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WITH TSEPANG CEKWANE, BOOI MOHAPI, MAMPOLOKENG
MOHAPI, NTSOAKI PHAKISI AND PALESA SEITHLEKO

Published by Idasa, 6 Spin Street, Church Square, Cape Town, 8001, and
Queen's University, Canada.

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ISBN 1-919798-16-1

First published 2001
Design by Bronwen Dachs Müller
Typeset in Goudy

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Bound and printed by Logo Print
Print consultants Mega Digital, Cape Town

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SERIES EDITOR:
JONATHAN CRUSH

SOUTHERN AFRICAN MIGRATION PROJECT 2001

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Movement backwards and forwards across borders for work is often considered to be the primary form of unauthorized movement in Southern Africa. In southern Lesotho, a new and particularly dangerous form of two-way cross-border movement has become entrenched. This situation warrants the label “crisis”; a crisis which is devastating parts of the countryside in both Lesotho and the northern Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

Media and official attention has focused on the extreme violence which accompanies cross-border stock raiding. This paper seeks to understand the social and economic roots and impacts of cross-border stock theft. Such an analysis is a vital first-step towards the resolution of the conflict since it shows not only why the violence occurs but who stands to benefit from its perpetuation. The analysis is also helpful to understanding the extent to which the existence of an international border is implicated in the cycle and counter-cycle of violence. This paper concludes with an assessment of official reaction, or inaction, on the crisis.

The findings are based upon wide-ranging interviews with 147 respondents in 10 villages in southern Lesotho. A complementary study is now recommended on the South African side of the border. The stock theft epidemic is characterized by the following features:

- Although stock theft is not new to this border zone, it became more widespread, organized and violent in the 1990s. Some 71% of the Basotho stockowners reported having had stock stolen since 1990, many more than once. Over 40% of non-stockowners say they are without animals because of stock theft.
- Since 1990, 85% of stockowners in the border villages have lost animals to thieves as compared with 49% from non-border villages. Shepherds from border villages also report a higher rate of victimisation (83%) than those further removed from the border (50%).
- Most cattle and sheep are stolen from cattle posts where they are guarded only by shepherds. Stock is also taken from village kraals and, on occasion, whole villages have been attacked and all the stock driven off. Villagers in all ten villages rate stock theft as a serious problem.
- Stock thieves come from within Lesotho as well as across the border in South Africa. Basotho stock thieves also carry out raids in South Africa and vice-versa. Gun use is widespread,

although South African raiders seem to have greater access to arms.

- Much of the theft appears to be coordinated by well-organised criminal gangs but reliable information on their composition and organization is difficult to access. Criminal networks in Lesotho and South Africa also cooperate to dispose of stolen animals in the lowlands of Lesotho and as far afield as Port Elizabeth, Durban and Welkom
- The upsurge in stock theft is clearly related to growing poverty in the region. On both sides of the border, mine retrenchments have hit hard, sending experienced miners home and denying young men access to wage employment. Not only has this exacerbated household and community poverty, but it has provided willing foot-soldiers for stock thieves. Stock raiding produces further impoverishment, insecurity and suspicion, fuelling the escalating cycle of theft and counter-theft.
- Though not itself in dispute or a source of conflict per se, the Lesotho-South African border plays an essential role in the organization and impact of stock theft. There are significant differences in vulnerability and impact between villages close to the border and those further inland:
- The international border leads to a distinctive pattern of stock theft. In the simplest scenario, raiders from one side steal from border villages on the other and vice-versa and drive the stock back over the border. The situation becomes more problematic when Basotho stock thieves use the border as a refuge, stealing from Basotho and driving the animals across the border into South Africa to sell or exchange with South African thieves.
- Cross-border counter-raids to retrieve lost stock and revenge attacks are also common on both sides of the border. South African victims then target Basotho border villages for revenge raids, resulting in great tension and friction between ordinary Basotho and South Africans.
- The only Lesotho village reporting harmonious cross-border relations borders a white South African farming area. However, white border farmers are not aloof from the conflict. Lesotho police and villagers are adamant that some white South African farmers are implicated in cross-border theft.
- Stock raiding has major negative impacts on households, communities and cross-border interaction. The impacts also extend to the national economy. In Qacha's Nek and Quthing districts, production of wool and mohair has fallen significantly in the last 5 years. Livestock holdings have dropped and the numbers

of stockless households has increased.

- Farmers are reluctant to invest in breeding cattle as households debate the merits of getting rid of their cattle. One prominent stock-owner recently lost M200,000 of stock. Stock theft has also had a deleterious effect on agriculture, reducing the availability of oxen for ploughing fields.

No-one is immune from small-scale and organized raiding. Stock theft, coupled with decreasing agricultural production and increasing unemployment, deepens poverty and desperation. At the household and community level, the research found the following:

- Nearly 90% of respondents state their household economies have been negatively affected by stock theft. A household's entire wealth and livelihood can be wiped out in one attack.
- Escalating stock theft and related violence have profound social consequences, bringing fear and insecurity to ordinary people. People are abandoning their villages and migrating to town and to South Africa to look for work.
- Community relations have become fraught with tension and suspicion. Nearly half of all stockowners interviewed suspect specific individuals within their own village are involved in the theft of animals – acting either as informants or actual thieves. Invariably it is the poor who are fingered and stigmatised.
- Communal cooperation such as livestock loaning for ploughing and mafisa (sharing of products) is in steep decline, as are cultural activities and celebrations which involve the slaughter of animals.
- Cross-border cooperation, activities and initiatives have collapsed and there is considerable animosity and hatred between the communities on either side of the border. Even casual visiting and shopping have all but ceased.

Prevention efforts have involved some cross-border cooperation between villages to apprehend thieves and return cattle but these efforts are sporadic and make little dent on the problem. They often also lead to vicious reprisals from stock-theft syndicates. Vigilantism is on the rise in the face of widespread perceptions that the police and the courts on both sides of the border are either ineffectual or corrupt.

This paper examines the inadequacies of the policing of the crisis, highlighting the low rates of arrest and prosecution. The difficulties of geography and inadequate resources which hamper effective policing are highlighted. Only in areas where the army is stationed or soldiers patrol the border has there been any marked decrease in theft.

The situation is bound to deteriorate further unless there is effective national-level attention and intervention. The low-level civil war in

the nearby Tsolo district of South Africa in 1997 was fuelled by a potent mix of poverty, mine retrenchments and stock theft. This conflict could well pale in comparison with the volatile situation building in the southern Lesotho border zone. Here, the same combination of factors are compounded by ethnic and national difference, and the strategic manipulation of borders by stock thieves on both sides.

Both governments need to recognize that this local crisis could escalate into a major conflagration and intervene to defuse the situation, calm tensions and work towards effective policing and a political solution. Within Lesotho, the passage of a new Stock Theft Act promises heavy penalties for the shadowy figures involved in organized raiding, provided they can be caught. The institution of a national stock register also seems a step in the right direction though its likely effectiveness is debated.

Both the Lesotho and South African governments should acknowledge that a crisis situation exists and that this is a regional problem. Only when national governments, working together with local stakeholders, take the problem seriously and begin cooperating can workable initiatives to halt this devastating social and economic plague be implemented.

INTRODUCTION

Stock theft is endemic throughout Lesotho. However, the mountainous areas, particularly those which border the Eastern Cape (former Transkei), are especially hard hit. Stock theft and stock theft-related violence have reduced the living standards of an already impoverished populace, exacerbated social divisions and resulted in widespread violence both within Lesotho and across the border. Many villages have been abandoned and internally displaced people struggle to survive.

Much of the official and media attention to the stock theft crisis has focused on the violence, especially cross-border violence, that plagues the region. This paper sets out, instead, to understand the social, economic, political and environmental impacts of this crisis on the residents of southern Lesotho. The study concentrates on southern Lesotho but there are many parallels with the former Transkei region of the Eastern Cape. Poverty is worse in these areas; policing is made more difficult by the rugged terrain and poor infrastructure; and residents of southern Lesotho and the equally impoverished Eastern Cape both engage in cross-border raiding.

There is a long history of raiding along the southern border between Lesotho and South Africa. But worsening economic conditions in this region are almost certainly responsible for the recent upsurge in such activities. The contraction of migrant mining opportunities for men due to large-scale retrenchments, a drastic decrease in the employment of foreign novices and an increase in the use of sub-contractors in the South African mining industry have put thousands of households in a precarious economic position.¹

The underdevelopment of Lesotho's domestic economy, which is most acute in the mountain regions, severely limits the potential for excess migrant labour to be absorbed. Stock theft further undermines social and economic security in the region. The effect on local residents is devastating. Numerous people have been killed and injured, many villages have been abandoned, thousands of people have lost the animals which were their primary means of support and the agricultural sector has been adversely affected. If no measures are taken by the governments of Lesotho and South Africa this situation will almost certainly further deteriorate. The worst violence seems to stem from cross-border conflicts, and the existence of an international border further complicates matters.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research for this study is based primarily on 146 interviews conducted using structured open and closed-ended questionnaires in ten villages in Qacha's Nek, Quthing, Mohale's Hoek, and Thaba Tseka districts over a ten week period from March to May 1999. Six of these villages are located within 15 kilometres of the South African border – five border the Eastern Cape and one borders KwaZulu Natal. The border villages were selected at random for roughly equal geographical dispersion stretching from Sehlabathebe to Moyeni. Four interior villages were chosen to enable a comparative assessment of whether distance from the border impacts upon the severity and form of raiding.

In each village, we set out to interview the chief or representative of the chief, nine stockowners, four non-stockowners and one shepherd with as equal gender representation as possible. The vast majority of the interviews were conducted in Sesotho by members of the research team. In addition to interviews in the villages, police officers and officials, Rural Development officials, Ministry of Agriculture officials in the Departments of Range Management and Livestock Services, District Secretaries and a representative from each of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the South African High Commission were interviewed.

