



**EFFECTS OF LIVESTOCK THEFT ON THE LIVELIHOOD OF PEOPLE IN
RURAL COMMUNITIES: A CASE STUDY OF AMACWERHA TRADITIONAL
AUTHORITY IN ALFRED NDZO DISTRICT,
EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE**

by

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Requirements for the degree of Master of Social Science
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DECLARATION

This is to confirm that this
thesis is my own work which
I have never previously submitted to any other university for
any purpose. The citations used
have been acknowledged and referenced.

Signed on the ...17.....day ofJanuary..... 2024

Signature of candidate..........

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all the livestock farmers residing in the AmaCwerha Traditional Authority, who work hard daily to ensure that their families are well fed, who do this with an aim of ensuring a secure future for their children and their community; but in all they find themselves faced with a struggle of stock theft. This is to shed a light that acknowledges that you are not alone.

This is also dedicated to my late mother Khethiwe Nobongile MaCwerha Nogwaza and to my princesses and prince, Asakhanya Nogwaza, Snoyolo Nogwaza and Phawu Sisa Mawaba, oku kukubonisa ba akubalulekanga ukuba sisukaphi, okubalulekileyo kukwazi uba siyaphi.

Snoyolo ngokubona Asakhanya Amandla kaThixo!

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As written in Hebrews 11:1 and 4 “*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*” Lord this paper is the proof that you are indeed the God who restores and multiplies, you have been my pillar and you have been the light throughout the year.

My endless gratitude goes to the following people:

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- To Inkosana Mafolosi of AmaCwerha Traditional Authority, *AAH Zwelithini! Enkosi kakhulu ngokundamnkela emhlabeni wakho.*
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ABSTRACT

Rural farmers choose to engage in livestock farming; some do with an aim to of being able to put food on the table for their families while some engage in livestock farming with economic reasons and ensuring future economic stability for their families. However, rural farmers in this bracket are faced with numerous challenges that includes severe drought as well as stock theft. The annual crime statistics reports from The South African Police elucidates that rural livestock farmers that are based in are highly affected by stock theft. This means that rural farmers incur costs that precedes the costs meant for production and enhancing security in the outskirts, and because their aims of farming differs according to one's needs, the effects that they bear also differs. This study explored the extent, determining factors, and effects of stock theft on the livelihoods of the rural farmers in the AmaCwerha Traditional Authority area. Qualitative techniques were adopted with an aim of gaining in-depth discernment about the nature and extent of stock theft through the experiences of rural farmers. The primary data was collected through utilising semi-structured one-on-one interviews which were done with twenty (n=20) participants who are based in the AmaCwerha Traditional Authority area. Rational choice theory as well as routine activity theory were the theories employed by the study to explain how rural farmers become victims of stock theft. The primary forms of violence that were observed included physical assaults, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, and property theft and damage. The findings from this study shows that nature and the extent of this disturbing behaviour manifests itself in the AmaCwerha areas and for it to be fully tackled it will require the collective attention of various authorities. The findings drawn from the perspectives of the participants reveals very disturbing and devastating patterns that includes violent behaviours and threats against rural livestock farmers, their families and shepherds. It has been evident that stock theft instils a huge impact on the South African livestock farming sector and it importantly threatens the livelihoods and sustainability of the rural farmers and their families.

Key terms: *Rural farmers, livestock, crime statistics, stock theft, livelihoods.*

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Countries on the African continent are characterised by large areas that are plagued by under- and semi-development, and South Africa is one of these developing countries that is still crawling towards the standards that developed countries have achieved. South African governance depends on several factors and resources to see its status change from a developing to a developed country, and these resources include its richness in natural resources and minerals (Schneider, 2005). South Africa is divided into provinces, and each province has resources that can be or are utilised to uplift the economy. For instance, Gauteng is rich in minerals such as gold, North West is rich in platinum, and the Western Cape is rich in fisheries and wine, while the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal are celebrated for their agricultural and livestock resources (Biyase & Zwane, 2018).

It is vital to acknowledge the significant contribution of agriculture in both global and rural economies. Agriculture is defined as “the art and science of cultivating the soil, growing crops and raising livestock”, which are activities that involve refining and processing plant and animal products that are distributed to markets for financial gain (State of Food and Agriculture, 2021: xii). The sustainable production of agricultural products is dependent on the primary agricultural sector that produces both food and non-food products. These industries are fisheries, forestry, livestock and animal husbandry, aquaculture, and the growing of crops. Globally, the agricultural sector produces billions of tonnes of food yearly and creates billions of employment opportunities, thus making it the backbone of global economies through its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of all countries (Mayers, 1973).

The agricultural and forestry sectors provide raw materials such as grain and corn and wood for manufacturing and producing furniture and paper products respectively. These sectors provide a vast number of the world’s consumer essentials, from food, wool, cotton, leather and fabrics to many other agricultural products that are a necessity for survival. Producing, processing, and marketing these essentials provide economic opportunities that include international trade, the reduction of imports while exports are increased, and the strengthening

of foreign exchange (Mayers, 1973). Agriculture remains the most significant role-player in the economy of most rural areas in both developed and developing countries. In developing countries, many of which are located on the African continent, livestock farming, and mainly small-scale communal farming, is not only an economic enterprise but also a form of ensuring food security and a tool to alleviate poverty (Coleman, 2023). However, the crime of stock theft¹ has been gradually increasing annually, especially in rural communities, and this has caused devastation to both the agricultural industry and traditional communities (TLU SA, 2023). In an ideal world, agri-food systems should be resilient and sustainable and farmers should produce sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to feed all residents. In turn, farmers should be able to generate livelihoods that guarantee their economic success so that the nation's access to food and other related products is ensured.

1.2 Background and Research Problem

Many families in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape depend on livestock which is a main commodity in the region. Traditional economies, such as those in rural areas that are commonly populated by rural and relatively disadvantaged people, consider livestock their traditional currency as it alleviates poverty and enables them to sustain their livelihoods (Green, 2013). It is undeniable that owning and trading in livestock in indigenous rural communities in South Africa enhances socioeconomic resilience. The ownership of livestock is thus a valuable commodity as it is used as a medium of exchange in trade and as a means of sustaining livelihoods. In many rural communities, livestock owners keep mixed herds of various livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats, and chickens. These animals are ranked in value according to the extent of their multiple uses and their significance in ensuring subsistence and generating wealth (de Klerk, 2021).

The extent to which cattle, goats, and chicken are valued and looked after is evidence of a complex relationship among factors such as owning livestock, being able to secure a homestead for the family, adhering to prevailing belief systems, and socio-ecological becoming (Shava & Masuku, 2019), and livestock therefore has social, economic, spiritual, and ecological significance in rural communities. For example, cattle or cows are used to pay *ilobola* when a man wants to take a wife, which is known as *uMakoti* in the Xhosa tradition. Cows produce milk that is used for many household essentials such as tea and making 'maas', which is a

¹ Note: stock theft and livestock theft are used interchangeably in this dissertation.

product derived from sour milk. Moreover, goats are slaughtered in traditional ceremonies to communicate with and appease the ancestors (De Haan, Van Veen, Brandenburg, Gauthier, Gall, Mearns & Simeon, 2001).

People with large herds of livestock are considered wealthy in rural communities. Here livestock is used in ceremonies and are slaughtered for their meat and skins. Their skins are used for creating traditional art and decorations such as *Intsilathi*, *Isidwaba*, and *Imbadada*, which are used in Xhosa and Zulu traditional practices. People with large herds gain respect locally and beyond because of their breadth of experience, skills, and knowledge about livestock and its reproduction, upkeep, and health, and they are revered and broadly consulted (de Klerk, 2021). However, many men from rural areas nowadays choose to migrate to urban areas where they work in the mines, factories, and other industries. They save much of the money they earn and use these savings to purchase cattle, sheep, and goats. Many become successful and this is traditionally referred to as *intsebenzo*. Those who own livestock are filled with pride as it means they are successful and they will pass their success as an inheritance, or as *Ilifa* in IsiXhosa, to their children. They groom their male children to be able to look after the livestock and share this intergenerational experience to grow wealth.

Livestock also serves as livelihood assurance as it ensures food security. Products like meat, milk, and eggs are often plentiful sources of nutrition, while other products such as hides and feathers also ensure an income. Milk, or *ubisi*, is usually fermented and turned into a number of products such as buttermilk, or *amasi*, and cream and whey that is commonly referred to as *ulaza* in IsiXhosa. Rural disadvantaged communities use the waste from livestock, known as *ubulongwe*, as polish (*ukusinda*) to clean or plaster raw earth floors and walls (*ukutyabeka*). The dry cow dung (*amalongwe*) and *ingqokoqwane* (goat and sheep dry dung) can be used to make fire, while all old dry livestock dung is used as fertiliser when preparing the soil for planting crops.

Among all livestock species, cattle are regarded by the indigenous communities as the most important as they are pivotal in activities such as ploughing. In many rural areas, oxen, instead of tractors are used to pull ploughs (*ikhuba*) when ploughing and pull sledges (*isileyi*) filled with corn (or mealies) during harvest time. Giving someone livestock as a gift or as a token of appreciation for a service, a visit, or to bid someone farewell is also a common practice in rural areas. Livestock is also gifted as *Inqoma* (in IsiXhosa) or *ukusisa* (in IsiZulu) when someone

wants to start their own herd, or a person is gifted with a she-goat, an ewe, or a hen. Gifting children with livestock aims to teach them to value and care for animals, to demonstrate humanity when they help those willing to start with a necessary resource, and to teach them to be kind and helpful to others (Shava & Masuku, 2019).

The many uses of livestock as discussed above have been recognised and applied for generations. However, livestock theft hinders these generational practices, and this is a barrier to wealth that puts a heavy strain on the mainstream livestock farming sector. In 2021, de Klerk (2021) reported that over 131 000 stock theft cases had been opened each year since 2016. However, this seemed as only the tip of the iceberg as a significant number of unreported livestock thefts had also occurred. Stock theft is thus under-reported as farmers feel that reporting such cases does not make a change or lead to the recovery of their stock (Mulrooney & Harkness, 2017). TLU SA (2023) adds that the estimated value of stolen livestock for the 2019/2020 financial year amounted to R1 179 458 600 with an average of about 282 sheep, 138 goats, and 182 cattle being stolen daily in South Africa. Hans (2021) cites that the National Chairperson of the National Stock Theft Prevention Forum (NSTPF), Willie Clack, stated that livestock theft cost the South African economy about R1.4 billion annually. Due to the damage livestock theft causes the farming industry, NSTPF considers livestock theft a serious crime that has enormous implications for farmers, businesses, and production agencies. It is therefore important to acknowledge that high and increasing rates of livestock theft will result in a heavy burden for and even the collapse of the meat and dairy industries (de Klerk, 2021).

Chief Executive of the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU), Ishmael Sunga, lamented that livestock theft robbed commercial livestock owners of their capital assets and income (Hans, 2021). As a result, dairy and meat farmers and producers have been forced to reduce the number of their employees, which has caused high levels of unemployment in this sector. Stock theft has further reduced sales, caused a reduction in revenue for the government, diminished the GDP, and has caused an increase in the prices of milk, meat, wool, cheese, and maas (Mabunda, Maluleke, Barkhuizen & Clack, 2021). For smallholder farmers and rural households, stock theft means that they will not be able to plant, plough, and transport their harvests on time, and they incur extra costs that they can ill afford when they are compelled to hire tractors. This means that many smallholder farmers who are affected by stock theft simply cannot feed, clothe, or further educate their families. Livestock production is critical for many of the poor in the developing world, particularly for those who

own livestock on a small scale. Livestock contributes to multiple livelihood objectives, opens a pathway for many out of poverty, and positively impacts nutrition and health (Mabunda et al., 2021). For most South Africans, livestock serves various purposes. For example, it demonstrates wealth and strengthens family bonds when used for paying *lobola* (bride price). Livestock is also slaughtered for traditional rituals, church and family functions, and funerals. Furthermore, it is a norm within the African culture that a fine for wrongdoing can be settled by payment in the form of livestock and not in cash.

Many families in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape depend on livestock, but this sector has faced rapidly increasing livestock theft (Maluleke, Mphatheni & Nkosi, 2022). This has become an alarming and destructive issue in the farming community, be it among commercial farmers or those who own small herds of cattle. The escalation of stock theft in the Eastern Cape, particularly in the AmaCwerha Traditional Authority² area that falls under the Alfred Ndzo District, continuously slows down all forms of development and it has social, economic, and emotional effects on those dependent on livestock. Pasiwe, Earl-Taylor and Sinefu (2021) emphasise that stock theft rates are very high in the Eastern Cape, particularly in smallholding communities where there is a lack of proper fencing and security measures. The AmaCwerha traditional authority area is located in the Eastern Cape and is occupied by Black South Africans who live a relatively traditional life and who view livestock as a source of wealth.

1.3 Problem Statement

A literature review was conducted on the impact of livestock theft in rural communities and it was evident that insufficient research has been conducted in such areas on this topic. This gap is also referred to in literature on livestock theft internationally, and the problem is thus not limited to South Africa or the Eastern Cape only. Globally, research that explored criminology, penology, and the criminal justice system focused predominantly on urban areas and avoided rural or communal areas, thus displaying some bias (Scholtz and Bester, 2010). This could be attributed to the fact that academics found it difficult and expensive to access sparsely populated areas for both quantitative and qualitative research (Meissner, Scholtz and Engelbrecht, 2013). The review also found that, in some instances, farming communities had

² Note: AmaCwerha and EmaCwerheni are the names used when referring to the study area and are therefore used interchangeably in this paper

been inaccessible to researchers because of a lack of trust, aloofness, and a lack of personal and confidential information that could have been useful for those studies.

In South Africa, stock theft reduces farmers’ profits and interferes with the empowerment of emerging farmers and the government’s land reform process. Recent statistics released by the South African Police Service (2022: 5) showed an increase of 0.6% (42 cases) from October-December 2021 to October-December 2022 in livestock theft cases (**Figure 1.1**).

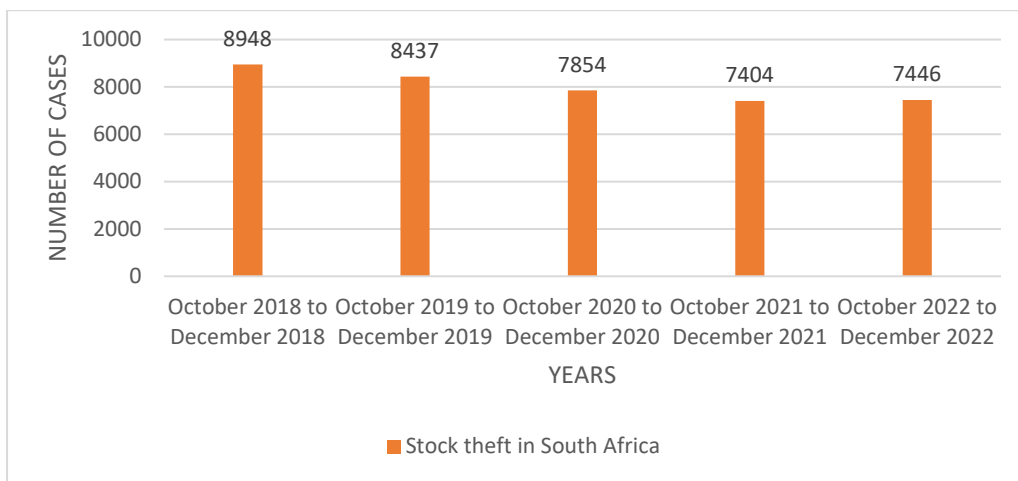


Figure 1.1: Statistics of livestock theft over a 5-year period

Source: SAPS, 2022: 5

When the stock theft rates in this survey period were compared per province, it was found that Gauteng had the most significant increase of 39.8% compared with the previous quarter, while cases in the Northern Cape increased by 31.3% and those in the Eastern Cape by 8%. In the Western Cape, Limpopo, and North West provinces stock theft increased by less than 4% over the survey period. In fact, the Free State experienced a decrease of 4.9%, Mpumalanga of 6.8% and KwaZulu-Natal of 9.7%. However, the provincial overview showed that KwaZulu-Natal ranked top with 1 837 cases, with the Eastern Cape in second place with 1 665 cases (see **Table 1.1** for the top-5 provincial stock theft statistics) (SAPS, 2022: 107). In the past four years, Eastern Cape has continuously shown a rapid increase in the number of reported stock theft cases.

Table 1.1: The five provinces where stock theft is most prevalent in South Africa

Provincial Ranking		No of Stock Theft Cases
1.	KwaZulu-Natal	1 837
2.	Eastern Cape	1 665
3.	Free State	855
4.	North-West Province	847
5.	Mpumalanga	752

Source: SAPS, 2022: 107

1.4 Significance of the Study

Livestock theft is an issue that is currently challenging the livestock farming sector. This phenomenon has drawn the interest of a plethora of scholars, but the majority focused their criminological studies on urban areas or on commercial farming, whereas most shied away from acknowledging the effect of this phenomenon on deep rural settings and smallholder farmers. This lack of attention to the plight of the ‘small guy’ has caused smallholder and custom farmers³ to be neglected as victims of stock theft (Pasiwe et al., 2021).

As described above, this study had a unique purpose compared to other studies in that it explored the extent of livestock theft and its effects on the livelihoods of smallholder and subsistence farmers in rural areas. The findings of this study will enrich scholarly knowledge as it will aid in better understanding the effects of stock theft on the economy as well as the hardships and burdens that this issue poses to smallholder farmers in rural areas. These findings may also guide relevant bodies, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders to devise strategies and preventive measures to curb stock theft and hopefully eradicate this scourge in rural areas.

³ An alternative to leasing farmland is custom farming. The custom operator agrees to perform all the machine operations on the owner’s land in exchange for a set fee or rate. The landowner pays for all seed, chemicals, and other inputs, and keeps all of the crop and commodity payments (Edwards, W., 2019).

1.5 Location of the Study

Many studies conducted on livestock theft focused on big, substantial farms where they evaluated the impact of this kind of theft on relatively affluent farmers for whom the financial or economic benefits were substantial. However, it is important to note that livestock farming is the backbone of a steady life for smallholder farmers who live in relative poverty in rural areas, especially in the Eastern Cape Province. Lately, there has been an increasing number of livestock theft cases in the Umzimvubu Municipality, especially in the AmaCwerha area. In light of the gap in research on subsistence farmers' livelihoods and the impact of stock theft on their economic survival, this study explored the socio-economic impact of livestock theft on the victims of this crime in the AmaCwera area in the Alfred Ndzo District in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The study was demarcated to this area as it comprises of rural communities under three municipalities: Ntabankulu Municipality, Mhlontlo Municipality, and Umzimvubu Municipality. Because stock theft limits the expansion of herds, particularly small herds, rural communities perceive it as a significant cause of poverty.

1.5.1. Profile of the AmaCwerha Traditional Authority Area

This research study was undertaken in the Alfred Ndzo District Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. The Eastern Cape Province is divided into six districts of which the Alfred Ndzo District Municipality is one (Figure 1.2). There are six towns, namely Mount Frere, Mount Ayliff, Ntabankulu, Bizana, Maluti, and Matatiele, and these towns fall under four local municipalities (Figure 1.3). The headquarters of the Council of this district municipality is seated in Mount Ayliff. The Alfred Ndzo District gets its name from Mr Alfred Baphethuxolo Nzo, who was the secretary-general of the African National Congress. During the tenure of Mr Nelson Mandela as the President from 1994 until 1999, he was the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

This district has a population of 801 345 residents of whom about 434 857 (54.27%) are females and 366 488 (45.73%) are males. The majority of the residents speak isiXhosa (Eastern Cape Provincial Government, 2021: 11).



Figure 1.2: Alfred Ndzo District Municipality and Local Municipalities

Source: SA Municipalities, n.d.

The study area is the poorest and smallest district in the Eastern Cape Province. The EmaCwerheni area occupies the largest part of the Alfred Nzdo District Municipality (Figure 1.3) and it is where the heart of communal farming is located alongside Maluti and Matatiele. The livelihoods of people in this area depend on livestock and agricultural activities. Many people also migrate to provinces with mineral resources and other industries for better job opportunities. However, as much as communal farming is the heartbeat of the community, it is crippled by the ominous disease of stock theft.

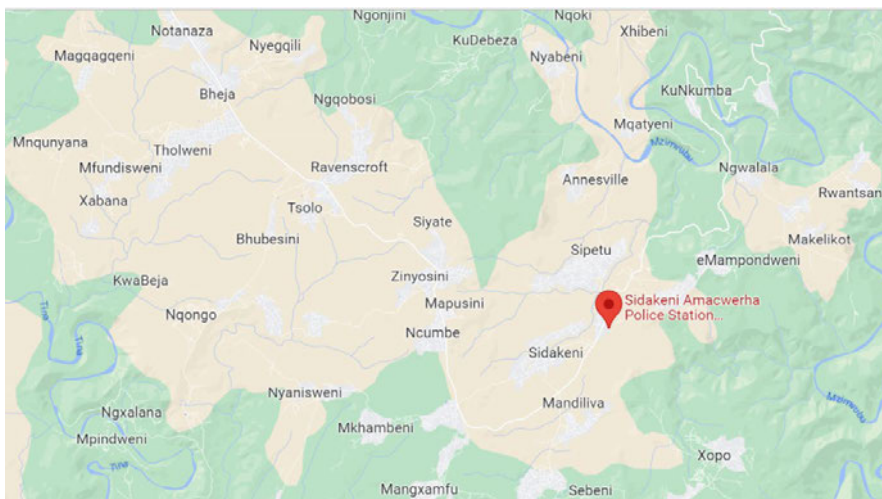


Figure 1.3: Location of the AmaCwerha Traditional Authority area

Source: Google Maps, 2023

The AmaCwerha area has a high crime rate as far as stock theft is concerned (Nota, 2022). As it is believed that incidences of stock theft and other crimes increase daily in this area (Cakata,

2022), it may be argued that the efficacy of combatting crime in the area has decreased and that the possibility of recovering stolen livestock is limited. The Eastern Cape Province has 21 policing clusters or precincts and 196 police stations that are located in various areas across the province. Figure 1.3 shows that the AmaCwerha area is divided into 25 sectioned locations and these are serviced by only one sub-police station that is situated on the outskirts of the study area. According to Mzontsundu Times (Mneno, 2022), only six police officers are deployed at the Sidakeni AmaCwerha police station. It is therefore heavily under-resourced and not even one police van is allocated to this station. When there is a need to use a police van, the officers have to request one from the Ntabankulu police station and it rarely arrives timeously (Mzontsundu Times, 2022).

1.6 Aim and Objectives

1.6.1 Aim of the Study

This study aimed to determine the effects of livestock theft on the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in the Amacwerha area in the Eastern Cape Province.

1.6.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to focus on the AmaCwerha traditional authority area and to:

1. Determine the nature and extent of livestock theft on rural farmers in this area;
2. Understand the effects of livestock theft on farmers in the area;
3. Determine the factors that contribute to stock theft in the study area; and
4. Assess the effectiveness of current measures to combat stock theft in the AmaCwerha area.

1.6.3 Research questions

1. What is the extent of livestock theft in the AmaCwerha area?
2. What effects does livestock theft have on livestock farmers in the AmaCwerha area?
3. What are the factors that contribute to livestock theft in the AmaCwerha area?
4. What measures do the farmers and the community of AmaCwerha take to fight stock theft?

1.7 Conceptualisation of Terms

Livestock theft is an issue that is not limited to a certain area, country, or continent, but is a global phenomenon that has challenged livestock herders and farmers for hundreds of years. It occurs at various frequencies and on a range of scales, hence international definitions of livestock theft differ according to countries' experiences the meanings they attach to this crime. **Table 1.2** presents the different terms used by various countries when referring to livestock theft. In South Africa, the criminal justice system (CJS) categorise various forms of livestock theft as 'stock theft' for statistical purposes, as per a proposal by the United Nations Organised Crime and Drug Unit (UNODC), irrespective of different international classifications of this crime (Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014; Niv, 2014).

Table 1.2: Terms used by various countries to refer to stock theft

Countries	Terminology
India	Lifting
South Africa	Stock theft
Northern and East-African countries	Cattle rustling
Australia	Cattle duffing
The United States of America (USA) and European countries	Cattle raiding

Source: National Red Meat Producers, 2018

For enhanced clarification, the following terms are discussed in more depth:

Stock: This term refers to any domestic animal that forms part of household farming and that may be useful in producing various products for domestic consumption or use, or for trading and bartering. This includes animals such as goats, horses, cows, sheep, chickens, turkeys, domesticated ostriches, and pigs (Waldman, 2005). Household farming is regarded as the household currency in rural areas, this is due to its versatility and its plethora uses. It is therefore important to understand the role stock plays in sustaining livelihoods of rural farmers.

Stock theft: Stock theft is a criminal action that involves stealing and being in possession of animals that do not rightfully belong to the perpetrator (Wang, 2018). This study seeks to examine how does stock theft affects the livelihoods of farmers based in the rural areas.

Rural area: A rural area is a geographical area that is located on the outskirts or far from a town and urban environments. These areas are characteristically sparsely populated with wide open spaces, and the wealth generated in these areas is dependent on communal farming and/or an agricultural lifestyle. The infrastructural development is usually limited to roads at various levels of engineering sophistication, bridges, and farm dwellings or rural settlements (Kepe, 1999). Rural areas in the Eastern Cape are filled with people who believe in indigenous practises, these are the people who view stock theft as their commodity that plays a huge role in their livelihoods. However, these people and their areas are plagued by the issue of stock theft.

Victim/s: In criminological studies, a victim is anyone who has suffered due to injury or who has endured loss due to the criminal behaviour or act by another person or persons (Nash, 2007). This can be anyone who has been affected by a crime. They can be directly or indirectly affected by a crime, for example being a member of a family that has been affected by stock theft.

1.8 Outline of the Chapters

Chapter one: Introduction and Background to the Study

This chapter introduces the research topic/aim of the study which was to explore the impact of livestock theft on the livelihood of people in rural AmaCwerha in the Alfred Ndzo District in the Eastern Cape Province. The background of the study is presented and the problem discussed. The author explains the significance of the study and reflects on the impact of livestock theft on the livelihood of people in rural communities. The objectives of the study are also presented, followed by the research questions that aligned with how these research objectives would be met in line with the criminology discipline under the sub-discipline of victimology.

Chapter two: Literature Review

This chapter summarises pertinent findings by earlier studies on the topic of livestock theft. Evidence of gaps and grey areas in these earlier investigations are highlighted and it is emphasised that some aspects of the topic under investigation have been left out or have remained unresolved. The current study therefore intended to fill some of those gaps to enrich existing knowledge.

Chapter three: Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the theoretical frameworks used in this study are discussed. Two theories were employed, namely the rational choice theory and the routine activity theory. These theories were developed by Adam Smith (1776) and Cohen and Felson (1979) respectively and have been examined and utilised in numerous studies to enhance scholarly knowledge and understanding of various topics in the Criminology discipline. Each theory is explained in depth while the researcher also highlights the assumptions of those theories and aligns them with the research topic. The researcher thus endeavours to explain how these theoretical theories encapsulated the concept of stock theft as explored in this study.

Chapter four: Research Methodology and Research Design

This chapter describes and provides justification for the methods used in this research study. The reasons for the selected epistemological paradigm is discussed to underscore its appropriateness for the phenomenological design of the study. The chapter additionally describes the non-probability sampling technique that was used and explains why it was suitable for the this particular investigation.

Chapter five: Data Analysis and Interpretation

Based on the information collected from the participants, this chapter articulates how the data were systematically organised, examined, interpreted, and presented. Thematic analysis was used and the findings that emerged from the data are discussed under these themes.

Chapter six: Conclusions and Recommendations

It is important that a study affirms its relevance by offering pertinent recommendations based on the findings. In this chapter, the researcher summarises the key findings and offers recommendations that not only aim to curb livestock theft, but to eventually eradicate it. The researcher also highlights the significance and limitations of the study before some concluding remarks are offered.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter introduced this research study. The background to the study was elucidated, the research problem was discussed, and the aim, objectives, and research questions were presented. The six chapters were also briefly summarised to present an overview of the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review the literature that was relevant concerning the aim and objectives of the study. Many scholars, researchers, journalists and other relevant people have extensively highlighted the issue of livestock theft and its impact on the livelihoods of those practising livestock farming, especially in rural areas. The literature review presented in this chapter highlights important information about livestock theft and initiates a prominent foundation for this research project. A literature review is defined as “a comprehensive summary of research studies previously conducted on a topic; it is a systematic way to identify, evaluate, and interpret articles, books, and other sources about a certain area of research produced by various scholars, practitioners and researchers” (Marshall, 2015: 22). Taylor (n.d.: 37) argues that a good literature review “summarises, describes, enumerates, objectively clarifies and evaluates previous research and sets a foundation for a framework that will be used to discuss various key concepts and research objectives together with relevant theories or models”. Therefore, this section briefly explains rural crime as a determining factor of livestock theft. The researcher evaluates various debates and scholarly views while she also articulates the convergence of knowledge from different scholars on the nature and extent of livestock theft from both international and national perspectives. The chapter will also elucidate livestock theft strategies that, once understood, could be useful in mitigating this scourge in the country.

2.2 An International Perspective on Stock Theft

A number of studies, reports, and several news publications offer abundant evidence that a rise in livestock theft is occurring across all continents and in various regions. This phenomenon is also associated with a number of deaths/murders of cattle herders and farmers, rustlers, and security forces, which raises grave concerns. However, writers have not been able to explore much systematic research into the phenomenon of livestock theft with the aim of opening a global eye on the extent of livestock theft across various continents. The following section provides an international perspective on the livestock theft phenomenon.

2.2.1 Europe

In 2014, Saner (2014) stated that livestock theft from British farms had increased significantly over the previous five years. Farmers in Ireland have also raised the issue of animal theft, arguing that it poses a serious threat to their businesses as it is a major cause of decreasing breeding opportunities and stock expansion (Waquil, Neske, Ribeiro, Schlick, Andreatta, Perleberg, Borba, Trindade, Carriquiry and Malaquin, 2015). Law enforcement authorities have also voiced concerns about the stock theft practice as its impact is felt from local to national and to global corners. NFU Mutual (2022), an insurance company which insures farmers in the UK, released preliminary data that suggested that livestock theft counts had increased by 24% on farms in 2022. According to figures from NFU Mutual, as many as 90 000 animals were stolen in 2022. Although pigs and cattle were also targeted by the thieves, most of the animals stolen were sheep.

2.2.2 South America

Chan (2023) reported in an article in the Chilean *The Guardian* that a total of 700 sheep worth up to US\$140 000 had been stolen from farms situated in the west of Victoria during February of 2023 year. In most South American states, weak border management and security have been challenges that have fuelled livestock theft. Poor border management has opened an unfortunate opportunity for the rise in cross-border livestock smuggling. Moreover, economic problems such as hyperinflation and price controls in countries such as Venezuela have been evident and these have exacerbated stock theft.

Long (2018) reported in the *Financial Times* that lawlessness on the border between Venezuela and Colombia has caused cattle rustlers from Venezuela to steal and trade stolen livestock with Colombians. These rustlers smuggle the stolen livestock across to Colombia at night by bribing border guards to get through the boarder. In this way as many as 250 000 cattle is stolen per year. These animals are transported to Colombian abattoirs where they are slaughtered and their meat is then sold at three times the normal price of meat in Venezuela. This practice costs the Venezuelan economy in excess of US\$135m a year.

2.2.3 United States of America (USA)

Since 2013, livestock farmers in Texas have been experiencing the threat of a sharp increase in cattle rustling. In a report in *State Impact* in 2016, Buchele (2016) stated that as many as 10 000 cattle and horses had been reported stolen by the Texas Department of Public Safety, which

was a 40% increase in cattle rustling statistics of previous years. This shocking trend displays a crippling challenge to the agricultural sector in the USA and poses a threat to law enforcement in Texas. Despite the efforts by the Texas Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice department to toughen the laws by increasing the penalties for rustling, this phenomenon seems on the increase. In 2009, the Department of Criminal Justice increased the period of imprisonment for rustlers to a minimum of 10 years. This measure was implemented with the aim of discouraging rustlers from stealing livestock and to deter cattle theft, but it has surprisingly failed to do so as the number of stolen cattle has been rapidly increasing since the law was passed (Buchele, 2016).

Richard Hartley, the Chairperson of the Criminal Justice Department in Texas, said tougher sentences had failed as a crime deterrent. He commented that even historically, when Texas applied the death sentence, cattle rustling was rife (Hodgson, 2016). He argued that the reason for this was the weak economy, as it caused poverty and unemployment that made people willing to take risks such as being involved in rustling regardless of tough penalties. Doug Hutchison, a Commissioner who specialises in investigating cattle theft for the Texas Department of Public Safety, mentioned various reasons for the rise of cattle rustling such as drought, drug use, and ranchers who practised farming as a hobby and who thus did not regularly check and supervise their herds (Saner, 2014).

2.3 An African Perspective on Livestock Theft

African countries have also experienced their fair share of livestock theft over the years. Livestock theft has crippled various economies on the African continent and has had adverse effects that resulted in the escalation of various crimes. For instance, Western and Central African countries, such as parts of Burkina Faso, central Mali, and Nigeria, have faced increasing rates of farmer-herder violence over the years as a result of livestock theft that has escalated into a war between the two parties (Kolane and Phulane, 2023). In some Southern African countries, livestock theft has developed into a barter system among syndicates involved in cross-border stock theft and this has increased the rate of exchanging stolen livestock for other stolen products such as vehicles and guns.

