

**A HISTORY OF PASTORALISM IN LESOTHO: CHALLENGES OF HERD BOYS IN  
MOKHOTLONG, 2010-2020**

**BY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the history of pastoralism in Lesotho with a specific focus on the challenges encountered by herd boys in Mokhotlong between 2010 and 2020. For rural families in Mokhotlong, a district characterized by rugged terrain, high-altitude plateaus and harsh weather conditions; their animal stock has long served as their primary means of sustenance. However, the reality for herd boys, custodians of this livelihood, is not without hardships. The findings of this study were harvested through qualitative research methods including literature review, archival data, interviews, and focus group discussions. These findings revealed that challenges encountered by herd boys encompassed a web of economic adversities, environmental obstacles and socio-cultural complexities, which were further exacerbated by limited political representation. Efforts to improve access to services, promote sustainable practices and enhance resilience have been made, yet challenges persist. The implementation of nomadic education, the promotion of sustainable pastoral methods, the advancement of social, economic, and political participation, and the strengthening of resilience within this crucial sector of Lesotho's rural community must all be reviewed to solve these concerns.

## **DECLARATION**

I, Keratuae Moqiti, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “History of Pastoralism in Lesotho: The Challenges of Herd Boys in Mokhotlong, 2010- 2020” is my original work and has not been previously submitted for any degree or examination at any other university or academic institution. All sources of information utilized in this dissertation have been duly acknowledged.

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Signature and Date

Keratuae Moqiti (201703632)

**CERTIFICATION**

I certify that this dissertation entitled “History of Pastoralism in Lesotho: The Challenges of Herd Boys in Mokhotlong, 2010- 2020” has been duly completed by Keratuo Moqiti (201703632) of the Department of Historical Studies, Faculty of Humanities, National University of Lesotho, Roma.

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my precious daughter, Ntlelekaze Nyamane. May this work kindle and ignite your lifelong pursuit of knowledge?

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ABC	All Basotho Convention
DA	District Administrator
DAO	District of Agricultural Officer
DDCs	District Development Committees
DLC	District Liaison Committees
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LANFE	Lesotho Association of Non-Formal Education
LDF	Lesotho Defence Force
LHA	Lesotho Herders Association,
LHWP	Lesotho Highlands Water Project
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDTP	Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Project
NEAPs	National Environmental Action Plans
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGOs	Non- Governmental Organizations
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PMT	Protection Motivation Theory
PRSP	Lesotho Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

REGSEC	Regional Security Council
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programs
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TBNRM	Transboundary Natural Resource Management
TFCAs	Transfrontier conservation areas
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
VDCs	Village Development Committees
WDC	Ward Development Committee
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figures</b>	<b>Pages</b>
Figure 1: Sheep owners at the wool shed in Mokhotlong.....	8
Figure 2: The Khoi People and Herding.....	11
Figure 3 shows pictures of the grassless maboella (reserved grazing) which were grazed for approximately 3 weeks for winter in Checha village in Mokhotlong taken by the researcher.....	44
Figure 4: Map showing areas that were impacted by cross-border pastoralism in Lesotho as highlighted in the body.....	48
Figure 5: Operation patrol of the Stock Theft Unit.....	56
Figure 6: Showing stock Stover.....	59

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Pages</b>
Title Page.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Declaration .....	iii
Certification .....	iv
Acknowledgements .....	v
Dedication .....	vii
List of abbreviations .....	viii
List of Figures.....	x
Table of Contents.....	xi
<b>Chapter One: Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background to the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	4
1.3 Aim and Objectives.....	4
1.4 Research Questions.....	5
1.5 Scope and Limitation.....	6
1.6 Justification of the Study.....	7
1.7 Literature Review.....	8
1.8 Methodology.....	20
1.9 Summary of Chapters.....	21

<b>Chapter Two: Pastoralism in Lesotho.....</b>	<b>22</b>
2.1 Transhumant Pastoralism in Lesotho.....	22
2.2 Indigenous and Cultural Practices of Pastoralism.....	25
2.3 Pastoralism in Highlands and Lowlands.....	28
2.4 Pastoralism and Land Use.....	32
2.5 Tradition and Modernity.....	34
2.6 Policy Framework.....	39
<b>Chapter Three: Pastoralism and Herd Boys.....</b>	<b>44</b>
3.1 Herding Traditions and Practices.....	44
3.2 Herd boys and Cross- border Pastoralism.....	47
3.3 Resilience and Adaptation.....	57
<b>Chapter Four: Economic Challenges.....</b>	<b>64</b>
4.1 Wages and Income Disparities.....	64
4.2 Herd Boys and the Economic Landscape.....	69
4.3 Access to Banking Facilities.....	74
4.4 Livelihood Diversification.....	76
<b>Chapter Five: Socio-Cultural Challenges.....</b>	<b>80</b>
5.1 Access to Education.....	80
5.2 Herd boys and Farmers conflicts.....	86
5.3 Social Exclusion.....	89
5.4 Cultural Preservation and Adaptation.....	95
<b>Chapter Six: Summary and Conclusion.....</b>	<b>99</b>
6. 1 Summary.....	99

6.2 Conclusion.....	102
6.3 Bibliography.....	106

## Chapter One: Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the Study

This study explores the historical trajectory of pastoralism in Lesotho, especially the challenges faced by herd boys in Mokhotlong between 2010 and 2020. Lesotho has a rich history deeply rooted in pastoralism for many years as a predominantly agrarian Kingdom with livestock as one of the major bedrocks of Basotho's economic and cultural identity. Pastoralism has intersected with the wool and mohair industry along with merino wool, contributing to Lesotho's export. Lesotho is the world's second largest producer of mohair after South Africa, accounting for 11% of global output.<sup>1</sup> Mokhotlong, a district in the Highlands Zone of Lesotho is known for its rugged terrain, characterized by high altitudes, mountains, valleys and vast grazing lands, suitable for pastoralism.<sup>2</sup> Livestock farming remained central to the livelihood of the local communities during the transformative period between 2010 and 2020, revealing complex relationships between land, its people and challenges that shaped their ways of life.<sup>3</sup>

Central to pastoralism in Lesotho, are herd boys who are often confronted with many challenges, characterized by a confluence of socio-cultural, economic and political challenges. The challenges of the herd boys are important in understanding the dynamics that shaped Lesotho's pastoral landscape. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the history of pastoralism in Lesotho, focusing on the challenges of herd boys within the broader discourse on pastoralism.

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<sup>1</sup> IFAD, "The Small livestock advantage: A sustainable entry point for addressing SDGs in rural areas," *Agricultural & Applied Economics* (2020)29.

<sup>2</sup> Colin Hoag, "The Ovicaprine Mystique: Livestock Commodification in Post-industrial Lesotho," *Anthropology*120, no.4 (2018) 27.

In Lesotho, a herding tradition has a rich history deeply connected with the agricultural, pastoral and economic fabric of the Basotho people. Despite their contributions to the agro-economy, herd boys have faced persistent marginalization, isolation and inequalities. Herd boys have traditionally been entrusted with the crucial task of *ho lisa*, which is tending herbivore species like cattle *likhomo*, sheep *link*, and goats *lipoli*.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the responsibilities of herd boys extended beyond the fundamental role of herding as their daily tasks ranged from nurturing newborns and temporal separation from the mothers, milking lactating females and safeguarding the herd in kraal during sunset and at night from predators and thieves. Under the supervision of experienced elders, they also undertook health care measures such as treatment through indigenous herbs and vaccinations against diseases such as ecto- and endoparasites. They also participated in seasonal reproduction-related activities, such as choosing breeding females and males, allowing males to join the breeding herd at a later time, castrating males not needed for breeding, and culling old or infertile female and male animals. They combed and sheared animals that produced fibre, like sheep and goats. It is also the responsibility of herders to mark, claw, trim, slaughter animals, sell animals, and prepare hay and pens for winter.<sup>5</sup> The herd boys continued to be disregarded despite their contributions to the rural economies – a widespread occurrence in post-colonial Lesotho, especially since 2010.

The historical trajectory of pastoralism in Lesotho, which is interwoven with the significant tradition of herding dates back to the pre-colonial era when animal rearing played a crucial role in

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<sup>4</sup> Eva Schlecht, Matthew D. Turner, Christian G. Hülsebusch & AdreasBuerkert, “Managing Rangelands Without Herding? Insights from Africa and Beyond,” *Frontier Sustainable Food System* 4(2020) 2.

<sup>5</sup> Mark Moritz, Kristen Ritchey & Saidou Kari, “The social context of herding contracts in the far north region of Cameroon,” *Journal Modification of African Studies* 9, no. 2 (2011) 263.

measuring the ‘wealth’ and ‘status’ of African Kingdoms, including Lesotho.<sup>6</sup> Animal husbandry had a significant role in Basotho society's rural lifestyle, influencing their social, economic, and political structure. The significance of animal rearing was observed in the early 1800s when King Moshoeshoe I out of autotelic mechanisms such as cattle raiding, marriage alliances, the mafisa system, and diplomatic negotiations which significantly depended on cattle and herding tradition formed the Basotho Nation.<sup>7</sup> This system, which benefited people with dairy products, draught animals, and productive applications, had attracted over 20,000 cattle by 1939. Beyond their role in nation-building strategies, animals were raised for a variety of reasons, such as customs, bridewealth (*bohali*), and economic endeavours or profits. Animal skins were made into skin skirt *mose oa khomo*, an undergarment made of sheep skin cut into a triangle for boys called *ts'eha*, and the animal-skinned blankets worn by men called *setipe* and *mokhahla*, as well as materials used to make shoes, belts, and sandals, to name a few.<sup>8</sup> However, Basotho's social and political structures often overlook the significant roles played by individuals; particularly herd boys in maintaining the vital connection between animals and the Basotho people. The traditional pastoralist lifestyle and changing economic paradigms, such as industrialization, which is frequently entwined with urbanisation, and employment patterns may have contributed to the difficulties faced by herd boys in Mokhotlongs.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Selloane Pitikoe, “Male Herders in Lesotho: Life Histories, Identities and Educational Ambitions,” PhD, University of Kwazulu- Natal, (2016) 42.

<sup>7</sup> Tefetso Mothibe, “State and Society, 1824- 1833,” in N. W. Pule and M. Thabane, *Essays on Aspects of the Political Economy of Lesotho 1500- 2000*, National University of Lesotho, Department of History: Morija Printing Works(2013)15- 30.

<sup>8</sup> John Gay, Debby Gill & David Hall, *Lesotho's Long Journey: Hard Choices at the Crossroads*, Maseru: Morija Printing Works, (1995)110.

<sup>9</sup> Miyo Mutsumoto, “The decline in migrant labour and its impact on diversified rural livelihoods in a mountain area of Lesotho,” *MILA: A Journal of the Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies* 12 (2014) 14.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The intricate dynamics of pastoralism as a vital source of cultural and economic livelihood for Basotho remains incontrovertible. However, the custodians of this practice, namely, herd boys appear to be excluded from the benefits of their occupation, potentially contributing to heightened levels of their poverty.<sup>10</sup> Some scholars have widely acknowledged the economic benefits of pastoralism, highlighting its role in supporting the economies of pastoral communities in Lesotho through food security and the production of wool and mohair that comes with foreign exchange, among others, however, the importance of herd boys as caretakers is frequently overlooked in scholarly discourse.<sup>11</sup> Despite the role of herd boys in caring for livestock – a fundamental pillar of Lesotho’s economy, cultural identity and agro-economy of the pastoral landscape of Lesotho, they are persistently overlooked and marginalized socially and economically. This study offers insight into the entrenched marginalization of herd boys through socioeconomic exclusions, ranging from limited access to opportunities to limited government interventions. It is therefore essential to examine the interventions that can uplift this important but underprivileged part of the Basotho people to effectively and completely support Lesotho's pastoral landscape.

## **1.3 Aim and Objectives**

This study aims to comprehensively investigate the history of pastoralism in Lesotho with a special focus on the challenges encountered by herd boys in Mokhotlong between 2010 and 2020. It also aims to interrogate their socio-economic conditions, livelihood strategies and the factors that affected their well-being.

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<sup>10</sup> Christian Boehm, “Land and Labour: Agrarian Change in Post-Retrenchment Lesotho,” in Q. Gausset, M. A. Whyte & T. Birch- Thomsen (eds), *Beyond Territory and Scarcity: Exploring Conflicts over Natural Resource Management* (2005) 30.

<sup>11</sup> Colin Hoag, “The Ovicaprine Mystique: Livestock Commodification in Post-industrial Lesotho,” 7.

- To examine the historical factors that shaped pastoralism in Lesotho from 2010 to 2020.
- To explore the historical interplay between herd boys and pastoralism in Mokhotlong from 2010 to 2020.
- To investigate economic adversities faced by herd boys in Mokhotlong from 2010 to 2020.
- To look into the socio-cultural obstacles experienced by herd boys during the specified period.
- To interrogate government initiatives on the livelihood of herd boys from 2010 to 2020.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

- How have historical shifts influenced the evolution of pastoralism in Mokhotlong from 2010 to 2020?
- How did the involvement of herd boys contribute to the historical dynamics of pastoralism in Mokhotlong?
- How did economic challenges manifest in the livelihood of herd boys in Mokhotlong during the specified period?
- How did cultural norms and societal attitudes shape the socio-cultural challenges faced by herd boys within the context of pastoralism in Mokhotlong during the study period?
- How did government policies impact herd boys' livelihood in Mokhotlong during the study period?

#### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

This study examines the history of pastoralism in Lesotho, focusing on the challenges faced by herd boys in the district of Mokhotlong from 2010 to 2020. This study focuses on Mokhotlong

because this region is known for its rich pastoralist traditions, crucial for boosting the socio-economic fabric. Renowned for diverse livestock rearing tended by herd boys, Mokhotlong stands out for breeding high-quality livestock including Angora goats and Dohne Merino Sheep, a German breed praised for its quality meat, contributing significantly to local butcheries.<sup>12</sup> Beyond its contribution to meat production, Mokhotlong holds a prominent position as one of Lesotho's foremost producers of wool and mohair, serving as a vital pillar of the nation's agrarian economy. This study focuses on the timeframe from 2010 to 2020 within the post-colonial era because the socio-economic landscape of independent Lesotho underwent significant transformations with modernization efforts, strong integration of Lesotho into the global economy and new economic structures, which significantly had profound effects on the pastoralist communities. This period marked the adoption of economic measures such as the Millennium Development Goals, Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063, and Structural Adjustment Programs as well as the introduction of Free Primary Education which aimed at addressing and eradicating poverty in Lesotho as one of the impoverished countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>13</sup> Further, the study is limited to the specified period of 2010 to 2020, which may restrict a comprehensive understanding of the long-term changes in the socio-economic conditions of herd boys in Lesotho.

## **1.6 Justification of the Study**

This study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the history of pastoralism covering among other things rural pastoral livelihoods and the challenges faced by herd boys. The findings will inform policy development and interventions aimed at addressing and improving the socio-

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<sup>12</sup> Colin Hoag, "The Ovicaprine Mystique: Livestock Commodification in Postindustrial Lesotho," 27.

<sup>13</sup> Moeketsie Kali, "Causes and Solutions of Poverty in Lesotho," *European Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 3, no. 2(2020) 23.

economic conditions of herd boys in Lesotho. In general, the research will amplify the voices and experiences of herd boys, promoting a more nuanced understanding of their contributions, and the need for their inclusion in development initiatives. Events such transition of Lesotho from a granary to a labour reserve due to gold discoveries in the neighbouring Republic of South Africa and a subsequent retrenchment provide a crucial context for understanding the challenges faced by herd boys. The post-retrenchment also came with a massive shift to agro-pastoralist practice by retrenched miners.

Among other factors that impacted pastoral production was the influence of global economic trends like the arrival of Asian investors in the textile garment influenced by international agreements like AGOA, which used cheap labour contributing to the complex socio-economic landscape. Subsequently, the 2000s saw macro-social changes such as deagrarianisation and diversified livelihoods of agro-pastoralist Basotho communities including Mokhotlong. Understanding these dynamics is essential for exploring the socioeconomic changes and predicaments that affected agricultural and pastoral production, directly involving herd boys. Migration trends, employment shifts and other economic factors provide a comprehensive background to analyse the historical and contextual factors influencing this study.



Figure 1: Sheep owners at the wool shed in Mokhotlong<sup>14</sup>

### 1.7 Literature Review

It is important to note that there is a wide range of titles appropriate for individuals who are committed to the practice of animal herding in the worldwide annals of animal herding. The titles "cowboys" and "vaqueros," who steered cattle through rough terrain on the western frontier, "gentle shepherds," who led flocks of sheep through undulating hills, "drovers," who pioneered long-distance livestock journeys and guided animals to new frontiers, and "raised hands," who were skilled workers who tended to the ranch and were responsible for various tasks, including herding, all capture the historical resonance of individuals with these qualities.<sup>15</sup> Similar to this, Africans who adopted nomadic herding – wherein herders frequently travelled from one location to another in quest of better grazing space and water – included the Massai people of East Africa

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<sup>14</sup> Colin Hoag, "The Ovicaprine Mystique: Livestock Commodification in Post-industrial Lesotho," 9.

<sup>15</sup> Cambridge dictionary, Cambridge University Press.

and the Somalians.<sup>16</sup> In Lesotho, the term herd boy or shepherd stands for those who guide and guard livestock, leaving an indelible mark on the cultural heritage of this pastoral nation.<sup>17</sup>

According to Dong et al herders played a very significant role in pastoral societies globally, a phenomenon, which is also common to Basotho.<sup>18</sup> Fleming observed that pastoralism in Europe can be traced from prehistoric times during the first half of the second millennium in Northern-Eastern Europe.<sup>19</sup> Grant and Lane traced pastoralism and herding tradition in South America back to about A.D. 600.<sup>20</sup> In China, Blench traced it to the early 2205- 1766 BC.<sup>21</sup> Smith opined that genetic evidence manifested that African domesticated animals originated in the Levant about 8000 years ago and spread across the Sahara due to favourable conditions. After 5000 BP, the Intertropical Convergence Zone retreated, allowing pastoralists to move south into West Africa and via Ethiopian highlands to East Africa. Domestic stock arrived in Southern Africa around 2000 BP and pastoralists began as sheep herders in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BCE.<sup>22</sup>

Wilson also observed that the origin of pastoralism and herding in Southern Africa, especially, South Africa dates back to the pre-historic era after the settlement of Khoikhoi and later Bantu-speaking people who domesticated wild animals such as sheep and goats.<sup>23</sup> In Lesotho, Gill

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<sup>16</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Family Farming Knowledge Platform: Countries Where Nomadic Pastoralism Is Still A Way of Life* (2019).

<sup>17</sup> Pulane J. Lefoka, "Out of school missing boys - a study from Lesotho," *Commonwealth Education Partnerships*, (2007) 213.

<sup>18</sup> Shikui Dong, Lu Wen, Shiliang Liu, Xiangfeng Zhang, James P. Lassoie, Shaoliang Yi, Xiaoyan Li, Jinpeng Li and Yuanyuan Li, "Vulnerability of Worldwide Pastoralism to Global Changes and Interdisciplinary Strategies for Sustainable Pastoralism," *Ecology and Society* 16, no. 2 (2011).

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Fleming, "The Genesis of Pastoralism in Europe Prehistory," *World Archaeology* 4, no. 2 (1972) 179.

<sup>20</sup> Jennifer Grant & Kevin Lane, "The political ecology of late South American pastoralism: Andean perspective A. D. 1000- 1, 615," *Journal of Political Ecology* 25, no. 1(2018), 447.

<sup>21</sup> Roger Blench, 'You can't go home again' Pastoralism in the millennium,' *Overseas Development Institute* (2001) 18.

<sup>22</sup> Andrew B. Smith, "Pastoralism in Africa," In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History* (2021).

<sup>23</sup> Monica Wilson, "The Hunters and herders," in M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds), *The Oxford History of South Africa* 1, (1969).

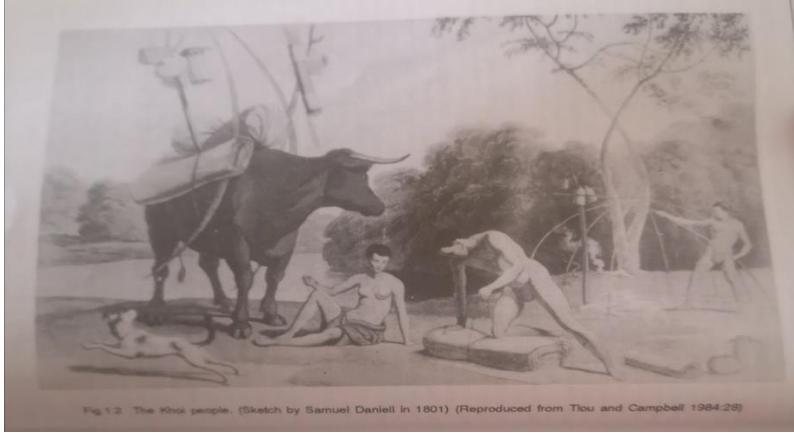
pointed out that a stone-age culture paved the way for herding and farming. The herding tradition, however, began with the San hunter-gatherer group, which was joined by Khoi from Northern Botswana who learnt herding tradition from the Nilotic people of Sudan.<sup>24</sup> Archaeological evidence also shows that the arrival of pastoralism in Lesotho was deeply rooted in the historical settlement of Bantu-speaking people who were agro-pastoralists.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Maliehe emphasized that historians and linguists generally agreed that the emergence of livestock rearing can be attributed to the Bantu-speaking Iron Age communities. These communities originated from the border regions of present-day Nigeria and Cameroon in West Africa. By the 3rd century AD, they had reached East African. Some gradually migrated southward where they found San who were said to be the indigenous inhabitants or aboriginals of Lesotho, as well as the Khoi-Khoi hunter-gatherers, during the fourth and fifth centuries.<sup>26</sup> Roberts, Sailus, as well as Wilson, hold the view that this group learnt that by keeping livestock, they could have reliable sources of meat, milk and hides for clothing. Although there is no consensus on the exact origins of pastoralism globally, scholars have been able to demonstrate their importance in different geographical settings.

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<sup>24</sup> Stephen J. Gill, *A Short history of Lesotho*, Morija: Morija Museum & Archives (1993) 99.

<sup>25</sup> David B. Coplan, "Land from the ancestors: Popular Religious Pilgrimage along the South Africa- Lesotho Border," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29, no. 4 (2003) 978.

<sup>26</sup> Sean M. Maliehe, *Commerce as Politics: The Two Centuries of Struggle for Basotho Economic Independence*, New York: Berghahn (2021).



<sup>27</sup> Figure 2: The Khoi People and Herding

The tradition of herding, according to Decker, has now become less valued, and a vast knowledge of herders is threatened by pressure to conform to modernity, a case which is also prevalent in Lesotho.<sup>28</sup> Between 21 and 22 January 2016, 30 members of pastoralist organisations from Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda met in Lukenya, near Nairobi to discuss the difficulties encountered by herders. These included maintaining their sociocultural legacy, delivering ecosystem services while protecting the environment, and receiving little credit for their contributions to food security.<sup>29</sup> In a study on Lesotho, Pitikoe and Preece observed that the marginalization of herders began as an identity of being a ‘herder’ and ‘others’.<sup>30</sup> Mokhosi, Shale, Molapo and Jegede observed that Basotho were traditionally cattle and livestock-owning pastoral people, and considered domestic work as taboo for men and boys.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, when girls at the age of 10 were taught domestic work, boys were

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<sup>27</sup> Stephen J. Gill, *A Short History of Lesotho*, 6.

<sup>28</sup> Peter R. Decker, “Cowboys Need Not Apply,” *The Massachusetts Review* 23, no.3 (1982) 516.

<sup>29</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO), *Eastern and Southern African pastoralists demand recognition and support*.

<sup>30</sup> Selloane Pitikoe & Julia Preece, “Herder identity in Lesotho: implications for non-formal education,” *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 35, no. 6 (2016) 616- 617.

<sup>31</sup> E. B. Mokhosi, M. Shale, M. Molapo & J. O. Jegede, ‘The situational and Need Analysis Survey of Herd boys in Lesotho’, *Unpublished Research Report, UNICENUL- CONSULS*, Maseru (1999).

taught to herd cattle in the fields. In Basotho society, a herder would be hired in the absence of a male child.<sup>32</sup> Herding practice is still alive in post-colonial Lesotho, however, the lens through which herders and herding are viewed today is negative and has become a marginalized group.<sup>33</sup>

Global discourse manifested that even though initiatives have been made, the material life of herders remains largely unchanged during this modern era and herders continue to face crushing rural poverty, a widely observed scenario in Lesotho.<sup>34</sup> This is evident through Allmendinger's argument that 'even today in United States of America, Europe and Asia cowboys were viewed as unskilled and unemployable vagrants on horseback who prowled after cattle.'<sup>35</sup> They were also considered economically impoverished to the extent that they were associated with theft by non-cowboy societies. Additionally, Cattley, Lind, and Scoones observed that herders are not an exception to the rising rates of poverty and destitution that pastoralist regions in the Horn of Africa continue to face, leading to persistently high levels of human malnutrition.<sup>36</sup> According to UNESCO, poverty has been identified as the key factor that hinders access to education in Lesotho.<sup>37</sup> Lehohla also described how local herders continued to be incredibly poor even though they greatly contributed to the maintenance of the herds that were essential to pastoral Basotho civilizations.<sup>38</sup> Pitikoe has also emphasized that some Basotho herders were pressured by poverty

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<sup>32</sup> Selloane Pitikoe & Julia Preece, "Herder Identity in Lesotho: Implications to non- formal education," 3.

