Livelihoods and sharing: Trends in a Lesotho village, 1976–2004

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Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies

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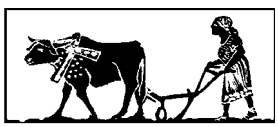

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Selelekela

Lilemong tsa 1976 le 1977 ke ne ke qete selemo Ha Tumahole ke ithuta mekhoa ea temo le tsela tse ling tseo batho ba iphelisang ka tsona. Selemong sa 2004 ke bile lehlohonolo hore ke boele ke khutle hape ho tla bona hore naa ho bile le liphetoho life kamora lilemo tseo tse 27. Lekhetlong lena ke qetile libeke tse 'ne ke leka ho fumana hore naa batho ba Ha Tumahole ba thusana joang temong le mekhoeng e meng ea ho iphelisa. Morero oa mosebetsi ona ke ho thusa mokhatlo oa CARE litekong tsa ona tsa ho leka ho ntlafatsa maphelo a batho ka ho tšehetsa temo.

Batho ba Ha Tumahole ba ne ba nkamohele ka mofuthu ha ke qala ho ea ka 1976. Ke ile ka boela ka amoheloa ha monate hape lekhetlong lena la bobeli leha batho ba bangata bao ke ba tsebellang khale ba se ba sa phele. Ke isa liteboho tsa ka ho Morena Tumahole Theko le moena oa hae Ntate Ntaote Theko ha ba ile ba ntumella ho tla sebetsa motseng oa bona, le lithuso le tšehetso tsa bona. Ha ke lebale Malefetsane Kuoape, setloholo sa e mong oa bakhotsi ba ka ba baholo lilemong tse 28 tse fetileng, Khoeli Kuoape, ea neng a tsamaea le 'na ho chakela malapa. Ke leboha ka ho fetisa batho ba Ha Tumahole ha ba ile ba nkamohela malapeng a bona 'me ba araba lipotso tsa ka tse amang maphelo a bona.

Joalekaha ke hlalosa tlalehong ena, ke ile ka fetola lebitso la motse oa Ha Tumahole le mabitso a batho bohle ba neng ba ameha lipatlisisong tsa 1976–77. Lekhetlong lena ke ile ka fuoa tumello le khothaletso tsa ho sebelisa mabitso a nepahetseng a batho le lebitso la motse.

Ka Pulungoana 2004 ke ile ka balisa basebetsi 'moho ba CARE le Morena Tumahole likopi tsa tlaleho ena e le hore ke utloe maikutlo a bona ka eona. Ke leboha tlatsetso tsa bona.

Morena Tumahole o tla fuoa likopi tsa tlaleho ena hore a li fetisetse ho batho ba Ha Tumahole e le hore ba tsebe ho ipalla le ho ipolokela eona. Ka bomalimabe ha ke na ho khona ho e fetolela Sesothong kaofela. Leha ho le joalo mohatsa'ka Monono o nthusitse ka ho fetolela selelekela le kakaretso Sesothong.

Ke isa liteboho ho CARE Lesotho ka ho ntšehetsa ka chelete bakeng sa leeto la ka Lesotho ho phetha mosebetsi ona. Ke tšepa hore tlaleho ena e tla tsoela lenaneo la LRAP molemo.

Stephen Turner
Amsterdam
Phupu, 2005.

Litšoantšo tse leqepheng le kantle la buka li bontša moreneng Ha Tumahole hlabula la 1976 le mariha a 2004.

Preface

In 2004 I was fortunate enough to be able to return to Ha Tumahole, the village in Lesotho where I undertook research on farming and livelihoods in 1976–77, and spend four weeks learning about what had changed in people's lives and land use. This time, I paid particular attention to the arrangements people make to share resources and to help each other in their farming and in other aspects of their livelihoods. The work is intended to contribute to the research component of CARE's Livelihoods Recovery through Agriculture Programme (LRAP).

The people of Ha Tumahole received me hospitably when I first lived there. This time, although many of those I knew then are no longer alive, I was again given a warm reception. I am grateful to Chief Tumahole Theko for agreeing to my work there, and to his brother Ntaote Theko for his day-to-day support during my visit. I also thank Malefetsane Kuoape, the grandson of Khoeli Kuoape – one of my best friends there 28 years ago – for accompanying me on many of my household visits. Above all, I thank all the people who took the time to answer my questions and teach me about life at Ha Tumahole in 2004.

As I explain in the report, I concealed the identity of Ha Tumahole and of the individuals whose cases I quoted in the thesis that I wrote in 1978. This time, I was told that I could – indeed, should – refer to the place and the people by their real names.

I intend to provide copies of this report to Chief Tumahole so that the community have a record of the data they have provided. It is not feasible to produce a full Sesotho version of the report, but my wife Monono has kindly translated this preface and the summary.

In November 2004 I circulated a draft of this report. I am grateful to colleagues in CARE and to Chief Tumahole for the comments and further information that they have since provided.

I am grateful to CARE Lesotho for funding my travel to Lesotho for this assignment. I hope that this report will be useful to LRAP.

Stephen Turner
Amsterdam
July, 2005.

The cover photographs show Ha Tumahole Moreneng (the chief's village) in summer 1976 and winter 2004.

Figures, tables and boxes

Figures

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Boxes

Acronyms and abbreviations

Aids	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere Inc.
FEWS	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
GOL	Government of Lesotho
HIV	human immuno-deficiency virus
LRAP	Livelihoods Recovery through Agriculture Programme
nd	not dated
OFS	Orange Free State
PLAAS	Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies, University of the Western Cape
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VIP	ventilated improved pit

Kakaretso

Mariheng a 2004 ke qetile libeke tse ’ne Ha Tumahole seterekeng sa Maseru ke bapisa mekhoa ea temo morao tjena le ea lilemo tsa bo 1976–77. Ke ne ke sheba matsema, liahlolo le tsela tse ling tsa ho thusana. Sepheo sa mosebetsi ona e ne e le ho kenya letsoho morerong oa mokhatlo oa CARE Lesotho litekong tsa ona ho leka ho fumana hore naa Basotho ba nka mehato efe ho ntšetsa pele mekhoa le meetlo ea ho thusana temong mehleng ena.

Ka kakaretso re ka re maphelo a batho a fetohile lilemong tsena tse 27 tse fetileng. Thepa ea ho lema le ea ka tlung e kang libethe, litafole le litulo e eketsehile. Mokhoa oo batho ba aparang ka ona o ntlafetse ho feta mehleng ea pele. Batho ba Ha Tumahole ba ntse ba phela ka temo leha chai e sa fetoha hakaalo. Lipompo tsa metsi li teng hohle motseng. Batho ha ba sa ea selibeng. Malapa a sehlopha a na le lifono tsa thekeng. Palo ea batho bao re buileng le bona ba tsebang ho bala le ho ngola e eketsehile. Palo ea malapa a nang le matloana e feta halefo. Batho ba bang ba na le matlo a maholo a boemo, le matlapa a bokellang matla a letsatsi. Batho ba bang ba na le mehlape, ba bile ba na le majarete a matle a meroho le litholoana. Ho bile ho na le methoaela e phehang ka khase. Ke fihletse qeto ea hore 17% ea batho bao re buileng le bona ba atlehile ho latela maemo a bophelo Lesotho, 25% a mahareng, ha 45% e le bafutsana. Ba futsanehileng hampe ke 13%.

Leha maphelo a batho a shebahala a ntlafetse, batho ba Ha Tumahole ba tsietsing hobane malapa a mangata a lahlehetsoe ke mokhoa oa bohlokoa oa ho phela ha mesebetsi e fokotseha limaeneng tsa Afrika Boroa. Batho ba bacha ha ba na boikhethelo haese feela ho ea sebeletsa meputso e tlaase ea lifemeng Maseru. Mathata ana a ipontša tabeng tse kang tsa ho nyala. Batho ba bacha ba se ba lieha ho itlama ka lenyalo hobane ba se na matla a bohali kapa hona ho qala lelapa. Ba khonang ho qala malapa hangata ba phela ka thata, ba bang ba thusoa ke batsoali kapa bang ka bona. Manyalo a mangata a senyeha ’me basali ba iphumana ba tlameha ho khutlela mahabo bona le bana kapa ba siea bana le batsoali ba bona mahaeng ha bona ba ea mosebetsing litoropong.

Ka lebaka la batsoali ba shoang ba sa le bacha ba siea bana, maqheku a iphumana a tlameha ho holisa bana bana. Ke boikarabelo bo boima bona hobane maqheku ana ha a sa sebetsa, ha a na chelete, hangata ha a phele hantle. Batho ba Ha Tumahole ha joale ba phelisoa ke moruo oa batho ba sa tsoa khaotsa ho sebetsa limaeneng, empa bonyane bona bo ba bo sebelelitseng bo tla feela haufinyane, mohlomong kamora lilemo tse leshome, ’me malapa a mang ha a sa tla nka sebaka sa ona hoba mesebetsi ea limaene ea fela. Le batho ba bang ba ikhahetseng matlo a maholo bao u ka reng ba atlehile, ba se ba ntse ba hula ka thata hobane chelete ea bona ea fela.

Kantle ho mekhatlo ea mpate sheleng le thimi tsa bolo ha ho na mekhatlo e meng Ha Tumahole. Ha ho sekolo sa mathomo kapa lipalangoang tse tlang motseng. Puso ea libaka ea nakoana e bileng teng Lesotho ha ea ka ea thusa sechaba sa Ha Tumahole haholo. Ha Tumahole joaleka libakeng tse ling tse ngata, batho ha ba sa hlompha molao kapa ba boholong joaleka pele. Bosholu ba liphoofolo ekasita le thepa efe kapa efe e ka nkehang bo bongata. Bothata bo fetisang ke lefu la Aids. Le nka maphelo a batho ba bangata. Ba bangata ba salang ba sala ba se na letho.

Liahlolo le tsela tse ling tsa ho thusana ho shebahala li ntse li le teng leha tse ling tsa tsona li se li sa tloaeleha joaleka khale. Tse ling ha li sa le teng ho hang. Liahlolo ha lia fetoha empa matsema ha a sa le eo, leha batho ba bang ba re a ntse a le teng. Ho lemelana masimo le ho kopanya lipane ho ntse ho le teng. Malapa a kopanelang ho alosa mehlape kapa a isang liphoofolo tsa ona mafisa a eketsehile.

Batho ba hlokang hangata ba hiroa ke ba nang le hona, ho sebetsa masimong e le mokhoa oa ho thusana, e seng ho potlakisa mosebetsi hakaalo. Mokhoa o tloaelehileng oa ho lefa basebetsi ke oa chelete leha ho ntse ho e-na le mekhoa e meng. Hona ho

entse hore ho thusana ho fele, ho sale feela ho sebeletsa chelete.

Boholo ba batho ba Ha Tumahole ba lumela hore kahisano 'moho ea fokola. Batho ha ba sa thusana joaleka pele. Malapa ha a sa tsotellana. Motho le motho o ichebile bo-ena feela. Batho ba se ba kopanngoa ke mafu feela. Leha ho le joalo ho ntse ho na le Basotho ba fokolang ba reng botho ba Basotho bo ntse bo le teng. Ho fihlela ha joale thuso ea 'muso ha e s'o tsebe ho nka sebaka sa thusano ea sechaba. Tšepo ke hore ha morero oa ho fana ka lipenshene o ka atleha ntho li tla fetoha. Hape phapang e ka ba teng ha sechaba se ka tšoarana ka matsoho le 'muso mererong ea oona ea morao-rao ea mekhatlo e thusang bakuli ba malapeng.

Empa tabeng ea ho thusana temong teng ha se bohlale ho kopanela liahlolo le 'muso kapa mekhatlo ea lithuso hobane ho se ho bonahetse hore ha ho atlehe. Leha ho le joalo ho bohlokoa hore 'muso o lise liphetoho tse teng maphelong a batho tse amang tšebelisano 'moho, e le hore o tsebe ho nka bohato; mohlala, haeba ho na le masimo a qetang nako a sa lengoe hobane beng ba ona ba se na matla kapa ho se motho ea ba thusang.

Ka lebaka la mathata a bakoang ke ho fela ha mesebetsi limaeneng, mathata a Aids le a batho ba hlokang ka kakaretso, meetlo ea khale ea ho thusana ha e sa lekane. Ho se ho hlokahala litšehetso tse tsoang kantle, ho thusa batho ba jereng boikarabelo ba ho thusa ba hlokang kapa ba fokolang. Ho fana ka mohlala, batho ba salang le likhutsana kapa ba tšoanetseng hore ebe ba sebetsa empa ba kula kapa malapa a bona a senyehile.

Ha Tumahole joaleka libakeng tse ling, puso ea libaka e tšoanetse e be e eteletse pele mererong ea ho thusa batho ba hlokang; empa ka 2004 puso ena e shebahetse e fokola ho feta. Ho bonahala bothata bo bakoa ke ho fokola ha marena a mang. Pheliso ea puso ea libaka ka makhotla a ntlafatso metseng e ile ea baka mathata a fetisisang. CARE le mekhatlo e meng ea ntšetso pele e tšoanela ho tšehetsa mebuso ea libaka e sa tsoa thehoa.

Ho thehoa ha mekhatlo e thusang bakuli ba malapeng Ha Tumahole le metseng e mengata e meng hoa khothatsa. Leha boikarabello ba eona e le ho thusa bakuli ba lefu la Aids le HIV, mekhatlo ena e ka ikarabella tabeng tse ling tse amang sechaba. Mokhatlo oa Ha Tumahole o se o itlamme ho etsa joalo ha ho hlokahala. CARE e ne e ka ikopanya le mekhatlo e meng ho tšehetsa malapa a nang le mathata. CARE e ka rerisana le Lekala la Bophelo morerong oa lona oa ho koetlisa mekhatlo ena literekeng tseo ba seng ba ntse ba sebetsa ho tsona.

CARE e ka fumana ho se bonolo ho leka ho thusa malapa a hlokang hobane matsapa ao batho ba iphelisang ka oona e se a batho ba ipopileng. Ka lebaka lena ho bohlokoa haholo hore CARE e thuse ho ntlafatsa le ho tšehetsa mekhatlo e mecha e thusang bakuli ba malapeng.

Summary

Ha Tumahole is a village in the foothills of Maseru district. During four weeks' work there in winter 2004, I compared current livelihoods and inter-household sharing mechanisms with what I had seen during research in the same village in 1976–77. This study is meant to contribute to CARE Lesotho's Livelihoods Recovery through Agriculture Programme, as it seeks to understand how Basotho livelihoods are evolving and how traditional modes of inter-household support are responding to new kinds of vulnerability.

In many ways, the standard of living at Ha Tumahole has risen since 1977. People own more farm implements and furniture, for example, and many have better clothes and shoes. The people of Ha Tumahole are still active farmers. Although crop yields have not risen substantially, they seem not to have fallen. Throughout Ha Tumahole, people can now draw clean water from standpipes. Of the households surveyed, 13% have mobile phones. Literacy levels seem to have risen.

Housing standards have been maintained or improved and just over half the surveyed households now have a latrine. There are a number of substantial homesteads with impressively large houses, solar panels, comparatively large numbers of livestock and fine gardens with many fruit trees and vegetables. A few privileged people cook with gas. Overall, I subjectively classified 17% of the interviewed households as 'well off' in the context of Lesotho livelihoods. I classified 25% as 'medium', 45% as 'poor', and 13% as 'very poor'.

In other ways, however, Ha Tumahole seems poorer – or more vulnerable. The community has lost its economic backbone as opportunities to work in the South African mines have fallen to negligible levels. Young people see little prospect of employment or significant income, unless they are 'lucky' enough to get work for long hours and minimal wages in a Maseru factory. The apparent decline or deferment of marriage is an ominous economic and social signal. Many young people cannot afford to marry. Those of the younger generation who have established households are often living with minimal resources, sustained to some extent by their parents or other older relatives. Broken marriages or relationships are common, causing women to return home with their children or to send the children home while they live separate lives in town. The economic and social burdens on the elderly are increasing as some of the middle generation die, leaving child care and its many costs to the grandparent(s). For the time being, a mainstay of the economy in Ha Tumahole is the capital that the older generation of men accrued during earlier migrant careers in South Africa. These men help others to farm and support client households in various ways. But those who play this role now will only be able to do so for another decade or two. There is no present prospect of their being replaced. Some of those in big houses have already exhausted most of their capital. Although outside appearances suggest that they are well off, closer inspection shows that they are living in poverty.

Apart from burial societies and football clubs, the institutional landscape at Ha Tumahole is mostly desolate. There is still no primary school, and still no public transport to the village. The community has suffered from general weaknesses of local government in Lesotho during the long recent 'interim' period. As throughout the country, local authority systems have been in decline; there is less respect for local law and order; and theft of livestock and every other kind of moveable property is rampant. Finally, of course, the community is just starting the steep descent into the multiple tragedies of HIV/Aids. Many of those whom the pandemic does not kill will be made much poorer by it.

Some sharing mechanisms seem to have held their own at Ha Tumahole between 1977 and 2004. Others are in decline, or have disappeared. Sharecropping functions at

much the same levels, and plays similar roles, to those of 28 years ago. The *letsema* work party, on the other hand, has almost vanished – although there are still those who claim to hold them. Inter-household (usually inter-men) arrangements for shared ploughing, and other long-term friendly farming partnerships, are as common as ever, and it is still very unusual for a household to farm without any links at all to other households. Meanwhile, the proportion of livestock-owning households that share herding arrangements with others has increased since 1977, and over a third of surveyed cattle owners in 2004 were using the customary institution of *mafisa* loans to place some or all of these animals in the care of others.

Arrangements for the employment of farm labour for payment in kind can be seen as sharing mechanisms, because they typically involve an element of patronage of the poor by those who are better off. Although the productivity of the former is seldom high, they are assured of some sustenance from the latter. The least efficient of these arrangements, the *letsema*, is almost extinct. Other modes of payment in kind persist, but the consensus is that they are slowly being supplanted by the payment of cash wages.

It is fair to assume that, as farm labour is monetised, the element of patronage is declining and the function of such labour as a redistributive mechanism is dwindling. The majority view at Ha Tumahole is that the community spirit is in decline, and that people help each other less than they did previously. Support from parents, children or other relatives is still often cited as a significant livelihood strategy, but (doubtless with a tinge of nostalgia) most people believe that life is becoming more individualistic. Only in death, they say, does the community still unite to help the bereaved household. Overall, the effectiveness of the community as provider of social protection is weaker than it was. However, this view is not unanimous, and some say that the Sesotho spirit of helping each other is still strong. Meanwhile, the state is not yet playing a stronger role in this regard, although it may begin to soon as the new pension system comes into operation. New roles shared by the community and the state may emerge if the Support Groups recently established in Ha Tumahole and throughout the country start to function usefully.

It is not realistic to recommend direct intervention by government or other development agencies in the sharing mechanisms that Basotho use to sustain their livelihoods. What can be clearly recommended is that government and these other agencies should abandon promoting the concept of sharecropping. Such schemes always lose money, and sometimes reduce harvests instead of increasing them.

Although it is hard to intervene directly in support of sharing mechanisms, it remains important to track their performance and evolution. It will be particularly important to monitor the proportion of fields not used because their owners were unable to marshal the necessary resources to farm them, through sharecropping or less formal arrangements. So far, this is not a significant problem; but the situation could change.

As we cross the blurred boundary from sharing to social protection, there is greater potential for useful support from outside. Those within communities who are caring for the most vulnerable are an important target group. Development and welfare interventions should ensure that they reach such households. Particular support is needed for older households that provide for orphans and for those in the middle generation who are ill or whose households have disintegrated.

In Ha Tumahole as elsewhere, local government should be playing a key role in social protection. But in 2004 local government was weaker than ever – partly because of the variable performance of chiefs, but mainly because the state abolished other local government institutions some years earlier and had not yet established new ones. An important task for CARE and all other development and welfare agencies is to advocate and support urgent action to get the new local government system fully installed, with staff trained and working on the ground. The one light on the institutional horizon is the Support Group, recently established at Ha Tumahole as in so many communities up and

down the country. Although rightly intended to focus on support for those living with HIV and Aids, these groups can play a broader role in social protection. Members of the new group at Ha Tumahole assume that they will do this. CARE should consider whether, through the LRAP and other initiatives, it can enhance its development and welfare support to vulnerable households through a programme of action with these new Support Groups. In consultation with the Ministry of Health, it might pilot a process of capacity building and community action with selected Support Groups in some of the districts where LRAP is active. This brief review of sharing mechanisms in Ha Tumahole suggests that it will be hard for an agency like CARE to intervene directly in support of the myriad household-to-household links that people use to cope with their vulnerability.

But, given the slow erosion of some of these mechanisms, the rapid growth in the need for social protection and the lack of other institutions at village level, action to build the effectiveness of Support Groups might be an important step forward.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Support between households used to be a universal feature of human society. Nested between the mutual relations of individual family members and the broader welfare functions of community and higher structures, these inter-household links provide a range of social and economic benefits – to the better off as well as the poor. These sharing mechanisms have made it possible for the Basotho to survive the 20th century.

Sharing mechanisms and Basotho livelihoods

During the 20th century, inter-household support and sharing declined markedly in Western society. Elsewhere, and especially in poorer countries, sharing mechanisms have retained a vital role in the structure of livelihoods. They help the poor meet some of their most critical needs; they make important inputs to production by the better off, while building their social capital; and they help maintain the social, cultural and sometimes spiritual qualities of 'community' that make a society viable.

Sharing mechanisms continue to play a key role in Basotho livelihoods. As in earlier generations, they are particularly important in helping households to farm, despite the widespread lack of the means of agricultural production. They are also the main reason why destitution has been rare in Lesotho, as families with more resources reached out to help those in deepest poverty (see Box 1). Kinship relations are an important factor in such support, notably in sharing arrangements that support the elderly.

Without these sharing mechanisms, Lesotho would not have survived the 20th century. Will they help Basotho sustain their

Box 1: Sharing mechanisms

Across Lesotho, assistance from kin and neighbours is quoted as a major means of survival for the very poor. Religion and ritual form another important part of the social fabric. Weddings, funerals and feasts for the ancestors are an important means for the very poor to get meat and drink. Even when close to destitution, Basotho usually retain the social capital to survive … What sustained Lesotho livelihoods through the hardships and oppression of the 20th century were the mechanisms for equity and sharing that were built into them. The result has been that – at least in the rural areas – even the poorest households have some economic assets, and destitution is rare. A strong base of social capital has meant that Basotho share and redistribute what little wealth they have through a variety of mechanisms that combine the economic with the social and cultural. The distribution of land among the nation is only one aspect of the comparative equity of Lesotho life to date (Turner et al. 2001:91).

livelihoods through the adversities of the coming decades, which in some ways are even more threatening? Three concerns have been identified.

- First, the capital that sharing mechanisms have redistributed through Basotho communities over the last few generations is dwindling. It was mainly generated from migrant labour in South African mines, which has shifted from being the backbone of Basotho livelihoods to being a minority occupation for the fortunate few (Turner 2003:32–3). New employment opportunities in Lesotho factories are not providing the same opportunities for redistribution.
- Second, social ties, expectations and roles are changing, particularly with the accelerating urbanisation of Lesotho. In the past, the community within which sharing mechanisms functioned was a spatially and socially focused unit with a single outpost – the men in the mines, who retained strong social and economic ties with their families at home. Now, many households are more scattered between (peri-)urban and rural locations. Expectations of how resources should be shared are diversifying, not least because marriage is becoming less common. Often, it is financially or logistically impossible for the old kinds of sharing to continue.

- Third, the demands on intra- and inter-household support are heavier than ever because of the HIV/Aids pandemic that is currently ravaging Lesotho. Increasingly, the economically active core of society is unable to fulfil its normal role. More and more people need to be given the basic necessities of life because they can no longer produce them themselves. More and more need to be nursed through sickness to death. The dependants – children and old people – whom the middle generation normally support must now fend for themselves, or be helped by the reduced number in that middle generation who remain active.

The state in Lesotho is strengthening its contributions to social protection as far as it is able, notably through the launch in 2004 of a state pension for those aged 70 or over (Thahane 2004; see also GOL n.d.:section 8.3.4). But it is important to know how well traditional sharing and social protection mechanisms are holding up under current pressures. How far have they evolved, or deteriorated, over the last generation? The prospects for the next generation are clearly bleak. A better understanding of these trends can help policy makers decide how best to react.

LRAP and sharing mechanisms

Prompted by the increasing vulnerability of many Basotho livelihoods, CARE and the Government of Lesotho (GOL) launched the Livelihoods Recovery through Agriculture Programme (LRAP) in 2002. LRAP was an urgent response to growing hardship, and although Lesotho has been intensively researched over several decades, it was felt that some issues relating to the current crisis were not fully understood. The programme therefore included a research component. The first task under this component was a review of livelihood trends, intended to explain – on the basis of the available literature – how Basotho livelihoods are constructed, how they are changing, and what threats there are to Basotho livelihoods. The review was also meant to identify those issues on which the LRAP research component should focus.

This review recognised the critical importance of sharing mechanisms, and the current threats to their viability (Turner 2003: 21–2). It recommended that further work be done by LRAP

> *to investigate the current status of socio-economic sharing and networking mechanisms in a selection of communities across Lesotho, to identify strengths and weaknesses and determine whether any feasible strategy could be introduced to promote the role of these mechanisms in supporting livelihood security* (Turner 2003:22).

LRAP subsequently drew up a research strategy. Responding to this recommendation, it included two tasks focused on sharing mechanisms (CARE 2004:13). The

first is the one described in this report: a longitudinal review of what has happened to livelihoods and sharing mechanisms in one Lesotho community over 28 years. The second is a broader, contemporary study of these mechanisms in one lowland and one mountain village. Funding shortages have so far precluded implementation of the second study.

Sharing mechanisms are not an easy thing for an external agency to support. But government and its partners need an integrated strategy for social protection that recognises the roles played by households and communities, by government, and by other local and external agencies. LRAP hopes to contribute to such a strategy through its research programme, which aims to improve understanding of these mechanisms.