The interviews were designed to collect data on: (a) respondents' household socio-economic situation; (b) the social, economic and environmental consequences of stock theft at both the village and household level; (c) the differential impact of stock theft on villagers; specific instances of stock theft; and individual and community efforts to counter stock theft; (d) people's ideas on who is involved in stock theft; (e) people's perceptions of, and experiences with, police and government efforts to counter stock theft; (f) people's perceptions of the underlying causes of the stock theft crisis and their suggestions for solutions. We tried to determine the total number of animals owned in each village but this proved impossible because of the poor state of the stock registers.

The 146 interviewees comprised 87 stockowners, 38 non-stockowners, 10 chiefs and 11 shepherds. About 37% of stockowners and 45% of non-stockowners interviewed were female. Some 39% of stockowners and 61% of non-stockowners stated that they are unemployed and 58% of stockowners and non-stockowners claim their households have no regular monthly income. Monthly incomes range from M0 – M3,000, averaging M286 for stockowners and M81 for non-stockowners. The largest portion of respondents engaged in any wage earning activity were farmers who are therefore heavily dependent on livestock.

Livestock ownership amongst our interviewees varied tremendously (See Appendix).

THE DIMENSIONS OF STOCK THEFT

Some 71% of the stockowners we interviewed have had stock stolen since 1990. Many have been victimised a number of times. One man from a border village has lost stock to thieves nine times in this period, including twice in 1999.² Over 40% of previous stockowners say they are currently without animals because of stock theft (either all their animals have been stolen or most were stolen and the remainder were sold to pre-empt further losses).

Thieves are opportunistic and the patterns of theft reflect livestock owning trends. Cattle are stolen more frequently than other animals, but this is almost certainly because more people own them. Sheep are actually stolen in greater numbers but, again, this is probably a result of the larger numbers of sheep owned (see Appendix). In 40% of the thefts, cattle were stolen. Theft of sheep occurred in 30%, goats 13%, horses 13%, and donkeys 4%.

In the majority of cases, animals are stolen not from villages but from cattle posts where they are guarded only by shepherds. However, stock is also taken from village kraals and, on occasion, villages are attacked and all the stock is driven off. There are seasonal variations only for the two villages where cross-border accessibility is largely determined by the level of the Senqu River. These villages report that theft is much worse when the river is low in the winter. All ten villages rate stock theft as a serious problem.

Location is a key factor in determining the extent and nature of victimisation. Border villages are susceptible to South African raids which are often conducted in daylight by large parties that capture all available stock. Villages close to the border typically find themselves in a difficult situation for they are targeted by both Basotho and South African stock thieves. When the figures are disaggregated spatially, it is clear that border villages suffer more than their counterparts in the interior.

The chief of a village involved in an ongoing battle with South African raiders reports his people have had stock stolen fifteen times in the past twelve months.³ Since 1990, 85% of stockowners in the border villages have lost animals to thieves as compared with 49% from non-border villages. Shepherds from border villages also report a higher rate of victimisation (83%) than those further removed from the border (50%). And, while the use of guns by thieves is widespread, South African raiders rely on force of arms and resort to violence more readily than Basotho thieves.

Cross-border stock theft involves a high level of violence; five of the six border villages report theft-related deaths and all have suffered injuries.⁴ Official police statistics claim that in 1997/1998 in the whole of Lesotho, only fourteen Basotho lost their lives and three were seriously injured in stock theft-related incidents, while two South Africans were killed and two seriously injured.⁵ Yet the police commanders of Quthing and Qacha's Nek state that stock theft is the leading cause of murder in both districts. It is unclear whether deaths go unreported, unrecorded or misrecorded, but it is evident that official figures are incorrect.

Respondents mention that people in their villages suspected of theft have either been killed or have gone missing in the Eastern Cape:

Some of the thieves from our village who went to Matatiele to steal animals have just disappeared. We do not know what happened to them – whether they were killed or imprisoned... We never even bothered to ask because they are thieves.⁶

Stockowners and non-stockowners alike fear what they perceive to be increasing levels of violence – thieves do not differentiate between those with animals and those without. In one village, respondents report raiding parties which not only stole animals, but looted homes, shot people, raped women and generally terrorised the villagers.

Shepherds experience the highest level of violent intimidation and victimisation. Shepherds have been bound, severely beaten, threatened with guns, castrated and even set alight. Most live in fear of death and injury:

I was attacked by Mfengu [South Africans] at the cattle post. They beat me and fastened my hands with a rope. They took me to another cattle post and captured two more shepherds. After a time, I managed to escape and went to a neighbouring cattle post where the shepherds untied me. All the animals were stolen and I went back to the village to report. I am now afraid to go to the cattle post because I might be attacked.⁷

Being a shepherd is like sitting on the edge of a cliff from which you can fall when the wind blows. It is a terrible life. I am always in danger especially these days when thieves use guns.⁸

The threat has frightened many families from hiring out their sons as shepherds to other stock-holders.

There is a widespread belief that stock theft has not only increased in recent years, but it has become more violent and organised.⁹ The police commander of Quthing District noted:

We have had [stock theft] from time immemorial, but from a flock of sheep or a herd of cattle you would choose one or two and go in the night and take them leaving the rest with the owner. But what we have seen happening of late is these guys start shooting at your house and telling you to come out if you want to die. Then they open the kraal and take everything. From the cattle posts they take the herd-boys and only release them after a long time so they cannot raise the alarm. That is what you see happening today.¹⁰

The presence of the international border between Lesotho and South Africa facilitates different stock theft patterns. In the simplest cases, either Basotho from one village steal from another village in Lesotho or South Africans steal from border villages in Lesotho. The situation becomes more problematic when Basotho steal from Basotho and drive the animals across the border into South Africa, either to sell or exchange the animals with South African thieves or to drive the stock back into Lesotho via an alternate route. In both cases South Africans are often blamed and anti-South African feelings are heightened.

In some cases, Basotho from further in the interior will cross the border into South Africa to steal animals; once again the wrong party is often blamed as South African victims then target Basotho border villages for revenge raids. Attempts to reclaim stock that has been taken to South Africa results in much friction between Basotho and South Africans.

Some border villages find themselves in a Catch-22 situation. If they ignore the Basotho stock thieves, they are targeted by South African revenge raids; however, if they move against the Basotho thieves, they become embroiled in conflicts with them. Of course, border villages also participate in theft, primarily in South Africa where raids are justified as retaliation and revenge. The only village that reported harmonious cross-border relations borders a white South African farming area.

Yet this does not mean that white border farmers are not embroiled in the conflict. On the whole much more prosperous than their black counterparts in Lesotho and the former Transkei, they have little incentive to steal from their impoverished neighbours, and much to lose if they precipitate a cycle of revenge raids. Yet, Lesotho police and villagers are adamant that white South African farmers encourage cross border theft by hiring thieves and buying stolen animals – ‘White farmers are

responsible. One day I heard a man from Matatiele talking to his friend saying he bought his truck with money coming from stock he had stolen from Lesotho. He said that he had orders from white farmers.¹¹

Small-scale stock theft, whereby an individual or small group steals one or two animals for consumption or a quick sale to a butchery, is also very common. Butchers tend to ask the person selling the animal(s), 'is it burning?' If the answer is yes the animal is slaughtered immediately and any parts with identifying marks are disposed of.

There are also large well-organised networks operating both in Lesotho and South Africa that cooperate to dispose of stolen animals. A villager from Thaba Tseka District explains:

It is organised. For example, there are maybe two thieves from this village, five from the next village and one from another village who work together. I cannot know exactly how they organise themselves but they transport stock during the night. Like what happened here last year – the people from our neighbouring village found their animals in Maseru.¹²

Stolen animals from the mountain districts are transported to butcheries in the lowlands: 'People from Leribe, Butha-Buthe and Berea come straight to Sehonghong to load their trucks and vans with stolen stock.'¹³ Criminal networks reportedly ship the stock as far afield as Port Elizabeth, Durban and Welkom.¹⁴

Stock theft is a key element in a much larger illegal economy involving arms trafficking and drug smuggling and is directly or indirectly responsible for the majority of murders in Qacha's Nek and Quthing. Stock theft networks are part of a thriving criminal trade on the Lesotho-South African border. Stolen animals are merely one form of currency in this trade which also involves guns and dagga. Both police and villagers report the "dagga for guns" trade has drastically increased the number of firearms on the Lesotho side of the border in recent years:

Basotho sell dagga to the South Africans in exchange for guns and this is one of the major difficulties for us to prevent stock theft. There is a lot of dagga within our country and as more Basotho grow and sell it more and more guns enter Lesotho and stock theft becomes worse.¹⁵

Stolen stock is also traded for guns and thus the cycle of violence on the border continues. Given the ongoing violent conflict in some areas of the former Transkei, the demobilisation of the Transkei military and police forces and the armed organisations which operated and sought

sanctuary there, it is hardly surprising that illegal firearms are easily available.

The people we interviewed were unable or unwilling to identify the shadowy figures who head these networks, other than to speculate that they are rich people because they hire others to work for them. Police in Qacha's Nek report that most of the thieves they arrest have been hired.¹⁶

CAUSES OF STOCK THEFT

Livestock is the most visible form of wealth in the mountain area of Lesotho. The ease with which stolen animals can be exchanged for cash, dagga (marijuana) and guns, or simply slaughtered and eaten, makes stock an attractive commodity. The rugged terrain and mobility of livestock in the mountain districts make it relatively easy to steal.