<sup>33</sup> M. Mohasi, "Mainstreaming marginalized populations through adult education programmes: the herd boys in Lesotho" in Merriam S. et al. (eds.), *Global Issues*, (2006).

<sup>34</sup> Travis J. Lybbert, Christopher B. Barrett, Solomon Desta & Layne D. Coppock, "Stochastic wealth dynamics and risk management among a poor population," *Economic Journal* 114, no. 498 (2004).

<sup>35</sup> Black Allmendinger, *The Cowboy: Representation of Labor in an American Work Culture*, New York: Oxford University Press (1992) 7.

<sup>36</sup> Andy Catley, Jeremy Lind & Ian Scoones, "The futures of pastoralism in the Horn of Africa: pathways of growth and change," *Rev. Sci. Tech. Off. Int. Epiz.* 35, no. 2 (2016) 389.

<sup>37</sup> UNESO, *EFA global monitoring report: Towards the EFA goals. Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning*, 2012a.

<sup>38</sup> 'Proceedings of a Coordination Seminar on Herd boys in Lesotho,' *Office of The Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System's Operation Activities for Development*, Maseru: United Nations House, 1999.

to end up becoming herders.<sup>39</sup> According to Preece and Lekhetho, Ralenkoa, and Makau, a school-age boy in a family that was economically disadvantaged became an escape-board for the family's financial needs.<sup>40</sup> This underscores a parallel narrative of herders as an impoverished class across distinct regions including Lesotho.

In a study by Sbaloff on the Mongolian herders, the poor economic state of herders made it difficult for them to acquire Western education due to the high cost, a pattern typically observed in Lesotho.<sup>41</sup> The FAO observed that pastoralists in Eastern and Southern Africa face a long list of threats, which include a lack of education.<sup>42</sup> In the case of Lesotho, Pitikoe pointed out that Basotho herders are reservoirs of different forms of indigenous knowledge, which they apply for health care and nutritional purposes as well as for veterinary care for their herds. More importantly, Lesotho's education system includes both formal and non-formal education with the former favoured than the latter. Despite the absence of clear policies and open distance learning in Lesotho, non-formal education was created as a possible option for herders.<sup>43</sup> It was, therefore, suggested by Pitikoe the need for the implementation of a relevant curriculum, which is suitable to herders' lifestyles.<sup>44</sup> According to Pitikoe, it is necessary to understand who the herders are,

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<sup>39</sup> Selloane Pitikoe, "Life History, identity construction and life ambitions of Basotho herders," *Educational Research for Social Change (ERSC)* 7, no. 2 (2018)151.

<sup>40</sup> Julia Preece & Mapheleba Lekhetho, "The Challenge of Relevant and Accessible Education Provision for Herd boys in Lesotho," in J. Zeelen et al *The Burden of Education Exclusion* (2010) 6.

<sup>41</sup> Paula L. W. Sabloff, "Capitalist Democracy Among Mongolian Herders: Discourse or Ideology?" *Human Organization*69: no.1 (2010) 91.

<sup>42</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations, *Eastern and Southern African pastoralists demand recognition and support*.

<sup>43</sup> UNESCO, Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), *Lesotho Education Sector Strategic Plan 2005–2015*. Maseru, Swaziland: MoET, 2005.

<sup>44</sup> Selloane Pitikoe, "Indigenous Knowledge/s of Survival: Implications for Lifelong Learning among the Basotho Herding Fraternity," *Educational Research for Social Change (ERSC)* 6, no. 1 (2017) 38.

how they live and their ambitions to identify an educational system or mode that will suit them. This is against the background of the educational dilemma faced by herders.

According to the FAO findings, Ms Sadia Ahmed from the Pastoral and Environmental Network in the Horn of Africa (PENHA) in Somalia said that ‘Policy makers assume that pastoralist lands are no-man lands and make decisions on our traditional lands that can hurt our livelihoods.’<sup>45</sup> Scoones also thinks that conservation policies or efforts sometimes restrict herders’ access to certain grazing lands and resources and thereby affect the efficient supply of food for herds by herders in Massai communities.<sup>46</sup> Herd boys in Lesotho also encounter a lack of clear policies as exemplified in Pitikoe and Preece’s argument that herders face challenges in non-formal education (NFE) due to non-ratification of key policy documents.<sup>47</sup> They further argued that the Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre (LDTC) and Lesotho Association of Non-formal Education (LANFE) serve as resources but lack political support and integration into mainstream education and as a result, the semi-nomadic herding lifestyle contributes to high learner drop-outs as NFE programmes lack coordination.

Herders were and are globally grappling with the consequences of climate change, which degrade the environment for herds, which has become problematic in Lesotho. Dahl and Hjort alluded that ‘herd growth is central to pastoralists’ definitions of wealth and poverty, as herds represent economic assets, sources of food and buffers against drought and other shocks and stresses.’<sup>48</sup> However, climate changes significantly pose and continue to pose a threat to herders globally

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<sup>45</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO), *Eastern and Southern African pastoralists demand recognition and support*.

<sup>46</sup> Ian Scoones, *Living with Uncertainty: New directions in pastoral development in Africa*, United Kingdom: Practical Action Publishing (1995) 3.

<sup>47</sup> Selloane Pitikoe & Julia Preece, “The public image of the herders in Lesotho and implication for the non-formal education curriculum,” *African Identities*, 15, no. 4 (2017) 458.

<sup>48</sup> Gudrun Dahl & Anders Hjort, “Pastoral change and the role of drought,” *SAREC Report No. 2*, Stockholm: Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation in Developing Countries (SAREC), (1979).

through increasingly unpredictable weather patterns such as prolonged droughts or extreme rainfall, which have a direct impact on pasture quality and quantity.<sup>49</sup> A report by the United Department of Agriculture shows that the 1982-84 drought in the Sahel led to scarcity of water and poor pastures making it difficult for herders to provide adequate food and water for livestock.<sup>50</sup> In the first half of the 1980s, Sub-Saharan African countries, such as Botswana, South Africa, Somalia and Zimbabwe as well as Eastern African countries such as Kenya also experienced severe and prolonged droughts and changing climate patterns, which threatened livestock.<sup>51</sup> The FAO also reported that climate change in Eastern and Southern Africa contributes to water scarcity, which fuels conflicts around boreholes and other water sources between other land users and herders.<sup>52</sup>

Ferguson argued that in the early 1980s drought was also problematic in herding societies of Basotho, leading to the depletion of rangelands.<sup>53</sup> From January 1983 the Ministry of Agriculture urged livestock owners to sell their stock due to widespread losses due to drought which also resulted in a significant drop in sales and plummeting beef prices in Thaba- Tseka Market.<sup>54</sup> The decline in beef prices caused a significant drop in total sales in 1983, with the Thaba Tseka Market experiencing a decrease from an average price of 69 cents per kilogram for oxen in November 1982 to a low of 51 cents per kilogram in March 1983, resulting in total sales being only 45% of

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<sup>49</sup> Gudrun Dahl & Anders Hjort, "Pastoral change and the role of drought," 5.

<sup>50</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, *Sub-Saharan Africa: Situation and Outlook Report*, 9.

<sup>51</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, *Sub-Saharan Africa: Situation and Outlook Report*, 9.

<sup>52</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO), *Eastern and Southern African pastoralists demand recognition and support*.

<sup>53</sup> James Ferguson, "The Bovine Mystique: Power, Property and Livestock in Rural Lesotho," *New Series* 20, no. 4(1985) 650- 654.

<sup>54</sup> Extension workers in Thaba Tseka district carried this message to the villages, and officers of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Thaba Tseka Development Project lectured the people in remote areas on the need for destocking in general, and on the particular dangers of the then current drought

the same period in 1982.<sup>55</sup> Vetter, Goodall and Alcock argued that KwaZulu-Natal was also hit by drought in 2016 leading to scarcity in forage and water resources and they became too to reach.<sup>56</sup> This drought led to animal losses. Eldredge also contended that droughts and natural disasters in southern Africa during the 19th century disrupted agricultural and pastoral production, leading to migrations and competition for land.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, as part of this region, Lesotho experienced drought in the 19<sup>th</sup> century causing pastures to dry up and negatively impacting grazing livestock. The need for more pasture resulted in the migration of herders and their livestock, leading to conflicts over border areas with neighbouring groups. Drought was another factor that indirectly contributed to famine through the link between conflict over pasture land and subsequent food shortages, even if the drought itself was not the direct cause of famine.

Hussein, Sumberg and Seddon contended that conflict between farmers and herders over land has for a long time become common globally and in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Lesotho.<sup>58</sup> The FAO also observed that for centuries, pastoralists across Eastern and Southern Africa have faced threats of conflicts, resulting from encroaching and blocking grazing routes.<sup>59</sup> The United Nations also highlighted that farmers-herders conflicts have become very problematic in the Sahel of Burkina Faso and Mali because of scarce resources and the effects of climate change.<sup>60</sup> Richard emphasises that even though farmer-herder conflicts are often considered local, low-intensity

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<sup>55</sup> James Ferguson, "The Bovine Mystique: Power, Property and Livestock in Rural Lesotho," 650.

<sup>56</sup> S. Vetter, V. L. Goodall & R. Alcock, "Effect of drought on communal livestock farmers in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa," *African Journal of Range & Forage Science* 37, no. 1 (2020) 93.

<sup>57</sup> Elizabeth A. Eldredge, "Drought, Famine and Disease in Nineteenth-Century Lesotho," *African Economic History* 16, (1987) 71.

<sup>58</sup> Karim Hussein, James Sumberg & David Seddon, "Increasing violent conflict between herders and farmers in Africa: claims and evidence," *Development Policy Review* 17, no. 4 (1999) 379.

<sup>59</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO), *Eastern and Southern African pastoralists demand recognition and support*.

<sup>60</sup> United Nations, *Deadlier Conflicts, Climate Change Threaten Cross-Border Herding in West Africa, Delegates Tell Economic and Social Council, Peacebuilding Commission* (2019).

conflicts and not wars, the impacts of such conflicts have been largely felt in West African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon and Burkina Faso, among others.<sup>61</sup> A small number of these disputes have escalated into widespread violence and displacement of people. Regarding the farmer-herder conflict in Tanzania, Brockington highlighted that to restore or rejuvenate their farms, small farmers argued that cattle trampling hampered earthworm grazing and also hindered the recovery of fallowed land as well as depleted soil nutrients as herds consumed crop residues after the harvest.

Additionally, it was acknowledged that cattle dung facilitated the spread of a locally known grass called kasangani (*Cynodon dactylon*), which posed difficulties in terms of weed control.<sup>62</sup> The cattle owners, however, dismissed these concerns, claiming that farmers were mistaken about the negative impact of cattle on farmland and accusing them of laziness and jealousy, while confrontations between herd boys and farmers often turned violent due to the potential compensation costs that could be deducted from the herd boys' wages.<sup>63</sup> In the case of Lesotho, Mashinini also contented the districts of Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek in the 1980s saw efforts of Farm Improvement with Conservation (FISC), Production Through Conservation (PTC) and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) supporting the Ministry of Agriculture to regarding enhancing its capacity to assisting Basotho farmers and rural communities in general, to do proper land use planning and combat soil erosion on their fields.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Paul Richards, "New War: An Ethnographic Approach," in P. Richards, *No Peace, No War: An Anthropology of Contemporary Armed Conflicts*, Athens: Ohio University Press (2005a) 14.

<sup>62</sup> Dan Brockington, "The Politics and Ethnography of Environmentalisms in Tanzania," *African Affairs* 105, no. 418 (2006) 110- 111.

<sup>63</sup> Dan Brockington, "The Politics and Ethnography of Environmentalisms in Tanzania," 114.

<sup>64</sup> Israel Vusi Mashinini, "Sustainable Rural Development in Lesotho," PhD, University of Free State, (2000) 236-265.

The conservation measures undertaken by those farmers who partook included among other things construction of terraces, water diversion canals, and waterways as well as planting fodder grasses such as elephant grass and bentgrass came third and planting fruit trees on terraces. However, these efforts were unsuccessful and farmers reported that they were destroyed by herd boys and their livestock they also linked range deterioration to overgrazing caused by herd boys and livestock to enclosed pastures for rotational grazing.<sup>65</sup> Farmer-herder conflicts though underexplored were not a new phenomenon from the 1980s as the *maboella* system had long been utilized. According to Kimble, *the maboella* system prevented Basotho from encroaching on land that was recognized as belonging to another ‘hamlet’, under common sense and the fundamental principles of fairness and equity.<sup>66</sup> In cases of encroachment of livestock within *maboella* areas, the customary laws of Lerotholi granted the chief the authority to impose fines, as stipulated in the Lerotholi Laws.<sup>67</sup> *Maboella* areas were veld located around and between the cultivated areas fields to ensure the village had access to grazing for the winter season.<sup>68</sup> Global economic challenges that have hit hard the herders and herd boys in Lesotho are not exempted from the broader economic challenges. Gereffi argued that the global economy at the macro level operates through international organizations and regimes that establish rules, norms, and resources for the global community, promoting competitive capitalism. These include institutions like the World Bank, IMF, World Trade Organizations, and Labour Organization as well as regional integration schemes like the European Union and the North American Free Trade Agreement<sup>69</sup> With this regard, in

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<sup>65</sup> Israel Vusi Mashinini, “Sustainable Rural Development in Lesotho,” 259- 265.

<sup>66</sup> Judith Kimble, *Towards an Understanding of the Political Economy of Lesotho: The Origin of Commodity Production and Migrant Labour, 1830- c. 1885*, MA, National University of Lesotho (1978) 23.

<sup>67</sup> *Melao ea Lerotholi*(1903) 14.

<sup>68</sup> Judith Kimble, *Towards an Understanding of the Political Economy of Lesotho: The Origin of Commodity Production and Migrant Labour, 1830- c. 1885*, 304.

<sup>69</sup> Gary Gereffi, “The Global Economy: Organization, Governance, and Development,” *The hand book of economic sociology* 2 (2005)160-62.

recent decades a strong anti-capitalism movement emerged. From the anti-capitalist point of view, scholars such as Rodrick 1997; Klein 2000 and Ritzer 2000 as quoted by Gereffi contented that globalization, led to increased vulnerability, economic instability, social dislocations of Indigenous populations well as flattening culture in the financed well-financed global marketing machines and brand-bullies.<sup>70</sup>

In this regard, Horowitz argued that large dam projects in the Third World funded by institutions like the World Bank, despite having resettlement guidelines, have often resulted in involuntary relocations and negative economic and political impacts on downstream communities.<sup>71</sup> For instance, the World Bank has been involved in projects that disregard environmental and social sustainability principles, such as approving oil pipeline projects in Cameroon and Chad and a resettlement project in China, resulting in the displacement of ethnic Tibetans and Mongol nomadic herders. In 2000, the Bank acknowledged that 2.6 million people worldwide were adversely affected by forced evictions, land loss, or loss of livelihood within its portfolio. Additionally, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) allocated 19.1 per cent per cent of its investments in the fiscal year 1999 for operations related to oil, gas, mining, timber, pulp, and paper.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, in the case of Lesotho dams under the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), the loss of grazing land, as previously mentioned by Thabane,<sup>73</sup> and mining by Makhetha cannot be overlooked.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Gary Gereffi, "The Global Economy: Organization, Governance, and Development," 175.

<sup>71</sup> Micheal M. Horowitz, "Victims Upstream and Down," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 4., no. 2 (1991)164- 181.

<sup>72</sup> E. B. Herbert, "Impact of World Bank-Assisted Projects on Poverty Alleviation," *Consilience* no. 25 (2021-22) 12.

<sup>73</sup> Motlatsi Thabane, "Shifts from Old to New Social and Ecological Environments in the Lesotho Highlands Water Scheme; Relocating Residents of the Mohale Dam Area," 635- 636.

<sup>74</sup> Esthers Likeleli Makhetha, "Small Scale Artisanal Diamond Mining and Rural Livelihood Diversification in Lesotho," PhD Dissertation, University of Pretoria, South Africa, (2016)119.

Mokoa contended that for Basotho males, herding serves two primary purposes, firstly, to build up personal livestock wealth by either caring for their family's animals or being recruited or employed as herders or receiving payment in the form of livestock after 12 months of work.<sup>75</sup> In cases where the family is underprivileged, the first male, regardless of age or educational level is the first to seek employment from wealthy cattle owners because of his status as the family provider.<sup>76</sup> Pitikoe further highlighted that each year's payment terms are negotiated between the herders and the employer and the payment is often in the form of 12 sheep per year while others are paid with a cow and some cases cash. Therefore, throughout the year the herder immensely depends on other means, which do not come from their wages. Pitikoe further argued that in many instances, employers violated the herders' negotiated payment terms by paying them annually instead of the agreed-upon monthly cash wages in some instances, without obtaining the herders' consent.<sup>77</sup> In light of the aforementioned issues, herders encountered an intricate web of economic challenges in this evolving landscape. Taking all things into consideration, this literature review extensively underscores and provides a solid foundation for the discourse regarding the history of pastoralism and the challenges faced by herders.

## **1.8 Methodology**

This study will use a qualitative research design because of its nature, as evidenced in its objectives and research questions, which were developed from the study's main goal. With a focus on the struggles and experiences of the herd boys in Mokhotlong, the qualitative research design will help to collect rich, detailed data essential to examining a variety of perceptions and constructing a

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<sup>75</sup> Thabo Makoa, *Shepherd boy of the Maloti*, Morija, Lesotho: Morija Museum and Archives, (2005) 9.

<sup>76</sup> Selloane Pitikoe & Pholoho Morejele, "Indigenous Knowledge/s of Survival: Implications for Lifelong Learning among the Basotho Herding Fraternity," *Educational Research for Social Change* 6, no. 1 (2017) 40.

<sup>77</sup> Sellaone Pitikoe, "Male herders in Lesotho: Life histories, identities and life Ambitions," 129.

more nuanced socio-economic history of pastoralism as it affects herd boys in post-colonial Lesotho. The qualitative research design will be complemented with the collection of archival data, and in-depth oral interviews, as well as Focused Group Discussion (FGD). These will be used for a detailed and in-depth examination of pastoralism and the challenges of herd boys in Mokhotlong.<sup>78</sup>

This study will involve exploring academic journals, books, government reports, and other relevant sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic and to find and acknowledge what has been covered about herd boys. However, because archival data is frequently prone to inconsistency, lack of chronology, and missing data, oral interviews will be used to fill any gaps identified in archival materials. The interviewees of this study will be former herd boys, community members and local leaders as well as herd boys because they are relevant stakeholders who can provide insights into the socio-economic aspects and status of herd boys. Their roles, responsibilities, and interactions within the livestock sector and the broader community will be examined to understand the challenges they are faced with in Lesotho.

### **1.9 Summary of Chapters**

This research is built around six chapters with chapter one being the introduction. In Chapter 2 the focus shifts to pastoralism in Lesotho, examining its historical and contemporary aspects. Chapter 3 uncovers the dynamic interplay between pastoralism and herd boys. Chapter 4 scrutinizes the economic hardships faced by herd boys shedding light on the dynamics that come with it. Chapter 5 covers socio-cultural challenges offering insights into cultural dynamics that affected pastoralism. Chapter 6 offers a succinct summary and conclusion.

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<sup>78</sup> Monique Hennik, Irige Hutter & Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, London: Sage (2020) 10.

## Chapter Two: Pastoralism in Lesotho

### 2.1 Transhumant Pastoralism in Lesotho

Transhumant pastoralism is a traditional livelihood strategy that involves the seasonal movement of livestock from one area to another in response to climatic variations and the search for optimal pastures.<sup>1</sup> The relationship between Basotho people and their livestock has as far back as the precolonial era given rise to a unique set of indigenous practices or traditional knowledge systems that define their way of life. The communal approach was central to resource management, with collective decision-making among herding communities regarding migration routes, grazing areas and water rights as well as giving owners of stock permission to build cattle posts. Quinlan posited that chiefs in co-operation with villagers were the ones who were in control of transhumant pastoralism as they were in charge of giving access to grazing areas and controlling the type of livestock which should stay in the village and cattle posts. Movement typically followed a seasonal pattern with herders migrating to higher elevations known as grazing posts ‘*metebo*’ during the summer months, capitalising on abundant high-altitude pastures in cooler areas away from villages to protect animals from crops and conversely, during winter they descended to lower altitudes where milder temperatures and accessible forage facilitated the survival of their herds.<sup>2</sup> Dobb further noted that approximately 78% of stock owners in his village survey used grazing posts.<sup>3</sup> The migratory nature of transhumant pastoralism allowed herders to optimise grazing resources,

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<sup>1</sup> Anatoly M. Khozanov, “Pastoralists in the Contemporary World: The Problem of Survival,” in J. Ginat & A. M. Khozanov (ed), *Changing Nomads in Changing World*, Britain: Sussex Academic Press (2014)11.

<sup>2</sup> Tim Quinlan, “Marena a Lesotho, Chiefs, Politics and Culture in Lesotho,” PhD, University of Cape Town, (1994) 134.

<sup>3</sup> Allen J. Dobb, “The organisation of range use in Lesotho, southern Africa: A review of attempted modification and case study,” *M. Sc thesis*, Washington State University (1985) 136.

preventing overgrazing in specific areas and fostering the regeneration of pastures. This mobility served as a mechanism for risk mitigation as it reduced the vulnerability of livestock to extreme weather events for their survival.<sup>4</sup> Lesotho's mountainous terrain and rugged environment, characterised by high-altitude plateaus also known as highlands as well as lowlands made this migratory lifestyle effective for grazing and up-to-date, transhumant pastoralism holds a paramount position in the economic sustenance of Mokhotlong, with herd boys being the active stakeholders of this strategic way of life.<sup>5</sup>

Transhumance pastoralism in Mokhotlong has been fluctuating due to limited natural resources.<sup>6</sup> Research from large-scale ranching in the grasslands of the Americas and nomadic or transhumant livestock systems in Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia, suggests that the more precisely specific areas of vegetation at a specific development stage can be targeted; the more beneficial will be the outcome in terms of animal nutrition and productivity. Traditionally, this is predominantly achieved through herding, which allows for adaptive and selective grazing patterns.<sup>7</sup> However, herd boys in Mokhotlong have not been able to consistently keep up due to scarce animal vegetation.<sup>8</sup> Among factors contributing to limited natural pastures in Mokhotlong were climate change, and unsustainable grazing practices like overstocking, overgrazing and ageing of pastures. Likewise, the limited and declining availability of natural or forage resources in the Sudano-Sahelian/Sudano-Guinea zones of Mali became a huge predicament for transhumant

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<sup>4</sup> Tim Quinlan, "Marena a Lesotho, Chiefs, Politics and Culture in Lesotho," 147.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Nku Nku, Mapholaneng Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023..

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Pitso Fihlo, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Eva. Schlecht, Matthew D. Turner, Christian G. Hülsebusch & Adreas Buerkert, "Managing Rangelands Without Herding? Insides from Africa from Africa and Beyond," *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems* 4, (2020), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Leluma Bereng, Ministry of Agriculture Mokhotlong, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

practices.<sup>9</sup> Climate change significantly affected and altered the availability of forage, thus significantly affecting the efficiency of transhumance pastoralism.

Natural pastures were very limiting in several nutrients. Consequently, poor nutrition and bad weather conditions were foremost causes of high annual kid mortality of over 50%, leading to a decline in annual goat numbering of Lesotho.<sup>10</sup> The decline in Angora goat numbers, mohair production, and mohair yield per goat, attributed to nutrition deficiency made animals prone to nutritional diseases and adverse weather conditions led to high child mortality and low productivity of Angora goats in Lesotho. Severe winter conditions in Lesotho also hindered plant growth, impacting Angora goat does' pregnancy nutrition.<sup>11</sup> Inadequate pre- and post-partum nutrition contributed to lighter kid births and higher mortality, emphasizing the need for nutritional supplementation to enhance birthweight, growth, and kid survival.<sup>12</sup> Phororo argued that the backbone of pastoral systems like Angora goats faced challenges emanating from unsustainable grazing bred by climate change thus resulting in a decline in animal population and productivity.<sup>13</sup> Herd boys in Mokhotlong expressed that the time-consuming nature of transhumance pastoralism which mostly takes place in cattle posts constrained their ability to diversify for better future and leisure time.<sup>14</sup> Fihlo, one of the herd boys grappled with similar predicaments. Guarding livestock

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<sup>9</sup> Clarisse Umutoni & Augustine Abioye Ayantunde, *Perceived effects of transhumant practices on natural resource management in southern Mali*, no. 8 (2018).

<sup>10</sup> Linthe Khitsane, *Effect of Pre & Post- Partum Soybean Meal Supplementation on the Productivity of the Doe and Birthweight, Growth and Mortality of Angora Goat Kids in the Rangelands of Molimo- Nthuse Area of Lesotho*, Ministry of Agriculture, Maseru, Lesotho (1979) 2- 3.

<sup>11</sup> D. R. Phororo, *Livestock farming in Lesotho and pasture utilization and suggested national policy*, Ministry of Agriculture, Maseru, Lesotho (1979).

