kenya. Thus, the study concludes that an increase in disarmament would lead to tactical, and target crime displacement. Integrate disarmament with other community centered crime prevention and control strategies. From the results and conclusions, this study recommends community centered strategies such as community policing, evidence-based policing, legitimacy policing, and proactive policing to be used alongside hotspot policing strategies.

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