Ha Tumahole

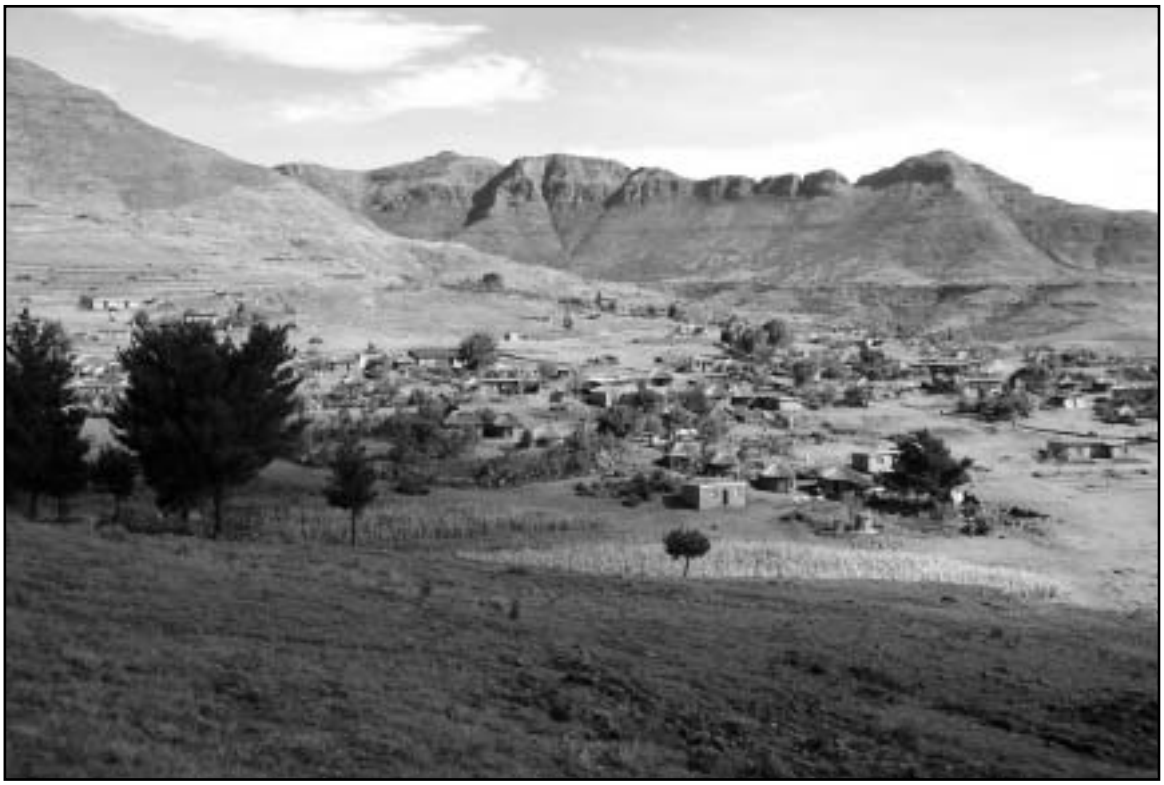
Ha Tumahole is located in the foothills of Maseru district, with the chief's village lying some 5km south of Nazareth. The Tumahole chief's area of jurisdiction comprises a string of villages running south from Thaha Lia Tloka (across the Mountain Road from Nazareth) to Ha Matekane at the foot of 'Malehloane mountain. The chief reports to a senior chief at Ratau, who in turn is a subject of the Principal Chief at Thaba Bosiu.

There has probably been settlement and agriculture in the Ha Tumahole area for more than a hundred years. The area was previously ruled by Chief Majoro Moshoeshoe, who lived near the current village of Ha Tsoili. In 1924, Tumahole Theko was placed as chief of the area, and established himself at the current

Figure 1: Map of Lesotho

Figure 2: Ha Tumahole Moreneng, summer 1976

Figure 3: Ha Tumahole Moreneng, summer 2004



'Moreneng', the Ha Tumahole chief's village. When he died in 1958, his widow 'Matsenolo Theko, a daughter of Paramount Chief Lerotholi, became chief (Figure 4). She held this position until her death at the age of 105 in 2000. After her death, Tumahole Theko, grandson of Chief Cameron Theko of Ha Molengoane (a brother of the original Chief Tumahole), wrote to Chief Lerotholi Theko of Ha Ratau, under whom Ha Tumahole falls. In his letter he claimed the chieftainship of Ha Tumahole. The young Tumahole had been brought up by 'Matsenolo, whose only child was a daughter. On 11 May 2001, the Principal Chief of Thaba Bosiu, under whom the Ratau and Tumahole areas fall, proclaimed him chief of Ha Tumahole (Figure 5). However, as he has a full-time job at a trading store elsewhere in Maseru district, he nominated his younger brother Ntaote Theko to take undertake the chief's administrative duties on his behalf. More recently, Chief Tumahole's wife has taken over this work. Until the new Chief Tumahole takes up residence there, which he says he will do soon, the chief's houses are unoccupied, except during working hours when his wife walks from their home at Molengoane to deal with official business.

The sub-villages of Ha Tumahole lie at altitudes between about 1 875m and 2 000m above sea level, with their fields between about 1 800m and 2 050m. The mountain grazing areas begin close to the villages at about 2 000m, and rise in the immediate vicinity to almost 2 500m. The summer grazing areas traditionally used by the village are further away at Thaba Putsoa, rising to about 2 750m. Agricultural conditions at Ha Tumahole are typical of the Maseru district foothills, with comparatively productive soils and an average annual rainfall of 870mm. The soils range from rich, dark loams in the valley bottoms to shallow basaltic soils on the slopes above the villages. Households' land holdings are typically scattered across

Figure 4: Chief 'Matsenolo Theko, Ha Tumahole, 1976

Figure 5: Chief Tumahole and Mofumahali 'Mamokhoabane Theko, Ha Tumahole, 2004

this range of production conditions, but all must contend with the usual Lesotho climatic hazards of early and late frosts, hailstorms and occasional snow.

Although no exact comparisons are possible, it is fair to say that a good number of the people of Ha Tumahole are still committed farmers, well versed in the indigenous knowledge and skills of local land use, and offering a better model of Sesotho farming than might be found in many other lowland or foothill communities. My guide during 2004 field work, for example, said that he derives his main source of livelihood through the concoction of traditional medicines that are burned in the fields to ward off birds and insects. Sesotho culture and tradition remain comparatively strong. Male and female traditional doctors are easy to find, and – as in many parts of Lesotho – boys' and girls' initiation schools are said to be enjoying a revival. One development worker I spoke to described Ha Tumahole as a traditionalist area that is slow to see the light of progress. Its position in a corner of the foothills, nestled against the westernmost range of the Maloti Mountains, has isolated it to some degree. But the same observer said that the people of Ha Tumahole are not as poor as some because they still farm comparatively intensively and well.

Although it now has reasonable road access and a well reticulated village water supply, the community still has no primary school. (There are several primary schools at other villages within 60 minutes' walk.) Like the rest of the country, it receives scant attention from what remain of the agricultural extension services. However, World Vision bases one of its Lesotho area development programmes at Nazareth, and provides some welfare support to Ha Tumahole.

Research at Ha Tumahole, 1976–77 and 2004

Ha Tumahole fell within the area of the World Bank-funded Thaba Bosiu Rural Development Project, to whose socio-economic department I was attached during doctoral fieldwork in 1976–77. More specifically, it was an area where the Project's soil conservation programme planned to work. As soil conservation was one of my particular research interests, I requested and was given permission to live in the village

and to make it the core of my investigations into the condition and prospects of Sesotho farming. With the support of the Project, I also carried out surveys in many other villages in the lowlands and foothills of Maseru district and the Berea district foothills. I submitted my findings and analysis to the Project and placed copies of the Ph.D. thesis (Turner 1978) in two Lesotho libraries.

In accordance with a commitment to anonymity that I made to all my informants, I gave Ha Tumahole the name of 'Ha Khoeli' in the thesis, and assigned pseudonyms to all the individuals about whom I quoted specific livelihood or farming details. I gave particular attention to a random sample of 30 field-holding households, whose farming activities I tracked through the 1976–77 season.

In June–July 2004, I undertook a further four weeks of fieldwork at Ha Tumahole in order to produce the analysis of trends in livelihoods and sharing mechanisms that is reported below. As in 1976–77, I concentrated on the four southern sub-villages of Ha Tumahole: Bolometsa, Moreneng, Matebeleng and Ha Matekane.[1] I recruited a local man (the grandson of one of the 1976–77 core sample) to help me find the households I was looking for, although in fact I worked about a third of the time without him.

At an introductory *pitso* (public meeting) I referred to my use of pseudonyms in the earlier work and asked whether I should continue to conceal the identity of the village. The meeting decided that, in this report, I should refer directly to Ha Tumahole and the real names of its inhabitants. One reason for this choice was that concealing the village's identity would prevent readers of this report from using it as a basis for much needed development aid to the community. I stressed then and later, however, that CARE could offer no specific development commitment in return for the hospitality and co-operation that I received at Ha Tumahole.

Approach and methods

Fieldwork for this study focused on the same sample of 30 households with whom I worked in 1976–77, and on the fields that those households had owned then. It proved quite easy to trace these households, although not surprisingly 21 of the original household heads had died. In seven of these 21 cases, a widow was still alive. In the other cases the land had been transferred to children, grandchildren or more distant relatives. Because the original 1976 sample was random, it is reasonable to assume that the group interviewed in 2004 is also representative of Ha Tumahole overall – except for its bias against those with no fields.

The core research instrument was a questionnaire (Annex 1). This was designed to provide much of the same information that had been generated in a census of the four southern sub-villages that I carried out in 1977 (see Chapter 2, Demography). It also included some questions that were asked in a CARE livelihoods survey in southern Lesotho in 1998 (Mohasi and Turner 1999), and used that survey's participatory method to explore and rank households' livelihood strategies with respondents.

During the questionnaire interviews, it was possible to identify all the households with which the respondent household had farming links – sharecropping, rental and less formal arrangements for working together, pooling resources or providing assistance. I then followed up by undertaking the same questionnaire interview with each of the households to which the original 30 households were linked in this way. With one easily accessible exception, however, linked households living outside the four southern sub-villages were not interviewed. One such linked household living inside the focus area was also excluded, as no adult respondents were available during my visit. The interviews with the linked households in turn identified further farming linkages that they had in addition to their connections with the core sample of 30. I did not interview that further group.

The survey population was expanded in two ways. First, I asked senior and trusted informants to identify about five households in each of the sub-villages (Bolometsa, Moreneng and Matebeleng) which they considered to be the poorest of all. This yielded a total of 17 names. Four had already

been interviewed. I was able to interview 12 of the remaining 13 households in this 'very poor' group. Second, a few households specifically invited me to interview them, and with a few field days remaining I randomly selected some further households in addition to these volunteers. As can be seen from Table 1, I interviewed a total of 76 households; of these, 75 lived in the four sub-villages. Originally I had hoped to be able to interview every household in these sub-villages to permit a direct comparison with the population covered by my 1977 census. But I did not have time to do this, and it proved impractical for CARE to arrange an enumerator who could complete the coverage after I left.

It is only a coincidence that categories 1–3 in Table 1 add up to 30, the number of households in the 1976 core sample. Land from some of the original households had gone to more than one other household (shown in category 3 in Table 1). Some category 3 households had received land from more than one of the original households. One of the original household heads is survived by his widow, but their original five fields are now held by three children as well as the widow herself (who retains two). It was possible to interview only one of the three children, so that original household is represented twice in Table 1: once in category 2, and once in category 3. I mention these details in order to hint at the complexity of inter-generational land access and transfer. Table 2 gives a summary of three sets of households: the core sample of 1976; the 30 households interviewed in 2004 that held land from the original 1976 group; and the full 2004 survey population.

The basic household features, shown in Table 2, reflect the ways in which the 1976 and 2004 survey households were chosen. By definition, none of the 1976 households, and none of the 2004 households in categories 1–3 (those with land from the 1976 group) were landless. Some of the very poor households specially selected for survey in 2004 had no fields, bringing down the mean number of fields held, and the percentage of households sharecropping their own field(s), for the whole 2004 group. Because the full 2004 group includes many of those who were sharecropping the fields of the 'core' 2004 group (categories 1–3), the proportion of the full group who are sharecropping other people's land is noticeably higher than the proportion of the 1976 group or the 'core' 2004 group.

As noted above, I began the fieldwork with a *pitso*. However, I avoided some of the participatory methods of investigation that CARE commonly uses, feeling that they would not add a great deal to the information I sought. I did none of the resource mapping, wealth ranking or transect walks that are now such regular features of development agencies' contact with rural communities. But I did engage in a great deal of informal conversation with people – both those involved in the formal questionnaire interviews, and other local residents. On the basis of my own intuition and experience, I subjectively allocated each of the 76 households that I interviewed into one of four wealth categories: 'very poor', 'poor', 'medium' and 'well off' (Table 3). Excluding the 12 who were added to the survey because they were identified as 'very poor' (two of whom, after interview, I decided to classify as 'poor'), this rough and personal allocation classified 13% of the other 64 interviewed households as 'very poor'; 45% as 'poor'; 25% as 'medium'; and 17% as 'well off'.

In the analysis that follows, I mainly treat the whole group of households surveyed in 2004 as a single population that is representative of Ha Tumahole overall. The bias towards households with land is partially offset by the inclusion of some landless families among the extra group of 'poor' and 'very poor' that were added in.

Table 1: Households interviewed, 2004		
Category	Household status	No. of households
1	In original 1976 sample: original household head	9
2	In original 1976 sample: widow of original head	7
3	Household to which original 1976 sample household's land transferred	14
4	Household with farming link to household in category 1, 2 or 3	27
5	Extra household identified by informants as 'very poor'	12
6	Extra household	7
	Total	76

Table 2: 1976 and 2004 survey households: some basic features			
	1976 sample	2004: households with land from 1976 group	2004: whole group
Total no. of households	30	30	76
Female headed households (%)	33	33	34
Mean household size	4.5	6.4	6.4
Mean no. of fields held	2.2	2.4	1.9
Sharecropping own field(s) (%)	27	33	20
Sharecropping others' field(s) (%)	13	17	36

Table 3: 2004 survey households: subjectively assigned livelihood categories			
Livelihood category	No. of households	% of households excluding those specially selected	% of all households surveyed
Well off	11	17	14
Medium	16	25	21
Poor	29	45	41
Poor (specially selected)	2	–	
Very poor	8	13	24
Very poor (specially selected)	10	–	

This report

This report falls into two main sections. In Chapter 2, I offer a summary description of livelihoods in Ha Tumahole in 1977 and in 2004. Chapter 3 focuses on trends in sharing mechanisms there, with particular emphasis on those mechanisms that support field and garden crop production. Chapter 4 offers some conclusions and recommendations.

Endnotes

1. The village name Matekane is little used now, and that sub-village is usually considered part of Matebeleng.

Chapter 2: Livelihoods

This chapter offers a summary description of livelihoods in Ha Tumahole in 1977 and 2004.

In 1977, towards the end of my fieldwork at Ha Tumahole, I undertook a socio-economic census of the southern part of the chief's area, comprising the sub-villages of Bolometsa, Moreneng, Matebeleng and Ha Matekane. (I refer to these four villages as 'the study area'.) The livelihoods framework was not yet in vogue then, but data from the 1977 census do permit an outline of some elements of Ha Tumahole livelihoods 28 years ago and a comparison with the conditions revealed by my smaller survey in 2004. After a comparative outline of demographic indicators and a short discussion of shocks and stresses, the subsequent sections of this chapter roughly follow the presentation of livelihood elements used in the CARE literature review of livelihoods in Lesotho (Turner 2003), but skip over any presentation of livelihood context to begin with assets and capabilities.

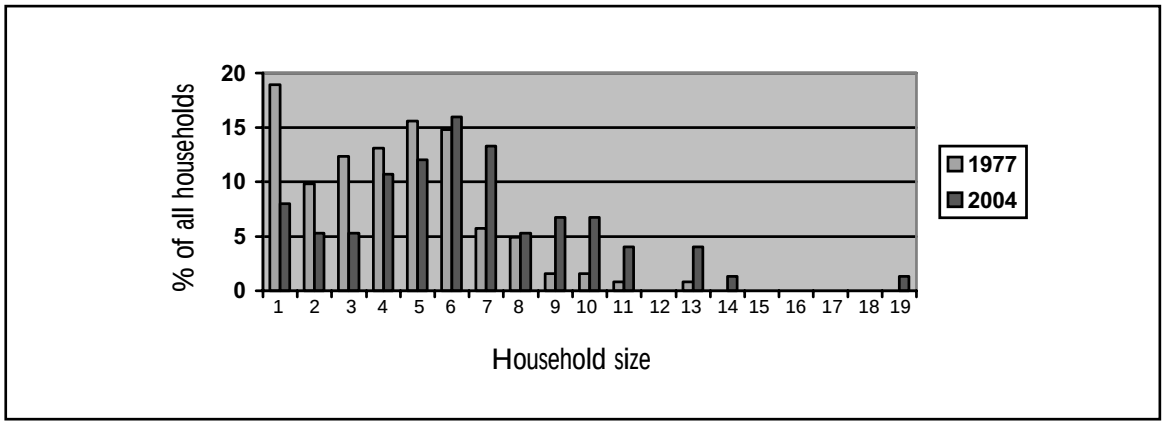
Demography

In 1977, 122 households lived in the study area. Altogether, they comprised a *de jure* population of 519 people, giving a mean household size of 4.25.[1] A quick count at the end of my 2004 fieldwork identified 82 households that had not been visited (in addition to the 76 that had), suggesting a total of 158 households. Among the 75 households actually interviewed in the study area in 2004, the mean *de jure* household size was much higher than in 1977, at 6.3. This suggests a total *de jure* population for this area of 995, implying an annual growth rate of 2.44%. The national intercensal growth rates were 2.6% p.a., 1976–1986 and 2.0% p.a., 1986–1996. In 1996, the mean national household size was 5.0 (Turner 2003:43). The World Resources Institute (2004) estimates an annual population growth increase in Lesotho of 2.3% between 1980 and 2000.

The distribution of household sizes in 1977 and 2004 is shown in Figure 6. It is remarkable how the proportion of single-person households shrank between the two surveys, from 19% of the total to 8%. Figure 7 clearly shows the 'greying' of household heads at Ha Tumahole. A much smaller proportion of household heads are now aged under 40: 12% in 2004, compared with 35% in 1977. In 1977, 28% of household heads were 60 years old or over. In 2004, that proportion was 49%. These trends presumably reflect the growing difficulties that young men face as they contemplate marriage. As they are largely unable to go to the South African mines (as previous generations did), these young men find it much harder to amass the resources needed to start an independent household. Meanwhile, some young women are pursuing independent strategies that involve work in and/or migration to Maseru. Marriage plays little part in these strategies. These and related trends can be seen in the marital status of the surveyed populations in 1977 and 2004 (Table 4).

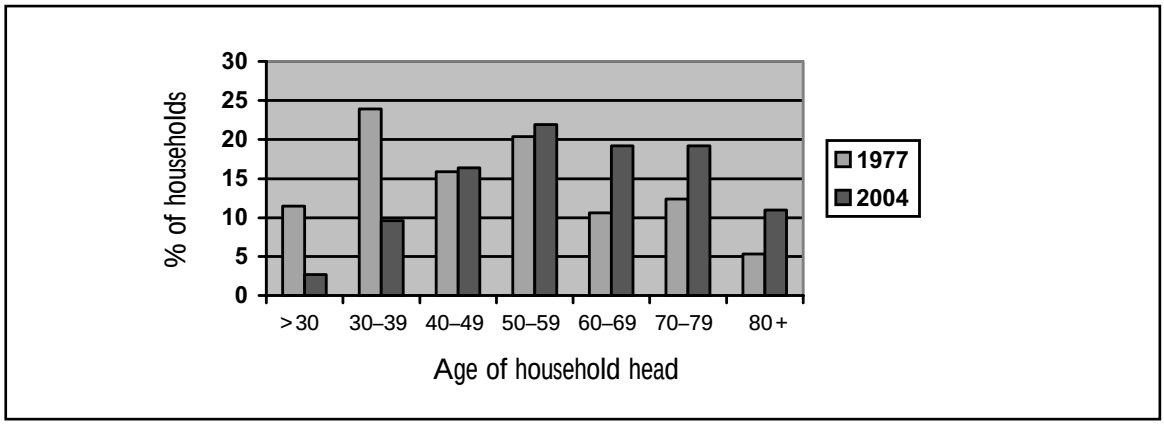
In 1977, 29% of the 122 households surveyed were headed by women. Among the 2004 survey group, 34% of households were female-headed. Just over a quarter (26%) of the household heads were absent in 1977, reflecting the economic and demographic importance of migrant labour to the South African mines in the 1970s. In 2004, however, only 13% of household heads were absent, and more than half of these (8%) were absent at work elsewhere in Lesotho. Only 5% were absent at work in South Africa.

Figure 6: *De jure* household size, 1977 and 2004



1977: N = 122. 2004: N = 76.

Figure 7: Age of household head, 1977 and 2004



1977: N = 113 (age of household head unknown for seven households, not recorded for two households).
2004: N = 73 (age of household head unknown for three households).

Table 4: Marital status, 1977 and 2004

Marital status	% of *de jure* surveyed population, 1977	% of *de jure* surveyed population, 2004
Never married	50.1	64.4
Married	38.0	24.4
Deserted	0.8	0.2
Divorced	1.9	–
Separated	1.0	2.5
Widowed	8.3	8.5

1977: N = 519. 2004: N = 480.

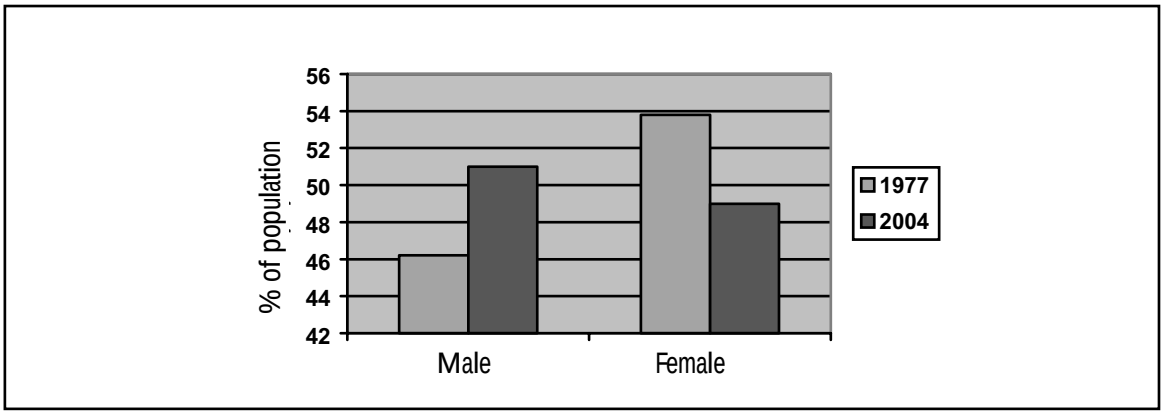
The gender balance has also changed since 1977. Although data for both years show *de jure* populations, the change is probably due to reduced migrant labour opportunities for men. Some men who might otherwise have been registered as *de jure* household members in 1977 had presumably drifted or broken away into separate lives in South Africa, so that those at home no longer recorded them as such. In 2004, the same may have been true of some women from Ha Tumahole who now live independent lives in Maseru and were not reported as *de jure* family members by their original households. Of the 13 *de jure* residents recorded as absent at work in South Africa in 2004, seven were women. Of the 33 working elsewhere in Lesotho, 17 were men.

The age distribution for the 519 individuals in the study area in 1977 shows a comparatively youthful population. The birth rate appears to have fallen since, with the 2004 households showing a higher proportion of the total population in the 11–20 cohort than in the 0–10 one. Slightly larger proportions of the population are now to be found in the age groups above 50 than was the case in 1977.

Shocks and stresses

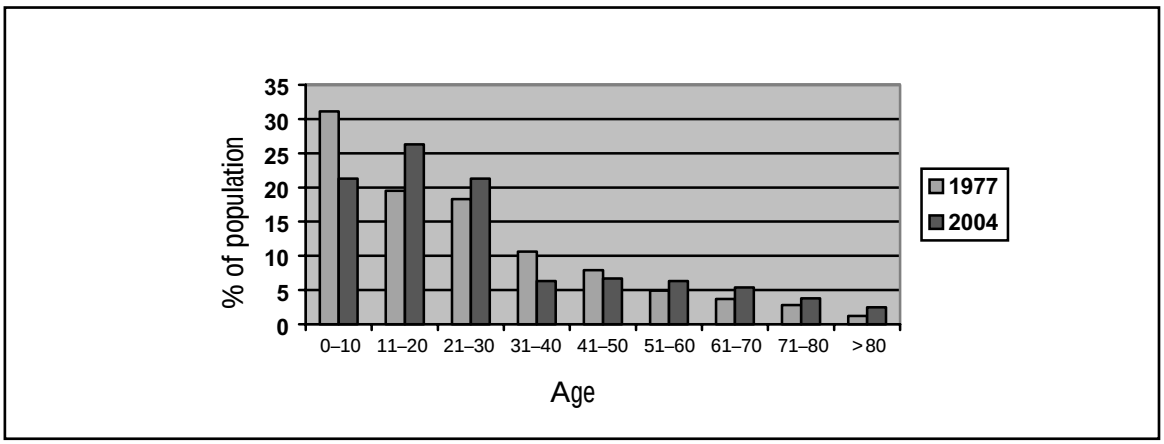
It is now customary in the analysis of livelihoods to identify the shocks and stresses with which people must cope. Sometimes this is done as part of a discussion of the vulnerability context of those livelihoods (Turner 2003:19). This was not the case in 1977, and my Ha Tumahole census that year did not ask about the problems people faced in life. I investigated those issues by different

Figure 8: Gender balance of *de jure* population, 1977 and 2004



1977: N = 519. 2004: N = 480.

Figure 9: Age distribution of *de jure* population, 1977 and 2004



1977: N = 508 (age of 11 people not known).
2004: N = 445 (age of 35 people not known).

means throughout the Thaba Bosiu project region within which Ha Tumahole fell, concluding that:

> *The Basotho lack the means to subsist at any level within the confines of their own country; they must sell their labour elsewhere in order to survive. Only very recently, however, has it become possible for some Basotho to depend solely upon the sale of labour elsewhere; they have had, and in the majority of cases are still required to depend upon both farming and migrant labour to support themselves… [For] a majority of households… survival depends on a precarious combination of farming, migrating to work, negotiating for material assistance through the networks of kin and other obligations, and sometimes missing meals…*
>
> *Respondents complain that 'We lack strength', that 'We are unable to farm', that 'We are unable to work for ourselves'; problems which in themselves constitute a 'vicious triangle' incorporating both elements of subsistence in Lesotho. More specifically, the elements of hardship are: a lack of education, ignorance of how to relate successfully to the culture which now dominates southern African society thoroughly; a lack of (agricultural) inputs and cattle…; a lack of farm implements; illness; and a lack of material comforts. The consequent complaint of hunger is therefore to be expected. It is significant also… that the general statement 'We are poor' clusters most closely with the complaint that 'We do not farm successfully'* (Turner 1978: 327–9).

The 2004 survey did ask directly about shocks and stresses, although these words are difficult to translate concisely into Sesotho and thus the question usually ends up asking about problems and hardship.

The growing impact of HIV/Aids is probably the reason why illness is now the most commonly mentioned problem. In another CARE survey, illness was the only shock or stress to have been mentioned more often in 2004 than in 1998 (Lethola 2005). That death of family members is the

Table 5: Problems faced by households, 2004

Problem	% of households mentioning problem
Illness	37
Poverty	27
Hunger	26
Theft	22
Death of family members	18
School fees	15
Unemployment	10
Old age	6
Lack of land	6
Low harvests	6

N = 73. The table does not show problems mentioned by less than 5% of households.
The sum of the percentages is more than 100 because many respondents mentioned more than one problem.

fifth most often mentioned problem, reflects the hardships faced by widows. Hunger and poverty are almost interchangeable in Sesotho idiom, and are general reflections of the low standard of living. The national concern about theft (Leboela & Turner 2003: 6–13) is clear at Ha Tumahole. Anything moveable around the homestead runs a real risk of being stolen. (In one case in 2004, even the door was stolen from one of two huts belonging to an elderly widow.) Although many respondents welcomed the gradual introduction of free primary schooling in Lesotho, Table 5 also shows that 15% of them mentioned school fees as a significant problem in their livelihoods. Many of these households struggle to keep their older children in secondary education.