<sup>12</sup> Linthe Khitsane, *Effect of Pre & Post- Partum Soybean Meal Supplementation on the Productivity of the Doe and Birthweight, Growth and Mortality of Angora Goat Kids in the Rangelands of Molimo- Nthuse Area of Lesotho*, 3.

<sup>13</sup> D. R. Phororo, *Livestock farming in Lesotho and pasture utilization and suggested national policy*, Ministry of Agriculture.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Lehana Lehana, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

for grazing and against threats denied him the opportunity to explore and pursue other activities vital for personal development like education, leisure and other jobs outside herding.<sup>15</sup> In this regard, Baca Jasiek from Ochotnica shared his thoughts with a mix of humour and resentment, noting the shift in work ethic over time. The necessity to safeguard sheep from predators overnight in mountainous terrains is a shared hardship that underscores the strenuous nature of pastoral duties. He observed that the concept of a "weekend" has become universal; contrasting with past times when such breaks were unknown and work with sheep was relentless.<sup>16</sup> The modern allure of year-round jobs offering regular weekends has led to a decline in young men accepting shepherd roles. Many seek employment beyond Poland, often in the UK, for better wages. Today, the role of a *juhas*, or shepherd, spanning three seasons, fails to provide a stable livelihood. The job's round-the-clock demands, coupled with the necessity of guarding sheep against wolves overnight in the mountains, make it less appealing and financially rewarding. The occupation requires resilience, solitude tolerance, and adaptability—traits that contemporary pastoralists find lacking in the younger generation. This shift reflects broader economic changes and evolving job market expectations.<sup>17</sup>

## **2.2 Indigenous and Cultural Practices of Pastoralism**

Lesotho's history has a longstanding tradition of pastoralism deeply etched into the very fabric of the nation's identity built out of indigenous knowledge and cultural practices.<sup>18</sup> Pastoralism was deeply embedded in Basotho cultural beliefs and rituals. For example, ceremonies such as

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Pitso Fihlo, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>16</sup> Pawel Sendyka & Nicolette Makovicky, "Transhumant pastoralism in Poland: Contemporary challenges," *Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice* 8, no. 5 (2018) 6.

<sup>17</sup> Pawel Sendyka & Nicolette Makovicky, "Transhumant pastoralism in Poland: Contemporary challenges," 2.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Lebenya Lebenya, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024.

initiation rites and marriage celebrations often involved the exchange of livestock, reinforcing the importance of cattle and other animals in their cultural identity.<sup>19</sup> In this regard, indigenous knowledge was used to take care of these animals and the main reason for the continuous functioning of indigenous knowledge is that pastoralists and herders put the knowledge to continuous use.<sup>20</sup> Pastoralists managed their production system for many centuries, accumulating detailed knowledge of the environment of their grazing landscape and traditional knowledge of the indigenous people was fundamentally important in the management of local resources. As expressed by a Somali elder, the relationship between pastoralists and rangelands is symbiotic; a rangeland cannot exist without pastoralists' knowledge, and conversely, pastoralists cannot practise their livelihood without access to rangelands.<sup>21</sup>

Traditional grazing rotations and land-use patterns played a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance, for instance, based on historical events, climate change (rainfall and temperature), soil, topography and vegetation. Southern Ethiopian pastoralists and herders categorised the grazing landscapes into two Badaa and Gamoji. Gamoji landscapes had low rainfall, warm temperatures, lowlands, and sparser vegetation while Badaa landscapes were characterised by high amounts of rainfall, cool temperatures, highlands and dense vegetation cover. This criterion was similar to that used by the Ariaal of northern Kenya, who classified the range into two main categories: the highlands and the lowlands.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, based on the nature of ecology, the local communities

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Lebenya Lebenya , Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024.

<sup>20</sup> Gufu Oba, "Harnessing pastoralists' indigenous knowledge for rangeland management: three African case studies," *Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice* 2 (2012) 2.

<sup>21</sup> Ahmed Mohammed Bouh & Yared Mammo, "Indigenous conflict management and resolution mechanisms on rangelands in Somali Regional State, Ethiopia," *Nomadic Peoples* 12 (2008).

<sup>22</sup> Gufu Oba, "The role of indigenous range management knowledge for identification control in northern Kenya," *Research Report No. 4*, Uppsala: EPOS, Uppsala and Linkoping Universities (1994).

make decisions about range suitability for a given livestock species. Likewise, one of the elders in Mapholaneng asserted that Lesotho's pastoralism roots itself in a symbiotic relationship between the land and its people and therefore Basotho herders utilized various techniques to manage their livestock and these included transhumant pastoralism to prevent overgrazing in rangelands and respond to weather variation.<sup>23</sup>

This practice was also evident in the Maasai community which also practiced transhumant pastoralism moving livestock between different grazing landscapes.<sup>24</sup> Many pastoral communities maintained old-age nomadic lifestyles, moving their herds in response to seasonal changes and resource availability. Nomadism was an adaptive strategy that allowed for sustainable grazing practices, preventing overgrazing and enabling the natural regeneration of pastures.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, conflicts over resources such as grazing land and water sources were common among Basotho pastoral communities, however, to control such, Basotho developed customary laws and conflict resolution mechanisms, often mediated by community elders or chiefs, to peacefully resolve disputes and maintain social harmony within the pastoralist society.<sup>26</sup>

Through his studies, Johnson shed light on the unique problem-solving skills of herd boys despite their low literacy rates in monitoring and managing livestock.<sup>27</sup> Under the close mentorship of elders, herd boys acquired a unique set of skills and knowledge orally, passed down through

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<sup>23</sup> Interview with Lereko Lereko, Mapholaneng Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>24</sup> Anorl. L. Mapinduzi, GufuOba, RobertB. Weladji & JonathanE. Colman, "Use of indigenous ecological knowledge of the Maasai pastoralists for assessing rangeland biodiversity in Tanzania," *African Journal of Ecology* 41 (2003) 331.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Pule Madona, Mokhotlong, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>26</sup> Tim Quinlan, "Marena a Lesotho, Chiefs, Politics and Culture in Lesotho," 157.

<sup>27</sup> Lineo R. Johnson, 'Cultural and social uses of orality and functional literacy: A narrative approach', *Reading & Writing* 7, no.1 (2016) 6.

generations, defining this mode of learning as informal.<sup>28</sup> Adaptation is central to herding and this is where herd boys count their livestock through visual matching where stones are matched with several livestock as they enter kraal.<sup>29</sup> Sometimes herd boys learned numeracy by using sheep droppings whereas they were taught to read using animal droppings. Even though some herd boys did not know scientific numeracy, they adopted non-scientific forms of counting and learning skills, which of course bred the same results, which could be obtained by counting using numbers. Fihlo contended that under the guidance of skilled animal experts, they inherited the rising socio-economic transition which enormously embraced modernity thus reducing extreme reliance on indigenous ways of managing livestock due to the adoption of innovative techniques and modern veterinary practices to enhance the health and productivity of their livestock. This adaptive approach allowed them to navigate the challenges posed by economic shifts and environmental changes.<sup>30</sup>

### **2.3 Pastoralism in Highlands and Lowlands**

To comprehend the complexities of pastoralism in lowlands and highlands; it is of great significance to consider the nexus of environment and geography, which played a defining role in shaping the divergent successes of pastoralism in Lesotho's lowlands and highlands. The topography of the country comprises four agroecological zones namely mountains or highlands (with peaks rising to 3.299 meters above sea level), foothills, lowlands, and the Senqu River Valley.<sup>31</sup> These zones are characterized by distinct landforms, soils, climates, vegetation and land-

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<sup>28</sup> Selloane. Pitikoe & Julia Preece, "Herder Identity in Lesotho: Implications to non- formal education," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 35, no. 6 (2016) 3.

<sup>29</sup> Selloane. Pitikoe & Julia "Preece, Herder Identity in Lesotho: Implications to non- formal education," 51.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Pitso Fihlo, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>31</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, "Agricultural Policy and Capacity Building Project (APCBP)," 85.

use. A focus in this sub-section, highlands were characterized by rugged terrains, climatic extremes, challenging topography, steep slopes and fragile soil prone to sheet wash and rill erosion and thus lacked extensive agricultural opportunities. The need for land is visible; the many abandoned and deeply eroded fields on steep slopes are testimony to the consequences of challenging ecological constraints.<sup>32</sup>

Contrariwise, lowlands featured expansive plains and milder climatic variations, abundant water sources, and fertile agricultural land were more prevalent, providing favourable conditions for grazing and efficient livestock management.<sup>33</sup> The dual nature of Lesotho's topography served as both an asset and a challenge, shaping the trajectory of pastoral communities in distinct ways. In these rocky lands of the highland's landscapes, pastoralism not only persevered but thrived as the primary livelihood, with communities navigating the constraints of limited grazing areas and harsh climatic conditions.<sup>34</sup> These altitude-induced limitations on vegetation and the proneness of inclement weather events compelled herders in the highlands to adopt a more adaptive and resilient approach to their pastoral lifestyle. The afore-highlighted issues are evidence that the sheer determination of the Basotho people in navigating these geographical challenges reflected a profound commitment to their cultural identity and a testament to their environmental wisdom and endurance embedded in their historical practices.

In contemporary Lesotho, pastoralism was intensively practised and commercialized in the highlands region while lowlands included a large number of segments of non-herders who pursued a range of economic strategies. Some of the Basotho, who were once stewards of herds, now

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<sup>33</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, "Agricultural Policy and Capacity Building Project (APCBP)," 85.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Tikoe Palima, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

redirected and channelled their energies into diverse entrepreneurial pursuits beyond the realm of animal husbandry. Mat'oeu, a pastoralist in Maputsoe further argued that:

'The surge in factories altered Maputsoe, evolving from just two factories in the 1980s to a thriving industrial centre today thus reshaping our livelihood. With intensifying urbanization in the 2000s, access to grazing areas has become a contentious issue due to scarcity and therefore these land conflicts limited grazing options. Some land owners even expect us to personally cut grass, a task challenging to fulfil while juggling work for survival and paying herd boys. .'<sup>35</sup>

Less than half of Maputsoe's population in the 2000s engaged in agro-pastoral practices with many diversifying into various economic activities such as selling food along the roadside and local markets, some ventured into imported vegetables trade, alcohol trade, welding and some ventured into shoemaking. From clubs and taxi industries to bottle stores, salons, lodges and restaurants, the urbanized areas became a crucible for investment.<sup>36</sup> Local animal production became significantly affected and its ability to maximize profit as the quality of fibre in lowlands was slightly less than that of highlands, which were further favoured by highlands at high altitudes. Consequently, there was a rise in massive imports of animal-sourced products from South Africa. Basotho street vendors capitalized on this trend to a large extent by importing agro-pastoral sourced goods, turning it into a lucrative business opportunity and this phenomenon was evident through skyrocketing local food businesses and butcheries which imported meat from Bethlehem in South Africa.

In regards to the above, Quinlan suggested that the Basotho people were gradually losing interest in pastoralism or agriculture as early as the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was evidenced by a reduction in the land allocated for cultivation and an expansion into grazing lands due to population growth and

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<sup>35</sup> Interview with Mats'oeu Tsoeu, Ha Moholisa Maputsoe, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Nts'ekhe Nts'ekhe, Maputsoe Urban Council, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

the spread of settlements.<sup>37</sup> Quinlan noted that the decline in cultivation resulted in a scarcity of crop stover, a traditional practice in the Mokhotlong district where farmers stored harvested crop residues as winter forage for livestock.<sup>38</sup> This decline was partly a response to changing ecological conditions, such as increased settlement and encroachment upon suitable grazing lands.

Lack of economic foresight in the traditional practice of livestock herding and the failure of many lowlands pastoral regions to go commercial coupled with massive industrialisation and urbanization on livestock rearing cemented challenges faced by herd boys suggested that for some herders in the lowlands, herding evolved into more of a ‘hobby’ than a carefully managed production.<sup>39</sup> Many engage in animal rearing without paying close attention to the necessary skills and knowledge one needs to acquire to maximize returns in such production, especially in the evolving modernizing world. Instead, a significant number of Basotho spent their hard-earned salaries, wages and remittances from factories, mines and domestic jobs and invested in animal rearing without conducting thorough research on the economic aspects of animal husbandry production. Moorosi argued that there are some farmers and pastoralists who reared animals just because they have inherited livestock as a form of wealth without making a clear economic analysis of expenses spent and the returns they would get.<sup>40</sup> Since these farmers no longer experience the same profit as before, this phenomenon has led to disputes and violations of agreement regarding payment between the employers and the herders resulting in late or insufficient payment at times. Mashoai aged 31 highlighted a similar issue, recounting his

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<sup>37</sup> Tim Quinlan, “Marena a Lesotho, Chiefs, Politics and Culture in Lesotho,” 125.

<sup>38</sup> Tim Quinlan, “Marena a Lesotho, Chiefs, Politics and Culture in Lesotho,” 134- 136.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Karabo Masilo, Ha Nyenye Maputsoe, 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Ntai Moorosi, Ha Mathata Maputsoe, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

experience in 2001 when he herded seven cows.<sup>41</sup> Despite his efforts, the owner faced challenges in selling the small number of cows, leading to financial challenges and complaints about paying the herder from his pocket. With all highlighted, this historical perspective underscored the recurring theme of insufficient research among pastoralists which impacted well- the well-being of those involved in herding and the need for a more informed and economically viable approach to livestock rearing in the lowland region of Lesotho.

## **2.4 Pastoralism and Land Use**

The vast expanses of highlands of Mokhotlong served as a vital resource for livestock sustenance under the care of herd boys and local prosperity.<sup>42</sup> Drawing on their knowledge of the highland terrain acquired through years of experience, herd boys strategically managed land use for optimal livestock well-being. Land use, therefore, became a linchpin in the pastoralist way of life thus implying that the utilization of the highlands for grazing was not just a utilitarian practice but a coexistence between pastoralism and land use – a synergy that shaped the resilience and prosperity of these highland communities of Mokhotlong.<sup>43</sup> Over the past three to four decades, African livestock keepers have become increasingly incorporated and integrated into the global system through forces of globalization, leading to significant implications and changes in the management of land, labour, and livestock within these communities.<sup>44</sup> There was a visible shift of African pastoralism toward capitalist practices during this period.<sup>45</sup> This phenomenon is evident through

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<sup>41</sup> Interview with Pita Mashoi, Ha Lebopo Mokhotlong, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Tankiso Mosae, Tlokoeng Mokhotlong, 27<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Thato Lekhema, Checha Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2023.

<sup>44</sup> Nikolaus Schareika, Christopher Brown & Mark Moritz, “Critical Transitions from Pastoralism to Ranching in Central Africa,” *Current Anthropology* 62, no1 (2021).

<sup>45</sup> Nikolaus Schareika, Christopher Brown & Mark Moritz, “Critical Transitions from Pastoralism to Ranching in Central Africa.”

the progressive enclosure of once traditionally open pastoral spaces. This encroachment on open pastoral spaces has been primarily fuelled by various factors such as competition for land, including pressures from protected areas, land grabbing and land fragmentation to mention a few.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, land scarcity for pastoralists has intensified, leading to a notable change in their relationship with the land, now characterized by heightened and tense competition with other users and the economic valuation of land as a factor to be calculated against potential returns.<sup>47</sup> The commodification, privatization, and titling of land for pastoral use in Africa as highlighted by Lesorogol, have become prominent strategies for valuing and allocating land under these new conditions.<sup>48</sup> These changes are not only influenced by national states but are also propelled by global development agencies such as the World Bank.<sup>49</sup> Likewise, in Mokhotlong, this period was not without its challenges influenced by land-use changes. Developments, population growth and transformation of land-use patterns during this period led to the fragmentation of grazing areas affecting traditional herding practices in some instances.<sup>50</sup>

Following efforts to modernize Land tenure in 1979, Lesotho saw the encroachment of infrastructures, and clothing textiles as well as multi-million developmental projects such as Kao in the Butha-Buthe district, Lesotho Highlands Development Project and Polihali Dam in

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<sup>46</sup> Nikolaus Schareika, Christopher Brown & Mark Moritz, “Critical Transitions from Pastoralism to Ranching in Central Africa.”

<sup>47</sup> Elliot Fratkin & Robins Mearns, “Sustainability and pastoral livelihoods: lessons from East African Maasai and Mongolia,” *Human Organization* 62, no.2 (2003).

<sup>48</sup> Carolyn K. Lesorogol, “Cutting up the commons: the political dynamics of institutional change,” *American Anthropologist* 105, no. 3 (2003).

<sup>49</sup> Thomas J. Bassett, “Mobile pastoralism on the brink of land privatization in northern Côte d’Ivoire,” *Geoforum* 40, no. 5 (2009).

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Ntai Moorosi, Checha Mokhotlong, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

Mokhotlong district on pastoral lands impacting pastoral lands.<sup>51</sup> Basotho faced not only migration but also due compensation, thus significantly violating their rights.

## 2.5 Tradition and Modernity

Tradition and modernity significantly impacted the livestock herding and practices of Mokhotlong.<sup>52</sup> While traditional practices such as communal living and reliance on agriculture as well as pastoralism persisted, modern influences such as mining, water exports, and tourism competed for land historically utilised for grazing herds. Consequently, some of the young generations have lost interest in anything thing that has to do with herds and herding tradition has become overlooked as intensification of modernization is taking over. In support of this, Bennett *et al* argued that developments of animal industries in Africa are in an awkward transitional stage.<sup>53</sup> Khozanov also argued that modernization efforts in many developing countries extend beyond industrialization and urbanization.<sup>54</sup> It involves a deep transformation, or even destruction of many traditional social, economic and cultural institutions. Some scholars consider this inevitable. In the footsteps of modernization is the disruption of old systems of social control, and their economic base is inevitable.<sup>55</sup>

Destruction of traditional forms of social organization results in disorganization, chaos, and social dislocations because in most cases effects of modernization were imposed from outside and did

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<sup>51</sup> Kamohelo Khoboko, “The need to balance responsible corporate conduct and standards of good governance in conflicted affected areas; A case for Kao and Polihali victims of Human rights violations,” Degree of Bachelor of Laws, National of University of Lesotho (2020) 2- 3.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Nala Lesole Mokhotlong, 27<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>53</sup> John Williams Bennett, Steven W. Lawry & James C. Riddell, *Land Tenure and Livestock Development in Sub-Saharan Africa* (1986).

<sup>54</sup> Anaotly M. Khozanov, “Pastoralists in the Contemporary World: The Problem of Survival,” 8.

<sup>55</sup> Lennart Back, “Reindeer Management in Conflict and Co-operation: A Geographic Land Use and Simulation Study from Northernmost Sweden,” *Nomadic Peoples* 32 (1993) 79.

not connect with spontaneous development. Khazanov further argued that pastoral or mobile nomads played a huge role in the past world history, their present is precarious and as for their future, it seems uncertain at the moment. Pastoralists had survived despite development schemes not because of them<sup>56</sup> Likewise while herding tradition significantly remained overlooked, the majority of Mokhotlong residents made a living from pastoralism, a practice that has been thriving due to herding.<sup>57</sup>

Modernity became powerful in the 1980s to 2000s and it was strengthened by the modernization of Land Tenure.<sup>58</sup> For some of Mokhotlong herding residents, the Land Act of 1979 and 1980 Land Regulations provided entrepreneurial opportunities for some citizens, particularly in Mokhotlong town where land purchases were common.<sup>59</sup> The push for 'development' led to the establishment of a Development Committee in the 1980s, but transparency issues linked to the interests of bureaucrats driven by commercial pursuits affected villagers in places like Tlokoeng and Mapholaneng and they lacked hope for change. Each area had a 'Village Development Committee' (VDC) governed by sub- ward chief and this committee consisted of elected residents from the area, but it did not necessarily need to include the local chief or headman.<sup>60</sup> These VDCs

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<sup>56</sup> P. T. W. Baxter, "Introduction," in P.T.W. Baxter(ed), *Property, Poverty, and People: Changing Rights in Property and Problems of Pastoral Development*, Manchester: University of Manchester, n. d., i- vii.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Nala Lesole, Tlokoeng Mokhotlong, 27<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Nala Lesole, Tlokoeng Mokhotlong, 27<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>59</sup> Since the late 1960s, however, site allocation has been in the hands of Land Committees. Today, these Committees also deal with arable land allocations as a result of the 1979 Land Act (Land Act, 1979) and the 1980 Land Regulations (Legal Notice, 1980a). The Land Committees are a means for the state to exercise its authority in villages.

<sup>60</sup> Tim Quinlan, "Marena a Lesotho, Chiefs, Politics and Culture in Lesotho," 107.

were tasked with initiating local projects, raising funds for villagers, and collaborating with government officials.<sup>61</sup>

However, the hierarchical structure, from VDCs to District Development Committees (DDCs), showed minimal public accountability and concentration of authority in civil servants, serving commercial interests.<sup>62</sup> One of the pastoralists, Lisene argued that many properties made around Mokhotlong town were established without the active participation of local communities for whom the land was a means of pastoral and agricultural production.<sup>63</sup> With this regard, WDC and DDC were excluded from negotiations with the French multinational company Spie Batignolle in Mokhotlong, limiting discussions on crucial issues ranging from compensation for the use of fields for the work site. Consequently, development was perceived as irrelevant to rural life, with villagers viewing VDCs as a means to extract material benefits from a frugal government outside the village realm.<sup>64</sup> Development and education played a huge role in bridging traditional values with elements of modern education and urban lifestyles.<sup>65</sup> One of the herd boys, Masilo argued that from his early childhood, he was taught about animals but in the name of ‘progress’ interwoven with modernity he had to go to school and he dropped out because it was draining his parent’s money for years without returns.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> WDC submitted proposals to the 'District Development Committee' (DDC) which, in principle, included elected members as well as the District Secretary, the district chief and, as observers, the district heads of government departments. The DDC was responsible for assessing project proposals and for authorising the relevant government departments to carry them out.

<sup>62</sup> Tim Quinlan, “Marena a Lesotho, *Chiefs, Politics and Culture in Lesotho*,” 111.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Moko a Lisene, Tlokoeng Mokhotlong, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>64</sup> Tim Quinlan, “Marena a Lesotho, *Chiefs, Politics and Culture in Lesotho*,” 108.

<sup>65</sup> Anatoly M. Khozanov, “Pastoralists in the Contemporary World: The Problem of Survival,” 18.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Masilo Masilo, Mokhotlong, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

He further pointed out that in his life he never wanted to be hired instead he wanted to have his animals like his parents and make a living out of them. Quinlan also contended that the superimposition of other forms of social and economic networks is evident in the Mokhotlong district.<sup>67</sup> There are many schools and churches, for example, as a result of intensive missionary work by the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, now constituted as the Lesotho Evangelical Church, and by various orders of the Roman Catholic Church. Church and school were often closely linked.<sup>68</sup> The primary schools in many villages were established by evangelists with the support of villagers. According to oral reports, there was occasional resistance from the chiefs. Mosuo Sekonyela, for example, reportedly resisted villagers' efforts to build a school in Malingoaneng. In light of the aforementioned, one of the pastoralists also argued that the 2000s saw the collapse of commercial banks, agricultural banks and Lesotho Bank as well as cooperatives which were of great importance to the livestock economy while expressing bewilderment over the government's introduction of 'Free Primary Education,' considering that he attended school 'paliso' in the 1960s. Lesole was also of the view that the migration of pastoral citizens of Mokhotlong from their traditional land in the name of a 'development project' which was of no benefit for them was indeed the manifestation that development or progress which is an agent of modernity was indeed more valued than traditional history of Mokhotlong citizens.

In addition, Raikes contended that the most effective way to integrate mobile pastoralists into national economies involves the productivity of existing herding systems rather than replacing

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<sup>67</sup> Tim Quinlan, "Marena a Lesotho, Chiefs, Politics and Culture in Lesotho," 99.

<sup>68</sup> Victor Ellenberger, *A Century of Mission Work in Basutoland 1833-1933*, Morija: Morija Sesuto Book Depot, (1938).

them with 'modern' alternatives.<sup>69</sup> True modernization for pastoralists requires their integration into modern society, granting them not only a stake in its benefits but also a voice in decision-making. Raikes argues against excessive control, asserting that pastoralists should not be treated merely as recipients of modernization packages.<sup>70</sup> The challenge is not to replace extensive pastoralism with other economic activities but at least how to enhance its efficiency. Development should be accepted by those it addresses rather than enforced, as pastoralists appreciate innovations, they deem beneficial, exemplified by their welcome of veterinary advancements such as veterinary practices.<sup>71</sup> Raikes further argued against false assumptions by bureaucratic actions that pastoralists lack knowledge about their livestock, highlighting the importance of fostering self-development for economic progress.<sup>72</sup>

The challenge of technological gaps or literacy among herd boys in Lesotho's Mokhotlong region arose from disparities in access to and utilization of modern technologies, creating a divide between those who have access to these resources (the haves) and those who do not (the have-nots).<sup>73</sup> This issue exacerbated existing social and economic inequalities in several ways. Not all herd boys had equal access to modern technologies such as smartphones, education and infrastructure. Those with limited access to education faced challenges in acquiring the necessary skills to effectively use modern technologies due to the fact educational opportunities played a pivotal role in bridging technological gaps. Additionally, affordability is a significant factor; however, herd boys could not afford a modern way of doing things due to economic barriers. Even

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<sup>69</sup> Philip Lawrence Raikes, "Livestock Development and Policy in East Africa," *Nordic Institute of African Studies* (1981) 250.

<sup>70</sup> Anatoly M. Khozanov, "Pastoralists in the Contemporary World: The Problem of Survival," 18.