2.3.1 Nigeria

Bashir, Yusof and Azlizan (2018) argue that not a week or month goes by in Nigeria without reports of cattle rustling. Livestock is the most valuable resource in most rural communities

and has become a common target of theft. The increased frequencies and magnitude of livestock theft are both causes and effects of violent conflict. Armed groups use stolen cattle to fund their activities, and so the risk of livestock theft causes herders to arm themselves to protect their herds or flocks. However, the increasing demand for arms enriches criminal syndicates involved in armed trafficking, and all these factors raise the risk of violent altercations. Moreover, aggrieved groups may revert to stealing livestock from communities with which they have been in conflict as a form of justice. This has led to a rapid expansion in the number of community-based armed groups to ostensibly guard against livestock theft, though such groups can also be engaged in reprisal acts of violence. In many Nigerian states and parts of Central Africa, 'war economies' have emerged around livestock trade networks and migration routes (Risk Bulletin, 2023).

2.3.2 Madagascar

In Madagascar, reports of almost a 100 events of stolen stock per weekend reach the media and law enforcement, which affirms that this country is plagued by the rustling phenomenon (Hundred killed in Madagascar cattle rustling unrest, 2022). A rapidly increasing rate of livestock theft, especially of Humped Cattle which is a highly prized breed that is found in the southern parts of Madagascar, leads to anarchic and highly violent behaviours when villagers decide to fight stock theft. Lieutenant Colonel Rakotomalala, a member of the Madagascan Paramilitary Police, highlighted that livestock theft had a bad effect on the livelihoods of rural farmers, to the extent that they regarded it as an attack on their social security (AFP, 2023). Citizens feel that the government is not doing enough to fight this scourge and, as a result, they have lost faith in the government and other security structures and take matters into their own hands. Villagers meet at night armed with spears, rocks, and firearms to ambush cattle rustlers. This practice has both positive and negative outcomes. On the one hand it has led to the death of a number of police officers and gendarmes and up to 100 cattle rustlers have been killed, but on the positive side, 9 out of 10 cattle were discovered and retrieved in one operation by villagers.

2.3.3 Lesotho

A number of scholars analysed and reported trends in livestock theft in Southern Africa that demonstrated that it was uncontrollable in Lesotho and the Eastern Cape for quite a long time. As a result, the southern parts of Lesotho and the Transkei in the Eastern Cape have been declared the stock theft hotspots in Southern Africa. Kolane and Phulane (2023) wrote an

article in *The Reporter*, highlighting that porous borders, rogue police officers, and illegal livestock auctions were leading issues that led to an increase in stock theft in the rural areas of Lesotho, especially in those near the border with South Africa. According to Kolane and Phulane (2023), Puseletso Tsolo, a Councillor of Matsoku, highlighted unemployment and starvation as the drivers of stock theft, arguing that this was the only way some people could make a living. Inefficient policing was also mentioned as a key factor in increased livestock thefts in Lesotho. It has been estimated that 80% of the Lesotho population depends on communal farming for their survival, but lately productivity has been very low due to livestock theft (Clark, 2021). These factors all negatively impact the economy of Lesotho as it loses about M14million due to this crime every year.

2.3.4 South Africa

For decades, stock theft has been a pestering problem in the pastoral regions of South Africa, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, and the Eastern Cape. Stock theft has been a prominent issue since the eighteenth century. It was prevalent in South Africa during the Bantustan era, the colonial era, and it is still a dire issue even today. The issue of stock theft was also attributed to the Khoi-San people who were historically agrarian while also relying on their hunting techniques for a sustainable living (Mneno, 2020). They thus often targeted the easily accessible domesticated livestock of African tribes who viewed the killing of their animals as an attack that threatened their wealth.

The colonial era introduced another form of stock theft. The British would often forcefully occupy land, claiming that all that would be produced and conserved on that land as theirs. In the former Transkei and Ciskei, colonialists would often command their herdsmen to seize any livestock that they saw near their fields or camps, claiming that these animals were destroying their crops. They would then demand payment in the form of livestock before they would release the confiscated animals (Beinart, 2008). Livestock would also be stolen when herds grazed in the fields, and this caused conflict between white farmers and African tribesmen.

In the post-apartheid era since 1994, the issue of livestock theft has not been resolved. In fact, it has escalated and has severely challenged South African pastoral communities, especially those farming on the borders between South Africa and its neighbouring countries. The rapid and rampant increase of stock theft has been attributed to various issues, such as ineffective control systems deployed by South Africa to control stock theft and the weak control of the

cross-border movement of people, animals, and vehicles (Ehret, 2008). The post-apartheid era in South Africa has thus witnessed the scourge of cross-border stock theft due to the discontinuation and/or ineffective control of several theft mitigation procedures and strategies. Conversely, statistics have shown a decrease in the reported number of stock theft incidences, but this is attributed to farmers' loss of faith in the police and thus a high rate of under-reporting, as will be explained later.

Ironically, during the apartheid era the stock theft problem was quite under control when the military maintained order on the borders and fought crime, especially in the borderlands. However, it escalated soon after the withdrawal of the military from the country's borders. Currently, cross-border livestock theft seems almost out of control. The disbandment of highly effective security and local crime prevention structures, such as the Commando system⁴ that was abolished in 2004 by the South African democratic government, also contributed to an escalation in criminal activities and stock theft in peri-urban and rural areas (Ehret, 2008). As a consequence of escalating stock theft incidences, both commercial and smallholder farmers feel the pressure. Some have left the country to make a living outside its borders, and many who remain are constantly living in fear (Ludolph, 2022). The remittance effect of this crime on South Africa's agricultural sector and its economy at large is enormous, as more and more livestock farmers leave the industry. This has caused a decrease in employment opportunities, while some businesses in affected areas and towns also suffer. This crime thus creates several socio-economic issues that include high unemployment, financial insecurity, and low gross domestic product, which has even affected the South African exchange rate. It is estimated that law-abiding South African farmers lose in the region of 218 000 farm animals per year, and this figure includes cows, sheep, and goats (Beinart, 2008). According to Cakata (2022), a total of 180 000 livestock had been taken in the few months prior to their survey, and that loss was believed to be worth about R900m, or US\$60m.

⁴ The Commando system was an arm of the South African Defense Force but its members were primarily volunteers and not conscripted. It was structured as various Commando units across the country such as Umkomaas Commando to the south of Durban and Highway Commando in the western parts of the larger Durban area. Commando units were responsible for the safeguarding and protection of specific communities (usually rural, but sometimes urban). Commando units' main function was area protection, and it was thus a military-based system that safeguarded communities (residential areas, industrial areas, farming communities, and townships) regardless of ethnicity (Commando System, n.d.).

2.4 Conceptualisation of Stock Theft in South Africa

Several attempts have been made to determine the extent of livestock theft in the South African context. Recent statistical evidence suggests that South Africa's provinces, particularly the rural areas in these provinces, are affected economically and socially by stock theft. Recently, studies have shown that stock theft costs the Eastern Cape province and South Africa a whopping R1.4 billion a year (Ludolph, 2022; Clack, 2022; Lombard, 2020). A major impact of the wide extent of livestock theft is that it negatively affects the health and wellbeing of victims in rural areas, and that it particularly devastates elderly livestock farmers who have no recourse against the wave of stock theft. Moreover, livestock theft has direct commercial effects that lead to present and future economic issues, while its aftermath also threatens food security and impacts escalating meat prices that empty the pockets of South Africans citizens. Earlier reports suggested that stock theft occurred primarily for the pot to fill empty stomachs, but this motivation has changed dramatically as syndicates are now involved in stealing animals to enrich themselves (Clack, 2022).

However, despite a rather dark picture, recent South African crime statistics (South African Police Service, 2023) have shown a pleasing decline in stock theft countrywide (Figure 2.1). The data compare first quarter statistics (January to March) over a five-year period from 2019 to 2023. The figure displays a decline of 580 cases between the first quarters of 2019 and 2020, a decline of 764 cases in 2021, an increase of 154 cases in 2022, and a decline of 342 cases in the first quarter of 2023. Interpretively, Figure 2.2 shows a slight fluctuation in stock theft rates over the past five years, but it is important to note and appreciate the evident downward trend.

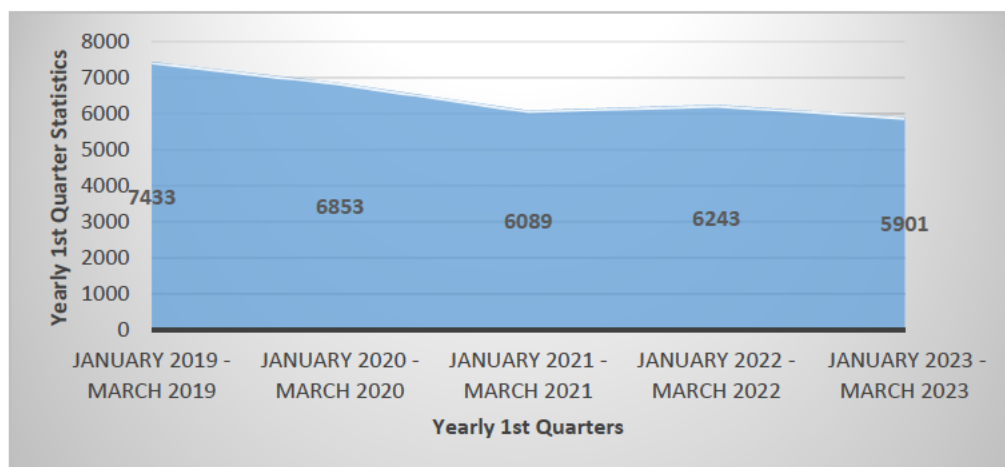


Figure 2.1: Comparative first-quarter statistics of stock theft 2019-2023

Source: SAPS, 2023

Although the quarterly statistics presented above suggest that there has been a promising decline in stock theft, they should be interpreted with caution considering the exclusion of non-reported incidences, as argued by various authors. An alarmingly number of cases have not been reported to the police, and this therefore results in a skewed picture of the livestock theft rate in South Africa (de Clerk, 2021). It is therefore vital that the under-reporting of stock theft must be considered when releasing and interpreting stock theft statistics, as this will ensure that strategies and measures to mitigate this dire crime accurately reflect the real extent of this criminal phenomenon.

Currently, the police system of South Africa, especially the stock theft unit, faces challenges such as diminished manpower and inadequate equipment and vehicles to execute their task. These issues make it virtually impossible for this special unit, which is deployed in various parts of the country, to perform its duties, and this makes these officers seem inefficient and unable to properly do their work. When society views stock theft units and the police system as failing in doing their work, they treat them with disdain and mistrust, arguing that they are incapable of doing their job. Individual community members then often resolve to take the law into their own hands, which might end in tragedy.

Under-reporting is often attributed to farmers who do not bother to report a stock theft to the police for various reasons. For instance, the theft of one or two animals may be regarded as a small loss and therefore the perception may exist that police will not attend to the charge (Geldenhuys, 2020). Another factor is the low recovery rate of stolen livestock as evidenced by statistics (Red Meat Producers, 2022). The stolen livestock recovery statistics below depict that the recovery rate is depressingly low in all provinces, and it is clear that stock theft units dismally fail to recover stolen livestock. This failure rate may continue to create mistrust and cause farmers to lose confidence in the police. Moreover, this low recovery rate might be a vivid indication that livestock theft syndicates are able to successfully get rid of the stolen livestock before authorities can take action for recovery. The dismal picture in Figure 2.2 is that not even a single province managed to reach a recovery rate of 50% (with the exception of the recovery rate of goats in the Eastern Cape at 78%), while all the recovery rates except one was also below 40%.

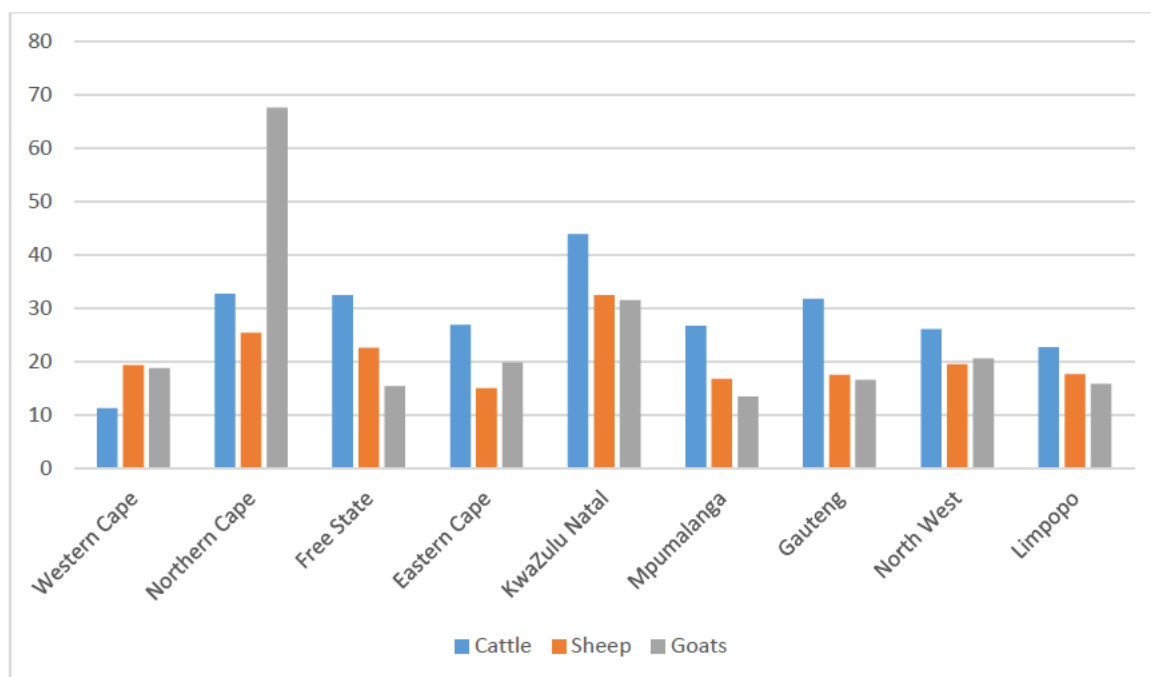


Figure 2.2: Stolen livestock recovery rate in South Africa by province

Source: Red Meat Producers, 2018

Economically, this crime has affected business enterprises and producers of livestock adversely, irrespective of whether they are commercial or small-scale farmers. Clearly, stock theft is a highly significant obstacle in sustaining livestock production and food security. Based on economies of scale, small-scale agricultural operations have been more severely affected by livestock theft compared to their large commercial counterparts. This notion is supported by Zwane, van Marle-Köster, Greyling and Mapholi (2013) and Rural Safety Summit (2022), who argue that 85% of victims of livestock theft in South Africa are non-value added tax (VAT) registered individual or communal farmers.

There is increasing concern that the rapidly increasing rate of livestock theft in rural communities will cause communal farmers to be subjected to intersectional victimisation (Farmer’s Weekly, 2023). This is due to the severe consequences that smallholder farmers experience when they are forced to transition from owning a relatively large herd of livestock to owning fewer animals or no herd at all. This is an intersectional situation because it results in high poverty and unemployment and causes financial and emotional distress. Based on the findings of their study, Maluleke, Shandu and Makhanya (2021) argue that a large number of opportunistic perpetrators of organised crime have lately targeted the agricultural sector, and they fear that this will further impact rural communal livestock farmers negatively.

Several studies have concluded that the phenomenon of livestock theft has no geographic boundaries, scale, or dimensions (Aiyzhy, Mongush, Mongush, Ondar, Seden-Khuurak and Bildinmaa, 2021). Notably, most Southern African Development Community (SADC) neighbouring countries contribute hugely to the rates of crime across their borders, especially livestock and vehicle theft. In fact, livestock theft has permeated across South African and Lesotho borders and has been booming for many years (Chelin, 2019). The long and often deep rural borders between these countries are poorly protected and have thus become porous. Therefore, South African border patrol policies must include strategies to eliminate this porousness and to ensure that the borders are heavily protected. South African authorities need to replace the large strips of the ‘security’ fences that have been cut off or stolen, and this needs to be done in collaboration with the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) responsible for monitoring mountainous terrain. Filling this lacuna will eliminate livestock trafficking as smuggling routes will be blocked, which will in turn limit opportunities for criminal networks to flourish.

Livestock theft has produced a plethora of negative socio-economic consequences. This wave of crime is an attack against the country’s farmers who should be protected by government-initiated and law enforcement interventions. However, the consistent failure by the South African government to execute this mandate has significantly exacerbated the issue of livestock theft in South Africa (Chelin, 2019). Furthermore, those who buy stolen livestock and the people who sell the meat of stolen livestock on sidewalks and at informal markets must be arrested and prosecuted because they are fuelling livestock crime and are the biggest culprits of the escalation of this phenomenon. It will really benefit South Africa if the police and all law-abiding citizens know who these thieves are because they are often well known in the community. Phillips (2021) argues that South African police stations, SAPS stock theft units, other crime-fighting entities, and the criminal justice system need to up their game and deploy more resources to deal with the current wave of livestock theft.

The above literature draws a clear picture on how the scourge of stock theft takes place in all continents. It clearly depicts stock theft as a pandemic that is widely challenging the farming sector as whole regardless of geographic standings or borders. On the other hand, the above literature fails to culminate the deeper picture of how this menace directly and indirectly affects the farmers, their families and their livelihoods at large. The above literature is focused on

national statistics rather than focusing on individual repercussions that stock theft subjects the farmers to.

2.5 Factors that Contribute to the Crime of Stock Theft

2.5.1 The nature of rural terrains

According to Safeopedia (2017), rural areas are situated outside or far from densely populated urban towns and cities. Rural areas include large or smaller farms, plots, and small settlements such as villages that are usually far away from large central business districts. The primary industry in these areas is agriculture and people are dependent on living and working on farms or smallholding patches of land (Greenberg, 2018). In South Africa, remote rural dwellers, such as those in the Eastern Cape, commonly live in dwellings that they construct of sticks, mud, and clay, and the roofs are generally thatched. The socio-economic status of rural Eastern Cape villagers is based on the ownership of agricultural land that is associated with social and economic prestige in the traditional African culture (Malusi et al., 2021). Rural inhabitants' livelihoods primarily depend upon small patches of crop cultivation for domestic use or small informal markets, but many predominantly rely on livestock rearing which constitutes a significant part of South Africa's gross domestic product. The livestock reared by rural Eastern Cape inhabitants are generally cattle, sheep, chickens, pigs, and goats, and all these animals are targeted by livestock thieves to a smaller or greater extent, depending on opportunity and motivation.

Understanding crime in rural areas necessitates taking into account a complex set of factors. Violence and crime are often a part of rural residents' lives and exacerbates their grievances and frustrations over their poor living conditions. According to Mpofu (2019), violence and the risks associated with it are linked to the conditions that exist as a result of unplanned and underdeveloped living conditions and spaces. Under-developed land surrounding many African homesteads thus provides an ideal setting for crime to unfold. The fact is that rural areas are located in peripheral parts in the countryside that are separated from formal settlements (Greenberg, 2018).

Thick vegetation surrounding homesteads often characterises rural areas and encourages crime. Criminals use vegetation as cover to hide until the opportunity arises to steal livestock. Livestock theft perpetrators create distractions and escape routes and they often hide stolen

livestock until the animals can be safely rustled or transported. Due to the dense vegetation surrounding settlements in the study area and its infrastructural nature, travelling at night is often dangerous as people with nefarious intent find many spaces to hide (Clark, 2015). According to stock theft narratives, residents were often attacked by livestock thieves in their homes at night, especially when there was no moon, to neutralise the owners and to prevent them from following the spoor of the stolen livestock. These attacks also often occurred in winter when the cold prevented immediate retaliatory action (Pasiwe, Earl-Taylor and Sinefu, 2021). The latter authors assert that livestock is generally stolen at night not only from grazing camps or fields, but from household kraals because the thieves know they cannot be easily identified due to a lack of lighting. Moreover, the dense nature of the vegetation surrounding homesteads, or the wide-open spaces that are easily accessible by trucks or smaller 'bakkies', assist their escape.

Many rural people tend to leave their rural homes to migrate to urban areas in search of a better life. This migration results in many unoccupied homes and is a concern raised by most residents who have remained to continue their rural lifestyle (Pasiwe et al., 2021). Many residents are concerned that unoccupied homes have made it easy for criminals to find a hiding place. They have relative ease of movement from and to these 'safe' hiding bases and, when livestock is stolen from grazing camps at night or daytime hours, the animals are often slaughtered on the spot in these unoccupied homes and the meat is then transported to informal markets (Doorewaard, 2020).

The geographic setting of rural areas also renders them vulnerable to crime. These areas are characterised by mountainous or wide open terrain, rivers, forests, and limited infrastructural development (Chelin, 2019). The distance that law enforcement units have to travel to investigate livestock theft thus benefits these thieves as they have various escape routes across the veld to move the stolen stock from one location and hide it in another. Some livestock carcasses were discovered in mountainous areas and in bushes, while some live animals were found hidden in kraals (compounds) that had been unlawfully constructed in remote forests or in mountainous terrain (Mzontsundu News, 2023).

2.5.2 Socio-economic factors

The rapid increase in crime has been attributed, among other factors, to the social acceptance of crime by various communities that argue that it is a rightful act to alleviate their poverty and struggles (Mensah, 2023). A culture that seemingly condones illegal practices has therefore emerged as ‘one is only guilty when proven to be so’. For instance, many argue that it is their right to purchase and sell stolen items as it is way of ensuring a living (Mensah, 2023; Chelin, 2019), while the perpetrators may deem it their right to choose to be part of illegal syndicates and to be involved in corruption possibly because this culture is evident even in the top echelons of South African society that only pay lip service to the unlawfulness of corruption and theft (Doorewaard, 2020; Bayley, 2022; Ross, 2022).

2.5.3 Unemployment

Currently South Africa faces an unemployment rate of 32.9%, and the majority of those who are unemployed are young people between the ages of 18 and 35 (Gumbi, 2023). Unemployed rural community members who are poverty-stricken may therefore easily be socialised into a culture of crime and violence. Moreover, in these rural communities individuals involved in crime receive ready acceptance and their criminal behaviour is hardly challenged (Jabbari and Rouster, 2022). According to Clark (2018), stock theft provides a ready method for earning an income when unemployed, and this situation advocates stock theft as an easy route to creating a livelihood and even wealth. Unemployment reduces spending and the attainment of desirable and valuable goods, and affected people have a hard time maintaining a luxury or lucrative lifestyle. Many thus seek nefarious survival options of which livestock theft is one, as it is effective in mitigating the effects of unemployment (Tarling, 1982).

Unemployment thus induces criminal behaviour based on the notion that individuals respond to certain stimuli and incentives to gain a better lifestyle. Some criminals tend to conceptualise their criminal acts as a form of employment as it requires their time and generates income (Tarling, 1982). In this context, stock theft offenders make the ‘rational decision’, as posited by the rational choice theory, that the time consumed by their illegal activities (from planning and scouting target areas that have livestock that could be captured to executing the act) warrants employment, and they then make the decision to steal (Beinart, 2008). It is undeniable that unemployment is associated with a lack of income and that it thus involuntarily increases the desire to access the means to alleviate it by, for instance, livestock theft.

Moreover, rural people who experience chronic joblessness feel that they have little to lose should they get arrested and incarcerated. This reasoning suggests that unemployment is a determinant of high rates of criminal offending, of which stock theft in rural areas is one. Studies that were conducted in rural areas generally found that unemployment had a stronger effect on property crimes than on violent crimes due to the returns associated with the value gained from property crimes. Ricketts et al. (1998) emphasise that property theft in urban areas focuses on digital items and expensive cars, while in rural areas livestock is the most targeted commodity.

2.5.4 Poor law enforcement capacity

Recent empirical research results concerning crime have shown that poor law enforcement capacity is a strong driver of stock theft. Of the several reasons that underpin increasing livestock theft in rural areas is the inability of the police and the criminal justice system to bring the perpetrators to book. In this context, Nickerson (2023) argues that the quality and efficacy of the criminal justice system impacts the endurance of perpetrators; hence, if the system is ineffective, stock thieves become more efficient and they continuously manage to escape the long arm of the law.

Law enforcement should therefore apply the full force of its mandate to ensure that evidence is collected and protected for the justice system to sentence, incarcerate, and eventually deter livestock thieves (Clack, 2013). The well published incarceration of those involved in livestock theft will show that law enforcement is determined to put an end to this crime. It will also drive perpetrators to reconsider their actions, especially when they are still planning to act.

Many farmers in South Africa choose not to report livestock theft because of various critical reasons that are often associated with their previous experiences. For instance, in many instances the police were ineffective in identifying and arresting the perpetrators. Statistics have shown that the percentage of non-reported stock theft cases increased from 60.1% in 2011 to 64.4% in 2013/2014 (Statistics South Africa, 2011; 2014). In this context, Clack (2013) argues that the drafting of legislation needs to be absolutely clear and unambiguous regarding the identification and incarceration of livestock thieves, otherwise it creates confusion for the courts and contributes to offenders not being sentenced in accordance with the law.

2.5.5 Drug use and the availability of firearms

Against the background of high unemployment, poverty, and high drug and alcohol consumption in rural areas, people have little to no income at all, and this means they have more time to think and plan ways to make money and many end up seeing crime as a means of survival. Ricketts et al. (1998) and Nickerson (2023) thus suggest that the link between drug use, gun availability and crime is undeniable. In this chain of crime, the first link is the unavailability of legitimate employment opportunities; the second link is illegal money-making opportunities; and the third link is the consumption of criminogenic commodities such as drugs and alcohol and the availability of illicit guns. The fourth link is the lack of or slow response by law enforcement units and the criminal justice system to stock theft incidences (Ricketts et al., 1998); Nickerson, 2023). In the researcher's view, a fifth link should be added, which is the lack of trust that farmers of all categories now have in the police, with the consequent lack of under-reporting of the crime of stock theft. From the above it is concluded that there is a pro-cyclical positive correlation between guns, alcohol, and drug consumption and livestock theft in rural areas. The correlation is that illicit commodities (drugs, alcohol, and guns) induce criminal behaviour and exacerbate the confidence criminal elements have in using lethality (Seleka, 2022). The latter notion, in combination with a lack of trust in the police, therefore leaves one with the impression that the criminal behaviour of stock theft is fuelled by rural criminal elements' belief that they are invincible and therefore have the 'right' to take what they want 'because they can'.

Study evidence and community narratives have highlighted that the EmaCwerheni study area has recently experienced an eruption of drug use amongst the youth, and this phenomenon has added to the issue of illegal trading of alcohol in this area. According to an article in *The Pondo News* (Nota, 2023), there is a dire need to address illegal gun availability in the area which is an issue that erupted in the aftermath of the apartheid era. A *Mail and Guardian* bloch (2021) reported that the availability of illegal guns in rural areas is due to the fact that most white people owned guns during the apartheid era for various reasons. They were given the opportunity to give up these guns, but many have chosen not to do so (Malusi et al., 2021). The fact that many of these guns have consequently been stolen during farm attacks poses a threat to people living in rural areas because the owners of these illicit guns now threaten the safety and lives of rural communities and those of farmers who are perceived to be a source of easily available firearms. In 2020, an elderly farmer aged 83 was shot in the abdomen and the leg at night as he tried to prevent thieves from stealing his livestock. The perpetrators shot him and

fled with 37 sheep and 18 cows. The gun that was used and the cartridges were later traced to a gun that had been registered during the apartheid era but had been reported stolen (Bloch, 2021).

In another incident, a 44-year-old man from Orange Farm reported to *News24* (Seleka, 2022) that he had been targeted on 3 August 2022 by eight men who were armed to the teeth. They forcefully entered his property by destroying the sensor using an AK-47, which is an automatic rifle that is associated with Umkhonto we Sizwe fighters during the armed struggle. They entered the yard and started opening fire at the farmer's house. This time they fled without taking any livestock as the farmer returned fire. This was the third time they attempted such an attack on the same farmer, who had already lost 15 cows and 70 sheep through livestock theft.

The fact that livestock syndicates use guns during stock theft does not only challenge rural communal farmers, but even larger commercial farmers with security guards face the same challenge. For instance, on 11 July 2018, 28 sheep were stolen from KwaJustice Livestock Farm near Doesburg Road in KwaDukuza. The police spokesperson told *The North Coast Courier* (Twenty-eight sheep stolen in KwaDukuza, 2022) that two men armed with pistols had entered his farm compound and held the security guard hostage. Meanwhile, two bakkies were driven onto the property and the thieves loaded 28 sheep onto the bakkies and then fled.

2.5.6 Availability of target markets and reciprocity

At the core of livestock theft is everyone who is always available to buy the meat or willing to help those involved in stock theft. People who buy stolen livestock or the products that are sold are motivated due to the availability of lucrative informal markets. According to Šileika and Bekerytė (2013), another reason for affected societies' reluctance to object to such offenders is that the market for stolen livestock is commonly available. Clark (2018) adds that the availability of target markets with people willing to buy stolen livestock is crucial in sustaining and supporting livestock theft, especially for those who view livestock theft as their means of living.

Nickerson (2023) emphasises that the crime of livestock theft results in the development of reciprocal relationships among those people involved in it. This is because the perpetrators build up a customer base of people who are loyal to them due to reciprocal wealth generation. These loyal customers tend to buy stolen stock/products because it is cheaper than legitimate

ones. They thus negotiate terms with the perpetrators who are only too keen to reach a deal as they obtained the livestock or meat products illegally and accept a marginal selling price or reach an exchange agreement with the person willing to buy the livestock or meat. For instance, those who steal livestock in South Africa may sell it to Mozambicans or they may negotiate a bartering deal involving stolen cars. This creates an illicit market interaction that is built on reciprocity. Clark (2018) and Perera (2023) note that individuals with access to vulnerable locations for livestock theft use this to their advantage to attain a life of luxury at a low cost or no cost at all to themselves.

2.5.7 Individualistic attitudes and values

Embracing an individualistic culture means that individuals prioritise their needs and desires over those of others or of the group. They thus value individual relationships instead of societal relations (Perera, 2023). Those who value this culture are of the view that individual values and interests indicate independency and the group's social structures indicate conformity. Individualistic mind-set promotes self-definition, independence, and self-sufficiency and favours egoistic tendencies that result in social behaviours that are driven by self-centred desires. A society with people who embrace an individualist culture believe that personal achievement and competition are important and they value independence above an altruistic approach to society (Perera, 2023). In this context, Clark (2015) cites the example of an unemployed person living in a rural area who is surrounded by employed, successful and financially stable people. The latter group then views livestock as the most valuable asset to elevate their financial position, while livestock theft is an answer to the desires of the former. Therefore, the main motivation for offending, as explained by the routine activity theory, is individual choice, self-actualization, and personal gratification and freedom. In an individualistic community, the individual adopts self-dedicated social behaviours and ignores the needs of the larger group. As a consequence, such people cultivate their own lifestyles and judgment, regardless of social norms (Nickerson, 2023).

2.5.8 Poverty

The term 'poverty' refers to constant lack of food, homelessness, and other personal possessions, and is in essence the condition of having insufficient possessions that are needed to satisfy one's needs (Nyasulu, 2010). It is therefore associated with having little or no money at all to satisfy one's basic needs and to maintain a desired standard of living. Poverty has diverse economic, political and social causes and effects. Amongst these is unemployment

which also often leads to social issues such as crime (Savignac, 2009). Researchers such as Mpofu (2019) and Bunei et al. (2016) share the view that there is a correlation between crime and poverty, especially when people lack certain material possessions and money. Poverty is therefore the cause of many social ills, particularly when it increases the rate of substance addiction (Clark, 2015). Poverty is also often blamed as the major role-player in criminal activities, especially in theft, and it has evolved into a multi-functional industry for many for various reasons. In terms of livestock theft, poverty has been associated with criminals who prey on livestock for financial gain (Clark, 2015). These thieves, who are driven by poverty, do not care about the consequences of their actions as they want to meet their own basic needs by earning money. The fact that they impoverish their victims thus does not matter.

Poverty has a range of consequences and often has extremely harmful effects on individuals and their families. Poverty-stricken people, especially in rural areas, often feel compelled to commit stock theft purely as a means of survival. Poverty also leads to other property crimes in the form of burglary and theft. Statistics have shown high victimisation rates in areas with high poverty rates, and the victims of property crimes, including livestock theft, experience hard times as they cannot replace stolen goods. Additionally, livestock theft and other violent crimes that are prevalent in high-poverty areas can suppress property value and disrupt the livelihoods of people in these areas.

Doorewaard (2020) conducted research to explore, describe, and explain criminal behaviour associated with livestock theft using a criminological worldview by compiling a profile of such perpetrators. Doorewaard (2020) conducted interviews with 35 offenders and analysed 28 case dockets. He conducted interviews with South Africa Police Service Stock Theft Unit (STU) members as well as victims in order to determine the motives and causes of livestock theft. The findings of the study revealed that livestock theft perpetrators came from diverse backgrounds. Among other factors, low qualification levels and socio-economic class were the main reasons people became involved in livestock theft. A low education level also correlated positively with unemployment. If a person was uneducated or had a low level of education and lacked practical skills such as brick laying that are relevant and in demand in rural areas, they became unemployable and this resulted in their involvement in stock theft. Those fortunate enough found jobs, but many were poorly paid and they could not support the needs of their dependants. They thus found a way to help their families by easing the economic burden, and stock theft was the answer (Doorewaard, 2020).

2.5.9 Family dynamics and culture

Family dynamics and patterns of familial interactions reveal that family members usually rely on one another for physical, economic, and emotional support (Ratcliffe, 2019). Family members generally regard one another as a primary source of security and comfort, and this dynamic plays a vital role in moulding and developing certain behaviours in children and the youth. However, several studies on juvenile delinquency have shown that “the family environment can present as either a risk or protective factor” (Savignac, 2009: 61). Risky behaviour particularly manifests in delinquent and harmful actions. Perera (2023) argues that young people’s exposure to risk factors often leads to an increase in the probability that they may engage in delinquent behaviours. Additionally, the exposure to one risk factor may increase the probability of the adoption of another risk factor, which consequently leads to the increased likelihood of involvement in problematic behaviours. Families that are exposed to multiple risk factors are considered ‘vulnerable’ or ‘at-risk’, while those who embrace protective factors in the family context often avoid the negative effects of risk factors and reduce the likelihood of delinquency (Nyasulu, 2010). It is in this context that Clark (2018) argues that the high involvement of young people in livestock theft in the rural areas of Eastern Cape are associated with a broken family structure as so many parents migrate to urban areas to seek a better way of life, leaving their children in the care of elderly grandmothers or child-headed homes. It is therefore important to understand the effects of family risk and protective factors as they are complicit in either encouraging or preventing children and young people from being involved in illegal and deviant behaviour.