The overriding cause of stock theft is clearly poverty. Joblessness and poverty were consistently rated by respondents as the primary reasons for endemic theft. Unemployment has certainly increased substantially throughout Lesotho since 1990. Youth (particularly males) are the hardest hit. Unemployment rates are higher in the rural and mountain areas of Lesotho where people are particularly dependent on livestock. Poverty is also more severe in these areas.¹⁷ Not surprisingly, the level of stock theft rises following poor harvests. The cycle is a depressing one – stock theft is a result of poverty, stock theft increases poverty and poverty begets more stock theft.

The stock theft epidemic cannot be isolated from changing migrant labour dynamics. Of particular concern to many is the continuing return of retrenched miners to Lesotho who are barred from finding other work in South Africa. Many respondents saw a link between retrenchments and increasing stock theft. As one commented:

It is worse since around 1990 when retrenchment became too much. People used to make their living from the mines but they have been sent back. Most of the miners bought stock when they returned but it was stolen so they in turn choose to steal.¹⁸

In 1990, 5,083 men from Qacha's Nek district were employed on South African mines, a figure that declined to 2,371 in 1998. Quthing district suffered a similar drop over the same period, from 8,577 to 4,778. Male youth are also experiencing a drastic curtailment in employment opportunities on the mines. In the past, young men from initiation school, with little or no formal education, would typically

have become mineworkers. However, in all of 1998 only 10 novices were recruited from Qacha's Nek and 38 from Quthing.¹⁹ These youth have abysmal employment prospects in Lesotho:

I think the youth are the ones who steal our animals especially because there is an increasing rate of unemployment. They have nothing to live on and as a result they resort to stock theft. I suspect these people because despite the fact that they are unemployed they still wear new clothes, they are not poor and one wonders where they get the money.²⁰

Retrenched miners and unemployable male youth are the foot soldiers of stock theft operations on the Lesotho side of the border.

Within Lesotho, stock theft is often attributed to jealousy, where those without stock steal from their relatively prosperous neighbours.²¹ Many people comment that anyone who accumulates significant numbers of stock is a target for poorer villagers who resent the obvious wealth and status of the stockowner. A contributing factor is that people who have managed to amass large herds are sometimes suspected of having done so at least partly through theft. These suspicions highlight the increasing gap between the small numbers of successful livestock owners and the large majority of people in the mountains who struggle to survive.

The situation in the former Transkei is very similar to that of southern Lesotho. It is one of the poorest regions of South Africa with a high rate of unemployment and miner retrenchment, widespread environmental degradation which negatively affects agricultural production and livestock grazing, a poor to non-existent infrastructure, and policing and judicial systems which have been accused of both incompetence and active involvement in stock theft.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF STOCK RAIDING

Stock theft has affected my family in that my neighbour used to lend me his donkeys to go and grind corn into flour and this is a long distance. Thieves stole all his animals and nobody will lend us their donkeys for fear that they might be stolen. We now use wheelbarrows and it takes a very long time. Moreover, we used to buy milk from the neighbours, but now their animals have been stolen. In addition, last year I has unable to plough my fields because I had to hire somebody's cattle, but I was late because about six households were already ahead of me. Generally stock theft has affected us negatively, we just wish that something could be done.²²

This village has been affected by this tragedy because when people have nothing to eat in their houses, it means they will go to a neighbour's and that affects the neighbour's wealth when he has to share outside of his household. It even causes a lot of crime within the village and stock theft then even occurs within the village. Above all, I am sad to see many children not going to school because their parents have no money – that is what is happening now in this village because of stock theft. What makes things worse is that even those people who work on the mines have been retrenched and this brings terrible poverty to their families. Now crime will increase like in South Africa.²³

Statistics provided by the Ministry of Agriculture's Department of Livestock Services indicate a steady decline in wool and mohair production since 1994 in both Qacha's Nek and Quthing districts.²⁴ While stock theft may not be the only reason for decreasing production, it is certainly a contributing factor. Not only has stock theft reduced the number of animals, the day-to-day fear of having animals stolen discourages stockowners from purchasing expensive breeding stock to improve the quality of their herds.²⁵ The quality of livestock and their products has deteriorated, as a result

A 1997 study by the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) reported that an escalation in stock theft would undermine livestock improvement programmes.²⁶ One stockowner who had 665 sheep and goats stolen within a one year period explains:

I was a member of the District Animal Committee and I was also a member of the National Animal Committee. I used good quality rams, angora goats and merino rams. There were all taken without being sheared, I lost everything in that year. I have the goats that are left, but I am afraid to spend my money to improve their quality.²⁷

We used to buy rams from South Africa as a cooperative in order to improve our stock by breeding high quality animals for better wool. All these things have collapsed due to stock theft. You cannot think of improving what is going to be taken from you the next day.²⁸

Livestock quality is also suffering because stockowners are reluctant to move their animals to traditional summer grazing areas at the cattle posts, as these areas are considered less secure. As a result, lands closer to the villages have come under even greater stress than previously and

are experiencing high levels of over-grazing and degradation. Only 31% of stock owning respondents now rotate their grazing lands on a consistent basis and an additional 8% do so only occasionally: "Stock theft has affected the quality of my stock because my animals do not graze where there is a lot of grass because I am afraid they will be stolen. Now they are very thin."²⁹

Five of six border villages report that grazing patterns have been drastically altered. As one stock owner explains, "This has reduced the grazing area to a very small portion where all stock gather throughout the seasons of the year."³⁰ Grazing animals closer to the village does not ensure their safety and may, in fact, put the village at risk. Respondents from one village revealed that they tried to graze their animals in a more secure area near the village, which resulted in thieves coming to the village with guns in order to capture the animals. The shortage of shepherds, which has been exacerbated by stock theft, also contributes to the reduced use of traditional grazing lands at cattle posts.

Stock theft has had a deleterious effect on agriculture. Fewer oxen are available for ploughing fields and the pressure on these animals has increased. Non-stockowners complain that they must wait a long time before animals are available for them to plough, by which time it may be too late:

We are now unable to plough due to a lack of animals. We need to borrow other people's animals which we might have to wait for until the owner has finished with his/her own fields, hence we are always behind time and, as a result, our crops' quality becomes very low. We may even have to hire some people's animals or tractors. Sometimes we are even forced to participate in sharecropping due to a lack of animals to use in our fields.³¹

Tractors are available for some people to hire but, again, the waiting list is long and the cost of renting is prohibitive for many. Furthermore, tractors are only capable of reaching the lower fields and villages must be easily accessible by a road. Tractors are simply not an option at all in three interview villages, and all of the others had a number of fields which tractors are unable to access. As a result many fields go uncultivated:

No one is ploughing at this place because we do not have tractors, our hope was on cattle that are almost finished because of stock theft. Many people are unable to plough, some even use spades to plough just a little – enough to eat. People are starving. In the high land people use cattle to plough. That means when they are stolen, we fail to

plough because we do not have ploughing machinery. Farming has failed in this place.³²

Department of Rural Development projects in the agricultural sector have also been undermined due to stock theft. A farm demonstration programme initiated in Qacha's Nek failed due to a lack of oxen for ploughing. The Qacha's Nek Rural Development Office states that although many farmers were interested in the programme, they were unable to undertake the initiative because there was an insufficient number of oxen.³³

The economic impact of stock theft on households, villages and districts has been devastating. Stock theft, coupled with decreasing agricultural production and increasing unemployment, deepens poverty and desperation. Nearly 90% of respondents state their household economies have been negatively affected by stock theft. A household's entire wealth and livelihood can be wiped out in one attack. In such circumstances, the possibility of economic recovery is unlikely and the long-term economic viability of the household is threatened. For example, one stockowner had stock valued at over M200,000 stolen in a matter of months. He stated that whereas previously he had been the richest person in the village, he is now one of the poorest.³⁴

Income from the proceeds of their animals – by selling an animal or its milk, labour, wool or mohair – pays for such extras as schooling for their children. One respondent lost 50 goats in one night which provided his household M3,000 worth of mohair per year to pay for the school fees of his 5 children.³⁵ People in all 10 villages commented on their declining ability to school their children. Numerous villagers have also observed declining nutritional levels – especially amongst children. The availability of meat and milk has decreased in many villages making it much more expensive to purchase. Furthermore, many households which were previously able to supply themselves with meat and milk are no longer able to do so.

The price of livestock has decreased, putting additional stress on household income-generating capabilities. There are a number of reasons for this. First, stolen animals are sold at much reduced prices and are readily available except in the most remote villages. Second, animals are of poorer quality because they are kept closer to the village where grazing lands are inferior. Third, full-grown animals are stolen and only immature stock remains which fetches a lower price. Finally, the full-grown stock which remains is needed for breeding and activities such as ploughing and therefore only immature animals can be sold.