<sup>71</sup> Anatoly M. Khozanov, "Pastoralists in the Contemporary World: The Problem of Survival," 18.

<sup>72</sup> Daniel K. Ngdagala, "Pastoralists in the State of Tanzania," *Nomadic Peoples* 20, no. 27 (1990) 61.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Pitso Fihlo, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

though the technology was available, economic constraints hindered some of the herd boys from purchasing or maintaining these devices. Therefore, economic barriers in some cases widened the gap between those who could afford and integrate technology into their herding practices and those who could not. Insufficient technological infrastructure such as lack of reliable internet connectivity in rural areas impeded herd boys from fully leveraging technological tools thus hindering important factors like access to information like weather forecast and communication which was very crucial in this era which witnessed a high rate of stock theft.

## **2.6 Policy Framework**

Policy frameworks rooted in good governance align with the principles of liberal democracies, characterized by traits like public participation, transparency, accountability and adherence to the rule of law.<sup>74</sup> However, challenges such as political corruption and government arbitrariness pose threats to the effective functioning of liberal democracies. Regarding pastoralism and challenges faced by herd boys in the 1980s to 2000s in Lesotho, the question remains if there are policy frameworks facilitating such in a democratic manner. Herding tradition has for years been central to the pastoral economy in Lesotho, however direct policy framework addressing and catering for rights of figures central to this practice has for years become a problem.<sup>75</sup> Herding practices in this contemporary era in Lesotho including Mokhotlong receive no or limited attention from the government as the government focused more on fiscal policy which was highly dominated and influenced by foreigners.<sup>76</sup> Anderson further strongly argued that during the most modernizing phase of government (1948 to the early 1960s), colonial powers failed or were ‘unwilling’ to

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<sup>74</sup> Kamohelo Khoboko, “The need to balance responsible corporate conduct and standards of good governance in conflicted affected areas; A case for Kao and Polihali victims of Human rights violations,”2.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Lukas Rakoe, Maputsoe Leribe, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Lesia Phatela, Mokhotlong, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

address the unique challenges of pastoralist communities for effective and rapid social change, a prevalent case in post-colonial Lesotho.<sup>77</sup> Notably, Khozanov is of the view that it is still premature to dismiss mobile pastoralism as a viable food-producing economy because pastoralism was originally developed as an alternative to agriculture in regions where the latter was impossible or economically less profitable, a prevailing case in Mokhotlong where geography is more conducive for livestock compared to agriculture.<sup>78</sup> Pan-African policy on pastoralism further acknowledges the substantial contribution of pastoral systems to national and regional economies and describes them as sustainable economic activity in the rangelands.<sup>79</sup> Despite this, Lesotho remains economically challenged in pastoral practices due to inadequate efficient policies and institutional mismanagement<sup>80</sup> and herd boys are not exceptional.

Modernization of land tenure in Lesotho significantly affected access of herding communities to some of the traditional land which was central to animal rearing.<sup>81</sup> These developments significantly encroached on grazing lands which was the source of livelihood. Since the 1970s, several land laws have been enacted in an attempt to ‘modernize’ land administration, particularly in urban areas and Mokhotlong town is not exceptional. These initiatives, aimed at reshaping traditions outlined in the customary code in 1903 known as Laws of Lerotholi which granted chiefs

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<sup>77</sup> David Anderson, “Cow Power: Livestock and the Pastoralist in Africa,” *African Affairs* 92, no. 366 (1993) 121.

<sup>78</sup> Anotoly M. Khozanov, “Pastoralists in the Contemporary World: The Problem of Survival,” 18.

<sup>79</sup> African Union, *Policy framework for pastoralism in Africa: Securing, protecting and improving the lives, livelihoods and rights of pastoralist communities*, Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (2010).

<sup>80</sup> I. Abedian & N. Nattrass, *The impact of changes in South Africa on the developmental prospects of Lesotho*, Report commissioned by the United Nations Development Program, Lesotho, 1995, Department of Economics, University of Cape Town (1995) 8.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Khabo Khabo, Maputsoe, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

the power to allocate land.<sup>82</sup> The government's efforts to modernize land policy began in 1967, culminating in the Land Act of 1979 and by 2008, Lesotho signed an agreement with the USA Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), focusing on modernizing land administration and stimulating the land market, with \$20 million by MCC funding allocated for developing new land laws and institutional changes and regulating land tenure.<sup>83</sup> Planning and Finance Minister Timothy Thahane informed IRIN that “The Land Act is part of an overall strategy to modernize the economy of Lesotho so that investors can come, start a business and receive mortgage financing and insurance...”<sup>84</sup> However, for pastoralists like Nku, this legislation represented a compromise between traditional views of the land as a communal resource for Basotho welfare and external donor pressures favouring private property and freehold tenure in Lesotho.<sup>85</sup> This shift gave rise to ‘big’ projects like the Polihali Dam in Mokhotlong, which resulted in insignificant land losses inclusive of grazing lands of herding societies of Mokhotlong. Khotso Lehloka, a herder and secretary-general of the Lesotho Herders Association (LHA), representing 17,000 to 20,000 livestock herders, further expressed discontent, claiming that the Land Act primarily benefited government officials and urban elites.<sup>86</sup> In his words, Lehloka asserted that “This land Act is not for us; it’s for people sitting in the highest seats of government and fancy chairs in the city.”<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> United Nations Development Programme, *Workshop Summary Report and Recommendations: The Future of Land Tenure in Lesotho* (1993) 2.

<sup>83</sup> Charles Fogelman, “Measuring gender, development and land: Data- driven analysis and land reform in Lesotho”, *World Development Perspectives* 1(2016).

<sup>84</sup> OCHA, *Pastoralists fear land ‘modernization’ act*, IRIN, December 1, 2011. Available at <http://www.laa.org.ls/AboutLAA.legislation/Land%20Act%202010.htm>

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Nku Nku, Mapholaneng Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023

<sup>86</sup> United Nations Development Programme, *Workshop Summary Report and Recommendations: The Future of Land Tenure in Lesotho* (1993) 2.

<sup>87</sup> OCHA, *Pastoralists fear land ‘modernization’ act*.

Lesotho Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) developed by the IMF highlighted that agriculture is the foremost source of employment and income in rural areas.<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, Khabo contended that the Western-influenced macro-reform policies like the Structural Adjustment Program (SAPs) adopted early 1990s in Lesotho affected pastoralism.<sup>89</sup> Established among influential entities in Washington, including the US government and international financial institutions,<sup>90</sup> SAPs advocated for specific policy reforms: fiscal austerity, inflation control, liberalization of trade and capital accounts and privatization and deregulation of markets. To Eurocentric thinkers like the economist Williams, SAPs represented a shared wisdom accepted by serious economists.<sup>91</sup> He dismissed any challenges to this orthodoxy as the work of eccentric individuals, comparing it to questioning the well-established fact that the Earth is not flat. However, for Africanists like Hart, one must be aware of one-size-fits-all development models like SAPs and therefore she advocated for approaches that recognize the diversity of local contexts and empower communities to shape their development pathways. The adoption of SAPs coupled with intensified leasing of land ownership benefited foreign investors while leaving underprivileged Basotho traditionally relied on agro-pastoral practices disadvantaged. With this regard, Makenete *et al* contended that in the late 1990s, Government support declined due to the implementation of SAPs in 1991.<sup>92</sup> This policy urged some developing countries, including Lesotho, to cut subsidies on small-scale farmers, adversely affecting agricultural production and

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<sup>88</sup> Lesotho Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), 10.1094/PDIS-11-11-0999-PDN, 2012.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Khabo Khabo, Maputsoe, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

<sup>90</sup> John Williamson (editor), *Latin American adjustment: how much has happened?* Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics (1989) 1329.

<sup>91</sup> John Williamson, "Democracy and the Washington consensus," *World Development* 21, no.8 (1993) 1330.

<sup>92</sup> Andrew L. Makenete, Gerald F. Ortman, & Mark A. G. Darrooch, "Maize marketing and pricing in Lesotho: Implications for policy reform," *Agrekon* 36, no. 1 (1997) 9.

causing increased food insecurity and poverty and the dire effects felt by the farmers pastoralists and herd boys were not exceptional. One of the pastoralists in Mokhotlong argued that under the Leeabua regime before the adoption of SAPs; the government provided regular assistance in the form of dip and vaccinations. However, following his overthrow, this support significantly decelerated.<sup>93</sup> Rantso and Seboka supported the policy of government subsidizing inputs, particularly for the poor who could not afford prizes of inputs especially given escalating prizes.<sup>94</sup> They argued decline in agricultural productivity over the years was attributed to macro-economic reforms like SAPs and this led to lower productivity as they turned to simpler technologies. Consequently, land in Lesotho failed to sufficiently feed its people.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Interview with Lisema Lisene, Tlokoeng Mokhotlong, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>94</sup> Tšepiso A Rantšo & Maitumeleng Seboka, "Agriculture and food security in Lesotho: Government sponsored block farming programme in the Berea, Leribe and Maseru Districts," *Cogent Food & Agriculture* 5, no. 1 (2019)12.

<sup>95</sup> J. A. G. Perry, "Land and Politics in Lesotho," *African Studies* 42, no.1 (1983) 57.

## Chapter Three: Pastoralism and Herd Boys

### 3.1 Herding Traditions and Practices

Pastures have always been central to herding tradition as far back as the Moshoeshoe era and this phenomenon was seen through the loss of fertile land bred by the Basotho- Boer Wars (1865-1868) and Anglo-Basotho Gun War of 1880-1881. Herding traditions and practices, which heavily relied on pastures were very central to the rural development of Mokhotlong.<sup>1</sup> The nutritive value of a pasture is its ability to provide animals with nutrients for the maintenance of body functions and the production of offspring and other products. However, for years, rangelands in Mokhotlong have lost value due to various factors such as climate change, burning of rangelands and communal grazing as well as encroachment of bushes in rangelands.<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 3:** Pictures showing the grassless *maboella* (reserved grazing) which were grazed for approximately 3 weeks for winter in Checha village in Mokhotlong taken by the researcher

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Pitso Fihlo, Checha Mokhotlong, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Bereng Leluma, Ministry of Agriculture Mokhotlong, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

The degrading physical geography of Mokhotlong pastures of recent years hindered the efficient success of the herding tradition, as depicted in Figure 1 above; thus significantly affecting herd boys in fulfilling their job, ‘herding.’<sup>3</sup> In 2000, Lesotho’s Ministry of Natural Resources produced a National Report on Climate Change regarding the vulnerability and adaptation assessments which were undertaken for different sectors.<sup>4</sup> This report highlighted that climate change would affect the rangelands, including grasses, trees, herbaceous plants and fauna that were found on the rangelands.

The success of herding tradition and practices were significantly affected by communal grazing through disease risk which came with higher rates of direct and indirect inter-herd contact than private grazing or zero-grazing.<sup>5</sup> Communal grazing has two effects: it increases the value of livestock by providing food for the animals but may decrease the value of livestock through disease morbidity and mortality. Higher objective risk may then be associated with higher perceived disease risk. Diseases of small ruminants play an important role in the livelihoods of rural communities and the economy of Lesotho because their presence can negatively impact the production and productivity of small ruminants, which play a pivotal role in earning foreign exchange for Lesotho due to their importance in the export trade.<sup>6</sup> When talking about the ‘Organization of work’ Volti highlighted that sometimes, ‘traditional arrangements—“We’ve

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Chief Ntlibi Matete, Ntlholohetsane, Mokhotlong. 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Orange-Senqu River Basin Orange-Senqu River Commission Secretariat Governments of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa, “Demonstration Project on Community Based Rangeland Management in Lesotho,” *Technical Report 05*, UNDP-GEF Orange-Senqu Strategic Action Programme (Atlas Project ID 71598), Rev 3, 2 (June 2011) 9.

<sup>5</sup> Haseeb Ahmed, Douglas R. Call, Robert J. Quinlan & Jonathan K. Yoder, ‘Relationships between livestock grazing practices, disease risk, and antimicrobial use among East African Agropastoralists,’ *Environment and Development Economics* 23, no. 1(2018) 81.

<sup>6</sup> The Kingdom of Lesotho: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security Department of Livestock Service, *African Union - Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resource, Peste Des Petits Ruminants (PPR) Control and Eradication Strategy* (November 2019) viii.

always done it this way”— may or may not be effective.’<sup>7</sup> Most organizational modes fail due to mixing ‘longstanding precedents’ and ‘new ways of doing things.’

Fihlo, one of the herd boys argued that their role involved year-round management of livestock in cattle posts with infrequent visits from herd owners.<sup>8</sup> The responsibility of managing large herds without regular supervision was sometimes overwhelming, especially in the case where they had to make critical decisions independently. In this regard, Masilo argued, “If I notice that some of the livestock were showing signs of illness, I had to quickly identify the symptoms and decide whether to attempt treating them with limited medicines available or separate the infected ones from uninfected ones or take other measures all without the immediate guidance of the herd owner.”<sup>9</sup> Additionally, without regular visits from the herd owners, in some cases, herd boys had limited access to necessary resources such as medicines, food and financial support, which were essential for effective herd management and their sustenance. This phenomenon was also evident through the quotation by Kimble that “the rich wool natives do not all live in the mountains, in fact very few of them do so. Many rich woolmen are domiciled on the flats... and are keeping their flocks and herds in the mountains. ... When shearing is completed, the money is brought to the owners who are living below and finds its way to the different camp stores.”<sup>10</sup> This phenomenon was evident through the assertion of an interviewee of Volti in Kenya who stated, ‘I just sent some medicines to my hired herd boys and sent them some medicines and cash to pay them. I do not have to go there myself.’<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Rudi Volti, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Work and Occupations (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, London: Sage Publications (2012) 34.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Pitso Fihlo, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Masilo Masilo, Checha, Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>10</sup> Judith M. Kimble, *Migrant Labour and Colonial Rule in Basutoland, 1980- 1930*, Grahamstown, South Africa: Rhodes University (1999) 220.

<sup>11</sup> Rudi Volti, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Work and Occupations (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)* 161.

### 3.2 Herd Boys and Cross-Border Pastoralism

In many regions worldwide, cross-border pastoralism stands as a traditional and widespread practice, characterized by the seasonal migration or movements of herds in search of optimal grazing conditions. This long-standing tradition of transboundary pastoralism was seen in regions such as the Nepal-Tibetan Plateau border,<sup>12</sup> and Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, where herd movement is based on established grazing agreements and social ties between pastoralists and host communities. This tradition is also evident in Ghana which experiences the influx of Fulbe herders into Northern Ghana with their livestock, primarily from neighbouring countries like Mali, Niger, and Nigeria, as well as from southwestern Burkina Faso. However, in the context of Lesotho, these dynamics of pastoralism align more closely with the pervasive issue of cross-border stock theft rather than the traditional mobility of herds for grazing purposes. This phenomenon was supported by Lereko, an elder who emphasized that discussions concerning cross-border pastoralism in Mokhotlong, were regularly connected significantly to the incidents of rampant cross-border stock theft experienced in the region.<sup>13</sup>

Former Police commissioner, Holomo Molibeli, noted that livestock theft was a major problem between Lesotho and South Africa particularly affecting provinces such as Free State, Kwazulu-Natal, and Eastern Cape, which all shared boundaries with Lesotho.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, Police Officer 1, one of the Police officers in the Stock Theft Unit in Mokhotlong noted that cross-border pastoralism in Mokhotlong has for years been significantly characterized by cases of cross-border stock theft. This practice fluctuated in past epochs but in recent decades, it has been increasingly

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<sup>12</sup> Jonathan Davies, Claire Ogali, Lydia Slobodian, Gyyo Roba & Razingrim Oudraogo, "Challenges and opportunities for transboundary pastoralism," *Legal and Policy Arrangements for Cross-border Pastoralism*, United Nations (2019) 17- 18.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Lereko Lereko Mapholaneng Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

<sup>14</sup> "Lesotho, SA reeling from stock theft," *Lesotho Times*, 21<sup>st</sup> December 2023.



neighbourhood and more chances for increased stock theft,<sup>17</sup> a trend persisting into the post-colonial era. As per the 1969 Lesotho annual report of the police commissioner, stock theft emerged as the predominant form of crime nationwide.<sup>18</sup> A study by Wilfrid Laurier University found that since 1990, 85% of livestock owners in Lesotho's border villages have experienced theft, compared to 49% in non-border areas.<sup>19</sup>

In addition, Kynoch and Ulicki contended that while stock theft has a longstanding presence in the border region, the stock theft crisis in Southern Lesotho and the former Transkei, now part of the Eastern Cape region of South Africa, captured significant media attention like newspapers, various government document and even popular South African television program (SABC Special Assignment, February 3, 1999). The focus was on the increasingly organized and violent cross-border stock theft, affecting approximately 71% of Basotho stock owners and deeply impacting the area.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, since 1990, 85% of stock owners residing in the border villages have reported losses of animals to thieves in contrast to 49% from non-border villages.<sup>21</sup> Perpetrators of stock theft originated both from within Lesotho and across the border in South Africa and they use firearms with South African raiders having greater access to such weapons. Mokhotlong was not exceptional.

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<sup>17</sup> Motlatsi Thabane, "Towards an Identification of Historical Roots of Lesotho's Political Instability" in M. Thabane, ed., *Towards an Anatomy of Persistent Political Instability in Lesotho, 1966–2016*, Roma, Lesotho: National University of Lesotho (2017) 14.

<sup>18</sup> Lesotho Mounted Police, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of the Police* (1969) 3.

<sup>19</sup> M. Molupe, "The Stock- theft menace," *The post, Telling It Like It is*, Maseru (2023).

<sup>20</sup> Gary Kynoch & Theresa Ulicki, "It Is Like the Time of Lifaqane": The Impact of Stock Theft and Violence in Southern Lesotho," *Journal of Stock Theft and Violence in Southern Lesotho* 18, no. 2 (2000) 179.

<sup>21</sup> Gary Kynoch, Theresa Ulicki, T. Cekwane, B. Mohapi, M. Mohapi, N. Phakis & P. Seithleko, "Cross-border raiding and community conflict in the Lesotho-South Africa border zone," *Southern African Migration Project (SAMP)*, (2001).

The former Mokhotlong District Administrator (DA) Serame Linake also stated that the district has long struggled with cross-border stock theft where Basotho individuals often stole cattle and sheep from South Africa and fraudulently sell them back in South Africa at auctions in Vanderbijlpark. The problem was exacerbated by perpetrators who had migrated to South Africa but returned to Lesotho to commit theft, leveraging their familiarity with the local terrain and corridors.<sup>22</sup> Aerni-Flessner et al. corroborate this assertion through interviews, citing examples such as a Mosotho businessman in the Maluti District of the Eastern Cape (Matatiele) on the Southside of Lesotho Kingdom who identified stock theft which cost him over 300 sheep as a significant challenge, attributing it to individuals from Lesotho. Similarly, in the Ladybrand on the north side of Lesotho within the Maseru border, a commercial farmer recounted instances of small-scale stock theft linked to Lesotho like his stolen horse. One Mosotho consultant residing in Ladybrand was of the view that stock theft was a response of Basotho to the nineteenth-century land dispossession historically famous as ‘the Conquered Territory.’<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Lebohang, a pastoralist in Checha village in Mokhotlong town emphasized that most of the stock was stolen from Lesotho to South Africa borders particularly QwaQwa and Natal and vice versa. Additionally, Bereng, the District of Agricultural Officer (DAO) in the Ministry of Agriculture also noted that stock theft also occurred through Lesotho- South African borders such as through the Mahlatsane Mountains into Harrismith in SA.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, Kynoch and Ulicki thought that the surge in stock theft is closely linked to increasing poverty in the region, resulting in significant negative impacts on households, communities, and

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<sup>22</sup> *The post, Telling It Like It is*, Maseru, 2023.

<sup>23</sup> John Aerni-Flessner, Chitja Twala, Munyaradzi Mushonga & Grey Magaiza, “A Transnational History of Stock Theft on the Lesotho– South Africa Border, Nineteenth Century to 1994,” 1- 2.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Leluma Bereng, Ministry of Agriculture Mokhotlong, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

cross-border interactions.<sup>25</sup> Aerni-Flessner et al also argued that stock theft in Lesotho- South African borders was driven by various factors such as poverty, retaliation against perceived unfair employers, feelings of inadequacy due to high unemployment rates, or organized theft for financial gain.<sup>26</sup> With regards to the aforesaid Coplan noted that these crimes often involved collaborations between South Africans, foreigners, and Basotho in partnerships or syndicates.<sup>27</sup> Police Officer 2 argued that not only did cross-border stock theft have affected the wealth of pastoralists, but more importantly herd boys have also become vulnerable.<sup>28</sup> He argued that there have been many reported cases of stock theft which were taken at gunpoint often leading to the deaths of herd boys. Cross-border stock theft frequently escalated into violence, resulting in injuries and fatalities. The Kroon Report (1995) characterized the stock theft as a regional catastrophe particularly noting high levels of victimization experienced by shepherds in the cattle posts.<sup>29</sup> The impact of cross-border stock theft extended beyond strained relations between Lesotho and South Africa, as it often involved other crimes such as the exchange of stolen vehicles and weapons for animals. Recognizing the severity of the issue, the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation (SARPCCO) established a task team to devise strategies for addressing and mitigating the rampant stock theft plaguing the region.

Herd boys faced significant challenges, often becoming both victims and perpetrators of livestock theft.<sup>30</sup> Matumeliso Lets'ela, the area chief of Khonofalong told Lesotho Times that herd boys in

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<sup>25</sup> Gary Kynoch & Theresa Ulicki, "It Is Like the Time of Lifaqane": The Impact of Stock Theft and Violence in Southern Lesotho."

<sup>26</sup> John Aerni-Flessner, Chitja Twala, Munyaradzi Mushonga & Grey Magaiza, "A Transnational History of Stock Theft on the Lesotho– South Africa Border, Nineteenth Century to 1994," 1- 2.

<sup>27</sup> David B. Coplan, "A River Runs through It': The Meaning of the Lesotho–Free State Border" *African Affairs*100, no. 98 (2001) 108.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Anonym Police Officer 2 Mokhotlong Police Station, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>29</sup> Api Rafolatsane, "The Role of Police and Civil Society in Combating Cross- Border Stock Theft," University of the MA, Witwatersrand (2013)7- 8.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Police Officer 2, Mokhotlong Police Station, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

her area were the primary instigators of livestock theft, crossing the border into South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province to steal sheep and cattle.<sup>31</sup> In retaliation, people from KwaZulu-Natal conduct raids to reclaim their stolen livestock and also steal from the Basotho. This cycle of theft and retribution exacerbates the problem, with stolen cattle often filling kraals overnight. The chief noted that when South African owners come looking for their livestock; they sometimes take even those that do not belong to them as an act of revenge. Lets'ela believe that the issue of livestock theft in Khonofalong will only be resolved when Lesotho herd boys stop stealing from South Africa. Additionally, one of the pastoralists Phalima also argued stock theft in some cases was a pure inside job where herd boys have connived not only local but also cross-border butcheries or abattoirs by leaking information about animals they herded obviously for 'better' money compared to what they earned.<sup>32</sup> A similar case was observed in Ghana where cross- pastoralism as earlier indicated has for years been. In this regard, Tonah argued that stock theft caused conflicts between Fulbe herders who migrated to the Volta Basin in Ghana and farmers.

Many stockholders and farmers think that their hired herders either conspired with other herders to steal animals from the region or were actively engaged in cattle rustling themselves and this phenomenon was supported by one of the farmers who argued that the herders' typical response when a cow goes missing is to say that 'it got lost in the bush.' One cannot always trust the Fulani,' he continued. They could tie the animal up in the jungle and then come to you to report it lost. They might even push the animals into the homes of their relatives. They are quite cunning, so you must keep a close eye on your pets if they are with you.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Tonah highlighted that while

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<sup>31</sup> *Lesotho Times*, 21 December 2023.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Bosiu Phalima, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>33</sup> Steve Tonah, "Migration and Farmer-Herder Conflicts in Ghana's Volta Basin," *Canadian Journal of African Studies/La Revue canadienne des études africaines* 40, no. 1(2006) 162.

Fulbe herders acknowledged that their cattle can wander occasionally, they maintained that this was typically not the result of their bad behaviour. They asserted that to gain the sympathies of other farmers and provide an excuse for their incapacity to grow their cattle herds over time, farmers and stock owners regularly exaggerate their livestock losses. Herders typically showed support and empathy for their comrades who were being accused of stealing live cattle. They contended that unfavourable working conditions and the exploitative connection between farmers and hired herders almost guaranteed stock theft. Herders received inadequate pay, housing, and equipment. Even though the quantity of cattle entrusted to the Fulbe has increased significantly, stock owners and their hired Fulbe herders have continued to poorly pay their herders in the form of animal milk, manure and access to the utilization of farmland. This has frequently caused contention and animosity between the two groups.<sup>34</sup>

To mitigate stock theft, the establishment of Liaison Committees such as the Maseru/Ladybrand District Liaison Committees (DLC) falls within the Lesotho/Free State border areas and the Qacha's Nek/Matatiele DLC which falls within Lesotho/Transkei border area along the borders by the Lesotho and South African governments to address border challenges, including the skyrocketing stock theft organized by criminals using deadly weapons like AK-47s.<sup>35</sup> Stock theft has also plagued the Maluti District of the former Transkei and the Mohale's Hoek and Quthing Districts of southern Lesotho, mirroring the experiences of Xhosa-speaking neighbours in the former Transkei homeland area of the Eastern Cape. Both sides attribute blame to each other for the majority of these crimes and ensuing violence. Post-independent Lesotho saw efforts to eradicate stock theft nationwide with the stock theft unit primarily operating in remote

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<sup>34</sup> Steve Tonah, "Migration and Farmer-Herder Conflicts in Ghana's Volta Basin," 162.