2.5.10 A large number of dependants

Some scholarly evidence articulates that, at the heart of the explosion of livestock theft in South African rural areas, is the need to care and support for too many dependants which creates a condition that exceeds the capacity of some fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and guardians. People other than the biological parents of children are often responsible for caring for these young people as the parents are unemployed or receive an inadequate income and they then explore alternative ways to support their dependants. Some leave their children to seek better employment, while others engage in illicit behaviours to try to make ends meet (Mitchley, 2023). This has led to the disintegration of many rural communities into social chaos and economic devastation.

Fergusson, Swain-Campbell and Horwood (2004) examined the extent of family dependency on rural crimes, and they revealed that most criminals in rural areas tended to be individuals who became involved in crimes, such as livestock theft, with the aim of easing the burden of a high number of dependants. The latter authors refer to this phenomenon as ‘sibling or family tax’ and highlight its contribution to crime. The results suggest that a large number of dependants creates socio-economic disadvantages that are associated with an increase in the rates of a variety of property crimes. In terms of livestock theft by rural dwellers, the latter study also found that family leaders, or those referred to as bread-winners, were susceptible to complicity in this crime.

2.5.11 The economic value of livestock

Most rural crimes, including livestock theft, usually require a perpetrator with the knowledge of an insider (often known as ‘rural social capital’) to enable them to take advantage of any potential opportunity to enrich themselves (Savignac, 2009). Ratcliffe (2019) states that moving livestock after theft requires skill and knowledge, and farmers and law enforcement officers have regularly argued that the perpetrators knew exactly what they were doing and what they were looking for. In most cases, perpetrators’ knowledge of the targeted livestock is enhanced by the fact that they live in the area, actually work/ed on the targeted farm, and/or are exposed to livestock in their daily lives. Most offenders grew up with livestock and regard these animals as important in enhancing their wealth. Perpetrators may also have been communal farmers who suddenly lost livestock, and thus resort to livestock theft to fill the void left by losing their animals. This notion was corroborated by an article in *News24*, where a perpetrator told the reporter that livestock had been part of his livelihood. The animals had provided his family with food and helped when he ploughed and harvested crops. But he had lost his livestock during a period of drought, and he now lived by stealing others’ livestock. The value that livestock has for perpetrators was also reported in an article in *The Pondo News* (Nota, 2022), which reported that perpetrators in Qachsnek in Matatiele mentioned the importance of owning livestock, especially cattle, for every rural man. Cattle are used for ploughing while selling livestock, milk, and eggs eases economic burdens such as having to pay school fees and buying clothes.

2.5.12 The role of livestock in religious and cultural customs

Most perpetrators who are involved in livestock theft claim that they love animals and they believe their actions display no cruelty to them. Livestock plays a role in their traditional lives,

and many believe that parts of the carcasses of slaughtered animals have healing properties. Some perpetrators are thus driven by their religious and cultural beliefs to commit livestock theft. Cultural traditions such as paying a bride price (lobola) in the form of cattle also encourage stock theft. Some offenders divulged that the cultural belief of using animal parts as medication or *muti* directly related to their livestock theft (Nota, 2023). Various sources have affirmed that, in most African cultures, livestock is used to perform rituals, for instance at funerals (Clark, 2015).

Although some offenders belong to certain dominant religions such as Christianity, they simultaneously adhere to the cultural traditions of their ancestors. An article in the *Mail and Guardian* (Manoko, 2021) reported that a certain man from Free State who had been practising traditional healing since 2004 argued that, because traditional healing required the use of various substances such as natural herbs, plants, and livestock (especially goat) body parts, he had decided to become involved livestock theft. The man further explained that livestock theft helped him to earn more money because when a person sought help and their healing required slaughtering an animal, they would also buy goats and cattle from him to complete the traditional process. Traditionally, goats' blood is used for cleansing a person or a home, while cattle are slaughtered on site during feasts and celebrations and for *ukukhapha* at funerals (Hans, 2021).

Therefore, although some perpetrators steal livestock for financial reasons, some steal animals to adhere to their cultural and religious beliefs. Men who have to pay a bride price (labola) require about eleven cows and goats, and this is a financial burden that few can afford. They may therefore revert to stock theft as an easy solution (Hans, 2021).

2.5.13 Revenge

Poverty and hate or revenge crimes are regularly misunderstood. Revenge crimes are those crimes committed by perpetrators either through violence or as an aggressive act towards victims due to their religion, ethnicity, lifestyle, and beliefs. This type of crime generally occurs as a result of poverty, social exclusion, and/or broken family life because these can push people towards taking extreme measures against society. Pare and Felson (2014) share the view that the relationship between revenge and livestock theft in rural areas is complex. According to Doorewaard (2020), some perpetrators' actions could be classified as revenge because they acted against a person (often employers) who treated them badly by for instance firing them.

Sometimes the perpetrator had lost self-control when they believed they had been ill-treated or when they had experienced a horrific life event such as death or unemployment. For instance, a 28-year-old police officer and a 31-year-old man were arrested in North-West Province when they were caught with four sheep and two cattle that had been stolen from a farm near Mmabatho. The man had worked on the farm and was in cahoots with the police officer. In his statement, the man revealed that he had stolen the livestock because he was not happy with his treatment and the wage he had earned on the farm (Kockott, 2023). He claimed he had raised the issue of a too low wage with the employer who then said he could do whatever he wished because there was no money, hence he chose to steal the livestock. He also justified himself by arguing that his employer had added to his emotional and psychological stress due to his financial crisis.

2.6 Internal and External Factors as Divers of Livestock Theft

Livestock is an economic asset that does not necessarily have to be transformed into monetary currency to affirm its relevance. It is a living currency with multiple applications that are relevant to indigenous and rural contexts. Masuku and Motlalekgosi (2021: 667) conducted a study in the rural areas of Mpumalanga Province in the Pixley Isaka KaSeme district, and their findings suggest that “an upward trend of stock theft is a cause for concern and should be seen as a call for interventions, such as community involvement”. Masuku and Motlalekgosi (2021) further emphasise that community involvement has been an effective intervention measure in many other crimes, hence it may result in the same effectiveness in the quest to curb stock theft.

Lombard and Bahta (2019) list various internal and external variables as factors that lead to or pose a threat to livestock. These include the profile of the targeted farm, active theft management practices, topographic variables, physical barriers, strategic barriers, management practices, and actions that should be applied to fight stock theft. Other variables include forms of livestock marking and conditions or periods when livestock is mostly stolen. They also suggest ways of combatting livestock theft. They refer to steps that herders and farmers can take to ensure the safety and protection of their livestock against theft, and highlight the potential for certain places or spots where the livestock is usually stolen, such as grazing fields and kraals. They also discuss measures that livestock owners can employ to ensure they never fall victim to stock theft (again).

2.6.1 External factors

External determinants are those factors that do not occur inside the livestock owner's area of control, such as grazing fields in rural areas and the nature of the design of the compound or kraal. When housed in poorly designed and structured holding areas, livestock are vulnerable to theft as the perpetrators can easily access such sites. However, livestock need to be fed and farmers/herders need to be cognisant of the vulnerability of such areas. In this context, topographic features can facilitate stock theft as they are prominent in rural areas where livestock is provided with grazing spaces such as grasslands, areas under trees, near rivers, and wide open grazing fields. However, these settings and topographic features can also determine the proneness of livestock to be stolen, particularly as stock thieves can utilise them to approach and steal livestock without much danger of being caught in the act. According to Akers (1990), livestock thieves evaluate the settings in which livestock are accessible, and Kockott (2023) adds that thieves do this evaluation to see whether they could readily steal livestock from a certain setting without being challenged. The routine activity theory supports these arguments, as thieves with nefarious intent scout such areas before making the decision to strike. The following features are usually considered.

Plains: A plain is a geographic feature that is also known as a flatland as it has few elevations, is treeless, is wide open and spacious, and runs in valleys or at the foot of mountains. This type of area makes it easy for perpetrators to steal grazing animals as they can spot any other person approaching from a distance (Lombard and Bahta, 2019). It is also easy to spot herds from a distance because there are no trees or elevations that hide them (Masuku and Motlalekgosi, 2021). When it is raining or windy, there is no place where the livestock can hide, and the animals then stand in close groups in plain sight. Flatlands are also usually near roads and this makes it easy for perpetrators to take a large number of livestock using vehicles and get away promptly (Shava and Masuku, 2019). On the other hand, if thieves steal livestock on foot, it may not be easy to hide many animals on a flat terrain, but they could easily hide them in mountainous areas.

Ridges: A ridge is “a long, narrow, elevated geomorphologic landform, structural feature, or combination of both, that is separated from the surrounding terrain by steep sides. The sides of a ridge slope away from a narrow top, the crest or ridge crest, with the terrain dropping down on either side” (The State of Food and Agriculture, 2021: n.p.). These are the types of grazing places situated mostly in unplanted natural forests. Rural herders choose to let their livestock

feed in these terrains mostly in winter because during this season, most grazing areas are dry in summer rainfall areas (Khoabane and Black, 2009). These grazing camps do not easily dry out and their grass is generally freshly green because it is moistened by mist and dew. For this reason, perpetrators know the right moment to strike. Because these fields are usually steep, cows are easily driven along a chosen route (Nel, 2014).

Mountains: A mountain is an elevated portion of the Earth's crust with steep sides showing significantly exposed bedrock. A mountain differs from a plateau because it has a limited summit area and is usually higher than a hill, and it typically rises about 300 metres above the surrounding land (The State of Food and Agriculture, 2021). Livestock owners like letting their cows graze in a place where they can easily access their feed and water simultaneously, and most rural mountains areas are also characterised by the presence of rivers or dams. People in rural areas tend to let their cows and cattle graze in such areas. They leave them there overnight, but the herder would go and check on them from time to time. Unfortunately, this gives thieves the time to regularly check these spots and to strike and they often take the whole herd if possible (Khoabane and Black, 2009).

2.6.2 Internal factors

Farmers use various techniques to ensure that their livestock is protected and guarded against theft. For instance, farmers ensure that their livestock is herded back from the grazing fields to their kraals and are counted daily. Most also ensure that their homesteads have well-secured and sturdy fences and gates. Homesteads are also guarded by guard dogs and/or a security guard to ensure that kraals and sheds are well protected and not easily accessible.

Marking livestock for easy identification has been applied for many years. According to Coetzee, Montshwe and Jooste (2005) a marked animal provides absolute proof of ownership and helps in record keeping and avoiding disputes when the need arises to identify stolen animals. Livestock marks can be applied in various ways and can be temporary or permanent. Painting livestock with colour or cutting the tails of animals are considered as temporary markings for a few months, while ear notching, ear tags, and hot iron and freeze branding leave permanent markings. These are useful since they are recorded into the database of the Department of Agriculture. They are advantageous in fighting stock theft and help in managing and tracking lost or stolen animals (Coetzee et al., 2005).

Tattooing: This marking technique is when a permanent mark is put in an unobtrusive area, such as on an animal's ear or inside a lip. It consists of patterned, closely spaced dark dots depicting numbers, letters, or a combination of letters and numbers. These are embedded in the animal's bare skin using black ink, generally on the inside of the ear (Nel, 2014). Stock thieves often resort to cutting off tattooed ears to remove the identification of an animal; therefore, markings must be positioned in a way that discourages this practice. If an ear of an animal is removed, that is a violation of the law because, according to South African law, only a vet is allowed to remove the ears of livestock for health reasons (Coetzee et al., 2005), and prosecutors can lay a charge against a person found with livestock with a removed ear.

Marked ears: A simple and handy method known as 'ear notching' is used to identify animals individually from a distance. A combination of notches are applied to the rim of the ear of the animal which is a code for a number to identify each animal (Nel, 2014). This can be used for all livestock species and has variations in systems and techniques, such as ear punching. In this method, shell holes are punched in the ear using a pair of special pliers. According to Uys (2017: 67), "90% of rural communities use ear notching as an identification method" as it gives animals "unique markings that are linked to a specific household or farm, and these markings cannot be easily altered by criminals to match those of their herds". Therefore, stolen livestock can be easily identified by checking the ear-notched patterns.

Using a registered mark: People who own cattle, sheep, goats or pigs are obliged to mark their livestock with an identification mark showing to whom the animal belongs. According to the South African Government (n.d.), if the livestock is lost or stolen and is found, it will be possible to trace the owner with the help of an identification mark which consists of not more than three letters of the alphabet. It can also consist of symbols or characters. Livestock owners must apply for a registered identification mark to the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development.

2.7 Implications of Livestock Theft for Rural Households

Despite statistics that have shown some decline in livestock theft, this crime has increased rapidly in South Africa. It has devastating consequences, especially for smallholding and communal farmers because this commodity is a (Nota, 2022) a currency that has versatile functions in the livelihoods of those engaged in livestock farming. Losing livestock through theft has various consequences that are emotional, social, and economic. Livestock theft has financial consequences for all targeted farmers (commercial and small-herd or communal farmers) and may affect the sustainability of production and food security (Slembrouck, 2015). By the same token, livestock farming results in emotional trauma due to the toll of searching and failure to recover the stolen stock.

2.7.1 Poverty

Rural areas are mostly occupied by poor people whose highest proportion of income is from livestock. For these people, stock theft poses a dire poverty-related challenge. Rural households survive on the returns of their livestock wealth, for example milk and other products derived from animals such as wool and mohair (Khoabane and Black, 2009). They also slaughter animals for meat and hides. Some livestock-derived products and livestock itself are also sold for cash to purchase food and services. Farmers thus sell milk, eggs, pork, and goats to survive.

2.7.2 Loss of income

When livestock produces products such as milk, eggs and meat, households consume some while selling the rest to earn an income to buy goods such as furniture and clothing and to pay for services such as medical bills and school fees. When livestock is stolen, the loss of this income is devastating (Khoabane and Black, 2009).

2.7.3 Unemployment

Herds are fed by grazing in the field or by giving them various feeds. For example, sheep, goats and cattle graze while chickens and pigs are given scraps and other food. Livestock rearing therefore requires herdsman and people to care for the animals. Therefore, when livestock is stolen, the number of livestock to be guarded decreases and herdsman are laid off and become unemployed (Manoko, 2021).

2.7.4 Loss of transport and means of farming

Rural areas normally lack road infrastructure and in many mountainous areas horses, donkeys, and mules are used as transport. Cattle and horses are also used for ploughing and for transporting harvested crops. According to Shava and Masuku (2019: 6), “cattle are also used as draught power, providing traction with the advent of the ox-drawn plough, sledge and cart when harvesting”. When it is ploughing season, cattle are used in teams of two to four in what is called *ispani* in isiXhosa. They are tied together using *idyokhwe* as they pull *ikhuba* that is used to plough. When it is harvesting time, draft horses, donkeys, and oxen pull a sledge or cart full of harvested mealies, beans, pumpkins, and cabbages. Horses and donkeys are used to transport a vast number of things, including people. Donkeys also carry water, while horses are ridden as a form of transport.

2.8 Reasons for Livestock Theft

2.8.1 Rivalry and vengeance

Many people in rural areas believe they are poor because they are victims of other people’s deceit, witchcraft, and betrayal. Therefore, some view livestock theft as justified as this is not theft but a way to reimbursing themselves for some injustices. People sometimes engage in stock theft as an act of vengeance, such as when they believe they have been victims of deception. For example, Matjhabeng (2021) narrates the event of Mr Maela who believed his friend had deceived him. They had had an agreement to help each other pay for start-up livestock (a cow and an ox), and their agreement had been that they would each pay a certain amount. The conflict started when the friend said he was not financially safe and they should put the agreement on hold after the friend had already received the cows as his part of the agreement. Mr Maela then felt betrayed and used; he then decided to steal the friend’s cows to sell them and buy his own. In another incident, a man from Maluti reported to *Pondo News* (Nota, 2022) that the farmer they had stolen from had probably killed his father, and therefore he had taken away the breadwinner. Stealing the farmer’s livestock was therefore his way of filling the gap that had been left by the death of the father.

Rivalry may also cause stock theft. There is a belief that thieves work in groups and target certain areas. If one group believes that a member lost livestock because of another group, they then target members of the rival group by stealing their livestock. For instance, the SAPS (2021) recovered 14 cows and 1 horse that had been hidden in the veld behind the Lesotho

Mountain near Matatiele. Two men were found guarding these animals and they were arrested. These men admitted that they had hidden these animals in the veld to buy time and that they would later cross the border to sell them. In court, the men pleaded guilty and admitted to committing stock theft because they believed a group of thieves from Matatiele had also been stealing from them.

2.8.2 Poor safety measures

Farmers who adopt poor techniques to curb stock theft in rural areas are the target of stock thieves. The nature and frequency of stock theft opportunities in rural areas are increased if rural farmers do not take adequate steps to ensure the security of their livestock. Weak protection measures are equivalent to high stock theft rates in rural areas and have clear implications for aggregate crime rates as potential perpetrators view this as an easily accessible opening for their operations without requiring too much effort. If the fields and kraals of livestock farmers are not secured enough to prevent thieves from entering them, it creates opportunities for thieves to steal their stock.

2.9 Opportunities for Recovering Stolen Livestock

In the period April 2019 to March 2020, the Eastern Cape province alone reported the theft of 11 506 sheep, 3 124 cattle, 2 497 goats, and 176 horses. The Eastern Cape lost about R260m in stock theft that year and this was never recovered (Marais, 2020). According to Clark (2013), the chances of stock recovery slowly deteriorate yearly, which discourages livestock owners from reporting any theft. Additionally, Pasiwe et al. (2021) state that failure to recover stolen stock is because the police take too long to respond. This gives perpetrators enough time to move the stock they have stolen further away. According to Coleman (2023), the poor recovery of stolen livestock is also due to miscommunication or lack of communication among the forums for stock theft and the police. The thieves also plan ahead and know where to hide or sell the stolen stock, while large transport trucks and bakkies are also used for a quick and untraceable get-away. Moreover, Hans (2021: 1) adds that “the weakest link in the security chain [is] caused by unsecured borders between South Africa and its immediate neighbours such as Eswatini and Lesotho, [and this] is another issue hindering farmers from recovering their animals once they [have crossed] the porous borders”.

2.10 Markets for Stolen Livestock

According to Manoko (2021), syndicates that stole livestock in Ganyesa near Vryburg in the North-West province sold the stolen livestock to traditional healers, who claimed they had bought the animals believing that the seller was the owner (Manoko, 2021). Some perpetrators would steal livestock and sell it to available abattoirs. Such abattoir managers should be prosecuted as they are condoning theft. Areas near the borders of neighbouring countries also advantage thieves who easily ship, hide, and sell stolen stock to people in these countries. These areas are those in Mpumalanga near the Eswatini border, Matatiele near the Lesotho border, and Kosi Bay in KwaZulu-Natal near Maputo in Mozambique. Some buyers know that these stocks are stolen while others turn a blind eye and argue that South Africa has cheap livestock (Hans, 2021).

2.11 Measures to Prevent Livestock Theft

It is important for livestock owners to be aware that, because livestock theft is an issue in the global and national economy, it is in their best interests to do everything in their power to protect their livestock from thieves. Livestock owners must ensure that they keep an eye on trends and stock theft patterns/modus operandi in their area, and they must be able to identify factors that lead to their victimisation and ensure they attend to them accordingly to eliminate the chances of repeated targeting. Farmers must ensure that all fences and gates where they keep their livestock are secure and in good working order. Erecting electric fences and sensors to protect their livestock is expensive but may save a lot of money in the long term.

Livestock owners must ensure that they repair holes in and under the fences immediately when they have been noticed. Additionally, farmers need to consider employing people who have especially been trained to patrol and check fences daily. This will ensure that everything that needs to be fixed or replaced is done promptly. Livestock owners must also inspect their livestock and reparations rather than merely delegating people to do so. If a farm has loading ramps in paddocks that are out of sight of direct supervision, then they should be kept locked or obstructed all the time. Yards and kraals where farmers keep their livestock should always be secured (Khoabane and Black, 2009).

Farmers need to avoid areas in close proximity to roads when planning where to put their paddocks, as thieves view stockades near roads as ideal for herding and loading stolen animals quickly. When the farmer has sheep and goats, they must be kept in kraals close to the

farmstead. If it happens that a farmer considers buying an additional plot to keep livestock, he or she must consider buying a plot close to the homestead or ensure 24-hour security (Hans, 2021).

2.11.1 Paying attention to trends and frequencies of livestock theft

Farmers need to keep an eye and ear on livestock theft trends, especially with regards to times of occurrence and the methods used. For example, they must particularly note when these crimes may be imminent, such as when there is a full moon, when it is raining heavily, on weekends, or during school holidays. They must also pay attention to areas that are targeted, such as flat grazing fields or in bushy areas. Livestock owners should identify targeted spaces and dangerous periods where and when stock theft is likely to occur.

2.11.2 Doing background checks on employees

Rural farmers should appoint workers to patrol areas around grazing fields and inspect fences daily. When they considering applicants for employment, they should contact previous employers to establish the reasons for the applicant leaving the previous job. They must do a proper background check and lodge enquiries at the SAPS to check whether the applicant has a criminal record.

Farmers and those in their employ should identify irregularities and immediately report and address suspicious movement around grazing fields, kraals, and homesteads. Farmers and their employees must be careful about what they say in front of strangers, as syndicates send scouts to figure out who does what and when and they use that information to study the patterns of movement on targeted farms.

2.11.3 Employing livestock counting and identification measures

Livestock farmers should count their livestock daily. Livestock owners, especially communal farmers, should make it their responsibility to count the animals themselves and not leave it to their employees to do the counting because it is the farmer's duty to lodge a complaint when livestock is missing (Phillips, 2022).

It has been highlighted by Phillips (2022) that some court cases are closed or lost due to disputes about the proper identification of livestock when they went missing, such as the colour of the missing cattle, how many have gone missing, and for how long. Therefore, if the

identification and head-counting is done by the farmer rather than an employee, it will be easy to identify the variables. Having livestock marked with a registered brand mark or tattoo helps to easily identify stolen animals and will aid in resolving or avoiding disputes. These markings include hot iron branding that is applied through heating a metal rod and placing it on the animal's hide to burn it and leave a mark of a symbol or number (Figure 2.4). Tattooing is another type of livestock branding where farmers use a needle for injecting ink into the animal's ear or lip (Figure 2.5). To easily brand stock, owners should visit SAPS Stock Theft Unit offices where they will be issued with application forms to apply for branding certificates from the Department of Agriculture. As per Animal Identification Act No. 6 of 2002 (Clark, 2018), livestock owners should properly mark their livestock, preferably with tattoos or numbers.



Figure 2.3: Hot iron branding

Source: Brody (2018).



Figure 2.4: Tattooing

Source: Livestocking.Net (n.d.).

When shortages or signs of theft are observed, they must be reported immediately as this will ensure immediate response to the threat and might ensure that stock theft is prevented or that the animals are recovered. While grazing, livestock should always be watched. Guarding is preferable to recovery and eliminates the anxiety and stress of livestock theft.

2.11.4 Use of technology

Farmers should not hesitate to invest in technology such as CCTV cameras, which they must utilise to curb the high increase of livestock theft (Livestocking.Net, n.d.). Technology will help to capture movements in and around farms, households, and around kraals. Livestock farmers are also advised to use thermal imaging cameras as they record images of infrared radiation that are able to identify or sense heat to determine possible threats (Phillips, 2022). These images are produced by thermal cameras that produce highlighted pictures according to their perceived range of threat that is presented through robotic colours. For example, if a captured image is red, it is perceived as high threat, those appearing in blue or green represent limited or no threat, and lukewarm threats appear in orange or yellow. Thermal cameras are advantageous compared to conventional CCTV security cameras because they are able to detect threats and capture images in extremely low light or in complete darkness, unfavourable weather conditions, in areas with thick vegetation, in heavy fog, and in dust and excessive glare from the sun (Phillips, 2022).

2.11.5 The SAPS and community cooperation

Owners need to ensure that there are no spots near their farms where stolen livestock can be hidden. Regular patrols are required to notice strange or suspicious people and, if spotted, they must be immediately reported to the police and the neighbourhood watch. It is important to note that the longer the delay in reporting and starting a search for stolen or lost livestock, the less the possibility of it being recovered becomes. Farmers must cooperate with the local SAPS and its Stock Theft Unit and, when working with them, they must ensure they support them in their efforts to recover the livestock lost. The SAPD, on the other hand, must ensure prompt response to reports of stock theft.

Reducing the rates of crime in an area is the responsibility of the community as a whole and not only that of certain individuals and the SAPS. Community members must work together in the fight against crime to make it easy to raise awareness and assist one another to block the perpetrators from taking away their stock. All residents should prioritise community safety and not engage or resist when they are held at gunpoint by thieves when they steal stock (Nel, 2014). When court cases have been opened, livestock owners need to show interest and attend all court proceedings. They should avoid withdrawing stock theft cases regardless of the apparent lack of interest by the SAPS or their own reluctance to attend court proceedings.

2.11.6 Livestock insurance

Livestock farmers are advised to consider the risks posed against livestock and they should consider protecting themselves by insuring their livestock. Insurance can be costly, but it could help avoid the financial strain livestock owners face when they have lost their animals (Pare and Felson, 2014).

2.12 Interventions to Curb Livestock Theft

Intervention methods to curb livestock theft include short- and long-term strategies (Mpfu, 2019). Key livestock theft prevention techniques are discussed below because they are used in police work most of the time. It is therefore important to point out that, as much as situational crime prevention occurs by means of target hardening and the neighbourhood watch system, little evidence exists in favour of its effectiveness (Pare and Felson, 2014). This is a result of the absence of the proper evaluation of these techniques.

2.12.1 Improved resources and personnel

Most government police stations and stock theft units, especially those in rural areas, are faced with issues such as lack of resources, limited staff, and heavy workloads. Not having enough resources and manpower creates huge gaps in the ability of the police service and stock theft units to execute their task. It seems a travesty that there are units without vehicles and limited personnel, as this makes them unable to perform properly and they constantly feel overworked. Limited resources naturally result in inefficiency and ineffectiveness (Pare and Felson, 2014). It is therefore crucial that government adjusts the SAPS budget and ensures that more manpower is deployed to rural areas. The number of vehicles available to each unit and police station should also be increased to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. Additionally, police and stock theft unit managers must conduct effective station evaluations to ensure the satisfactory performance of officers of all ranks.

2.12.2 Neighbourhood watch

The neighbourhood watch system is a series of security watch units formed by residents of a neighbourhood of changeable sizes to prevent crime in an area. For example, they are formed by people from one street or a group of people from a certain village. They engage in constant patrols and supervision and report any suspicious movements in the area to the police (Mawby, 2013). The purpose of a neighbourhood watch is to reduce crime and ensure safety in their residential or business areas. Cooperation, patrol, and watchmen-ship are key features of a neighbourhood watch unit.

It is important to note that social guardianship, which means that more than one person lives in a residence, has a higher chance of preventing livestock theft than physical guardianship, e.g. extra locks and alarms in places where livestock is kept and tightening of visibility in grazing fields (Pare and Felson, 2014). Mawby (2013) studied the different dimensions of guarding (physical, personal, social, and natural) on both individual and neighbourhood levels, and noted that natural guardianship (defensible space) and physical guardianship (target hardening) appeared to be the most effective in addressing livestock theft victimisation. This author also points out that crime prevention strategies work best when they attempt to prevent crime on both the individual and community levels.

2.12.3 Community policing forum

A Community Police Forum (CPF), as popularly implemented in most police precincts in rural areas, consists of members of organisations and institutions operating in certain areas such as schools, mosques, churches, youth groups, ratepayers' associations, civic organizations, and businesses (SAPS, 2016). The forum's purpose is to establish and maintain a safe and secure environment for its community members and organisations who want to make the community safe. These forums thus seeks to establish a good collaborative partnership between the community and the police. Once a CPF has been formed, the executive must be selected to ensure that every member understands and fulfils his/her role in the organisation. According to the National Constitution of South Africa, each police station should have a Community Police Forum (SAPS, 2016).

By law, a Community Police Forum must have specific aims as constituted in Section 18 of the SAPS Act No. 68 of 1995, but a forum can also add more aims if its members agree (SAPS, 2016). All the aims must be written into the constitution of the forum. For instance, Section 3 of the Sample Constitution for CPF suggests that a forum has to: help the police service and the local community to work together; make the police and the community partners against crime; identify and solve problems to do with crime, disorder, fears, and poor service by the police; improve communication and relations between the police and the community; find ways to make the police service transparent and accountable; encourage the media to be fair when they inform people about police actions; promote respect for human rights; work together with other institutions in the local community; track the police service, including complaints, charges, visits to cells and patrolling; help different cultural groups to understand one another; and act in a mature and polite way when working with the police (SAPS, 2016).

2.12.4 Implementation of the National Rural Safety Strategy (NRSS)

The National Rural Safety Strategy (SAPS, 2019) came into effect in July 2011 to address the restructuring of Public Order Policing (POP) units whose mandate included, among its other operational duties, the responsibility for follow-up operations on farm attacks. It was later amended to include eliminating victimization of rural farmers (SAPS, 2016). Its purpose is to provide guidelines that will be of assistance in creating safety and security in rural areas. The aims of the NRSS are to respond to the needs for safety and security in rural areas, combat livestock theft, provide a safe and secure environment that is in support of food security, increase social and economic development, and strengthen relationships in the rural community

through joint planning, implementation, development, and evaluation of the execution of the plan.

This NRSS was implemented to enhance protection service delivery in rural communities while ensuring increased police visibility in rural villages and improved police response and effectiveness in rural areas. It also aims to create effective and efficient rural policing to protect those regarded as vulnerable (women, children, and the disabled) and to focus on security issues in rural farming areas. Its purpose is to enhance safety awareness among rural communities and to build a support system for rural development and growth through the enhancement of cooperation. It also aims to establish a strong foundation of partnerships in rural areas in the fight against crime by involving not only the police, but the community as well. Its emphasis is on enhancing communication and building relationships between the police, farming communities, villagers, and all stakeholders in internal and extended rural communities. It is also mandated to create opportunities for community involvement in rural safety through involving local community policing forums with the aim of improving the investigation of crime and increasing convictions for all crimes committed in rural areas.

2.13 Conclusion

The review of the literature on livestock theft clearly exposed the need to identify existing gaps, trends, and patterns that characterize this crime in rural and farming areas. The discourse focused on the extent and nature of livestock theft in various countries as it is a global phenomenon, with specific focus on the situation in South African rural communities in general. Different reasons for stock theft and its escalating prevalence were discussed, namely cultural practices, lack of employment, and the wealth associated with livestock ownership. Livestock theft was historically a means of ensuring survival, but it has become commercialised due to the acquisition of wealth associated with this crime. Social challenges such as increased availability of arms and workplace conflicts on farms that sometimes lead to job losses were also discussed.

Although the dynamics of this crime differ from area to area, livestock theft remains a concern in many African countries. The nature of this crime has also escalated into organised crime tendencies across the globe, which is no different in South Africa. The examination of research studies on rural crime and livestock theft as well as media reports on such incidences revealed that perpetrators might come from different socio-economic backgrounds and that their motives

differ based on the relationship of the offender with the victim, their age, the extent of stock theft syndicates in a particular area, and the accessibility of means and opportunities to commit this crime. Likewise, it was discussed that, as much as the causes and motives for stock theft vary, measures to mitigate this crime also vary. Perpetrators use different methods to execute livestock theft that range from stealing only a few animals to loading large herds on trucks and driving them away. Different theft strategies thus require different mitigating measures.

The findings suggest that the SAPS and the criminal justice system need to improve their services to effectively fight this crime. SAPS officers need to respond timeously and collect and secure evidence properly to ensure that offenders are found guilty. They also need to regain the trust of the community and motivate victims to report livestock theft. If is not done, it can further impede the correctional management and rehabilitation of livestock theft offenders and may exacerbate recidivism of livestock theft perpetrators. Moreover, proper recording and accurate statistics of this crime need to be a priority in the SAPS.. There are diverse and divergent views on the challenges associated with farm attacks, farmer murders, and livestock theft, and if the police in rural areas do not step up they will rub further salt into the wounds of a society that is already fed-up with police inefficiency and excuses. It is necessary to point out that the literature findings affirm that the system used by the policing sector in rural areas has failed dismally in curbing this crime that ravages the lives of so many law-abiding farmers who operate both large and small farming enterprises in this country.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

For centuries, livestock has been a source of wealth and social standing for herders, owners, and farmers who have had the opportunity to own these animals. However, livestock has been equally attractive to thieves who steal these animals for various purposes and at various frequencies. It is therefore essential to acknowledge that there is a correlation between the crime of livestock theft and the place or environment in which this crime is committed. Moreover, livestock theft is a crime that has become a concern due to its organised nature and its increasingly bad impact on local and national food security. In order for South Africa, its police, agricultural departments, and rural communities to devise strategies to mitigate this crime, it is vital to assess, understand, and evaluate it through the lenses of various theories.

Criminological theories attempt to explain what is deemed inexplicable and examine factors leading to deviant, violent, and all other unlawful behaviours (Okada, 2015). It is important to note that different theories propose different explanations for criminal behaviour. These tend to reflect various concerns and professional interests depending on their disciplines. For instance, biologists explain criminality in terms of the physiology of the criminal, while psychologists direct their attention to the mind or personality of the perpetrator (Exploring Your Mind, 2020). At the same time, sociological theorists recognise that people with the same physiological profiles may behave differently depending on the circumstances of their socialisation (Burke, 2018). Therefore, researchers take cognisance of the fact that legal philosophers, biologists, psychologists, sociologists, and political scientists may not view crime from the same perspectives as criminological theories do. Criminological theories tend to explain what drives or motivates one to offend rather than highlighting the attributes of an offender (Vinz and George, 2022).