The increasing rate of stock theft in Lesotho's mountain districts has hit small businesses hard. Shop owners are now reluctant to go to the Eastern Cape to buy supplies to replenish the goods in their stores and

people simply do not have the money to buy their goods:

I used to sell blocks to people and run a shop. I received cheques for my wool and would improve my businesses with this money, but now I am unable to do that and my businesses are declining everyday. I can buy nothing because I do not even have enough money to support my family.³⁶

THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF RAIDING

The loss of livestock and livelihood is one of the most visible impacts of criminal stock raiding and theft. But escalating stock theft and related violence have profound social consequences, bringing fear and insecurity to ordinary people:

The possibility of violence related to stock theft haunts us. We keep wondering what will happen when they have finished all the animals. We think that we will be the next victims. We are afraid that they are going to kill us all thinking that we have hidden some animals or that when they are through with something, they will take away all our belongings.³⁷

I feel threatened because Mafengu do not just come and steal, they also kill whomever they meet on their way. I cannot say 'I do not have stock' whenever they come or whenever we are called by the chief to follow them to reclaim stock. I have to go. That has happened three times. You see we are also in danger although we don't have animals because these people with livestock help us in many ways, so we must help them.³⁸

We feel very threatened especially those like me – an old one who cannot even run. If I had a daughter in a town I would move and stay with her. This has affected me in that I do not feel secure. I feel like this is a different place. I have lived here for more than fifty years but it looks new and strange to me. I wish I had died together with my husband then I would not have seen these atrocities.³⁹

A number of villages along the border in Qacha's Nek and Quthing have recently been abandoned as a result of the raids. In one of our

villages, homesteads situated higher along the mountain were abandoned in January 1998 after two people were killed and houses looted in raids. Fourteen families have been displaced and now rent accommodation in a nearby village. Although soldiers are now stationed in the village, the families are still afraid to return. People have had to abandon their homes, their fields, their possessions, and their livelihoods. According to the chief of this village the effects of such displacement on people are profound: "Some people in my village have lost everything. The worse part is that people have lost their lives because of stock theft violence. People have left their homes and fields and now they live very miserable lives."⁴⁰

A related consequence has been the increase in rural-urban migration – especially of young people:

People have been impoverished by this problem of stock theft. Now since they have nothing, obviously they have to come to the town to look for piece jobs because there is more employment in towns. So there has been an increased influx into the towns which has then increased the crime in town.⁴¹

The District Secretary of Qacha's Nek highlighted the devastating impact of stock raiding on villagers:

People have been killed in numbers – I can assure you of that. You go around to Qanya – people have fled their places of residence. They have left almost everything. People have lost their lives because of stock theft. People have been killed when thieves come into their houses because what we have now is not stock theft but capturing. At Mosaqane people have fled their houses right up to where Mosaqane ends – they have come down here. And they have come here without anything to live on. They cause problems because they need to be accommodated. I was asked by people from Ha Makoae if my office could supply tents but we could not afford that because we don't have anything. Many people there have nothing.⁴²

Stock theft has affected relations within villages on a number of different levels. Many of our respondents accuse chiefs of aiding and abetting stock theft. Chiefs allegedly participate in stock theft in several different ways; turning a blind eye to stolen animals in their villages, protecting thieves, and providing false documentation for stolen stock. Some villages are reputed to be havens for stock thieves, places where they can hide animals before moving them in return for supplying the chief with

an animal or two.⁴³ Chiefs are also accused of protecting thieves who operate from their villages:

Some chiefs try by all means to prevent stock theft but others are either thieves themselves or they work hand-in-hand with the thieves. For example when we were at the village called M the chief of that village kept us waiting for many hours before he granted us permission to look for our animals within his village. We learned later that he had sent his representative to tell the thieves to hide the stolen animals.⁴⁴

The practice of issuing receipts for stolen animals contributes to conflict when the animals are sold, particularly if they are claimed at a later date by their legitimate owners who produce the original documents.⁴⁵

The level of mistrust amongst villagers has also reportedly increased:

Our village is very much affected. People do not trust each other and that causes conflicts. We are afraid of quarrelling because the person you quarrel with might come and steal from your kraal that night.⁴⁶

Relations are not good within this village. When stock is stolen people do not greet each other because they always suspect one another.⁴⁷

Non-stockowners feel that they are often unjustly suspected of being thieves and fear they may be injured or killed as a result of such suspicions. Nearly half of all stockowners interviewed suspect specific individuals within their village are responsible for the theft of animals – acting either as informants or actual thieves:

Relations are not good because there are people in our village who allow thieves to stay in their homes and our stock is stolen. We have one person in our village who provides thieves with information. When stock goes missing from the village you see him with new clothes.⁴⁸

Relations are not good amongst the people of this village. We even point to our neighbours saying because they have visited Matatiele that is why our stock is being stolen. We suspect they give information about our kraals. There is no trust among the villagers.⁴⁹

Stockowners and non-stockowners alike comment on the falling levels of cooperation. Non-stockowning villagers rely on the communal goodwill of stockowners to share the benefits of animals, but as the rate

of stock theft has increased and the total number of animals in villages has decreased, such cooperation is diminishing. Poorer people are no longer permitted to enter the kraals to collect cow dung:

Poor people don't have cow dung. They have to ask from those that have animals. But now because of the conflict in the village they must follow the animals. They can no longer collect dung from the kraals. The owners of the animals refuse, they tell them, 'You are the thieves and we cannot help you with anything'.⁵⁰

In remote villages donkeys and horses are not as readily lent for transportation to those who do not have animals. The vast majority of those who do not own draught animals report they are either unable to plough or that their fields are ploughed too late to produce a sufficient harvest. Stockowners agree:

Since we are neighbours sometimes we help them plough without asking for money. But this is becoming too much on our side since so many people in the village have lost stock. In the past before their stock was stolen we used to join hands when ploughing. But if I am the only one doing that work, my bulls will become tired and thin. And even myself, I will not be patient enough to help all of them.⁵¹

Stock theft also exacerbates intra-household divisions. The issue of whether or not to sell animals which have not been stolen is fiercely contested – primarily along gender divides, but also generationally. According to one stockowner, 'Stock theft is one of the most common issues discussed within families today.'⁵² Women generally want to sell stock to secure scarce resources and invest in the basic needs of their families, rather than "keep them for thieves" and invite possible injury or death:

Family relationships have really been affected by stock theft. I, as a mother, will suggest that we sell all of the animals but my husband refuses. We had a lot of disputes, especially last year when Mafengu were attacking more frequently. But since they have stopped coming I have become convinced that it may not be necessary to sell all of them. But I can tell you *ntate*, many families have undergone serious conflicts due to stock theft.⁵³

There have been many disagreements within my family concerning the animals. This year my wife wanted me to sell some sheep to pay school fees for our daughters, but I

refused because we have very few sheep and if we sell them we will be left with nothing to live on.⁵⁴

I quarrel with my wife who encourages me to sell the remaining animals before they are stolen. She says there is no need to starve instead of selling stock that will be taken by thieves.⁵⁵

Children also encourage their parents to sell their animals and to put the money in a bank or invest it in their education. While in many cases this is prompted by the fear of stock theft and the physical and economic danger in which this places the family, sometimes children are simply uninterested in rearing animals or in acting as shepherds.

Not all women want to sell their household's stock. In a few cases – most often when the spouse is a migrant worker – women state they cannot live without animals and must convince their husbands not to sell their stock.⁵⁶ Donkeys carry their heavy loads, cattle plough their fields and provide their children with meat and milk.

There is a widely-held sentiment that a Mosotho is not a Mosotho without animals. Virtually all cultural practices require animals. However, in every interview village stock theft has drastically reduced livestock holdings. This makes it very difficult for people to contribute to cultural events. Traditional practices are being eroded as a result and may eventually be abandoned:

I have a son who can marry at any time from now, but I am worried that I will not be able to pay *bohali* for his wife. Most of the cultural events which require animals to be slaughtered have diminished. We have lost a lot of our identity as Basotho because of the lack of animals due to stock theft.⁵⁷

Births and deaths still require the slaughtering of animals and the inability to do so is regarded as a disgrace: “We can ignore some ceremonies, but the funeral we cannot ignore, our gods will be angry with us.”⁵⁸

Mistrust has also contributed to the decline of *mafisa*. This is a long-standing practice whereby a stockowner gives animals to a friend or relative to care for. In return, they keep a portion of the proceeds of the animal (milk or wool) and often the offspring. Today, Basotho feel more comfortable keeping their animals closer to home and believe they will be more vigilant in preventing theft. Furthermore, when *mafisa* animals are stolen, there is inevitably suspicion that the recipients played a part in the theft.

More than 80% of respondents think that domestic drudgery has

increased as a result of stock theft. This is primarily due to the lack of dung within villages. Many Basotho in rural areas use dung to smear the floors of their homes and for cooking; however, now women must use wood for fires. Deforestation in many of the interview villages is evident and many women now spend anywhere from 3 to 6 hours per day collecting wood in addition to their other duties.

Previously men may have used oxen to transport large sections of trees, but the lack of draught animals in villages means women must carry the wood themselves. Unless the rate of stock theft is brought under control, women will have to travel longer distances searching for wood which they say increases the risk of sexual harassment. Furthermore, if collecting wood takes women outside their village boundaries it causes conflict between villages over scarce resources.⁵⁹ In villages where wood is simply unavailable, households may be forced to spend scarce financial resources on paraffin for cooking and heating.

THE DECLINE OF CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION

Both sides of the Lesotho/Eastern Cape border region are under-resourced and under-developed – a situation which has contributed to the tension. With such high levels of hatred and mistrust, it is impossible to envision successful cooperative activities of any sort, since people simply refuse to work with one another. This is clearly exemplified by the fact that the Qacha's Nek District Liaison Committee (DLC), a body made up of local leaders on both sides of the border, whose purpose is to encourage cross border cooperation and defuse potential conflicts, has not met since December 1997. There are no indications it will be resurrected.⁶⁰

Cross border activities, which previously were part of everyday life in this region of Lesotho have been drastically reduced and/or altered:

We were cooperating with other associations in South Africa but since October 1996 when they started to attack us in our village we stopped working together. We were going to South Africa and they were coming to our country but since 1996 everything has stopped.⁶¹

Prior to 1994, Basotho were able to graze their animals along the Eastern Cape side of the border where grazing lands are superior to their own. This is no longer an option. Children living in border villages sometimes attended schools in the Eastern Cape, but parents feel it is no longer safe for them to do so. Women report that they can no longer collect wood near the border, where the wood supply is more plentiful, as they are in danger of assault and sexual harassment. Many respondents

state they are afraid to go to border towns to buy provisions due to anti-Basotho sentiment. Even Basotho shop owners are no longer able to shop at wholesalers in Matatiele.

