About forty acres belonging to members were ploughed with a hired tractor, fertilised and planted with high grade seed. Insecticide was also used. Only one member used the new method on all his fields. The rest set aside a few of their fields for the 'experiment' and cultivated the others by traditional methods. Some people, who had second thoughts about incurring such huge debts (from N20 to N60) sold some of their fertiliser to neighbours who had not joined the association.

For the first half of the season enthusiasm for the Beipopo was great. Frequent meetings were held, work on a new seed and fertiliser store (financed by the CFA) went ahead rapidly, and members helped one another in their fields. The government took several of the members to inspect a large and highly productive irrigation scheme in the north of Lesotho.

Then, rather suddenly, interest in the Beipopo declined. This was not due to disappointment with the results, for most of the members were full of confidence that their returns, after paying their debts, would be greater than ever before.

Our interviews indicated that the fall-off in participation was due mainly to political and social factors. Two-thirds of the members stated that they feared the views of the B.C.P. members and of others who disapproved of anyone who 'gets involved with whites'. Several respondents said that the enemies of the association were saying that only poor people without cattle or money to help themselves became members, and that other enemies said that only rich people, who could afford the huge debts, joined.
The two E.C.P. members who had joined Boipopo took the pragmatic view that what they needed most was more food and how they got it was a secondary consideration. But they were clearly embarrassed by their compromise. For those to whom party considerations did not apply, the fear of social alienation from the company of those who disapproved of the Boipopo's associations was influential. One third of the members expressed the view that by belonging to Boipopo they belonged to a controversial group, but that they were determined to take the consequences of actively and publicly supporting it. There was unanimous agreement among the members that the fields cultivated by Boipopo members, taken as a whole, provided spectacular proof that the new methods are superior, and that even those whose objections to the association as such are most vociferous are deeply impressed and would like to join.

While the antagonism lasts, however, most people are content to wait passively until it abates. They also wait to see the measures taken by the government to collect its debts. If these are not as harsh as some expect, especially on those who did badly this year, and if the net gains from the year's operations are greater than before, and greater than those of non-members, they feel that the social consequences of active support of the Boipopo will not be as unpleasant as they are at present.

All the members but two say that they will continue to belong to the Boipopo next year. Two are in doubt, for they have suffered severe losses through the drought, and although
they do not blame the Boipopo for this; they are unwilling to try to recoup the losses by trying again next year and incurring another debt, although this is what the extension agent advises. All but four say they believe that others will join next year when they have seen the benefits. Of these four two say that many people would like to join but are dissuaded by fear of indebtedness. Others said that people will join in spite of their fear and of their dislike of the necessity of becoming involved with the white man. Informal discussion with non-members confirms these statements. They are waiting to see what the final economic returns of members will be, what action the government will take to recover its debts, how the internal organisation of the association develops, and whether the attitudes of the antagonists will change.

There is near unanimity among the members that the degree of co-operation among themselves has fallen far short of expectations. About half of those who had joined had done so, they said, on the understanding that a major benefit of membership would be the mutual help in cultivating their fields that every member had pledged. All had agreed at the outset to work on one another’s fields in rotation and not to expect payment for doing so. This, it was thought, would overcome a major disadvantage of the traditional ‘lemona’, which is a working party, summoned after due notice to his neighbours, by one who undertakes to provide food and beer for the workers. The disadvantage is that food and beer are often scarce at the time when hoeing, the most time-consuming
agricultural task, has to be done. And some people arrive late for the work, do very little, and consume a great deal. Actually at no time did all the members co-operate together cultivating one field. Several groups within the Boipopo did, however, assist one another within the group, but after a few weeks even that form of co-operation broke down. The reasons were that some people have larger holdings than others, so that those who have less land were disinclined to hoe areas of the larger holdings which exceeded their own; also some of those whose lands had been hoed first lost interest thereafter in co-operating with the others. Therefore the letsema, and the simple hiring of labour, are still the major forms of agricultural co-operation.

This is a further example of the difficulty of securing co-operation in work where reciprocation is not immediate. With good reason people do not trust others to co-operate except in the very short run and where the terms of the deal are clearly set out.

Relationships within the Boipopo are further complicated, and co-operation further retarded by tensions that exist between certain key figures - the chairman of the Boipopo, his brother who is chairman of the lehhalana, the secretary of the Boipopo and Kalalho. I discuss this in more detail in the next chapter.