This chapter presents the theoretical frameworks that were adopted to underpin this study that explored the effects of livestock theft on the livelihoods of people in a selected rural area. Vinz and George (2022) argue that the purpose of adopting theories in criminological research is to provide explanations for why crime is committed and to envision the conception of criminal behaviour. Criminological theories are important in research studies because they help the

researcher and the affected community to understand and explain the root causes as well as the consequences of deviant behaviours. These theories seek to examine the correlation between laws, the criminal justice system, and other role-players involved in the patterns of crime, while they also serve as compass to finding ways to effectively respond to and prevent crime (Exploring Your Mind, 2020).

To ensure the effectiveness and relevance of a theory in a study, a researcher must choose a theory that aligns the assumptions of that theory with the topic under investigation. Criminological theories are not time-restricted to occurrence or place, and they may therefore be used to assess, examine, and explain different situations and behaviours that occur in different settings and spaces across various fields of study (Farrell, 2010). Due to their versatility, one theory may be applicable to many schools of thought and to various phenomena. Cressey (2017) states that for each research study there is always a theory that orientates the data collection and analysis processes.

The criminological theories that this study adopted were the rational choice theory and the routine activity theory. These theories were selected because their assumptions (or tenets) align with the phenomenon of livestock theft. According to Klerks (2004), for a theory to be a perfect fit for a study, it must be able to elucidate the causes, correction methods, and prevention plans from different worldviews of various disciplines. They must also be able to complement and verify the findings of studies concerning criminal behaviour. The selected theories were thus used to emphasise how the deviant behaviour of stock theft is maintained and why it is still prevalent (and even escalating) in the current era. These theories were effective not only in explaining how the crime of stock theft is executed, but their assumptions and tenets were also used to remedially draft strategies to mitigate stock theft in the rural area under study. These theories were utilised in an attempt to explain livestock theft and to suggest ways to combat this crime. Each of these theoretical approaches was used to analyse the stock theft crime from different angles but, ultimately, they converged the findings to reach a set of meaningful conclusions.

3.2 The Rational Choice Theory

3.2.1 Origins of the rational choice theory

Rational choice theory originated in the seventeenth century. Its origin can be traced back to a philosopher and political economist, Adam Smith (1723-1790). It was then a theory containing a set of guidelines that were to help in gaining a better understanding of economic and general social behaviour. In essence, the rational choice theory postulated that a person first performed a cost-benefit analysis to determine their decisions (Verbora, 2015). This cost-benefit analysis helped in deciding on an option that was best or the most suitable, and it also suggested that people would take self-driven rational actions that they thought would be best for the overall economy. This theory was later adapted by Gary Becker in 1968 who presented it as an economic model of crime, thus the rational choice theory was introduced to the criminological field of study (Harman, 2013). Becker, as a proponent of the model, outlined a formula that may be used to determine a potential delinquent's utility. According to Farrell (2010), this formula is the following:

$$EU = pU(Y - f) + (1 - p)U(Y)$$

where p is the potential offender's chance of being caught in the act; f presents the severity of the anticipated punishment upon apprehension; and Y is the utility benefits that one would gain after committing the crime successfully and if not caught. In other words, this calculus of choice describes the person's utility as a determining factor of the costs and benefits of a crime, where a crime rise is presented as Y and a fall for both p and f . In 1986, Derek Cornish and Ronald Clarke re-modelled the theory to enhance understanding of the occurrence of criminal events (Clarke and Felson, 2017). They conclude that people can use rationality as an assumption for understanding an extensive range of behaviours in an array of contexts besides using it to understand only economic decisions.

Cornish and Clarke (1986) share the view that individuals engage in criminal activities following deep logical thoughts where they process and consciously analyse and weigh the benefits against the costs of committing a crime. They argue that if the potential criminal perceives the benefits of committing the intended crime as outweighing the costs, he or she is then highly likely to commit the offense. The rational choice theory has been adopted by a school of thought that holds the view that people decide to take actions that are mostly in alignment with their desired subjective preferences. It is therefore the theory that has been

predominantly used by numerous criminological scholars to understand and examine criminal events. For instance, a property crime such as livestock theft is often committed because the perpetrators calculate that the theft of the targeted animals will be relatively easy due to limited chances of being apprehended, while the income that they will gain from selling these animals or slaughtering them and selling the meat is a conclusive fact.

3.2.2 Overview of rational choice theory

The major fundamental concept that the rational choice theory holds is rationality. Rationality is defined as “the role of reasoning that a human adopts prior to behaving in a certain way; in this sense, rationality sees crime as the results of a person’s thinking through weighing all the possible rewards and downfalls that may be as a result of a criminal act” (Verbora, 2015:36). The rational choice theory purports that, in their quest to offend, potential offenders make four primary choices, namely: (i) whether to commit a criminal act or not; (ii) whether to select a certain target or not; (iii) how frequently they must offend to achieve the desired reward; and (iv) whether to desist from committing this crime or not. Each primary choice is briefly discussed in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Choice structures to classify crimes

Primary Choice Structure	Brief Description
Whether to commit a criminal act or not	There are many reasons why a person may choose to commit a criminal act; for example, psychological issues, familial challenges, social problems, and economical challenges. Regardless of issues or challenges, any crime is still viewed as a rational decision, especially in cases where one is not coerced into being involved in criminal behaviour. Human beings have a clear choice whether they would offend or not. Criminals consider the best opportunities (whether legitimate or illegitimate) for benefits and make conscious choices to act. Therefore, an offence is a rational choice.
To select a certain target or not	The rational choice of whether to select a certain target or not is an important aspect in this choice. Probable offenders first interpret hints and features serving as indications of perceived outcomes, such as the surroundings or environment, how the crime will be committed, and who this offense will impact. For example, they will check whether the target is valuable enough to risk being caught, if they are familiar with the area, and the availability of access and escape routes. They

also check the proximity of potential guardians in the area of the potential target.

How frequently they must offend This choice is dependent on a plethora of factors such the social network of the potential offender, monetary and other needs, the influence of peers, and the ability to avoid being caught. This means that the frequency of offending is the individual's choice.

Whether to desist from crime or not Ceasing from partaking in criminal acts or continuing with them is another rational choice that has to be made. Various factors may influence an offender's decision to continue or refrain from committing a potential crime; e.g., detection, ageing issues, and the accessibility of potential targets, all of which are internal issues. External issues include being married, the potential to sustain injury, and the necessity to change employment status.

Source: Verbora, 2015

The rational choice theory examines the relationship between a perpetrator's preferences and choices. For instance:

Humans possess the power to freely choose their conduct: The rational choice theory assumes that criminals are rational beings and that their behaviour results from decisions influenced by rational thoughts and decisions taken based on the accounts of offenders' desires, preferences, and motives (Clark, 2015). Potential offenders decide to act based on weighing the extent to which they expect their choices to maximise their benefits while minimising the costs. In this regard, their decision to offend are influenced by expected efforts and rewards compared with the likelihood of severe punishment if caught.

Humans are goal-oriented and purposive: For example, on consecutive rainy days, cattle owners in rural areas opt not to fetch them from the fields to avoid leaving them in muddy kraals and be infected with *uchwane* (a form of foot rot or foot sore on livestock). During this period, they look for places with grass and let their cattle stay there, while thieves then utilise this opportunity to their advantage and ensure that rainy days are their protection from being caught by owners as they will stay indoors to avoid being exposed to the rain. Clark (2015) argues that stock thieves also consider the geographic characteristics of the crime location before they commit themselves to stealing stock. They analyse the terrain and determine the route they will take to avoid being caught.

Humans act rationally and their judgment is influenced by three factors: (i) They have a number of alternatives depending on their desired hierarchical preferences; (ii) they weigh the cost of individual alternatives; and (iii) they determine the best available opportunity to maximize their targeted utility.

For instance, they may decide to steal the targeted cattle grazing in a bushy area or forest on a misty day. Burke (2018) believes that livestock thieves are like a tradesman whose decision to act is derived from economic gain and other motivations as they choose the trade with the greatest rewards. According to Burke's perspective, criminals use a normal, reasoning mindset to accurately distinguish the means (livestock) and ends (financial results); they scrutinize what they want and the ways available to them for obtain the desired result. These people calculate whether the benefits of stealing livestock outweigh the costs; when the costs outweigh the benefits, they do not steal, but when the benefits outweigh the costs, they act (Clark, 2015).

3.2.3. Assumptions of the rational choice theory

The rational choice theory is underpinned by the following assumptions (Beaudry-Cyr, 2015; Turner, 1997):

1. People have the ability to frankly choose their actions.
2. People are purposive agents.
3. Humans tend to act based on their hierarchical utilities and preferences.
4. People do things based on their rational acumen.
5. People are influenced by a range of alternative preferences.
6. People assess the consequences of every single alternative.
7. People consider the chances of maximizing the rewards while minimising the cost of a criminal act.

3.2.4 Rationality as a driver of criminal behaviour

To articulate rationality in humans, the rational choice theory examines three concepts that delineate the uniqueness of each offender. These are discussed below.

Humans are rational beings: The key premise of the rational choice theory is that individuals are actors who make decisions based on their will; and these decisions collectively have an effect on the individual's aggregate social behaviour. This means that every individual makes

decisions based on their preferred choices and the constraints they are faced with. The theory suggests that an individual is a sole agent that decides on the results they prefer most (Matsueda, 2013). Therefore, after the outcomes have been evaluated by the agent in terms of cost-benefit analysis, their choices are dependent on the maximum benefit. Therefore, the behaviour of a rational individual is not entirely driven by financial gain, but also by emotional motives (Turner, 1997).

In the Criminology discipline, the rational choice theory suggests that criminals are rational actors who take calculated and deliberate decisions. They are conscious decision makers who simultaneously aim to work towards the purpose of gaining maximum benefits based on their present challenges and needs while mitigating the costs. The central premise of the rational choice theory is therefore that humans are rational actors who first thoughtfully consider their personal preferences before deciding how they will behave, and this drives the actions of criminals.

Self-interest influences crime: Individuals choose their actions and behaviour depending on their self-interests. The rational choice theory assumes that individuals are self-interested and they prefer using these self-interests to drive them into making choices that they hope will manifest in desired benefits (Akers, 1990). Potential offenders weigh the options they have and choose what they think will serve their interests. This theory relates its assumptions on human behaviour and one of its tenets is that the mind-set of humans chooses to make decisions and choices based on their self-interests that are their priority.

The influence of the ‘invisible hand’: The ‘invisible hand’ serves as a foundational factor for the rational choice theory. Adam Smith argues that humans harbour unseen, underlying forces that the public and society do not see, and these impact their behavioural, economic, and social choices (Fattah, 1993). For example, everyone has psychological, social, and financial desires that may drive them into the den of criminal behaviour. These hidden forces are the drivers of everyone's daily choices as people focus on their self-interests and the benefits they may derive prior to making decisions.

3.2.5 Preferences over alternatives

In successfully applying rationality, offenders seek to fulfil their desired preferences. For a mission to successfully fulfil the preferences, their completeness and transitivity must be met. Figure 3.2 below briefly explains the desired outcomes of preferences.

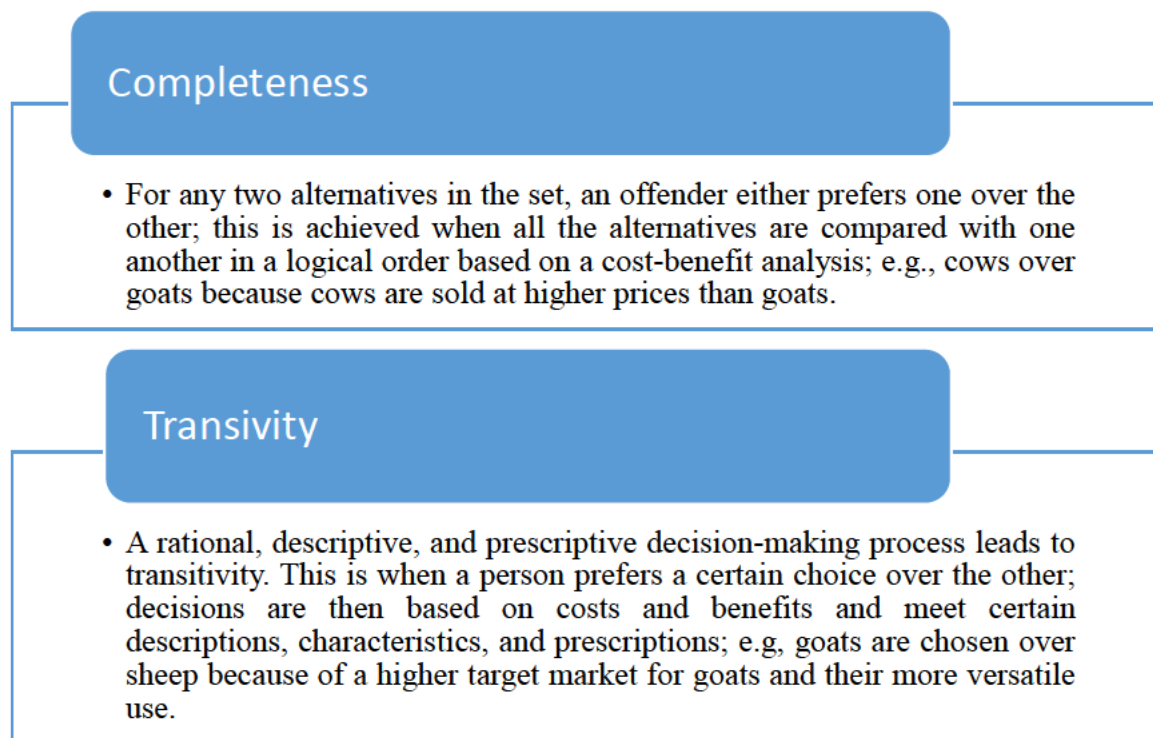


Figure 3.1: Two desired outcomes of preferences

Source: Regenwetter, Dana and Davis-Stober, 2011

3.2.6 Utility maximisation

For a maximum utility to be fully achieved, perpetrators or potential offenders need to successfully attain a goal of maximum benefits (Regenwetter, Dana and Davis-Stober, 2011). This is ensured through eliminating all possible costs, and this requires clear articulation and thorough planning. Thorough planning as a route to rationality, the achievement of maximum utility is attained through a complete realisation of the following:

Clear information: For an offender to be able to make rational decisions, they need to have full and clear information about all that there is to know about the place or the target as well as all possible outcomes and possible blockages (Kahneman and Thaler, 2006). All this perfect information must therefore leave no room for uncertainty in the offender's mind. These are, for instance, familiarity with the target, knowledge about security measures, and all the possible

challenges that might hinder the offence. For example, having an ex-employee or an inside man on the farm as an informant, gaining clear knowledge about the security system on the farm, knowing about escape routes when there is the need for them, and knowing about places to hide stolen livestock such as bushes, mountainous terrain, and valleys near rivers.

Choice under uncertainty: In cases where there is uncertainty about the eventual outcomes, the offender is forced to effectively choose among various ideal options before commencing the mission. Each option presents a different probability of outcomes and the alternative that has the best chance of resulting in the desired outcome or reward stands the best chance of being taken (Gilboa, 2012). For example, if a factor such as tight security on a farm creates uncertainty for the offender, then he/she will seek other possible options such as starting a fire to ensure that security staff are distracted while the livestock is stolen.

Inter-temporal choice: When outcomes may be affected by choices and decisions, such as a narrow exit area or loading points being too difficult for a quick operation, a compromise must be reached to distract the guardian and buy more time to limit the chance of being caught. Sometimes the decision is taken to take fewer animals to reduce the chance of being caught red handed (Green, 2002). However, if the last option is chosen, less money will be made, but counting the costs of being caught warrants the sacrifice being made.

Challenges that limited cognitive ability: Identifying and weighing all possible options against every possible challenge may take time and sometimes require creative ideas, effort, and mental capacity (or cognitive ability) (Boudon, 2009). The cognitive limitations of some individuals with criminal intent often limit their rationality and their creativity is thus impeded.

3.2.7 Critique of the rational choice theory

The rational choice theory has been criticised for falsely assuming that everyone is capable of rationally choosing to act (Burke, 2018). It has also been argued that the theory fails to explain why young delinquents, unlike their adult counterparts, fail to accept accountability and responsibility for their behaviour. O'Grady (2011) also criticises the theory as it seems to disregard individuals who can be considered not criminally responsible for their actions due to a mental disorder. Moreover, studies have suggested that rational considerations can sometimes be overridden by extreme desire and pressure (Clark, 2015). This theory thus tends to disregard the role of emotional arousal and anger in spur-of-the-moment acts such as assault, while it also fails to explain acts that are driven by situations beyond perpetrators' control. Furthermore, the

theory does not include individuals who commit a crime without considering the long-term consequences or possible alternatives, such as youthful indiscretions and robbery to satisfy basic needs and realize immediate gratification (Clark, 2015). For example, livestock may be stolen for immediate consumption due to hunger.

3.2.8 Earlier related studies that used the theory

Doorewaard (2020) conducted a study titled *Livestock theft: a criminological assessment and sample-specific profile of the perpetrators*, and adopted the rational choice theory to explore, explain, and describe the behaviour of criminals associated with the theft of livestock. The key findings of the study suggest that crime exists as a result of an offender's decision whether to commit a crime or not. Clark (2015) endeavoured to understand crime using criminological theories, and suggests that the decision to transgress is motivated by consideration of the costs and benefits together with offenders' personal or moral views. According to the above scholars, offenders decide to engage in crime in phases. In the initial phase, the perpetrator considers involvement depending on different factors and motivations. These are shaped by past learnings acquired through previous encounters with the law and/or criminal acts. Other background factors also play a role, for instance childhood upbringing and socio-economic status.

3.2.9 Applicability of the rational choice theory to the topic under investigation

Based on the tenets of the rational choice theory, preventive measures to mitigate livestock theft can be formulated. It is evident that the perpetrators of livestock theft decide to commit this crime based on their learning and experiences. They therefore rationally consider the probability of punishment and the gratification of their personal needs, such as making money or taking revenge (Clark, 2015). Therefore, the rational choice theory suggests that, to control crime, punishment should be severe and outweigh the benefits. In this regard, improving and alleviating social, economic, and psychological issues such as poverty, unemployment, and parenting styles may result in curbing crime. In this context, the factors that are highlighted by the rational choice theory that explain the reasons for the commission of crime should be remediated and mitigated.

3.3 The Routine Activity Theory

This is one of the sub-field theories in Criminology that are used to explain the crime opportunity theories, especially those that focus on various situations in which crimes are

committed. This theory is widely applied in the Criminology discipline. Unlike criminological theories of criminality, its main focus is on studying crime as an event; it is thus applied to closely examine the relationship between crime and the environment in which it occurs (Kleemans, Soudijn, and Weenink, 2012). The routine activity theory thus emphasises the ecological process of crime, thereby diverting the focus away from offenders by including factors such as the nature of victims and the environment where a crime is committed.

3.3.1 Background of the routine activity theory

This theory was initially proposed by Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus Felson to explain changes in the rates of crime. It focuses on crime as an event while highlighting the relation between space and time and emphasising its ecological nature and implications (Miro, 2014). According to Miro (2014: 1), Cohen and Felson hypothesised that “postmodernity [has] facilitated the convergence in space and time of likely offenders with the goal of committing crimes against suitable targets in the absence of capable guardians”. Based on this hypothesis, they derived two apparent but simple ideas with significant implications: the first is that an opportunity for committing a crime depends on a configuration of distinct (not disaggregated) elements of the perpetrator or aggressor criminal, while the second is that, in relation to the first, the absence of either the aggressor or a target and the presence of a capable guardian will be sufficient to prevent a potential criminal event.

Cohen and Felson (1979) propose that crime increases when more opportunities are offered by contemporary society that potential criminal offenders will identify. These opportunities are, for example, unguarded spaces such as homes and kraals on farms. The foundation of the routine activity theory is rooted in human ecology and it is in essence also rooted in the rational choice theory (Reyns, 2017). It has been widely adopted to study property crimes, cyber-crimes, robberies, and sexual crimes. In recent studies, the routine activity theory was adopted in multilevel frameworks where it was used to understand numerous neighbourhood crimes.

The routine activity theory focuses on different patterns that people adopt in the environment where they live or work. It examines a number of prevalent and regular patterns of living and the victimisation that occurs as a result of those patterns. These, among others, include work and employment, financial standing, consumption patterns, leisure, and other social issues such as child rearing/parenting, education, and social activities. This theory emphasizes that the routines and daily activities that have become habitual shape the frequencies of opportunities

for the commission of various forms of crime. This theory suggests that, for a crime to unfold, there must be three elements (Figure 3.3) that play a role in the commission of crimes.

3.3.2 Main assumptions of the routine activity theory

This theory explains criminality through the essential assumption that there is a natural convergence of daily activities in space and time. Crime thus requires the following: A potential or motivated offender with the capacity to commit a crime, a suitable target or victim, and the absence of a guardian to protect a target or victim.

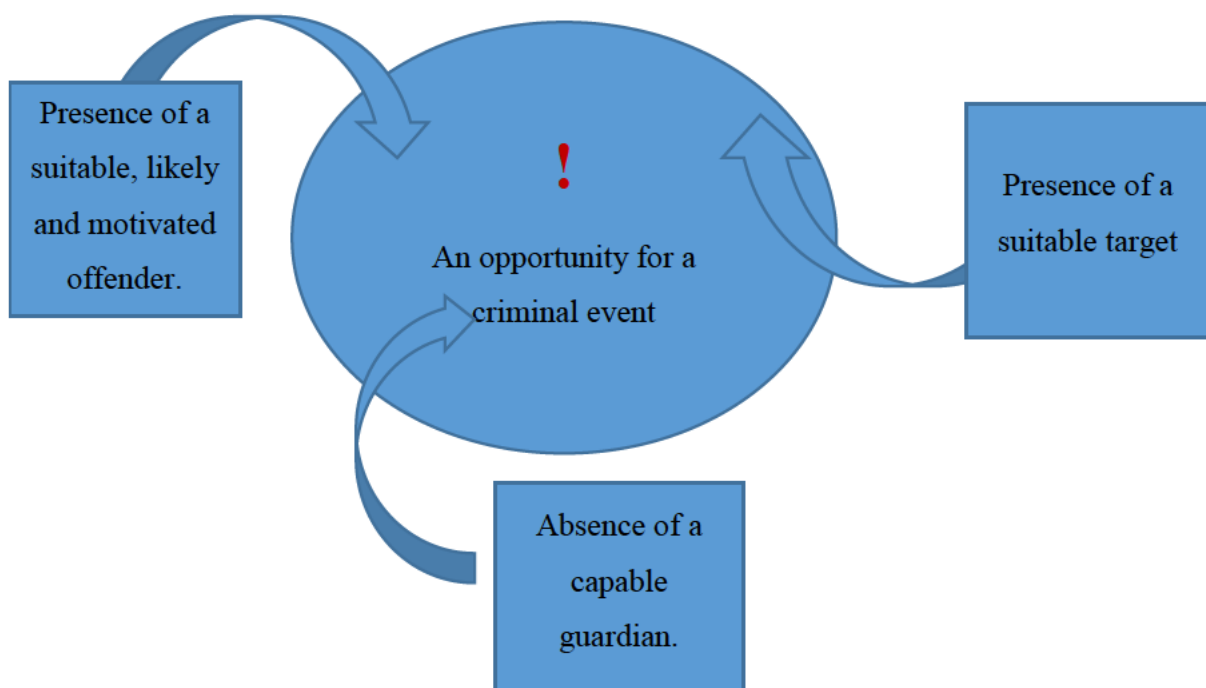


Figure 3.2: Flow of factors that encourage the commission of a crime

Source: Leukfeldt and Yar, 2016

3.3.2.1 A motivated offender

According to Clark (2015), a motivated offender is anyone driven by a motive to commit a crime and who has the capability to do so. A motivated offender is often one who faces challenges such as unemployment and poverty. For instance, it may be a former farmer who lost livestock due to drought and is willing to farm again but does not have the means to do so, a person who has financial issues, or one who wishes to exert revenge for a perceived injustice. A motivated offender can be anyone who has the true intention to commit a crime. The target may be a person, a group of people, or property/possessions. Schaefer (2021) emphasises that a motivated offender must be an individual who is capable and able to commit a criminal act

and has everything that is needed for committing that particular crime, be it physical, social, or mental.

It should be noted that the routine activity theory does not entirely seek to explain the reasons for a crime and the potential offender’s willingness to commit that crime (Boetig, 2006). It thus avoids explaining deep-seated psychological drivers that are capable of inspiring criminal activity; instead, it holds that the offender’s motivation to engage in criminal activity remains constant. Table 3.1 summarises the needs that may drive livestock theft according to the routine activity theory.

Table 3.2: Needs that may encourage livestock theft

Categories of Needs	Capabilities
Mental	Clear mind-set Ability to critically think Mentally stable
Physical	Physically fit Able to walk, run, climb, drive a vehicle Able to talk to and drive/rustle livestock
Socially	Can easily connect with and build relationships Connected with people from different locations Easily adapt and organise

Source: Researcher’s summary

3.3.2.2 A suitable target

From Miro’s (2014) point of view, “a suitable target may be [any] person or property that may be threatened by an offender”. Miro (2014) further adds that there are four attributes that may influence the probability of being a suitable target or victim: value, visibility, inertia, and

accessibility. Clark's (2015) perspective is that value refers to real or tangible things that may draw the offender's attention, such as a large herd of cows. Inertia refers to the weight, shape, and size, or any other physical features of the victim or goods that render it/them desirable to the offender, such as well-fed and healthy cattle or sheep. Visibility means the exposure of a target to a perpetrator and its attributes that mark the target as suitable, such as cattle grazing in a field near an access/escape route. Access refers to the placement or site where the target is situated which increases the likelihood of victimisation, for example a kraal with no or flimsy gates and no lighting (Clark, 2015).

The routine activity theory uses the term 'target' instead of 'victim' because a crime might focus on an item or objects and the owner who is the victim might not be around at the time of the criminal event. For example, the farmer may not be in the grazing field or at home when livestock thieves strike. Therefore, the livestock is the target and the farmer's or shepherd's absence is an indication of the absence of a capable guardian, which encourages the criminals to commit the crime. A suitable target is therefore any person, item, object, or property that a motivated offender might threaten or take in any way possible (Schaefer, 2021). If a target is deemed suitable by a probable offender, there is a high probability that a crime will be committed. The target must also be easily accessible to encourage criminal intent. Figure 3.5 illustrates the attributes that render a target suitable. This is based on the VIVA (visibility, inertia, value, access) criteria, while Figure 3.6 outlines the attributes based on the CRAVED (concealable, removable, available, valuable, enjoyable, disposable) criteria.

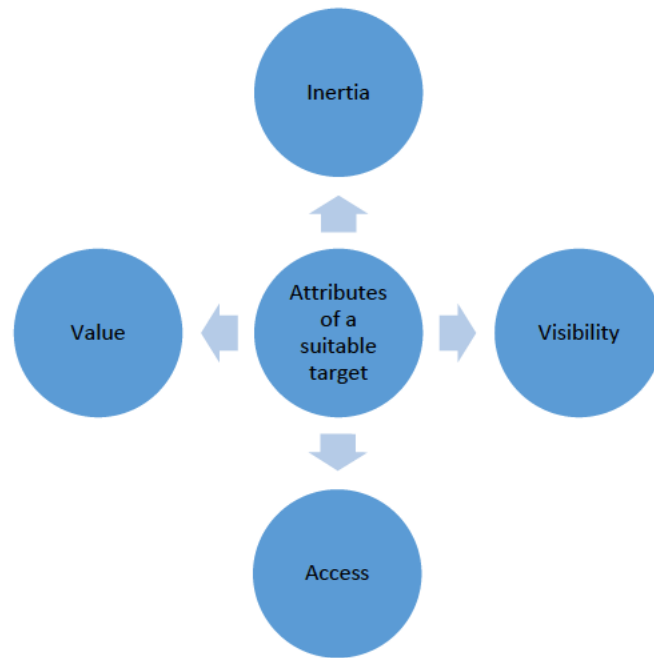


Figure 3.3. Attributes of a suitable target (VIVA)

Source: Researcher’s illustrations



Figure 3.4: Attributes of a suitable target (CRAVED)

Source: Researcher’s illustrations

Of the VIVA criteria, the first criterion is the value that a target poses for the perpetrator. It may be financial or social such as something that will boost one’s power, social status, or a

enhance one's role in cultural or religious practices (Clarke and Felson, 1993). For example, livestock is regarded as valuable in many cultures, especially among the Nguni people, due to their versatility; thus cattle, goats, and sheep are regarded as highly valuable because of their monetary value when sold (Kynoch and Ulicki, 2000). Ownership of cattle also boosts social status as people who have substantial livestock herds or flocks in rural areas are regarded as wealthy and successful and they are highly respected. Livestock use is also versatile as these animals are used in cultural and religious celebrations such as at funerals and weddings. Livestock is therefore valuable in rural areas which makes these animals suitable targets for theft.

Inertia refers to how easy or difficult it is for a targeted item/object to be removed (Holt, Leukfeldt and van de Weijer, 2020). Although it might be quite hard to remove some items such as appliances, it is easier to remove them using a form of transport. For example, livestock can be moved on foot if someone herds them in a particular direction. Currently, syndicates make use of trucks and bakkies to transport stolen livestock 'invisibly' (Sidebottom, 2013). Media reports have also recently exposed incidences of livestock being transported in minibus taxis that usually transport human commuters (Mentz, L., 2023). Third is the visibility of the object or item that is targeted. For example, if the livestock is grazing in plain sight in an open camp with no trees or in mountainous or hilly terrain, this is advantageous to those watching for an opportunity to strike (Holt et al., 2020).

The final aspect of VIVA is access to a target. Items, objects, property and people that are in public spaces where everyone can easily enter are accessible and are easy to target in comparison to those in private spaces (Clarke and Felson, 1993). People in rural areas use wide open spaces for grazing and watering their livestock. Grazing camps are usually in open fields and rural farmers often take their animals to rivers, ponds, or dams that are easily accessible to scouts who identify the right time for the syndicate or their cronies to steal the animals they target (Sidebottom, 2013).

3.3.2.3 Absence of a capable guardian

This refers to the absence of anything or anyone whose presence may prevent a crime from being committed (Miro, 2014). Mannon (1997) emphasises that a guardian does not necessarily have to be a police officer or a security guard, as it may be just anyone whose presence will prevent the opportunity of a criminal incident. Guardianship is also attributed to an object or

appliance such as CCTV cameras, razor wired fencing, guard dogs, street lights, face detection devices, and fingerprint monitoring devices.

Inadvertently, the absence of a guardian may encourage a criminal event (Fattah, 1993). A capable guardian may be human, such as a person whose presence may prevent potential criminals from initiating a crime. Even though some guardianships may not be human, they may require a human element to effectively prevent a crime (Clarke and Felson, 1993). For example, a CCTV camera requires someone to monitor it at the other end to effectively identify foul play.

Guardians may be categorised as deliberate and formal such as security guards and well-trained guard dogs (Farrell, 2010), while inadvertent and informal guardians include neighbours and passers-by. It is vital to note that it is possible that a guardian may be present, yet be ineffective (Gilboa, 2012). For instance, a CCTV camera may be a capable guardian but if it is not set up in the correct way or if it is placed in the wrong area and is unmonitored, it may not be effective because no one will detect nefarious moves on the other end. Security guards or shepherds might be in the proximity or on the targeted farm, but they may not be paying sufficient attention to the livestock and suspicious movements in the area, and this may lead to their inefficiency in deterring stock theft.

3.3.3 Criticism of the routine activity theory

The theory has been criticised for the fact that it only presents three factors that explain crime and fails to acknowledge the influence of social aspects such as personal education and socio-economic status in the commission of crimes (Miro, 2014). Thomas (2003) adds that the theory simply describes instead of explaining crime, while Clark (2015) articulates that the theory describes crime and victimization through mainly macro lenses and rejects micro influences on crime. Clark (2015) further states that this theory mentions motivated offenders while it deviates from explaining how such offenders came into existence and how they were motivated. This theory assumes that criminals are rational in their decision making, but it ignores that offenders may not be as rational as the person implementing the security measures. Moreover, some may commit a crime under the influence of drugs or alcohol without being able to think rationally or having scouted the targeted area (Burke, 2018).

3.3.4 Earlier related studies that used the theory

Clark (2015) conducted a study titled *Criminology theories: an analysis of livestock theft* and describes livestock theft as “a rural crime that needs to be attended to in a more specialised manner than other crimes against property in rural areas”. It also analysed specific livestock theft cases to demonstrate that this crime occurs in certain rural environments. Clark used the rational choice theory, the routine activity theory, and the crime pattern theory to understand the findings and concluded that the routine activity theory was the most suitable for the study as it both explained the phenomenon of livestock theft and suggested preventative measures.

Burke (2018) also conducted a study on livestock theft and concluded that the chances of livestock theft “vary depending on place or location, time of day, proximity to residence, workplace, recreation, and so on”. He found that this crime required an offender to be aware of spaces for criminal opportunity. The findings of the study revealed that grazing fields, rivers where livestock (*suitable targets*) drank, and places where livestock sought shelter when it rained were what offenders targeted (Burke, 2018). The study further revealed that patterned structures, such as river crossings, allowed thieves the opportunity to assess the times when herders might take lunch or rest (*absence of capable guardianship*), and these patterns allowed offenders to plan their actions. Okada (2015) and Clark (2015) agree that the tenets of this theory are helpful and necessary in understanding crime and in creating crime reduction techniques.