Suspicion, mistrust and lack of cooperation now define most cross-border inter-village relations. As one stockowner observed, "Each village thinks that the other villages steal or help South African steal their cattle."⁶² Such suspicion often results in violence: "We do not have good relations with people across the Senqu (River) because of stock theft. We know they steal our stock and if we go to their places they will kill us."⁶³

People are no longer able to visit other villages freely. Any unknown person is regarded with suspicion. Respondents in one village recounted an incident in which men confronted strangers approaching the village with the result that two of the villagers were shot. While this is an extreme case, general mistrust prevails:

There is no peace. I might take a journey from here to Ha Rapase or any other place. When I get there, people will no longer welcome me as they used to before because they suspect I might be a thief.⁶⁴

Strangers at our village have to report their presence to the chief even before they go to the people whom they are visiting. When strangers spend a night or more our husbands patrol the village at night until the strangers are gone.⁶⁵

The conflict exacerbates ethnic/nationalist tension and Mafengu are stigmatised as violent thugs:

Guns in South Africa are just like pens to pupils. Every pupil when going to school is expected to have a pen. In South Africa every dirty street boy has a firearm. What do you expect from such a person?⁶⁶

The border situation is fueling dangerously high levels of ethnic tension and nationalism. The enmity Basotho in border villages feel for South Africans is evident:

The people in Matatiele hate us, but we hate them more. We wish that they could all be dead. They have done a terrible thing to us and we are now poor because of them. I hate them really.⁶⁷

By far the most common community effort to thwart stock theft has been the formation of stock theft associations (STA). Six of the ten villages in which we interviewed had active STAs, three others had

operated STAs in the past but had abandoned them for a variety of reasons. The primary task of these associations is to search for animals that have been stolen and to apprehend and turn thieves over to the police. Meetings to discuss methods of reducing stock theft are also held and, in some instances, members patrol the village at night to guard against theft. Membership dues are used to buy provisions for reclamation expeditions and to hire lawyers when members are accused of torturing and killing suspects.

In villages that lack a formal association, friends and neighbours will usually come together to search for stolen animals.

Communal efforts to recover animals, and in some cases to prevent theft, are generally more successful than individual initiatives. When STAs from neighbouring villages cooperate, the chances of recovering stolen animals increases. However, only 30% of respondents indicate that there are cooperative activities with neighbouring villages – either in Lesotho or South Africa – to prevent or reduce stock theft or search for stolen animals. Some cross-border efforts have yielded good results: “Boers of Underburg work together with us for instance when we find their stolen stock in Lesotho we return it to them. They do the same for us. Sometimes we work together to recover stolen stock.”⁶⁸ There is also a cross border project operating in the Mphaki area which both residents and local police say has reduced the incidence of theft and violence. Other initiatives both in Quthing and Qacha’s Nek have been less successful:

We have formed a liaison committee and have started working together as chiefs and farmers of Matatiele and Lesotho. Very few Basotho have recovered their animals but South Africans have recovered all of their missing animals. That is what makes Basotho reluctant to accept this cooperation. The problem with South Africans is that they do not respect the law, they do what they like even in the presence of the police. They refuse to release stolen animals no matter what the police say or do.⁶⁹

While they offer the best chance for recovering stolen animals, STAs are not without their drawbacks. Associations are plagued by the same squabbles that divide villages; political rivalries and mistrust brought about by stock theft often hamper cooperative efforts. STAs disband because thieves join the organisations to render them ineffective. The mismanagement of funds and the fact that some members attempt to keep recovered animals stolen from other villages also lead to the dissolution of STAs.

Clashes with police cause some associations to cease operating. In

such cases respondents are adamant that the police are in league with the thieves:⁷⁰

We were encouraged to form a stock theft association by a police commander by the name of M. He was here some five years ago. He taught us how to run the association and worked with us but since he left the remaining police commander is just not interested in preventing stock theft. We were very successful in this work despite the problems that we encountered with the police who did not like us saying that we were taking away their work. But now that they have destroyed us they are sleeping – theirs is just to get up in the morning, go to the shebeen and collect their cheques at the end of the month.⁷¹

STAs often come into conflict with thieves when they try to recover animals and a number of people have been killed in such battles. Given the increased availability of firearms it is inevitable that these casualties will escalate. A further problem occurs when stock theft associations apprehend suspected thieves. In one instance a man was beaten so badly en route to a police station that the police supposedly refused to take him into custody because they were afraid he would die and they would be blamed.⁷² Brutal beatings are routine and some suspects are killed. Most cases of this nature are probably never reported.

Villages in Lesotho cooperate with neighbouring South African communities/organisations to reduce cross-border theft are at some risk, particularly if they confiscate stolen South African animals from Basotho thieves. In one area in Qacha's Nek, these actions precipitated an intense conflict between communities within Lesotho, resulting in several deaths as the thieves from the interior sought revenge on the border village which interfered with their activities. A similar situation prevails in Quthing:

There are some villages along the border which tend to be victimised more than villages further in the country. And having noticed that they try to intercept stolen animals coming into the country so they won't be victimised by South African thieves. Now they become even more victimised as a result of doing that because those thieves will run away and leave the animals but come back in the night and steal all the animals of the villagers where they were intercepted. This is their revenge.⁷³

POLICING THE CRISIS

The seeming inability of police, prosecutors and magistrates to apprehend and convict thieves enflames an already volatile situation. For instance, in 1998 of the 359 cases of stock theft reported to the police in Quthing district, there were 7 arrests and 4 convictions. In 1994, despite a total of 255 cases of stock theft being reported not a single person in either Qacha's Nek or Quthing was convicted. In all of 1994 and 1995 no one was arrested for stock theft in Quthing.⁷⁴ These figures are even more alarming when one considers that a large proportion of stock theft cases are not reported to the police. The District Secretary of Qacha's Nek traces the onset of widespread cross-border theft in Lesotho to South African dissatisfaction with the difficulties in recovering their stolen animals once stock was impounded or the subject of court cases in Lesotho.

Partly this speaks to the difficulty of policing effectively across international borders. But some accuse the police and justice officials of complicity in the vicious cycle of raiding that characterises cross border theft between Lesotho and South Africa:

The police are the main source of all this mess because whenever they recovered animals stolen from Matatiele, they did not take them back to Matatiele, instead they kept them and after some months they auction them to themselves. This made Mafengu want to pay revenge saying that Basotho eat all their animals. That is the reason why these people decided to attack Basotho and capture their livestock.⁷⁵

One government official alleged that high level police officers from the lowlands are involved in transporting stock and that one in particular owns hundreds of stolen animals. There are rumours that elements within the Eastern Cape police also orchestrate stock theft operations. Lesotho's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has received reports that some corrupt police in the Eastern Cape own butcheries and are involved in registering and transporting stolen animals.⁷⁶ These are allegations, no more, but they surely bear investigation.

The primary reason that vigilante activities are so prevalent is the perception that policing and the courts are ineffective. The majority of respondents (70%) say they reported the theft of their animals to the police. They did so not because they expected any immediate action but because the police would then have a record of their stock to check against any animals recovered in the future. Only 3% of respondents who reported theft to the police recovered some or all of their stock as a direct result of police assistance (compared to a recovery rate of 9% by

owners with the assistance of friends, relatives and STAs).

Allegation that the police work in concert with thieves was a common thread throughout our interviews. Major Mofolo of the Lesotho police claims they are working hard to weed out such elements: "It is true that we have had some police corrupted by those thieves and we have stood firmly against that – opening dockets and sending them to court even before the ordinary cases. We try to root it out as much as possible from the police."⁷⁷

The credibility of the Lesotho police is further undermined by their inability to deal with South Africa raiders. Villagers on the border state the police provide no protection out of fear.⁷⁸ One border resident related how, following an attack on his cattle post in which the raiders shot the dogs and chased away his shepherd, the police were alerted and pursued the thieves but abandoned their pursuit when shots were directed at them.⁷⁹ Major Mofolo said that the issue of pursuit across the border has been discussed with the SAPS but his officers are outgunned: "We have talked about it but we don't have the guns to go there – those guys are more heavily armed than us. It would cause a lot of deaths on our side."⁸⁰

Basotho are no more enamoured of police in the Eastern Cape who they believe conspire with South African stock thieves against them. They complain that even when Basotho trace their animals to a certain village in South Africa, the South African police refuse to help them recover their stock. At a meeting of the Bushman's Nek (South Africa)/Sehlabathebe (Lesotho) Stock Theft Liaison Committee it was noted:

Farmers in Sehlabathebe are not getting any cooperation from the Maluti Stock Theft Unit in Eastern Cape when they had information that their stolen stock was in that area. The Lesotho Delegation complains that cases do not get attended. Complainants get attacked if they go on their own after stolen stock. Some have actually been killed in the past but no investigation was done.⁸¹

Basotho on the border are very bitter that neither the Lesotho nor South African police provide effective assistance. Moreover, Basotho who go to South Africa to retrieve their animals do so at great risk.

My animals were stolen and taken to Matatiele according to the information I got. We went there but didn't get any help from the Matatiele police. We came back empty handed even though we saw the place our animals were taken. The people of that village warned us not to enter.⁸²

We went with a police sergeant (from Lesotho) but when we arrived at the police station in Matatiele, our two police

officers were disarmed. We went to that village that we suspected and when we arrived there one man told us that our cattle passed through on Saturday and the thieves slaughtered four of them. The meat was shared among the people of that village. We searched that village with the police. A man called out asking whether we were from Lesotho and then they told us to come closer so they could kill us. We found 14 of our cattle and started to drive them back. The people of that village said we should be killed but the police separated us. The villagers put stones in the road to prevent us from passing but we managed to get past them (without the cattle). One of those men was holding an AK-47.⁸³

In defence of the Lesotho police, it should be noted that they face enormous difficulties in their campaign to bring stock theft under control and are understandably frustrated with public perceptions that they are incompetent and dishonest. The rugged terrain and lack of access roads render the mountain areas a thieves' paradise. Cross-border tensions impede their ability to deal with cross-border theft. The police have neither the human nor material resources to effectively combat stock theft. In all of Qacha's Nek and Quthing there are only eight police posts separated by long distances. Qacha's Nek has 16 officers in the stock theft unit, while Quthing has 14. Only the main stations at Qacha's Nek and Quthing have vehicles, the other posts are supplied with horses. There are no larger vehicles capable of transporting recovered stolen stock.