The sale of a portion of their fertilizers by some members illustrates the great fear that people have of incurring large debts to impersonal bodies. The very slight control that people have had over their agricultural yields leads
to think of success in agriculture as a matter of 'luck'.

This was expressed again and again in our interviews with
dalipos members. The major factors determining success or
failure are the 'elements' which may burn up the crops during a
drought, the frost, which may catch the crops before they are
ready, the weeds, which may overwhelm the young plants and
grow too fast for poor man to be able to control them, and the
rain, which determines the time of planting and the subsequent
growth of the plants. These factors seen at the moment to
be largely outside of man's control. 'Nelos' (God) controls
them, and it matter of luck whether He arranges them benefi-
cially in any given year and for any given individual.

The factors which can be controlled by man, such as the
'feeding' of the plants with fertilizer, the use of good seed,
the killing of insects, etc., are generally regarded as less
influential in determining the yield than the factors which
are imperishable to the touch of man. For this reason debts
incurred in agriculture, more especially when they are not
soften by social ties between debtor and creditor, are re-
garded as extremely dangerous. A kinsman or a neighbour will
not bring one to total ruin in his efforts to collect his
debt. An impersonal, bureaucratic type of organization like
the government may well do so however. This view is strength-
ened by the presence of white people in senior positions in
the government. White people are notorious for their arth-
lessness in pursuit of economic gain. Some of the B.C.P.
members of the community, who did not join the Dalipos, play
on the fears of those who did, saying that the government in
collaboration with the whites will take all the stock, the
household possessions and the land of the people who cannot repay their debts. Then they will make extra gain by selling people food out of their own fields. The prospect of this fate is a real possibility to some people.

Innovation.

The economic risk and to some extent the social cost of joining the Boipopo was considered to be very great by members and non-members. The question therefore arises why did those particular individuals become members? Largely on the basis of findings in rural U.S.A. Rogers (1962: 105) offers a summary of characteristics of various 'adopter categories'. We are concerned here only with the first two categories, 'innovators' and 'early adopters'. The other categories, the 'early and late majority' and the 'laggards' have not yet emerged, since the adoption process is incomplete.

I have classified two of the eighteen members of the Boipopo as innovators and the rest as early adopters. I have not taken the use of modern techniques of agriculture as a criterion for innovativeness because several members of the community have in the past used these methods and begun to do so long before I began research in Nkholokhong. The innovation I am concerned with is the idea of the Boipopo itself, including the acceptance of loans from the government, with group responsibility for their repayment, mutual assistance in agriculture on the basis of membership of the association, the acceptance of technical advice from the Ministry of Agriculture, and the employment of an integrated set
of advanced agricultural practices rather than the sporadic use of fertilizers, or of good seed etc.. This idea was first accepted by Nkatho who promoted it among her subjects. In her efforts to get the idea accepted she was closely followed by Alexis Haboto, secretary of the Beipopo, who also made propaganda in private conversation and at public meetings. These two were the original champions of the idea. The rest accepted their lead.

Nkatho's list of attributes of innovators, makes an interesting comparison with the attributes of Nkatho and Alexis, although, because we are not working to a quantitative standard, the comparison is at best approximate. The attributes which I assign to Nkatho and Alexis are based on the standard of Nkholokho in relation to which they can be classified as relatively 'wealthy', or 'educated' or 'respected', etc..

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nkatho's Attributes of Innovators</th>
<th>Nkatho</th>
<th>Alexis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Youngest age.</td>
<td>50 years</td>
<td>65 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Closest contact with scientific information sources.</td>
<td>Closest contact.</td>
<td>Close contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Greatest use of impersonal information sources.</td>
<td>Greatest use</td>
<td>Uses use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Some opinion leadership.</td>
<td>Some.</td>
<td>Very little.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I discuss these attributes in order.

1. Mabaso is risking a great deal economically and politically in interpreting the headmanship as an innovative role. Alexie is playing for lower stakes, and accordingly his risks are smaller. I elaborate on these statements at some length in the next chapter.

2. Rogers' data suggest a positive correlation between youth and innovativeness, but the factors associated with this correlation in the U.S.A. are probably very different in Lesotho. The inability of the great majority of young men in Mokhotlong to devote themselves to any continuous project at home inhibits any display of innovativeness on their part. The relatively advanced ages of Mabaso and Alexie are therefore understandable in terms of the local situation.