<sup>35</sup> Motheba Gwendoline Moeletsi, "Grassroots Diplomacy between Lesotho and South Africa: The District Liaison Committees," MA, Rhodes University (2000) 3- 4.

mountainous regions of the country, as depicted in Figure 1 while maintaining a strong collaborative relationship with South African Police to effectively combat this shared concern.<sup>36</sup>

As a result of the unit's diligent efforts, stock theft decreased by nearly one-third.

Additionally, addressing the challenge of cross-border stock theft, the 1968 annual report of the police commissioner noted the substantial progress achieved by the stock theft unit. They emphasized the successful development of strong teamwork with the South African Police, working collaboratively on both sides of the border. However, it was acknowledged that considerable time would still be required to fully tackle the crime.<sup>37</sup> More importantly, in recent years Livestock farmers from different areas of Mokhotlong requested for deployment of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) at illegal borders to control stock theft between Mokhotlong and Kwazulu Natal province, South Africa. The majority of farmers who spoke in the meeting regarding the increasing stock theft in the district requested that illegal borders namely Langalebalele, Mohloling oa Mokhotlong, Reli, and others should be given priority when the army decides to deploy soldiers at such places. They mentioned that these places are used by those who bring stolen livestock from Lesotho either to South Africa or vice versa. One of the prominent farmers, Mr Khotsang Moshoeshoe, recounted that there used to be the deployment of LDF members in illegal borders between 2015 and 2017, adding that since such deployments stopped stock theft also increased. He said the patrols that the army used to embark on along the border helped a lot in the prevention of stock theft and asked for such patrols to be undertaken again for the safety of their livestock.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Lesotho Mounted Police, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of the Police* (1969) 3.

<sup>37</sup> Lesotho Mounted Police, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Police* (1968) 4.

<sup>38</sup> LENA, "Farmers Request LDF Deployment at Illegal Borders," 25/ 01/ 2023, <https://www.gov.ls/farmers-request-ldf-deployment-at-illegal-borders/>

One of the herders in Mokhotlong, Napo argued that eradication of stock theft in Mokhotlong cannot be attainable because some politically involved figures were linked to stock theft syndicates. The Lesotho Times also reported that prominent individuals have been implicated in stock theft. Businessman Lebuajoang Thebe-ea-khale was arrested for stealing cattle from South Africa and selling them at an illegal abattoir in Maseru. Former All Basotho Convention (ABC) member Thabang Mafojane, was also arrested for allegedly stocking his butchery with stolen meat both were released on bail and surety.<sup>39</sup> This was one of the concerns raised by farmers during a public gathering that was held in Ha 'Mamolibeli, Mokhotlong where they expressed about widespread stock theft, accusing police and area chiefs of complicity.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, the former Mokhotlong DA, Linake shared similar concerns about the widespread stock theft in the district. He highlighted the case whereby 13 cattle were stolen from a police kraal by a known suspect from the village of Sakeng who remains unarrested. Linake noted that some chiefs, farmers, and local writers are part of the theft syndicate, promising strong measures against them. On behalf of the Principal Chief of Mokhotlong, Chief Tšepo Seeiso also appealed to the police to arrest the suspect, calling the incident a disgrace given the public's trust in law enforcement. This issue of endemic corruption or state weakness also participates in skyrocketing stock theft in Tanzania.<sup>41</sup> It ignores the culpability of state employees who all too frequently either fail to make rules or fail to implement them and who are too easily bribed to dispense just solutions to local conflicts there was also a remarkable case of local government corruption and collusion in stock theft in the 1980s that required the intervention of Julius Nyerere to resolve.<sup>42</sup>

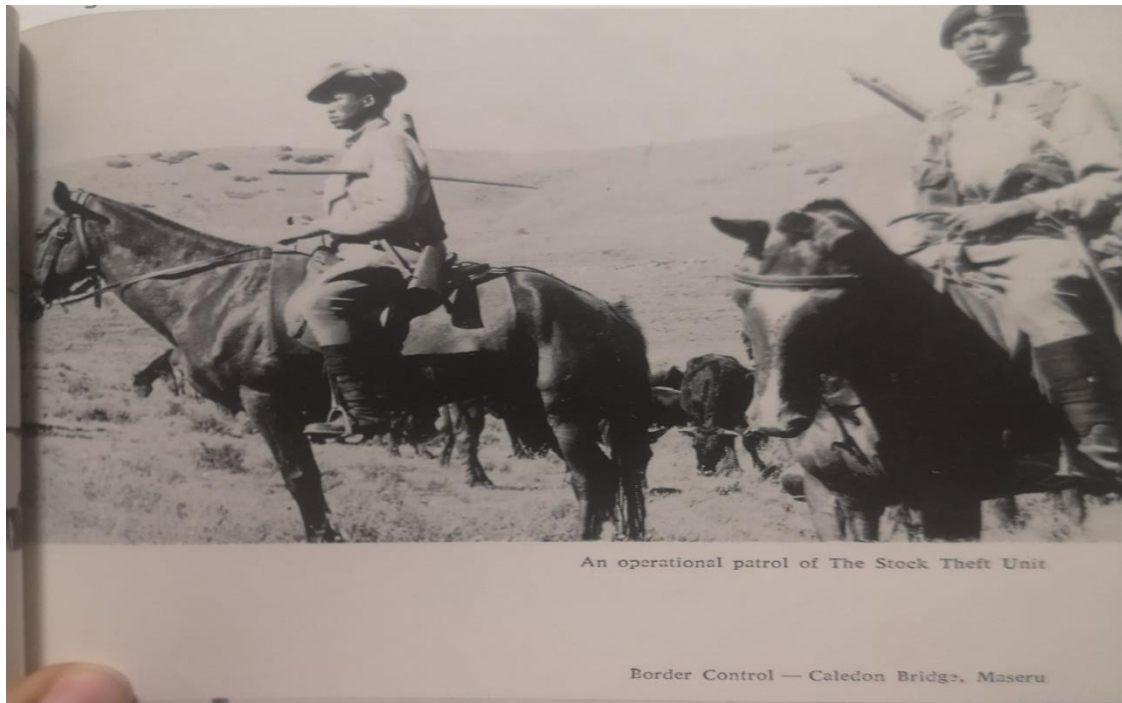
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<sup>39</sup> *Lesotho Times*, 21 December 2023.

<sup>40</sup> "Farmers cry foul of rampant stock theft," *Metro, News you can use*, 1 August 2021.

<sup>41</sup> Dan Brockington, "The Politics and Ethnography of Environmentalisms in Tanzania," *African Affairs* 105, no. 418 (2006) 109.

<sup>42</sup> Dan Brockington, "The Politics and Ethnography of Environmentalisms in Tanzania," 108.



**Figure 5: Operation patrol of the Stock Theft Unit<sup>43</sup>**

The aforementioned manifested the deep dilemma of stock theft hence the need for diverse strategies for mitigating this issue. According to one of the herders Pitso some of the herders were willing to cooperate with the legal team (police) in mitigating stock theft as they were familiar with the routes the stock thieves used and their strategies. Additionally, stock thieves have become aware of strategies of herding communities of Lesotho used publicly for alerting about any suspected theft taking place on *Moafrika* FM radio, a strategy that thieves have become aware of and they managed to get away with. However, herders lately helped the legal team underground by privately talking to the legal team and helping them trace such thieves. However, Phalima argued that lack of technology was also a barrier to effective communication with the needed

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<sup>43</sup> Lesotho Mounted Police, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of the Police*.

stakeholders in eradicating stock theft. For instance, lack of tracking devices, and access to communicating devices such as walkie-talkies which hinder effective communication.<sup>44</sup>

Police also argued that lack of access to technology for communication purposes such as routers or networks in cattle posts, electricity and solar hindered immediate communication with the legal department during stock theft.<sup>45</sup> When addressing the farmers, Brigadier Posa Stemere of the LDF said the army command has heard the outcry of farmers about their livestock being stolen. He confirmed that the deployment of soldiers along the borders was stopped in 2019 due to a shortage of resources.<sup>46</sup> With this regard, Mashinini also argued that in the modern world, technology played a crucial role, in its own right and as a complement to labour, in the development process. The lack of technology that is appropriate for the Third World hinders the development of these countries. This situation is aggravated by the lack of serious efforts by the Third World to develop their indigenous technologies and attune them to the demands of modern development as did Japan, for instance.<sup>47</sup>

### **3.3 Resilience and Adaptation**

The previous sub-chapters highlight those factors like climate change and stock theft affected the efficient success of herding. Conservation conventions influenced by the pace of global change further undermined the lifestyles of herders as mobile people reduced their ability to live in balance with nature and threatened their very existence as distinct peoples.<sup>48</sup> The above- therefore leaves

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<sup>44</sup> Interview with Pitso Phalima, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Anonymous Police 1, Mokhotlong Police Station, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>46</sup> "Farmers Request LDF Deployment at Illegal Borders," <https://www.gov.ls/farmers-request-ldf-deployment-at-illegal-borders/>

<sup>47</sup> Israel Vusi Mashinini, "Sustainable Rural Development in Lesotho," PhD, University of the Free State (2001) 4.

<sup>48</sup> Michele Nori, Jason Switzer & Alec Crawford, "Herding on the Brink, Towards a Global Survey of Pastoral Communities and Conflict," *International Institute for Sustainable Development* (2005) 8. [security\\_herding\\_on\\_brink.pdf \(iisd.org\)](#).

one question, how do herders manage to fulfil their herding role amidst the aforesaid situation? With this regard, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) highlighted that adaptation behaviours were shaped by a process that involves first ‘threat perception’ which is recognizing challenges at hand.<sup>49</sup> Secondly, ‘rational judgement based on planned experiences’ which was considering experience and knowledge and thirdly, ‘coping perception’ which was evaluating coping strategies. Lastly, the process encompassed ‘adaptation behaviour’ which was a phase of implementing adaptive strategies. Pastoralists in particular have recognized the necessity of adopting various adaptive measures to navigate and endure the prevailing socio-economic conditions.<sup>50</sup> Therefore this sub-chapter discusses the resilience and adaptation of herders.

Amidst of challenges significantly posed by climate change to herd boys and their livestock, Matete, one of the herd boys highlighted the adaptations utilized to cope with these changes. For fuel, they collected a lot of firewood, dry cow dung and maize stalks after harvesting as fuel to make a fire to cook and for warmth during cold seasons or snowfall.<sup>51</sup> During snowfall, a prevalent climate change in Mokhotlong, accessing water from wells became difficult. To address this, they melted the snow in the pots for drinking, cooking and for animals. As for animals, they did not graze during the snowy seasons. To facilitate grazing, herd boys sprinkled salt on the snow to speed up the melting process. Mashoai, another herd boy, mentioned grass burning as a strategy which assisted in eliminating unpalatable grass species and encouraged the growth of preferred ones.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, in East Africa, controlled burning was not only used by pastoralists and herders

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<sup>49</sup>Cai, Yu, Minjuan Zhao, Aftab Khan &Yuxing Shi, “Environment, Development and Sustainability: Understanding herder’s perception and adaptation to climate change: an integrated framework,” *Environ Dev Sustain*(2024).

<sup>50</sup> Daniel K. Ndagala & Daniel Ndagala, “Pastoral territory and policy debates in Tanzania,” 23.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Neo Matete, Ha Lebopo Mokhotlong, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Pita Mashoai, Ha Lebopo Mokhotlong, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024,

to encourage the growth of favoured species but also to reduce parasites.<sup>53</sup> During times of ecological shocks, herd boys further supplemented livestock grazing with alternative feed.<sup>54</sup> They kept stock rover for times of stress as depicted in Figure 4 below. Residues of crops, maize stover and grassland were therefore harvested for harsh seasons. In light of the afore-highlighted issues which Nori labels contingency responses,<sup>55</sup> herders exhibit remarkable resilience by adapting to changing circumstances and drawing on both rational and empirical experiences. This ability is vital to their survival and the continuity of their traditional roles.



**Figure 6:** Showing stock Stover

Social organization and Indigenous knowledge were also central to the resilience and adaptation of herd boys. Traditionally guided by councils, chiefs or elders who possessed the skills and wisdom for their community and its resources, herding communities in Mokhotlong have maintained their customs and were equipped with the longstanding Indigenous knowledge which significantly assisted them in coping amidst evolving times. Mateu, 79 years 79-year-old elder, emphasized that herding tradition survived amidst challenges. Essential to this resilience was

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<sup>53</sup> Mary Kirkbride, *Survival of the fittest: Pastoralism and Climate Change in East Africa* 116, Oxfam Briefing Paper (2008) 30.

<sup>54</sup> Mary Kirkbride, *Survival of the fittest: Pastoralism and Climate Change in East Africa*, 30.

<sup>55</sup> Michele Nori, Jason Switzer & Alec Crawford, "Herding on the Brink, Towards a Global Survey of Pastoral Communities and Conflict," 7.

herders' knowledge of natural capital and livestock.<sup>56</sup> Their in-depth pastoral knowledge of complex rangeland agroecological dynamics was critical in detecting resource availability to ensure livelihood strategies and develop coping mechanisms accordingly. This knowledge included understanding erratic climatic patterns and familiarity with patchy range resources. Water availability has often been the limiting factor in pasture utilisation, whilst wild fruits and nuts, medicinal plants, and salty areas provided important supplemental food resources for pastoralists.<sup>57</sup>

In response to ecological shocks, herders strategically turned to 'common resource pools.'<sup>58</sup> These were shared resources including pastures, wells and forests drawn upon by communities during times of scarcity or disaster. Notably, in the Sahel region, both farmers and herders utilized common-property pastures and undeveloped forest areas. These spaces significantly provided sustenance such as nuts and roots, supplementing their primary livelihood when productivity fell short. Similarly, in Somalia, 'emergency wells' were drilled whose access was limited to times of critical environmental stress periods. In Mokhotlong, herd boys coped with the scarcity of forage through rotational grazing and grazing their livestock in designated '*maboella*' areas, regulated by the council and chief.<sup>59</sup>

Resource use and management played a significant role in sustaining the herding tradition.<sup>60</sup> Mobile livestock keeping became fundamental in this context. The relationship between mobility and access to key rangeland resources (primarily pastures and water) shaped the herding tradition.

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with Mateu Lepolesa, Checha Mokhotlong, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024,

<sup>57</sup> Michele Nori, Jason Switzer & Alec Crawford, "Herding on the Brink, Towards a Global Survey of Pastoral Communities and Conflict," 8.

<sup>58</sup> Michele Nori, Jason Switzer & Alec Crawford, "Herding on the Brink, Towards a Global Survey of Pastoral Communities and Conflict," 26.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Mateu Lepolesa, Checha Mokhotlong, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>60</sup> Michele Nori, Jason Switzer & Alec Crawford, "Herding on the Brink, Towards a Global Survey of Pastoral Communities and Conflict," 7.

Seasonal movement was driven by variations in climate change that significantly impacted grazing resources. Mobility patterns ranged from pure nomadism (characterized by opportunistic, no fixed base) to transhumance (following set migratory routes on a seasonal basis).<sup>61</sup> This was prevalent case in Lesotho where mobility was central to nomadic hunter-gathers during the Stone Age and also the Iron Age which saw the rise of pastoralism. Similarly, the rugged mountainous terrain of Mokhotlong also necessitated extensive mobility of herd boys.<sup>62</sup>

In their quest for the most palatable grasses in this geographically challenging environment, they traversed diverse landscapes. This mobility strategy was crucial for sustaining livestock nutrition and ensuring effective herding practices. Likewise, across regions of the Arctic, sub-Arctic and the Antarctic, reindeer herding culture alongside Indigenous peoples were used to live on their pastures, fishing grounds, and ancestral lands, which were usually rich in natural resources. However, due to natural disasters, climate changes and economic processes came with dislocation from their pastures for industrial development; they have honed their ability to adapt.<sup>63</sup> Following ceding their pastures for development, herding communities resorted to mobility as the primary strategy even though securing alternative grazing lands remained a persistent challenge, demanding considerable time and effort.

Herd boys were able to mitigate livestock theft through the assistance of the Police. Police Officer 1 argued that they helped herd boys in the strategic placement of the *metebo* on the hillside of the mountain facing the grazing areas. These hillside locations served as natural barriers against stock

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<sup>61</sup>Michele Nori, Jason Switzer & Alec Crawford, "Herding on the Brink, Towards a Global Survey of Pastoral Communities and Conflict," 9.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Mateu Lepolesa, Checha Mokhotlong, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024,

<sup>63</sup> Svein Disch Matheisen, Inger Marie Gaup Eira, Ellen Inga Turi, Anders Oskal, Mikhail Pogodaev & Marina Tonkopeeva (Editor), 'Reindeer Husbandry: Adaptation to the Changing Arctic,' *Springer Polar Sciences* 1 (2023) 8-9.

theft and predators.<sup>64</sup> The elevated positions offered better visibility, enabling herd boys to vigilantly monitor their herds and detect monitor potential threats from a distance. According to a herder Molise, the practice of digging medicinal plants such as *lekhala la thaba*, *sesepa sa linoao* (*Albuca trichophytic*) and *mofifi* played a pivotal role in managing diseases. For instance, *mositsang* was utilized to stimulate animal appetite. *Mohalalitoe* (Lilly) and *monatja* were ground and given to enhance their reproductive capacity. Additionally, *tsilabela*, *cheche* and *mofihli* were used to heal *nyooko* (ailments).<sup>65</sup> Basotho herders relied on traditional herbs found within the herding environment for both human primary healthcare as well as veterinary care. Knowledge about these indigenous remedies was often acquired through social interactions among herders and their elders.<sup>66</sup> Herding life equipped Mosa, a herd boy with an understanding of various traditional herbs and their curative properties. He further transformed this knowledge into an income-generating activity. *Ralikorotoana* or *monna motšo* translated as ‘the black man,’ grows amongst *cheche* bushes. It is tasteless black bark, tasteless and was either chewed or boiled, serving as a mild purgative that deals with gallbladder-related problems as well as discharge. It also worked very effectively when mixed with *sehala hala sa matlaka*.

Herders in Lesotho have shown resilience and adaptability through support from NGOs like ReNOKA and the Lesotho Association of Non-Formal Education (LANFE).<sup>67</sup> Herders in Semonkong, Maseru herder participated in public gatherings which were hosted by ReNOKA.<sup>68</sup> These gatherings focused on sustainable natural resource protection practices. ReNOKA further

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with Anonymous Police 1, Mokhotlong Police Station, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Khotso Molise, Checha Mokhotlong, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>66</sup> Selloane Pitikoe, “Turning the herding lifestyle into a learning opportunity: Experiences from Lesotho,” *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa* 4, no. 1 (2018) 6.

<sup>67</sup> ReNOKA, “ReNOKA hosts herders in Semonkong on sustainable natural resource protection practice,” (2022). Available at <https://renoka.org/stories/renoka-hosts-herders-in-semonkong-on-sustainable-natural-resource-protection-practices/>, accessed on 05 May, 2024,

<sup>68</sup> ReNOKA, “ReNOKA hosts herders in Semonkong on sustainable natural resource protection practice.”

extended its community outreach to include herders in Thaba-Tseka, emphasizing range management.<sup>69</sup> Community events hosted by this organization to raise awareness about natural resource protection, especially wetlands. Stakeholders that supported ReNOKA's initiatives on herders included the Dinizulu Herders Association, the Lesotho Defence Force, the Lesotho Mounted Police Service, LHDA as well as the community leaders. Over 100 herders actively participated, recognizing their crucial role in safeguarding rangelands and water resources. While traditionally criticized for unsustainable practices like overgrazing and burning grass, herders received education on their significant contribution to environmental management. Once more, representatives, such as Mabesebese Mahamo, expressed gratitude for these engagements and requested further support, including fencing wetlands for animal protection. Minister of Water, Honorable Kemiso Mosenene, in his address, encouraged herders to practice sustainable grazing. Chief Lerotholi Bereng Seeiso, Principal Chief of Matsieng praised ReNOKA's program and appealed to the Lesotho government to support organizations like LANFE that educate herders. As custodians of water and land in Lesotho, herders play a crucial role herder in natural resources management as the grazing areas for their animals. Over 80 herders are committed to protecting rangelands as well as vital ecosystems within rangelands to enhance resource management and prevent conflicts. Practices like rotational grazing and avoiding grazing in protected areas were encouraged.

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<sup>69</sup> ReNOKA, "Herders in Thaba-Tseka affirm full support towards range management," (2022). Available at <https://renoka.org/stories/herders-in-thaba-tseka-affirm-full-understanding-and-support-towards-range-management/>, accessed on 05 May 2024,

## Chapter Four: Economic Challenges

### 4.1 Wages and Income Disparities

From the 1980s and beyond, herding continued to sustain the economic livelihood of the pastoral communities of Mokhotlong.<sup>1</sup> However, herd boys in Mokhotlong have voiced concerns about the long-standing issue of wages and income disparities. Like in the Sudano-Sahelian region of West Africa, means of payment varied for herding labour in Lesotho and herding contracts ranged from familial obligations, livestock entrustments and extra-familial labour-sharing to mention a few.<sup>2</sup> In Lesotho including Mokhotlong, herding labour has for long been rewarded with livestock or cash depending on the agreement between the employer and employee.<sup>3</sup> Issues of wage or income disparities for herd boys in Lesotho come as far back as pre- pre-colonial era. Livestock rearing being central to the history of the Basotho nation, the herding subordinate class was marginalized while owners of herds which was the tributary class, particularly the Bakoena lineage benefited the most.<sup>4</sup> The strategies like *mafisa* and placing system utilized by Moshoeshoe in nation-building reinforced the economic dominance of the tributary class, preferring to provide them what they needed rather than letting them get it on their own, thus solidifying their dependency on chieftaincy and thereby entrenching itself in a position of dominance.<sup>5</sup> While many Basotho merely saw economic benefits from the *mafisa*, some views like Casalis saw *mafisa* as a political strategy

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with Nku Nku, Mapholaneng Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>2</sup>Matthew D. Turner, "Labor Process and the Environment: The Effects of Labor Availability and Compensation on the Quality of Herding in the Sahel," *Human Ecology* 27, no. 2 (1999) 271.

<sup>3</sup>Interview with Nku Nku, Mapholaneng Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>4</sup>Judith Kimble, "Towards an Understanding of the Political Economy of Lesotho: The Origin of Commodity Production and Migrant Labour, 1830- c. 1885," MA, National University of Lesotho (1978) 153.

<sup>5</sup>Judith M. Kimble, *Migrant Labour and Colonial Rule in Basutoland 1980- 1930*, South Africa, Grahamstown: Rhodes University (1999) 151.

fostering economic dependency and loyalty to the chief.<sup>6</sup> Thabane quoted by Mothibe noted that *mafisa* exploited the loanee who laboured without contract or assured rewards.<sup>7</sup>

Herding further became overlooked during the colonial era. In the early 1900s, following the mining revolution in South Africa, colonial officials prioritized economic and fiscal policies and thus implemented taxation in Basutoland.<sup>8</sup> In 1916, an attempt to impose an age limit of 18 for taxation faced resistance from elders who desired to retain control over their sons' labour. They feared that tax would force them to seek work in mines and would therefore leave their responsibilities in livestock tending to their father's livestock in the mountains. Although colonizers recognized the significance of exports particularly wool and mohair from the Southern mountains for generating customs dues and tax revenue, the principal priority of colonial officials was the maintenance of administration, police force and balancing colonial accounts. Unfortunately, the main productive sector received little support for economic development while labourers formed the foundation of the social hierarchy.

The plight of herd boys in Mokhotlong since 2010 further manifested a persistent predicament of wage disparities. Despite the value they added to the agro-economy, herd boys like Phatela expressed frustration at the disparity between their essential contributions to the community and the meagre rewards they receive in return.<sup>9</sup> In his song '*Likokotane*' the Famo artist Katiba sheds light on the unwavering dedication of herd boys who tended and continue to attend to livestock regardless of heavy rainfalls, snowfalls extreme colds and extreme weather conditions, eating twice per day. Contrary to the popular belief that they received 12 livestock or a cow annually,

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<sup>6</sup>Tefetso Mothibe, "State and Society, 1824- 1833," 20.

<sup>7</sup>Tefetso Mothibe, "State and Society, 1824- 1833," 22.

<sup>8</sup>Judith M. Kimble, *Migrant Labour and Colonial Rule in Basutoland, 1890- 1930*, 10.

<sup>9</sup>Interview with Lesia Phatela, Mokhotlong, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

negotiations varied and often resulted in fewer animals. Their rewards often remained inadequate and, in some cases, receiving unproductive cows or livestock annually or as little as 500 Maloti if is cash monthly.<sup>10</sup> For instance, Tseko's 2010 agreement with his then-employer was the payment of six livestock annually which turned into four Indigenous sheep (associated with poor fibre production).<sup>11</sup>

An anonymous herder from one of the Dairy Farms in Mokhotlong further asserted that he initially earned M1250. 00 per month and was promised annual raises.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, the reality has not aligned with those promises. Likewise, the younger Fulbe herders' generation in the Volta basin resent their parents' working conditions who worked as hired herders for farmers and other stockowners. They argued that herding can be financially rewarding, however, their parents who were hired Fulbe herders in Ghana also became victims of exploitation thus leading to worsening economic conditions. While caring for cattle, they observed cattle stock owners accumulating more wealth while theirs remained relatively small. This disparity led to feelings that farmers and stock owners accumulated at their expense.<sup>13</sup> Volti argued that people living in modern societies measure affluence in terms of money and possessions.<sup>14</sup> Now can such wage be enough for herder to accumulate assets, let alone having to assist their families?