3.3.5 Applicability of the routine activity theory to the topic

In the current study, the tenets and assumptions of this theory provided a framework that was useful in understanding the research problem and in addressing the objectives and research questions to determine measures that may possibly be employed to curb this crime. In contrast to other traditional criminological theories, the focus of this theory is on macro factors, such as a lack of guardianship, that can be converted into preventative measures. This theory also attempts to answer why offenders choose to commit crimes, and in the context of livestock theft two of its tenets, namely the presence of a suitable target and the absence of guardianship, could be used to suggest ways for alleviating livestock theft. For instance, guardianship should be improved by providing more shepherds, secure kraals and homes, and safeguarding the spaces where livestock is kept by using security cameras and gates and allowing guard dogs to roam at vulnerable points and times. The suitable target theory thus implies that farmers should

not leave livestock in the fields unattended, should safeguard the areas where the stock graze, and should count their livestock daily.

3.4 Conclusion

The two theories that this study adopted highlighted the application of crime prevention methodologies because their focus is on threats and risks that cause criminal acts. They provide a framework that could be used to prevent crime by altering habitual practices, for example altering the absence of guardianship to the presence of a capable guardian. To be effective, crime prevention measures should focus on all three elements of crime: the rational and motivated offender, the victim, and the provision of guardianship. The rational choice theory proposes important tools for crime analysis, such as the fact that criminals rationalize costs and benefits, which is a proposition that articulates that offenders are deep thinkers who weigh what to do and when to commit a criminal act.

The factors and assumptions that the two theories propose were applicable to the property crime of stock theft. These theories were originally developed to examine contact crimes, and in the current study their assumptions thus served to illuminate possible crime prevention strategies based on the findings. Both these theories explain how people become vulnerable and fall victim to crime. Moreover, they explain the vulnerability of humans and the environment to crime, and this was applicable to the topic that investigated livestock theft in rural areas and how to possibly curb this phenomenon.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Various scholars refer to research methodology as the scientific approach that guides how a research study should proceed. According to Kothari (2004), selecting an appropriate research methodology plays a vital role in executing a study that will contribute to knowledge, policy development, and eventually social change. A well-articulated research methodology requires a clear and systematic way to solve the research problem, and this is only achieved if various scientifically-approved steps are followed in a logical manner. The research methodology thus serves as a tool for identifying ways in which data may be collected, analysed, and interpreted to arrive at logical and trustworthy findings (Cakata, 2022). This chapter presents the research design and the empirical methods that were used to collect and analyse the data. These processes included participant sampling methods and the data collection and analysis techniques. The study was motivated by the identified problem, which was the observation that rates of livestock theft had increased in rural areas regardless of seemingly decreasing statistics. To explore this dichotomy, the rural AmaCwerha Traditional Authority area in the Alfred Ndzo District Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province was selected as the study site. The literature review affirmed that the stock theft phenomenon had detrimental effects on rural societies, and this study therefore aimed to understand the effects of livestock theft on the livelihoods of people in the study area.

Research components that are addressed in this chapter include the location of the study, the research design, and the research paradigm. A discussion on the sampling techniques (i.e., the selection process to recruit participants) follows, while the data collection and data analysis procedures are also discussed. Reflections on achieving trustworthiness and the ethical considerations that were adhered are presented. The last section focuses on the limitations of the study.

4.2 Research Approach

The research design encompasses the purpose of the study, the research paradigm, the framework adopted to conduct the research, and the research techniques that are adopted to collect/generate and analyse the data (Vogt, Gardner, and Haeffele, 2012). The aim of this

study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of rural livestock farmers in the AmaCwerha Traditional Authority area in the Eastern Cape. The recruited participants had all been victims of livestock theft and it was therefore possible to determine how livestock theft affected them and their livelihoods. According to Salkind (2010), if a research problem guides a study to explore the natural setting of human subjects and their views, it is best to use a qualitative research design to collect relevant and rich data. It was for this reason that the researcher adopted a qualitative research approach as it was imperative to achieve the objectives and hence the aim of the study. Abbott and McKinney (2013) argue that this design allows the researcher to explore a plethora of dimensions in the social world where arrangements and connectedness interact to shape people's everyday lives. In this context, the researcher was able to explore the study participants' daily social world, their worldviews based on their experiences, the ways in which social processes affected their discourses and social relationships, and the meanings they attached to this world. Abbott and McKinney (2013) assert that the use of qualitative methodologies enables the researcher to obtain rich, nuanced, in-depth, contextual, multi-dimensional, and complex results in a first-hand manner.

Sileyew (2019) states that qualitative research enables the researcher to identify issues from the authentic perspectives of research participants to understand the meanings and interpretations they attach to the studied phenomenon. The researcher thus interrogates their understandings of certain behaviours, events, and objects in their surroundings. The qualitative research approach is rooted in the worldview that there is no such thing as a sole or exclusive reality; instead, reality is based upon personal perceptions that are bound to differ among people (Vogt et al., 2012). These realities may change from time to time as people construct their own meanings based on their unique situations and contexts. Therefore, by employing the qualitative approach, this study managed to construct arguments on the nature and extent of livestock theft in the studied rural area, its effects, as well as the challenges that had for a long time impeded the quest to curb this criminal behaviour. Furthermore, as this research approach allowed the researcher to offer theory-based justification for the findings, it made it possible to arrive at conclusions that were "capable of producing very well-founded cross-contextual generalities" (Mason, 2002: 1), and this led to the achievement of the objectives of the study.

4.3 Purpose of Inquiry - Exploratory Research

Research methodologies are regularly classified based on their purpose; hence, there are explanatory, descriptive, and exploratory studies. This study was developed based on its

purpose to explore the perspectives and experiences of rural livestock owners who had been the victims of stock theft. According to Sileyew (2019), criminological exploratory research studies typically focus on crime, different criminal justice policies, and when and why these policies changed. Salkind (2010) posits that exploratory studies are frequently conducted to explore new inquests or phenomena and to become familiar with a state or condition. The above argument by Salkind supported the purpose and approach of this study as its aim was to acquire insight into the effects of livestock theft on the livelihoods of rural farmers by exploring the authentic views and experiences of recruited rural farmers.

Explorative research is applied when a research study aims to outline the magnitude of a particular phenomenon, problem, or behaviour and to gain insight into a situation that a community or individual is faced with (Swedberg, 2020). Therefore, by employing the exploratory approach, the researcher was able to identify salient internal and external factors that caused and perpetuated the increase in stock theft in the rural area under study. The findings also illuminated the effect this crime had on the rural farmers and their households, as well as the community in general. Secondary data were first collected to attain a schema of the extent of the stock theft phenomenon. Publicly available sources such as reports, crime statistics, and publicly released scholarly work by academic researchers on the effects and extent of criminal offences such as livestock theft were therefore scrutinised. Primary data were then collected by means of one-on-one interviews with recruited livestock farmers who had experienced the theft of their livestock.

4.4 Research Design

There are various research paradigms and designs in the social research field that support different schools of thought. A research design is a pattern or model that is emulated to aid in observing and creating a better understanding of what people perceive about a studied phenomenon and the way in which they understand it (Mertens, 2012). In other words, collectively, paradigms are simple ways or worldviews of looking at, understanding, and interpreting reality. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), paradigms entail belief systems concerning the nature of reality, and they assist in directing decisions on ways to approach the research questions. A selected paradigm thus serves as a guide to execute a research study appropriately. The current researcher chose the interpretive research paradigm as the guide for this study. This paradigm ensured that the purpose of the research was met and that the epistemology, ontology, and the methodology were adequately utilised. Therefore, the study

was framed using interpretive-phenomenological guidelines as a tool for the strategies employed in this inquiry. In the interpretive approach, there are five different ways that may be adopted as strategies of inquiry, namely: realism, phenomenology, natural inquiry, hermeneutics, and symbolic interactionism. In this study, the researcher adopted the phenomenological inquiry approach.

This study was framed based on hermeneutics (Noy, 2008), also referred to as a descriptive-interpretive paradigm. According to Thanh and Thanh (2015), interpretive studies are rooted in hermeneutics as they are theory-based studies and their interpretation requires deep consideration to create understanding through a psychological reconstruction within the reader's mind. This happens when the reader reconstructs whatever original intention the author possessed when writing a text to reflect their own perspective. Phothongsunan (2010) describes qualitative research studies as a tool to enrich knowledge through learning about various experiences directly from participants' or a group's perspectives. This means that by adopting an interpretive approach in a qualitative research study, the researcher aims to clearly understand society's way of defining, interpreting, and understanding experiences in certain situations and in relation to certain phenomena.

However, the interpretive paradigm is not concerned with interpreting or searching for existing and highly applicable laws and regulations; rather, it aims to produce highly descriptive-analytic thinking with the emphasis on creating deep and interpretive cognizance of a social phenomenon (Silberman, 2015). This simply means that this study focused on understanding the worldviews and perceptions of rural livestock farmers about the phenomenon under study. To be more specific, the purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions of victims of livestock theft who resided in the AmaCwerha Traditional Authority area and to understand this phenomenon from their viewpoint so that the effects this phenomenon on their lives and livelihoods would be illuminated.

Interpretive research is subjective rather than objective and is constructed through people's experiences and interpretations of their world. When conducting interpretive research, the researcher seeks solutions to address research questions and therefore does not adopt an inflexible approach. Stavraki (2014) indicates that interpretivism mostly seeks to understand a certain situation and that, at its core, is the belief that the absolute truth is a product of social construction. It is an approach that seeks the truth by involving subjects with authentic

experiences and encounters concerning the phenomenon under research. These subjects may be a group, an individual, or even a collection of animals. In this study, the research subjects were human individuals from the AmaCwerha Traditional Authoritative area who had experienced the unfortunate phenomenon of stock theft.

Interpretivism regularly acknowledges a plethora of perspectives and thus enables an increasingly rich and wide understanding of a studied phenomenon. This encourages qualitative researchers to always obtain in-depth and insightful data from a sample of a population as opposed to relying on existing and published statistics. Interpretivism was deemed suitable for this study as it offered the researcher the chance to elicit in-depth knowledge on the extent, nature, causative factors, aftermaths, and preventive and mitigating measures to curb stock theft in the AmaCwerha area.

Ontologically, the interpretive paradigm refutes the notion that an objective reality exists independently only through the frame of mere reference from the perspective of a connoisseur (Wilson, 2017), and in this instance, the connoisseur is the participants as they are directly affected by the phenomena. However, reality depends on how one's mind perceives it and it is influenced by people's intentional reality and judgement as its focus is on discovering various perspectives from different role-players derived from different social spheres. Role-players who are primarily associated with stock theft are the public (especially those dependent on livestock), stock theft units, police officers, investigators, prosecutors, and the justice system. The focus of this study was on the perspectives of rural farmers as the primary victims of livestock theft whose reality of this phenomenon was individually dependent on how their experience of stock theft affected their minds and perceptions.

Adopting the interpretive research paradigm sanctioned the researcher to explore the daily experiences of rural livestock owners. As the purpose was to make sense of the experiences of rural livestock owners, interaction with the participants was vital to capture the essence of the authentic reality of livestock theft and its impact on them, their households, and the community. This is a process that Lukka and Modell (2017) advocate in their emphasis on the idea that the use of an interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to recognise that reality is truly socially constructed because the experiences of people occur and are influenced by various occasions in society that are shaped by personal, cultural, historical, and social contexts. Therefore, humans engage in various situations and behaviours and individually process their experiences

and perceptions to make sense of their feelings and to draw conclusions. These conclusions are arrived at based on individuals' wider social context and they then construct shared and inter-subjective interpretations (Marsden and Littler 2000). Hence, by virtue of the interpretive paradigm, the researcher was allowed to be situated within the contexts and realities experienced by the participating rural farmers, and this enabled her to formulate meaningful interpretations of the narratives they shared during in-depth interviews. The importance of conducting qualitative research that was embedded within the interpretive paradigm was that the participants were not assumed to be merely passive vehicles for various social affairs; rather, they had internal capabilities that allowed them to judge, perceive, and understand their experiences differently and make decisions according to their multifaceted realities, as proposed by Wilson (2017).

Thus, by adopting the interpretative perspective, the study successfully captured the livestock farmers' judgements, experiences, and perceptions with regards to the criminal behaviour of livestock theft, its effects, and ways that could help to address the problem. The nature, extent, causes, and challenges associated with the increasing frequency of livestock theft were addressed. The interactive dialogues during the interviews elicited rich and descriptive data that reflected the worldviews of the participating rural livestock farmers who had been affected by stock theft. The findings based on the data analysis enlightened the diverse rationalities of these victims. The researcher embarked on a thorough study of these perceptions and experiences and utilised the human mind to achieve the research objectives and goal, as highlighted by (Marsden and Littler 2000).

4.5 Participant Recruitment Strategy

4.5.1 Sample selection and gatekeeper's permission

Before commencing with this study, the researcher consulted Chief Inkosana Mafolosi to acquire relevant information about the AmaCwerha area. During this meeting, the researcher was given brief information about the area, which equipping her with relevant background details about the area and the criminal issues it faced. This information was also helpful in narrowing down the scope of the study and to identify potential participants.

Chief Nkosana Mafolosi identified 14 communal livestock farmers who had been victims of stock theft in the Chibini location. Snowball sampling then applied as those identified by the Chief suggested other farmers who had had the same encounters. They resided in

Nkompolweni, Bheja, and Qolweni. Eventually, 20 (n=20) communal farmer participants were recruited. The Chief granted permission that the study could be conducted in the area. His sanction and support assured that the researcher had access to the participants and could make appointments with them. Every ethical consideration was observed as advised by Fox (2008) to ensure collaboration between the researcher and the gatekeeper and participants.

4.5.2 Sampling methods

Sampling methods are strategies or techniques that are used when researchers select participants for a study. Sampling gives researchers a chance to study the population's characteristic and then to select a sample of representatives from that particular population (Csikszentmihalyi, Larson and Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). The sample, which possesses certain desirable characteristics or qualities that the researcher has identified (Menold, 2014), then represents the population. Pustejovsky and Tipton (2018) suggest that, when selecting a sample, the researcher has to select some cases from a pool of cases of interest, examine them in detail, and then utilise all they have learnt or highlighted from those cases to understand the larger pool of cases, or the population. Following this advice, the researcher sampled rural farmers who had lost livestock due to stock theft and who resided in three locations in the EmaCwerheni area.

Participants were selected who might best enhance understanding of the social world (i.e., the rural area) and the studied issue (i.e., stock theft) so that a rich and detailed description of the phenomenon in question would emerge. It was envisaged that the participants would unveil rich information of value that would contribute to understanding the effects of stock theft on the affected farmers and the community, where relevant.

4.5.3 Non-probability sampling

The non-probability sampling method is a technique that a researcher may use to select the sample based on subjective judgment rather than random choice (Lamm and Lamm, 2019). When this method is used, not all the members of a population have an equal chance of being selected as the probability of being selected as a subject is un-determined (Tansey, 2009).

In using non-probability sampling method the current study employed purposive sampling. Rai and Thapa (2015) state that purposive sampling usually adopts the features of the non-probability technique as participants are selected based on the richness, depth, and relevance

of the facts they possess that will relate to the research questions of the study. In support of this statement, Denieffe (2020:69) states that purposive sampling is a technique according to which respondents are chosen non-randomly based on their knowledge and/or experience of the phenomenon under research. This was achieved by selecting livestock farmers who had fallen victim to stock theft.

4.5.4 Purposive and snowball sampling

Sampling means extracting participants from the population. This process involves making decisions concerning which people or objects to select, the settings where the research will take place, events that will take place, which behaviours or experiences of participants needs to be explored, and which social phenomena and processes need to be observed (Andrade, 2021). The non-probability sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling techniques were adopted to ensure that the sample would be able to produce data that would address the objectives and answer the research questions. Ames, Glenton and Lewin (2019) explain that although ‘experts’ who are familiar with matters concerning the topic and research problem may be sampled in qualitative inquiries, the opinions elicited by a sample of participants who experienced the studied phenomenon tend to be more credible than those of any others. According to Bakalbasioglu (2020), one of the advantages of adopting purposive sampling is that it utilises the power of purposefully selecting subjects for the study who will produce rich data, thus resulting in an in-depth study that will equip society with a great deal of information about the social issue under study. Sibona, Walczak and White Baker (2020) indicate that purposive sampling is a reasonable procedure to be followed for most case studies.

While purposive sampling enhances understanding of the perceptions and encounters of a selected group of participants, snowball sampling recruits participants who are not initially identified but who are also connected with and knowledgeable about the topic under investigation. Snowball sampling occurs when recruited subjects suggest further referrals of participants who share the same characteristics and/or experiences as they (Noy, 2008). Thus, snowball sampling is the backbone of assigning and suggesting other potential participants for a study to enrich and extend data generation.

As snowball sampling relies on initial participants’ suggestions or referrals to recruit extra participants, it is a form of ‘chain referral’ to ensure that individuals that are recruited for the study are relevant. It is important to highlight and clarify that initially participants were selected

through purposive sample and the rest was selected through snowball sample. However, had it happened that those selected through purposive sampling did not possess the characteristics that fit the stud such as they have never been victims of stock theft, hey would have been excluded in the study as they have never experienced the phenomenon under investigation.

In the current study, a sample of 20 participants was achieved by initially approaching the Chief of the AmaCwerha Traditional Authority who referred some possible participants, and after these people had been approached, they in turn suggested and referred other community members who had been the victims of stock theft. The qualities that these participants possessed that were relevant for the study were that they were:

1. Residents of communities in the AmaCwerha Traditional Authority area in the Umzimvubu District Municipality;
2. Community leaders/members;
3. Significant or the study (either as male or female participants) as they had experienced stock theft.

The fact that both genders were involved in the study obviated any gender bias and resulted in understanding the worldviews and experiences of both genders as long as they were in the livestock farming field. The study thus acknowledged that one gender is not more worthy than the other in the livestock farming sphere. It was also acknowledged that members of the two genders could have varying opinions although they had been exposed to the same crime of livestock theft. Including both genders from different locations ensured the generation of deep and rich data over a broad spectrum.

4.5.5 Sample size

Study samples are utilised because it is highly impossible to conduct a study on the entire research population. Sample size therefore refers to the number of people included in a study sample who are regarded as representative of the entire population (Lakens, 2022). The sample size is always indicated by the n-symbol (e.g., n=10 if 10 participants were recruited as the sample). As the views of the sample lead to conclusions about the population, the sample size must be estimated in the proposal phase. However, in qualitative research a too large sample may be clumsy, while a too small sample may be unscientific and can lead to overgeneralising the results (Morse, 2000).

Conclusions are drawn from a sample with the intention of generalizing the findings to the population in the research site, and therefore the sample must at best be representative of the population. Qualitative research studies generally tend to utilise smaller samples as opposed to quantitative research studies, as qualitative studies generally aim to acquire useful information to understand the complexity, depth, variation, or context surrounding a phenomenon (Faber and Fonseca, 2014). A total of 20 (n=20) participants was deemed adequate for this qualitative study.

4.6 The Researcher as the Key Research Instrument

The researcher has a unique role in the data collection process of a qualitative study because of his/her active involvement throughout the process (Wa-Mbaleka, 2020). These processes include formulating the topic, identifying the population, sampling, data collection and analysis, and interpreting the findings. The researcher is thus a vital instrument in a qualitative study.

Data collection techniques may include observations, questionnaires, and interviews that will help to bring the researcher in contiguity with the research participants (Slembrouck, 2015). The role of the qualitative researcher is interactive as he/she must become familiar with the research participants and understand the social context in which the participants live. As an active participant, the researcher utilizes his/her sensory abilities to understand the study subjects, mirror their consciousness, and convert these mirrored images into phenomenological representations that could be interpreted to develop findings (Wa-Mbaleka, 2020). Through the facilitative interaction of the researcher, a conversational space is created where participants feel comfortable enough to share their stories based on their experiences and worldviews (Hatch, 1996). In this research study, the researcher took an active role in collecting the data by conducting interviews, transcribing and translating the voice recordings, and analysing and interpreting the data thematically.

4.8 Data Collection Methods

4.8.1 In-depth interviews

The data were collected by conducting in-depth one-on-one interviews with stock theft victims to ensure that rich and relevant data were collected. Slembrouck (2015) defines an interview as a two-way dialogue during which an interviewer asks the interviewee pertinent questions.

Interviews generate information about different ideas, beliefs, views, behaviours, and opinions about the studied topic. The researcher thus posed pre-designed questions during one-on-one interviews related to the research purpose and objectives. According to Showkat and Parveen (2017: 163), an in-depth interview permits the researcher “to explore people’s views, perceptions and understanding of an area [and] provides the researcher with rich and sensitive material”.

Minichiello, Aroni and Hays (2008) view an interview as a two-way conversation, while Mears (2012) views it as a meaning-making tool and a partnership between the interviewer and the interviewee/s. This partnership renders in-depth interviews a special way of producing rich knowledge through conversations. This implies that an interview session is not just conducted with the aim of allowing a respondent to tell a story while the interviewer is listening; rather, it is an opportunity for the interviewer to pose questions while motivating and probing the respondents to share their experiences and perspectives without any interference or coercion.

By adhering to the principles of in-depth interviewing, the researcher managed to view the world through the eyes of the respondents. This enabled the study to obtain rich, descriptive knowledge that assisted the researcher in understanding the respondents’ construction and comprehension of their social realities. According to Mears (2012), the purpose of in-depth interviews is to gain insight into certain social issues straight from the view of victimised/affected individuals, and to achieve this purpose the semi-structured interview style has to be utilised. The researcher thus formulated an interview schedule that contained questions that would address the research questions and, if answered, would achieve the objectives of the study (Appendix C).

Using the interview guide was effective in eliciting rich information about different aspects pertaining to livestock theft. It also made it possible for the interviewer to exercise flexibility when posing questions and probing deeper to meet the study objectives. These interviews created a space for new ideas and questions to pop up as the conversations unfolded, and the participants were allowed to speak freely and widely about issues pertaining to stock theft.

To ensure that the interviews generated data in alignment with the purpose of the study, the researcher:

1. Utilised semi-structured interviews with the aim of generating feedback for data collection;
2. Engaged in appropriate interaction with each respondent during the interview;
3. Asked open, non-threatening and harmonious questions; and
4. Prompted the participants to voice their worldviews by probing for deep and profound information when the need arose.

The spirit of camaraderie between the researcher and the participants was enhanced by soliciting the assistance of the gatekeeper who played a role in introducing the researcher to the initial research participants who, on his encouragement and advice, were willing to be interviewed. It must however be important to emphasise that none of the participants were coerced in any way to participate against their will despite the respect and reverence they had for the Chief. By engaging in light and casual chat at first about current social and academic issues and the current state of affairs, camaraderie was established between the researcher and each participant. It is important to note that interaction with each interviewee was uniquely different due to their various backgrounds and narratives. For instance, some enquired about the researcher's background, while others had stories to tell about their experiences of certain places in KwaZulu-Natal. Due to these informal discussions, the researcher managed to establish links and a harmonic start to each interview.

For the interview examinations to produce the desired results, to ensure that none of the worldviews were lost, and to capture every important detail, the interviews were voice-captured using a voice-recorder for accuracy and to avoid memory loss. The voice recordings were also used to ensure accuracy when transcribing and translating the interviews as soon as possible after each session. A digital audio recorder was used and permission was sought and granted prior to the commencement of the interviews to use it. According to Boyce and Neale (2003: 23), the benefit of making use of an audio recorder during interviews is that "it allows the researcher the opportunity to listen to the flow of discussion and the exact vocabulary used by informants".

4.8.2 Interview guide

An interview guide consists of listed questions that relate to the topic that the researcher wants to study. This guide underscores the objectives that need to be met while it also guides the interview format that paves the way for the interviewees to answer the posed questions freely. The interview guide is not restricted to a particular order but allows flexibility (Smulowitz, 2017).

To conduct effective interviews, the researcher should record the interviews in some format, be mindful of researcher bias, and choose the right interview setting (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson and Kangasniemi, 2016). The interview guide for this study was drafted prior to conducting the interviews but subsequent to conducting the comprehensive literature review that highlighted the need to fill certain gaps in knowledge about stock theft. The semi-structured format of the interviews enabled the researcher to centre the questions around the effects of stock theft and to gather relevant information about the effects of stock theft as well as possible ways to mitigate it.

4.8.3 Structure of the interview schedule

The semi-structured interview schedule was constructed in five crucial parts. The first section posed questions about the extent of stock theft in the EmaCwerheni area. The second section explored the factors that caused stock theft in the study area, while the third section posed questions about the way in which government entities rendered support and other services to the victims of stock theft. The fourth section determined how the participants tried to combat stock theft, while the fifth section contained questions about interventions to eliminate or mitigate stock theft. The interview schedule was wrapped up with open-ended questions to enquire if there was any additional information that the interviewees wished to share.

4.8.4 Time frame and interview venues

The interviews were conducted in isiXhosa to accommodate the participants because they were not familiar with English. These interviews lasted between 20 to 45 minutes per participant. The time-frame depended on the depth of information provided by each respondent. As the study purported to extract rich qualitative information, the researcher conducted the interviews in conducive environments where there was no chance of being interrupted. Hence, they were conducted in each participant's home. The times for the interview slots were allocated in consideration of the availability of each participant. Prior to the commencement of the

interviews, the researcher clearly explained what the study entailed and what its purpose was. The nature of the questions that would be posed was also explained before the participants signed the informed consent form.

4.8.5 Administration of the interviews

The researcher had approached the Chief of the AmaCwerha Traditional Authority and asked his official help in a face-to-face discussion. The Chief then introduced the researcher to a number of potential participants who also suggested others. When meeting with the participants, the researcher briefly explained the topic, aim, and objectives of the research. The researcher then made the appointments with each participant according to their availability.

During the meetings with the participants, the following process was followed:

Explaining the purpose of the study to the participants. Dilley (2000) emphasizes that communication between the researcher and the participants about the study's aim and objectives is important. The researcher thus provided a brief overview of the study and explained that their participation was voluntary. They were assured that everything they said during the interview would be treated with confidentiality and that the information they provided would be used only for research purposes and nothing else.

Informed consent: Before starting each interview, the participant was given a consent form that was written in both in isiXhosa and English. The researcher usually requested a third person, such as a husband/wife or an older child, to be present when the consent form was read. They were allowed to ask for clarity and only when the participant clearly understood and had expressed willingness to participate in the study, he/she was requested to sign the voluntary consent form. All the participants gave their permission to be recorded without any coercion.

Commencing the interview process: After the participant had signed the informed consent form, the interview started. Dilley's (2000) advice was followed in terms of the following:

1. Rich and deep data were generated regarding experiences and life events from the perspectives of directly affected participants;
2. Their reactions, certainty, body language, and expressions were observed;
3. The participants' definitions, worldviews, and social processes pertaining to the research topic were elicited;

4. The researcher read, analysed, and interpreted words, discourse, and non-verbal responses;
5. The researcher asked for clarity and when there was uncertainty; and
6. Follow-up questions were posed as soon as possible if there was the need. Both the participants and the interviewer were allowed to ask questions to seek clarity or to provide answers.

Debriefing: Once each interview session had been completed, a short debriefing session was conducted with the aim of rectifying possible misconceptions and to provide a space where each participant's feelings concerning the research could be discussed.

4.9 Data Analysis and Interpretation

For the analysis of data to be effective, the researcher must follow a rigorous procedure (Berthold and Hand, 2007). This research study deployed an interpretive paradigm that was based on the hermeneutics and phenomenological strategies of inquiry as proposed Hair (2009). These were discussed earlier.

The data analysis process commenced when the 20 recorded interviews has been transcribed verbatim and translated into English. Thematic analysis was then employed to make sense of and analyse the data. Galanis (2018) states that thematic content analysis is a procedure of analysing data using themes that emerge from the data. In this process, the researcher reads through the data and categorizes key thoughts and words into connecting themes and views. Making notes of examples and subjects that are delineated in the data reinforces qualitative interpretation. It is a key route that the researcher may use to identify logical clarifications that may address the objectives of the study (Braun, Clarke & Weate, 2016). Therefore, lengthy snippets extracted from the interview transcripts were made, and thematic analysis was employed to organize the data for easily interpretable responses. Separate codes were created from the interpretable responses. Categorising the data into themes was then done by thoroughly and repeatedly reading the transcripts and grouping analogous responses or codes together. The coding of the data was manually done and was documented in Word. According to Chung, Biddix and Park (2020), phrases and codes or categories from the collected data summarise what the main themes in the data entail.

Thematic content analysis is highly beneficial for researchers who work with large data sets as it enables coding, categorising, and dividing extensive data to easily digest and interpret the gist. Thematic analysis is thus very useful for those who conduct studies with the aim of capturing subjective knowledge such as participants' experiences, worldviews, and their varying opinions (Braun and Clarke, 2019). Thematic analysis is therefore mostly employed to make sense of the data generated by means of open-ended interview responses and various social media platforms. To identify and analyse the patterns that emerged as themes from the data, the researcher followed six steps:

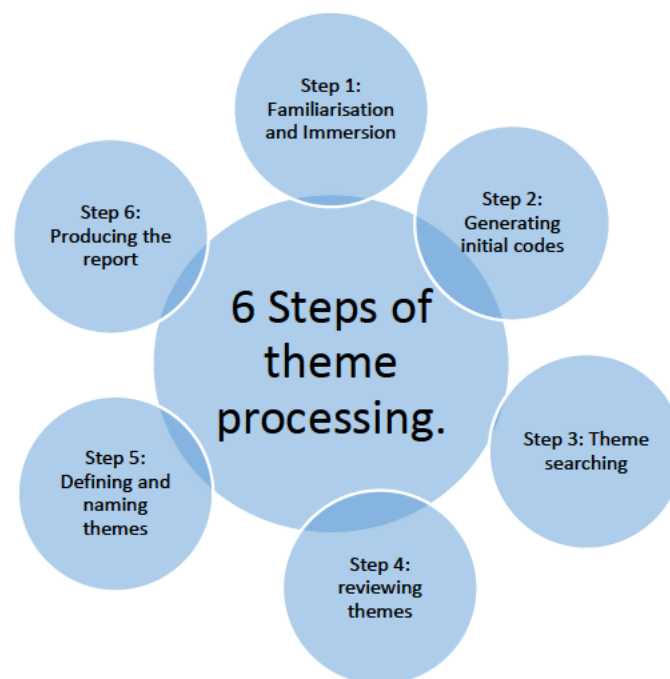


Figure 4.3: The six steps of thematic analysis

Source: Braun and Clarke, 2019

Step 1: Familiarisation and information immersion

Some researchers document their thoughts and interests during the data collection phase, while others do so after data collection. At any stage data analysis commences as the researcher takes note of thoughts, interests, and questions and initially analyses and makes interpretations based on the initial introduction to the data (Heydarian, 2016). To immerse her mind into the data to become familiar with every nuance as expressed by the participants (Majumdar, 2022), the researcher repeatedly first listened to the recordings as she is proficient in isiXhosa, and then

read the transcriptions. While reading the data over and over, she actively searched for meanings and patterns.

Step 2: Generating codes

When the researcher read and re-read the data until she was familiar with every aspect and nuance, she had a good sense of what had been highlighted and was interesting about the data pertaining to the objectives. Once the researcher had highlighted these pertinent areas, she developed initial codes by hypothesizing and constantly revisiting the data. At this stage, codes were created through constant reflection and interaction with the data (Clarke and Braun, 2013). This phase allowed data simplification and enabled the researcher to focus on specific data characteristics. The codes that had been created to highlight features that were of interest to the study objectives, the data were arranged in a systematic way to indicate which relevant data had been accumulated under each code. Thus unstructured data were transitioned to structured information that elicited a clear idea what the data were revealing (Locke, Feldman & Golden-Biddle, 2022).

Step 3: Developing themes

When the entire data set had been provisionally coded and listed, the researcher sorted and compiled these into themes that contained all the improbably significant coded data (Lukka and Modell, 2017). Kothari (2004: 19) defines a theme as follows:

“A theme is an abstract idea which catalyses meanings and identity to repetitive experiences and their divergent appearances; themes have shared meanings, universal ideas or lessons, and they have universal message that can be explored throughout a data set.”

Intrinsically, the themes that were compiled in this study captured and unified the essence of the experiences of the participants. They were identified to highlight prominent components and fragments of the views and encounters that first appeared to be meaningless when they were noted in isolation (Morse, 2000). The researcher thus compiled the codes into significant themes by gathering all the data that were relevant to each hypothetical theme.

Stage 4: Reviewing the themes

Once the set of themes had been formulated, refinement was required. The researcher reviewed the coded data in every theme and considered whether they were coherent and relevant to the

others and to the objectives. The researcher also assessed the validity of each theme to determine if they faultlessly reflected the meanings that were apparent in the data set (Salkind, 2010). During this phase, flaws in the primary codes and themes were uncovered and relevant changes were required. So, where irrelevant codes or codes that overlapped were noted, they were deleted, as proposed by Thanh and Thanh (2015). In this way, the researcher evaluated whether the themes related to the coded analects and generated a thematic outline of the data.

Stage 5: Finalising and naming themes

The researcher determined whether the initial themes captured what was required by the research questions and objectives to achieve the aim of the study. Each theme was justified by means of detailed data analysis based on the stories that had been told by the participants. The researcher engaged in an incisive analysis of each theme to allow the reader to gain an instant sense of what aspect of stock theft was illuminated (Lukka and Modell, 2017). The researcher ensured that each theme addressed the purpose and overall narrative of the entire data set and that the themes correlated with the research questions and objectives, as proposed by Berthold and Hand (2007).

Stage 6 step: Report writing

After fully establishing and analysing the data reflected in each theme, the researcher commenced writing the study report to provide a clear, logic, and scholarly account of the data. Concise and coherent analyses were attained based on relevant verbatim excerpts and codes across the themes. The researcher endeavoured to communicate the findings in a transparent and logical process and to engage with them in a critical manner (Berthold and Hand, 2007). The claims made throughout the data analysis discussion are presented in relation to the data and are therefore credible and convincing (Abbott and McKinney, 2013). This vivid report offers examples that were extracted verbatim from the participants' narratives and these are an essential element of the trustworthiness of this report. The themes and excerpts that are provided were first rigorously scrutinising in terms of their relation to the research questions and the literature review, and the data were then analysed analytically to illustrate their complexity and to convince all interested parties of the validity of the findings (Berthold and Hand, 2007).