3. The headman occupies the highest social status in the community; Alexie has only middling status which is based on his headship of a very numerous family (eleven children), his age, and his being secretary of the lehobotla.

4. Mabaso and Alexie are probably among the top six in Mokhotlong in terms of wealth.

5. The sources of scientific information most easily available to the people of Mokhotlong are the government extension service, the university and the mission. Mabaso has more direct contact with the extension agents and with the university than any one else. All government
representatives approach her first and she often goes into Nasseru to discuss agricultural matters in the Ministry of Agriculture. She has attended courses on community development and credit unions given by the Extension Department at the university.

Alexis works at the Roma Mission high school as a head man. The school and the mission are well equipped and practice modern agriculture.

5. Alexis and Nabalho are both functionally literate in Sesotho and English and so have available to them a variety of papers and pamphlets issued by the government and the university, on agriculture, soil conservation, co-operatives, credit unions, etc. Neither refers frequently to this literature but both read it occasionally. Both listen to the radio and sometimes comment on bits of practical advice given in reports on rural development schemes elsewhere.

6. Nabalho's opinions have been sufficiently influential to have stimulated the formation of both the Study Club and the Kuipopo. On the other hand people are suspicious of her motives. She has the reputation of producing good ideas which are potentially dangerous.

Alexis has very little opinion leadership.

6. According to Rogers, "The innovator's reference groups are more likely to be outside rather than within their social system. They travel widely and are interested in affairs beyond the boundaries of their social system."
By these criteria, Nbathe is very cosmopolitan in respect of local standards. She frequently visits people in Nacru and at the university, listens to the radio news and reads the occasional newspaper.

Alexis also, by virtue mainly of his contact with a major institution outside the community, has a much wider and diverse set of social ties than do most people.

This 'cosmopolitanism' is deplored by many of their neighbours, but it is recognized as useful in dealing with the increasing number of essential, and desired, contacts with the outside world. Indeed, it is this very ability to communicate, often in English, with influential outsiders, including technical specialists and providers of material benefits, which has enabled Nbathe and Alexis to become 'innovators in the first place. They have been able to understand the new ideas and to interpret these to the people.

Nbathe has no close kinmen and very few close friends in Marakele. Since many people also suspect her motives, she is socially marginal in the sense that the frequency and intimacy of her social encounters are slight by local standards.

Apart from his large family Alexis has no close kinmen either. He is not well liked in Marakele and is both ridiculed and distrusted.

Barnett (1953) and Linton (1952) in addition to Rogers attribute social marginality or 'deviance' from the
accepted social norms to innovators. This characteristic seems to be associated especially with societies where change is slow and where considerable popular resistance is offered to innovations. The economic, and often the social and political disruption caused by the 'venture-scamness' of innovators is resented and often opposed by the more traditionally oriented members of the society. It therefore takes a special kind of person to persist in innovation in spite of the danger of ostracism.

10. habebe and Alexis, both with Std. 7 education, are among the best educated people in the community.

11. habebe lacks respect on account of her failure to live up to the standards of headship set by her husband. Some people believe her to be dishonest and many think that she does not have the welfare of the community at heart.

Alexis lacks respect because he is widely regarded as a deceitful man. This, combined with his ambition to wield influence which is manifested at pitepo and boipopo meetings, generates a great deal of hostility and scorn.

The membership of the boipopo, apart from the two innovators, displays an extraordinary diversity in respect of the criteria found significant by Rogers. I could find no significant correlations with respect to social status, wealth, opinion leadership, marginality, respect, age, education, or
my other factors. The two most easily quantifiable variables are age and education, for which the patterns are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>No. in Relevant Religion</th>
<th>Total Population Including Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 to 30 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 59 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 3rd</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6th</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 and above</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the few figures given above there is no reason at all to infer that there is a correlation between age/education and membership.

The amount of land held by members ranges from one to eleven acres and is therefore not a significant variable.

The characteristics of local innovators, thus, seem to correspond in a high degree with those outlined by Rogers. No set of characteristics proposed by Rogers or emerging from my field data apply to the 'early adopters', however, indicating that more work in this sphere is necessary.

*Excluding the two innovators.*
CHAPTER VI. POLITICAL AND PROGRESS.