The poverty-driven and irregular nature of herding work in Mokhotlong led to demotivation for some herders bred by insufficient payment, thus significantly contributing to skyrocketing stock

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with Sello Khomo, Checha, Mokhotlong, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Tseko Tseko, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Anonymous herder, Mokhotlong, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024.

<sup>13</sup> Steve Tonah, "Migration and Farmer-Herder Conflicts in Ghana's Volta Basin," 164.

<sup>14</sup> Rudi Volti, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Work and Occupations (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, London: Sage Publications (2012) 21.

theft and unsustainable use of the environment.<sup>15</sup> The quality of herding is influenced by the extent of remuneration received by herders, both socially and materially.<sup>16</sup> With regards to the aforesaid, from the sociological perspective on the sociology of work, Volti highlighted the dangers of underpaying workers. He contended that the primary or perhaps only reason for working is to earn wage or salary and poorly paid jobs are unattractive despite being a source of personal satisfaction.<sup>17</sup> This phenomenon leads to job alienation which contributes to poor performance. High levels of worker satisfaction are linked to good job performance, including punctuality and regular attendance. Dissatisfied employees, however, often exhibit absenteeism and theft as forms of discontent.<sup>18</sup>

From the afore-highlighted issues, herding labour is characterized by irregular income and unpredictable employment conditions, thus making them vulnerable to economic shocks and lacking stable income. Standing further highlighted the need to be aware of a rising class- in- the-making if not yet a class-for-itself in the Marxian sense of the term notably ‘precariat’ characterized by precarious employment, financial instability, economic vulnerability and lack of work-based identity. Precariat is a newly coined term that merges the adjective ‘precarious’ and the noun ‘proletariat.’<sup>19</sup> The precariat class characterized by unstable labour and low income aligns with the precarious employment conditions faced by herd boys in Mokhotlong. The precarious economic conditions of herding labour affected purchasing power while perpetuating in many cases intergenerational poverty. One of the herd boys during the interview posed the question

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Lesia Phatela, Mokhotlong, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>16</sup> Matthew. D. Turner, “Labor Process and the Environment: The Effects of Labor Availability and Compensation on the Quality of Herding in the Sahel,” 271.

<sup>17</sup> Rudi Volti, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Work and Occupations (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, 111.

<sup>18</sup> Rudi Volti, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Work and Occupations (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, 204.

<sup>19</sup> Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), 11- 21.

‘How can one expect herd boys to break free from the cycle of poverty if their wages remain disproportionately low?’ Limited earnings hindered herd boys’ ability to meet basic needs like food, clothing, and education and healthcare services, thus exacerbating poverty, trapping herd boys in a cycle of economic precarity.

Underpayment encountered by herd boys was also exacerbated by political underrepresentation through specific policies catering for their rights.<sup>20</sup> Labour Code Order 24 of 199 in Lesotho serves as the primary law governing labour and employment.<sup>21</sup> This Labour Code applies broadly to employment under private sector, government and public authority with specific exclusions. However, the code’s limitation in achieving universal coverage undermines a fundamental principle of social security provision. Additionally, the Lesotho workers' compensation scheme established in 1977 under the Workmen's Compensation Act, defined ‘workman’ as someone under a contract of service or apprenticeship with an employer. However, the weakness of this Act is that it excludes some categories of employees. Exclusions include casual workers, those who are employed for business, clubs and domestic workers as well as shepherds.

These groups were rewarded in kind according to Sesotho's custom.<sup>22</sup> Herd boys in Lesotho despite being excluded from labour laws due to perceived lack of skill have often become victims of human rights violations. Leotla a fifth-year Law student further saw this phenomenon as a violation of human rights supported by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which form the International Bill of Human Rights, a pillar for human rights protection within the

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<sup>20</sup>Interview with Neko Mahao, Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>21</sup>Kananelo. E. Mosito, “A Panoramic View of the Social Security and Social Protection Provisioning in Lesotho,” *PER/PELJ* 17, no. 4 (2014) 1579.

<sup>22</sup>Kananelo E. Mosito, “A Panoramic View of the Social Security and Social Protection Provisioning in Lesotho,” 1587- 1588.

United Nations implemented on 16 December 1966.<sup>23</sup> This Covenant, adopted after World War II, promotes economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. Notable provisions include the right to work (article 6), just and favourable conditions of work (article 7), the right to trade unions and strike (article 8), social security (article 9), the right to an adequate standard of living encompassing food, clothing, housing and enhancing living conditions (article 11) and the highest attainable standard of health (article 12).<sup>24</sup>

#### **4.2 Herd Boys and the Economic Landscape**

The herding tradition, believed to have emerged during the Neolithic revolution, also known as the first agricultural revolution in Southern Sahara, marked a significant shift from hunting and gathering livelihood by the earliest African herders to pastoralism.<sup>25</sup> Muhereza contended that it is natural to classify pastoralists into the next stage of development, which is agriculture.<sup>26</sup> Marite, through an interview with BBC News Africa, asserted thus:

‘no cattle in Maasai societies, no life, they depend on it in everything. It’s the money, it’s the house because we use cow dung to make our houses. It’s part of our food. It’s everything to the Maasai people. Food: they can have blood, they have meat, they have milk. ... It’s very important to have cattle. ... These animals rely on human protection.’<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, pastoralism which significantly relied on herding remained the very core backbone of Mokhotlong's livelihood as highlighted in previous chapters. Livestock in Lesotho produced and contributed approximately R30 million to the national income in 1993.

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<sup>23</sup> Interview with Thembegile Leotla, National University of Lesotho Roma, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

<sup>24</sup> Magdalena Sepulveda, *The Nature of the Obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, Utrecht University: INTERSENTIA (2003) 1- 2.

<sup>25</sup> Food and Agricultural Organization of the United States, *Countries Where Nomadic Pastoralism Is Still A Way Of Life*, World Atlas (2019).

<sup>26</sup> Frank Emmanuel Muhereza, *The Struggle for land Rights and the 1990 Squatter Uprisings in the Former Government Ranching Schemes of Uganda*, (n.d.).

<sup>27</sup> K. Marite, Interviewed by Zeinab Batawi, “Guide Discovery Centre four seasons Lodge Serengeti, Tanzania,” *History of African History*, BBC News Africa, 11.02- 11. 54

It generated R31.5 million from the sale of wool and mohair in 1990. This figure was about 21% of all exports from the country in 1990.<sup>28</sup> However, worth-noting is the fact that during that period, Lesotho had been absorbed in the developmental stage known as globalization. Gereffi argued that the global economy at the macro level operates through international organizations and regimes that establish rules, norms, and resources for the global community, promoting competitive capitalism. These include institutions like the World Bank, IMF, World Trade Organizations, Labour Organization as well as regional integration schemes like the European Union and the North American Free Trade Agreement.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, competition over land which is a pastoral resource has become a source of marginalization of herding traditions. Practices or policies which overlooked and to a certain extent were antagonistic to herding tradition have been adopted, resulting in undermining pastoralism as a form of production while promoting areas like commercialization.

In regards to the aforementioned, in recent decades a strong capitalist movement emerged. Gereffi contented that globalization led to increased vulnerability, economic instability, and social dislocations of indigenous populations as flattening culture in the well-financed global marketing machines and brand bullies.<sup>30</sup> Large dam projects in less developed countries funded by institutions like the World Bank, despite having resettlement guidelines, have often resulted in involuntary relocations and negative economic and political impacts on downstream communities.<sup>31</sup> World Bank has been involved in projects that disregard environmental and social sustainability principles, such as approving oil pipeline projects in Cameroon and Chad and a

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<sup>28</sup> Israel Vusi Mashinini, "Sustainable Rural Development in Lesotho," 4.

<sup>29</sup> Gray Gereffi, "The Global Economy: Organization, Governance, and Development," *The handbook of economic sociology* 2 (2005)160-62.

<sup>30</sup> Gray Gereffi, "The Global Economy: Organization, Governance, and Development," 175.

<sup>31</sup> Micheal M. Horowitz, "Victims Upstream and Down," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 4, no.2 (1991).

resettlement project in China, resulting in the displacement of ethnic Tibetans and Mongol nomadic herders. In 2000, the Bank acknowledged that 2.6 million people worldwide were adversely affected by forced evictions, land loss, or loss of livelihood within its portfolio. International Finance Corporation (IFC) further allocated 19.1 per cent of its investments in the fiscal year 1999 for operations related to oil, gas, mining, timber, pulp, and paper.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, Lesotho's economy is open and traditionally centred on trade and over the past two decades, the structure of Lesotho's economy has shifted.<sup>33</sup>

Additionally, once based on remittances and agriculture, in recent years the country's economic growth was driven by value-added activities of means of production in the manufacturing, wholesale, retail, and service sectors, and mining. Under the global economy, Lesotho saw the rise of three main industries, water, diamond and textiles.<sup>34</sup> Mokhotlong, endowed with abundant natural resources such as water and diamonds saw the rise of significant developments. There was the construction of Letseng Diamond Mining owned by Gem Diamonds Ltd of the United Kingdom (70%) in partnership with the Government of Lesotho (30%) and Polihali dam under the multibillion-dollar Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) as earlier mentioned which led to land dispossession, constituted among other things grazing lands, thus reshaping the economic landscape.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Eti Best Herbert, "Impact of World Bank-Assisted Projects on Poverty Alleviation," *Consilience*, no. 25 (2021-22) 12.

<sup>33</sup>Seroala Tsoeu- Ntokoane, M. Kali & X. Lemaire, "Energy democracy in Lesotho: Prioritising the participation of rural citizens," *Cogent Social Sciences* 8, no.1 (2022) 3.

<sup>34</sup>Tawanda Mukurunge & Takura Bhila, "Impacts of Mining Operations on Water Resources of Letseng Diamonds in Lesotho," *IJSRD - International Journal for Scientific Research & Development* 6, no. 12 (2019) 635.

<sup>35</sup>Tawanda Mukurunge & Takura Bhila, "Impacts of Mining Operations on Water Resources of Letseng Diamonds in Lesotho," 635.

Competition over land which is a pastoral resource became a source of marginalization of herding traditions and practices in Mokhotlong, to promote commercialization and one of those was the construction of mini hydro-power renewable energy.<sup>36</sup> Energy demand is growing in South Africa and the rest of the region, and Lesotho has the potential to export renewable power.<sup>37</sup> According to Lesotho's Department of Energy, Lesotho could produce 450 MW of hydropower and more wind power. However, about 17% of energy has been exploited and these include 'The Muela hydro-power plant and the rest from mini hydro-power plants at Mants'onyane, Mokhotlong, Tsoelike, and Semonkong. Thabane also highlighted that the bi-national Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) between the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Republic of South Africa came with the construction of the Katse dam, Mohale dam and the 'Muela hydropower plant in the highlands.<sup>38</sup> The Project aimed to utilize Lesotho's water for the mutual benefit of both countries.<sup>39</sup> Notably, the project included a Hydroelectric generating capacity of approximately 180 MW.

However, the hydropolitics of LHWP combined with the environmental impact of construction posed threats to human security in Lesotho. Although South Africa benefited more, the hydropolitical interests of both riparian states overlooked human security considerations. The project displaced more people in Lesotho than the actual number of jobs created during construction. Most contracts went to South African firms. More importantly, approximately less than 10% of Lesotho's total land was lost to the project and Phases 1A and 1B rendered

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<sup>36</sup>Interview with Malibusa Makhetha, Roma, 19 April 2023.

<sup>37</sup>International Trade Administration, *Renewable Energy* (2024).

<sup>38</sup>Motlatsi Thabane, "Shifts from Old to New Social and Ecological Environments in the Lesotho Highlands Water Scheme; Relocating Residents of the Mohale Dam Area," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26, no. 4 (2000) 635.

<sup>39</sup>Oscar Mwangi, "Hydropolitics, Ecocide and Human Security in Lesotho: A Case Study of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33, no. 1 (2007)14.

approximately 1,500 ha of arable land, 1,900 ha of cropland and 5,000 ha of grazing land.<sup>40</sup> The reduction of grazing lands in the Lesotho highlands due to this project led to the concentration of herds of cattle, sheep and goats on smaller ranges, straining already stressed grazing areas. The loss of winter pastures due to the reservoir significantly affected cattle rearing and this led to conflicts among herders in certain areas near Katse Dam. Lesotho possesses abundant renewable energy resources including solar insolation levels of 5.25 – 5.53 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year and annual average wind speeds of 3.7 to 4.7 m/s/year at 10 m heights, thus making it an attractive market for clean energy.<sup>41</sup>

Some of the places with wind farms, solar plants and hydroelectric stations include Mohale's Hoek wind farm Turbine, Ha Ramarothola which has a solar plant in Mafeteng, and a mini-grid (smaller version of the solar plant) in Linakeng and Motete,<sup>42</sup> Some of the developments towards biofuels included the proposed site of a wind farm in Mokhotlong near Letseng la Trai and, the proposed Hydropower station or plant in Oxbow. These proposed places therefore suggest more competition over land which will probably affect herding traditions. In this regard, worth- highlighting is the Mohlomi Code, which highlighted the significance of intergenerational value and thinking. Intergenerational value is understood to mean making the world economically, environmentally, socially or spiritually better than were found it and intergenerational thinking is premised on value-sharing initiatives which are the epicentre of botho, a concept advocated by Chief Mohlomi and mastered by King Moshoeshoe I. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterized by jobless growth, the unequal

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<sup>40</sup>Oscar Mwangi, "Hydropolitics, Ecocide and Human Security in Lesotho: A Case Study of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project," 12 -13.

<sup>41</sup>*Lesotho: Renewable Energy Policy* (2013) 5.

<sup>42</sup>Interview with Malibusa Makhetha, Roma, 19 April 2023.

distribution of wealth and other economic conditions that leave the youth and generations unable to create value from their interaction with economic agents.

It has been evident that the widening economic gap was exacerbated by large companies (e. g. mining companies) that did not have models that shared value with the societies and nations in which they operated. It is very important for the organization for an organization to understand that business is not a zero-sum game where it is only beneficiary, while other stakeholders are left worse off. Any organization capitalizing on the weakness of its stakeholders is running the risk of creating a toxic environment where only the fittest survive. Most of the planet's resources are finite and the interaction of different stakeholders should promote the sustainable use of these resources. Investors make investment decisions to ensure that their future generations will have a better future. Organizations transcend generations; decisions made by organizations must ensure that all stakeholders continue to benefit from operation for generations to come. Traditionally, shareholders were the only stakeholders of the organization that served in the creation of intergenerational value.<sup>43</sup>

### **4.3 Access to Banking Facilities**

Lesotho is one of the countries that, though politically independent; still find their economies an enclave of the Republic of South Africa, in addition to the experience of worldwide domination of the economies of developing countries by markets, investment and technology of the industrialized countries.<sup>44</sup> As a result, in post-independence, these countries began indigenizing their economies and they still have a long way to go in developing meaningful policy measures for securing

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<sup>43</sup>Mohlomi Code, *Mohlomi Corporate Governance Code*, Institute of Directors of Lesotho (2021) 37- 44.

<sup>44</sup>I. Abedian & N. Natrass, "The Impact of Changes in South Africa on the Developmental Prospects of Lesotho," *Report Commissioned by the United Nations Development Program Lesotho*, Department of Economics University of Cape Town (1995) 3.

indigenization of their economies.<sup>45</sup> With regards to the aforesaid, there was implementation of cooperatives and more importantly, rural banking which was Lesotho Agricultural Development Bank. This bank gave credit to organized groups such as farmers' associations or village-based cooperatives. Mr C. S. Molelle, the Managing Director of the Lesotho Agricultural Development Bank highlighted that starting with just one branch in 1980, the bank expanded to nine branches and thirteen agencies nationwide.<sup>46</sup> Net total assets increased from M1.4 million in 1980 to M66 Million in 1990 during this period.<sup>47</sup> The bank's expanded network allowed it to meet the demand for agricultural rural credit in rural or remote areas of the country where no other financial institutions existed. However, Basotho argued that the approach went in vain.

During Jonathan Leeabua's era, Lesotho Bank and Agricultural Development Bank played crucial roles in supporting agro-pastoral activities. Unfortunately, under the Congress Party Regime, this institution collapsed.<sup>48</sup> Majara contended that one of the reasons for the ineffective implementation of indigenization occurred due to the rising interest of the ruling class in maintaining its position and authority.<sup>49</sup> Maliehe further argued that the fall of this institution was politically motivated.<sup>50</sup> Indigenization stood limited or no chance to succeed and according to Maliehe the focus of Congress Party government which assumed power in 1993 focused more on attracting capitalization and privatization hence the adoption of SAPs. To facilitate this Privatization Act No. 9 of 1995 was passed. The government privatized the state-owned companies during that economic

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<sup>45</sup>M. Majara, "The Lesotho Economy and the Problems and Prospects of the Indigenous Business Class," A Research Project Submitted to the Department of Political and Administrative Studies in Pursuance of a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Public Administration (1991) 3.

<sup>46</sup>Agric Bank, *Annual Report* (1990) 3.

<sup>47</sup>Agric Bank, *Annual Report* (1990) 3.

<sup>48</sup>Interview with Lebonya Lebonya, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024.

<sup>49</sup>M. Majara, "The Lesotho Economy and the Problems and Prospects of the Indigenous Business Class," 4.

<sup>50</sup>Sean M. Maliehe, *Commerce as Politics: The Two Centuries of Struggle for Basotho Economic Independence*.

construction, excluding ordinary Basotho from share ownership due to perceived capacity limitation which was skills and money. The government removed the credit-lending portfolio used in older enterprise-development institutions narrowing it to training Basotho and mentoring them to develop ‘bankable business plans. ‘The government claimed that: ‘There was excess liquidity with the commercial banks mainly because the banks do not get viable proposals’. Notwithstanding all this, the majority never laid a finger on this alleged excess liquidity.’<sup>51</sup>

Furthermore, many of Basotho’s business loans were rejected from obtaining credit; however, government officials and their associates had easier access to business loans even when they did not meet the standard conditions. A former senior employee of the Lesotho Bank (Agric Bank) revealed that political issues influenced loan approvals.<sup>52</sup> This phenomenon is supported by Behnke who argued that the economies of Ethiopia and Somalia are poor, and technologically underdeveloped but integrated nonetheless into global capitalism. In terms of livestock exports, these countries produce relatively unprocessed raw commodities - hides, skins and live animals - for regional markets.<sup>53</sup> However, weak, non-existent or (from the perspective of livestock producers and traders) parasitic national governments do little to promote their livestock industries.

#### **4.4. Livelihood Diversification**

The government’s ability to address the problems outlined above appears bleak. The prevailing perspective seems to be that herders contribute little to national economies often marginalized herders.<sup>54</sup> Amidst this limited support and rewards from herding, herd boys diversified to sustain

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<sup>51</sup> Sean M. Maliehe, *Commerce as Politics: The Two Centuries of Struggle for Basotho Economic Independence*.

<sup>52</sup> Sean M. Maliehe, *Commerce as Politics: The Two Centuries of Struggle for Basotho Economic Independence*.

<sup>53</sup> Roy H. Behnke, “The Economic Contribution of Pastoralism: Case Studies from the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa,” *Nomadic Peoples* 12, no. 1 (2008) 46.

<sup>54</sup> Leif Manger, “East African Pastoralism and Underdevelopment: An Introduction.”

their livelihood. Lets'ohla, one of the herd boys contended that limited diversification existed for herd boys because of the year-round demands of herding in cattle posts. This constant and time-consuming occupation left little time for other alternative livelihood means of sustenance. Dependency on livestock as the primary source of income further constrained herd boys in meeting their livelihood needs.<sup>55</sup> At cattle posts, herd boys predominantly subsisted on *seshoai* - food given to herd boys by the owners of herds. Unfortunately, these rations often constituted maize meal, beans, salt and soap and thus often insufficient to sustain them until the next *seshoai* distribution. They therefore supplemented with goat milk and edible plants and roots (*meroho ea naha*) such as *papapsane*, *tenane* and *bobatsi*.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, they consumed *letsete* which was a preservation method where maize was stored in sacks and buried under sand soil on the riverbanks for future use. However, these food sources were seasonal and sometimes limited due to climate change such as snow, drought as well as rain. Relying on animal-based food notably milk and wild seasonal plants made them vulnerable to nutritional deficiencies. Tankiso further highlighted that they occasionally resorted to hunting wild animals like rats '*tali ea naha*' and birds for sustenance. However, the huge challenge was the perishable nature of this food, they not be stored for future use and most of them were seasonal. To mitigate this, herd boys assisted each other by sharing amongst themselves during times of need.<sup>57</sup>

This era saw a notable shift in livelihood patterns significantly affecting pastoral and herding traditions in Mokhotlong.<sup>58</sup> Traditionally, herding practices used to be the bedrock of the Mokhotlong economy with livestock rearing as a dominant pursuit. However, in recent years, there

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<sup>55</sup> Interview with Lets'ohla Palo, Tlokoeng Mokhotlong, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Pitso Fihlo, Mokhotlong, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Tankiso Mosae, Mokhotlong, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Anonymous Officer, Mokhotlong Urban Council, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023

have been emerging off-farm means of living. Individuals including livestock owners, and middle to higher-income earners diversified their income sources through investments in rental properties in the villages surrounding Mokhotlong town.<sup>59</sup> Key areas that experienced this include Checha, LeCoop, Mangaung and Ntlholohetsane. More importantly, these properties were situated on the land that was once designated for grazing. This transition underscores the recognition that real estate ventures complement traditional herding practices offering economic opportunities beyond the confines of livestock-related activities.

In this regard, Turner highlighted the need to move beyond the longstanding simplistic perception of viewing Lesotho as a pastoral economic country because the current reality is more complex and dynamic than this simple version. He therefore argued that the aforesaid phenomenon is parallel to the common assumption that Lesotho is an ‘agrarian’ Kingdom.<sup>60</sup> In his view, Lesotho stopped being agrarian in the 1920s when Lesotho ceased to be a net exporter of agricultural commodities like grain not in contemporary times where unfavourable conditions and economic shifts and challenges hinder the success of crop production. In regards to livestock keeping, he went to question this claim stating that the natural and socioeconomic circumstances in Lesotho imply that, in theory, fostering the production of livestock for meat, milk, wool, and mohair has the potential to uplift numerous marginalized rural communities and enhance food security for a greater proportion of the populace. However, in actuality, prior initiatives to improve dairy, wool/mohair, and cattle output have only had inconsistent limited results. These initiatives have frequently been combined with attempts to manage natural resources for pasture enhancement.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Interview with Anonymous Officer, Mokhotlong Urban Council, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023

<sup>60</sup>Murray (1981) emphasized that in half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Basotho were prosperous and self-sufficient people exporting grain to newly opened in Kimberly. Ferguson (1990) also argued that in 1873, Basotho exported some 100,000 bags of grain as well as other agricultural products such as wool and mohair.

<sup>61</sup>Steve D. Turner, *Promoting food security in Lesotho: issues and options*, 10.

Furthermore, oversimplified assumptions regarding Lesotho's agro-pastoral rural development issues often lead to the misconception that food security solely relies on sufficient food production by the agricultural sector.<sup>62</sup> However, that's not the case because regardless of engaging in agricultural and herding traditions, Basotho diversified to non-agricultural or pastoral means and this phenomenon was evident through dependency on migrant labour in South Africa throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century where South African mines constituted the cornerstone of rural economy although migrant labour dropped significantly during retrenchment in the 1990s. In addition to the afore-highlighted issues, Muhereza argued that the scholarly discourse regarding pastoralism in East African Drylands has been dominated by themes about the 'decline of pastoralism' thus doing nothing but affecting the lens through which herding tradition is viewed.<sup>63</sup> Dyson-Hudson 1985 argued that pastoralism has been seen as being incapable of sustaining itself under the changing environmental, political and socio-economic conditions. Pastoralism is portrayed as being in decline, because of diminishing survival options available to cattle keepers and herders living in a very highly unpredictable physical environment.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Steve D. Turner, *Promoting food security in Lesotho: issues and options*, 10.

<sup>63</sup> Frank Emmanuel Muhereza, *The Struggle for land Rights and the 1990 Squatter Uprisings in the Former Government Ranching Schemes of Uganda*.

<sup>64</sup> Neville Dyson-Hudson & R. Dyson-Hudson, *The structure of West African herds and the future of East African herder development and change* 13 (1982).