4.10 Achieving an Ethical Study

4.10.1 General ethical considerations

Research ethics are concerned with the appropriateness of behaviour and conduct of the researcher towards the research subjects or anyone affected by the research (Aguinis and Henle, 2004). The researcher thus abided by all ethical considerations pertaining to the moral and professional behaviour of researchers and she abided by all the obligations to protect the participants from any potential harm (Gregory, 2003). According to Allmark (2002), an ethical study mitigates any behaviour or conduct that may arise as a result of dilemmas and conflicts due to any improper way of conducting research, and ethical behaviour demands that the researcher follows proper, legitimate, and moral research procedures. The current researcher in this study therefore adhered to all ethical obligations by adopting the most fitting and appropriate methodologies and by ensuring that the research was conducted in a responsible, ethical, and morally defensible way.

The researcher adhered, among others, to the following tenets of ethical research:

1. Never engage the participants in a way that may lead to unnecessary and irreversible harm.
2. Prior to starting the research and when seeking participants, voluntary consent needs to be obtained.
3. No parties should be humiliated or engaged in activities that could humiliate or harm them.
4. No harmful information should be collected or released about any individual.

Overall, every ethical concern was adhered to and the researcher avoided every undesirable consequence that could have had a negative impact on the research participants.

4.10.2 Ethical approval

The ethical rules of the University of KwaZulu-Natal mandate all post-graduate students to obtain ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee prior to conducting a research study. Therefore, the researcher requested and received permission to proceed as well as a gatekeeper's letter from the Chief of the AmaCwerha Traditional Authority. The study only proceeded after all clearance documentation had been received.

4.10.3 Ethical principles

4.10.3.1 Respect and Beneficence

In the social sciences sphere, the respect is a complex but pivotal ethical consideration. Prior to the existence of ethical principles, “researchers merely focused on obtaining the best outcomes rather than treating their research subjects with autonomy and harmony” (Aguinis and Henle, 2004: 14). The principle of respect commands researchers to treat participants in an honourable manner. Respect is rooted in ensuring morality and it serves as a reminder that participants must be protected. In this study, the researcher accepted that she held no power of influence over the participants, but that the participants held the power and higher authority to take the research to the desired heights; therefore, their norms, preferences, and values needed to be protected and they needed to be treated with respect.

To ensure that the research adhered to the principle of respect, the researcher understood that it was her duty to respect the participants’ rights. This obliged her to recruit participants who were competent and had the ability to give conscious and valid consent to be part of the research. Thus no false promises were made, nor were any incentives offered as a motivation to participate in the study. Additionally, to ensure that the participants fully understood what they were consenting to, the consent form was read in both English and isiXhosa before the participants signed theirs.

4.10.3.2 Non-malice

The researcher considered various ways in which the participants could be harmed and did everything in her power to mitigate this possibility (Helps, 2017):

Psychological harm: Sensitive questions might have triggered negative emotions or led to secondary victimisation. The researcher thus avoided triggering anxiety or emotional pain that could have been experienced due to stock theft. Participating in this study was bound to trigger previous negative emotions as stock theft is not easy to experience, therefore a social worker was available to provide psychosocial assistance should any participant need it.

Social harm: Participating in a research study may involve social risks such as stigma. The participants were not subjected to any form of stigma.

Physical harm: Participants may experience pain or injury arising as a result of participating in research procedures. However, there were no activities that put the participants at risk of injury.

Legal harm: Nothing required legal information or breach of privacy in this study. The information the participants provided will remain anonymous and can never be traced to any individual participant.

4.10.3.3 Deception

A key emphasis of research ethical principles is to ensure voluntary consent, which emphasises that no one has the authority to force or coerce any individual to participate in a study. This principle requires researchers not to lie to potential research participants to get them to participate in the study as this is regarded as deceit. It is therefore unethical for a researcher to misrepresent or fabricate certain information or sell untrue intentions to the participants (Aguinis and Henle, 2004). The current researcher shunned deception by first briefing all the potential participants about what would transpire during the interviews and by then outlining the objectives of the study.

4.10.3.4 Informed consent

For informed consent to be fully obtained, people should participate in a study only after they have received all the relevant information about the study (Aguinis and Henle, 2004). The participants must fully understand every piece of information that they are entitled to know about the study before deciding to participate without being threatened or coerced. The participants should also be made aware of the benefits of participating in the study, the risks that could arise, the lack of remuneration, and that institutional approval has been granted (Helps, 2017). All the participants in the current study were provided with relevant information that addressed the following questions:

1. What does the study entail?
2. What are the risks and benefits of being involved in the research?
3. What is the time frame of involvement in the study?

The researcher's contact details and the ethical approval number were also indicated. The participants were additionally informed that the data would be stored safely and treated in a confidential manner. They were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study

any time they wanted and they were asked to contact the researcher or the supervisor should they wish to withdraw their participation. Each participant was issued a written consent form to read and sign and they were allowed to ask questions. Because some of the participants had low literacy levels and to make sure they fully understood what they were getting involved in, a literate assistant read both versions of the consent form (English and isiXhosa) to them and verbally explained that signing the consent form was necessary before the interviews commenced.

4.10.3.5 Confidentiality and anonymity

There is a view that some social researchers might transgress by failing to respect the privacy of their research subjects, especially when they study social behaviour. It was therefore vital that the privacy of the participants was protected by not disclosing their identities at any phase during or after the study and to ensure their anonymity and confidentiality. Wiles, Crow, Heath and Charles (2008) state that anonymity allows participants the right to be kept nameless and remain anonymous in research studies. To exercise this principle, the researcher allocated a code (not a pseudonym) to each of the participants (e.g., Farmer 1, Farmer 2, up to Farmer 20).

4.11 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in research studies means that those who read the work and pay attention to the research findings will find it worthy as a scholarly endeavour. This applies to all stages of the research, from the literature review to the analysis of the findings and writing the study report (Wiles et al., 2008). To achieve trustworthiness, the researcher focused on exhibiting a true and clear picture of the research phenomenon by meticulously describing all the relevant methodological details and ensuring that evidence was provided to support the research findings as a product of the researcher's deductions based on the data (Rallis and Rossman, 2009). Trustworthiness was achieved by focusing on dependability, confirmability, transferability, and credibility.

4.11.1 Credibility

In a qualitative research, credibility assesses the extent to which the research findings reflect reality by searching for and discovering similarities amongst the realities that are drawn from the minds of relevant participants (Petrovic, 2017). Researchers achieve this by matching the encounters of the participants with what they shared in the process of gathering data. For a research study to be deemed credible, its findings must be both substantial and plausible. The

various strategies that this study employed to accomplish credibility were peer review, persistent observation, and member checking.

Peer Review: This is an evaluation of the research report by people (can be one or more) who share academic competencies with the researcher. In this study, the researcher engaged consistently with her supervisor through open and in-depth discussions about every aspect of the study. In the course of this process, both the researcher and the supervisor thoroughly examined the research questions and research findings to ensure the validity of the findings and the reliability and authenticity of the research.

Persistent observation. This is a way of pursuing interpretations using constant and tentative analysis. Persistent observation aims to search for multiple influencing information to extract valuable data and eliminate those that are irrelevant (Petrovic, 2017). This study accomplished this requirement as the researcher remained observant during the interviews and she explored the data in depth by listening to the audio recordings and reading the transcribed texts over and over to focus on all the relevant aspects that emerged. During the interviews, the researcher paid attention to non-verbal gestures and movements as well. Doing so assisted her in connecting intimately with the participants' words, tone of voice, emphasis, movements, and feelings. Paying attention to the non-verbal signals enabled the researcher to notice contradictions and similarities in the data (Cranton, 2001).

Member checking: According to Candela (2019), member checks or checking is when the interview transcripts are analysed to check whether they match what the participants meant. To ensure credibility, the researcher re-engaged with the research participants in dialogue after every data collection interview to finally clarify aspects that had been highlighted during the interview. This process ensured the accuracy of the data and the interpretations. It also saved time when transcribing the interviews and avoided the need to make corrections when interpreting the data. It also avoiding making unrelated assumptions.

4.11.2 Transferability

According to Majumdar (2022), the term transferability means the extent of applicability of the findings to other contexts and with different respondents. Qualitative researchers have no interest in statistical generalizations and are of the view that research validity and observations must be defined by context and occurrence (Majumdar, 2022). In the quest to achieve transferability, the researcher utilised purposive sampling strategies and interpretive phenomenology. The results will be helpful in enabling the readers of this study report to form an informed opinion and to be able to see the applicability of the findings to various contexts that might draw their interest. Transferability determines if the research findings may be utilised by other researchers due to their applicability to similar situations that share the characteristics of the study (Galanis, 2018). The relevance of transferability is to establish that the findings and conclusions of one study are applicable to different situations, places, and populations (Clarke and Braun, 2013). Transferability was thus achieved by providing adequate background information to establish the foundation and context of the research. A detailed description of livestock theft in rural areas was also provided to open the door for comparisons of events of stock theft in other similar instances but in different settings. Various secondary data from peer-reviewed academic publications, statistical data reports, academic books, news reports, and South African Police Service quarter and annual crime reports were utilised to corroborate and examine the research findings of this study, as advised by Clarke and Braun (2013).

4.11.3 Dependability

As indicated by Berthold and Hand (2007), to achieve dependability a study must be able to assure its audience that if it is repeated with the same participants in the identical manner and setting, the findings may be closely comparable. Dependability is the degree to which the audience is convinced that the research findings are a true reflection of what the researcher says transpired. It thus addresses and affirms the stability and consistency of the findings (Braun and Clarke, 2019) as well as the dependability of the research process, the documentation, and the auditing of the research and its findings (Berthold and Hand, 2007). To ensure dependability, the researcher compiled this research report that entails a clear exposition of the research design, how it was implemented, and what operational methodologies were applied to collect, analyse, and interpret the data.

4.11.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is the magnitude of the impartiality of the research findings. This simply means that research findings must be based on the responses of participants and that the researcher needed to have avoided any possible bias or being led by personal assumptions. Biased findings skew the data interpretation and distance the research findings from the perceptions and narratives of the participants (Cranton, 2001). Therefore, to warrant confirmability and ensure dependability, the researcher ensured an audit trail such as audio recordings, the gatekeeper's letter, and ethical approval letters. The researcher also retained and stored written observation notes, peer review reports, and the transcribed texts of the interviews. During the entire research process, the researcher kept a reflexive diary in which all her personal feelings and perceptions were recorded. This assisted in recalling all the information that was not included in captured audio recordings.

4.12 Conclusion

In the twenty-first century, research has been utilised more than ever before to traverse and explore social realities. Research is enriched by various methodological techniques with every one serving a specific purpose. This chapter outlined the research design and methodologies that facilitated its execution and scholarly demeanour. The motivation for selecting the methods was also elucidated. The research design was the road map that directed this research journey, while the methods that were utilised ensured the logical and scholarly outcomes of this research endeavour.

The qualitative approach that was guided by the descriptive-interpretive paradigm and the use of the phenomenology strategy was efficient in generating data that answered the research questions and allowed the researcher to achieve the study objectives. A description and maps of the AmaCwerha area clarified the geographic context of the study. This chapter firmly established the relevance of adhering to the ethical considerations that ensured that the study was executed in an appropriate methodological manner and that it employed ethical, humane, and morally justifiable approaches. This chapter also outlined how the researcher achieved the trustworthiness of the study. The following chapter will present the data and discuss the research findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Introduction

As the heart of this study report, this chapter unpacks, discusses, and interprets the data that were collected to examine the effects of livestock theft on the livelihoods of farmers in the rural area under study. According to Rabiee (2004), data interpretation is useful to assist researchers in categorizing and summarizing all the information gathered to answer questions analytically about the phenomenon they study. The major objective of this chapter is to present an eclectic picture of the experiences, unique perceptions, and stances of the rural farmers from the AmaCwerha Traditional Authority area. The data are integrated with supporting and contrasting information from the research findings of other relevant studies in the same field.

The discussion in this chapter unfolds to address the objectives that were articulated in Chapter one. These were to:

1. Determine the nature of and the extent of livestock theft on rural farmers in the AmaCwerha Traditional Authority area;
2. Understand the effects of livestock theft on residents in the study area;
3. Determine the factors that contribute to livestock theft in the study area; and
4. Assess the effectiveness of current measures used to combat stock theft and recommend new strategies

To pave the way for in-depth data analysis after extensive examination of the related literature, the following key research questions were formulated to guide the study:

5. What is the extent of livestock theft in the AmaCwerha area?
6. What effects does livestock theft have on livestock farmers in the AmaCwerha area?
7. What are the factors that contribute to livestock theft in the AmaCwerha area?
8. What measures do the farmers and the community of AmaCwerha take to fight stock theft?

As the data collecting tool of choice, one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 rural communal farmers in the AmaCwerha area to obtain relevant data, and thematic analysis was utilised to unpack these data. Wickham and Wickham (2016) argue that thematic

analysis makes summarising the data so much simpler as it ensures that data are easily interpretable and sensible. The goal of thematic analysis is to identify themes that are important in illuminating topic-related patterns throughout the data. These themes are then utilised to address the research questions and achieve the objectives of the study. It is important to acknowledge that some themes may overlap (Brown and Lemmon, 2007). To answer the research questions and achieve the objectives of this study, interviews were conducted and voice recorded. The recordings were later transcribed and translated. Thematic analysis allowed various themes and sub-themes to emerge from all the collected information. These themes were then synthesised to portray a holistic picture of the effects of stock theft on the livelihoods of livestock farmers from the rural area under study, and the data are presented in verbatim format (therefore, there may be unintentional linguistic flaws) and discussed under these themes in this chapter.

5.2 Participants' Demographic Details

Table 5.1 presents the profiles of the 20 rural livestock farmers who participated in the study.

Table 5.1: Demographic data of the livestock farmers

Code	Gender	Location	Nature of Livestock	Frequency of Livestock Theft	Types of Livestock Stolen
Farmer 1	Female	Chibini	Cows	2 times	Cows
Farmer 2	Female	Chibini	Sheep and cows	1 time	Cows
Farmer 3	Male	Chibini	Goats and cows	2 times	Cows
Farmer 4	Female	Chibini	Goats and cows	4 times	Cows
Farmer 5	Male	Chibini	Goats and cows	1 time	Cows
Farmer 6	Male	Chibini	Goats, sheep and cows	1 time	Cows
Farmer 7	Male	Chibini	Sheep, goats, horses, and cows	4 times	Cows and a horse
Farmer 8	Female	Chibini	Sheep and cows	2 times cows and many times sheep	Cows and sheep
Farmer 9	Female	Chibini	Goats, sheep and cows	2 times	Sheep and cows

Farmer 10	Female	Chibini	Cows and sheep	3 times	Cows
Farmer 11	Male	Chibini	Cows and sheep	4 times	Cows
Farmer 12	Male	Nkopolweni	Cows and goats	2 times	Goats and cows
Farmer 13	Male	Nkopolweni	Cows and sheep	2 times	Cows
Farmer 14	Female	Bheja	Sheep and cows	4 times	Cows and sheep
Farmer 15	Male	Bheja	Sheep, goats and cows	3 times	Sheep, goats, and cows
Farmer 16	Male	Chibini	Cows, goats and sheep	6 times	Cows, goats and sheep
Farmer 17	Female	Chibini	Sheep and cows	2 times and many times sheep	Cows and sheep
Farmer 18	Female	Chibini	Sheep and cows	3 times	Cows
Farmer 19	Male	Nkopolweni	Sheep, goats and cows	3 times	Cows and sheep
Farmer 20	Male	Chibini	Chicken, sheep, goats and cows	8 times cows 1 time sheep	Sheep and cows

Source: Researcher's summary

5.3 The Nature and Extent of Livestock Theft in the Rural Area under Study

Rural areas have been plagued by diverse trends and patterns of livestock theft. The literature reveals that, while stock theft increases, other kinds of crime are also rising such as trespassing, assault, murder, attempted murder, and other organised crimes such as cross-border gun and car smuggling (Mabunda, Maluleke, Barkhuizen and Clack, 2021). Livestock is stolen in rural areas from the fields where they graze, kraals, and from near homesteads often despite the presence of herdsmen and shepherds. Incidences have been reported of thief-on-shepherd altercations, violence, threatening household security, death, civil dissonance, and disruption of public order due to fights and feuds in villages (Ellis & Jubase, 2023).

The manner in which livestock theft is executed involves farmer-thief contact as well as no contact at all. Farmer-thief contact usually occurs between livestock thieves and their victims. Livestock theft, regardless of the manner in which it is executed, results in materialistic loss

that is often associated with physical and psychogenic consequences for the victims. This crime has thus led to severe physical injuries and even murder, and it paralyses rural economic prosperity (South African Police Service, 2009). The above and other consequences of livestock theft also emerged in the participants' narratives that they shared during the in-depth individual interviews. Several participants argued that stock theft was getting more personal and even violent as victims got assaulted and threatened during theft incidences. Comments in this regard were the following:

These livestock thieves are people who do not want to see us alive; these are people who want us to die the moment we hear that our livestock has been stolen. Counting all these times that I my livestock has been stolen totals to over 50. Do you think that the person who always takes my livestock wants to see me alive or dead? (Farmer 7).

The fact that they have the nerve to come to our home means this is personal. (Farmer 15).

The participants also agreed that stock theft was a traumatic experience. They stated that stock theft would often occur near their homes, which they regarded as their comfort zones, and this did not only threaten the safety of their livestock but that of their families as well:

These people come to houses and knock on our doors to notify us that they are taking our livestock, and we may come out if we want to. That means they do not respect us; they are trying to make us see that there is nothing we can do to stop them. If they come here where me and my family live, it means they are prepared to kill the whole family in the name of taking livestock...Before retaliating we must consider that we do not stay alone. As a man you cannot take a risk as you know will put your family in jeopardy. Now this forces us to remain in our rooms and let them take the livestock to protect our families and save our lives. (Farmer 7)

The nature of livestock theft raised certain questions as the participants expressed different views concerning the manner in which livestock would be taken in the AmaCwerha area. The participants shared the following information:

The first batch were cows taken from our kraal, which was 15 cows, some of them with their calves. And the other batch was taken from the ploughed fields. Others were taken from our garden and the last batch was taken from the ploughed fields again while they were grazing there (Farmer 4).

What these thieves do is, while we are guarding our grazing livestock in the fields, they are watching us and studying our moves. Once they know what we do at what time, that is when they strike. They wait for our lunch time and the times we go home before coming back to gather our livestock for going home and counting them prior to putting them in the kraal. I have been victimized more than nine times and in most cases my livestock was taken from the fields at night because I let my cows sleep there for them to feed any time. Once 49 sheep were taken from the kraal in my yard at night. They came and opened the kraal and the yard gate and left with my sheep. I have dogs who are very sharp at noticing suspicious movements in the yard, but they fed them something because in the morning my dogs were sick. (Farmer 15).

Several participants emphasised the seriousness of the nature of stock theft. They stated that livestock theft was an unjust act that badly affected them as victims because they worked hard to raise their livestock and some people then simply snatched them away. They additionally argued that livestock thieves were self-centred, and lamented that this practice could lead to dire consequences, even murder.

As farmers in AmaCwerha we are affected badly by this crime, and it seems like the thieves continuously target the same people and certain locations. If these people took your livestock once, just know they will repeat the same thing again. It has now come to the point where it is accompanied by acts of violence, assault, and threats. (Farmer 16).

I am not the only one in our family who has livestock...and this happened till we were left with nothing in our kraal...I had no money and because of this my husband's health deteriorated after losing all the livestock. I had to concentrate on it and that required money. We had to shift our focus from livestock to [growing crops]. (Farmer 14).

The participants also explained how the stock thieves accessed their livestock. For instance, a participant stated:

To access my livestock, the thieves waited for the day when there was heavy rain. When it is raining heavily, I do not let my livestock go into the kraal, I put them in the fenced garden because I avoided [putting them in] the mud. The thieves used pliers to cut the fence at the bottom of the yard and went in and took 75 sheep. It was in the evening.

When taking my cows, they opened the gate of the garden and herded them out. It was also at night and it was also raining. (Farmer 14).

Various studies have divulged that stock theft has various impacts on victims' lives. These include the obvious loss of their stock as well as having a negative influence on victims' mental state. Mabunda et al. (2021) state that rural stock farmers feel more vulnerable compared to other rural dwellers due to their increased victimization over a long period. This research bore witness to this notion as it was found that stock theft victims in the AmaCwerha area did not only experience the loss of their livestock, but they also incurred emotional shock, deterioration in their health, social disconnection, financial constraints, and civil unrest. However, it is important to note that the victims responded to stock theft in diverse ways. The most common response was to report the crime to the nearest police station, and the victims then embarked on a search for their livestock with the police or by themselves.

The findings affirmed that stock theft rates in the AmaCwerha were increasing as a result of numerous factors, which will be discussed in subsequent sections. In some instances, when the rural farmers chose to deal with the suspects in their own way, it led to unfortunate outcomes such as suspicion and hate among community members, conflict, and fights (family-on-family, villager-on-farmer, or farmer-on-villager). Youth unemployment was also highlighted by most of the participants as the main driver of the rise in stock theft rates in the study area, while the use of weapons (knives, axes, machetes, and guns) to threaten farmers when stealing their livestock in their presence and to intimidate their families was also highlighted as prevalent; this corroborates literature from scholars such as Chelin (2019).

The AmaCwerha community was reportedly plagued by the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the police, which was arguably driven by a lack of resources at the local police station. The community thus resolved criminal issues without putting their trust in the SAPS. Mistrust in the police was rife as the livestock farming society believed that the irresponsiveness of the SAPS and their failure to make any arrests associated with stock theft were a result of police involvement in stock theft syndicates. Various scholars in the literature corroborates that ineffective and inefficient police measures leads to high stock theft in rural areas (Cakata, 2022; Chelin, 2019 & Clack, 2015).



Figure 5.1: The nature of stock theft in the AmaCwerha Traditional Authority area

Source: Researcher's illustration

5.4 Overview of Stock Theft Trends in the Study Area

5.4.1 Locations where livestock is stolen

The participants suggested that trends characterised stock theft in the area. These trends were both personal/interactive and non-personal/non-interactive. Personal and interactive situations occurred when the stock thieves would access the personal spaces of the stock theft victims, such as their homes, where farmers and their families would be victimised and intimidated. Shepherds and herdsman would also be accosted prior to taking the livestock from their presence. Non-interactive situations occurred when the stock thieves stole livestock from settings in the absence of farmers or guardians; for example, they would wait in hiding near the fields where the livestock would be grazing until the shepherd/herdsman or farmer left the area for some reason; this is in line with the literature from Cakata (2022) and Maluleke et al., (2016). Cakata (2022) depicted that in most incidents of stock theft, there are interactive encounters where the event take place in the farmer's micro spaces; according to Maluleke et al., (2016), during accosting, the thieves would act aggressively towards the shepherds, herdsman and farmers, and these encounters would sometimes even affect the people who are not part of the incidents.



Figure 5.2: Micro-systemic trends of stock theft in the rural area under study
 Source: Researcher’s illustration

5.4.2 Times when livestock theft is most likely to occur

Generally, the majority of stock theft incidences occurred during the night. This may be attributed to the rational and logic argument by perpetrators, who are rational beings, to approach their target cautiously to avoid the risk of capture. They thus select the target analogously to ensure minimal risk rather than taking an impulsive decision. Therefore, stock thieves who operate in rural areas generally strike at night as shepherds, herdsmen, farmers, and their families then let their guard down as they go to bed. As a passive crime, stock theft perpetrators tend to ensure that they commit the offense at times and in places where the probability of encountering contact with victims or anything that will hinder them from completing their mission are limited (Pasiwe et al., 2021).

The participants believed that stock thieves rationally chose times to strike that were convenient for them. Prior to approaching a targeted area, the criminals would consider a plethora of factors, as is posited by the rational choice theory. The participants commented as follows in this regard:

All the measures we take seem to not work though, because it seems like these thieves are calculating people. They watch us and all our actions; they know what we do and

when. The livestock I keep in the fields that were taken there at night, I would go there in the evening to count them and herd them to a place where they should sleep. The night they were taken I had just been there to check them. The next day I woke up very early in the morning to check and I did not find them in that spot. They knew the right time to act was at night because there was no one watching and no one would be in the fields at night. (Farmer 10).

I do not think these people sleep. They are like owls. They came to my neighbour's house, opened the kraal gate, and took sheep and cows. They knew we and everyone else were sleeping. When it is raining, they know we cannot hear a thing because of the noise made on the zinc roof. Night time and rainy days are a perfect combination for them. (Farmer 8).

The perpetrators who stole the livestock of the participating farmers were clearly rational in their actions. They weighed every viable option prior to committing stock theft. The participants highlighted that the perpetrators first familiarised themselves with the farmer's or their shepherds' daily routines and movements before stealing their livestock. They knew the times when the farmers or/and shepherds would leave the grazing areas and the times they would come back to check on the livestock. They seemed to be aware of quiet or busy times in the fields and in the farmers' households. Therefore, it was easy for them to steal the livestock.

Night time was the perfect time for stock thieves to strike as the chances of being caught were minimal. However, some had become quite bold and struck when it was light. The following participants' narratives confirmed this:

You see, my livestock that was taken in 2019, they were 10. They were taken in the afternoon from the ploughed fields just near our home. I had just gone to check on them where I had left them because I thought it was still early and that could herd them home later. I usually let them graze near our home (Farmer 7).

I lost my cows in the grazing fields. By that time, I had just gone to check on them and came home for lunch. When I went back to them, I did not find them and that is how I lost them. I am even afraid to take a few minutes for lunch now because I know they use every few minutes they get. "Ndiனால் loba noxa ndigqiba kuvulela ndakhaphela, lemizuzwana endiyihleli apha ndingangazitholi, kungathi kanti ndivule ikroba

lalarhamncwa [I am afraid as I am sitting here because even though I had just sent them to the field, I may not find them there; I may have opened an opportunity for these vultures]. (Farmer 12).

My cows were taken from the ploughed fields in the afternoon. On that day I had gone to the funeral of my cousin and had left my boys to herd the cows. It was the time when everyone was gathering their livestock to go home, and the boys had gone home to eat prior to doing that and when they went back the cows were gone. (Farmer 17)

The findings clearly indicated that the community in the study area was vulnerable and exposed to the crime of stock theft. None of the participants were vigilant at night, and some even left their animals unguarded during the day to enjoy a meal at home, which cost them dearly. These findings are in line with the literature from Shava and Masuku (2019) and Maluleke (2016) that states that stock theft in most rural areas is most likely to take place at night, this is when the farmers are resting at their homes and had let their guard down.

5.5 Factors that Contribute to Livestock Theft

The following tables summarise the factors that contributed to stock theft in the study area and the measures farmers took to curb this scourge.

Table 5.2: Factors contributing to livestock theft

Factor	Number (n=20)	Percentage %
Unemployment	7	35
High number of taverns	8	40
Alcohol and drug abuse	5	25
Letting livestock stay in grazing fields unmonitored	8	40
Carelessness and negligence on farmers	6	30
Personal vendetta	4	20
Failure of vetting shepherds	2	10
Bad spirits	1	5
Thieves are undermining us	5	25
I do not know	8	40
Greed	3	15
Corrupt police	12	60
Corrupt officials	5	25

Illegal firearms	9	45
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Table 5.3: Measures taken by livestock farmers to prevent livestock theft

Sub-theme	Participants	Percentage
Monitoring and counting livestock	9	45
Nothing	14	70
Marking livestock	11	55

The results do not tally to 100% as the participants could indicate more than one option

Source: Researcher's summary

The participants indicated several factors that they believed contributed to the increase in stock theft in the AmaCwerha area. Pertinent literature indicates that perpetrators often acquire information that leads them on a mission to steal livestock, and they thus tend to thoroughly observe the area from which they wish to steal. Sometimes, they forge a relationship with people that work in the area or on the farm and target those who can best assist them for a considerable or even a small reward (Doorewaard, 2020; Maluleke et al., 2016). They do this rationally, plan the operation, and they reconnoitre the area or a household. At times they would gain access to a grazing fields or a farmer's household by disguising themselves as officials who conduct a survey such as a census to count how many people are living in a household. These practices were confirmed by the participants who said the following:

We see things that are unusual when something is about to happen, and we sometimes choose to ignore them. A few days before they came to take my sheep from my kraal, a young man came here and said he worked for the government, and they were counting people. After the incident we learnt that the 'count' had been done at only a few households who had livestock and from 3 out of those 5 households, sheep and goats were stolen. (Farmer 15).

Since we have a lot of taverns there are a lot of movement. People come in and out of our area as they please; we would see people we have never seen before with unfamiliar faces who pretend to visit the taverns and then in a few days we will be notified that so and so has lost their livestock. (Farmer 14).

Other studies on livestock theft have revealed that limited employment opportunities in provinces with low economic development, such as the Eastern Cape, experience severe social

marginalisation, which causes the unemployed to seek other ways of making money. These unemployed people are mostly young and some perceive themselves as ‘hustlers’ who view livestock theft as the most lucrative way to secure a living and to obtain social respect and self-esteem. In local jargon, hustling refers to any way of making money illicitly (Dooreward, 2020). The farmers who participated in the study believed that unemployment was the main reason why young people became involved in stock theft. For instance, two farmers shared the following insights:

Unemployment is the leading cause now. They live by stealing, selling, and eating our livestock. It is young people who are doing this. (Farmer 12).

I think it is because of youths being unemployment. Because there are no jobs, the youth just stay in the community with no idea what to do and no income; they therefore decide to steal. We are now the places [farms] where they see easy money because there are no jobs, and they are unemployed. (Farmer 13).

One of the key assumptions of the rational choice theory is that perpetrators of crime perceive that they will gain more by committing a crime than by making the effort to obtain gainful employment. The participants implied that some offenders stole livestock in the knowledge that if they committed this crime, they could sell the animals to interested parties (who were then complicit in the crime) at low prices as long as they would be able to finance their needs and sustain their desired lifestyles.

The participants also raised the issue of substance abuse as a factor that contributed to stock theft. One participant mentioned the following about alcohol abuse and its contribution to stock theft:

We have a lot of shebeens [pubs] in our area and most of the people [who frequent them] are unemployed youths. This makes us wonder: so being unemployed means you do not have an income, then how do they manage to always fill up taverns even on weekdays? (Farmer 14).

According to Khumalo, Shumba and Mkhize (2019), South Africa is plagued by a high rate of substance abuse which is a crucial issue that leads to the youth’s involvement in criminal activities. The literature argues that the use of illicit substances, such as nyaope, ecstasy, and other forms of heavy drugs, is rife in South Africa, and these substances have now also reached

rural areas where their use used to be prevalent only in suburban areas and townships (Mpanza & Govender, 2017). These substances are commonly used by young people who are mockingly called ‘amaphara’. This nickname is derived from the word ‘parasite’, which is associated with drug junkies because of the way they acquire money to satisfy their drug needs. These people will, if they have the chance, steal from anyone without remorse as long as they can feed their addiction (Hunter, 2021). One participant corroborated the above view by linking drug abuse and stock theft. He narrated that 10 of his cows had been stolen from the field near his home. He continued the narrative as follows:

...I was told that young boys were herding them from those trees in the evening. This means the boys were waiting for people who were to pick up those cows, and that is how I lost 10 of my livestock. There is a group of young men in this area who use drugs and to nurse their addiction they need money every day. They make money by helping thieves from other areas to gain access to our livestock. This thing of drug use is new to us; we are used to those who use marijuana, but they never brought us such trouble.
(Farmer 7)

The routine activity theory suggests that perpetrators always seek to victimise or act where there is no guardianship, where there is a suitable target, and where there is a motivated or potential offender. In this narrative, youths who were drug users were the motivated offenders due to their need to ensure that they obtained what would help them get their next fix. Moreover, the moment Farmer 7 was absent from the field as the guardian, the proximity of the cows to the youths marked the availability of a suitable target.

The findings that were discussed above demonstrated that stock theft had become a bold crime in the study area and was driven by various contributory factors. As a range of factors seemingly caused stock theft in the study area, various consequences were also associated with this crime. The farmers engaged in diverse activities and animal husbandry as shown in Table 5.1, and those affected by stock theft also responded differently. The data suggested that stock theft victims were impacted physically and/or emotionally and that all felt threatened by the experience that they perceived as traumatic and stressful.

5.6 The Impact of Livestock Theft on Farmers and their Households

Earlier studies have shown that livestock theft has a dire impact on the lives of those who are dependent on livestock farming (Doorewaard, 2020; Maluleke et al., 2016). It was therefore pertinent to explore the emotional, physical, financial, psychological, and health consequences of stock theft on the lives of rural farmers. Maluleke (2016) argues that these effects sometimes linger for lengthy periods and may even last throughout the lives of some who were affected by it.

Table 5.4: The Impact of stock theft

Sub-theme	Number of participants	Percentage %
Deeply hurt	5	25
Social isolation	4	20
Beyond what the participant could handle	3	15
Health issues	6	30
Financial issues	11	55
Changes household livelihood resources	14	70
Emotional issues	4	20
Trauma	2	10
Mental issues	4	20
Hopelessness and giving up farming	3	15
Subjected to scams	4	20
Threatened safety	7	35

Source: Researcher's summary

The literature proposes that the lives of rural farmers are highly dependent on organic practices and an agrarian lifestyle. This means that a change or an issue that disturbs their practices also impacts their livelihoods and their survival in numerous ways. The participants confirmed that stock theft did indeed affect and unsettle their lives. Fourteen (70%) of the participants stated

that it had changed their livelihoods for the worse. For instance, one of the participants mentioned the following:

It hurts so bad to lose something that you have kept because you know you are preparing for rainy days and that [the livestock] need to assist you. It hurts so deep because it gets very painful when I see most of my plans not coming to life because of the livestock that I have lost. I feel that if my livestock had not been stolen, I would have sold some of the livestock and made my plans happen according to what my heart desires. (Farmer 14).