Livelihood assets and capabilities

Human resources, skills and capabilities

The 1977 census collected very little information on this subject. Household members' level of education was not recorded. The only question asked was whether the respondent could read Sesotho. To this, 62% responded positively. (71% of respondents were the heads of their respective households.) In 2004, 72% of the respondents said that they could read Sesotho (75% of them were household heads).

In 2004, I recorded the highest level of education reached by each individual, including those currently at school. Table 6 shows this highest educational attainment for all those not currently at school, college or university, excluding those too young to have started school. All earlier class names and grades have been converted to the new 12-grade system. Grade 7 marks the end of primary school. The table shows that almost half (47%) of adults no longer at school have completed primary school or reached a higher level of education. Compared with much of Africa, the adult population of Ha Tumahole is fairly well educated. But a fifth have no schooling at all.

Recording useful and accurate data on people's skills is difficult and time consuming, and I did not attempt it in this survey. As noted earlier, agricultural skills

Table 6: Highest level of education attained, 2004

Highest level of education reached	% of those aged 20 or more who are not at school or college
Did not go to school	20.5
Grade 1	1.9
Grade 2	3.0
Grade 3	6.0
Grade 4	6.3
Grade 5	9.0
Grade 6	6.7
Grade 7	18.7
Grade 8	5.6
Grade 9	7.5
Grade 10	5.6
Grade 11	1.5
Grade 12	7.5
University or college	0.4

N = 268.

still seem to be widespread, along with substantial indigenous knowledge about farming and natural resources. While mining and related skills remain widespread among older men, they are now less common among the generation who are of prime working age. Lesotho used to be able to claim that its male work force had practical skills from the mines that could be put to use in domestic industry. That is less true today.

Social and economic networks

One key type of social and economic network in Basotho society encompasses the various agricultural and horticultural sharing mechanisms that are the main focus of this study. The nature and frequency of these mechanisms are discussed in Chapter 3. Other types of linkage are provided through membership of various committees and associations.

Although substantial numbers of these bodies existed at Ha Tumahole in 1977, only one type showed significant levels of membership: 24% of those aged over 20 were members of burial societies. The second most popular body was the communal garden committee, with 22 reported members (8% of those aged over 20). It beat membership of religious associations into third place (only 18 members, or 7% of those over 20). Only 14 people were said to belong to *stokvels* (rotational savings associations). With membership of 'community-based organisations' apparently so limited at Ha Tumahole in 1977, we can only guess that agricultural sharing mechanisms and a range of kin and cultural linkages not captured by the census were more important in holding the social fabric together.

In 2004, the institutional landscape was, if anything, even more arid than it was 27 years earlier. The only type of community-based organisation that has become stronger is the burial society. In Ha Tumahole, 86% of households reported that at least one member belonged to such a body. Some other organisations, notably the Village Development Committee/Council, the Land Allocation Committee and the communal garden committee, are defunct. Only five households said they had a member who belonged to a farmers' association of some kind. Membership of *stokvels* and grocery associations was negligible (three households and two households respectively).

There was probably some under-reporting of group membership among household members other than the respondent. In particular, it was clear from general observation in the community that football clubs play a more important role in 2004 than in 1977. A markedly convex area has been cleared as a makeshift pitch, and there is a girls' football club as well as one for boys. The relations between these two clubs would make an interesting separate gender study: the newer girls' team does not yet have its own kit, and the boys' team was prepared to consider a subsidy for this purpose if the girls would agree to wash the boys' kit every week. In fact, the boys' football team has emerged as a source of credit in Ha Tumahole. Presumably through its success in the local league, the team has some capital and has made a small number of loans to households for various purposes.

The football teams were almost the only new feature on the institutional scene in 2004. Some cultural activities that used to bring people together no longer take place. Examples mentioned were the *mokopu* dances (which I witnessed in Ha Tumahole in 1976) and the rain making rituals: girls stealing the porridge stick of a neighbouring chief's wife, or boys and men going out on special hunts. On the other hand, as mentioned in Chapter 1, initiation ceremonies for boys and girls have enjoyed a resurgence. One very untraditional grouping that was in the process of formation in 2004 was the HIV/Aids Support Group. Sponsored by the Ministry of Health, these bodies are being established in many Lesotho communities. The one in Ha Tumahole had already existed for some months at the time of my visit, but had not yet received any training. Its chair is a traditional midwife and herbalist (see Box 2).

Box 2: Ha Tumahole Support Group

'Masesiouana Mahloane is chair of the new Support Group that was recently formed for Ha Tumahole. They have not yet been trained, so they are not fully aware of what their role and activities will be. But the general idea is that this group will extend support to families with HIV-positive members and Aids patients, as well as other vulnerable people who may need help. 'Masesiouana is also a traditional doctor and midwife, as well as playing a prominent role in the local girls' initiation school. She says it remains to be seen how people in need accept the advances of the Support Group. She agrees that it is an interesting initiative at a time when the general level of help and support between households is said to be declining. They certainly do have some Aids cases as well as cases of Aids orphans to deal with, she says. Anyone who is interested can volunteer to be part of the Support Group, as it is not only for those with HIV-positive family or patients. The group started under the auspices of the Red Cross, but now they are working mainly with the Ministry of Health through the Nazareth Clinic. World Vision is involved as well. Most villages in the Machache region have formed these groups, but not all.

Table 7: Household buildings, 2004

No. of 1–2 room houses	% of households
0	1.3
1	27.6
2	50.0
3	14.5
4	5.3
5	1.3
No. of multi-room houses	
0	69.7
1	30.3
No. of toilets	
0	46.1
1	52.6
2	1.3
No. of kraals	
0	52.6
1	46.1
3	1.3

N = 76.

Shelter

The 1977 census did not include any information about shelter. As can be seen from Figure 2, Ha Tumahole comprised the typical mix of housing for that period, with thatched roofs still more common than corrugated iron ones. In 2004, I found that most people had managed to maintain or improve their housing stock. Accommodation ranged from single thatched huts occupied by some widows who lived alone, to substantial dwellings with half a dozen or more rooms and, in just one case, a satellite dish. As can be see from Table 7, 30% of the surveyed households had a multi-roomed house, i.e. one with more than two rooms. Seventy-one

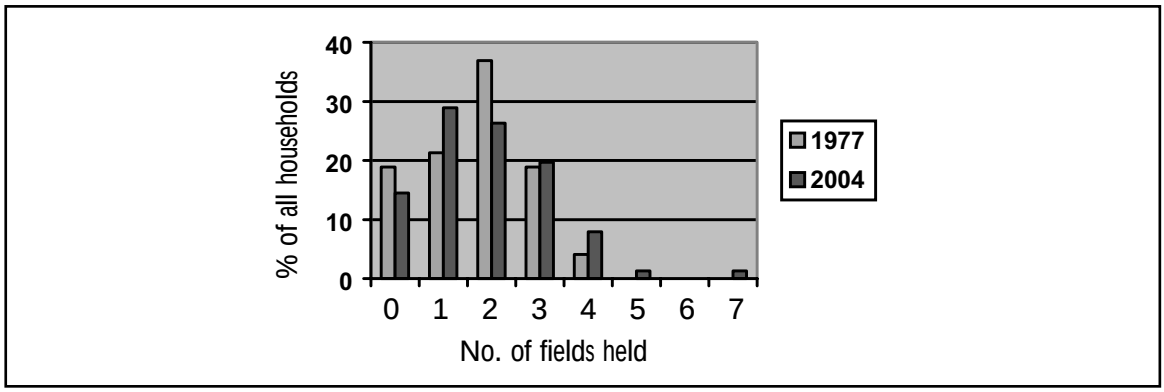
percent of the households owned at least two smaller houses. More than half (54%) of the surveyed households now have a toilet. These are all pit latrines, many of the VIP (ventilated improved pit) type. World Vision is currently building latrines for the elderly and very poor in Ha Tumahole.

Arable land

In 1977, 19% of the households in the study area had no fields. The commonest number of fields held by a household was two. In 2004, the situation is slightly different: 15% of the households surveyed have no fields, but the modal holding, by a narrow margin, is now one. The 2004 data may be slightly skewed by the way the survey population was built up (see Chapter 1 and Table 2), since all the core 30 households in this group, by definition, have fields. It is also interesting that in the 2003–2004 season three of the 76 surveyed households rented arable land, while five borrowed it.

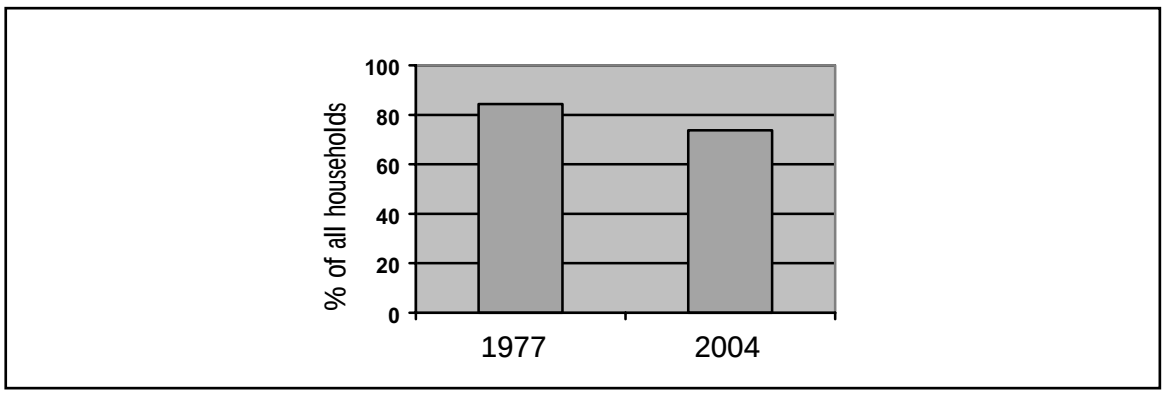
The proportion of households cultivating vegetable gardens appears to have declined since 1977. In that year, 83% of the surveyed households reported that they were using homestead gardens, with a further two households cultivating in the communal garden that then tenuously existed. In 2004, 74% of households said that they were cultivating vegetable gardens, all on their homestead plots. In both years, the amount actually being produced from these gardens varied considerably, and some gardens made a negligible contribution to household nutrition. It should be noted, of course, that the 2004 survey took place in winter, when most gardens are not at their best.

Figure 10: Number of fields held, 1977 and 2004



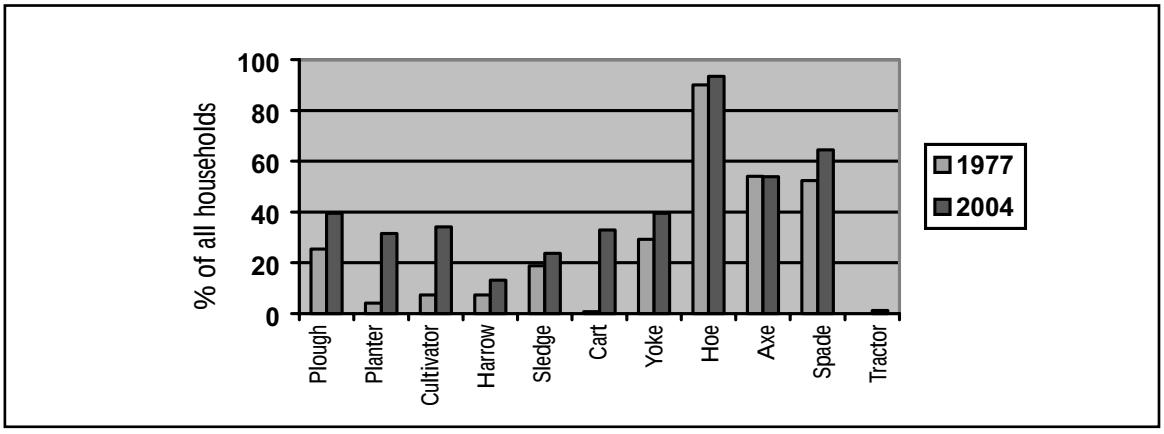
1977: N = 122. 2004: N = 76.

Figure 11: Proportion of households cultivating a vegetable garden, 1977 and 2004



1977: N = 122. 2004: N = 76.

Figure 12: Ownership of agricultural tools and equipment, 1977 and 2004.



1977: N = 122. 2004: N = 76.

Tools and equipment

Ha Tumahole households are better off for agricultural tools and equipment in 2004 than they were in 1977. The most notable increase has been in the proportion of households owning carts: up from just one cart in the whole study area in 1977 to almost a third of households owning one in 2004. Carts are now even more important to the household economy than they were in the past. Much more of the crop residues are brought back from the fields for stall-feeding of livestock at the homestead, and, for security reasons, crops are taken home to be threshed there rather than on threshing-floors in the fields. Ox-drawn ploughs, planters and cultivators are more widespread, especially the latter two implements. However, 58% of field-holding households in the 2004 survey still do not own a plough; 69% of them lack a planter; and 65% have no cultivator. There is still a major need for farming households to share equipment.

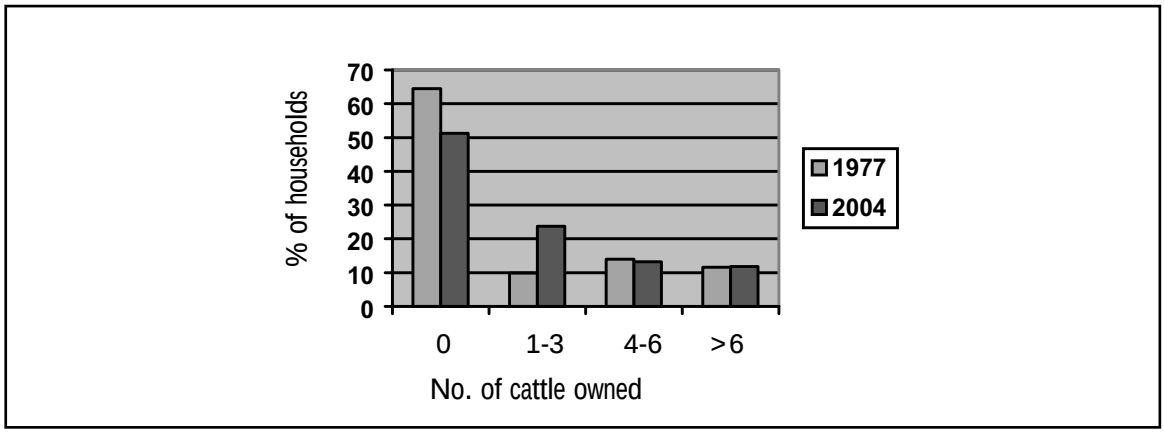
Livestock

Although the 1977 census collected information on all types of livestock, the only data I can now trace are those for cattle. Then and now, cattle are vitally important in providing the draught power for field crop production: even in 2004, there is only one tractor in the study area. Although field owners occasionally rent tractors from elsewhere, much of Ha Tumahole's land is inaccessible and inappropriate for tractor cultivation. Cattle provided the draught power for 96% of the study area fields ploughed in 2003–2004. The categories shown in Figure 13 reflect the fact that a person needs at least four cattle to make a ploughing span. Not all the owners in the two higher categories (see Figure 13) will be able to make a span as some of their animals may be too young or infirm. Even if they all could, however, it can be seen that this privileged minority has remained a small proportion of the total population since 1977.

However, the proportion of households with no cattle has decreased from 65% to 51%. Cattle ownership is still seen as a desirable livelihood strategy, and in 2004 we see the reduced proportion of households with no cattle balanced by a larger proportion who have one to three. The average number of cattle owned in the study area was 2.1 in 1977, and 2.3 in 2004. The sharing of draught power is clearly essential for crop production at Ha Tumahole.

Other forms of livestock production are now very much a minority activity. In 2004, only 12% of the households surveyed in the study area owned sheep, and only 4% (three of the 76 households) owned more than ten. The largest holding is 20 sheep. Goat production is almost as insignificant: 18% of the surveyed households owned these animals, with seven households owning more than ten and the largest flock numbering 54 goats. Stock theft and the declining market prospects for wool and mohair have clearly

Figure 13: Ownership of cattle, 1977 and 2004



1977: N = 121. 2004: N = 76.

taken their toll in this sector. The Mosotho horseman is also probably less common: 20% of surveyed households owned one or more horses in 2004. The donkey seems to be slightly more widespread, with 25% of the surveyed households owning between one and four.

Chickens, however, continue to be popular: in 2004, 72% of the surveyed households owned them, with 8% owning more than ten. Opinions differed widely about the desirability of keeping pigs. Some respondents rejected the very idea of owning such a creature, but 17% of the households surveyed in 2004 kept one, two or even three pigs.

Public services

When I lived in Ha Tumahole in 1976–1977, there were no public services provided from within the study area, except those delivered by the chief and her headman – such as the issuing of livestock movement permits, land allocation, production of letters in support of passport applications and the all-important operation of the village court. Water was drawn from unprotected springs. The nearest clinic was at Nazareth, some 6km away, and the nearest primary school was at Mohlaka oa Tuka, about 3km from the Tumahole chief's village. The area did receive comparatively high levels of agricultural extension, falling into the area of the Thaba Bosiu Rural Development Project that was active at that time.

In 2004, the chief's services continue to be delivered in largely the same way, although there are complaints that the quality of local governance generally has declined. The main change is in land allocation. Under the 'interim' arrangements that prevailed in Lesotho in 2004, one member of a temporary local authority based some 5km away at Ha Ntsi was responsible for land matters in Ha Tumahole as well as in four other areas. This inevitably resulted in inefficiency and delay. A major positive change for the community is the reticulation by government of water supplies throughout the four sub-villages in the study area, which took place in about 1994. However, in 2004 primary education and health facilities seem no nearer than they were before, apart from the construction of a primary school at Ha Ramotsoane, a village that is about as far from Ha Tumahole as Mohlaka oa Tuka. World Vision has built a large pre-school in the chief's village at Ha Tumahole. However, this facility is under-used: enrolments have been lower than was hoped, and there is little use of the rooms for other community activities.

Agricultural extension by government hardly occurs at all now, judging by questionnaire responses in 2004. According to 85% of respondents, there is no extension agent working in the Tumahole area. Of the 15% who said there is, less than half could name the individual. They referred to an officer based at Ha Ntsi who was transferred out of the area in 2003 amid allegations of corruption.

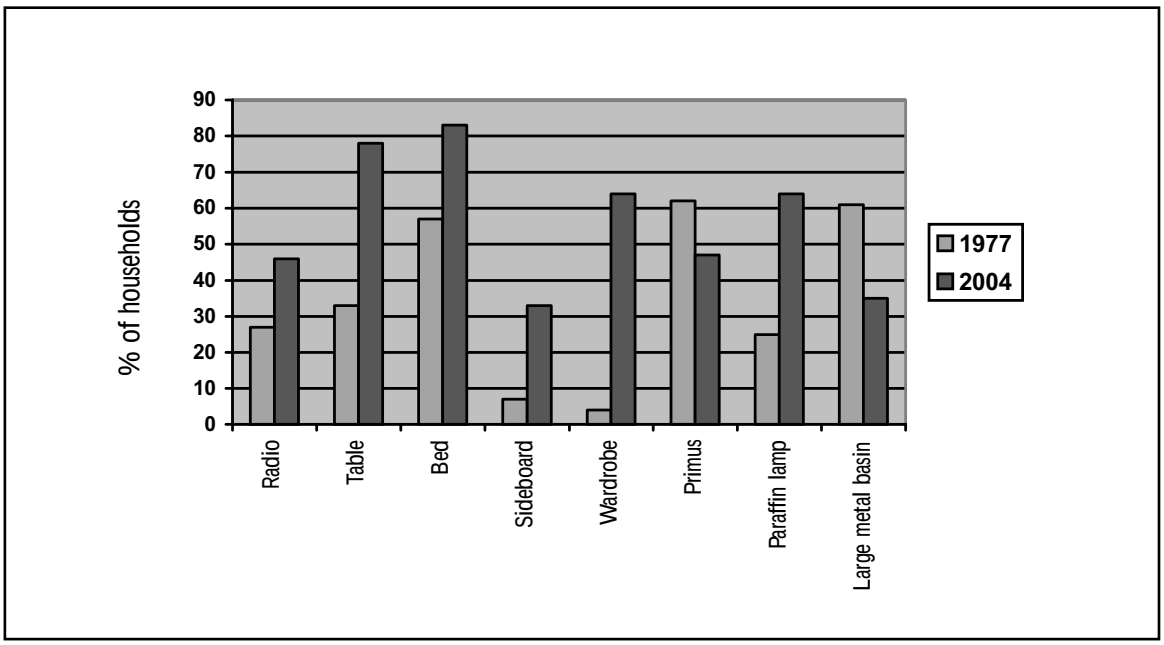
The most visible extension presence in the study area now is World Vision, working from its area headquarters at Ha Molengoane, near Nazareth. It focuses its support on the elderly and the very poor, and recommends the Machobane farming system of year-round relay cropping and intercropping to vulnerable and HIV-afflicted households. It also undertakes limited 'sharecropping' activities, analogous to those sometimes offered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security. As noted earlier in this chapter, World Vision has been active in 2004 building latrines for selected vulnerable households.

Indicator assets

It is common in surveys of livelihoods and standards of living to check which of a list of indicator assets a household owns. These assets are chosen because ownership of them is believed to indicate a higher material standard of living. Some of the assets used for this purpose in the 1977 census, such as a gramophone, are no longer relevant today – and vice versa. The *sesiu*, a large grain basket woven from grass, could still be found in 4% of the households surveyed in 1977, but is nowhere to be seen in 2004: the younger generation have to be reminded what it was. It is interesting to see how many households in Ha Tumahole now own a mobile phone, for example – 13% of those surveyed in 2004 – but that would have seemed like science fiction in 1977.

Figure 14 suggests a substantial improvement in material standards of living in Ha Tumahole between 1977 and 2004. Note, in particular, the increased amount of furniture in households. It was common, even in 1977, to have at least one chair, but in 2004 65% of surveyed households have three or more chairs, compared with 25% in 1977. The use of Primus paraffin stoves has declined. A few wealthier households cook with gas, but cooking with shrubs, firewood and dung is probably at least as common as in 1977. Ownership of paraffin lamps has increased considerably, although many of these are crude affairs with a wick protruding from a small can rather than lamps with glass chimneys. The large metal washing basin, mainly used for laundry, has been partially usurped by plastic basins of various sizes.

Figure 14: Ownership of indicator assets, 1977 and 2004



1977: N = 122. 2004: N = 76.

Livelihood strategies

Overview

Only limited data on livelihood strategies can be retrieved from my 1977 census at Ha Tumahole. However, the census does show that 13.5% of the whole study area population worked in the South African mines at some time in 1976 or during the first half of 1977. This compares with 1.3% of the surveyed population who worked there in 2003 or the first half of 2004. In 1977 migrant labour to South Africa was still the economic backbone of the community: the leading strategy whereby households built up their capital and sustained other, mostly agricultural, strategies that could continue after their migrant members were no longer needed in the mines. In 2004 it is clear that Ha Tumahole households must build their livelihoods within Lesotho.

Using the same participatory method that Mohasi Mohasi and I used in our livelihoods survey in three southern Lesotho areas in 1998, I asked respondent households in Ha Tumahole to rank their livelihood strategies in 2004. In total, they mentioned 37 strategies. As explained in the report on the 1998 research, there are various ways in which these data can be processed and presented (Mohasi and Turner 1999:32). Here, I have processed the top six strategies mentioned by each household, or fewer for those many households who did not identify six strategies. One way to present the results, as shown in Table 8, is to weight the strategies according to the rank the household gave them. Table 8 also shows, for each strategy, the percentage of respondent households who ranked it as their most important, and the percentage who mentioned it.

The method used in the 2004 survey for identifying and ranking livelihood strategies is far from perfect. Different household members might mention a slightly different set of strategies, or offer an alternative ranking, than the respondent. The strategies identified, and the way they are ranked, depends to some extent on the season as well as on what is uppermost in the respondent's mind. For the latter reason, this exercise came towards the end of the questionnaire interview, when the full scope of the household's livelihood had been discussed. It was hoped that this would reduce any bias towards a particular sector that might otherwise arise.

Table 8 illustrates many important features of livelihoods at Ha Tumahole in 2004. Some of these will be discussed in more detail below. One striking overall feature is the diversity of strategies. Only crop production is mentioned by more than half the respondent households. Livestock production was mentioned as the most important livelihood strategy by the same number of households as crop production on one's own land without sharecropping (which is still likely to depend on various sharing mechanisms, as we shall see in Chapter 3). But if we include crop production through sharecropping one's own land and through sharecropping the land of others, we find that 34% of the surveyed households mention this type of activity as their most important livelihood strategy. Those who ranked livestock as their most important strategy gave the usual range of reasons, citing the multiple economic uses to which these assets can be put.

Given the massive decline in the role of mine work in South Africa, it is significant that almost a quarter of these Ha Tumahole households include full-time wage employment in Lesotho as one of their livelihood strategies, with 8% ranking it as their most important. Just over a quarter mention 'support from children', which in some cases is likely to involve the transfer of earnings from wage employment in this country. That 'support from children' is the fifth commonest strategy to be ranked number one among these households probably represents the number of older or relict households that now depend heavily on support from the younger generation. The only pensions mentioned are those received by two elderly women, both of whom live alone and lost their husbands in the Second World War. The pension is M150 per month.

It is also clear from Table 8 that some strategies are potentially of major

Table 8: Livelihood strategies, 2004

Strategy	Rank (weighted scores)	% of households ranking this strategy no.1	% of households who mentioned this strategy
Farming own land (not sharecropping)	1	21	67
Livestock	2	21	43
Vegetable garden	3	3	49
Sharecropping others' land	4	5	34
Support from children	5	13	26
Full-time employment in Lesotho	6	8	24
Farming own land (sharecropping)	7	8	21
Farm labour for others (paid in cash)	8	4	13
Local piece jobs	9	3	14
Selling peaches	10		14
Selling wood	11		11
Support from parents	12	4	5
Mine work in South Africa	13	3	5
Farm labour for others (paid in kind)	14	1	4
Support from other relatives	14	1	5
War widow's pension	16	3	3
Support from outside family	17		4
Handicrafts, local manufacture	18	1	3
Other wage employment in SA	19		4
Brewing, selling local beer	19		5
Farming rented land	19		4
Raising chickens	22		3
Mine death compensation	22		3
Traditional doctor services	22	1	3
Piece jobs elsewhere in Lesotho	25		3
Selling grass	26		1
Selling milk	27		1
Piece jobs in SA	27		1
Savings in the bank	27		1
Sewing, clothes repairs	30		1
Farming borrowed land	30		3
Thatching	32		1
Selling eggs	32		1
Renting out field	32		1
Selling clothes	35		1
Renting out urban rooms, flats	35		1
Selling non-local beer	37		1

N = 76.