## Chapter Five: Socio-Cultural Challenges

### 5.1 Access to Education

By the early 20th century, the first and second industrial revolutions had transformed the economies of many nations and profoundly altered the nature of employment and work.<sup>1</sup> As industrialisation was reshaping the economic and social landscape during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, another revolution was underway- the transformation that continues up-to-date. To comprehend the nature of this ongoing revolution, it is vital to acknowledge that in pre- pre-industrial era, agriculture was a macro means of living significantly employing the majority of the workforce. However, the primacy of agriculture as a major source of employment commenced to shrink as industrialization generated numerous new non-farm jobs.<sup>2</sup> In the modern era, workers' contributions to production and revenues were highly influenced not only by the physical capital they worked with (such as machines tools and computers) but also by their human capital encompassing their abilities, personal qualities, skills and aptitudes they brought to work. Human capital significantly acquired through formal educational attainment remained determinants vital determinant of their employability in good income-earning jobs. Education stood as a proxy for human capital hence investment in schooling brought returns in the form of enhanced employability for paying higher-paying jobs.<sup>3</sup>

Likewise, the post-1980s period in Lesotho witnessed a significant shift in perception of the importance of education.<sup>4</sup> Education meant human capital and access to better-paying jobs. After

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<sup>1</sup>Vijay Paul Sharma, Ilse Köhler-Rollefson & John Morton, "Pastoralism in India: A Scoping Study," *Indian Institute of Management and League of Pastoral Peoples, Ahmedabad, India* (2003) 36.

<sup>2</sup>Rudi Volti, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Work and Occupations (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, London: Sage Publications, (2012) 61.

<sup>3</sup>Rudi Volti, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Work and Occupations (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, 116- 117.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Nala Lesole, Tlokoeng Mokhotlong, 27<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

the mining revolution, the majority of men and well-bodied boys went from herding straight to mines, bypassing formal education. Some Basotho's men either attended school or did not before seeking mining jobs while others did not complete school and combined schooling with livestock rearing, particularly cattle rearing. The massive retrenchment in the mining industry which commenced in the 1980s to 90s led to a notable shift in the Basotho mineworkers' perception regarding the value and necessity of education.<sup>5</sup> This shift resulted from their sense of disempowerment and lack of control over their future careers coupled with the realization that the skills they acquired in the mines were significantly relevant to the mining industry, not the economy of Lesotho. In Kenya, herders recognized the need to diversify beyond traditional livelihoods due to declining livestock and land conditions hence diversified in formal education. Formal education became essential for acquiring skills that reduced dependence on an unpredictable livelihood and addressed contemporary challenges.<sup>6</sup> One of the interviewees argued that:

‘With education, one can get a job. ... Salary is more reliable than livestock and one can easily buy/restock his herd with salary, I send children to school with the expectation of them helping us since livestock are no longer reliable. We used to be proud of our many animals to support the family, but not now. Only an educated child has value in the family for he can do many things - supply food, clothes, educate others...’<sup>7</sup>

Moroosi, a herd boy in Mokhotlong who possessed 80 livestock (goats and sheep) and one donkey expressed regret for not going to school.<sup>8</sup> He felt undervalued compared to his educated siblings

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<sup>5</sup>Relebohile Nthathi Morojele, “Determining the attitudes/perceptions of retrenched Lesotho migrant labourers from the RSA mining industries regarding education using their career life histories,” MA, University of Stellenbosch, (2004) 111- 117.

<sup>6</sup>Peter D. Little, AbdiIahi. Aboud & Clement Lenachuru, “Can Formal Education Reduce Risks for Drought-Prone Pastoralists? A Case Study from Baringo District, Kenya,” *Human Organization* 68, no.2 (2009) 154- 163.

<sup>7</sup>Peter D. Little, AbdiIahi Aboud & Clement Lenachuru, “Can Formal Education Reduce Risks for Drought-Prone Pastoralists? A Case Study from Baringo District, Kenya,” 158.

<sup>8</sup>Interview with Kalimo Moroosi, Checha, Mokhotlong , 18<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

who held salaried positions. These sentiments simply reflect new patterns of social status and new meanings of social and economic well-being.

In certain herding communities like Raika in India, herding animals are often stigmatised as solitary jobs associated with illiteracy. This social stigma was evident through many reported cases of girls who refused to marry boys they were previously engaged to, because of herding career.<sup>9</sup>

The stigma associated with illiteracy was common in Lesotho. Linakaneng shared the same sentiments and further explained the mockery that the herders are subjected to due to illiteracy:

“(Frowning) One of my colleagues tried to propose love to an educated ‘girl’ in Maseru. The ‘girl’s’ father asked him if he would be able to wash his daughter’s feet because he was a ‘mere’ illiterate herder”.<sup>10</sup> Mokhotlong was not exceptional to the aforesaid. Tseko, a herd boy from Mokhotlong reported that he had an unpleasant encounter sometime back in 2002 where he went to a shop to purchase the soap and paid for soap with insufficient money. Upon receiving the money, the cashier addressed him in a discourteous manner, instructing him to observe prices more attentively. The most painful remark from the cashier was ‘You heard boys who dropped out of school during ‘break’ are annoying, can’t you see the price there?’<sup>11</sup>

The practice of withdrawing children, especially young boys from school to tend herds was a persistent challenge to educational attainment for many herders.<sup>12</sup> While girls did household chores from a young age, boys’ responsibility included farm work and cattle herding which often took them away from the village during the day. Herding demanded an all-day commitment particularly

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<sup>9</sup>Vijay Paul Sharma, Ilse Köhler-Rollefson & John Morton, “Pastoralism in India: A Scoping Study,” 36.

<sup>10</sup>Selloane Pitikoe, “Male Herders in Lesotho: Life, History, Identities and Educational Ambitions,” PhD, University of KwaZulu-Natal (2016) 193.

<sup>11</sup>Interview with TsekoTseko, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>12</sup>Interview with Tseko Tseko, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

when grazing and water sources were distant and that was enormously incompatible with school attendance.<sup>13</sup> For example, Molise commenced herding at the age of 8 years<sup>14</sup> while Matete started after completing primary school<sup>15</sup> and elder Fako began herding after he did *paliso*.<sup>16</sup> Some Basotho in Mokhotlong still rely on gender for job allocation and many herd boys suffered from that and were therefore faced with challenges. Likewise, Fulbe herd boys in Ghana were frequently withdrawn from school to take care of the family's livestock.<sup>17</sup> This pattern was also seen in Kenya where the fathers would simply take their children out of school because of herding labour and mobility needs.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, in Tanzania, the responsibility of herding and caring for livestock in Tanzania typically started at a very young age, often as early as 6-7 years old. It became generally challenging to combine herding activities with education because livestock herding was an all-day-round activity in most cases outside the villages.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, the above-highlighted pattern became challenging for some herders as they expressed a desire to receive education to avoid following in their fathers' footsteps as herders because education was seen as a means to gain human capital and improve their overall livelihood.<sup>20</sup> Regarding the above-mentioned herding, many herd boys started at an early stage due to the social construction of their families, limiting them to education.

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<sup>13</sup> Sophie Hedges, Monique Borgerhoff Mulder, Susan James & David W. Lawson, "Sending children to school: rural livelihoods and parental investment in education in northern Tanzania," 43.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Khotso Molise, Checha Mokhotlong, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Neo Matete, Ha Lebopo Mokhotlong, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Masilo Masilo, Checha Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>17</sup> Steve Tonah, "Migration and Farmer-Herder Conflicts in Ghana's Volta Basin," 169.

<sup>18</sup> Peter D. Little, A.bdiIahi. Aboud & Clement Lenachuru, "Can Formal Education Reduce Risks for Drought-Prone Pastoralists? A Case Study from Baringo District, Kenya," 157.

<sup>19</sup> Sophie Hedges, Monique Borgerhoff Mulder, Susan James & David W. Lawson, "Sending children to school: rural livelihoods and parental investment in education in northern Tanzania," *Evolution and Human Behavior* 37, no. 2 (2016) 149 – 150.

<sup>20</sup> Selloane Pitikoe, "*Male herders in Lesotho: Life histories, identities and life Ambitions*," 86.

Most of the interviewed herd boys like Molise attributed their lack of education or dropout to impoverishment in their families.<sup>21</sup> Some managed to pass the primary level but faced challenges continuing to the secondary level due to the poor financial muscle of their families. Others like Mahao cited a lack of brilliance in school leading them to engage in herding tradition.<sup>22</sup> Female literacy rates in Lesotho have resulted from poverty and economic challenges which prohibit male access to education. Males often drop out to work as herders, to supplement their family income and contributing to higher female literacy rates. Whilst non-formal education (NFE) provision catered for adult herders, it inadequately addressed their educational ambitions.<sup>23</sup> UNESCO (2012a) identified poverty as a global barrier to education affecting Lesotho's development ranking. Basotho males faced greater educational deprivation than girls because, from a young age, they were often recruited as herders thus disrupting their education. Some males continued herding until their stage into adulthood, further missing their access to adult education opportunities.

Even though education is central to human capital, Volti asks this question, 'But to what extent are achieved characteristics such as the possession of academic degrees and the number of years spent in school accurate indications of these capabilities?'<sup>24</sup> In Tanzania, the concept of 'development' is metaphorical and strongly ingrained in everyday thinking. Success in education and securing a good job is considered progress and development. Depending on traditional lifestyles such as herding livestock or hunting wildlife is seen as less modern or developed.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Interview with Khotso Molise, Checha Mokhotlong, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>22</sup>Interview with Mahao Neko, Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>23</sup>Selloane Pitikoe & Julia Preece, "The public image of herders in Lesotho and implication for the non- formal education curriculum," *African Identities* 15, no. 4, (2017) 457.

<sup>24</sup>Rudi Volti, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Work and Occupations (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, 116- 117.

<sup>25</sup>Dan Brockington, "The Politics and Ethnography of Environmentalisms in Tanzania," *African Affairs* 105, no. 418 (2006), 115.

Despite the decline of per capita livestock holdings since 1980- 1981, most of education was often funded through livestock sales. Interviews in 2001 revealed that households' heads sold livestock (cattle and small stock) to cover secondary school costs.<sup>26</sup> Matlole a farmer in Mokhotlong engaged in livestock keeping and by 2010, five of his children had completed secondary school financed by animal sales.<sup>27</sup> After college, his three sons were teachers, a nurse and soldier servants. Even though education was perceived as a means to a salaried position, unfortunately, the Lesotho job market was tougher. As a result, it became extremely difficult for the Lesotho job market to meet the demands of the growing population of graduates.

There were attempts made by the non-governmental organization of Sentebale to organize a night school for herd boys in Mokhotlong, however, it was not fully effective due to inadequate sensitization.<sup>28</sup> Not only were the interviewed herd boys along nearby villages (such as Checha, Mangaung and Ntlholohetsane near Mokhotlong town) clueless about Sentebale and its offices in Mokhotlong town, but they were also unaware of the night school for herders introduced by Sentebale at Matsoaing. Non-formal education (NFE) for herders was ineffective because limited available information on Basotho male herders has been largely descriptive and lacked theoretical depth. Among Basotho herders in Lesotho, most adult males exhibit either partial or complete illiteracy. While some adult herders initially enrolled in non-formal education (NFE) programs<sup>29</sup>, they often discontinued participation due to the semi-nomadic lifestyle inherent in herding. Additionally, the limited accessibility of NFE learning centres further contributes to this trend. This issue significantly hindered a comprehensive understanding of their identities, educational

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<sup>26</sup>Rudi Volti, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Work and Occupations (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, 158.

<sup>27</sup>Interview Potso Matlole, Checha Mokhotlong, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>28</sup>Interview with Lesole Nala, Tlokoeng Mokhotlong, 27<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>29</sup>Selloane Pitikoe & Pholoho Morojele, "Indigenous Knowledge/s of Survival: Implications for Lifelong Learning among the Basotho Herding Fraternity," *Educational Research for Social Change (ERSC)* 6, no. 1 (2017) 40.

aspirations and economic needs crucial for guiding the development of the curriculum and NFE programme.<sup>30</sup> As a result, the weakness of the current NFE in Lesotho was driven by donor agendas rather than to meet the local needs of Basotho.<sup>31</sup>

## **5.2 Herd Boys and Farmers Conflicts**

Conflicts associated with natural resource use were and are still common in rural areas of Africa.<sup>32</sup> Different natural resource schools of thought like influential “environmental security” and “common property management” perspectives argued that resource-related conflicts are strongly scarcity-driven while “political ecological historiography” or “political ecologists” expressed that the genesis of resource-related conflict is bred by divergent interests.<sup>33</sup> For instance, farmer-herder conflict in the Sahel was a type of resource-related conflict that seemingly aligns with a perspective that conflicts arise due to heightened competition over scarce resources manifested in terms like “resource conflicts,” “conflicts over resource access,” and even farmer–herder conflicts related to pasture, crop damage or field encroachment.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, climate change and population growth in Ghana,<sup>35</sup> paralleled by similar circumstances in Nigeria, have intensified land use competition between farmers and herders, precipitating conflicts over scarce resources.<sup>36</sup> Though overlooked, resource conflicts between herd boys and farmers in Mokhotlong were also prevalent. The conflict

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<sup>30</sup> Selloane Pitikoe & Julia Preece, “The public image of herders in Lesotho and implication for the non- formal education curriculum,” 458.

<sup>31</sup> Selloane Pitikoe, “Turning the herding lifestyle into a learning opportunity: Experiences from Lesotho,” 3.

<sup>32</sup> Matthew D. Turner, “Political ecology and the moral dimensions of “resource conflicts”: the case of farmer–herder conflicts in the Sahel,” *Political Geography* 23 (2004) 863.

<sup>34</sup> Matthew D. Turner, “Political ecology and the moral dimensions of “resource conflicts”: the case of farmer–herder conflicts in the Sahel,” 864- 866.

<sup>35</sup> Sebastian Angzoorokuu Paalo, “The politics of addressing farmer-herder conflicts in Ghana,” *Peacebuilding, DOI: 10.1080/21647259.2020.1740412*, (2020) 1.

<sup>36</sup> C. E. Balogun, “Social Capital: A Panacea for Farmers and Herders Conflict Management in Nigeria,” *Nigerian Journal of Rural Sociology* 22, no. 2 (2022) 41.

between these groups arose from divergent land use practices driven by different livelihood priorities amidst scarce resources. Herders' reliance on livestock often compromised crop conservation while farmers' dependence on cultivation for sustenance and income necessitated crop protection. These conflicting interests strained relations between the two groups.<sup>37</sup> The mountain terrain in Mokhotlong further limited arable land, thus placing additional pressure on the available resources. Mokhotlong's chief argued that:

“the existence of farmers and herd boys in our area were marked by rival interests, leading to occasional tensions. These conflicts often arose due to poorly controlled livestock which encroached into fields. The recurrent conflicts intensified during winter months when herd boys migrated to the winter grazing areas and cattle posts usually near villages and agricultural lands.”<sup>38</sup> In some cases, confrontations escalated into violence driven by potential compensation deductions from the herd boys' wages.<sup>39</sup>

Resource scarcity phenomenon that contributed to conflicts in natural resources management in the abovementioned corresponds to Neo-Malthusian ideas which highlighted the need to be aware of the dangers of population growth in scarce resource communities.<sup>40</sup> The Neo-Malthusians posited that as the population grow, the demand for essential resources such as land, water and pastures also increases.<sup>41</sup> As more people rely on these finite resources, competition among some user groups inclusive of herders and farmers intensifies. As a result, farmers and herders often find themselves in direct conflict due to overlapping resource needs. Most environmental programmes in the South still limit themselves to those resources that are fixed within delimited territories. Management becomes a matter of sharing finite resources among an increasing number of people.

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<sup>37</sup>Interview with Nku Nku, Mapholaneng, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>38</sup>Interview with Nthibi Matete, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>39</sup>Interview with Masilo Masilo, Checha Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>40</sup>Christian Boehm, “Land and Labour: Agrarian Change in Post-Retrenchment Lesotho,” in Q. Gausset, M. A. Whyte & T. Birch- Thomsen (eds), *Beyond Territory and Scarcity: Exploring Conflicts over Natural Resource Management* (2005)10.

<sup>41</sup>Israel Vusi Mashinini, “Sustainable Rural Development in Lesotho,” 2.

Dysfunctional, corrupt and political biases significantly failed to address the herder-farmer-herder conflicts in Mokhotlong.<sup>42</sup> Corruption and political ethnic manipulations have hindered Nigeria's legal system from fairly addressing disputes including farmers-herder conflicts.<sup>43</sup> Likewise, historically, mutual relationships between farmers and herders in Ghana were usually managed at the community level through customary mechanisms led by chiefs and village leaders.<sup>44</sup> However, some herders and cattle owners in Ghana opined that 'big men' manipulated the court.' Alhaji Gurusu also stated that 'politicians who are on the side of the farmers influenced the court's verdict against herders.' On the contrary, some farmers were of the view that 'big men' who benefited from herding (e.g., as cattle owners) have also been influencing the hierarchy of the Regional Security Council (REGSEC) not to effect the ejection exercise after the court ruling.'<sup>45</sup> In Lesotho, the herders' encroachment was dealt with based on the Law of Lerotholi.<sup>46</sup> Section 13 (4) (a) (b) (c) read as follows "(a) Any person claiming damages because of trespass committed by any animal sent to the pound shall inform the Chief or Headman of the amount of damages claimed. (b) If the owner of the animal, or any person acting on his behalf, disputes the amount claimed as damages, the Chief or Headman shall depute two independent persons to assess the damages: Provided that if either party is dissatisfied with the amount assessed such dissatisfied party may take the matter to court. (c) The Chief or Headman in charge of a pound shall, before releasing any impounded stock, demand from the owner the amount of any assessed damages and the pound fees..."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Interview with Lefa Ramokheseng, Mokhotlong, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>43</sup>C. E. Balogun, "Social Capital: A Panacea for Farmers and Herders Conflict Management in Nigeria," 42.

<sup>44</sup>Sebastian Angzoorokuu Paalo, "The politics of addressing farmer-herder conflicts in Ghana," 1.

<sup>45</sup>Sebastian Angzoorokuu Paalo, "The politics of addressing farmer-herder conflicts in Ghana, Peacebuilding," 12.

<sup>46</sup>The Law of Lerotholi promulgated in 1903, constitute the primary source of customary law in Lesotho.

<sup>47</sup> Lesotho Law Report, *CIV/APN/331/88* (1998) 4.

In this regard, Ramokheseng, a herd boy in Mokhotlong, complained that he encountered a case where his employer was ‘unfairly’ fined for the damages his livestock caused due to the bad history that was caused by past conflicts between the owner and the farmer. As a result, the herd boy significantly lost a sheep to that fine.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, the 76-year-old elder, Seqhobo (name withheld) in Mokhotlong argued that favouritism, corruption and bribery have significantly perpetuated herd boys' and farmers' conflicts.<sup>49</sup> There were two sides to the aforesaid issue. On one hand, in some cases, there were prevailing biases against herders who encroached on the restricted environment based on the general conception that is given to herd boys.<sup>50</sup> Conversely, instances of bribery by herders or livestock owners further complicated the enforcement process.<sup>51</sup> Endemic corruption or state weakness not only participated in escalating stock theft but also the farmer-herder conflict in Tanzania.<sup>52</sup> State employees frequently failed to enforce rules and their susceptibility to bribery undermined fair conflict resolution. There was a considerable amount of conflict between farmers and herders over farm invasion, however often bribed officials with their wealth. This phenomenon therefore reflected government deficiencies. Warioba Report also highlighted instances of bribery in court cases. There was also a prominent case of an agricultural extension officer who was publicly reprimanded by the regional commissioner for soliciting payment to assess alleged crop damage.<sup>53</sup> The absence of justice and compensation for damages emanated from herders' ability to bribe officials responsible for safeguarding villagers' rights. The herders could afford to bribe various parties, including agricultural officers, elders' meetings,

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<sup>48</sup>Interview with Lefa Ramokheseng, Mokhotlong, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>49</sup>Interview with Seqhobo (name withheld), Mokhotlong, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>50</sup>Interview with Lefa Ramokheseng, Mokhotlong, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>51</sup>Interview with Potso Matlole, Checha Mokhotlong, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>52</sup>Dan Brockington, “The Politics and Ethnography of Environmentalisms in Tanzania,” 109.

<sup>53</sup>Dan Brockington, “The Politics and Ethnography of Environmentalisms in Tanzania,” 108- 109.

police and judges at both primary and district courts. Their wealth enabled them to navigate the shortcomings of the Tanzanian state.

Conflicts often arose due to divergent land use practices and competing interests and this included intentional practice of grass burning during the dry season by herd boys.<sup>54</sup> From herd boys' perspectives, grass burning allowed fresh grass to grow rapidly.<sup>55</sup> This regrowth provided nutritious forage for their livestock. However; for farmers, this practice was detrimental because they utilized the grass for the compost which provided organic matter to enrich soil fertility and enhance crop yields.<sup>56</sup> Grass burning further caused crop damage. As a result, the aforesaid brewed conflicts between herd boys and farmers.

### **5.3 Social Exclusion**

Humans universally live in a social context, emphasizing the fundamental need for belonging. Exclusion from the group can potentially cause emotional distress. Herd boys in Lesotho experienced social exclusion, which significantly posed a threat to social capital.<sup>57</sup> Their lifestyle in cattle post segregated them from other youth and community members, resulting in a lack of socialization, education, support or guidance and many herd boys grew and continue to grow without a sense of connection or responsibility to others.<sup>58</sup> Some turned to drugs, particularly dagga, alcohol and risky sexual behaviour. Many herd boys reported that they engaged in those dangerous, risky and illegal behaviours simply because no one cared about them. For instance, despite his young age, Thabo left school and tended to sheep, goats and cattle in the mountain

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<sup>54</sup> Interview with Ntlibi Matete, Ntlhlolohetsane Mokhotlong, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Kalimo Moroosi , Checha Mokhotlong, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Ntlibi Matete, Ntlhlolohetsane Mokhotlong, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Kalimo Moroosi , Checha Mokhotlong, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>58</sup> Help Lesotho, "Herd boy training program," *helplesotho.org* (2016).

passes of Lesotho. Isolated for months, he interacted primarily with his herd and two dogs, visiting his family twice a year during winter to check, count and keep animals warm for a brief period. His communication with people was therefore strained as he was accustomed to expressing dissatisfaction through physical aggression when dealing with stubborn animals to achieve results. Additionally, one of the herd boys in Mokhotlong Mosae argued they spend months away from their families, often in freezing and hostile conditions. They therefore yearn for meaningful connection beyond their responsibilities as caretakers because the absence of regular human contact instilled in them profound feelings of isolation.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, the lack of mentorship left them navigating their challenges independently.

Lets'ohla, one of the herd boys argued that the only visits they received were from livestock owners and these visits served a specific purpose: to check on the well-being of the livestock.<sup>60</sup> Livestock owners focused on their economic interests, which were ensuring that their investments remained healthy. In this regard, herd boys perceived these visits as transactional rather than relational. Likewise, a lack of trust in hired herders in Ghana was common. Livestock owners often perceived the younger generation of Fulbe herders who daily managed cattle entrusted to them by their hired parents with suspicion.<sup>61</sup> They expected adherence to the terms under which their parents were hired as well as sticking to the ascetic lifestyle. Many farmers became anxious upon hearing reports of hired herders spending lavishly, drinking and engaging in womanizing in town. The usual reaction of farmers to such news was paying herders and kraals frequent unannounced visits to closely check the number of their cattle and monitor their conditions. Conversely, hired herders perceived frequent visits from stock owners as a personal affront,

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with Tankiso Mosae, Mokhotlong, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Palo Lets'ohla, Tlokoeng Mokhotlong, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>61</sup> Steve Tonah, "Migration and Farmer-Herder Conflicts in Ghana's Volta Basin," 164- 165.

interpreting it as a lack of confidence in their character. They felt like they were under constant surveillance with stock-owners even dictating their preferred lifestyle.

Like other nomadic populations in Africa, herd boys in Mokhotlong faced significant challenges accessing health services as they spent most of the months in cattle posts, thus becoming highly vulnerable to HIV/AIDs.<sup>62</sup> Some of her boys were open to modern health care. However, their semi-nomadic lifestyle of cattle posts in search of natural resources significantly impacted their well-being. Limited access to health care services compounded by insufficient health literacy and ineffective strategies for delivering proper care in remote areas became a predicament to herd boys. Consequently, the patterns of common diseases remained poorly understood. Some of the herd boys due to limited education and health literacy heavily relied on indigenous knowledge particularly traditional medicine.<sup>63</sup> Scarcity and far-distanced healthcare facilities have since time immemorial made traditional medicine (herbal plants and aphrodisiacs) a practical solution.<sup>64</sup> The reliance on traditional medicines was further strengthened by the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019. For instance, Mahao a Mokhotlong-based herd boy chose not to undergo HIV/ AIDS testing in hospitals, instead, he relied on locally accessible traditional medicine due to his belief in the healing power of nature.<sup>65</sup> While traditional medicine has its merits, it's worth highlighting that it fell short of curing or treating chronic illnesses like HIV/AIDS. Former home nurse Nthorecounted several cases of herders in denial of their status who chose aphrodisiacs over proper treatment,

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<sup>62</sup> Interview with Fako Seqhobo Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Masilo Masilo, Checha Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>64</sup> A. Moteetee & B. E. Van Wyk, "The medical ethnobotany of Lesotho: a review," *Bothalia* 41, no. 1 (2011) 209-211. For instance, minor common ailments such as headache was cured by inhaling burning stick of *monkhoane* (*Heteromorpha aborescens*) or by inhaling fresh leaves of *lengana* (*Artemisia afra*) and stomachaches by chewing roots of *hloko* grass (*elionurus muticus*).