In this final chapter my purpose is to show how Mahatho, newly installed in her late husband's position, tried to cope with the multitudinous problems of maintaining peace and harmony in the community and some form of control over her subjects. I also discuss some of the social consequences of her effort.

In the biographical sketches in Chapter II I tried to emphasize the fact that Jobore had etched in the minds of his subjects an image of the headman which Mahatho could scarcely live up to. She was therefore bound to frustrate the expectations of her subjects. She has realized this and has tried to redefine the headman's role in a manner which she conceives to be more in accord with modern conditions and which she herself can perform.

She has set herself the task of leading her community to a new prosperity by means of modern agricultural methods, new forms of social organization to facilitate the adoption and practice of these innovations, and new relationships with agencies and persons outside the valley.

Jobore had many weapons, such as his legal skill and his strong personality, in his armoury which enabled him to conduct the affairs of headmanship with characteristic force. They enabled him to bring a degree of coercion to bear on intractable local situations. Mahatho lacking such effective weapons, must try to secure compliance through consensus, and
my first concern will be to examine the assets she possessed and their relevance to this enterprise.

Mabatho's first, and perhaps most important asset is her education. At school she learnt not only her lessons, but also the ways of a foreign culture. Her school at Marish Hill, near Pietermaritzburg in Natal, was run by Catholic nuns who spared no efforts to equip their pupils with the cultural skills, the etiquette and the attitudes of modern western culture as that was understood in South Africa some thirty years ago. Marish Hill itself was a centre of crafts and trades where numerous Africans have trained, and the ideals of domestic ingenuity and self-reliance were inculcated and absorbed. Mabatho has quoted to me the maxim 'The devil makes work for idle hands', which she constantly, but with singular lack of success so far, tries to impress on the more amenable of her subjects, and most especially on the members of the Study Club. How these two secondary assets of her education, her familiarity with the ways of white people, including the ability to converse fluently with them in their own language, and her belief in the goodness of making, improving and doing, have distinguished Mabatho from the great majority of her subjects and have enabled her both to perceive opportunities to improve her environment and to devise means to attain them. Acting on the belief that her subjects, on the whole, desire to improve their standard of living, Mabatho has utilised her educational assets towards this end. Thus, in providing a leadership in innovation, she has found a political advantage for herself. Like most
assets this carries its own disadvantages. Although the people may appreciate her rôle as promoter and agent for beneficial innovations, her relationships with government officials, and especially with whites, are suspect. While she gains some prestige among her constituents for her activities on the one hand, she forfeits their confidence on account of her external relationships on the other.

Nabatho has another useful attribute in her relatively strong economic position. This assists her politically in several ways. In order to retain and strengthen her relationships with government officials in Maseru she must visit them periodically and this costs BI a time by bus. By local standards the cost of two or three trips per month is ruinously expensive, and very few indeed could afford it. Were Nabatho not able to afford it she would almost certainly lose contact with the officials and the benefits which they can confer. Furthermore when official visitors come to Mohokong Nabatho provides expensive and often store bought foods and drinks for them, and before they depart she often loads them with gifts of fruit from her garden, vegetables, green maize, or whatever is in season. The immediate results of these gestures are, of course, not usually concrete, but psychological. The departing guest, especially if he is white, often feels embarrassed that he cannot reciprocate immediately and abundantly, especially since he is aware of the poverty of the community and of the fact that these gifts have strained the domestic economy of his host. Thus he feels constrained to reciprocate with whatever benefits lie within his control (e.g. building materials, agricultural credit, water piping, funds for the Boipopo). These benefits are channelled to
the community through the agency of Nabathe, of course. In
this manner she converts her economic assets into political
assets. Later on I shall describe how she converted, or
tried to convert, part of her own land holding into political
capital.

Nabathe's lack of kin is both an advantage and a disad-

vantage to her as headman. Lack of kin is a \textit{prima facie}
disadvantage because the mutual obligations of kinsmen to
support and assist one another, if fulfilled, can be an im-
portant source of political strength. One can only speculate
on Nabathe's political position had she been a member of a
strong local descent group. On the other hand however,
Nabathe's closest affinal kinsman, Notebele (Jobere's younger
brother) is a constant thorn in her side. He objects most
strONGLY to her innovative activities, maintaining that
she has no mandate to introduce such far reaching changes into
the community of her husband's (and his own) descent group.