With the paltry resources currently available to them, the police simply cannot be expected to control stock theft. The wish list of the police is a long one: more officers so that satellite posts can be established in remote areas, 4x4 vehicles for all posts, vehicles for transporting stock, radio links with villages for faster reporting, incentives for stock theft unit officers who work under difficult conditions and, especially, a helicopter.⁸⁴

It is impossible for the police to respond to every case of stock theft. In most cases it is futile for them to visit the site of the theft as the thieves are long gone. The nearest police post can be as much as a two day ride from the more remote areas. Furthermore, if animals are stolen from the cattle posts, the theft is usually reported to the village, and only then is it relayed to the police. Police state that they can hardly be expected to recover animals when the theft is only reported to them several days after its occurrence, but they understand the reasons for such delays.⁸⁵ In such instances the police open a docket and circulate a description of the stolen animals to neighbouring police posts. If a complainant is able to provide the police with concrete information, "we ride to the suspect and

arrest him, but this will also depend on how busy we are.”⁸⁶

Otherwise, the police mount periodic raids on villages they suspect of harbouring stolen animals. Any animals which cannot be accounted for are driven back to the police post and impounded. Owing to the lack of suitable vehicles to transport the animals, time is wasted driving the animals back to the station.⁸⁷ Unfortunately, many impounded animals die from starvation or disease before the legitimate owners can be traced.⁸⁸

The police report that they are received with hostility in some villages when they attempt to examine stock for evidence of stolen animals.⁸⁹ In some cases the police meet with overt resistance especially when they are cooperating with the SAPS to retrieve animals stolen from South Africa. During our research, a series of raids was staged in Qacha's Nek involving large numbers of officers from both the Lesotho police – including officers from Mohale's Hoek and Quthing – and the SAPS. In two villages, the people allowed their animals to be assembled but protested when South African citizens were brought in to examine the stock. Despite the presence of more than thirty police officers in both cases, the villagers refused to submit to their animals being examined by “Mafengu” and drove all the stock from the village.⁹⁰

Even taking the severe constraints facing the police into consideration, the low arrest and conviction record of police and judicial authorities requires explanation. Respondents claim that corrupt and incompetent courts exacerbate the stock theft epidemic. The police voice their own frustration with prosecutors and magistrates who they say often release animals to the accused for safekeeping until the trial date with the result that neither the suspect nor the animals are seen again.⁹¹ One police official provided us with a copy of a letter of complaint written by the Director General, Department of Foreign Affairs, Pretoria which states that the prosecutor in the Qacha's Nek court released stock to the accused for safekeeping:

Both the accused apparently, were out on bail at that stage. The stock in question were branded CCX18, and this is a clear indication that the stock were from the Eastern Cape, as it is known that Eastern Cape stock owners in the Maluti area brand their stock with a CCX 18 brand. It is my opinion that the prosecutor acted completely outside his jurisdiction as the court should have decided about the outcome of the stock after the evidence was heard. At no stage did the prosecutor contact the investigating officer or complainant to inform them of his decision.⁹²

Such cases not only highlight the problems of the courts, they further inflame cross border tensions.

Delays in bringing stock theft cases to trial further impede the efforts of police: "It is difficult to get convictions. Witnesses fail to come to court if their animals have died (while impounded) or if it takes a long time."⁹³ The District Secretary of Qacha's Nek states, "Sometimes stock theft cases are pending for years. If cases were prosecuted quickly that would help."⁹⁴ The recent appointment of a special stock theft prosecutor has greatly improved matters in Quthing:

Since sometime last year we have had a prosecutor assigned specifically to deal with stock theft cases. He was a policeman. Other prosecutors who were not police didn't seem to show any keenness towards this particular type of case. But this guy because he has been a police officer, he appreciates the problems we are faced with and gives priority to stock theft cases.⁹⁵

South Africans feel that the courts in Lesotho almost invariably favour Basotho. On the other hand, Basotho stockowners bitterly complain that it is almost impossible for them to recover animals once they have been driven across the border into South Africa. According to the District Secretary, in 1994 South Africans captured all the stock grazing along the border, because many Basotho grazed their stock in South Africa. The South Africans drove all the stock to Matatiele and no one could negotiate with them.⁹⁶ Basotho then embarked on a series of revenge raids and the situation deteriorated to its present state.

Official inaction has created a high level of anxiety, accompanied by a degree of fatalism. Individual stockowners feel that there are no effective measures they can take to safeguard their animals – especially against armed attacks: "How can you guard your kraal with *molamu* (stick) against a gunman?"⁹⁷ Even non-violent theft is extremely difficult to prevent. Stockowners spend money on fences only to have them cut. One man built a sheep shed but thieves carted away the corrugated iron sheets along with his sheep.⁹⁸

Very few individuals admit to gun ownership and only one stockowner states his shepherds carry guns. The vast majority of people speak passionately about their desire for guns believing that owning a gun is the best way to protect themselves, their families and their stock. At a workshop to discuss the Draft Stock Theft Bill held in Maseru in February 1999, many people objected when the police voiced their intention to crack down on illegal gun possession (especially automatic weapons) and arrest offenders. Stockowners attending the workshop complained vociferously that they need such weapons to defend themselves against thieves and if deprived of them they would be helpless.

The only effective deterrent to date appears to be the army. Soldiers

posted along the border, and in some instances, in border villages, play a key role in protecting Basotho from cross-border attacks. In one village in Qacha's Nek where soldiers are billeted, residents report that theft has been considerably reduced and there have been no attacks by South Africans since the soldiers killed several raiders.

The presence of soldiers at Sekhalabateng in Qacha's Nek was applauded by nearby villagers who claimed that this has been the only effective measure against cross border raids. Along the border in Quthing District, soldiers are often better situated to assist villagers because of the proximity of their bases to cattle posts. Soldiers in Quthing have also engaged in firefights with, and killed, South Africans.⁹⁹ The soldiers' presence in villages evidently deters South African raids but in at least one instance, it reportedly encouraged villagers to cross the border to engage in raids of their own knowing the soldiers would protect them from revenge attacks. Both police and government officials claim thieves take advantage of the soldiers' presence to steal with impunity and that at least some of the South Africans killed by the military were coming to reclaim stolen stock.

THE POLITICS OF STOCK THEFT

There has been little cooperation between the South African and Lesotho governments to address cross-border crime and conflict; perhaps because the former Transkei and the mountain districts of Lesotho are so far removed from the centres of power in both countries. The lack of meaningful joint initiatives between the two governments to deal with the crisis has allowed a culture of nationalist/ethnic intolerance to develop and ensures the violence has continued virtually unchecked.

Political turmoil and conflict within Lesotho also make constructive approaches to the crisis difficult to envision, let alone implement. In the affected areas, there is profound disillusionment with the political process in Lesotho. Some feel that cross-border theft has become much worse since 1994 when the African National Congress (ANC) was voted into office.¹⁰⁰ The ghost of past political conflicts is also seen to be contributing to the current crisis. Disaffected elements of the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA), which operated in the former Transkei, are supposedly deeply involved in criminal activities in the region.¹⁰¹

Although there is cross-border cooperation between some communities, without central government assistance it is difficult to sustain such initiatives. "The liaison committee comprised of Basotho farmers and South African farmers does not have the ability to prevent stock theft because it does not have a clear policy from the two governments. The

governments have failed to come together with a clear strategy to deal with this problem successfully.¹⁰²

The District Secretary at Qacha's Nek reported that attempts are being made to arrange meetings with the South African High Commission to resolve the problem. Pinkerton Mjakeliso, First Secretary to the South African High Commission, stated that the border conflict is driven by poverty but that tension along the border makes it very difficult to initiate the regional development projects necessary to alleviate poverty.¹⁰³ Mokhali Lithebe of Lesotho's Ministry of Foreign Affairs claims border conflict is primarily a police matter. Furthermore, the efforts made by his ministry to build local government ties and cooperation have not been effective because they are constantly undermined by criminals.

The Lesotho police and the Department of Agriculture have put together a draft Stock Theft Bill. The focus of this bill is on harsher penalties for offenders, especially violent offenders (10 year minimum sentence for first offence), the establishment of a national system of marking and registration for all stock, a flurry of new regulations governing the sale and transportation of stock, and granting police increased powers of search and seizure.

People are divided on the potential effectiveness of the bill, although all favour increased penalties. Doubts are expressed about the value of marking and registration because many animals are slaughtered shortly after being stolen. They frequently mention that corruption will render these new measures ineffectual. Police are very positive about the proposed bill as they feel the new penalties will serve as a deterrent and because a compulsory marking scheme will allow them to more easily establish ownership of animals.

There are a few obvious problems with the bill. The effectiveness of the proposed regulations are contingent on the enforcement capabilities of the police force. If the police cannot arrest offenders, and the courts cannot convict them, harsh new penalties are meaningless. Furthermore, the estimated cost of implementing the ambitious live-stock registration and marking programme mooted by the Ministry of Agriculture is M2,512,950 – money the Ministry simply does not have.¹⁰⁴

Finally, very few people in the mountain areas have heard of the proposed bill – only two of ten chiefs we interviewed, for example. Even they only knew of its existence. If the bill is passed there is a need for an extensive campaign to inform and educate villagers with regards to the contents of the bill and how it may affect them. Clearly, the passage of the bill should be a government priority.