Farmer 15 also lamented the loss of livestock:

At home, things have changed. When I used to see that we did not have enough food, I would slaughter a sheep so that we had something in the fridge. I used to sell livestock to buy school uniforms for my kids and to pay for their school fees, but now I cannot do that anymore because of stock theft.

Farmer 13 emphasised the following:

Livestock is a way of living for me and my children. Now that I lost my livestock I feel like someone is attacking me and my family. This is because I used to live by selling livestock so that my family and I would have something to eat. It fed my children. I sold the livestock and tried to build a home; a home for me and my children, and that was the use of livestock in my life. I sell livestock to try and ensure my children are sent to school; my children can study because I have livestock. I feel broken as I lost some livestock. I could have helped my children and raise them by selling it...

Farmer 12 was also deeply affected financially by the loss of livestock:

There were seasons when, if the cows were pregnant, we would know that we would not have to buy milk and maas; we would only buy mealie meal. Now we have to buy everything and there is no money. We used to sell milk and buy an electricity voucher, but now that the kraal is empty, we buy all that from our pockets. This hurt me because when I bought livestock, I thought this was something that would make me some money in return, but now I do not have money. My plan was that when I needed money, I would sell, but now I do not have a single thing to sell. I am living by means of a social grant even though, when I started farming, I was creating a source of income that would last

me a lifetime. [I thought that] it would multiply itself through the birth of calves and accumulate more income through selling milk and maas.

Other participants (11; 55%) also bewailed their financial struggles due to this crime. Farmer 11 added the following:

My aim was that, in times of need, I would use my livestock as a way of making a living. I aimed that, in times when I needed money, I would sell my livestock. When we needed food at home I would sell some and buy what we needed. Right now, I am no longer working. I have no income. When I was saving for livestock, I had years like this on my mind, now those years are here but I have no livestock. My grandchild is going to university next year and I will need money, but right now I should have been advertising to sell some my cows in preparation for fees for next year. Imfuyo yenza imali ngoko ke ndilahlekelwe yiMali yelikhaya [Livestock creates money; therefore, I have lost my household income].

Farmer 10 also articulated that the financial loss suffered impacted a brighter future for the children:

It affected me and my children because livestock is what is helping us when we send our children to school. We sell livestock to get money to pay school fees. For example, this year all my children are at university and I had to sell the three cows. This helped me to pay their registration fees and all that are required to start the year as university students. Since I have no cows in my kraal at the moment... Luckily, I have some that that I keep with other people. If I had not done that, I would have had to ask some of my children to put their studies on hold, or I would have had to obtain a loan and be in debt.

Farmer 8 raised the point that searching for lost livestock was an additional financial burden:

When we go on a phahla-phahla⁵ (search mission) we use our own money. We need to find a driver with a car who will take us there and bring us back, and that requires money. And we would eat out of our own pockets. Everyone pays all their expenses to go there.

⁵ A phahla-phahla is when those who have lost livestock go with the police on a search mission.

Besides ensuring financial stability, owning livestock is also a means of ensuring food security for rural farming families. Farmer 5 explained this as follows:

The extent [impact of livestock loss] is very wide. “Ndabetheka kabuhlungu” [This hit me heavily]. I was dependent on them [the cattle]; it was our way of ensuring that we would go to bed with something in our stomachs. It hit me to the point that I decided to demolish the kraals.

Besides financial loss, household changes, and survival issues, the participants also mentioned that stock theft had health repercussions. Farmer 4 said:

The last batch we lost was the one that had cut too deep because it made us realize that this might shorten our living days. This loss affected my husband’s health and it never got back to the way it was before. He would be silent for a long time and you would hear him saying, “Oh, into yeenkomo zam! Ngoku ndizofa ndingenanto. Mhla ndafa abantabam kuya kunyanzeleka bachithe ukuze ndikhatshwe ndibe bendisebenzile” [Oh, my cows! I am now going to die with nothing. The day I die children will have to spend for my burial even though I have prepared for myself in time.]

Farmer 7 stated:

Yoo, the ordeal has hit me so hard health-wise. Until today I have not healed. I cannot even count the amount of money I spent when I was searching. There were so many journeys I embarked on, and I came back with nothing, and that keeps making my health the reason that I cannot go back to the state it was in before.

Farmer 14 also described how her husband’s health had deteriorated due to stock theft:

...The health of my husband has been bad ever since we lost our cows. He at times just gets sick, now we cannot sell the few livestock that we are left with because we are afraid that we will empty our kraal.

Other victims also described how losing their livestock had subjected them to emotional strain that seemed to last forever. For instance:

The whole experience ruined and messed up my soul and emotional state because sometimes I find myself in deep thoughts. I am so troubled because I have so many problems that I need to solve, and when I think about them every solution is only

possible if I still had my livestock. I ask myself that if I should die, what could be slaughtered for my send-off [funeral]. What is worse is that I lost almost all of my livestock and I was left with only one cow. I totally have no hope at all and it seems like I am destined to die with nothing. (Farmer 18).

The pain that comes with stock theft is deep to the point that at times you feel like you have just heard of the death of a loved one. This is because you are the one who knows that your livelihood is dependent on the livestock. We are the ones who know the relevance of livestock and the role it plays in our daily lives. (Farmer 14).

This had not only affected my finances, but my soul and emotions too. Even for my family things have changed. The social grant is not enough to sustain our lives, and we would have been making money now through my cows... (Farmer 12).

It affected my soul and, financial and emotional state because I spent money looking and searching. I was told to go search in a certain place where cows had earlier been found, and I went there and was forced to even though I did not have money I had to make a plan. All this is emotionally and financially draining. Losing livestock gave me sleepless nights and going on searches sometimes gave me hope that I would find my livestock, but when that did not happen it got hard even to eat food. (Farmer 9).

Financially, if I were to count the money I spent from the start, it would be very bad because it brings back the wounds that are extremely far from healing. There are a lot of things that I have had to let go of because I lost my livestock. (Farmer 8).

All the farmers were affected by financial and psychological repercussions due to being victims of stock theft. However, some had also fallen victim to other crimes that occurred during the course of stock theft that left them helpless. Some of these crimes were opportunistic and unexpected. One such crime was swindling, as narrated by some participants:

You see, when you lost something, people would tell you that so and so may help you get back what you lost, even if you will pay. You do just pay because you want to get back what belongs to you. The people I was told would help me wanted money and even to get to them I had to spend money, and that deeply broke me and my soul. You would

pay someone who promised to give you something back that you have lost, but later you see none of the promised results. (Farmer 1).

I have been to many people who were praised, saying that they were the best in returning something that has been stolen. When you are desperate you do not care how many times you have walked the road and never saw the results. I paid someone three times for the same service because they would say I did not follow the instruction when putting together the muti [medicine], and later I realised the person did not know what they were doing and they refused to return our money because they said were the ones who had come to bother them in their homes. (Farmer 18).

I have financially been badly affected by this crime because I spent [a lot] when I was searching for my livestock. I would pay R5 000 to people who promised me they would make the people who had stolen my livestock return it, but that never happened even though I had paid. I even paid R4 000 to a traditional healer who promised the same thing. He said they [the thieves] were from Johannesburg. This thing of stock theft made me being victimized even by scammers. (Farmer 16).

The above findings are in line with various researcher's laments on their studies that revealed that livestock farmers did not only suffer financial losses but were also subjected to various psychosocial effects of this omen (Clark, 2013 and Bloch, 2022).

5.7 The Physical Threats that Livestock Theft Poses

Stock theft that occurs in the personal space of the victim is usually trespassing, threatening farmers and their families, intimidating security staff, and even threatening the lives of victims. Stock theft has therefore led to direct violence, physical harm, and even murder. Violence is perpetrated in diverse ways, such as when stock thieves enter the homes of farmers where they threaten and rob them. Also, when farmers become aware of suspicious movement and go outside to inspect, they are accosted by violent thieves and fights often erupt (Saner, 2014). In some instances, thieves overpower farmers and their families, beat them, tie them up, and make them watch as they steal the livestock and often other valuables as well. According to an article in the *Pondo News* (Nota, 2022), thieves raped female family members and made farmers

watch as they did so. In some instances, farmers and their family members were also killed. Table 5.... summarises the social ills that followed livestock theft.

Table 5.5: The social effects of livestock theft

Sub-theme	Participants	Percentage %
Lawlessness/social destruction	3	15
Social mistrust	9	45

Source: Researcher's summary

Acts of interpersonal violence had dire consequences that left the victims in physical and emotional distress (Tol, 2020). The following responses supported the literature:

These people come in our houses and knock on our doors to notify us that they are taking our livestock, and we may come out if we want to watch. That means they do not respect us; they are trying to make us see that there is nothing we can do to stop them. Now before retaliating we must consider that we do not stay alone, we stay with our wives and children. When you stay with females it is even riskier because prior to doing what they came for they might first rape them while I watch. As a man you cannot take a risk as you know will put your family in jeopardy. Now this forces us to remain in our homes and let them take the livestock to protect our families and save our lives. (Farmer 7)

Lately thieves have come to our homes and they even have the nerve to knock and let us know that they are taking our livestock and that we may come out if we want to witness this. What would you do to somebody like that? This means they come to your house to take what is yours and they give you a choice to either come out and die or stay inside and live. (Farmer 13)

In the area they even killed a person who was alleged to be the one who stole livestock and that did not end stock theft in the area. That did not help because livestock was stolen even after the death of that person. Some fled the area and died in the places they fled to. They fled because they were alleged to be stock thieves, (Farmer 2).

We are prisoners and slaves in our homes. We are punished for our hard work and wanting a better life. Socially things are not good because we now do not know who to trust. There is no trust amongst the community members because we do not know who is involved with the thieves and who is not. We do not feel safe in our own homes due to this thing of thieves invading our homes, (Farmer 14).

We do not trust each other. If you are shepherding in the fields and you see someone approaching you, your emotions just change whether you know or do not know that person because you do not know who will appear behind him. We do not trust each other at all. (Farmer 13).

We heard rumours that young men from a location that is a few kilometres from our area were stealing our livestock. We wanted answers, and you cannot get nice when you need answers, and that caused village fights which led to a few deaths. (Farmer 14).

5.8 The Impact of Intervention Measures on Livestock Theft

The responses indicated the relatively limited impact of markings and law enforcement assistance on stock theft. The questions that were posed to the participants and the rate of their responses are summarised in the following two tables:

Table 5.6: Do markings help and did you get help?

Sub-theme	Participants	Percentage %
Y	10	50
N	7	35
Sometimes	3	15

Table 5.7: Was what you did enough?

Sub-theme	Participants	Percentage %
Y	6	30
N	12	60
Cannot say	2	10

The level of crime in rural areas is continuously and rapidly increasing, and this impedes both peace and economic stability, weakens provincial economic growth, and portrays the Republic of South Africa as a country rife with lawlessness that tarnishes its image (Meth, 2009). In this context, the participants felt that the measures that had been put in place by the key law enforcement agency (the SAPS) to curb stock theft were not enough, and therefore community members sometimes took the law into their own hands.

5.8.1 The modus operandi of livestock theft perpetrators

Most of the participants affirmed the concern that there was nothing much they could do, or that what they were doing in the area to help eliminate stock theft was inefficient. They further mentioned that there was limited police or government involvement in combating this crime in their community. They voiced the concern that programmes has only been only launched when community members judged that it was time with little intervention by the government other than the token presence of the SAPS. The participants mentioned some measures and techniques that they utilised to curb stock theft, but these were applied individually in their micro spaces while large, collective operations were minimal to non-existent. The participants highlighted that effective ways to address stock theft required knowledge of the trends or modus-operandi used by stock thieves.

A participant mentioned the following:

Before looking for ways of fighting this bad habit, we must first know where, how, and when our livestock is stolen. In that way we will know where to start. (Farmer 19).

Another participant agreed as follows:

To know what we should do and what we should avoid, we first look at what are the techniques that the thieves are using when taking our wealth, which is our livestock. (Farmer 13).

The above excerpts suggested the application of both internal and external measures to curb stock theft as well as the importance of determining where and when stock theft might be perpetrated.

Table 5.8: Places where livestock is usually stolen from

Sub-theme	Participants	Percentage %
Fields	13	65
Kraal or yard	5	25
Among houses	6	30

Table 5.7 indicates that livestock theft primarily occurred when animals were accessed and removed from the fields where they were grazing. This could be attributed to the lack of guardianship in the fields and the negligence of farmers to ensure that their livestock was securely kept in stockades at night. However, the fact that livestock was also taken from kraals and even from among houses paints a dire picture of the growing arrogance and confidence of stock thieves who seem to rationalise that they are invincible due to the fear farmers may have of them, especially when they are armed.

5.8.2 The role of individual farmers in curbing livestock theft

Table 5.9: Farmers' measures to curb livestock theft

Sub-theme	Participants	Percentage %
Nothing	9	45
Switched to another type of livestock	4	20
Monitoring livestock	7	35
Marking livestock	8	40
Improving security on the farm	3	15

Source: Researcher's summary

Less than half (45%) of the farmers reported that they did nothing to eliminate re-victimization after they had fallen victim to stock theft. These participants also mentioned why they were not doing anything to fight this crime. The following are some of their comments:

I do not think there is anything I could do to avoid stock theft; it is still up to the government to help us fight this crime. (Farmer 7).

There is nothing we are doing because there is nothing we can do. We have exhausted all we can do at this point, because things have escalated to the point where this crime is uncontrollable, and nothing can change it. (Farmer 8)

Farmer 2 stated:

I will not lie; there is nothing I am doing to ensure my livestock is not stolen. Whether you gather your livestock to come home or not, it is the same because thieves come into our households and take them.

The participants agreed that the type of livestock that was highly targeted by stock thieves were cows/cattle. This means that cattle farmers are at substantial risk of finding themselves repeatedly victimized. Table 5.1 shows that most of the re-victimized farmers raised cows. To avoid revictimization, some farmers simply chose to switch from a herd to farming with sheep.

The following excerpts highlight their decision:

Except that I have stopped farming with cows, there is nothing I am doing now. Now I only have goats and sheep and I have no cows. I even bought one for my husband's funeral and another one for cleansing, which I would not have done if my stock had not been stolen. ... It is by God's grace that they have never been stolen because sheep and goats are also stolen from some households. (Farmer 4).

Famer 9 shared the following:

It still feels like I have a deep wound or a hole in my heart. It hurts to the point that I decided that you will never see keeping cows again in my life because I cannot always be next to them all the time. I can never go with them to the fields for grazing, and I can never guard them 24/7. Even herding them back to the homestead to let them sleep in the kraal does not guarantee their safety because thieves can take them even from the kraal in my yard. I therefore decided not to ever farm with cows again.

Some participants also added that they took precautionary measures by ensuring that they monitored their livestock, marked them, and improved security measures at the homestead. For instance, Farmer 1 had upgraded his vigilance:

What I am doing now is ensure that I keep an eye on my livestock. I ensure that they come back home after grazing in the fields. Otherwise, there is nothing I can do to

eliminate stock theft. I have realized that any time thieves want to steal livestock, they do so, because even if you fetch your livestock to ensure that they are secured in your kraal, they will take them from your kraal at the homestead; that shows that there is nothing we can do.

Farmer 3 brought his herd home at night and did not leave it in the field:

Now I ensure that I fetch my livestock from the grazing fields. They sleep in the kraal and I count them every time.

Farmer 9 had also become more vigilant:

Now, I ensure that they are fetched from the fields. I count them daily and ensure that they are secured in the kraal. I even fenced my yard and the gates are always locked during the night because I want to know that even if they take them, it happened because the thieves were determined to take them and the fault was not on my side I am therefore not to be blamed. (Farmer 9)

Farmer 10 said:

Because my livestock feed in camps, I had put hot steel marks on them so that even if I lose them again, I shall be able to easily identify my mark. All the measures we take seem to not work though, because it seems like these thieves are calculating people. They watch us and all our actions and they know what we do and when.

Farmer 3 utilised a measure that addressed certain vulnerable spaces and times. He said:

I think guarding them, shepherding them, keeping an eye on them all the times, and always being with them is the way to keep livestock secure. I fetch them, count them when it is time for harvesting, and avoid letting them stay in the fields because that is the place from where they usually take them.

Table 5.10: The effectiveness of livestock marking

Sub-theme	Participants	Percentage %
Yes	8	40
No	10	50
Sometimes it does	2	10

The participants shared the following regarding the effectiveness of marking their livestock:

It does not help, especially since the police are also livestock thieves. I say this because during the searches you'd find livestock with your hot-iron burn mark and the person who has your livestock will produce a fake card and claim it is theirs even though it is clear that the mark is lawfully registered as yours and their card is fake. The police will declare the livestock as belonging to the thief. (Farmer 4)

Marks and signs are sometimes the same or similar but there's one thing that one should be sure about, the colour. (Farmer 6)

Yes, hot-iron steel marking helps because if you find someone claiming the cow as theirs and you see that it is actually yours, hot-steel marking helps to prove [it is yours] even though someone messed it up by putting their own marking over yours. But the government says that if the first hot-iron mark appears more visibly than the second one is has been forged on top of the first one. (Farmer 7).

It is not helping at all, because none of my livestock has been lost without a mark and without being registered. They all get lost with their marks. You know, the thieves are very creative, so what is important is paying attention to the colours of your livestock. For example, the first cows were lost before they were hot-steel marked and when we recovered them, they were marked with a mark that was not ours. what helped us was knowing their colours. As a farmer you need to pay attention to small details or marks on the hides of your livestock. (Farmer 8).

Yes, hot-iron branding helps. Other signs such as cutting the tail and ear do not help because thieves can alter them and sometimes, they tend to somehow look the same. What is very helpful is hot-iron marking, because ear tagging can be taken out. Even worse, in the rural areas we feed [our animals] in the forests and veld where the livestock can easily get stuck on trees or anything and [the marks] can come out. (Farmer 13).

The preference for hot-iron markings was clear, although thieves also seemed to find a way around this by allegedly bribing the police to rule in their favour when stolen animals had to be identified, or by covering the original marking with a new one. The government seems to

be aware of this as a participant revealed that policy determines that the original marking, if visible, determines the owner.

5.8.3 The role of the community in curbing livestock theft

Table 5.11: Measures applied by the community to curb livestock theft

Sub-theme	Participants	Percentage %
We have an organisation	11	55
Nothing	9	45

Source: Author's summary

5.8.3.1 Community organisations

It was evident that the stock farmers in the AmaCwerha area adopted several ways to try to eliminate livestock theft. It was also noted that, while some did very little and argued that it was the government's duty to protect their animals, others took up the challenge and saw the need to collectively try to curb this problem. The latter had formed two organisations to fight stock theft, and they would therefore collaboratively help a victim to search for stolen livestock. Some of these participants stated:

We joined the Masifunisane organization with the aim to help each other together with the police who will assist us in mitigating this issue and in searching for stolen stock (Farmer 2).

We do have two organizations that I am also part of. These organizations are the Inkanyamba Association and Masifunisane. They are both registered and lawfully recognised organizations. Inkanyamba Association was formed to fight stock theft in the areas where the members are based. Its aim is to ensure that we eliminate stock theft by the roots. we work with the police and we have authority to keep our society secure from stock thieves. What we are authorised by the police to do is, if we see anyone who looks suspicious, or group of people, a car, a van or a truck transporting livestock, we have the right to stop those people and ask them questions about themselves and the livestock they are transporting. We are authorized to ask them to produce proof of ownership or proof of purchase of the livestock if they claim they have bought it. If they have none of these, I have a right as a member of the association to call the police to come and question them. (Farmer 15)

Farmer 9 also referred to membership of an organization:

I am part of Masifunisane, an organization that helps when searching for stolen livestock. It helps us in a way that at times we will just deploy a number of members to go and search [for stolen livestock] on our behalf, especially if you will not be available on that day. And those people will come and report back to us to tell us what they have discovered. Masifunisane also helps us as members to search independently from the police because sometimes we may hear from people that there is livestock that has been found in a certain place and our people then go there even though the police did not notify us.

While some participants saw the need for collective participation in curbing stock theft, some felt that it was useless. For instance, Farmer 3 stated:

On that [question] one I would say nothing, because I did not even join an association with the other farmers. Yes, there are associations that other farmers formed, but I do not see the need to join and be part of them. They always have meetings but no solution.

The participants who were members of a farmers' association highlighted that, for the smooth running of any operation, these organizations required consistent support to be effective and to curb opportunities for stock theft perpetrators to strike. From the participants' point of view, the perpetrators studied and observed the routine activities of their victims. They thus knew and understood their movements and activities. The proactive modus operandi of stock thieves will thus compel more farmers to become members of these organizations and to be vigilant and fully committed. They need to join in large numbers so that the entire AmaCwerha area can be monitored on a regular basis. However, the next section will reveal that these community organizations collapsed and became ineffective to a large degree.

5.8.3.2 The effectiveness of community organizations in curbing livestock theft

Some participants argued that community organizations for farmers were effective, while dissidents argued that they could be more effective if the larger community and all the rural farmers were involved in their daily functioning. The participants highlighted that these organizations and their activities had a significant impact on calming crime at the time they were launched as a result of the positive reaction and enthusiasm that farmers displayed. This

positive impact spiralled down to farmers, their families, and the community at large. The participants praised the initial effectiveness of the programmes in the AmaCwerha area:

At first, the Masifunisane Association was able to do its job because when somebody had lost livestock, they were able to quickly respond and we would start the search as soon as possible in the [affected] areas. We did not really require the presence of the police like our neighbouring locations where they would wait for the police to tell them where they would be going to searching. When the police notified us that we were going [to search], the organization was the first to come up with a plan of how we were going to get there and how we were going to pay for it. The support from other members for those who had lost livestock was there. But now, things are just quiet. If you have lost livestock, you are on your own; there is no support. There is no one who checks whether you will be able to search or not. (Farmer 4).

In some way, the Inkanyamba Association was able to fulfil its mission to stop stock theft when it had just started. Then the incidents of stock theft went quiet. But now the momentum increased, and the incidents started picking up again. (Farmer 2).

The programmes initiated by society were at first effective when the momentum was still high and stock theft was effectively lessened. These programmes were initiated by members of the community who had felt the pain of stock theft and started to do something about it. Their work was driven by a combination of passion and anger as they had had enough of the criminals who were terrorising their rural farming community. However, there was also agreement that these organizational measures were not effective in curbing stock theft in the area any more, particularly when there were interpersonal issues amongst the members. They highlighted the significant issues that caused the failure of these organisations as follows:

We had an association for combating stock theft, but it just slacked down because we turned on each other. We do not trust each other. We do not know who is a thief and who is not. We would appoint a person as a member of the association only to find that so and so joined the organization because they wanted to milk information to feed to their fellow thieves. (Farmer 12).

The community alleges that some police members are part of stock theft syndicates while some police point at the community alleging that farmers steal from one another. Therefore, we are the ones who should talk to each other to stop this. I suspect there

are stock theft syndicates that are in cahoots with the police that are working with our organization, because there was an organization that was formed to fight stock theft called Inkanyamba. We really thought this organization would eliminate this behaviour because it was more invested in punishing stock thieves. At first it seemed to help but the next thing we saw was that the suspects would flee before they could get to them. It was as if there were informants amongst the members of the organization who leaked information to the stock thieves. (Farmer 13).

The participants shared the notion that the programmes alone were inadequate to fight stock theft. They believed that the stock theft perpetrators should be taught a lesson in order for them to stop this behaviour. They proposed that these thieves should be apprehended by the community and spoken to in a manly way, or they should be arrested and be given severe jail sentences without the possibility of parole.

5.9 Participants’ Suggestions to Curb Livestock Theft and the Role of Law Enforcement

The following tables summarise the key suggestions offered by the participants under the headings: Suggestions to curb livestock theft; The chances of recovering stolen livestock; and The role of law enforcement in curbing livestock theft.

Table 5.12: Suggestions to curb livestock theft

Sub-theme	Participants	Percentage %
I do not know what could help	8	40
Nothing will help	12	60
Police should listen to the farmer’s views and suggestions	4	20
Government should reimburse us	1	5
Government should provide support to search for lost livestock	4	20
Build a police station nearby	12	60
Government must deploy more police	8	40
Solve the issue of jurisdiction	9	45

Marking and registering livestock	8	40
Practise <i>inqoma</i> ⁶	3	15
Monitor livestock	11	55
Police should have roadblocks at night	5	25
Increase security measures	3	15
Job creation	6	30
End loadshedding	1	5
Thieves must be killed	1	5

Note: More than one option could be suggested

Table 5.13: The chances of recovering stolen livestock

Sub-theme	Participants	Percentage %
None	14	70
Slim	3	15
No response	3	15

Table 5.14: The role of law enforcement in curbing livestock theft

Sub-theme	Participants	Percentage %
Law Enforcement		
Police fail to make arrests	13	65
Police are untrustworthy	6	30
Police fail to do their work	8	40
Thieves undermine the police	3	15
Police are useless	1	5
I do not want to comment	2	10
Not helpful	3	15
The police are doing everything they can	4	20
Laws and government protect thieves	9	45

*More than one option could be indicated

Source: Author's summaries

When referring to the role of the SAPS in curbing stock theft, the majority of the participants was highly critical. The Stock Theft Unit was accused of being obstructive and often unwilling

⁶ Giving somebody else who has no livestock, your own livestock for them to start-up their herds.

to go the extra mile to assist the farmers in retrieving their livestock. One participant's comment reflected the thoughts of others:

When searching with the police, for example if there is livestock just beyond the river nearby, the police from the Stock Theft Unit often say that that can only go to this certain area as their jurisdiction doesn't allow them to cross beyond the river because that is another area. (Farmer 7).

Another participant, who was quoted earlier, also complained of the tardiness of the SAPS as officers often arrived very late after a case of stock theft had been reported. It was evident that 60% of the participants complained about the issue of jurisdiction while, conversely, another farmer explained that the hands of the police were often tied by the issue of jurisdiction. According to this farmer, the police were often intimidated by local community members when they searched for livestock, possibly because these members were complicit in the theft or benefitted from it. One participant narrated such as incident:

Another time we went to a location called Dungu. when we got there, people from that area gathered and came to us as a group and asked us and the police who we reported to [to obtain permission] that we had the right to come to their area to search for lost livestock. They said, "There is no way that we shall accept the police coming to our community out of the blue, without notifying us. We therefore cannot allow you to search because you did not notify us." The police responded and said, "We usually do not notify anyone when we go to a location for a search," and the residents said, "In our location that is not how we operate. You guys should have notified us prior to coming here, therefore we will not let you gather our livestock" [to determine if there were any stolen cattle among them]. And no livestock was gathered indeed. There are areas with people who believe they are untouchable, even with the police there; nothing may be taken away from them. (Farmer 2)

The participants also commented on the tardiness of the police, arguing that they delayed arrivals and follow-up without logical explanations. One farmer narrated the following in this regard:

We recently had sheep stolen from a farm last week. Those sheep would have been easily recovered because they were spotted in just a few minutes by the domestic helper. The helper immediately called the owner of the livestock and the owner quickly called the police station. No one answered the call at the police station, and the farmer then

called Mount Frere police station who instructed the owner to call the police in their area because they could not go and block from their side without getting communication from the Sidakeni police that they should assist. The incident took place on Friday. The police only arrived on Saturday afternoon and took the statement. They never took the footage from the installed cameras but they said they were investigating. It has been five days now. We called them yesterday after one of the suspects had confessed, but they never arrived because they said there was no police van, it had gone to Ntabankulu. we waited for them the whole day. They said it [the van] would be available on Wednesday and that was when they would be able to come. Mind you, the suspects were there with us, but we had to let them go and that gave them a chance to either flee or change their stories. We did catch the criminals in this case as they had asked us to do so, but they said they could not come because they had no police van. Stock theft needs to be handled by police who are like the ones we had in the apartheid era, who used force and were harsh on criminals. (Farmer 13)

According to the participants, the role of the SAPS was obstructive rather than supportive in curbing stock theft, as their tardiness and lack of resources hindered effective action to bring stock thieves to book. If this pattern persists, it bodes ill for the future of livestock farmers in the study area.

5.9 Conclusion

The findings affirmed that stock theft was a serious crime that destroyed the participating farmers' lives in a very disturbing way. It was suggested that it needed to be recognised as a priority crime as it was also associated with other crimes such as bribery, swindling, violence, and even murder. The members of the AmaCwerha farming community bewailed the fact that they had limited resources and powers to cause the arrest of stock theft perpetrators and remove them from their community. They also highlighted the issue of low police involvement and the growing inefficiency of community organizations due to the under-resourced condition of the local police station and the fact that enthusiasm to be part of community organizations had waned, arguably due to their lack of success in bringing stock thieves to book.

The findings also highlighted that stock theft occurred either in the personal space of stock farmers or some distance from their guardianship. Upon reflection, the former seems a matter of grave concern as the lack of fear among stock thieves to show themselves and their

challenging and provocative behaviour highlight their growing awareness that stock theft activities go unpunished and that they may therefore continue with this criminal behaviour with impunity. This situation does not bode well for the future.

The comments that the government should step in and up are also noteworthy. The initial efficient and smooth implementation of community programmes and the services they rendered to assist in curbing stock theft were commendable, but the reasons for their collapse should be explored in depth as this has left a gap that operational government structures as embodied by of the SAPS and the criminal justice system have not been able to fill. Moreover, as the violent nature of stock theft has been escalating, the traumatic experiences that farmers are exposed to due to its prevalence will continue to have various psychological and financial effects on the farming community. The following chapter will outline recommendations and conclusions based on the research aims and objectives that were introduced in Chapter one.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

The aim of the study was to explore the effects of livestock theft on the livelihoods of people, particularly livestock farmers, who are part of the rural community in the AmaCwerha area that is located in the Alfred Ndzo District in the Eastern Cape Province. The purpose of this summative chapter is to highlight the key research outcomes and to offer recommendations for future research. The findings highlight the effects of stock theft on the livelihoods of the rural farmers under study and expose the pivotal role that the SAPS, the government, and livestock farmers should play in curbing this scourge.

6.2 General Conclusions

By utilising appropriate methodologies for this qualitative study, critical conclusions were reached that were attuned to the research objectives. It is reiterated here that the objectives of the study were to focus on the AmaCwerha traditional authority area to:

9. determine the nature and extent of livestock theft on rural farmers in this area;
10. understand the effects of livestock theft on farmers in the area;
11. determine the factors that contribute to stock theft in the study area; and
12. assess the effectiveness of current measures to combat stock theft in the AmaCwerha area.

6.2.1 The nature of livestock theft and its impact on rural farmers

The first objective of this study required an exploration into the nature and extent of stock theft and the impact it had on the residents, particularly rural farmers, of the area under study. The objective was accomplished by analysing the rich data obtained by means of in-depth one-on-one interviews using semi-structured questions that were administered to 20 farmer participants. The findings indicated that stock theft in this area was extensive and escalating. The participants, who had all been victims of livestock theft, lamented that they lived in constant dread of being revictimised by ruthless livestock thieves who had become provocative and challenging in the extreme. Some had even changed their livestock to avoid further victimisation. Many felt that their lives and families were threatened by this crime that was

often characterised by personal encounters and violence. Perpetrators had become more confident and aggressive, especially when they unexpectedly accosted a victim or any guardian in the fields or even in their homes. The participants raised the issue that weapons, particularly guns, were used to threaten shepherds, herdsmen, and farmers and their families when the perpetrators openly stole livestock. It was clear and disturbing that the farming community lacked a sense of security in their own households. This study revealed that stock theft took place any time of the day or night as long as the time was perfect for the perpetrators who targeted animals in the fields where they grazed or in stockades near farmers' homes. Livestock theft adversely affected all victims, such as shepherds, herdsmen, the farmers, and their families.

This study disclosed that stock theft was perpetrated by small groups and syndicates with suspected police and community complicity. Suspicion was so rife that, according to some farmers, it caused a breakdown in community trust and communication. The active thieves were allegedly unemployed young people who had no source of income and were possibly involved in alcohol and/or substance abuse as these habits have become rife among unemployed youths in the area. According to the participants, young people stole livestock for financial gain, however small, and it was argued that they might spend most of their money on alcohol and/or drugs as the taverns in the area were well frequented by unemployed young people. The perception prevailed that they were the 'foot soldiers' who scouted areas to obtain information about access to livestock and then executed the theft, while other 'faceless' people were the masterminds who planned these stock theft operations to grow their wealth. The literature proposes that people who commit stock theft need to be familiar with the spaces they steal the animals from. Thus, syndicates recruit youths from the AmaCwerha area because they need local people who are knowledgeable about the routines of farmers and who know access and escape routes in the area. This notion is supported by the routine activity theory that posits that criminals will first familiarise themselves with the routine activities of their targets before striking. Scouts will thus become familiar with the habitual movements of their targeted livestock guardians and rationally consider the best times to strike so that their rewards will outweigh the possibility of being caught, as posited by the rational choice and the routine activity theories.

6.2.2 The effects of livestock theft on the residents of AmaCwerha

The second objective of this research study was to determine the effects of stock theft on the residents of the AmaCwerha Traditional Authority area, and this objective was accomplished. The findings revealed that stock theft occurred as a contact crime when perpetrators accosted and intimidated farmers and their families in their homes, or it occurred in the communal-social environment when animals were stolen while grazing in the fields. Regardless of the type of environment where the crime was committed, the victims were usually left with traumatic scars and some might even have needed professional help. However, most of the victims in the AmaCwerha area had been financially devastated by the theft of their livestock and were therefore unable to afford any professional help. In such instances, volunteers from the community might support affected victims.