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Neko Mahao Checha Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

resulting in fatal consequences.<sup>66</sup> Another misconception among herd boys was that sleeping tablets could prevent HIV.<sup>67</sup> Early HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns led by NGOs, coordinated by the Ministry of Health informed Basotho through documents and radio programs about HIV/AIDS and raised awareness about this chronic disease and by the 1990s, these campaigns peaked. Despite these efforts, the behavior change remained elusive as evidenced by rising infection rates among sexually active groups including herd boys.<sup>68</sup> Many remained unwilling to reject ineffective HIV prevention myths due to ignorance and limited health literacy.<sup>69</sup>

Some herders in Mokhotlong faced a unique set of socio-economic challenges when they aspired to marry.<sup>70</sup> This was bred by financial barriers emanating from typically low and irregular income associated with herding. This economic instability made it difficult for herd boys to accumulate the bride price which was a customary prerequisite for marriage. Furthermore, the nomadic nature of their work which often required them to move frequently in search of grazing pastures complicated the establishment of stable relationships and the maintenance of family life. One of the herd boys recounted a case where he saw with fellow mate committing zoophilia.<sup>71</sup> This phenomenon was also observed in Israel where a young man joined shepherds for the first time to help them herd sheep in the summertime on the hillsides. A few days later, he had "the urge" and he asked one of the shepherds what should be done in such circumstances. "Grab a sheep and

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<sup>66</sup> Interview with Matefo Ntho, Mangaung Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>67</sup> Mangosa Khang, HIV/AIDS Support Group in Both- Bothe, "Lesotho: Navigating Discourses of Prevention and Care," PhD, University of KwaZulu- Natal (2018) 217- 216

<sup>68</sup> Matšelis M. Mphale Emmanuel G. Rwambali Mokhantšo G. Makoae, "HIV/AIDS and its Impacts on Land Tenure and Livelihoods in Lesotho," *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations* (2002) 12.

<sup>69</sup> Mangosa Khang, HIV/AIDS Support Group in Both- Bothe, "Lesotho: Navigating Discourses of Prevention and Care," PhD, University of KwaZulu- Natal (2018) 217- 216

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Lefa Ramokheseng , Checha Mokhotlong, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Lesia Phatela, Checha Mokhotlong, 28<sup>th</sup> December 20204.

enjoy," he was told. ... Ya, we all screw sheep, but not the ugliest one in the herd!"<sup>72</sup> Additionally, the social status of herders was often lower than other classes thus more often than not leading to stigmatization and reduced marriage prospects. The physical demands of the job also contributed to hygiene stigma which further diminished their attractiveness as potential spouses. Moreover, the time-consuming responsibilities of herding limited opportunities for social interaction and community engagement essential for forming romantic relationships. The intersection of these factors created a multifaceted struggle for hired herders seeking to marry. Some of them who married failed to constantly provide for their families, and their status as providers was significantly affected.<sup>73</sup>

The non-governmental NGOs have historically supported pastoralists and herders, dating back to the 1970s.<sup>74</sup> However, their development efforts were closely tied to their vision for the future of pastoralism in specific regions and their perception of government structures' roles. Despite having resources that governments lacked, NGOs faced challenges in effectively addressing pastoralists' needs. Restoration strategies such as restocking after droughts were common. However, a critical weakness emerged; the 'local focus.' When East African pastoralists relied on distant pastures and were impacted by policies made elsewhere, local perspectives struggled to address these complexities. Few agencies have adequately tackled these issues or supported government services to enhance their capacity in Lesotho including Mokhotlong.<sup>75</sup> This phenomenon was exemplified by the inaccessibility of cattle posts in the village outskirts. Even though NGOs were present, not

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<sup>72</sup>Dafna Shir-Vertesh, "Love Has (NO) Boundaries: Researching a Sexual Taboo," *International Journal of Social Science Studies* 1, no. 1 (2013) 163.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Polo Sekete, Ha Lebopo, Mokhotlong, 27<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>74</sup> Leif Manger, "East African Pastoralism and Underdevelopment: An Introduction."

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Polo Sekete, Ha Lebopo, Mokhotlong, 27<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

all herd boys benefited due to the impracticality of leaving animals unattended and some NGOs' failure to reach them.

Due to social exclusion and identity, herd boys in Mokhotlong often reacted aggressively when they perceived vulnerability or underestimation.<sup>76</sup> Henry posited that cultures with substantial inequalities often exhibit 'lower-status compensation' affecting various groups based on social class, education, income, ethnicity, race or age.<sup>77</sup> These status disparities threaten the sense of social worth of individuals in the status lower-status groups. To mitigate this threat, there is a greater likelihood that they engage in vigilant self-defence against those who threaten their sense of worth.<sup>78</sup> Additionally, the culture of honour posits that individuals, especially communities that are dependent on animal herding (pastoralism) respond to threats and unkind behaviour by defending their reputation through revenge and violence. Culture of honour emerged as an economically- functional cultural adaptation in populations heavily reliant on animal herding.<sup>79</sup> Notably, herding societies due to the precariousness of herdsman tend to exhibit defensive self-defence strategies and aggressive responses when their social worth is threatened. Herders also adopt an aggressive stance to protect their animals at all costs.<sup>80</sup>

#### **5.4 Cultural Preservation and Adaptation**

Given the afore-highlighted cultural socio-cultural issues, the question remained; what adaptations enabled the herd boys in Mokhotlong to preserve this culture and survive amidst such challenges?

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<sup>76</sup> Interview with Pule Madona, Mokhotlong, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>77</sup> P. J. Henry, "Low-Status Compensation: A Theory for Understanding the Role of Status in Cultures of Honor," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 97, no. 3 (2009) 451.

<sup>78</sup> P. J. Henry, "Low-Status Compensation: A Theory for Understanding the Role of Status in Cultures of Honor," 452.

<sup>79</sup> Yiming Cao, Benjamin Enke, Armin Falk, Paola Giuliano & Nathan Nunn, "Herding, Warfare, and a Culture of Honor: Global Evidence," *Working Paper 29250*, National Bureau of Economic Research, 2021,

<sup>80</sup> P. J. Henry, "Low-Status Compensation: A Theory for Understanding the Role of Status in Cultures of Honor," 452.

Herd boys played a crucial role in safeguarding and maintaining transhumance pastoralism in Mokhotlong. Their inherited skills and traditional knowledge sustained the continuity of this livelihood practice.<sup>81</sup> Pastoralism, classified as an economic-cultural type or traditional economy, still exists in Mokhotlong thus manifesting cultural preservation and adaptation. Adaptation refers to the development developmental process through which a community chooses to embrace specific cultural practices like subsistence systems and resource utilization patterns of resource.<sup>82</sup> The adaptive strategy was shaped by a plethora of factors including the nature of the environment, social values, cultural traditions, technological development and external influences.<sup>83</sup>

In Mokhotlong, herd boys incorporated their knowledge of resources and social relationships as their traditional adaptive strategies.<sup>84</sup> Resource management which incorporates the human action of harvesting resources from the surrounding environment was central to the adaptive strategies of societies. However, not all practices employed by herd boys were advantageous, particularly towards resource management.<sup>85</sup> Ecologists distinguished between rational resource management which considers the rate of reproduction of the exploited resources in meeting human needs and non-rational resource management which disrupts the equilibrium of the affected ecosystems. Notably, the survival of herding tradition amidst of evolving environment was due to herd boys' possession of knowledge about resources and their reliance on reciprocal social relationships that assisted them to perform their traditional adaptive strategies, thus constituting a form of capital.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Interview with Polo Sekete, Ha Lebopo Mokhotlong, 27<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

<sup>82</sup> Igor Krupnik, *Arctic Adaptations: Native Whalers and Reindeer Herders of Northern Eurasia*, Hanover & London: University of Press of New England (1993) 18.

<sup>83</sup> Igor Krupnik, *Arctic Adaptations: Native Whalers and Reindeer Herders of Northern Eurasia*, 8-18

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Pitso Fihlo, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Neo Matete, Ha Lebopo Mokhotlong, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>86</sup> Chengcheng Zhang, Wenjun Li & Mingming Fan, "Adaptation of herders to droughts and privatization of rangeland-use rights in the arid Alxa Left Banner of Inner Mongolia," *Journal of Environmental Management* 126, (2013) 185.

Like in Mongolia, natural capital which typically incorporates natural resources and environmental services provided by nature was central to the preservation of pastoralism by herd boys in Mokhotlong.<sup>87</sup> Research suggests that full ownership of these resources was not always necessary for sustainable outcomes; instead, access rights played a crucial role. For herders, access to natural grasses was vital due to the unpredictable climate in arid regions, resulting in varying grass distribution. In the late 1900s, herders freely utilized natural grasses across extensive rangelands, adapting to resource heterogeneity during drought years. Access to water from sources such as wells also constituted a critical form of natural capital.

The two primary forms of social capital involve “bonding” and “bridging” social capital.<sup>88</sup> Due to the bonding social capital or relationship that existed among herders and village (*gacha*) leaders in Mongolia, they were able to connect at the local level and during dry years, these connections assisted them in coping with drought. *Gacha* leaders traditionally brought herders together to find ways to adapt to drought, such as cooperating to dig new wells. *Gachas*’s responsibilities included resolving matters such as disputes among herders. The traditional mobility of herders, which allowed them to reach better resources during droughty seasons facilitated the establishment of close connections between different communities. Pastoralism and herding in Mokhotlong relied on the interdependent relationship among the chief, council, pastoralists and herd boys who collectively had a role in the management of natural resources.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>Chengcheng Zhang, Wenjun Li & Mingming Fan, “Adaptation of herders to droughts and privatization of rangeland-use rights in the arid Alxa Left Banner of Inner Mongolia,” 186.

<sup>88</sup>Chengcheng Zhang, Wenjun Li & Mingming Fan, “Adaptation of herders to droughts and privatization of rangeland-use rights in the arid Alxa Left Banner of Inner Mongolia,” 186.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Nku Nku, Mapholaneng Mokhotlong, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

Cultural capital which reflects people's knowledge of their environment and their behaviour, traditions and language significantly sustains the herding communities. In arid regions, the experience and adaptations have formed a mutual social memory among herders and this social memory has been passed down through the generations.<sup>90</sup> Herders' profound knowledge of grazing patterns and the heterogeneity of grass resources and other key resources and their application demonstrated their understanding of their local environment. Likewise, herd boys in Mokhotlong drew upon generational knowledge to manage grazing patterns.<sup>91</sup> This traditional knowledge enabled them to fulfil their resource-scarce Mokhotlong environments.

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<sup>90</sup> Chengcheng Zhang, Wenjun Li & Mingming Fan, "Adaptation of herders to droughts and privatization of rangeland-use rights in the arid Alxa Left Banner of Inner Mongolia," 186.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Lebenya Lebenya, Ntlholohetsane Mokhotlong, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024.

## Chapter Six: Summary and Conclusion

### 6.1 Summary

The economic allure of pastoralism in Mokhotlong lies in its self-reliant nature, serving as the cornerstone of livelihood for many, including herd boys. This independence reduced their dependency on the government for survival. However, the romanticism of this means of livelihood has often given people the misconception that these societies were food self-sufficient or survived quite well from pastoralism. However, that's not the case especially when giving close attention to the custodians of this practice, herd boys. The challenges herd boys encountered ranged from social, economic, political and cultural dimensions. Herd boys in Mokhotlong grappled with challenges arising from their role in transhumance pastoralism. The seasonal movement of livestock in response to climate variations often exposed herd boys to extreme weather conditions, significantly affecting both their health and livestock productivity. Living in the remote cattle posts further exacerbated their vulnerability. In addition, the year-round job of herding limited leisure time and opportunities for personal growth. Indigenous knowledge was very central to livestock production and the survival of herd boys in cattle posts. Despite of lack of formal education, herd boys employed various practical strategies such as using visual matching utilizing tones during livestock entry into kraals to count them. Adaptability, opportunism and the philosophy of Ubuntu – emphasizing interconnectedness and mutual support –served as key coping mechanisms. To mitigate the impact of climate change, particularly induced drought-induced pastoral shortages, herd boys implemented supplementary feeding like cut-and-carry systems (for instance stover and grass). These adaptive practices were crucial for their resilience in the evolving landscape.

Herding practices and herd boys in Mokhotlong were often associated with social stigma due to low socioeconomic status stemming from significant wage and income disparities that limited the

financial capital of herd boys. This phenomenon hindered the ability for purchasing power vital for meeting basic needs and access to education which served as a proxy for prestige and salaried position in this modern era. The income wages often resulted in intergenerational poverty as it was very difficult for many herd boys to accumulate wealth or make investment investments. Furthermore, income disparities were further exacerbated by limited or no government interventions based on the 'precariousness' nature of their job. Some of these individuals faced the psychological threat of stigma associated with their economic standing which was often seen by the broader society as controller.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, herding in many instances was seen by some educated classes as a fundamentally flawed way of life due to the status of disparities and greater poverty associated with it.

The nexus of tradition and modernity significantly affected livestock herding practices and land use patterns in Mokhotlong. While communal living and reliance on crop and animal farming persisted, externally- influenced modern economic forces such as mining, water exports and eco-tourism competed for land historically utilised for grazing herds. Due to capital and technological constraints, very poor countries including Lesotho often accepted foreign aid.<sup>2</sup> However, this assistance often came with costs. In Mokhotlong, the economic and political underrepresentation or marginalization of herd boys was significantly rooted internationally in influenced neo-liberal policies, reminiscent of a phase of neo-colonization. Drawing from Kwame Nkrumah's 1965 concept of Neo-Colonialism, one sees that supposedly independent states may appear sovereign, but have their economic systems and political policy and decisions effectively influenced and

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<sup>1</sup> P. J. Henry, "Low-Status Compensation: A Theory for Understanding the Role of Status in Cultures of Honor," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 97, no. 3 (2009) 452- 453.

<sup>2</sup> Henk Huisman & Gerard Schmitz, "Resource Survey and Decentralized Planning Priorities in Lesotho," 85.

directed by external sources.<sup>3</sup> In Mokhotlong, these challenges faced by herd boys were compounded by the government's adoption of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), the implementation of the privatization Act and the modernization of land tenure — largely influenced by international bodies like the World Bank, IMF and MCC. These policy shifts facilitated foreign investment, resulting in the construction and operation of projects such as Polihali Dam, Letseng Diamond mining and the protection of Khubelu Sub- catchment Area. Unfortunately, these projects encroached upon already scarce land, including grazing areas. The government of Lesotho's promotion of capitalism came at the expense of the indigenous way of life, including herding. One might therefore agree with Majara who contended that indigenization represents a struggle for economic independence against imperialism, where the African ruling class, shaped by Western imperialism, remains a conduit for Western interests.<sup>4</sup> James Ferguson also critiques the concept of "development." He argues that development projects often fail to achieve economic stability because these projects inadvertently "de-politicize" resource allocation questions and strengthen bureaucratic power.<sup>5</sup>

The herding tradition in Mokhotlong was significantly impacted by the wave of ecological modernization influenced by international environmental treaties and environmental conservation efforts.<sup>6</sup> Environmental ecological economists highlighted that the developments from the 1980s onwards witnessed the process that was referred to as the 'economizing of ecology' and the

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<sup>3</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism; The Last State of Imperialism* (New York: International Publishers, 1966) ix.

<sup>4</sup> M. Majara, "The Lesotho Economy and the Problems and Prospects of the Indigenous Business Class," A Research Project Submitted to the Department of Political and Administrative Studies in Pursuance of a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Public Administration (1991)3.

<sup>5</sup> James Ferguson, "The Anti- Politics Machine," in Aradhana Shirma & Akhil Gupta (eds), *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*, UK: Blackwell Publishing (2006) 259.

<sup>6</sup> Arthur, P. J. Mol, Gert Spaargaren & David, A. Sonnenfeld, 'Ecological Modernization Theory: Taking Stock, Moving Forward,' in S. Lockie, D. A. Sonnenfeld and D. Fisher (Eds), *Handbook of Environmental Sociology*, London: Routledge (2013).

‘ecologizing of the economy.’ In this pastoral district, heavily reliant on herd boys and herding practices, once-grazing lands experienced restrictions driven by conventional conservation policies. Lesotho’s history reflects external agencies’ intervention in the pursuit of sustainable development, aiming to enhance the livestock economy while conserving grasslands.<sup>7</sup> However, the top-down approach to Mokhotlong areas like the Khubedu sub-catchment and Thabana-Ntlenyana Mountain which used to constitute grazing areas often overlooked community considerations. Additionally, in Lesotho, less than one per cent of the land is protected and ongoing trans-frontier initiatives with South Africa included the Maloti-Drakensberg Trans-frontier Conservation and Development Area Programme which traversed, resulted in grazing restrictions.<sup>8</sup> This downtown top-down approach underscores the secondary role assigned to community welfare. The afore-highlighted factors bred competition over land which together with other factors including climate change, unsustainable range practices, and exploitation of natural resources contributed to the scarcity of natural resource resources. During the mobility of these animals, they sometimes encroached on the fields of farmers, giving rise to farmer-herder conflicts.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

Lesotho faced the challenge of reconciling its historical pastoral practice with the imperatives and demands of a capitalist system, all while striving for economic autonomy. Manger’s exploration of East African Pastoralism and Underdevelopment raised a very profound emphasis on the need to move beyond simplistic views when exploring the relationship between humans and the environment.<sup>9</sup> For many Mokhotlong communities, the land served as a vital means of production

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<sup>7</sup> Tim Quinlan, “Grassland Degradation and Livestock Rearing in Lesotho,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no. 3 (1995) 491.

<sup>8</sup> Orange-Senqu River Basin Orange-Senqu River Commission Secretariat Governments of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa, “Demonstration Project on Community Based Rangeland Management in Lesotho,” 4.

<sup>9</sup> Leif Manger, “East African pastoralism and underdevelopment: An introduction.”

for pastoralism. As custodians of this production, herd boys heavily depended on natural resources to fulfil their responsibilities. It is therefore fundamental to consider that social, economic, political and cultural empowerment could be put into consideration to assist crucial yet often overlooked stakeholders.

In Mokhotlong, the neglect of herding tradition stemmed from government prioritization and backing of ‘big’ development projects such as mining, eco-tourism and water supported by neo-liberal ideology. Dependency theorists hold the standpoint that the international system aligns its interests with local dependent classes in the Third World and while some are influenced by traditional Marxist reduction of state downplay the state’s role, considering it historically insignificant or merely a product of the global system.<sup>10</sup> Frantz Fanon, in his analysis of independent Africa’s position within the global order, advocates for a robust state capable of safeguarding the nation against imperialists’ ambitions and enhancing the well-being of the masses.<sup>11</sup> What Fanon observes is a reality of feeble governmental institutions that serve as the servants of a new African bourgeoisie, which has fully aligned itself with foreign interests.

In light of Frantz Fanon’s call for a strong state to protect the nation and enhance citizens’ quality of life, it is crucial to address the plight of politically and economically underrepresented herding tradition and herd boys in Mokhotlong. Since the economic livelihood of many Basotho in Mokhotlong has for decades been dependent on herding, the government could adopt a balanced approach by promoting development projects that contribute to Lesotho’s economy while simultaneously supporting poverty alleviation and preserving traditional subsistence herding

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<sup>10</sup> Tony Smith, “The Underdevelopment of Development Literature: The Case of Dependency Theory,” *World Pol* 247 (1979) 262- 63.

<sup>11</sup> Tony Smith, “The Underdevelopment of Development Literature: The Case of Dependency Theory,” 262.

practices. This delicate balance would acknowledge the impact of internationally influenced developments in Mokhotlong while safeguarding the livelihoods of marginalized communities. Political empowerment through policy support could be of great significance to herd boys. Legal protection can help ensure that herd boys have legal protection against exploitation and unfair labour practices by establishing minimum wage laws and enforcing labour rights.

Education occupies a centre stage in social and economic development; however, a significant proportion of herd boys remain illiterate in Lesotho including Mokhotlong, thus posing a persistent challenge. To address this chronic illiteracy among Fulani herders in Nigeria, the government introduced the nomadic education program.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, in Lesotho particularly in Mokhotlong, there exists an opportunity to bridge the literacy gap by implementing a comparable nomadic education initiative. The unique circumstances faced by herd boys; many of whom spent extended periods in remote cattle posts necessitate innovative solutions. Mobile schools could serve as practical means to reach these isolated areas without herd boys neglecting their herding responsibilities. Drawing from the Nigerian experience, these mobile units could feature collapsible classrooms that can be assembled or disassembled within thirty minutes. Each unit might accommodate three classrooms, providing education to 15 to 20 children per class.<sup>13</sup> To optimize accessibility, classes could be scheduled during herd boys' free time, even extending into evening hours. Vocational training can offer training in livestock management, veterinary care, and modern agricultural practices. This can enhance productivity and open up new income-generating opportunities. By adopting such a program, Lesotho could elevate the living standards of rural communities, thus unlocking the potential capacities of the herding population.

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<sup>12</sup> Ismail Iro, "Nomadic Education and Education for Nomadic Fulani," [www.yesneko.com](http://www.yesneko.com)

<sup>13</sup> Ismail Iro, "Nomadic Education and Education for Nomadic Fulani," [www.yesneko.com](http://www.yesneko.com)

Economic empowerment can assist in mitigating the economic marginalization faced by herd boys, particularly due to low wages. To achieve this, several strategies can be implemented. Economic empowerment of herd boys in Lesotho can be achieved through a variety of measures, focusing on enhancing their skills, providing better financial opportunities and ensuring supportive policies. Enhancing the skills of herd boys is essential. Second, creating better financial opportunities through microfinance; offering tailored microloans and savings accounts can enable herd boys to invest in livestock and diversify in other opportunities. These financial services can assist in bridging the economic vulnerability of herd boys. Additionally, insurance schemes specifically for livestock can help develop and protect herd boys from financial losses due to disease, theft, or natural disasters. Moreover, alternative livelihoods through diversification programs could assist herd boys to in diversifying their income sources.

## 6. 3 Bibliography

### Interviews

<b>Names</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>
Anonymous	Herder	37	Mokhotlong	23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2024
Anonymous Officer	Mokhotlong Urban Council	-	Mokhotlong	17 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Anonymous Police 1	Police Officer in stock theft unit	-	Mokhotlong Police Station	16 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Anonymous Police 2	Police Officer in stock theft unit	-	Mokhotlong Police Station	16 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Fihlo Pitso	Herd boy	24	Ntlholohetsane	17 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Khabo Khabo	Doctor & Pastoralist	-	Maputsoe	19 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
Khoabane Mpho	Farmer	34	Mpharane	18 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
Khomo Sello	Herd boy	27	Checha	21 <sup>st</sup> May 2024
Lebenya Lebenya	Elder	79	Ntlholohetsane	21 <sup>st</sup> May 2024
Lebopo Ralinotsi	Herd boy	24	Checha	29 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Lehana Lehana	Farmer	76	Ntlholohetsane	17 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Lekhema Thato	Herd boy	36	Checha	29 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Leluma Bereng	District Agricultural Officer	-	Mokhotlong	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2024

Leotla	Law Student	24	Roma	8 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
Thembegile				
Lepolesa Mateu	Owner of herds	79	Checha	19 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Lereko Lereko	Elder	75	Mapholaneng	29 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Lets'ohla Palo	Herd boy	19	Tlokoeng	28 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Lisene Lisema	Pastoralist	72	Tlokoeng	28 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Madona Pule	Elder	-	Mokhotlong	28 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Mahao Neko	Herd boy	27	Mokhotlong	29 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Makhetha	Sustainable	30	Roma	19 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
Malebusa	Energy student			
Mashoai Pita	Herder	31	Ha Lebopo	19 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Masilo Karabo	Farmer	28	Ha Nyenye	15 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
Masilo Masilo	Herder	31	Checha	29 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Matete Neo	Herd boy	18	Ha Lebopo	19 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Matete Ntlibi	Chief	-	Ntlholohetsane	17 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Matlole Potso	Farmer	-	Checha	28 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Molao Molemo	Herd boy	21	Checha	17 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Molapo Keketso	Chief	-	Ha Mathata	28 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
Molise Khotso	Herd boy	27	Checha	27 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Moorosi Ntai	pastoralist	78	Maputsoe	18 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
Mosae Tankiso	Herd boy	28	Mokhotlong	27 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Mpiti Sekele	Elder	82	Mokhotlong	15 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Nala Lesole	Pastoralist	45	Tlokoeng	27 <sup>th</sup> December 2023

Name withheld	Herder	38	Mokhotlong	21 <sup>st</sup> May 2024
Nku Nku	Elder	68	Mapholaneng	29 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Ntho Matefo	Former Nurse	65	Magaung	29 December 2023
Nts'ekhe	Maputsoe Urban	-	Maputsoe Urban	28 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
Nts'ekhe	Council		Council	
Palima Tikoe	Teacher	42	Mokhotlong	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Phalima Bosiu	Pastoralist	56	Ntlholohetsane	20 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Rakoe Lukas	Teacher	29	Maputsoe	18 April 2024
Phatela Lesia	Herd boy	26	Mokhotlong	28 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Ramokheseng	Elder	-	Mokhotlong	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Lefa				
Sekete Polo	Pastoralist	-	Ha Lebopo	27 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Seqhobo (name withheld)	Elder	76	Mokhotlong	29 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Tseko Tseko	Herd boy	23	Ntlholohetsane	17 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Tsoeu Mats'oeu	Pastoralist	76	Ha Moholisa	26 <sup>th</sup> April 2024

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