Perhaps the potential for an escalation in the current crisis is best

illustrated by drawing parallels between the existing situation in Lesotho's southern regions and the violence that has plagued the Tsolo area of the Eastern Cape for the past several years. Since the early 1990s, several hundred people have been killed in Tsolo. In 1995, following the deaths of more than two hundred people in a two year period, the Kroon Commission declared that, "The situation which has developed may be equated with a regional disaster."¹⁰⁵ The killings have continued unabated since that time. The Kroon Commission found that "the dominant and overriding underlying cause giving rise to the extensive incidence of violence which plagued the Tsolo area over the period in question was the rife-ness of the stock theft in the area."¹⁰⁶

Both the Kroon Commission and subsequent follow up reports by the South African Human Rights Committee (SAHRC) stress the role of inadequate policing in initiating and sustaining the violence:

Much of the disenchantment of the community with the police is born of the inability of the Tsolo police to deal effectively with the endemic problem of stock theft in the Tsolo area which has led sections of the community to take the law into their own hands and mete out their own punishment to suspected stock thieves and it is probable that there have been some revenge killings as well. A contributory factor is the inability of the police to deal effectively with the widespread incidence of violence.¹⁰⁷

Of 801 stock theft cases reported to the police in Tsolo between January 1993 and May 1995, only 8 convictions were gained.¹⁰⁸

The SAHRC, which investigated the situation through to the end of 1997, noted that retrenched miners were deeply implicated in the violence. Opposing factions organised themselves into the *Umfelandawonye wa Bafuyi*, a self-professed anti-stock association and a group known as the Amampondomise Thieves Unit. The conflict intensified and spread to neighbouring Qumbu throughout 1996 and 1997.¹⁰⁹ The SAHRC also said that while stock theft was the central cause of the violence, other factors such as gunrunning and political rivalries contributed to the crisis.

The situation in the southern Lesotho border zone has not yet deteriorated to the level in Tsolo and Qumbu, but the parallels are ominous. Both areas are economically underdeveloped and suffer the effects of the contraction of the South African mining industry; both are inadequately policed and poorly served by their judicial systems; both are plagued by vigilantism; both have experienced a cycle of violence ignited and driven by stock theft; and both areas have been flooded with weapons.

The presence of the international boundary introduces additional

complications to the Lesotho/Eastern Cape border region. Any attempted solutions will require the cooperation of both national governments along with the affected provincial and district administrations. The close proximity of two different militaries, and the existence of ethnic/nationalist tensions, figure prominently in this regard and increase the prospects of an international dispute. Furthermore, the current political deadlock in Lesotho has created a climate whereby political parties and criminal syndicates can exploit social divisions.¹¹⁰ The national government, like its predecessors, has largely ignored the remote mountain areas hardest hit by stock theft. Unless action is taken to address the crisis there is a strong possibility that a Tsolo-like disaster situation will develop.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

A large majority of our respondents feel the situation will only improve if the unemployment rate declines. To this end, they suggest the government must create jobs. Despite general disenchantment with the police, many villagers want more police; specifically, they want police posts established in remote villages. They also think it is necessary for the police to receive better training and to be remunerated more generously so they will not be so easily corrupted.

The frustration and anger of residents is evident in their desire for stock thieves to receive harsher punishments, including the death penalty.¹¹¹ Many feel that the military should play an increased role in the fight against stock theft. Villagers stationed close to army camps feel safer and state they have been victimised less since the soldiers' arrival. Accordingly, residents suggest the number of soldiers should be increased and that camps should be established at all the border passes.

As butcheries are consistently implicated in encouraging theft by knowingly purchasing stolen animals, the regulation and inspection of butcheries by police and government officials is widely advocated. Some villagers think that chiefs should be monitored by the government and if it is found that a chief encourages or does not discourage theft he or she should be demoted.

While it is clear that the only long-term solution is a reduction in poverty, macro-economic policies are beyond the scope of this paper's recommendations. Our suggestions focus on immediate measures designed to improve the situation:

- Both the Lesotho and South African governments should acknowledge that a crisis situation exists and that this is a regional problem. Only when national governments, working

with local stakeholders, take the problem seriously and begin cooperating can workable initiatives be implemented.

- Special attention should be paid to Qacha's Nek where cross border relations are particularly hostile and where the District Liaison Committee has not functioned since 1997.
- The Lesotho Draft Stock Theft Bill has much to recommend it, but for it to be effective several things must happen: 1) the powers that be must rise above political infighting and pass the Bill into law; 2) the police must be provided with the necessary support to enable them to enforce new legislation; 3) funds must be made available to implement the national registration and marking programme – including an information and education program.

The following are the minimum requirements necessary for the police to effectively combat stock theft:

- Special stock theft prosecution units should be established with trained and motivated staff in each district with the goal of expediting stock theft prosecutions. The possibility of mobile prosecution teams that travel to a few centers within each district should be explored.
- In recognition of the fact that stock theft is the foremost crime in the mountain areas, stock theft units should be allocated more officers.
- The total number of police should be bolstered in order for satellite stations to be established in more remote areas.
- Each police station accessible by road should have at least one 4x4 vehicle, and each district headquarters should have vehicles capable of transporting stock.
- Police state a helicopter, even one shared between the mountain districts, would be a great asset in the fight against stock theft. A clear blueprint outlining exactly how a helicopter would be utilised would help assess whether the benefits justify the expenditure. The possibility of police/military cooperation with regard to the use of a helicopter in stock theft operations should be explored.
- Radio contacts with remote villages should be established to facilitate the reporting of stock theft and other crimes. Officers on patrol, whether on horseback or in vehicles, should be provided with portable two-way radios to enable them to maintain contact with the station and fellow officers.
- A special effort should be made to uncover and prosecute police and military personnel involved in stock theft.
- The police should mount a public relations campaign through-

out the districts to improve their image. As it stands, people have little confidence in the police. A special effort should be made to assure people the police will do everything in their power to reduce stock theft (and all other crimes). At present, the police are seen as non-responsive when crimes are reported. This perception results in the under reporting of crimes and encourages vigilantism. The police should consult with villagers and listen to their complaints and suggestions. People need to understand the constraints that the police operate under and efforts should be made to establish closer links between police and communities.

- Crimes of violence should be more carefully categorised to ascertain whether or not there is a connection to stock theft. At the present time many murders, assaults and possibly even rape occur during stock raids. When the connection is more clearly established the seriousness of the stock theft and violence crisis will be more difficult for the government to ignore.
- Integrated units composed of SANDF and LDF personnel should be established and stationed along the border to reduce incidents of cross border raiding.

APPENDIX

Livestock Ownership*					
Stockowner No.**	Cattle	Sheep	Goats	Horses	Donkeys
1	3	0	8	0	0
2	1	0	0	1	1
3	4	0	0	0	0
4	5	0	0	0	1
5	7	0	10	0	0
6	2	0	0	0	0
7	5	0	2	1	3
8	3	8	2	0	1
9	2	0	0	0	1
10	15	30	8	1	0
11	2	0	10	0	0
12	0	0	42	0	3
13	5	0	0	0	1
14	0	0	0	0	1
15	0	0	0	0	2
16	3	10	0	1	1
17	7	6	0	2	0
18	1	0	3	2	0
19	7	20	17	2	1
20	4	6	1	0	2
21	2	5	2	1	0
22	0	2	0	0	0
23	15	20	25	1	0
24	8	3	4	1	0
25	4	40	15	1	0
26	0	4	0	0	0
27	2	18	0	1	0
28	2	4	1	1	0

29	3	0	0	0	0
30	2	20	15	1	2
31	2	2	0	0	0
32	2	3	3	0	0
33	1	2	0	0	0
34	4	0	0	0	2
35	2	0	6	0	4
36	3	0	10	0	0
37	7	0	18	0	3
38	3	9	7	0	2
39	5	4	45	0	2
40	9	0	0	0	4
41	9	0	51	0	0
42	5	4	0	0	0
43	20	70	31	6	0
44	16	10	17	1	2
45	4	0	0	0	1
46	1	12	13	0	1
47	5	3	9	0	0
48	4	40	12	1	1
49	15	0	86	2	0
50	1	32	0	0	0
51	11	200	1	3	0
52	4	47	20	0	0
53	7	0	0	2	1
54	21	251	4	18	4
55	4	0	0	0	1
56	13	100	78	4	0
57	15	95	5	2	1
58	5	0	0	6	0
59	7	20	0	0	0

60	1	10	15	1	0
61	0	10	20	0	0
62	0	8	0	0	0
63	4	3	12	1	2
64	3	10	0	1	0
65	4	4	6	0	0
66	15	13	20	1	2
67	4	5	5	2	2
68	4	11	4	2	2
69	2	2	0	1	0
70	5	0	0	0	0
71	2	0	0	0	1
72	2	0	0	0	0
73	12	24	5	0	4
74	5	5	24	1	0
75	6	36	9	2	0
76	6	3	0	2	2
77	10	62	0	2	0
78	2	20	0	1	1
79	5	60	9	1	7
80	10	110	10	1	1
81	8	52	12	1	1
82	17	200	40	3	3
83	9	100	30	2	1
84	4	35	2	0	1
85	15	172	18	2	4
86	2	0	0	0	0
Total no. animals owned	474	2055	821	89	54
No. respondents who own	80	58	53	44	44
* Number of animals owned. ** 1 case missing.					