Percentages in the right-hand column add up to more than 100 because most respondents mentioned several strategies.

importance in livelihoods, while others play a supplementary role and are never described as the most important. The latter are all minority activities. Vegetable gardening is only rarely described as the most important strategy, yet is frequently mentioned as the second, third, fourth or fifth most important, and is therefore ranked third in the weighted scores.

Some minority activities involve a particular skill; others, such as selling wood, are mainly the preserve of the very poor. Ha Tumahole women who sell wood must normally climb the nearby slopes to cut it from what remains of the shrub and bush cover. Once they have collected a head load, they must then carry it about 5km to Ha Ntsi, where they can sell it for M8 (about €1 or US $1.20). Collection, delivery to market and sale of one head load make up one long day's work.

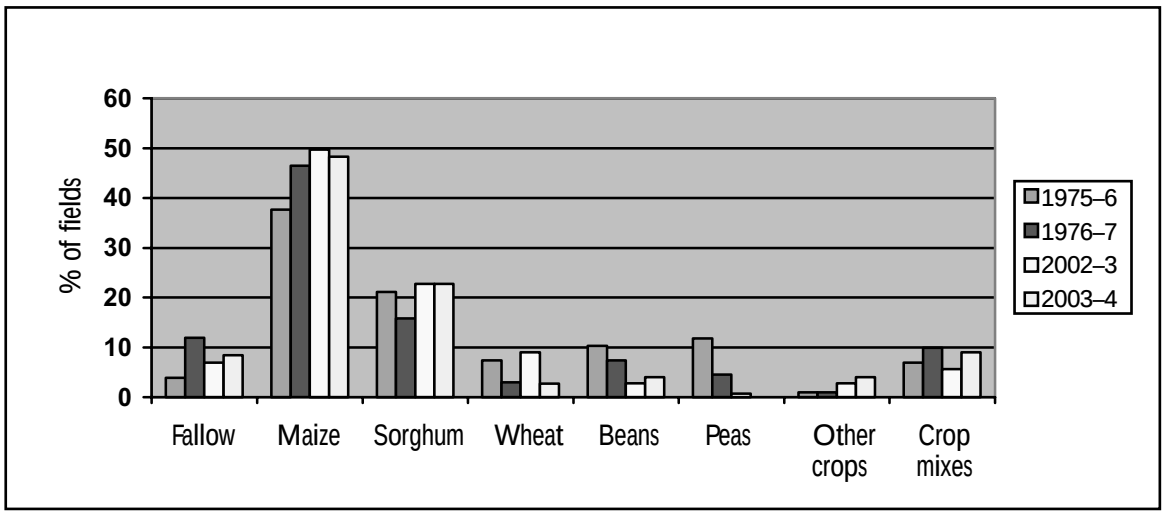
Crop production

At Ha Tumahole as elsewhere, production conditions and farmers' management decisions can vary substantially from one year to the next. Farming statistics from any particular year therefore cannot be assumed to be representative of longer-term conditions. The 1977 census and the 2004 survey both made some allowance for this by asking about the previous season as well as the current one. In both cases, however, the survey was conducted around harvest time, which meant that it was not possible to gather full information about harvests for the season then drawing to a close.

Getting accurate agricultural statistics also requires painstakingly detailed work through the season rather than a single-visit survey. The data presented here are therefore only indicative and approximate. They represent the population of fields about which information was gathered during the two surveys. For 2003–2004, these fields include all fields owned by respondent households, plus those fields belonging to other households that had been sharecropped, rented or borrowed by respondent households.

There appear to have been no enormous changes in summer cropping patterns at Ha Tumahole over the 28 years between 1975 and 2003. Somewhat under 10% of the fields continue to be left fallow each year, usually because of some production difficulty rather than through an explicit strategy of letting the land rest. Maize has retained its dominance in the crop mix, being planted on almost half the fields in both the periods reported on here. Beans were more popular in the 1970s, probably because the Thaba Bosiu Rural

Figure 15: Summer crops grown, 1975–1977 and 2002–2004



1975–76: N = 204. 1976–77: N = 202.
2002–03: N = 145. 2003–04: N = 149.

Development Project actively promoted and marketed them as a cash crop. Peas seem to be grown less now than before. Other crops – such as barley, oats and potatoes – remain negligible, and a little under 10% of the fields are planted to more than one crop.

Winter cropping used to be a significant farming strategy in the lowlands of Lesotho. In the foothill conditions of Ha Tumahole, it was hardly practised in winter 1976, the only winter season covered by the 1977 census. Only three fields were planted that winter – one each to wheat, barley and potatoes. The smaller number of households surveyed in 2004 planted a few more fields in the winter of 2003 – five to wheat and one to oats. Only one of these winter fields yielded more than a couple of basins of grain.

The categories used in the two surveys to record the sources of seed used were not exactly the same (Table 9). Overall, it appears that fewer farmers now simply plant seed that they have held back from the previous harvest. The 'government' category in the 2004 survey includes the *koporasi* or former co-op that still operates in an attenuated manner at Ha Ntsi, not far from Ha Tumahole. A few farmers also took advantage of government and World Vision 'sharecropping' schemes (discussed in Chapter 3).

It is clear from Figure 16 that there have been major changes in farming practice at Ha Tumahole since the 1970s. The planter and the cultivator used to be used by a privileged few, but are now used on the large majority of fields – although they remain inappropriate for wheat and fodder crops, which are broadcast and not weeded. Meanwhile, use of the harrow has declined – although Figure 16 shows a slight increase in the proportion of households owning one. The use of chemical fertilisers has increased considerably, but the fields shown as receiving these inputs in 2002–03 and 2003–04 include those that were treated with a mixture of manure and fertiliser. This arrangement is more common than treatment with chemical fertiliser only.

Fertiliser use in Lesotho depends quite heavily on how efficiently government

Table 9: Sources of seed

Source of seed	% of fields, 1975–76	% of fields, 1976–77	Source of seed	% of fields, 2002–03	% of fields, 2003–04
Previous harvest	77.3	83.8	Previous harvest	47.8	54.8
Gift from relative	5.7	6.7	Bought from government	11.9	12.6
Gift from friend	7.7	7.3	Provided by relative	9.7	3.7
Bought from government	4.6	1.7	Provided by other person	7.5	4.4
Bought from shop/ trader	4.6	0.6	Provided by sharecropper	7.5	10.4
			Government scheme	4.5	3.0
			Bought from shop/trader	3.7	3.0
			Bought from local individual	2.2	4.4
			Bought from individual elsewhere	1.5	–
			World Vision scheme	1.5	1.5
			More than one source	2.1	2.2

1975–76: N = 196. 1976–77: N = 179.
2002–03: N = 134. 2003–04: N = 135.

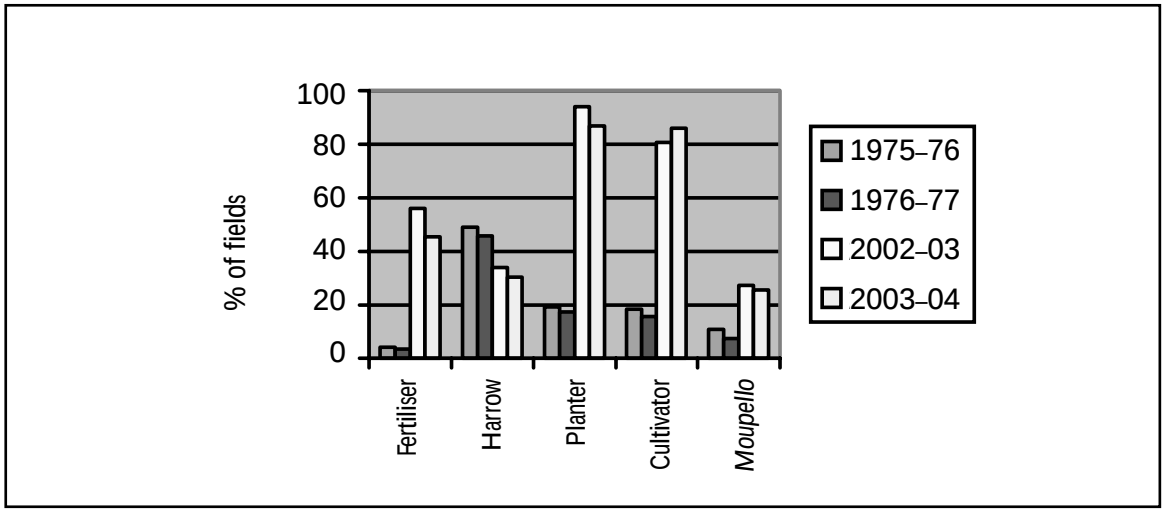
distributes it to field depots and co-ops, and whether government has any special schemes to promote its use. For both the years covered by the 2004 survey, just under 40% of the fertiliser used was reported to have been procured from the government, mainly at the Ha Ntsi *koporasi*. Another 9% in 2002–03, and 14% in 2003–04, was reported to have been provided through government and World Vision schemes. Farmers typically apply the fertiliser at much lower rates than recommended, either because they cannot afford more or because the schemes providing the fertiliser ration it out. It is also common to hold back some of the fertiliser for use during the following year.

There was no reference in the 1977 census to the use of chemical insecticides. However, in 2002–03, these were used on 36% of the fields covered by the survey. In 2003–04, they were used on 35% of the fields. The use of traditional *moupello* medicines (burned at the side of the field) to ward off birds and insect pests appears to be enjoying something of a revival, as can be seen in Figure 16.

Yield data are particularly hard to gather accurately, and those collected during single-visit surveys must be treated with great caution. They typically underestimate the nutritional (and sometimes market) value of crops gathered before the main harvest period. For what it is worth, the mean harvest recorded per field for summer 1975–76 in the study area was 323kg. This is an average across all crops. For 2002–03, the mean harvest per field was 351kg. Chapter 3 describes some of the intricate social and economic arrangements that make this production possible. Considering the meagre size of the harvest, it is striking that Basotho go to so much trouble. However, 2002–03 was not a good year for Lesotho agriculture as a whole. The national maize harvest was 76% of the mean for 1999–2000 to 2002–03, and only 60% of the mean for 1994–95 to 1998–99 (FEWS 2004:2). The Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee cannot yet quote actual production figures for 2002–03, but estimates total maize production to have been only 56% of the 13-year mean for 1989–90 to 2001–02.

As noted earlier in this chapter, 74% of the Ha Tumahole households interviewed in 2004 said that they were cultivating homestead vegetable gardens, down from 83% in 1977. *Sepaile*,[2] spinach and cabbage are the most popular vegetables grown by these 56 households, as can be seen in Table 10. Less common crops not shown in the table include peas, beans, *mashoabane*[3] and 'Sesotho tobacco'.

Figure 16: Use of farming inputs and equipment



1975–76: N = 196. 1976–77: N = 179.
2002–03: N = 134. 2003–04: N = 135.

Table 10: The main crops grown in homestead gardens, 2003–04	
Crop	% of cultivated homestead gardens in which crop grown
Sepaile	71
Cabbage	54
Spinach	52
Rapa[4]	36
Tomatoes	18
Maize	18
Potatoes	11
Carrots	9
Beetroot	9

N = 56.

Garden crop production is done by conventional means, typically involving the use of a few hand tools and with varying amounts of protection from chickens and livestock. A handful of people occasionally sell vegetables outside the local area. One or two have procured hosepipes in order to irrigate vegetable plots with water from streams, and three fields were planted to vegetables in 2003–04. Larger numbers of people sell peaches in Maseru when they are in season. Although I did not investigate the issue in detail, it would be fair to say that only a few households in Ha Tumahole put much effort into vegetable production. Questions about what people grew in their gardens often elicited rather vague, semi-serious responses, implying that for these respondents vegetable production was not a major livelihood strategy. Meanwhile, World Vision claims to be promoting keyhole gardening in the area. The one instance of this to which they directed me did not seem to be in very good condition, although my impressions may have been biased by the mid-winter conditions.

Many people at Ha Tumahole continue to collect and eat wild vegetables, such as *papasane*,[5] *theepe*[6] and *seruoe*,[7] whenever they can. These vegetables can be collected from the fields or from the veld. Only 11% of respondents said that they never eat those vegetables collected from the fields, while 72% said that they collected them in season. (Others claimed to eat them 'sometimes', or even 'daily'.) As for vegetables collected from the veld, 15% of respondents said that they never eat them, while 70% said that they eat them when they are in season.

Livestock production

As indicated earlier in this chapter and in Table 8, the production of livestock – and especially of cattle – is still considered a key livelihood strategy in Ha Tumahole. Indeed, the proportion of households that own cattle has risen since 1977, although only a small minority have enough to make a span for farming purposes. It is striking that livestock were mentioned by over a fifth of the surveyed households in 2004 as their most important livelihood strategy.

Not surprisingly, this is a predominantly masculine view. Three quarters of the households that described livestock as their most important strategy are headed by men who were the respondents during the questionnaire interview. Half the remainder are male-headed. The (mostly male) view at Ha Tumahole is still that livestock are a reliable, long-term asset that can sustain the household economy when more fickle things like money and wage employment are not available. This view persists despite the onslaught of stock theft and the decline in wool and mohair marketing opportunities.

Stock theft has, if anything, had an even more severe impact on sheep and goat holdings than on cattle. This is one reason why so many of the flocks of sheep and goats are now so small (see later in this chapter).

Only eight of the 18 households owning these animals had produced wool or mohair for sale in the 12 months preceding the 2004 survey. One man who owns two sheep and five goats said that he had been advised at the government woolshed not to bother bringing them for shearing, as the overhead charges are now so high that it would not be worth his while for so few animals.

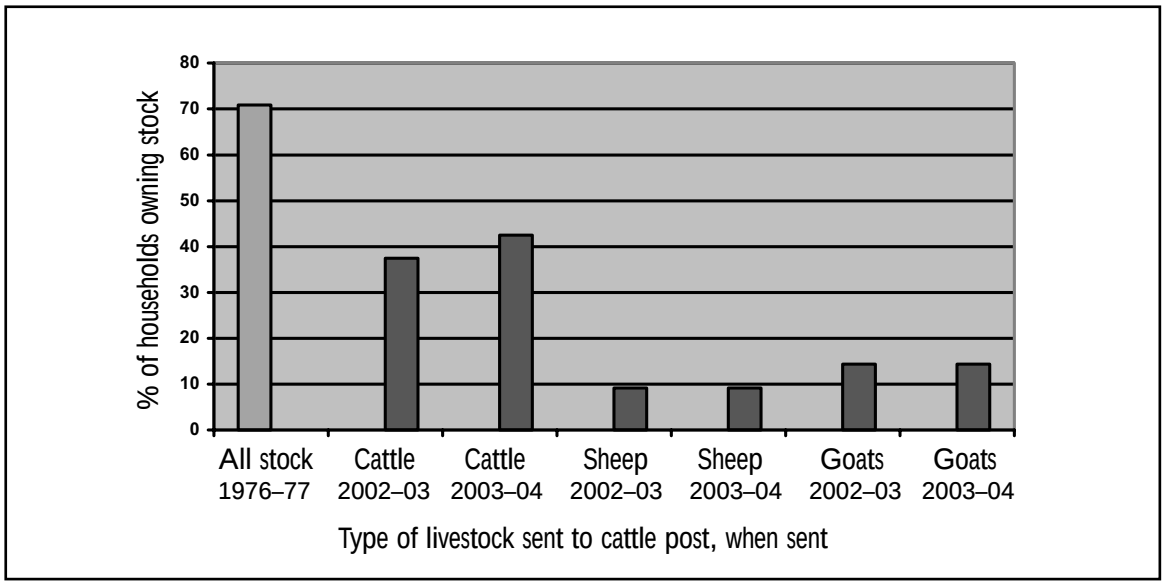
Some livestock continue to be kept by people who do not own them, through either *mafisa* or less formal arrangements. We return to these sharing mechanisms in Chapter 3. A common time for sharing arrangements is when livestock are sent to summer grazing at the cattle posts. However, this transhumance is less common than it was.

Livestock production has many cultural functions in Basotho livelihoods. Of the households interviewed in 1977 at Ha Tumahole, 38% had had a feast for the ancestors in the first half of that year or sometime in 1976. Sheep were the most common animals slaughtered for these feasts (19, or 41% of them), followed by goats and cattle (11%, or five each). Chickens came in last, being used for just four (9%) of the feasts – not including the 13 feasts (28%) where nothing was slaughtered at all.

These cultural activities continue at Ha Tumahole, but apparently on a reduced scale and with less use of cattle, sheep or goats. Thirteen (17%) of the 76 households interviewed in mid-2004 had held a feast for the ancestors some time that year or in 2003. Of this group, only one had not slaughtered any animal. In eight cases, one or more chickens were used for the feast. One household slaughtered a cow; another, two. One slaughtered two sheep, and one two goats. In addition, 18 households said that they had slaughtered a cow, sheep or goat over the same period for some other purpose. Funerals were the most common reason (six cases). Others included '*ho apesa mofu kobo*' (a feast to compensate for what is considered to have been an inadequate funeral), *ho rola thapo* (the end of the mourning period), *ho sua makoko* (when hides are stretched and tanned) and *ho tlosa bana khutsana* (to cleanse children of impurities that might linger after a parent's or other relative's death).

The payment of bridewealth (*bohali*) is still widespread, but does not often take the traditional form of livestock. Three of the 76 households said that they had paid cattle as bridewealth in 2003 or 2004 (two paid four beasts, the other five). Only one household made a bridewealth payment in the form of small stock in that period, paying four animals.

Figure 17: Use of cattle posts, 1976–77, 2002–03 and 2003–04



N = 55 (1976–77); 40 (cattle, 2002–03, 2003–04); 11 (sheep, 2002–03, 2003–04); 14 (goats, 2002–03, 2003–04).

Wage employment

Earlier in this chapter (see 'Demography') I noted that, whereas 26% of household heads were absent at the time of my 1977 census at Ha Tumahole, only 13% were absent in 2004. Furthermore, almost all the absences in 1977 would have been due to migrant labour in the South African mines, whereas in 2004 only 5% of the surveyed household heads were absent at any kind of work in South Africa. The Central Bank of Lesotho has argued that the number of Basotho with non-mining jobs in South Africa has continued to increase, partly offsetting the slump in mine employment there (Turner 2003:10). There is not much sign of this at Ha Tumahole, however. The drop in the proportion of the population in wage employment (Figure 18) is particularly striking when one recalls that the 2004 population is less skewed towards those below working age than the population of 1977 (Figure 9).

As with some other aspects of these two surveys, the categories used to identify types of wage employment are not directly comparable between 1977 and 2004. Nevertheless, it is clear from Table 11 that the significance of two kinds of work has declined greatly since 1977: working in the mines, and working for government. Over a quarter of those with wage employment now work in factories, and a fifth earn wages as domestic servants or cleaners.

It is also important to check on the location of people's wage employment. Mines and factories exist in both Lesotho and South Africa, for instance. Cross-tabulation of the 2004 results shows that all those with mine employment work in South Africa, and all those earning factory wages do so in Maseru. Table 12 shows that Maseru has now taken over as the main source of wage employment for the diminished number of Ha Tumahole people who are able to get a job at all.

Cross-tabulation of wage employment in 1977 by gender is not possible from the available data. However, we can assume that at least three-quarters of those then employed were men, given that 65% of the total were working in mines. Not surprisingly, all those employed in mines, in construction, as shepherds and as security guards in 2004 are male. Of those working in factories, seven are women and six are men. All the domestic servants and cleaners are women. Of those working in Maseru, 16 are women and 11 are men. Of those with wage employment in South Africa, four are women (two are domestic servants) and seven are men.

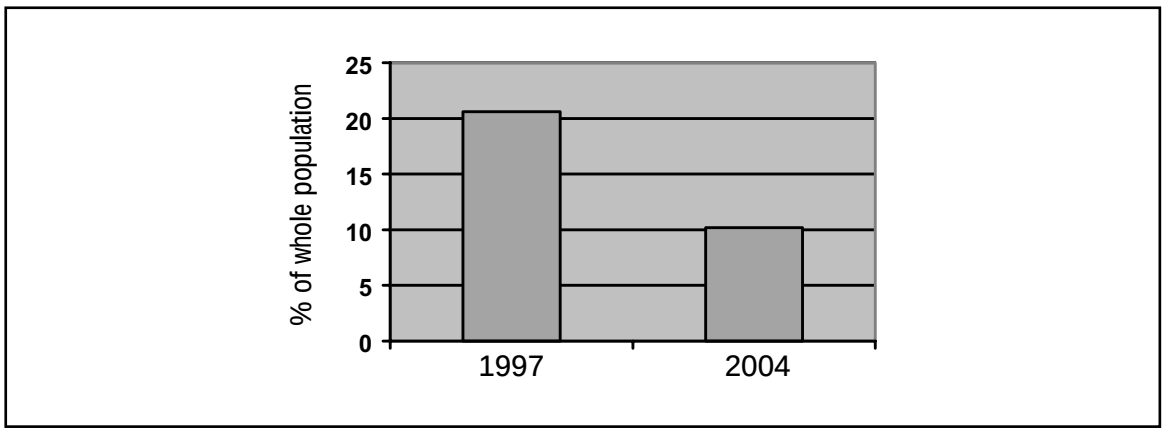
Although factory employment in Maseru is an important new opportunity for people in Ha Tumahole, it has not yet benefited many livelihoods – and when it does, the rewards are modest. Only 13 people from this survey population work in these factories, as we have seen, and they are actually concentrated in nine households (12% of all households surveyed), suggesting that it may sometimes be possible for one employee to secure a job for another in his or her family. One household actually has three members working in Maseru factories. In most cases, respondents did not know how much those working in the factories are earning. Three factory employees were reported to be earning M550 per month, and two to be earning M800 per month.

Other local livelihood strategies

It is difficult for single-visit surveys to get a full view of the diversity and complexity of household livelihood strategies. Basotho must typically engage in many different activities to sustain themselves. Some of these activities are occasional or seasonal. However much they may be trying to help (and not all are), respondents may not recall all of these activities at the time of interview.

As I noted earlier in this chapter, my data from 1977 on livelihood strategies are certainly incomplete. In any event, the two surveys used different means to ask about the strategies that supplement agriculture and wage employment. At household level, there was a question about 'other money earning activities' in addition to wage employment. Of the 122 households interviewed in the 1977 census, 21% reported having one or more members engaged in such activities. Among these households, grass weaving and knitting were each practised by seven people. Four made money by sewing, three by building and two by selling vegetables.

Figure 18: Proportion of population in wage employment, 1977 and 2004



1977: N = 519. 2004: N = 480.

Table 11: Wage employment, 1977 and 2004			
1977		2004	
Type of employment	% of those in wage employment	Type of employment	% of those in wage employment
Mines	65	Mines	12
Construction	4	Construction	2
Other industry in South Africa	3	Factory	27
Farm	1	Formal retail	6
Other employment in South Africa	2	Informal retail	2
Government of Lesotho	19	Office work (not government)	8
Shop in Lesotho	2	Domestic servant, cleaner	20
Other employment in Lesotho	5	Government of Lesotho	2
		Teacher	4
		Shepherd	6
		Security	6
		Non-governmental organisation	2
		Other employment in Lesotho	2

1977: N = 107. 2004: N = 49.

Table 12: Location of wage employment, 2004	
Where employed	% of those in wage employment
Maseru	55
South Africa	22
Local area, Nazareth	14
Elsewhere in Lesotho	8

N = 49.

In 1977, a separate question was asked about whether households brewed and sold beer. This was a widespread mode of income generation at the time. Over half the surveyed households practised it, with almost a quarter going through the cycle of brewing and selling beer twice a month.

The 2004 survey did not have a separate question about beer brewing. Table 14 gives some idea of the strategies that supplement agriculture and wage employment in 2004. It shows that brewing and selling beer, which is normally made from sorghum, is much less common now. Only 5% of the households interviewed in 2004 mentioned this as a livelihood strategy. The 2004 survey also asked a question about other income-generating activities in which household members were engaged (in addition to wage employment). Again, 'selling alcohol', which could include the resale of commercially brewed beer, spirits etc., was only mentioned by five households (7% of all households interviewed).

One reason for the apparent major decline in the brewing of local beer may be the collapse of migrant mine labour and a consequent reduction in the amount of cash men have available for recreational drinking. The number of fields planted to sorghum in the area has not declined, as Figure 15 shows. Another possible factor may be changing tastes. Those with the money to spend on beer may increasingly prefer to drink commercially brewed products in the growing number of bars a few kilometres away on the main road.

Table 13: Brewing and selling of beer, 1977

Frequency of brewing and selling beer	% of households
Never	47
Rarely	1
Once a month	16
Twice a month	23
Three times a month	8
Four times a month	3
More than four times a month	3

N = 122.

Table 14: Other income generating activities, 2004

Activity	% of households undertaking activity
Selling fruit, vegetables	20
Agricultural work	18
Selling firewood	9
Selling crops	9
Piece jobs	8
Selling alcohol	7
Building	7
Selling livestock	7
Traditional doctor services	5

N = 76.

Other natural resource-based modes of income generation received much more frequent mention in 2004 than they had in 1977. The sale of fruit and vegetables combines local sales with those in Maseru. We saw in Table 8 that farm labour for others ranks eighth in the overall weighted livelihood strategies reported in 2004. Considering the denuded state of the local slopes and the arduousness of the work, it is distressing to see that seven of the 76 households surveyed must try to make money by selling firewood.

Livelihood outcomes

Overview

As explained in the introduction to this chapter, this outline of livelihoods at Ha Tumahole in 1977 and 2004 follows the structure of the recent CARE literature review on livelihood trends in Lesotho. As that review acknowledges, it is not easy to fit the complexity of livelihoods into the analytical framework adopted there, or into any other such framework (Turner 2003:2). In particular, livelihood outcomes influence livelihood context, and can in many cases also be viewed as livelihood assets or capabilities. In the present analysis, three key livelihood outcomes for rural Basotho – water and sanitation, education and skills, and shelter – were dealt with as assets or capabilities. The status of another important set of outcomes – personal and asset safety – was referred to as a key livelihood problem, and recurs in the discussion of livestock production. A further important livelihood outcome in a community like Ha Tumahole is the quality of a person's social networks and status. This is the subject of Chapter 3.

Not having undertaken detailed income and expenditure surveys in either 1977 or 2004, I cannot present a comparative empirical analysis of income, savings and inequality in Ha Tumahole. My subjective impression is that the quality of life has both improved and deteriorated there over the last 28 years. People are both richer and poorer.