The emotionally devastating effects of stock theft were also visible. Whereas some affected farmers could recover emotionally and move on, others felt that they had lost their purpose in life. They felt defeated as they had bought and raised the livestock with hard-earned money, and the thought that someone who had stolen their livestock would sell these animals for less than they were worth and gain financially from their efforts was disheartening in the extreme. Being swindled by other criminals who had purported to be their supporters and helpers was also a devastating experience. One farmer spent in the region of R10 000 on the promises of swindlers that they would find and return his animals, but nothing came of this.

This study revealed that both males and females were livestock farmers and the two genders were equally affected by stock theft at physical, emotional, financial, and social levels. A key feature that emerged regarding the response of farmers and their families to stock theft was that they were fearful of being revictimized physically, emotionally, and financially. Males are generally masculine and strong and may fight off perpetrators, but stock theft affects the entire family and even the families of herdsmen and shepherds, thus the farmers admitted that they had refrained from retaliating physically when criminals attacked because it might have put their families at risk. This inability to retaliate seemed to exacerbate the emotional devastation that some farmers experienced as they admitted that they ‘felt it in their souls’. One farmer stated that he feared that the women in his household might be raped, and this is a very real possibility as revealed by the literature (Masiko-Mpaka, 2023).

The participants argued that continuous and repeated victimization made it extremely hard to forget and move on because, just when they had started to heal, stock thieves struck again, which reopened the wounds. The livestock most targeted by stock thieves were cattle/cows, which is a fact that the literature also highlights (Pasiwe et al., 2021). Some farmers had reached the point where they changed the kind of livestock they kept in fear of revictimization. Some mentioned that they were affected to the point where they could no longer mingle with society because of the emotional effects of stock theft. They distanced themselves from other people and their families, and some even found it hard to eat as they felt a failure because they could not provide for their families any more. Their livestock had been their sole source of income and wealth and this had been ripped away. Moreover, some participants had lost their trust in other community members and their fellow farmers as there was heavy suspicion that some members of the community and even some police officers were complicit in stock theft. These participants felt like prisoners in their own homes knowing that perpetrators had the nerve to accost them in their homes in a very challenging and threatening manner. Therefore, a severe detrimental effect of stock theft was revealed to be social destruction because feuds and village wars erupted regularly as a result of allegations of stock theft complicity by villagers, who then resorted to distrusting and victimizing one another.

6.3 Factors that Contribute to Livestock Theft

The following were highlighted by the participants as the factors that most likely contributed to stock theft in the AmaCwerha area:

1. Youth unemployment
2. Drug or substance abuse
3. Greed and jealousy
4. Farmers' carelessness
5. Failure to vet employees (shepherds, herdsmen)
6. Corrupt police officials
7. Availability of illegal firearms.

The participants corroborated information in the literature (Dooreward, 2020; Clark, 2018; Shava & Masuku, 2019) that young unemployed people contribute to increasing rates of crime across the country. They argued that when young people were unemployed, they would seek ways of earning an income and thus many became involved in criminal activities as an easy way to fill their pockets. The participants referred to the high attendance of taverns/shebeens

in the areas where stock theft was prevalent, arguing that this was where these young people connected with others in the community and scouted their targets without raising suspicion. Some also wondered why these young people, who had no jobs or money, could afford the alcohol and drugs they consumed, and alleged that it could be attributed to their stock theft income.

The participants also attributed the high rate of stock theft in the area to a high level of greed among some farmers and members of the community. They argued that some people hated to see other people prosper due to their successful livestock farming activities. Large herds mark success, which the participants called *intsebenzo*, and which the literature also refers to (Shava & Masuku, 2019). This is when a successful livestock farmer has gained social respect and a high social status. These farmers are prominent in society and regarded as experts in their field, and they are revered and their advice is often sought. Unfortunately, some community members and farmers become jealous and this envy reportedly leads them to steal the livestock of the person they have come to resent (Dooreward, 2020).

The carelessness of farmers was also highlighted as a reason why perpetrators accessed their livestock with ease. For instance, some farmers left their livestock in a field at night where they were not monitored. The participants estimated that about 65% of livestock was taken from where they grazed as there was often no guardianship. Herding the livestock back to a safe kraal in the evening is therefore a good option.

Some farmers also did not vet the shepherds they employed to determine if they had a sound background and record. In fact, 20% of the participants mentioned that failure to do background checks meant that they had hired untrustworthy people. Farmer 12, Farmer 13, and Farmer 16 admitted that unchecked employees had cost them dearly. These participants all referred to a recent incident when a farmer had lost livestock in large numbers due to a shepherd who had been working on the farm. That particular farmer lost 49 sheep in 2021, 19 head of cattle in 2022, and 49 sheep in August 2023. Camera visuals and the confession of one of the alleged perpetrators revealed that the shepherd had been involved in all three these incidents of stock theft. It later emerged that the shepherd had been fired from previous jobs because of his involvement in stock theft.

6.4 The Impact of Livestock Theft

This study discovered that some farmers had been physically injured during livestock theft while trying to fight the perpetrators. The literature also refers to incidences of stabbing, assault, and rape during livestock theft, and some victims even lost their lives (Springer, 2022). The literature suggests that when stock thieves intrude a home or trespass on a farm, wives and daughters may be raped and the farmer may be beaten up and even killed, and such events cause a lifespan of trauma (Maundu, 2024).

The participants referred to squabbles and jealousy in the community that damaged community cohesion and the willingness to work collaboratively to resolve problems and address livestock theft. Victims of stock theft had lost trust in the police and other members of society as they felt exposed to perpetrators who might come to their homes based on information provided by a fellow farmer or community member. The farmers realised that their homes needed to be secured and that their families and livestock had to be guaranteed safety. However, the cost of sophisticated measures did not allow many farmers to install such devices, and only one of the 20 farmers had been able to install CCTV cameras while four had managed to install electric fences. Most of the farmers commented that, due to the structure of their homes and affordability, they were unable to install cameras. Some also complained that they would require more than one camera to cover the yard and all the sides of their homes.

The socio-economic status of the residents of the AmaCwerha area is a very low, therefore affordability was an issue for most of the farmers. Some followed the advice of the SAPS Stock Theft Unit to monitor their livestock by counting the animals daily, ensuring that they would be fetched from the fields every day, ensuring they would be guarded all the time, and applying hot-iron markings on the hide of each animal.

6.5 Key Stakeholders in Livestock Theft and their Pivotal Roles

When suggestions for curbing livestock theft were analysed, four key role players emerged, namely the government, the SAPS (or police), livestock farmers themselves, and community organizations.

The SAPS: The SAPS clearly emerged as inefficient and apathetic, while the fact that their operations were often hindered by protocol and jurisdiction was also emphasized. Not only was there the accusation of tardiness when a stock theft incident was reported, but the police also

seemed to be poorly equipped to do their job, and there was even the suggestion of police complicity in stock theft syndicates.

One comment that stood out was the need to establish a police station in the area that would be accessible to and supportive of farmers. It was therefore also implied that this station should be equipped with the necessary resources, particularly appropriate vehicles, to engage in search operations. Another noteworthy suggestion was that the police “should listen to farmers”. This suggested that the police engaged in operations without heeding good advice by farmers who were on the ground and whose voices would have been important in the quest to retrieve their stolen livestock. It was a disturbing finding that the overwhelming majority of the farmers (70%) considered the recovery of stolen livestock a pipe dream, and that police officers were also implicated in inefficiency and lethargy. A recommendation was to establish road blocks at night, as this is the time when most stock theft incidences occur. It was also logical that the participants recommended the deployment of more police officers in the area, as a lack of sufficient manpower is the bane of police work and a major cause of the frustration of victims.

The government: The request for government to step in seemed moot, as the government is represented by its law enforcement structures, in this case the SAPD. To expect the government to refund losses also seemed a whistle in the wind, and farmers should therefore resort to other measures, such as insuring their livestock, which will unfortunately also be expensive.

Livestock farmers: The third role-player was farmers themselves. A clear dichotomy emerged as suggestions for vigilant and pro-active behaviour were juxtaposed by the fact that some farmers were apathetic after losing their livestock and merely blamed others for their plight, particularly the government and the police. The reference to load shedding was pertinent as electric fencing, cameras, and lighting in stockades have become pivotal in guardianship initiatives, and this may be where the government should primarily become involved as it should eradicate load shedding fracas as a matter of urgency.

Community organizations: It was encouraging to note that the community had taken the initiative to launch community-based local organizations to protect their interests. Members were thus deployed to quickly respond to stock theft incidences and to retrieve stolen animals, even without the presence of the police in some instances, as one farmer testified. However, the persistent prevalence and extent of stock theft soon insinuated mistrust into these

organizations, as members no longer knew who to trust and who were serving as informants for stock theft syndicates, probably earning huge bribes. Sadly, these organizations were reportedly no longer as efficient as they used to be.

Concluding remarks: The views on the role of the SAPS in curbing stock theft are shockingly yet unsurprisingly negative if the findings of earlier studies are considered. Only a very small portion of the sample felt that the police tried to do their best, while the overwhelming majority slated the police for failure to do their job, inefficiency, untrustworthiness, and even criminal complicity.

The findings in this section clearly expose severe challenges in the study area that will not be resolved overnight. Top of the list seem to be an inefficient police force and the breakdown in communication between the police and the livestock farming community, and between community members and farmers. This needs to be addressed as the resolution of any community-based criminality relies on trust, mutual respect, and collaboration. If these elements are absent, the situation is dire and requires in-depth intervention initiatives as a matter of urgency.

6.6 The Ineffectiveness of Current Measures to Combat Livestock Theft

When asked about the effectiveness of the measures they had adopted, the majority of the participants agreed that hot-iron marking was the most effective measure. However, as discussed earlier, this method was sometimes challenged by rogue police officers who endorsed the thieves' ownership of the animals, while some perpetrators tended to apply a new mark over the original one.

Participants who had installed CCTV cameras and electric fences argued that these were effective only up to a certain point as the load shedding challenge often rendered them useless. They also added that stock theft thieves waited for times of load shedding to strike. For example, the farmer who had recently lost 49 sheep had cameras and an electric fence, but the thieves waited for load shedding. This was when they opened the gates and herded the sheep out of the yard. This practice is underpinned by both theories that were adopted as the perpetrators first monitored the routine activities on the farm – i.e., bringing the sheep from the fields to the kraal – and then bided their time when the target (i.e., the sheep) was present and the guardian (i.e., electric cameras and fences) were absent before they struck.

6.7 Recommendations

Four participants felt that the police were trying to do their best, while most of the rest of the 20 participants reported that they were unhappy with the way that the police handled stock theft complaints and searches. The police often arrived late, claimed that the area where they had to search was beyond their jurisdiction, and when the animals were sometimes observed, some officers tended to accept the thieves' word and forged papers that the livestock belonged to them. Moreover, SAPS operations were crippled by a lack of resources, particularly transport and working telephone lines. Under-staffed and/or tardy police officers could also have contributed to the fact that reports of livestock theft were ignored. Therefore, the South African Government should deploy the South African National Defence Force in this very vulnerable study area to secure livestock hot-spots and search for stolen animals.

Moreover, the police station, which is very far from the community and is under-staffed and under-resourced, leads to zero police visibility in the area. The participants argued that, regardless of immediate reports of stock theft to the police, they never responded on time and always offered the excuse that something had hindered them from arriving at the scene timeously. Even searches and follow-up reports were badly delayed. It is therefore recommended that inter-demarcation and cross-district assistance must be compulsory. Even if there is no communication between police stations, as long as the victims reported a crime there should be immediate responsive and collaborative action. Police policy should also be reviewed as a matter of urgency to ensure effective cross-jurisdiction operations. If this does not occur, livestock thieves will continue to flourish with impunity.

It thus follows that the criminal justice system should deal harshly with anyone found involved in this crime. Moreover, due to the financial, emotional, psychological, and social impacts of this crime, there is an urgent call for inter-departmental attention to render support to affected farmers and to strengthen the hands of committed police officers whose passion it is to do their duty. In this context, it was noted that targeted livestock farmers were traumatised and devastated by the loss of their livestock and the financial implications this crime had. The Department of Health should therefore deploy trained specialists to this area to work in clinics where farmers may seek counselling to deal with their emotional and psychosocial challenges.

6.7.1. Strategies that could curb stock theft.

6.7.1.1. Implementing safety strategies and the collaboration among all stakeholders.

The government and all rural safety agents should promote and establish integrated approaches that are multidisciplinary; for example, that include collaboration between SAPS and all relevant departments like the Department of Traditional Affairs, Department of Agriculture and the rural community members with an aim of improving the safety and eliminating stock theft in rural areas. The government must mobilize the communities, especially Traditional Leaders, to assist in implementing Community Policing Strategy to improve rural safety and reduce stock theft. The government should build an effective policing capacity through human or physical capital, and must ensure capability of the personnel they deploy; this will ensure that rural dwellers are in effective and capable hands that will fight livestock theft in.

Policing should be improved in the rural areas through improving accessibility of policing to the rural farmers, effective investigation and sentencing that will ensure safety of the rural farming community. Policing infrastructure should be improved in the rural police stations, through effective policing services and easily available victim empowerment for farmers who need psychosocial support after they have lost their livestock. Clear and responsive policing should be ensured in rural police stations areas, this will encourage farmers to not be reluctant in reporting stolen livestock. Communication among the farming community and the police should be improved, this would improve or build trust amongst the police and the farming community. There must be high community involvement and relevant stakeholder collaborative operation when creating crime awareness and rural safety. The farming community should be mobilized to be part of inventing stock theft prevention measures and collaborate with relevant departments in supporting and enhancing safety and security in the areas. When strategies have been implemented, they should be monitored and evaluated to ensure that they serve the purpose they were invented for.

6.8 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Studies

As the study was delimited to one rural area and involved only 20 rural farmers, it is impossible to generalize the findings to similar areas across the South African landscape. This implies that the study should be emulated in other rural areas to plot similarities and differences, thereby

creating a full tapestry of the patterns and trends associated with livestock theft in this country so that it can be effectively eradicated.

The study was also limited in the sense that SAPS Stock Theft Unit officers were not engaged to contribute to the data. Had this been done, a much broader view of the stock theft phenomenon would have been obtained. Future studies should therefore heed this piece of advice.

Another limitation was that the study did not underpin the investigation with an in-depth exploration of the official Acts and regulations that guide law enforcement activities pertaining to stock theft, and particularly cross-border and police jurisdiction operations. Such an investigation may thus guide the amendment of policies, as referred to in the recommendations.

6.9 Conclusion

The study revealed numerous factors associated with stock theft that may impact livestock farmers and the community negatively. Regardless of where or how stock theft is executed, the victims are traumatized and social harmony and trust are disrupted. Moreover, a range of other crimes converge with stock theft such as swindling, assault, rape, bribery, and even murder. Apart from its traumatic impact on communal farmers' livelihoods, stock theft also impacts all other social stakeholders. Its primary impact deeply affects farmers and their immediate families, but it also transcends to society and the economy. Stock theft affects both those who just started engaging in it and those who have been practising it for a long time. Moreover, all types of livestock are targeted by stock theft perpetrators, whether these animals are sheep, goats, or cattle/cows. The need to address the scourge of stock theft at all levels and by all stakeholders has been extensively demonstrated by this study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A1: Participant Interview Schedule

Title of the study: *Effects of livestock theft on the livelihoods of people in rural communities: A case study of AmaCwerha Traditional Authority in Alfred Ndzo District,*

Eastern Cape Province

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:

PARTICIPANT: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____

1. To what extent is livestock theft affecting the residents of amaCwerha area?
2. How many times has the participant's livestock been stolen?
3. What kind of livestock was stolen from the participant? For example, was it cows, sheep or goats?
4. Explain how livestock theft has affected the participant's and their family's livelihoods?
5. What contributory factors contribute to livestock theft in the AmaCwerha area?
6. What actions is the AmaCwerha community taking to eliminate the contributory factors contributing to livestock theft?
7. Was there any assistance provided by entities such as the police in attempts to assist with the search for the lost livestock?
8. Were they successful?
9. According to the victim's view, were the efforts to search and recover livestock enough?
10. What is the participant's view on how the justice system apprehends and prosecutes those apprehended for livestock theft?
11. What new strategies are livestock farmers individually taking to ensure they do not get victims again?
12. What measures does the community of AmaCwerha collectively take to fight stock theft?
13. What could help mitigate stock theft in AmaCwerha area?
14. Do the farmers and the community as whole need assistance from government entities such as the Department of Agriculture and the police department in eliminating livestock theft?

Appendix A2: UHLELO LODLIWANO-NDLEBE

Isihloko Sesifundo: *Effects of livestock theft on the livelihoods of people in rural communities: A case study of AmaCwerha Traditional Authority in Alfred Ndzo District,*

Eastern Cape Province

UHLELO LODLIWANO-NDLEBE

UMTHATHI NXAXHEBA: _____

UMHLELI WEMIBUZO: _____

1. Lunzulu kangakanani ulwamvila lokwebiwa kwemfuyo kubafuyi bendawo yaseMaCwerheni?
2. Mangakhi amatyeli ubelwa imfuyo?
3. Ngaba loluphi uhlobo lwemfuyo osewuke walwebelwa? Umzekelo, ingaba ziiNkomo, iiGusha okanye iiBhokwe?
4. Sicela uchaze, ngaba kukuchaphazele njani uwebelwa imfuyo, wena nemo-ntlalo yosapho lwakho.
5. Ingaba zeziphi izinto ezikhokelela ekubeni nibeziisulu zokwebelwa imfuyo kwindawo yamaCwerha?
6. Manyathelo mani asele niwathathile ningabahlali bendawo yamaCwerha njengenzame zokuphelisa okanye ukwehlisa amathuba okwebelwa imfuyo?
7. Ingaba lukhona uncedo enikhe naluthola kumaqumrhu athile, njenga mapolisa, ukunincedisa nithole iinzame zokukhangela nokubuyisa ifuyo eniyebelweyo?
8. Oloncedo lwabaneziphumo ezintle okanye lwabayimpumelelo?
9. Ngokombono wakho, ingaba iinzame enizitholayo zokukhangela nokubuyisa imfuyo eyebiweyo ziluncedo yaye zanele?
10. Luthini uluvo lwakho mayelana nendlela okanye inkqubo yomthetho yokubamba nokutshutshisa abo barhanelwa ngokweba imfuyo?
11. Njengomfuyi, ngawaphi amaqhinga owasebenzisayo ukuqinisekisa uba awuzphindi uzithole usisisulu sokwebelwa imfuyo?
12. Ningabahlali baseMaCwerheni nzame zini enizisebenzisayo ukulwa ukwebiwa kwemfuyo ekuhlaleni?
13. Kungayintoni enganceda ukuphelisa nokwehlisa ukwebiwa kwemfuyo kulendawo yamaCwerha?
14. Ingaba lukhona uncedo eniludingayo kumaqumrhu kaRhulumente afana noMnyango wezoLimo kunye noMnyango wamaPolisa ukunceda ukwehlisa nokuphelisa ukwebiwa kwemfuyo?

Appendix B1: INFORMED CONSENT

**UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE (HSSREC)**

**APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL
For research with human participants**

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:

Greetings:.....

My name is...Balisa...Nogwaza...I am a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, studying Masters in Criminology & Forensic Studies. My student Numbers is 218058663 and my email addresses are as follows: 218058663@stu.ukzn.ac.za / bnogwaza1992@gmail.com.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research asking AmaCwerha Traditional Authority residents who have been the victims of livestock theft questions. The aim and purpose of this research is to determine the effects of livestock theft on Amacwerha residents and their livelihoods. The study is expected to enroll 20 participants. It will involve the following procedures asking the participants questions,

transcribing and recording their answers. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be 2 months. The study is not funded.

The study may involve the risks and/or discomforts that are as a result of opening wounds of stressful life circumstance. We hope that the study will create the following benefits: Although the study will provide no direct benefits to participants, it will help understand the nature, extent and effects of livestock theft on the livelihoods of people residing in the rural areas, especially in EmaCwereni area who have been the victims of livestock theft.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number_____).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at 079 690 0288 or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this research is voluntary and participants may withdraw participation at any point, and in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which they are normally entitled. The participant may withdraw at any point or time, should the participant wish to withdraw from the study they may contact the researcher through their chosen form of communication. The researcher terminate the participant from the study should the participant wish to do so, should the participant lose interest in participating in the study and should the participant fail numerous times to avail themselves for the study

There are no costs that might be incurred by participants as a result of participation in the study. There are no incentives or reimbursements for participation in the study.

The researcher of this study will follow the University of Kwazulu-Natal's ethical guidelines and ensure no bias that the participants and the study is subjected to. This study will assure the anonymity and confidentiality of participants and this will be clearly stated in the written consent forms. The study will assure protection of participants and that no harm will be incurred to them through this study which will also be stated in the written consent forms.

CONSENT

I have been informed about the study entitled Effects of livestock theft on the livelihood of people in rural communities: A case study of AmaCwerha area in Alfred Ndzo District, Eastern Cape Province, by Balisa Nogwaza.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed that there are no available compensation or medical treatment as there will be no injury that may occur to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at 0796900288 / 218058663@stu.ukzn.ac.za.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Video-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Use of my photographs for research purposes YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

APPENDIX B2: Incwadi yolwazi kunye nemvume yokubayinxalenye yophicotho-lwazi.

**UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE (HSSREC)**

**APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL
For research with human participants**

Incwadi yolwazi kunye nemvume yokubayinxalenye yophicotho-lwazi.

Usuku:

Bhota:.....

Igama lam ndingu...Balisa...Nogwaza...ndinguMfundi kwiYunivesithi yaKwaZulu-Natal, ndikwinqanaba leMasters kwiCriminology & Forensic Studies. iNombolo yobhaliso kufunda yam ingu218058663, i-email zam ndizizithola ku: 218058663@stu.ukzn.ac.za / bnogwaza1992@gmail.com.

Ndibhala lencwadi ngenjongo yokukumema uba ubeyinxalenye yophicotho-lwazi olumayelana nokubuza abahlali bendawo yamaCwerha Traditional Authority asebeke bazizisulu zokwebelwa imfuyo imibuzo. Injongo nencakam yoluphicotho kukudakanca iziphumo zokwebiwa kwemfuyo kubomi nentlalo-bume kubahlali bendawo yamacwerha. Koluphicotho kulindeleke uba lubenabathathi nxaxheba abalishumi elinethoba (19). Izinto ekulindeleke zenzeke zezi: ukubuza abathathi nxaxheba imibuzo, ukubhala phantsi nokushicilela iimpendulo zabo. Xa uthe wavuma ukuba koluphicotho ulindeleke uba yinxalenye yalo ixesha elingangeeNyanga ezimbini. Oluphicotho alunamxhasi ngamali.

Kungenzeka ukubayinxalenye yophando kubenemingcipheko nokungakhululeki okungabangelwa kukuthinteka kwamanxeba kunye nemivuka abangelwe luxinzelelo lwemeko yobomi. Sinethemba loba oluphando lokuveza lenzuzo elandelayo: nangona lungenanzuzo engungqo kubathathi-nxaxheba, iyakunceda ukuqonda ubume nobunzulu

beziphumo zokwebiwa kwemfuyo kwiindlela zokuphila kubantu abahlala ezilalini, ingakumbi aba bahlala EmaCwereni abakhe babelwa imfuyo.

Oluphando lujongiwe lwaze lwaphunyezwa ngokusemthethweni yikomiti yaseUKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (inombolo yophunyezo_____).

Xa kuthe kwenzeka wanengxaki, iiknxalabo okanye imibuzo ungaqhagamshelana nomphandi ngomyayi kulenombolo 079 690 0288 okanye iKomiti yase UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, kwezinkcukacha zilandelayo:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private

Bag

X

54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Ukuthatha inxaxheba koluphando kungokuzithandela yaye nanini na uvumelekile uba ungarhoxa, xa uthe wangavumi okanye urhoxe, awuyi kufumana sohlwayo, lahleko yonyango okanye nayiphi na inzuzo obunokuyithola. Njengomthathi-nxaxheba ungarhoxa nanini na, xa kungenzeka ubawele ukurhoxa kuphando ungaqhagamshelana nomphandi ngendlela ekhethwe nguwe. Umphandi angakuphelisa ukuthatha inxaxheba xa umthathi nxaxheba efuna kubenjalo ingakumbi xa kuphele umdla okanye umthathinxaxheba engenzi xesha ukubonana nomphandi.

Akukho nkcitho enokubaluxanduva lomthathi-nxaxheba. Akukho maqithi-qithi ankuthazo okanye mbuyekezo yokubayinxalenye yoluphando.

Umphandi uyakulandela imiqathango yokuziphatha yeUniversity of Kwazulu-Natal yaye iqinisekise uba akukho kuthatha icala okubhekiselwe kubathathi-nxaxheba. Kuyakuqinisekiswa ukungaziwa nokufihlwa komthathi-nxaxheba yaye kuyakuvezwa oku

ngokucacileyo kwisivumelwani. Uya kukhuselwa yaye awuyi kwenzakaliswa ngenxa yoluphando.

Isivumelwano.

Mna ndazisiwe yaye ndicaciselwe ngophando olusihloko sithi *“Effects of livestock theft on the livelihood of people in rural communities: A case study of AmaCwerha area in Alfred Ndzo District, Eastern Cape Province, olwenziwa nguBalisa Nogwaza.*

Ndiyaziqonda iinjongo neenkqubo zoluphando.

Ndilinike ithuba lobuza nokuphendulwa imibuzo mayelana noluphando yaye ndiphenduliwe ngokundenelisa.

Ndiyavuma uba ukuthatha inxaxheba kwam koluphando kukukuthanda kwam yaye ndingarhoxa nanini na xa ndifuna ngaphandle kwesohlwayo.

Ndazisiwe uba akukho nzuzo, mbuyekezo nanyango ngoba akukho kwenzakala okuya kwenzeka ngenxa yeenkqubo zolupando.

Xa kunokwenzeka ndibenemibuzo neekxalabo ezimayelana noluphando ndingaqhagamshelana nomphandi kwezinkcukacha zilandelayo: 0796900288 / 218058663@stu.ukzn.ac.za.

Xa ndinemibuzo neenkxalabo ngemalungelo am njengomthathi-nxaxheba okanye ndixhalabile malunga nombala othile okanye nomphandi ndingaqhagamshelana ne:

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Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Imvume eyongezelelweyo, xa kunemfuneko

Ndiyavuma ukuba:

Ulushicilele udliwano-ndlebe lwam EWE / HAYI

Ushicilele undiveze EWE / HAYI

Uthathe imifanekiso ngenjongo zolwazi EWE / HAYI

Kusayina umthathi-nxaxheba

Umhla

Kusayina ingqina
(Xa kufanelekile)

Umhla

Kusayina Umgquleli
(Xa kufanelekile)

Umhla

APPENDIX C: ETHICS CLEARANCE



05 September 2023

Balisa Nogwaza (218058663)
School Of Applied Human Sc
Howard College

Dear B Nogwaza,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00005878/2023

Project title: Effects of livestock theft on the livelihood of people in rural communities: A case study of AmaCwerha Traditional Authority in Alfred Ndzo District, Eastern Cape Province.

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 17 July 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 05 September 2024.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

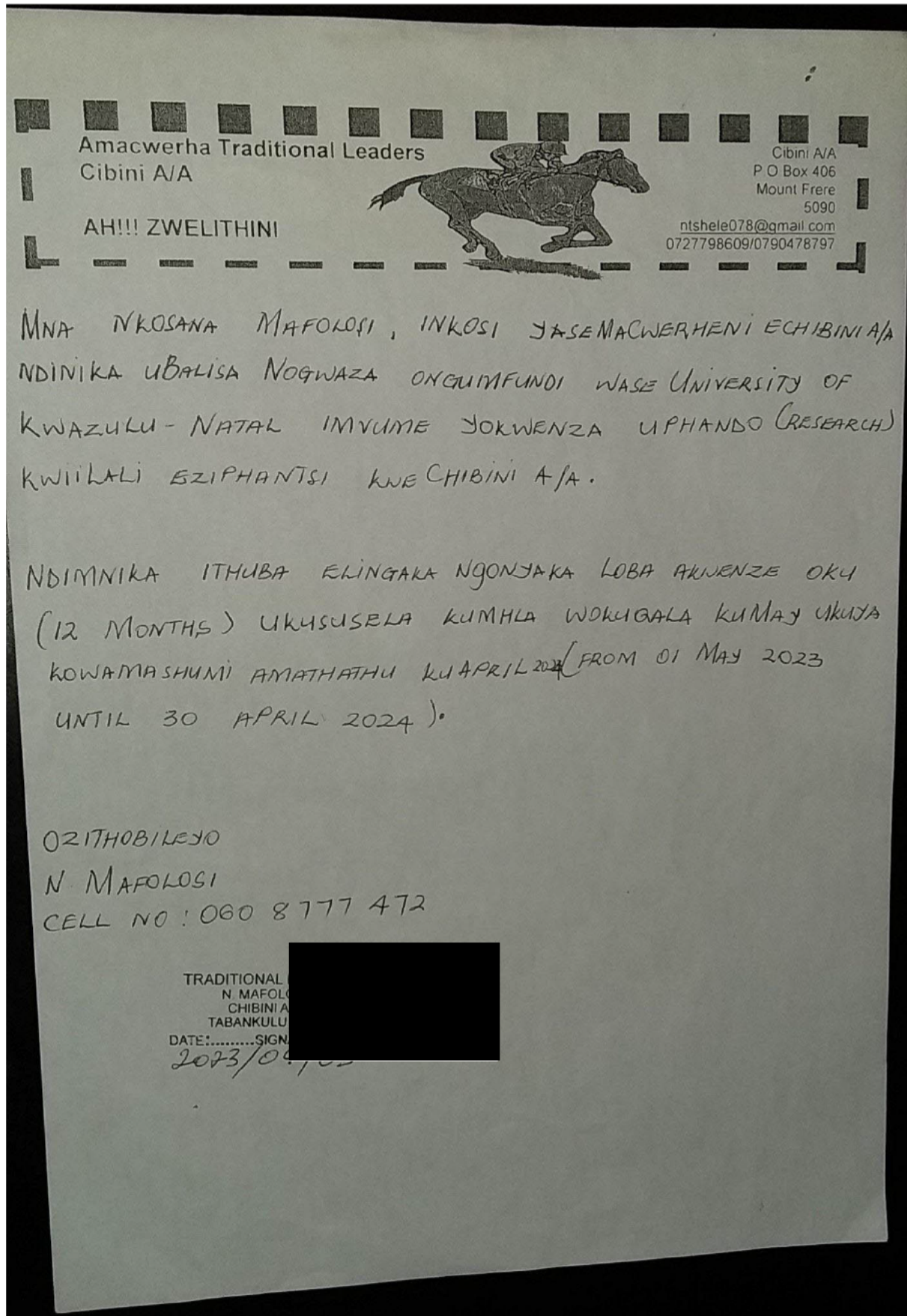
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS



APPENDIX D: Gatekeeper's Letter AmaCwerha Traditional Leaders.



APPENDIX E: SOCIAL WORKER LETTER.



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
HEALTH

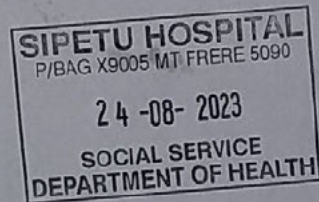
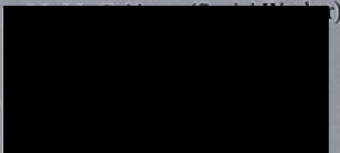
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To whom it may concern


Herewith as the Social Worker of the above mentioned Hospital Mr I.L Gebhuza practice number (1035536) accepting and willing to assist Ms Balisa Nogwaza student number (218058663) on her research study requirements of offering psychosocial support to her participants duration her research. That is based on topic about the "Effects of Livestock Theft on the Livelihoods of People Residing in Rural Areas: The case Study Of Amacwerha Area ,in Alfred Ndzo District Municipality ,Eastern Cape Province"

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours in Service



APPENDIX E: PROOF OF LANGUAGE EDITING

	<p style="text-align: right;">lindac@skytec.co.za 083 344 0706</p> <h1 style="text-align: center;">Research Skills Development Services CC</h1> <p style="text-align: center;"><small>SARS Income Tax No. 9249355208; CC Founding Statement No. CK94/16841/23 SARS; Tax Clearance Certificate No. 1994/016841/23 SACE REGISTRATION NUMBER: N.D. COERTZE – 1082433 (2003)</small></p>
<h3><u>DECLARATION OF PROOF-READING</u></h3> <p>TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN</p>	
<p>I, Nicolina D. Coertze, declare that I meticulously perused the Master’s dissertation referred to below for language editing and proof-reading purposes. I identified and corrected linguistic and stylistic inaccuracies to the best of my knowledge and ability. Using the <i>Word Tracking</i> system, I kept track of the changes that I made. I also offered additional annotations for consideration by the author should she deem it necessary to address areas that I considered might need attention. I declare that I adhered to the general principles that guide the work of a language editor and that I remained within my brief as had been agreed with the author of the manuscript.</p>	
<p><u>Details:</u></p>	
TITLE	Effects of livestock theft on the livelihood of people in rural communities: a case study of Amacwerha traditional authority in Alfred Ndzo district, Eastern Cape Province
NAME OF CANDIDATE	BALISA NOGWAZA
PROPOSED QUALIFICATION	Master of Social Science
DEPARTMENT	Faculty of Applied Human Sciences
TERTIARY INSTITUTION	University of KwaZulu-Natal
<p>Manuscript submitted on: 15 January 2024</p>	
<p>(MRS) N.D. COERTZE LANGUAGE EDITOR</p>	
<p><i>DISCLAIMER: The Editor was not responsible for the final presentation of this manuscript. It was the author’s/supervisor’s prerogative to format the manuscript and to make additional changes after editing without referring the document back to the language editor.</i></p>	

APPENDIX F: TURNITIN REPORT

Effects of livestock theft on the livelihoods of people in rural areas

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