ENDNOTES

1. Jonathan Crush, Theresa Ulicki, Teke Tseane and Elizabeth Van Vuuren, "Undermining Labour: The Social Impact of Sub-Contracting in the South African Mining Industry" *Journal of Southern African Studies*.
2. Interview, Stockowner (here after SO) 19. To preserve anonymity all interviewees are referred to by number only.
3. Interview, Chief (hereafter C) 3, 7 April 1999.
4. In all but one of these villages, the killers were South Africans. In the one exception, the village borders a white farming area in KwaZulu Natal. In this village, the stock theft association (STA) works closely with the police and farmers in South Africa to reduce cross border theft – as a result it is targeted by Basotho thieves from the interior who resent this activity.
5. Lesotho Mounted Police, STU, Maseru, Statistics generated May 1999.
6. Interview, Non-Stockowner (hereafter NSO) 11.
7. Interview, Shepherd (hereafter S) 4.
8. Interview, S 10.
9. Interview, NSO 4.
10. Interview, Major Mofolo, Moyeni, 30 April 1999.
11. Interviews, C 4; police, Mphaki; STU, Quthing. For reasons mentioned previously, it is unlikely that white border farmers participate in this trade. More probably it is farmers further from the border who are better insulated from theft by Basotho.
12. Interview, SO 67.
13. Interview, Lepheana. Police in Qacha's Nek also report that stolen stock is taken to Thaba Tseka and Mokhotlong. From these places it is trucked to the lowlands or across the border to South Africa.
14. Interviews, commander Stock Theft Unit (STU), Quthing, 30 April 1999; commander STU, Qacha's Nek, 29 March 1999.
15. Interview, STU, Sehlabathebe, 27 April 1999. The importation of rifles, specifically automatic weapons, into Lesotho as a result of the dagga for guns trade was a subject of much discussion at the Draft Stock Theft Bill Workshop held in Maseru on 18 February 1999. The police expressed their determination to prosecute those found in possession of such weapons.
16. Interview, STU, Qacha's Nek, 29 March 1999.
17. Males aged 15-24 are the category group with the highest unemployment rates. Ministry of Labour and Employment Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey 1997, (Maseru, 1998), p. 14. The percentage of adults without waged work in the mountain areas (which is consistently higher than the lowlands or foothills) increased from an average of 75%

- in 1990 to 83% in 1993. Sechaba Consultants, *Poverty in Lesotho, 1994: A Mapping Exercise*, (Maseru, 1994), p. 22. According to the World Bank, poverty in Lesotho is “deeper and more severe among households in the mountains.” World Bank, *Lesotho Poverty Assessment, Report No. 3171-LSO* (1995), p. 20.
18. Interview, NSO 5.
 19. Personal Communication, Chris Hechter, Regional TEBA Manager, Lesotho/Free State, May 6, 1999, Maseru, Lesotho. Since 1987, at which time 116,345 Basotho men were employed at the mines, Lesotho has experienced a 48% decline in jobs on gold, coal, platinum and copper mines. In 1997-98, a further 16,000 jobs were lost. In mid-1999 there were only 60,600 Basotho working in South African mines.
 20. Interview, NSO 20.
 21. Interview, NSO 9.
 22. Interview, NSO 14.
 23. Interview, SO 80.
 24. Wool and Mohair Production 1987-1998, Department of Livestock Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Lesotho.
 25. Interview, Mr. Johane, Department of Livestock Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Maseru, May 4, 1999.
 26. FAO, *Lesotho: Agricultural Sector Investment Programme – Sustainable Development Sub-Programme, Formulation Report. Working Paper 2: Extensive Livestock. Report No. 97/019 IFAD-LES* (1997).
 27. Interview, SO 49.
 28. Interview, SO 83.
 29. Interview, SO 22.
 30. Interview, SO 84.
 31. Interview, SO 34.
 32. Interview, SO 56.
 33. Interview, Qacha’s Nek, Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Local Government, April 23, 1999.
 34. Interview, SO 49. This man had 37 cattle, 35 horses and 665 sheep stolen. According to Sechaba Consultant’s market value of livestock (see *Riding the Tiger: Lesotho Miners and Permanent Residence in South Africa*, SAMP Migration Policy Paper No. 2, 1997, p. 38 – cattle, M1100; horses, M1500; sheep, M175), the total value of the stolen livestock is M209,575.
 35. Interview, SO 67.
 36. Interview, SO 56.
 37. Interview, NSO 14.
 38. Interview, NSO 35. Mafengu is a derogatory term used by Basotho to refer to Xhosa-speaking South Africans.
 39. Interview, NSO 38. This is the testimony of a 71 year old widow.

40. Interview, C 3.
41. Interview, Mofolo.
42. Interview, Lepheana.
43. Interviews, NSO 5; Lepheana.
44. Interview, SO 44.
45. There are a number of outraged people in one village in which we interviewed who had unknowingly purchased stolen stock and were later forced to return the animals to the legitimate owners without any compensation.
46. Interview, SO 16.
47. Interview, S 7.
48. Interview, SO 40.
49. Interview, NSO 7.
50. Interview, SO 67.
51. Interview, SO 79.
52. Interview, SO 51.
53. Interview, SO 77.
54. Interview, SO 62.
55. Interview, SO 23.
56. The reasons for this may be that women with migrant husbands often do not have an adult male in the household to assist with heavier work or because the frequency and amount of migrant remittances are, in many cases, unreliable, therefore, a woman may be able to sell an animal if a late or insufficient remittance places the family in economic jeopardy.
57. Interview, SO 76.
58. Interview, NSO 20.
59. Interview, SO 35.
60. According to District Secretary Lepheana, the head of the DLC on the Lesotho side, this failure is due to his South African counterpart who has refused to cooperate since the former head of the DLC, with whom he had close relations, moved to another post.
61. Interview, C 3.
62. Interview, SO 39.
63. Interview, SO 47.
64. Interview, NSO 5.
65. Interview, NSO 17.
66. Interview, SO 78.
67. Interview, SO 79.
68. Interview, SO 56.
69. Interview, C 10.
70. Interview, SO 81.
71. Interview, SO 80.

72. Interview, SO 44.
73. Interview, Mofolo.
74. Statistics are compiled by each district and submitted to the Stock Theft Unit (STU) headquarters in Maseru. These statistics were generated in May 1999 and are extremely suspect by admission of the commander of the national STU, who believes that all the numbers are significantly lower than actual figures, especially those reported for Qacha's Nek. Figures provided for Qacha's Nek by Maseru were significantly lower than those provided to us directly by Qacha's Nek police, but the general pattern of a very small number of convictions for cases reported was the same.
75. Interview, NSO 35. Matatiele is a small town some thirty kilometers from the border settlement of Qacha's Nek. Although the town itself is located in the province of KwaZulu Natal, Basotho commonly use the term to refer to the former Transkei border region, especially the Maluti and Mount Fletcher area.
76. Interview, Mokhali Lithebe, Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maseru, 3 May 1999.
77. Interview, Mofolo.
78. Interview, SO 27.
79. Interview, NSO 12.
80. Interview, Mofolo.
81. Minutes of Bushman's Nek/Sehlabathebe Stock Theft Liaison Committee, 12 February 1998.
82. Interview, SO 7.
83. Interview, SO 28.
84. Interview, Mofolo.
85. Interview, STU, Sehlabathebe.
86. Interview, STU, Sehlabathebe.
87. Interview, Mofolo.
88. Interview, Mofolo; National Livestock Registration and Marking Programme, (n.d.) Ministry of Agriculture, Cooperatives and Land Reclamation, Department of Livestock Services, p.2. The District Secretary's office is responsible for providing for impounded animals, but generally lack the necessary funds to do so adequately.
89. Interview, STU, Sehlabathebe.
90. Interviews, STU, Qacha's Nek; Mofolo; Major Babeli, Commander of the national STU, Maseru, 18 May 1999.
91. Interview, Captain Lerotholi, Commander, Qacha's Nek police station, 29 March 1999.
92. Dated 02/02/1999, Ref# FR/CL/CTR/43.
93. Interview STU, Qacha's Nek.
94. Interview, Lepheana.

95. Interview, Mofolo.
96. Interview, Mr. Lepheana, District Secretary, Qacha's Nek, 23 April 1999.
97. Interview, SO 78.
98. Interview, SO 42.
99. Interview, Mofolo.
100. Interview, stockowner (hereafter SO) 76.
101. Interview, SO 83. The spectre of former LLA cadres turned stock thieves was mentioned by a number of respondents including the police. Respondents state that as these people once lived in Lesotho and they know the villages and terrain it is easier for them to steal and to guide South African thieves.
102. Interview, SO 82.
103. Interview, Pinkerton Mjakeliso, Maseru, 2 February 1999.
104. Interview, Mohale Sekoto, Chief Range Management Officer, Department of Livestock Services, Maseru, 5 February 1999.
105. *Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Tsolo Violence and Related Matters* (Kroon Report), October 1995, Section III, p. 5.
106. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
107. *Ibid.*, p. 715.
108. *Ibid.*, Section III, p. 9.
109. *Dimensions of the Continuing Violence in Tsolo and Qumbu: Murder, Gunrunning, Stock-theft and Intimidation*, Special Report 4, Human Rights Watch, November 1997, p. 4. See also *Tsolo Battleground*, Special Report 3, Human Rights Watch, October 1996.
110. The Basotho National Party (BNP) has held public gatherings in the Qacha's Nek area and denounced the government for failing to deal with the problem of stock theft. Mopheme/The Survivor, 2 June 1999. It would be surprising if opposition parties do not capitalise on the crisis in an attempt to intensify anti-government feelings.
111. Interview, SO 44.

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Church Square
Cape Town 8001



PARTNERS:

Idasa (South Africa)
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This project is funded by the
Canadian government through the
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).