I have outlined a number of ways in which households' assets have improved – the number of farm implements they own, for example, and the amount of furniture. Adults without shoes are unusual now, whereas they used to be common. Although crop yields have not risen substantially, they do not seem to have fallen. Throughout Ha Tumahole, people can draw clean water from standpipes. Of those households surveyed, 13% have mobile phones. Literacy levels seem to have risen. Standards of shelter have been maintained or improved. Just over half the surveyed households now have a latrine. There are a number of substantial homesteads with impressively large houses, solar panels, comparatively large numbers of livestock and fine gardens with many fruit trees and vegetables. A privileged minority cook with gas, brought from town in large cylinders. Overall, it will be recalled from early in this chapter, I subjectively classified 42% of the interviewed households as 'medium' or 'well off' in the context of Lesotho livelihoods.

In other ways, however, Ha Tumahole seems poorer – or more vulnerable. The community has lost its economic backbone as opportunities to work in the South African mines fell to negligible levels. Young people see little prospect of employment or significant income, unless they are 'lucky' enough to get work for long hours and minimal wages in a Maseru factory. The apparent decline or deferment of marriage is an ominous economic and social signal.

Many young people cannot afford to marry. The few young households that I did visit were living with minimal resources, sustained to some extent by their parents or other older relatives. I heard about many cases of broken marriages or relationships, where women had either returned home with their children, were living elsewhere with them, or had sent the children home and were living separate lives in town. It is hard to predict the consequences if the conventional concepts of marriage and the nuclear household are in decline; but they seem to be troubling.

The economic and social burdens on the elderly are increasing as some of the middle generation die, leaving child care and its many costs to the grandparent(s). For the time being, a mainstay of the economy in Ha Tumahole is the capital that the older

generation of men accrued during earlier migrant careers in South Africa. These men help others to farm, support client households in various ways, and are the ones people can turn to if they desperately need to 'borrow' a basin of mealie meal or hope to be given a candle. But, as will be shown below, such inter-household support is weaker than it was; and those who provide most of it will only be able to do so for another decade or two. There is no present prospect of their being replaced. Some of those in big houses have already exhausted most of their capital. Although outside appearances suggest that they are well off, closer inspection shows that they are living in poverty.

Meanwhile, apart from burial societies and football clubs, the institutional landscape at Ha Tumahole is mostly desolate. There is still no primary school, and still no public transport to the village. The community has suffered from a specific problem of inadequate governance since the old chief went into decline in the 1980s (which may be remedied when the current chief takes up residence), and the general weaknesses of local government in Lesotho during the long recent 'interim' period. As throughout the country, local authority systems are in decline; there is less respect for local law and order, and theft and other crimes are rampant.

Finally, of course, the community is just starting the steep descent into the multiple tragedies of HIV/Aids. Many of those whom the pandemic does not kill will be made much poorer by it.

Beyond this overview and the aspects of livelihood outcomes that were discussed earlier in this chapter, I can present further details of two specific outcomes: levels of hunger or food security, and health. As another kind of overview, the chapter concludes with outlines of some current livelihoods at Ha Tumahole.

Hunger and food security

We saw earlier in this chapter that hunger was a widespread concern in the Ha Tumahole region in 1977 and that over a quarter of respondent households named it as one of their livelihood problems in 2004. In the latter survey I asked how many months the household could typically feed itself from its own field and garden production.

Of course, Table 15 includes the 11 households that have no fields, some of which may produce food through sharecropping or other arrangements with land holders. It can be seen that, although the harvest of 2004 was extremely poor for almost everyone, a significant minority of the surveyed households estimate that they can feed themselves from their fields and

Table 15: Average number of months households can feed themselves from their own production, 2004

No. of months	% of all households
0	9
1–3	20
4–6	38
7–9	13
10–12	20

N = 76.

Table 16: How households get food after using up what they have produced themselves, 2004	
Strategy	% of households not able to feed themselves all year from their own production
Buy food	72
Get help from family	29
Work for others	8
Sell livestock	3
Get help from others	2
Food aid	2

N = 65 (11 other households said they could feed themselves for 12 months).
Percentages add up to more than 100 because some respondents mentioned more than one strategy.

gardens for most or all of the year in average conditions. But the same proportion can only feed themselves for three months or less on average, and the commonest response was that the household could feed itself for four to six months. For the rest of the year, the main strategy is to buy food. The importance of social networks in accessing basic needs can be seen from the other responses in Table 16.

Although Table 16 quotes the strategies that people resort to when their home-produced stocks of food have run out, we should not assume that these strategies are always successful. That is why hunger is such a frequently-quoted problem. I have no direct data from 1977 or 2004 about nutrition at Ha Tumahole. Overt signs of malnutrition are not very evident to the untrained eye, but the widespread reference to hunger suggests that the problem does exist.

Health

Like other Basotho, people at Ha Tumahole enjoy a healthier environment than people in most tropical parts of Africa. At the same time, the winter climate exacerbates respiratory problems, which continue to be the most common ailment. The surveys in 1977 and 2004 both asked whether household members had been to hospitals, clinics or traditional doctors, and what health problems had led to these visits. Needless to say, there is no direct correlation between illness and visits to medical facilities. In general, the higher a household's standard of living, the more often its members will go to the doctor. The only major change suggested by Table 17 concerns visits to traditional doctors, which appear to have fallen off sharply. As traditional doctors are still easy to find in Ha Tumahole, it is hard to believe that use of these physicians has fallen as sharply as the Table suggests. In 1977, these were the doctors to whom people there most often resorted. Perhaps people are more reticent in reporting visits to Sesotho doctors nowadays.

In any event, it is unlikely that either survey achieved full recall by respondents of all the medical complaints and visits that their sometimes numerous family members had undergone during the previous six months. Table 18 probably under-reports the medical problems that the community faces. Illness is, after all, the most commonly mentioned livelihood problem in Ha Tumahole in 2004 (Table 5, Chapter 2).

Table 17: Visits to medical facilities in the first half of the year, 1977 and 2004		
Facility visited	% of population, 1977	% of population, 2004
Hospital	10	10
Clinic	7	9
Sesotho doctor	15	1
Private doctor	Not recorded	3

1977: N = 519. 2004: N = 480.

Table 18: Problems leading to visits to medical facilities in the previous six months, 1977 and 2004		
Type of problem	% of population, 1977	% of population, 2004
Respiratory	7	7
Digestive system	6	3
Muscles, joints	5	3
Gynaecological, childbirth	3	1
Skin complaints	3	1
Teeth	2	2
Eyes	1	1
Ears, nose, throat	1	1
Broken limbs, wounds	1	1
Measles	1	–
Mental health	<1	1
Cardiovascular	<1	1
Other	2	2

1977: N = 519. 2004: N = 480.

Not surprisingly, there were no direct references to HIV/Aids during enquiries about health in the 2004 survey. There is no doubt that the problem is as grave in Ha Tumahole as elsewhere in Lesotho. As it was not the direct subject of my research, I did not follow up on the issue directly at household level. However, a local development worker told me that she was aware of five Aids deaths in Ha Tumahole, and four people who had declared themselves HIV positive. She knew of two households in which both husband and wife had died. I encountered a number of households whose situation suggested that they had suffered Aids-related deaths: for example, older women (and some elderly couples) looking after grandchildren or the children of other relatives after one or both of the parents had died in the last few years. Altogether, out of the 76 households surveyed, I recorded ten whose demographics suggested Aids-related deaths, but of course I have no firm evidence of this.

Some current livelihoods at Ha Tumahole

As in the CARE study of land and livelihoods in southern Lesotho (Mohasi and Turner 1999:42–5), this chapter concludes with some examples of current livelihoods at Ha Tumahole, ranging from the very poor to the better off.

'**Mamokhoabane Ramotsabi** was born in 1933, in the old village of Ha Motanyane in the cleft of the mountains below 'Malehloane – a settlement that has since been abandoned. She lives alone in a single hut. She is pictured here with a grandchild who was visiting for the day. 'Mamokhoabane was married in

Figure 19: 'Mamokhoabane Ramotsabi

1951, and her son Mokhoabane (see below) was born the following year. But she became estranged from her husband, who was living separately from her, near Mokhoabane, before he died. Her husband went to the Second World War, and her main source of subsistence is her military widow's pension of M150 per month. Most of her former fields are now held by Mokhoabane, although she reports production from one that she considers her own. Her total harvest from this field, farmed for her by her son, was about 25kg in 2003. She broke her arm about four years ago and says that this makes manual labour, including cultivation of vegetables, difficult for her. She reports that a nephew helps her when she is in extreme need, but that he cannot do much as he is poor himself. In 2003 she received some food aid from World Vision, comprising maize meal, fish oil, rice and peas. The organisation has now built a latrine for her.

Maphale Shomoro is 65 and lives alone in one hut that has seen better days. Tough, cheerful and a little eccentric, he is one of the nine household heads from my 1976 sample of 30 who is still alive. He never went to school. He was married once, but has been by himself for a long time now. He has hardly any material possessions apart from a hoe and an axe. There is no bed or other furniture in his house; his only chair is the traditional stump of a *lekhala* (aloe). But he does have rights to two fields, which he uses by sharecropping with two different people. His sister, herself quite poor, lives in another part of Ha Tumahole and is probably a mainstay of Maphale's livelihood. He also keeps the grain from his harvests at her place. In 2003, the two fields yielded a total of roughly 400kg of maize and sorghum: he kept half and his sharecropping partners took the rest. He makes a very small income from weaving and selling ropes from *moseha*[8] grass. Maphale also provides agricultural labour in various people's fields in return for some payment in food.

Masilo Tsola, aged 50, has one of the more prosperous homesteads in Ha Tumahole. He is pictured standing on the right, in Figure 21. There are stables, kraals and big stacks of fodder in his yard, and he is a busy sharecropper, although he owns no field himself. He came to the introductory *pitso* (public meeting) at the start of my research with a little child in a blanket on his back –

Figure 20: Maphale Shomoro

Figure 21: Masilo Tsola's homestead

his two-year-old grandson is inseparable from him. There are nine people in his household, including two hired herdboys.

A daughter, aged 25, works as a cleaner in Maseru. His wife, 'Malibilo, was treasurer of the Village Development Council until staff of the Ministry of Local Government came to close it down in 2002 in preparation for new local government arrangements. In 2003–04, the household rented one of the chief's highly productive fields in the valley bottom, and borrowed a second field on the mountain slope from someone else. They also sharecropped four fields. They have a dairy cow, and 'Malibilo is chair of a dairy association in the Nazareth area. But they say that chickens and their many goats damage their vegetables, so currently they are not using their homestead garden. Livestock and the sale of milk are their main livelihood strategies. If they could get more land to sharecrop, says Masilo, they could feed more of the community. This is one of the two households I met that said they still hold agricultural *matsema* (work parties). They hold them for cutting fodder and for weeding. They give the workers food and beer. People will still come to *matsema*, they say, if you call them. Stock theft hits them every year. They see no solution to this problem – the thieves are well armed.

Mokhoabane Ramotsabi (on the left in Figure 22) is the eldest son of 'Mamokhoabane (see above) and a prosperous, active farmer who has built his livelihood through 33 years' work in South African mines. He left Westonaria in 2001, after holding a number of responsible positions there. Now they live mainly from their farming, but their substantial homestead is well furnished and they have a good range of household utensils and agricultural implements. They have 11 cattle, and are one of the few households that have recently made a *bohali* (bridewealth) payment, of five cattle. In addition to 15 chickens they have three geese, which may be a good investment for any homestead with the kind of assets that might interest thieves. They farm four fields, although they describe two of these as *liratsoana*, or 'small gardens' – a common appellation for a small field. 'Out of

Figure 22: Threshing at Mokhoabane Ramotsabi's place

friendship', Mokhoabane also provides a lot of help to Mosioua Mapolosi, a man in his 70's. Mokhoabane and his family do all the farming work on Mosioua's fields, except the weeding. They are active vegetable growers on their homestead plot. They believe that crop production trends at Ha Tumahole over the last 25 years have been stable. Ha Tumahole people like farming, they say, and tackle it in a competitive spirit. They name crop and livestock production as their main livelihood strategies, but also make money from the sale of garments knitted by Mokhoabane's wife 'Matokiso and from the seasonal sale of fruit.

Liphaphang Kuoape, now 62, is the son of Khoeli Kuoape, one of my closest contacts in 1976–77; the brother of one of the original 1976 sample (Pitso Kuoape, himself still alive); and the father of Malefetsane Kuoape, who guided me to many of the households I sought in 2004. He and his wife currently live with four grandchildren. Although he has a well-established homestead, it is clear that his standard of living is slipping. He was better off in the early years after his mining career ended. He has since suffered badly from stock theft. However, they still have three cattle, five sheep and 18 goats, as well as a plough, a yoke and a sledge. Liphaphang has one field himself. In 2002–03 he sharecropped two fields belonging to someone else. He did not do this in 2003–04, although he did help Sephepha Kokame with ploughing and other operations on two of Sephepha's fields. He and his family do some weeding work for other households. Liphaphang describes livestock production as his most important livelihood strategy, followed by the farming of his own land. In the last 12 months he has managed to sell some wool and mohair, to a private trader at Masianokeng. The household recently made a *bohali* payment of four goats.

'**Mateboho Mpane** says that she is about 60 years old, although she looks older. She lives alone, having recently buried her husband, and walks with great difficulty. But she tries to keep moving tackling small household tasks like collecting her firewood. She never went to school, having spent her childhood herding her father's goats – she had no brothers. She was not able to slaughter anything at the funeral of her husband, although one goat was slaughtered at the end

Figure 23: Liphaphang Kuoape and family

of the mourning period (*ho hlobola*). Her homestead consists of two huts. She has one bed, but no other furniture. Her livestock holdings consist of one chicken; their three cattle were stolen from the homestead kraal in 2001. She still has access to two fields – one her own, one on loan from her brother – and sharecrops these, although in 2003–04 she could not find a partner for her brother's field and it remained fallow. 'Mateboho used to make a bit of money by selling chickens, but can no longer do so. She still sells peaches, although she finds this difficult now that she is virtually crippled. She says that she often goes hungry, and that her children cannot help her much. Her daughters' husbands have no work. Her youngest son hawks chips and other snacks in Maseru and occasionally gives her some money, but his wife is reluctant to live with her in Ha Tumahole and look after her. Sometimes a distant relative living nearby helps her with some maize meal. World Vision have not built a latrine for her, she says, because she had nobody to approach them on her behalf. Like many people, 'Mateboho belongs to three separate burial associations, including one that will pay for a coffin (*lekese*) and one that pays for the food at a funeral (*bohobe*).

'**Matsolo Molelekoa** is a diminutive 84-year-old with a big personality. A widow, she never had a child, so 'begged' for[9] Ntaoa, now 52, who lives with her along with six grandsons, Ntaoa's wife and an ancient female relative. 'Matsolo eloped when she was in the old Standard 1 at school. Hers is an active farming household, with a substantial homestead and resources that were probably built up during the careers of 'Matsolo's husband and of Ntaoa. They have a large, multi-roomed house, a second house and a stable, which can accommodate some of their livestock: 15 cattle (including four they look after for Ntaoa's brother Kabelo through a *mafisa* sharing arrangement), 17 goats, two horses and three donkeys. Ntaoa sometimes sells cattle to help pay the many school fees that burden the household. They own

Figure 24: 'Mateboho Mpane

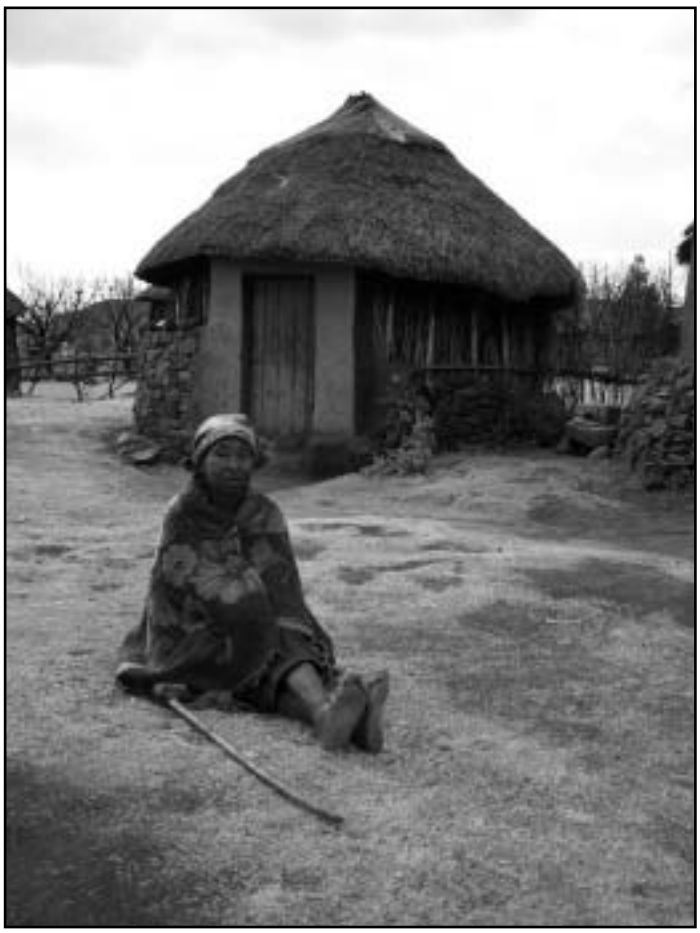


Figure 25: 'Matsolo Molelekoa and grandson

a full set of farming equipment, including a planter and a cultivator (but not a harrow, which is used less now than in the 1970s) and farm their own two fields as well as a couple of other fields through sharecropping agreements. In addition, Ntaoa has a farming partnership with Kabelo. They work on each other's fields and share a span of draught animals and the planter. In 2003–04, one of the sharecropping contracts collapsed in acrimony. The yield was very low, and the field owner took all of it. Despite its active farming, 'Matsolo says that the household can only feed itself for three months a year, on average, from its own production. In summer she has to feed herdboys at the cattle post as well as her numerous family. For the rest of the time, she says, they live on food that they buy by selling livestock, which she describes as the household's most important source of subsistence. Sharecropping other people's land can be a lot of effort for comparatively little reward, she says, especially if all the other person does is provide the land. At the homestead, 'Matsolo has four peach trees and one apricot tree. 'Heathens' (*bahetene*) cut down the fruit trees in her fields, for firewood.

Endnotes

1. *De jure* populations include absentees still considered to be household members based in the community being surveyed. *De facto* figures exclude these absentees and show only those who are actually present.
2. *Sepaile* or wild mustard (*Sisymbrium thellungii*).
3. *Mashoabane* is a type of ground thistle (*Senecio gerrardi*).
4. *Rapa* is the Sesotho name for turnip or kohlrabi.
5. *Papasane* is the Sesotho term for *Rorippa nudiscula, Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum, Nasturtium var. brevistylum*.
6. *Theepe* is the Sesotho term for *Amaranthus paniculatis, A. thunbergii*.
7. *Seruoe* is the Sesotho name for goosefoot (*Chenopodium album*).
8. *Moseha* is the Sesotho for *Danthonia macowani*.
9. 'Matsolo asked a relative of Ntaoa whether she could bring him up as her own son.

Chapter 3: Sharing mechanisms

Sharing mechanisms have sustained Basotho livelihoods for many generations. The emphasis in this report is on agricultural, horticultural and livestock sharing mechanisms, but I refer also to the broader context of sharing and social protection in which these mechanisms function.

Traditionally, social protection linked into community governance. The chief received tribute from his subjects, but through the *tsimo ea lira* (the 'field of the enemies', cultivated for him by the community) and other mechanisms, he was expected to help them in times of hardship. Social protection through governance institutions was one of three broad modes of sharing in society. A second comprised many less formal arrangements whereby people either helped each other to farm or transferred resources to each other to relieve shortages. Third, more formal contracts gradually came into operation. In one form of contract, the providers of labour could be paid. Where the payment was in kind, the relationship between 'employer' and 'employee' might be as much social as economic, with an element of patronage by better resourced households of those who were worse off. Payment at agreed cash rates has become more common in recent decades. Another form of contract was sharecropping (see below), in which a field owner and a provider of certain inputs, equipment and services would agree on their respective roles over a season in farming a field – and agree how to share the crop.

The older literature about Lesotho makes many references to the *letsema*, or work party (see later in this chapter) and to the pivotal role of the chief in social protection. It speaks less of sharecropping. In his book on farming in Lesotho in the old days, Mohapi (1956) gives a long, wry description of the *letsema*, but does not mention sharecropping. Nor does Ashton (1967, first published 1952), whose ethnography is mainly based on fieldwork in mountain areas. Sharecropping may have emerged on both sides of the new Lesotho border in the last quarter of the 19th century as a response to resource distributions and shortages that had not existed before.

As Basotho and other black farmers were steadily dispossessed in South Africa during that period, they began a phase of sometimes prosperous sharecropping with new white settlers who now owned the land, but owned

Box 3: Early examples of sharecropping with white settlers

In 1873… although the Basuto had lost all the fertile ground west of the Caledon, the Freestaters who had taken up the huge farms of 2 000 and 4 000 acres in these areas found themselves unable to cope with the demand for grain at the diamond fields. Across the river in Basutoland were plenty of families with ploughs and oxen ready enough to serve the new white owners of their old fields… The Basuto preferred to work in the O.F.S [Orange Free State] rather than push in to the east into the mountains, and so the practice grew of a farmer in the O.F.S. having as many as three or four families of Basuto on his land, finding him in servants, male and female, for small wages and growing wheat on a share system… The Basuto also received a small acreage to grow maize and millet on for themselves (Tylden 1950:119–20).

little else and certainly could not farm without inputs, equipment and labour from Africans (see Box 3, and Robertson 1987: 190–92). These arrangements persisted well beyond the attempt of the Natives Land Act to prohibit them in 1913 (Van Onselen 1996: 5–8). In Lesotho, meanwhile, the increasing scarcity of land, inputs, implements and labour – linked to the long-term absence of many men at the South African mines – made sharecropping an increasingly attractive mechanism for arranging the whole farming process through a season.

On the farming front, the central issue is that, in Lesotho, 'the homestead as an agricultural unit is largely inadequate' (Sheddick 1954:83). 'Land-holding households are seldom self-sufficient in respect of the resources they must muster for effective cultivation' (Murray 1981:76; see also Boehm 2003a:12). Agricultural sharing mechanisms are thus a central coping strategy in livelihoods whose economic dependence helped to sustain the South African mining industry (Turner 2004).

Many pages could be devoted to a discussion of the many commentaries on sharing mechanisms in the extensive literature on Sesotho land tenure, farming and culture (see especially Sheddick 1954:83–7; Wallman 1969:51–4, 149–51; Murray 1976: 99–129; Turner 1978:237–75; Phororo 1979: 40–50; Murray 1981:76–85; Robertson 1987: 128–204; Franklin 1995:127–50; Boehm 2003a). However, this report is not the place for such a discussion, although it does present a number of interesting comments and quotes from older descriptions and recent analysis. The core of this chapter is, once again, a comparison of conditions at Ha Tumahole in 1976–77 and 2004. From the available data it is possible to show the extent of certain sharing arrangements at the household level and at the level of individual fields in my samples. It is also possible to review small data bases of individual links between households, in order to consider the characteristics of the households they connect and the activities and resources that the links represent.

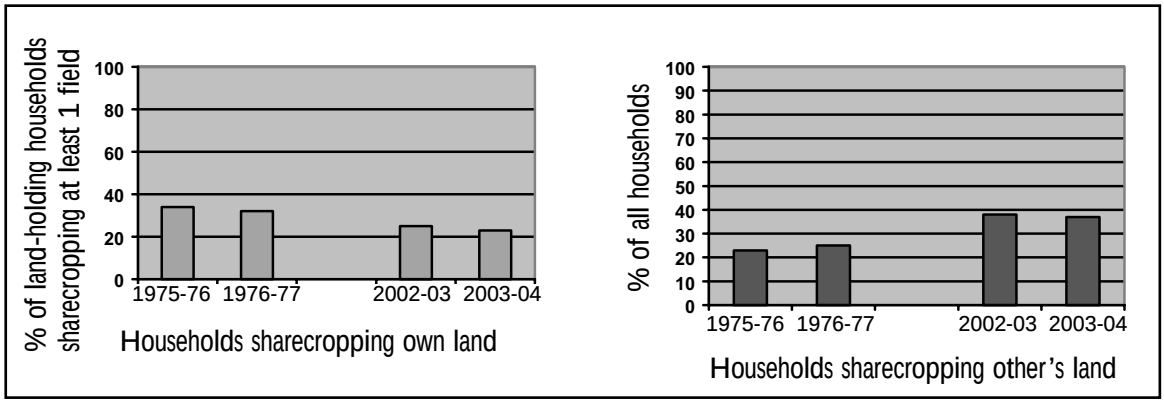
Sharecropping

Sharecropping seems to be as common at Ha Tumahole now as it was in the 1970s. There has been a slight decline in the proportion of surveyed fields overall that were sharecropped over the last two seasons, compared with 1975–76 and 1976–77 (Figure 27), from a little over a fifth to a little under. The proportion of households surveyed that were sharecropping their own land also fell slightly, while the proportion of households sharecropping other people's land appears to have increased (Figure 26). However, the most likely reason for the latter change is that the recent survey group included those households with whom the core sample of 30 households had sharecropping connections. The group may therefore have given disproportionate representation to households that were 'sharecropping out'. The safest conclusion from these data is that this kind of sharing mechanism retains roughly the same level of importance in farming at Ha Tumahole.

In his detailed analysis of sharecropping in Lesotho, Robertson (1987) notes the different livelihood roles that sharecropping can play for a household, and makes much of the supposed distinction between two kinds of sharecropping represented by two Sesotho words – *halefote* and *seahlolo*. He argues that, although many Basotho told him that both words meant the same thing, the first word (derived from Dutch) represents the entrepreneurial end of the sharecropping spectrum, as it developed in the Free State in the 19th century and as it continues to be practised now by a small minority of enterprising farmers who have the necessary draught power and equipment.

He associates the indigenous word *seahlolo* with the redistributive function of helping people out of temporary difficulties or longer-term resource shortages by pooling land, cattle and equipment. The two motives for sharecropping with a land owner, in other words, are 'business' and 'pity' (Robertson 1987:169). Of course, it is quite possible for these motives to merge, most notably in the many cases when a younger (usually male)

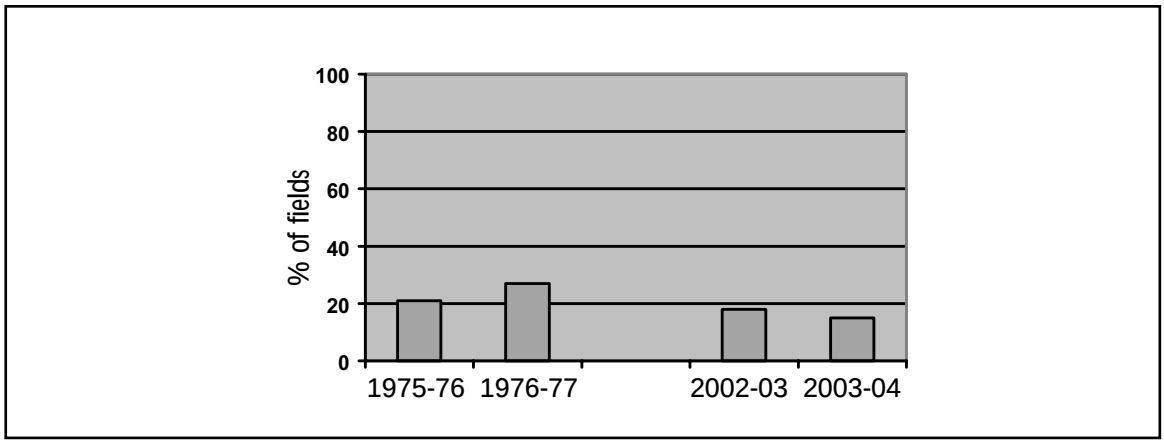
Figure 26: Proportion of households sharecropping own and others' land, 1975–76 to 2003–04



1975-–76: N= 102. 1976–77: N = 99. 2002–03, 2003–04: N = 65.

1975–76 and 1976–77: N = 122. 2002–03 and 2003–04: N = 76.

Figure 27: Proportion of fields sharecropped, 1975–76 to 2003–04



1975–76 and 1976–77: N = 206. 2002–03: N = 148. 2003–04: N = 154.

person sharecrops with an older (usually female) field owner who is no longer able to farm autonomously. Lawry (1983) describes entrepreneurs in the lowlands entering into numerous sharecropping agreements with widows that last for the rest of the old woman's life and guarantee certain funeral expenses when death finally closes the contract.

Just as they did in the 1970s, informants at Ha Tumahole in 2004 insisted that there is no difference between *halefote* and *seahlolo*. Now, as before, sharecropping can be contentious, and there continue to be instances of broken or spoiled sharecropping contracts. Some field owners still complain about how sharecroppers have exploited or cheated them. Many sharecroppers complain that these agreements are hardly worth all the effort they put in, although 5% of the surveyed households described sharecropping others' land as their number one livelihood strategy and this activity ranked fourth in the weighted overall scores achieved by Ha Tumahole livelihood strategies in 2004 (Figure 30). A new complaint by sharecroppers, however, is that it used to be generally accepted that the sharecropper could deduct an amount of grain to compensate him or her for special inputs such as fertiliser, pesticide or commercial seed that he or she had provided. The balance of the harvest would then be divided equally with the field owner. Now, they say, field owners

insist on a simple fifty-fifty split, regardless of what expenses the sharecropper may have incurred. This implies that field owners are in a stronger bargaining position than they used to be. It is not entirely clear why this should be, although Figure 26 suggests that a larger proportion of households now find it necessary to sharecrop others' land.

Sharecropping links various types of household. The most common differential is that the field-owning household is less well provided with the other factors of crop production than the partner household. Normally there is a contrast between a 'weaker' household, which has the field but little or no draught power and implements, and a 'stronger' household, which has these resources. This sharecropping partner household may have its own fields, or may not. The latter cases include some well-off families that for some reason lack land, as well as young men who are still in the early stages of building their households. Some of these young men sharecrop with cattle and/or implements that actually belong to their parents. More broadly, it is not unusual for someone to bring together the necessary draught power and equipment through various other sharing arrangements, and apply the resources so assembled to his/her sharecropping contract with a field owner.

The choice of sharecropping partner depends partly on expediency, and in large measure on the perceived reliability of the other party. Some sharecropping contracts are renewed year after year because the two households have good experience of working together. Kinship ties are not a special reason to sharecrop together, and some people say that sharecropping with kin is better avoided.

In 2002–03, only eight (29%) of the 28 sharecropped fields covered by my survey were sharecropped with kin. The following year, eight (35%) of 23 sharecropped fields linked households that were kin.

The stereotype of sharecropping is a contract between an old widow, who no longer has the resources to farm her fields, and a younger man in the prime of life who does have the necessary draught power and implements. But the sharecropping links covered in my survey of the 2003–04 season show a much broader range of partners. It is true, however, that almost all sharecropping contractors, i.e. those who provide inputs that the field owner lacks, are men. As can be seen from Figure 28, those who arranged to sharecrop one or more of their fields in this season range from young people in their 30's to the elderly, with the bulk of this small sample aged 50 or above.

Figure 29 shows that the commonest age for sharecropping contractors in the 2004 survey was between 40 and 60, but a significant number were older. One of the oldest is a woman, 'Matsolo Molelekoa (see Chapter 2), who is able to 'sharecrop out' like this because she has younger, male household members to maintain the necessary resources and do the farming work. The older men who are still sharecropping contractors are in a similar position. Either they still have the strength and resources to farm other people's fields themselves, or they still have sons or other male relatives within their households to provide the labour. At the other end of the age range are young men whose parents or other relatives lend them the necessary resources making it possible for them to sharecrop independently.

The stereotype of sharecropping links a poorer field owner to a contractor who is better off. As explained in the introduction to this Report (see Chapter 1: 'Approach and method'), I subjectively assigned each of the households I surveyed in 2004 to one of four livelihood categories, ranging from 'very poor' to 'well off'. Looking at the subjective livelihood categories of the surveyed households at Ha Tumahole who were sharecropping in 2003–04, we can see that there is some concentration of the field owners in the poorer categories. Only one contractor seemed to me to be 'very poor' (a young man using his father's resources to sharecrop), and there were seven in each of the 'medium' and 'well off' categories. But, as Figure 30 shows, there were more contractors in the 'poor' group. This reflects the fact that many households who can still marshal the resources to enter into a sharecropping contract may not be particularly prosperous in other respects. Among these are households whose male

Figure 28: Sex and age of field owners sharecropping their own land, 2003–04

N = 21. N = 21.

Figure 29: Sex and age of contractors sharecropping others' land, 2003–04

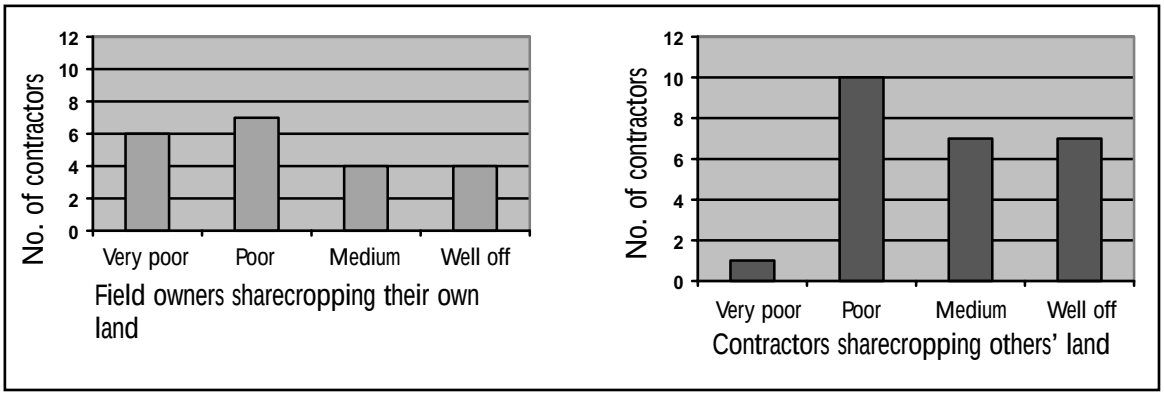
N = 25. N = 25.

head is getting on in years. Perhaps with the help of his son(s) and other farming partners, he can get fields ploughed and planted, and he has enough labour in the family to fulfil his share of the weeding and harvesting obligations. But other household assets may be depleted, and in this post-mining age there may be no cash income coming into the family. Conversely, some field owners who sharecrop their fields are well off. At Ha Tumahole, they include some of the dwindling minority of men working in South Africa, who cannot be present to farm their land; one man with a full time job in Lesotho; and a widow who retains substantial assets and has children in employment.

Over the 2002–03 and 2003–04 seasons, the 76 households covered by the 2004 survey at Ha Tumahole were involved in a total of 94 sharecropping contracts. In 39 of these contracts, the field holder was one of the core sample of 30 households. The other 55 field holders involved in these contracts in one or other of the two seasons were linked to the core sample through sharecropping or other links. In exactly half of the total of 94 contracts, the field holder was a resident of the Ha Tumahole survey area. In the other 47 cases, the field holder lived elsewhere. This indicates the way in which sharecropping networks spread across the countryside, from village to village.

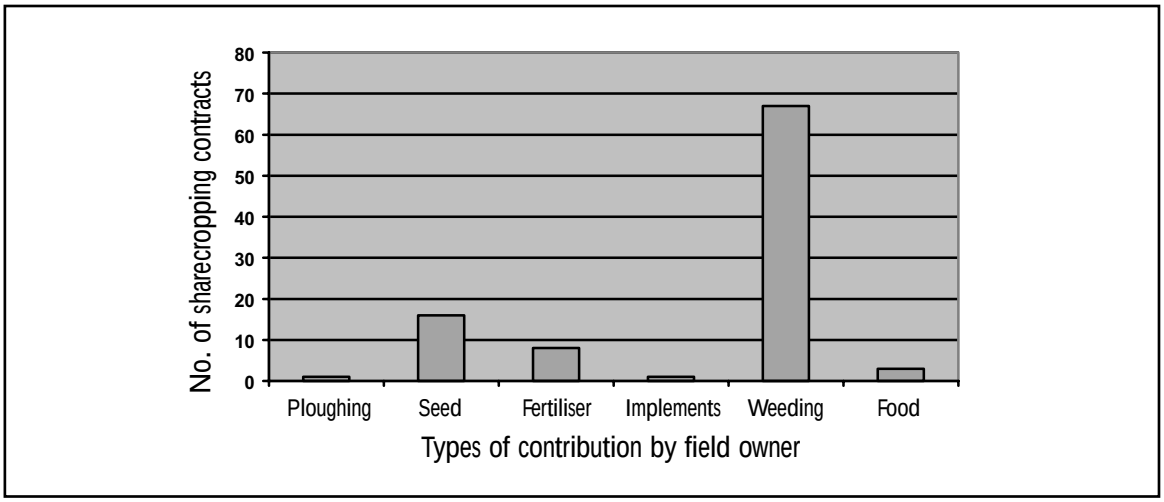
Given that there were 94 sharecropping contracts in total, it is interesting to see from Figure 31 that field owners only contributed to the weeding in 67 of them.

Figure 30: Livelihood status of sharecroppers, 2003–04



N = 21. N = 25.

Figure 31: Contributions by field owners in sharecropping contracts, 2002–03 and 2003–04



N = 94.

There may have been some under reporting in this regard, as weeding labour is generally regarded to be a standard contribution by both parties in sharecropping, and therefore some respondents may not have mentioned it. However, there certainly are cases in which the field owner, usually because of infirmity or absence, makes no contribution to this work. Harvest labour is not included in this data set because, at the time of the survey in winter 2004, not all the fields sharecropped over the previous summer had been harvested yet. The most striking aspect of these sharecropping contracts is how little the field owners contribute. In many cases, the contractor is providing everything except the weeding (and harvesting) labour, to which he or she also contributes.

Since the 1960s, government has been borrowing the concept of sharecropping to promote crop production in Lesotho. Wallman (1969:149–51) describes the first efforts of the Farmech Scheme in Mafeteng district in 1963 to provide tractor ploughing services to local farmers on a sharecropping basis, with the scheme receiving some of the yield. At Lesotho's tenth anniversary of independence in 1976, government sharecropping returned with a more political flavour, concentrating on wheat production in the lowlands. These efforts were replicated in several seasons during the following

decades, accompanied on some occasions by the incongruous spectacle of combine harvesters hired by the government from Free State farms moving along lowland roads to the fields of Basotho farmers. Government sharecropping has generally had two key characteristics. Technically, it has led to poor production because it was inadequately administered: inputs and ploughing or harvesting equipment arrived late, or did not arrive at all. In financial terms, these programmes have involved heavy losses for government and heavy subsidies for farmers, who often had nothing to do except sign the sharecropping contract at the start of the season and receive their share of the harvest at the end.

Most recently, these arrangements have evolved into sharecropping that was meant to help farmers after the 'famine' of 2001–02. For the 2002–03 season, government distributed subsidised inputs on the basis of contracts that required farmers to repay half the costs after harvest. The inputs covered were supposed to include tractor ploughing, fertiliser and seed. One of the areas covered by this scheme was Machache, within which Ha Tumahole falls. As in other areas of the country, however, the scheme did not work well, with insufficient inputs being made available and many of them arriving late.[1] Some people in the Machache area could not plant in time, and held the inputs over until the following year. Many of the fields that were planted produced very small harvests. Farmers were often unable to make the cash repayments that the scheme required. Later it was announced that repayments could be made in grain, but in July 2004 the Ministry of Agriculture office for the Machache area had not yet received the official conversion table for calculating repayments in grain. Meanwhile, there have been accusations of fraud in the handling of inputs at the Machache area office, and the officer responsible has been transferred. As in many previous government sharecropping schemes, farmers have not paid their agreed share of the costs following disappointingly small harvests, and government is likely to have incurred a substantial loss on the operation.

Since then, World Vision has also started sharecropping with farmers in the Ha Tumahole area. In earlier years, they donated seed and fertiliser to selected households. 'To try and get people to take the support more seriously', they have now converted to a sharecropping arrangement in which they provide seed and fertiliser to anyone who is interested.[2] The farmer is responsible for all field operations and must repay 30% of the harvest, in kind, to World Vision. The organisation continues to donate food to households in severe need.

Overall, however, the coverage of these schemes at Ha Tumahole was limited. In 2002–03, 5% of fields included in my survey were reported to have been planted with seed from a 'government scheme', 2% with seed from a 'World Vision scheme', and 12% of the fields were planted with seed that had been 'bought from the government'. In 2003–04, the proportions were 3%, 2% and 13% respectively. Slightly higher proportions of fields were reported to have used fertiliser from government and World Vision schemes: 9% and 6% respectively in 2003–04.

Work parties

Work parties or *matsema* used to be a central sharing mechanism in the rural economy of Lesotho, and are referred to in much of the older literature (see Box 4). They were still fairly common at Ha Tumahole in 1976–77. Today, the almost universal response to enquiries about *matsema* is that they no longer happen, because people today are not prepared to work for a meal and some beer. They want money. Interestingly, the chief's councillor at Ha Tumahole told Robertson the same thing in 1983 (Robertson 1987: 152). As noted in the section on 'Some current livelihoods' in Chapter 2, just one, relatively well off, family at Ha Tumahole told me in 2004 that they still held *matsema*. A much more common arrangement now is field labour for cash (*ho koropa*), which is discussed later in this chapter.

Box 4: Work parties/*matsema*

The Basutos assemble every year, to dig up and sow the fields appropriated for the personal maintenance of their chief and his first wife. It is interesting to see on these occasions hundreds of black men in a straight line raise and lower their mattocks simultaneously, and with perfect regularity. The air resounds with songs, which serve to invigorate the labourers and keep time in their movements. The chief generally makes a point of being present, and he takes care that some fat oxen are prepared for the consumption of his robust workmen. Every class has recourse to the same system to lighten and forward their labour; but among subjects, there is reciprocity (Casalis 1861:162–3).

In all phases of agricultural work great use is made of organised, co-operative work-parties called *matsema*. These are gay, sociable affairs comprising from about ten to fifty participants of both sexes. Ordinary people invite their close friends and neighbours to help them, headmen and chiefs call on their followers as well. Uninvited guests are welcomed provided they do some work.

These *matsema* are useful though not very efficient. They assemble in the morning about 9 o'clock and work, with frequent breaks for light refreshment, until about 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon, to the accompaniment of ceaseless chatter and singing. There are different songs for weeding, harvesting and threshing, the tunes being standardised throughout Basutoland, whereas the words are composed, *ex tempore*, by the leader.

Occasionally praise-songs are sung and one of the workers executes a *pas seul*, accompanied by the applause of the men and the trilling cries (*lilietsa*) of the women. When the host thinks they have worked enough, they adjourn to his house where food and drink are provided and the party becomes purely social … Chiefs and other important authorities have the right to call their subjects to so-called *matsema* to work in their fields, on pain of being fined ten shillings. Such work is supposed to be confined to the chief's public fields (*lira*) and not extended to his wives' private fields, but this is a distinction which is not always observed. Traditionally, too, the chief has a moral obligation to reward the workers with food and drink, but very few observe it, with the result that compulsory *matsema* are reluctantly and grumblingly attended (Ashton 1967:131 [first published 1952]).

Other sharing mechanisms in crop production

Sharecropping arrangements form only a fraction of the inter-household linkages that Basotho use to achieve their annual crop production. Much more common are the less formal ties of friendship, kinship and support that lead people to work in one another's fields – sometimes for many years in succession. Most notable among these are the partnerships men use to make up the necessary span of oxen and to provide the implements needed for ploughing, planting and cultivating the land. For example, Liphaphang Kuoape is the paternal uncle of Lazaro Kokami, and regularly shares most farming tasks with the younger man. Lazaro has no fields of his own, but Liphaphang helps him in his work on the fields that he sharecrops. Mokhoabane Ramotsabi partners Mosioua Mapolosi each season. Mosioua, who is not related to Mokhoabane, is an older man, and is now contributing less to the partnership. Still Mokhoabane persists in it 'out of friendship'. In another example, the young Thabo Mokoma has 'joined spans' with the older Libenyane Tsele, who is not kin. Some of these partnerships are between old friends of similar age, who may or may not be kin. Stephen Seakhi, for example, has a regular partnership with his brother-in-law, who lives at Ha Ratau, several kilometres away. Other links, like those involving Lazaro Kokami and Thabo Mokoma, combine the vigour of a younger man with the resources and skills of an older one. Again, the partners may or may not be related. In total, 29 (38%)

Figure 32: Ploughing one of the chief's fields, Ha Tumahole, 1976

of the 76 households covered by the 2004 survey at Ha Tumahole reported these 'shared ploughing' (*re lema le eena*) links. Seven of these households are female headed. Some of these women, like 'Matsolo Molelekoa (mentioned in Chapter 2) have younger men in their households who are in fact the active partners in the relationship. Others were reporting shared farming arrangements with their sons, which might be better described as support by the younger generation for their elder kin. In total, 18 (62%) of these 28 links were between kin.

Some households reported that they are regularly helped by others in their farming. Typically these are women who lack the strength or resources to farm actively. Often, but not always, they are helped by their children. Sometimes the help comes from more distant kin, and sometimes from people with whom they have no kin ties. Ten (13%) of the 76 households in the 2004 survey at Ha Tumahole reported this regular support. Some listed more than one household that helps them in this way. Three of the ten households were unrelated to those who gave them this support. Overall, in addition to sharecropping and rental arrangements, a third (25) of the 76 households reported helping other households in their farming in one way or another during 2003–04.

I did not systematically record the many less formal arrangements that exist, notably among women, to share the heavy labour of weeding and harvesting. There are many ties of friendship and kinship that encourage people to join forces and to work together on each other's land, although the general view at Ha Tumahole is that such mutual support is being steadily supplanted by more mercenary attitudes, as people expect to be paid for work outside their own fields.

A traditional support arrangement that persists at Ha Tumahole is *ho hata maoto* (to follow in the footsteps). After the funeral of the household head or another key family member, friends and neighbours may perform the next key task of the farming season on behalf of the bereaved family. At Ha Tumahole, one household's field was ploughed and planted for it in this way in 2003.

Hire

As I have noted, people at Ha Tumahole believe that the unpaid sharing of agricultural labour and resources is declining, and that the

hire of the factors of agricultural production is in the ascendancy. There are two basic forms of hire in field crop production. First, field owners hire labour, and the workers normally provide the equipment needed for the task in question. Sometimes, in fact, it is the equipment or cattle that the field owner lacks, rather than the labour; but it is not normal to hire these without hiring their owner to operate them. When people are hired to perform more labour intensive tasks such as weeding and harvesting, they normally (but not always) bring their own tools to the job. The second basic type of hire is the rental of land. Although it still only applies to a small minority of fields, this mode of access to land is far from unknown.

It can be seen from Table 8 that four of the 76 households surveyed at Ha Tumahole mentioned farming rented land as a livelihood strategy, and one mentioned the renting out of land. In 2003–04, three of the 76 households farmed rented land. Five borrowed fields. The current chief is renting out some of his fields, which are among the largest and most fertile in the area, because he is not currently living there and finds this the simplest way of keeping them in use.

More indirect modes of land rental also exist. One family I interviewed had handed over a field to one of the Ha Tumahole burial societies. They had lacked the resources (or, presumably, the society membership credentials and subscription record) to give their father a decent funeral when he died. The burial society is now using the field for as long as it takes to earn enough money from the harvests to cover the M1 000 (US $160) debt incurred for the funeral. The family expects it will take two or three years to cover the costs.

Not all hire of agricultural services is paid for in cash, either. For example, one woman at Ha Tumahole had her field ploughed by the person whose animals her grandson had been herding. Another livestock owner ploughed someone's field in return for the right to graze the crop residues there after the harvest.

Meanwhile, *ho koropa*, labouring in others' fields for payment in cash or in kind, is a widespread livelihood strategy for the less well off. Table 8 shows that agricultural piece work for cash was mentioned as a livelihood strategy by 13 (17%) of the 76 households interviewed at Ha Tumahole in 2004, and was the most important strategy of all for four of these. Farm labour for payment in kind was mentioned by only four households, although one of these said that it was their most important strategy.

Farm work for payment in kind falls into three categories. *Lijo tsa ho hlaolisa* is the grain paid for weeding labour. Food paid for work at harvest time is *lijo tsa mohlomelo*. Food paid for work at threshing time is *lijo tsa moelela* or *meelela*. In all cases, in 2004 the rate of payment was said to be about one basin of grain per day. Weeding labour may be paid in cash at the time, or a deferred payment may be made in grain some months later when the crop has been harvested (*lijo tsa ho hlaolisa*). The latter arrangement can

Box 5: Labour for food

[In the 19th century] women regularly helped other families with agricultural labour in exchange for food. One man explained that

> *…when the winnowing is finished, before they can pour the grain into the bags the woman who is the master* [mong] *there takes a basket for carrying grain …* [and] *she gives a small quantity to each woman* [who came to help].

This small quantity of grain clearly acted as an incentive for women to help each other. One woman stated explicitly that 'they used to help each other a lot because there was this thing which is called *moelela*; *moelela* is food which is given to a woman when the work is finished, it is [measured] with a tin or dish or a small grain basket and you thank her' (Eldredge 1993:119–20).

be risky: the harvest may be poor, or the field owner may be dishonest and conceal the size of the harvest or find another way to cheat you out of the agreed payment of grain.

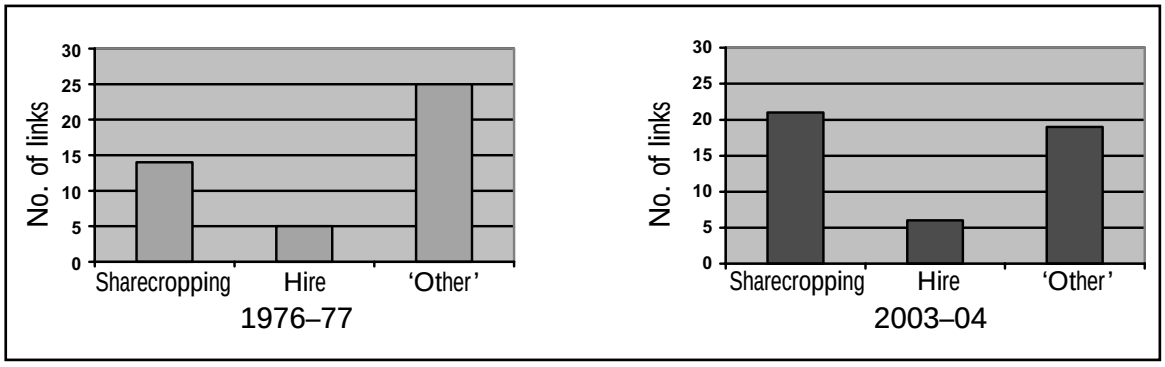
An overview of links in field crop production

In summer 1976–77, the 30 sample households on whom my research at Ha Tumahole focused were involved in a total of 44 links with other households for field crop production. In summer 2003–04, the descendants of the sample of 30 households were involved in a total of 45 such links. When analysing the 1976–77 connections, I classified them into sharecropping links, links involving hire or rental, and 'other' links, which included the many less formal arrangements between friends and relatives. I have more detail for the links in which the 2004 sample were involved, but on the basis of the same simple classification the intensity and nature of inter-household collaboration at these two dates can be seen in Figure 33.

We should not read too much into this comparison between two single seasons for relatively small groups of farming households. Overall, there would not seem to have been much significant change. Rather more of the links in which the 2003–04 group were involved consisted of sharecropping, and somewhat fewer involved the wide range of 'other' connections. Hiring arrangements were at the same modest level.

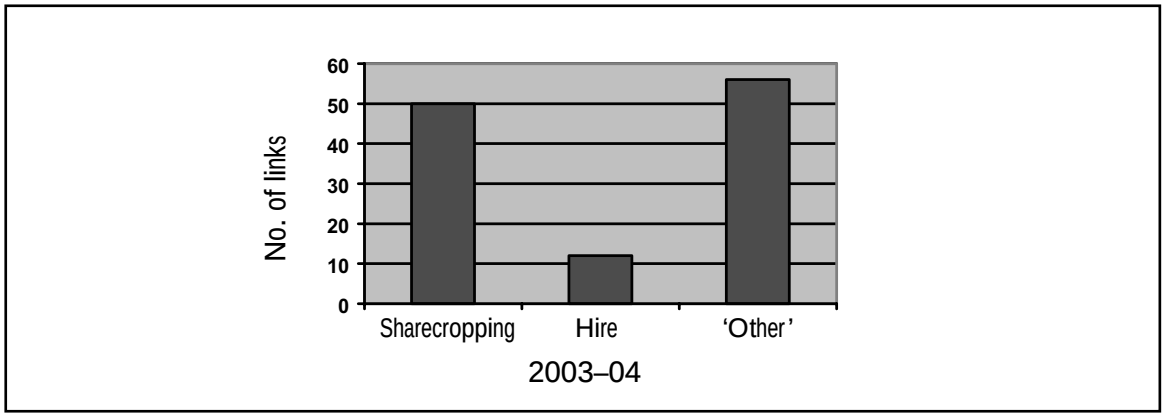
If we produce the same chart for all 117 farming links in which the 76 households surveyed in 2004 were involved the previous summer, we get the distribution of categories shown in Figure 34. Again, rather than draw

Figure 33: Thirty core sample households: types of farming link, 1976–77 and 2003–04



N = 30. N = 30.

Figure 34: All surveyed households: types of farming link, 2003–04



N = 76.

firm conclusions from this single season, we can conclude that the popularity of these agricultural sharing mechanisms has not changed radically over the past quarter century.

In analysing the 1976–77 farming linkages in which the core sample of 30 households were engaged, I produced a large chart that depicted the intricacies of who was connected to whom, for what farming activities, and with respect to how many fields (Turner 1978:268). It is impossible to reproduce that chart in this report, but again certain key parameters from that season can be compared with the same parameters in the linkages reported by the core sample in 2003–04.

In 1976–77, I did not record the number of fields to which the provision of services by core sample households to other households applied. There were seven links of this kind, out of the total of 44. Not surprisingly, as Table 19 shows, all the hire arrangements concerned a single field. But some cropping links involved two or even three fields, and the less formal arrangements, including shared ploughing partnerships, involved as many as four fields.

Table 20 presents the same analysis for 2003–04, but applies to all the farming links recorded for the full survey population of 76 households, and not just to the core sample of 30. It thus shows the links represented in Figure 34. The pattern is broadly similar, with a few sharecropping contracts applying to two fields and some of the 'other' linkages affecting as many as six. In some of these cases, families were linked not only for the cultivation of one or other's own fields, but also for the sharecropping in which one of them was engaged on a third household's land.

Figure 35 presents a different analysis of all 44 links in which the core sample were involved in 1976–77. It shows what types of input were received through the three categories of link. In 37 cases, core sample households are at the receiving end of these links. In the seven links referred to above, households outside the core sample were the recipients of inputs through links with core sample members. Because most links involved several specifically listed inputs, the total number of inputs represented in the

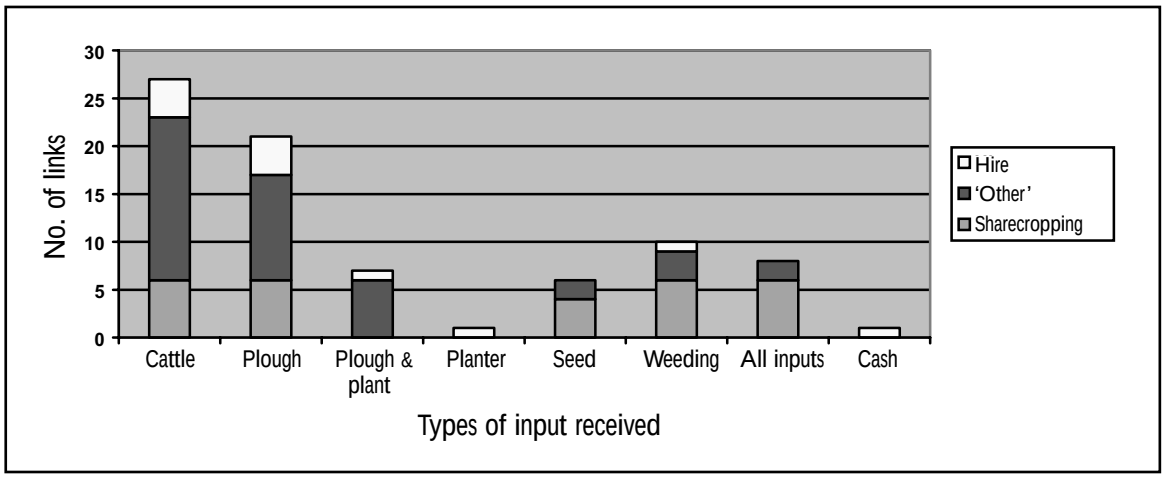
Table 19: No. of fields to which farming links applied, 1976–77

	No. of links				
	No. of fields to which link applies				
Type of link	1	2	3	4	Total
Sharecropping	6	3	1	–	10
Hire	4	–	–	–	4
'Other' links	11	4	5	3	23
Total	21	7	6	3	37

Table 20: No. of fields to which farming links applied, 2003–04

	No. of links						
	No. of fields to which link applies						
Type of link	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Sharecropping	42	8	–	–	–	–	50
Hire	10	2	–	–	–	–	12
'Other' links	25	20	6	2	2	1	56
Total	77	30	6	2	2	1	118

Figure 35: Core sample households: types of input transfer in different sharing arrangements, 1976–77



N = 44.

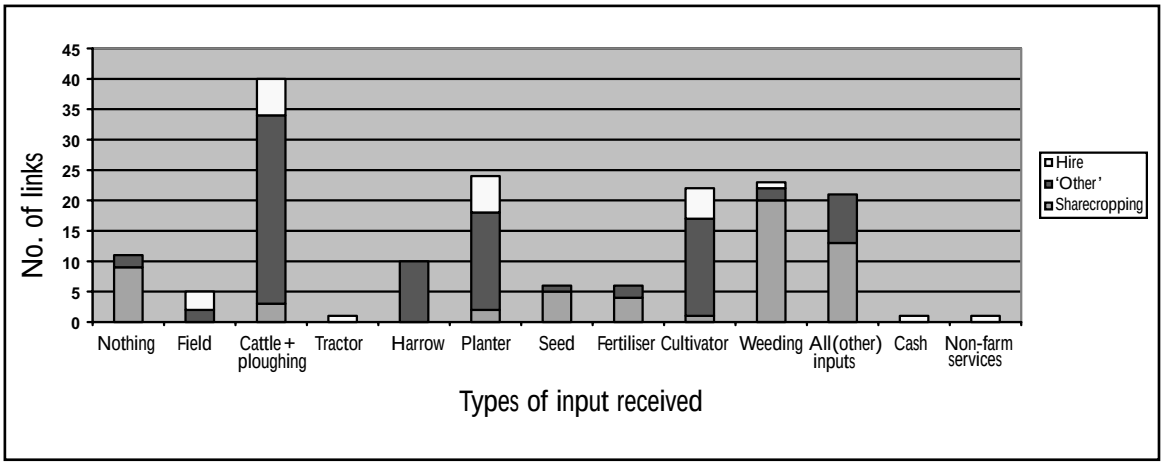
chart far exceeds the total number of links.

For example, one link in the 'other' category might have been recorded as involving arrangements to share a plough, seed, and weeding labour. Because all the recipients represented were land owners, land is not shown as an input in Figure 35. In six sharecropping contracts and two 'other' sharing arrangements, we can see that the other party was providing 'all inputs': everything needed for production of the crop, except the land itself. It was much more common for the field owner to provide one or more inputs in addition to the land. Arrangements for the field owner to get some or all of the necessary cattle from one or more other households were the most common, particularly in 'other' types of linkage. This represents the preponderance of shared ploughing arrangements among men. The seven references to the field owner receiving 'ploughing and planting' services probably concerned cases where he or she had no cattle or plough and arranged for someone else to do the whole operation.

The intricacy and nuances of agricultural sharing mechanisms are such that it is impossible to gather full details about a household's farming connections during a single interview, and it is difficult to code the information clearly and consistently. Figure 35 and Figure 36 are therefore incomplete representations of a complex reality. Unlike Figure 35, Figure 36 is based on all the households surveyed in 2003–04, rather than just the core sample of 30. As with the 1976–77 data, it focuses on the inputs and services received by each household, and does not record those provided by the household. Coding for 2003–04 integrated the provision of cattle and plough, which were treated separately in Figure 35. The most interesting way to review Figure 36 is to look at the kind of inputs involved in the three main types of linkage. As was noted above, weeding is supposed to be a standard input by the field owner in a sharecropping contract, and therefore tends to be under reported as a separate item in the agreement.

But it is interesting to see in Figure 36 that eight households engaged in sharecropping (mostly as contractors on others' land) emphasised that they received no input at all from the other party – not even weeding. We also see 13 sharecropping households saying that they provided all, or 'all other' inputs to the agreed farming process – the latter variant usually referring to contracts in which the land owner does do her or his share of the weeding work. As in 1976–77, the 'other' category of linkages is dominated by the shared span partnerships discussed above, but there are also various separately recorded arrangements in which one household provides the other with one or two specific pieces of equipment, such as harrows,

Figure 36: All surveyed households: types of input transfer in different sharing arrangements, 2003–04



N = 117.

planters and cultivators. There are also some instances of the households represented in Figure 36 hiring this equipment in, and one case of a household hiring a tractor. Single cases are recorded of a household receiving cash for some equipment or service that it hired out, and of the provision of non-agricultural services (in this case, herding labour) as part of an arrangement for field cultivation.

Very few households farm without any kind of collaborative link to other households. In 1976–77, none of the 30 households in my core sample farmed entirely alone. Three farmed their own fields without any input from other households, but were engaged in some way in the crop production of other people. In 2003–04, again, none of the 30 core households farmed without any kind of link to one or more other households.

Four were recorded as farming without any inward linkage. Twenty-six (87%) thus had inward linkages; a much smaller number, 11 (37%), had outward linkages as provider of some kind of input, equipment or service through sharecropping, hire or some other arrangement. Among the full 76 households surveyed in 2004, 59 (78%) reported an inward linkage and 38 (50%) had outward linkages. Just six households were recorded as having no links at all. Of these, three are elderly women living alone. Two have no fields; the third says her field has been fallow for several years. Two of the others are young men with apparent marital difficulties. One has a field but does not farm it. The other has no land and is not currently living at Ha Tumahole. The last person is also landless. A woman, she lives and works elsewhere, although four of her children remain at Ha Tumahole.

It can be seen that only the most marginal and unusual livelihoods do not involve agricultural sharing mechanisms of some sort. Boehm is right to say that, despite its rather low productivity, farming 'constitutes the "social backbone" of Basotho rural communities' (2003a:19). Indeed, of the 11 households in the 2004 survey population of 76 that have no land, seven are recorded as having outward farming links, mainly in the form of sharecropping contracts with land holders. Two of these also have inward links, getting some of the draught power or equipment they need to sharecrop from third parties.

Finally, it is worth noting that in 2003–04, the 117 linkages in which 70 surveyed households were involved branched out beyond these 70 to a further 52 households. Many of these other households are in villages outside Ha Tumahole: the furthest is some seven kilometres away, but most live within an hour's walk of the survey area.

Who links with whom?

As Murray pointed out (1976:121), the definition of kin in a Lesotho community is so intricate that it is to some extent arbitrary. Nevertheless, I made a simple classification of whether the 44 linkages reported by the core sample of 30 households in 1976–77 involved kin.

Table 22 shows the same analysis for all 117 links in which the households surveyed in 2004 were involved during the previous summer season. As in 1976–77, only about a fifth of the sharecropping links are between kin and, not surprisingly, all the hire relationships are between non-kin. But the proportion of 'other' linkages that are formed between non-kin appears to have increased.

For links between kin in the summer 1976–77 season, it is also possible to see what kinds of relatives were connected by the various sharing mechanisms. Although the total numbers involved are small, it is interesting to see the wide range of relationships, and their sometimes surprising manifestations. Two cases that year involved sharecropping and hire relations between parents and children, for example. Unfortunately the greater haste of the 2004 survey precluded collection of the same detailed information about the nature of each kinship link.

Table 21: Links between kin and non-kin in field crop production, 1976–77

	Links between kin		Links between non-kin		
Type of link	No.	%	No.	%	Total
Sharecropping	3	21	11	79	14
Hire	1	20	4	80	5
Other	13	52	12	48	25
Total	17	–	27	–	44

Table 22: Links between kin and non-kin in field crop production, 2003–04

	Links between kin		Links between non-kin		
Type of link	No.	%	No.	%	Total
Sharecropping	10	20	39	80	49
Hire	–	–	12	100	12
Other	35	37	21	63	56
Total	45	–	72	–	117

Table 23: Types of kin related in field crop production, 1976–77

	Parents and children	Grandparents and grandchildren	Siblings	In-laws (same generation)	Aunts and nephews	More distant relatives	Total
Sharecropping	1	–	–	1	–	1	3
Hire	1	–	–	–	–	–	1
Other	5	1	1	3	3	–	13
Total	7	1	1	4	3	1	17

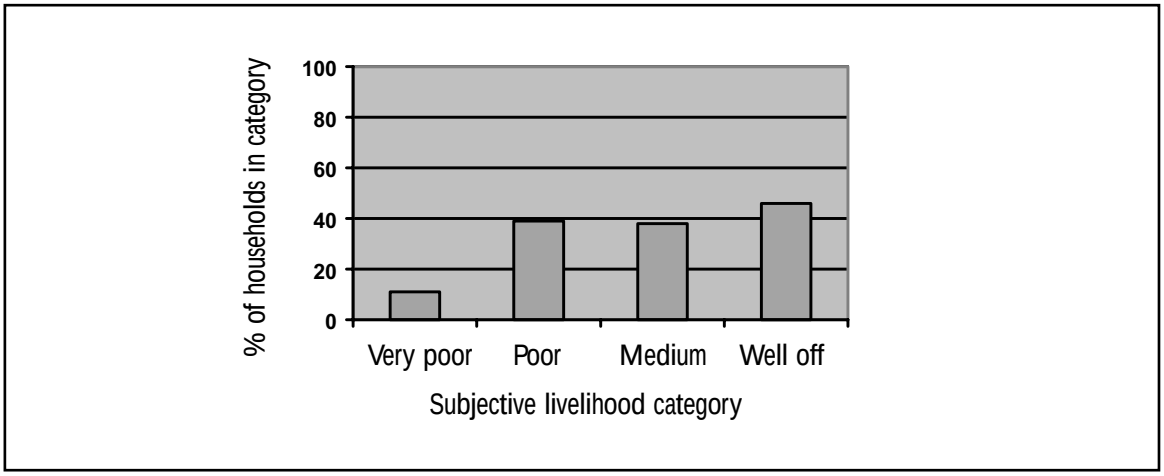
Earlier in this chapter, it was shown that, in 2003–04, male field owners were just as likely to sharecrop their land as female owners, and that all age groups are represented among those who decide to sharecrop their land – although the majority are over 50 (see Figure 28). It was also shown that almost all sharecropping contractors are men. Again, men of all ages sharecrop with field owners, but most are between 40 and 60 – the age at which such household heads are likely to be at the peak of their accumulation of cattle and farming equipment. We saw, too, that it is not only the poorer households that sharecrop their land, and that while the better off are strongly represented among sharecropping contractors, many whom I subjectively classified as 'poor' played this role as well.

As we have seen, in 2003–04, a third of the 76 households surveyed at Ha Tumahole helped other households with their farming in one way or another: these are households at the 'providing' end of linkages in the 'other' category described above, not those involved in sharecropping and rental arrangements. This kind of assistance came from across the livelihood spectrum, as defined by the subjective categories to which I assigned each of the 76 households. It can be seen from Figure 37 that a higher proportion of the 'well off' group gave this help than of any other group, but it is also notable that the proportions of those classified as 'poor' or of 'medium' income, who gave such help, are about the same.

Figure 38 shows how farming households (those owning fields and/or sharecropping others' land) in the different subjective livelihood categories obtained some of their farming inputs (i.e. equipment, seed, fertiliser and/or pesticides) in 2003–04. These data exclude cases of sharecropping. Obtaining these inputs from a relative or friend does not necessarily mean that they were not paid for. Such transactions range from the entirely charitable to the fully commercial, but it was not possible to record the details of each. In many cases, it can be assumed that people paid less than commercial rates if they paid anything at all. In most of these links, there was some element of reciprocity or mutual obligation. Not surprisingly, rental arrangements were commonest among 'well off' farming households. For all except this group, input transactions with kin were commoner than those with other acquaintances. The difference is most marked for the 'very poor'.

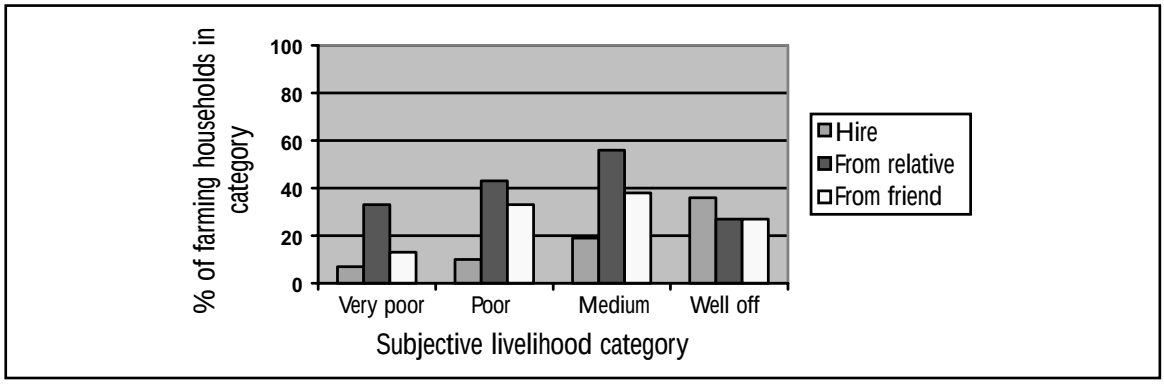
To conclude, Figure 39 and Figure 40 provide an overview of the subjectively classified livelihood status of the recipients and providers in the linkages recorded for the 2003–04 season. These graphs exclude those recipients and providers who were linked

Figure 37: Provision of farming assistance by livelihood status, 2003–04



N = 76.

Figure 38: Input acquisition linkages (excluding sharecropping) by livelihood status, 2003–04



N = 72.

to surveyed households but not themselves interviewed. As I noted earlier, the 70 surveyed households had links as recipients, providers or both, with 52 other households.

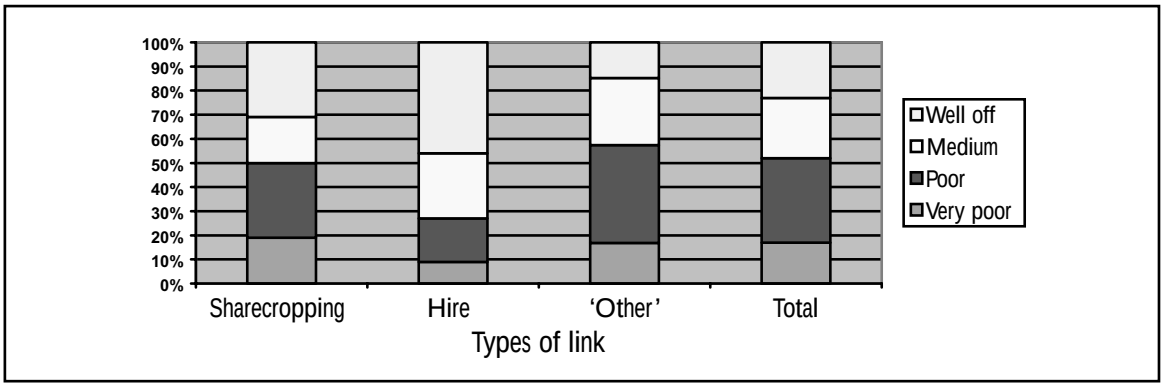
We can see from these graphs that the hiring out of services is the only activity that does not involve all four livelihood categories. According to Figure 40, no 'very poor' households were involved in this kind of service provision. This counter-intuitive result is due to the way questions about farming activities were asked and answers recorded. While many poor people would describe farm labour for others as a livelihood strategy, the questionnaire (Annex. 1) did not facilitate the recording of who had been employed for such purposes in the cultivation of a field. It is not surprising that the 'well off' are the biggest group among hirers of the inputs that were recorded on the questionnaire. It may be reassuring that, overall, the 'very poor' are better represented at the receiving end of the linkages than at the providing end. This suggests that agricultural sharing mechanisms at Ha Tumahole continue to provide a degree of protection against livelihood vulnerability.

Overall, it can be seen that agricultural sharing mechanisms currently help all parts of the livelihood spectrum at Ha Tumahole. They provide the poor with the labour, draught power, equipment and inputs that they lack. Without these mechanisms, many poorer households would be unable to use their fields. At the same time, such sharing arrangements enable the better off – who may or may not have land of their own – to increase their incomes by farming (extra) land. As Robertson pointed out, 'business' and 'pity' both play a role. Sharing mechanisms have an additional function for a minority of households at the better off end of the spectrum. Their other economic activities may preclude active use of their land at home. Sharecropping, rental or less formal arrangements may enable them to keep their land in production and to supplement their other income.

Sharing mechanisms in vegetable production

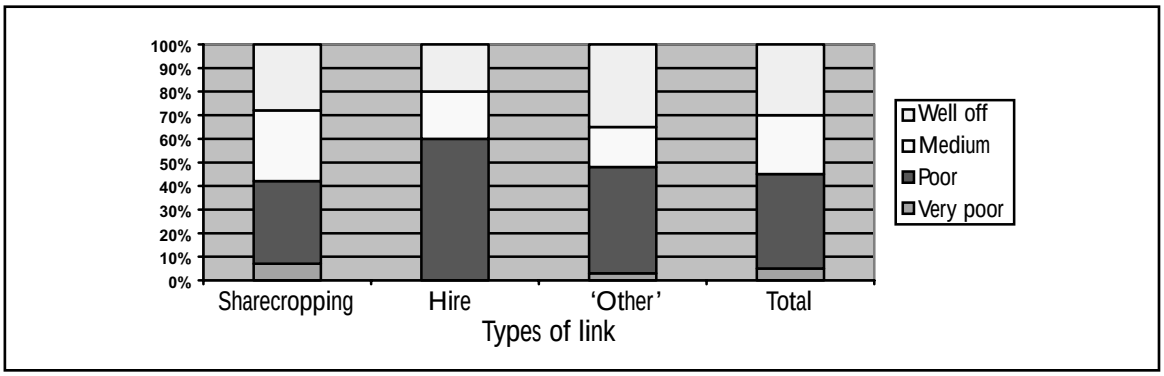
The complex web of sharing mechanisms that links Basotho's fields does not extend to their homestead vegetable gardens. My various enquiries at Ha Tumahole as to whether it was possible, for example, to sharecrop a homestead garden were all answered in the negative. But people do affirm that they help each other from time to time in garden work, on a casual basis, and that they may sometimes give each other seed. This informal pooling of labour links friends and kin, but is not systematic or structured. Indeed, few people at Ha Tumahole practise homestead gardening on a scale that would need much more labour than that available in the household. One woman said that she sometimes gets people to work in her garden and then gives them vegetable seedlings. Or (as she is well off), she may hire people to work in her garden for cash. One young man has an irrigated plot of a tenth of a hectare from which he markets vegetables in

Figure 39: Livelihood status of recipients in different types of farming linkage, 2003–04



N = 91.

Figure 40: Livelihood status of providers in different types of farming linkage, 2003–04



N = 77.

Maseru, but the work involved in cultivating the plot is well within his family's means. I found one field (safely near the village and conveniently near the road) that was devoted to vegetable production. In the rare cases where vegetables are grown in fields, the producers are normally among the better off in the community. Their main links to other households in vegetable production are likely to be in hiring poorer people to provide labour.

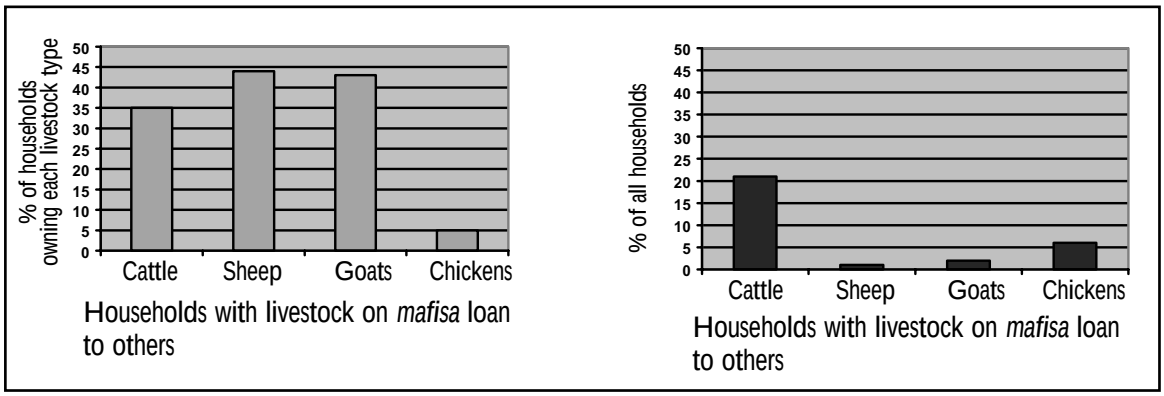
Sharing mechanisms in livestock production

The ancient tradition of *mafisa* continues to function at Ha Tumahole, as elsewhere in Lesotho. In *mafisa*, one household has long-term custody of some or all of another household's livestock, and the right to use them and consume their produce (Sheddick 1954:109–10; Ashton 1967:181). Although livestock production is becoming a riskier and less remunerative livelihood strategy, the prevalence and significance of *mafisa* have not yet declined. But the practice is largely limited to cattle.

As was shown in Chapter 2, 37 (49%) of the 76 households I surveyed at Ha Tumahole in 2004 owned cattle. Thirteen households (35% of the cattle owners) reported that some of their cattle were being kept by others through *mafisa* arrangements. The numbers of cattle involved ranged from one to four. The number of households reporting that they held *mafisa* cattle on behalf of others was 16, or 21% of all the households surveyed. One man said that he looked after 30 *mafisa* cattle for various relatives.

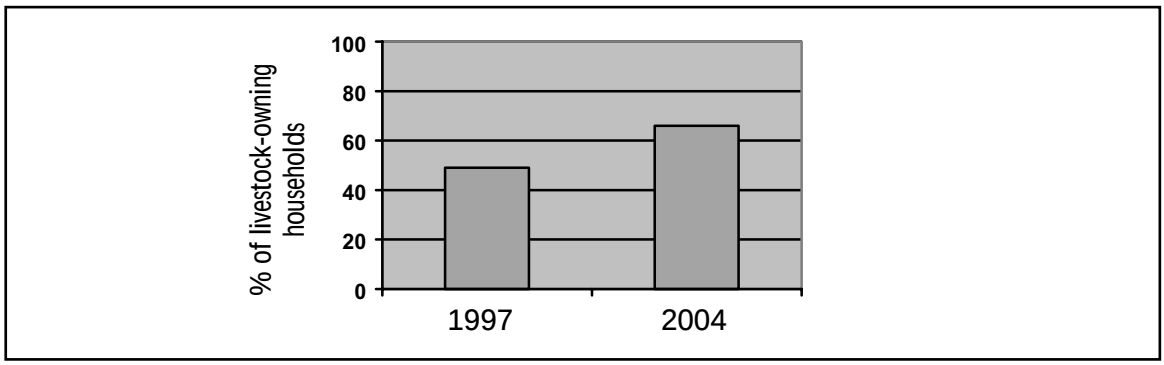
Four of the nine households owning sheep said that some of their sheep were looked after through *mafisa* by others, and a single family reported holding *mafisa* sheep on behalf of another household. The

Figure 41: Households sending and receiving *mafisa* livestock, 2004



N = 37 (cattle); 9 (sheep); 14 (goats); 55 (chickens). N = 76.

Figure 42: Livestock owning households herding their animals with those of others, 1977 and 2004



1977: N = 55. 2004: N = 41.

numbers owning goats are slightly larger, but the proportion sending some of their animals on *mafisa* to others is about the same. *Mafisa* chickens remain a possibility, but are uncommon.

Mafisa is not the only arrangement through which one household's livestock may be herded with those of one or more others. Herding labour is scarcer with more boys attending school. Livestock holdings are becoming smaller, so that in many cases it is less attractive to devote most or all of a boy's time to herding the animals of a single household. Not surprisingly, therefore, the proportion of stock-owning households that pool their animals with others' for herding has increased.

A new sharing arrangement is emerging in response to the stock theft crisis that is currently devastating many Basotho livelihoods (Leboela and Turner 2003:9). Some villages are building communal kraals, where all the local livestock are kept at night with several armed men on guard. (Weapons and training are provided by the police.) A communal kraal is nearing completion at Ha Tumahole. Another is already in operation at nearby Mohlaka oa Tuka.

An important customary sharing arrangement helped sustain livestock production in Lesotho and led many expatriate analysts to exaggerate the country's rate of overgrazing because their calculations did not take into account its contribution to livestock nutrition. This was the tradition of opening the fields to grazing by livestock after the harvest. It was linked to the customary principle of the Basotho (and many similar African societies) that individual tenure of fields only applied during the growing season, and was suspended after the harvest when communal use rights applied to the cultivated areas (Sheddick 1954:111). In 1976–77, this custom was

still in place at Ha Tumahole, with the community's livestock entering the harvested fields to graze after an announcement by the chief's councillor that the area was open for winter grazing. In 2004, I was told that the practice is extinct. Crop residues are now considered to be the private property of the individual field owner, who can take legal action against anyone else who allows his or her livestock to graze them. To reduce the risk of theft, it is now common to cut crop stalks in the fields and bring them for storage at the homestead.

Sharing mechanisms, vulnerability and exclusion

To what extent do sharing mechanisms in rural Lesotho help to combat vulnerability and social exclusion? Nostalgia may cloud the analysis, but there is a general consensus that the structures and linkages in traditional African society were typically effective in this regard. The quotes in Box 6 describe strong ties of community obligation among Basotho, and the proverb recorded by Sekese suggests solidarity between the poor. However, it is now widely believed – and I was often told at Ha Tumahole in 2004 – that the ties and the solidarity are weaker than they were, at least in terms of protecting the vulnerable. Some of the old sharing mechanisms are certainly extinct. At Ha Tumahole, many people no longer even know what the *tsimo ea lira*[3] was. Now, said one informant, if you are in need and you go to the chief for help, 'he will look at your feet'. His wife reminisced about all the neighbouring boys being called to the homestead whenever a cow produced its first milk after giving birth, so that they could be given a drink. Such things no longer happen, she said. Days later, however, I met ten children, most of them visitors, tucking into a big basin of cooked beans prepared by a relatively prosperous household that was nearing the end of an afternoon's threshing.

Box 6: Helping each other

Mafutsana a llelana letsetse.
– Poor people pity each other and help each other in their troubles.

(Sekese 1975:191 [first published 1907], quoted by Sheddick 1954:87)

Basuto were expected to help one another without looking for payment. If an ox fell into a donga, a hut caught fire, or an accident of any kind occurred, a cry of alarm would bring every one within hearing to help.

(Ellenberger 1992:268 [first published 1912])

The esprit de corps *surrounding neighbourliness derives partly from a sense of duty. In a Basuto village, every member is expected to assist his fellow residents as far as rules of sex and age division of labour permit. It is part of the men's duty to see that no woman has to undertake a man's job because she has no men to assist her. It is considered shameful to pass a woman doing work which is normally done by men without offering to help her… Conformity with the general rules for neighbourly assistance usually receives some reward in the form of invitations to beer drinks and of reciprocal help.*

(Sheddick 1954:87)

Figure 43: Eating beans at Mokhoabane Ramotsabi's place

We can look briefly at some of the agricultural linkages reported by the households whom I subjectively classified as 'very poor'. Thirteen of these 18 households have one or more fields. Five (39%) of these 13 were sharecropping one or more of their fields in 2003–04. Not surprisingly, none were contracting to sharecrop the land of others. Five households reported getting some inputs from a relative; two said they got inputs from some other person with whom they had connections.

Although the total number of cases is small, we can also see from Table 24 that many of the livelihood strategies of the 'very poor' involve interaction with, or support from, other households (see also Table 8). The preponderance of older people in these households explains why 'support from children' ranks first in the weighted livelihood scores for this group.

It is impossible in a short visit to gain a thorough understanding of the extent to which inter-household sharing and support continue to assuage livelihood vulnerability in a community. I did ask, whenever possible, what people thought about this issue. The general view was that Basotho are more individualistic than they used to be, and that the vulnerable are less assured of support these days. Nevertheless, although I met several very poor people, I met no one who was totally isolated, and many informants did refer to other households on which they could rely for regular or occasional help.

Not surprisingly, many people also claimed that they sometimes give such support. It is clear that most women still have friends, neighbours or relatives to whom they can turn if they need a basin of maize meal, a candle or a little cooking oil when times are hard for them. My tentative conclusion from observation at Ha Tumahole is that Basotho still provide a degree of social protection to each other, and that social exclusion remains rare. While vulnerability is almost universal in Basotho livelihoods at Ha Tumahole as elsewhere, absolute destitution is still not allowed to occur.

Table 24: Livelihood strategies of the 'very poor', 2004

Strategy	Rank (weighted scores)	% of households ranking this strategy no. 1	% of households who mentioned this strategy
Support from children	1	17	39
Farming own land (not sharecropping)	2	6	28
Local piece jobs	3	11	22
Vegetable garden	4	–	28
Farm labour for others	5	17	17
Farming own land (sharecropping)	6	11	17
Selling peaches	6	–	22
Support from parents	8	11	11
Support from relatives	8	6	17
War widow's pension	8	11	11

N = 18.

Overall trends in sharing mechanisms

Some sharing mechanisms seem to have held their own at Ha Tumahole between 1977 and 2004. Others are in decline, or have disappeared. Sharecropping functions at much the same levels, and plays similar roles, as it did 28 years ago. The *letsema* work party, on the other hand, has almost vanished – although there are still those who claim to hold them. Another traditional institution, *ho hata maoto*, or help to a bereaved family with its farming, still functions occasionally. Inter-household (usually inter-men) arrangements for shared ploughing, and other long-term friendly farming partnerships, are as common as ever, and it is still very unusual for a household to farm without any links at all to other households. Meanwhile, the proportion of livestock-owning households that share herding arrangements with others has increased since 1977, and over a third of surveyed cattle owners in 2004 were using the customary institution of *mafisa* to place some or all of these animals in the care of others.

Arrangements for the employment of farm labour for payment in kind can be seen as sharing mechanisms, because they typically involve an element of patronage of the poor by the better-off. The productivity of the former is often not high, but they are assured of some sustenance from the latter. The least efficient of these arrangements, the *letsema*, is almost extinct. Other modes of payment in kind persist, but the consensus is that they are slowly being supplanted by the payment of cash wages. It is fair to assume that, as farm labour is monetised, the element of patronage is declining and the function of such labour as a sharing mechanism is dwindling.

As just discussed, the majority view at Ha Tumahole is that the community spirit is in decline, and that people help each other less than they did. We have seen that support from parents, children or other relatives is still often cited as a significant livelihood strategy, but (doubtless with a tinge of nostalgia) most people say that life is becoming more individualistic. Only in death, most report, does the community still unite to help the bereaved household. Overall, the effectiveness of the community as provider of social protection is weaker than it was.

This is not the unanimous view, however, and some say that the Sesotho spirit of helping each other is still strong. Meanwhile, the state is not yet playing a stronger role in this regard, although it may begin to as the new pension system comes into operation. New roles shared by the community and the state may emerge if the Support Groups

recently established in Ha Tumahole and throughout the country start to function usefully.

Endnotes

1. J. Wyeth, personal communication; L. Lesetla, personal communication.
2. M. Moleleki, personal communication.
3. This can be literally translated as ‘field of the enemies’, land cultivated for the chief by the community. The chief was expected to use the produce from this field to help those in need.

Chapter 4: Conclusions and recommendations

What is the state of sharing at Ha Tumahole? This chapter draws some conclusions and makes some recommendations based on the research conducted in the study area in 1976–77 and 2003–04.

The state of sharing at Ha Tumahole

Ha Tumahole is not yet a community in crisis – either economically or socially. Standards of living have risen in many ways since 1977. Many sharing mechanisms are still in place. But there are ominous signs of growing vulnerability.

The community has lost much of its economic backbone – migrant remittances from the South African mines – and new income-generating opportunities in Maseru and elsewhere are a poor substitute. The young find it very hard to get work, and often lack the resources to marry. Those marriages that do take place, along with other relationships that produce children, often seem to disintegrate. Social and economic burdens on older people are increasing as HIV/Aids begins to take its toll and an increasing number of orphans require care. Through formal and informal sharing mechanisms, mature households that built up assets during their heads' mining careers in the late 20th century continue to sustain much of the community's farming. But they are the last generation who will be able to play this role.

Agricultural sharing mechanisms do not always link different economic strata, however – there are many cases in which the poor link with the poor to farm each other's fields. Meanwhile, although there is little doubt that households continue to help each other in many informal ways and there is no absolute destitution or social exclusion at Ha Tumahole, the consensus is that society is becoming more individualistic and mercenary. Village level institutions are weaker and scarcer than they were in the 1970s. The only significant new organisation on the horizon, the Support Group, could also serve as an important sharing mechanism. But it is as yet untested.

Recommendations

It is not easy to intervene usefully in the complex socio-economic structures and systems described in this report. In theory, such external support can take two forms. First, government, donors and NGOs can try to support or enhance sharing mechanisms in rural society. Secondly, they can try to strengthen social protection mechanisms. These two forms of support overlap, of course. But there is more potential in the second approach than in the first.

There is a long and lamentable history of government adopting the traditional mechanism of sharecropping as a development strategy. These interventions have always generated losses for the state. Sometimes, field owners have profited from them, since government has rarely succeeded in collecting its share of the proceeds. Often, however, the field owners have suffered too, since ploughing and input delivery have been late and/or inadequate, and harvests correspondingly low – meaning, of course, that there was still less prospect of government being able to cover its costs. Government should give up trying to sharecrop with Basotho. Such strategies are

in nobody's interest. This advice is linked to a broader conclusion. It is not feasible for government, or any other external agency, to intervene effectively in the sharing mechanisms within a community. We should seek to track how such mechanisms evolve, as I have done at Ha Tumahole. It will be particularly important to monitor the proportion of fields not used because their owners could not marshal the resources to farm them, through sharecropping or less formal arrangements. But it is clear that Basotho are as resourceful as ever in optimising joint use of their limited resources. Outside agencies will never have the sophistication or capacity to participate usefully in these intricate processes.

As we move across the spectrum from sharing to social protection, there is greater potential for useful support from outside. As Boehm argues, this means that LRAP and similar programmes must move into 'the difficult grey zone between "development" and "welfare"' (Boehm 2003b:4).

Somewhere between sharing and social protection is the growing role of older households in providing for orphans and those in the middle generation who are sick or whose households, if they ever had them, have disintegrated. Welfare agencies like World Vision already try to reach and support orphans and their carers. It is plain that much more of this support will be needed. Agencies like CARE that seek to target their development interventions on the vulnerable must ensure that their target group includes those whose limited resources are being stretched by support for the vulnerable.

In Ha Tumahole, as elsewhere, local government should be playing a key role in social protection. But local government is weak – partly because of the variable performance of chiefs, but mainly because the state abolished other local government institutions some years ago and has only recently established new Community Councils that are less 'local' than the old Village Development Councils. An important task for CARE and all other development and welfare agencies is to advocate and support urgent action to get the new local government system fully installed, trained and working on the ground. The repeatedly postponed local government elections, finally held on 30 April 2005, were only the first step in an institutional development process that is likely to last at least a decade.

The one light on the institutional horizon is the Support Group, established in 2004 at Ha Tumahole as in so many communities up and down the country (Lethola 2005). Although rightly intended to focus on support for those living with HIV and Aids, these groups can easily play a broader role in social protection. Members of the new group at Ha Tumahole assume that they will do this. So far, the development of Support Groups is following a familiar pattern. Government has done the easy part, which is to get these groups chosen in hundreds of villages. The challenge now is to give them meaningful training and to support them in establishing an effective role in their communities. At Ha Tumahole and, I suspect, many other places, the Support Group has been waiting many months for this capacity building to happen, and has not yet started any practical activities.

CARE should consider whether, through LRAP and other initiatives, it can enhance its development and welfare support to vulnerable households through a programme of action with these new Support Groups. In consultation with the Ministry of Health, it might pilot a process of capacity building and community action with selected Support Groups in some of the districts where LRAP is active. This brief review of sharing mechanisms in Ha Tumahole suggests that it will be hard for an agency like CARE to intervene directly in support of the myriad household-to-household links that people use to cope with their vulnerability. But, given the slow erosion of some of these mechanisms, the rapid growth in the need for social protection and the institutional weaknesses at village level, action to build the effectiveness of Support Groups might be an important step forward.

Annex 1. Questionnaire

CARE Lesotho Ha Tumahole household survey, 2004

Village _____ Date _____ HH no. _____

1. Household composition

No.	Name	Relationship to hh head	Year born (estimate if necessary)	Sex	Marital status	Residential status	Attends pre school	Attends school, college etc.	Highest standard reached at school	Illness/ disability
1		1								
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										
11										
12										

Illness/disability	
1	Ill < 1 month
2	Ill > 1 month
3	Diabetes
4	Epilepsy
5	Dumb
6	Deaf
7	Blind
8	Mental handicap
9	Cannot walk
10	Other

2. Deaths in last 12 months

		Relationship to hh head	Age (estimate if necessary)	Sex	Marital status	Cause of death	No. of months nursed
13							
14							
15							
16							

Cause of death	
1	Illness
2	Accident
3	Murder
4	Other

Relationship to household head	
0	Parent of household head
1	Household head
2	Spouse of household head
3	Child of head/spouse
4	Spouse of child of head/spouse
5	Grandchild of head/spouse
6	Other relative of head/spouse
7	Full time hired worker
8	Other person not related to head/spouse

Marital status	
1	Never married
2	Married
3	Deserted
4	Divorced
5	Separated
6	Widowed

Residential status	
1	Resident
2	Absent outside Lesotho - work
3	Absent outside Lesotho - other
4	Absent in Lesotho - work
5	Absent in Lesotho - school
6	Absent in Lesotho - other

Sex	
1	Male
2	Female

Highest standard reached at school	
0	Did not go/has not yet gone to school
66	Vocational qualification
77	College or university qualificatior
88	Unknown
Record according to new Lesotho system!!	

HH no. _____

3. Members of household in wage employment now or any time in 2003 or 2004:

No.	Name	Type of employment	Where employed	Currently employed	Employed at other time in 2003/04	Full time or part time	Wages per month (R/M)	Free food	Free lodging

Type of employment	
1	Mine
2	Railways
3	Construction
4	Factory
5	Formal retail
6	Informal retail
7	Office work (not government)
8	Other business
9	Farm
10	Domestic servant, cleaner
11	Government
12	Teacher
13	Shepherd
14	Security
15	Other (specify)
88	Unknown

Where employed	
1	Local area (Nazareth)
2	Maseru
3	Elsewhere Lesotho
4	RSA
8	Unknown

Full time or part time	
1	Full time
2	Part time

CARE Lesotho Ha Tumahole household survey, 2004

HH no. _____

4. Household members engaged in other income-generating activities

No.	Name	Type of activity	Where activity takes place	Full time	Some time every day	Some time every week	Some time every month	Less often	Income per month (R/M)

Type of activity	
1	Grass weaving
2	Knitting
3	Sewing
4	Other handicrafts
5	Selling fruit, vegetables
6	Selling cooked food
7	Selling alcohol
8	Other retail
9	Building
10	Agricultural work
11	Shoe repairs
12	Brick making
44	Other (specify)
88	Unknown

Where activity takes place	
1	Local area (Nazareth)
2	Maseru
3	Elsewhere Lesotho
4	RSA
8	Unknown

5. Can you read Sesotho?

Yes	No

6. Assets in working order

	No.		No.
Radio		Mobile phone	
Tape/CD player		Plough	
Table		Yoke	
Chairs (European)		Planter	
Bed		Hoe	
Sideboard		Spade	
Wardrobe		Cultivator	
Primus		Harrow	
Paraffin lamp		Sledge	
Wood/coal stove		Scotch cart	
Large metal washing basin		Tractor	
Large oil drum		Car/truck	
Grain basket		Axe	

7. Membership of committees and associations

VDC		Grocery association	
Land Allocation Committee		Livestock group	
Soil Conservation Committee		Security group/committee	
Garden committee/group		Sports group	
Burial Association		Youth group	
Credit association/union		Religious (specify)	
Farmers' Association/group		Other (specify)	
Stokvel			

8. Religion of household head

Catholic	
Church of Lesotho	
Anglican	
Zionist	
Other (specify)	
Does not go to church	

CARE Lesotho Ha Tumahole household survey, 2004

HH no. _____

9. Visits for medical attention by household members this year

Household no.	Complaint	Visited hospital	Visited clinic	Visited Sesotho doctor	Visited private doctor	Visit helped patient

10. Has the household held any feast for the ancestors in 2003 or 2004?

Yes	
No	

11. If yes:

Purpose of feast	What was slaughtered

12. Was any cow, goat or sheep slaughtered for any other reason in 2003 or 2004?

Yes	
No	

13. If yes:

Purpose of feast	What was slaughtered

HH no. _____

14. Has the household received or made any bohali payment in 2003 or 2004?

Yes	
No	

15. If yes:

Received		Paid	
No.	Type	No.	Type

16. Is there an extension agent working in the Tumahole area?

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

17. If yes: what is the name of the extension agent? _____

18. Household buildings:

	Type					Shape			Walls				Roof		
	House	Stable	Toilet	Kraal	Commercial	Round	Rectangular	Rectangular multi-room	Stone	Sticks, mud	Bricks	Metal	Grass	Metal	Harvey tiles
1															
2															
3															
4															
5															

CARE Lesotho Ha Tumahole household survey, 2004

HH no. _____

19. Household fields, summer 2002–2003

	Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	Field 4	Field 5
Location of field					
Crop planted					
Source of seed					
Tractor (T) / Oxen (O)					
Source of draft power					
Fertiliser/manure applied					
Type of fertiliser/manure					
No. of pockets of fertliser used					
Source of fertiliser					
Harrowed					
Source of harrow					
Planter used					
Source of planter					
Cultivator used					
Source of cultivator					
No. of times weeded by hand					
Source of weeding labour					
Insecticide applied					
Source of insecticide					
Moupello					
Other traditional medicines					
Total yield (bags/tins)					
Amount sold (not joala)					
Amount consumed (including sold as joala)					
Amount given away					
Level of yield					
Field sharecropped					
Sharecropped with whom					
Residence of sharecropping partner					
Yield division holder: partner					

20. Sharecropping on non-household fields, summer 2002-2003

	Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	Field 4	Field 5
Name of field holder					
Residence of field holder					
Crop planted					
Sharecropping: own contribution					
Sharecropping: partner's contribution					
Total yield (bags/tins)					
Yield division holder: partner					

Sources	
0	Own
1	Previous harvest
2	Given by relative
3	Given by friend
4	Provided by sharecropper
5	Bought from government
6	Bought from shop/trader
7	Hired
8	Credit
9	Other
88	Unknown

Level of yield	
1	High
2	Average
3	Low/nil: drought
4	Low/nil: heavy rain
5	Low/nil: weeds
6	Low/nil: late planting
7	Low/nil: hail
8	Low/nil: insects
9	Low/nil: poor soil
10	Low/nil: rats
11	Low/nil: frost
12	Low/nil: theft
12	Low/nil: stock damage
13	Low/nil: birds
14	Low/nil: other

Contributions	
FLD	Field
MOH	Plough
KHO	Cattle (number)
EKH	Harrow
POL	Planter
SEK	Cultivator
HLA	Weeding labour (no.)
LEM	Ploughing labour (no.)
KOT	Harvest labour (no.)
PEO	Seed
MON	Fertiliser
POL	Threshing labour
LIJ	Food for workers
OTH	Everything else

HH no. _____

21. Household fields, winter 2003

	Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	Field 4	Field 5
Location of field					
Crop planted					
Source of seed					
Tractor (T) / Oxen (O)					
Source of draft power					
Fertiliser/manure applied					
Type of fertiliser/manure					
No. of pockets of fertliser used					
Source of fertiliser					
Harrowed					
Source of harrow					
Planter used					
Source of planter					
Cultivator used					
Source of cultivator					
No. of times weeded by hand					
Source of weeding labour					
Insecticide applied					
Source of insecticide					
Moupello					
Other traditional medicines					
Total yield (bags/tins)					
Amount sold (not joala)					
Amount consumed (including sold as joala)					
Amount given away					
Level of yield					
Field sharecropped					
Sharecropped with whom					
Residence of sharecropping partner					
Yield division holder: partner					

22. Sharecropping on non-household fields, winter 2003

	Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	Field 4	Field 5
Name of field holder					
Residence of field holder					
Crop planted					
Sharecropping: own contribution					
Sharecropping: partner's contribution					
Total yield (bags/tins)					
Yield division holder: partner					

Sources	
0	Own
1	Previous harvest
2	Given by relative
3	Given by friend
4	Provided by sharecropper
5	Bought from government
6	Bought from shop/trader
7	Hired
8	Credit
9	Other
88	Unknown

Level of yield	
1	High
2	Average
3	Low/nil: drought
4	Low/nil: heavy rain
5	Low/nil: weeds
6	Low/nil: late planting
7	Low/nil: hail
8	Low/nil: insects
9	Low/nil: poor soil
10	Low/nil: rats
11	Low/nil: frost
12	Low/nil: theft
12	Low/nil: stock damage
13	Low/nil: birds
14	Low/nil: other

Contributions	
FLD	Field
MOH	Plough
KHO	Cattle (number)
EKH	Harrow
POL	Planter
SEK	Cultivator
HLA	Weeding labour (no.)
LEM	Ploughing labour (no.)
KOT	Harvest labour (no.)
PEO	Seed
MON	Fertiliser
POL	Threshing labour
LIJ	Food for workers
OTH	Everything else

CARE Lesotho Ha Tumahole household survey, 2004

HH no. _____

23. Household fields, summer 2003–2004

	Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	Field 4	Field 5
Location of field					
Crop planted					
Source of seed					
Tractor (T) / Oxen (O)					
Source of draft power					
Fertiliser/manure applied					
Type of fertiliser/manure					
No. of pockets of fertliser used					
Source of fertiliser					
Harrowed					
Source of harrow					
Planter used					
Source of planter					
Cultivator used					
Source of cultivator					
No. of times weeded by hand					
Source of weeding labour					
Insecticide applied					
Source of insecticide					
Moupello					
Other traditional medicines					
Total yield (bags/tins)					
Amount sold (not joala)					
Amount consumed (including sold as joala)					
Amount given away					
Level of yield					
Field sharecropped					
Sharecropped with whom					
Residence of sharecropping partner					
Yield division holder: partner					

24. Sharecropping on non-household fields, summer 2003-2004

	Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	Field 4	Field 5
Name of field holder					
Residence of field holder					
Crop planted					
Sharecropping: own contribution					
Sharecropping: partner's contribution					
Total yield (bags/tins)					
Yield division holder: partner					

Sources	
0	Own
1	Previous harvest
2	Given by relative
3	Given by friend
4	Provided by sharecropper
5	Bought from government
6	Bought from shop/trader
7	Hired
8	Credit
9	Other
88	Unknown

Level of yield	
1	High
2	Average
3	Low/nil: drought
4	Low/nil: heavy rain
5	Low/nil: weeds
6	Low/nil: late planting
7	Low/nil: hail
8	Low/nil: insects
9	Low/nil: poor soil
10	Low/nil: rats
11	Low/nil: frost
12	Low/nil: theft
12	Low/nil: stock damage
13	Low/nil: birds
14	Low/nil: other

Contributions	
FLD	Field
MOH	Plough
KHO	Cattle (number)
EKH	Harrow
POL	Planter
SEK	Cultivator
HLA	Weeding labour (no.)
LEM	Ploughing labour (no.)
KOT	Harvest labour (no.)
PEO	Seed
MON	Fertiliser
POL	Threshing labour
LIJ	Food for workers
OTH	Everything else

HH no. _____

25. Number of months per year, on average, that the household can feed itself from its own crop production _____

26. How does the household feed itself for the rest of the year? _____

27. What is the general trend in crop production at Ha Tumahole over the last 25 years?

Positive	Negative	Stable	Unknown

28. Is the household grain stored in

Basket	
Sack	

29. Did the household hold any matsema in 2003/2004?

Yes	
No	

30. If yes:

Purpose	Refreshments provided

31. Does the household cultivate a vegetable garden?

No	
Private	
Communal	

32. What vegetables have been cultivated in the last 12 months? _____

33. Does the household have any fruit trees?

	No. in village	No. in fields
Peach		
Other		
None		

CARE Lesotho Ha Tumahole household survey, 2004

HH no. _____

34. Household livestock:

	Owned and managed	Owned, mafisa out	Mafisa in
Cattle			
Sheep			
Goats			
Horses			
Donkeys			
Chickens			
Ducks			
Pigs			

35. Are household stock herded with stock from other households?

Yes	
No	

36. If yes, explain the arrangement: _____

37. Kraal for household stock:

Belongs to household	
Other (specify)	

38. Were household stock sent to a cattle post:

	Cattle	Sheep	Goats
Summer 2002/2003			
Summer 2003/2004			

39. Has the household produced wool or mohair for sale in the last 12 months?

Yes	
No	

40. Has the household obtained credit in 2003 or 2004?

Yes	
No	

41. If yes,

	Amount	Use
Bank		
Credit Union		
Other savings association		
Friend		
Relative		
Other (specify)		

HH no. _____

42. Livelihood strategies

Household livelihood category: _____

Household livelihood strategies:

	HH field (independent)	HH field (sharecropped)	Sharecropping other's field	Farming a rented field	Husband employed in mines	Livestock	Vegetable garden	Local beer	Selling Western beer	Local chickens	Fato-fato	Meelela	Piece job in RSA	Retrenchment compensation	Mine death compensation	RSA old age pension	Local piece jobs	Support from parents	Selling snuff	Selling wood
Rank																				
No. of counters (out of 20)																				

	Support from children	Selling woodlot trees	Full time employment in Lesotho	Traditional doctor services	Handicrafts/local manufacture	Spaza shop, café	Savings in bank	Village credit association	Hiring out cart, tractor, span	Gifts, help from outside family	Stokvel	Support from relvatives	Other wage employment RSA	Selling other crops	Farming borrowed field	Piece jobs elsewhere Lesotho	Commercial poultry	Grocery association	Hiring out farming services	Farm labour for others
Rank																				
No. of counters (out of 20)																				

43. Shocks and stresses

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____

44. Coping strategies

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____

45. Impact of coping strategies

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____

CARE Lesotho Ha Tumahole household survey, 2004

HH no. _____

46. Does this household give help to other households, or receive help from other households, in any of the following ways?

	Gives help	Receives help
Child care		
Caring for the sick/home based care		
Water collection		
Fuel collection		
Small businesses, e.g. crafts		
Food		
Other (specify)		

47. Do you get pumpkins from your fields?

Yes	
No	

48. How often do you eat:

	Daily		Weekly		When in season		Sometimes		Never	
Vegetables from own garden										
Wild vegetables from fields										
Wild vegetables from veld										

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