Kinship, therefore, \textit{may} carry disadvantages for the innovator,
since support from kinsmen is much more likely to be obtained
in the sphere of traditionally sanctioned activities than of
projects without precedent.

Many of the attributes of the innovator are connected
with his freedom from social constraints, so that presumably
it is more difficult for the member of the well integrated
descent group to innovate than it is for the relatively kin-
less individual. This will be amplified in the following:

The utility of her various assets may become clear to
...after about a month had elapsed since her husband's death. During this month she was in mourning, and as custom required she seldom left the precincts of her house, she did virtually no work, which was extremely trying for her, and most of the domestic tasks were done by female affines who came from neighbouring communities to help, and by her servants. During this period, as I have mentioned before, the life of the community was subdued and very few incidents of any note took place. As the trauma of Jobere's death began to wear off, however, people began to resume a more normal social life. The size and frequency of the beer drinks increased, people began to think about the harvest, and neighbouring wives began to take up the cudgels against one another again if they had been on bad terms before.

But the major difference between the status quo ante and post Jobere's death, which no one could ignore, was that the controlling influence of the old headman was now absent. The sure knowledge that an encroachment on reserved grazing would incur the headman's wrath and certain retribution was now replaced by the speculation that one's cattle could eat their fill of the tall grass without any unpleasant repercussions, that one could abuse one's neighbour as loudly and as obscenely as one wished and yet escape being publicly humiliated and reprimanded in the headman's court. I have given examples of both these types of infraction in Chapter IV, and they occurred in the first few weeks of Rabotho's regime. After the first, quiet, month had elapsed many other petty incidents of this kind occurred. Rabotho was conscious that the deference which had been paid by her...
objects to her husband was not paid to her. Attendance at
court hearings and at dinner was much less than during her
husband's time. I recorded my impression at the time that
the community somehow seemed to be less of a community than
before; it was, in a sense, an accephalous society. Even
though the structure itself had not changed the quality of
the relationships which held the structure in being had
changed. Jobero's homestead had been a kind of community
centre and every day of the week and for most of the day
we would find visitors there from outside and from within
the community discussing some business or other, or simply
passing the time and hoping for beer to be offered. When
the first month of mourning had passed, and the flow of con-
sciousness had diminished, the homestead became very quiet,
like most other homesteads in the valley, and only on
Saturdays, when cases were heard or a meeting convened was it
livelier than most.

These signs were not lost on Habeste who interpreted
their significance, correctly I believe, as a falling off in
its support for and influence of the headship. Her initial
response to this was to approach an Indian herbalist of high
local repute, who lives some five miles away, to provide
her with medicine in order to treat the four villages of the
community. This medicine was to make the people 'quiet', to
render them submissive to her authority, and to disarm those
who harboured specific antagonisms towards her. At the first
interview she outlined the problem and received a quotation
for the medicines, which was exorbitant, and she departed to
consider the matter. To my knowledge she has not returned since. Nebatho also at this time went frequently to church at home in order, she said, to pray for support and strength in her new position, and also for her husband.

Very soon after its inception it became clear that the Bolope, like the Women’s Club, was destined to become an arena within which Nebatho would try to propagate her influence and gain political support.

As a proportion of the total number of farmers in the community (ninety five) the membership of the Bolope (eighteen) was not very large. But it was a promising start. There was considerable enthusiasm among those who had joined, and the early meetings were characterised by expressions of confidence in the benefits to be reaped at the end of the season. Even among those who had not joined there was a great deal of speculation about the prospects and many non-members said they would wait and see the results of the first year’s efforts and then consider joining. It was therefore plain that a movement which could actually bring greater profits from agriculture could, in principle, command a large popular following. From Nebatho’s point of view this presented the possibility of greatly enhancing her influence in the community, but that depended, of course, on the degree of influence and control she could exert over the association and its members, and also on her capacity to remain the sole agent through which government assistance might be brought into Bolopechong.
Almost immediately this became a serious problem. I have mentioned that Mabatho was elected 'vice-secretary', the least responsible position in the committee. I have records of other chiefs and headmen who actually refuse to take any important office in such voluntary organisations because, they say, their subjects might accuse them of using the organisation for their own political or economic ends. Since this was an accusation which had already been levelled at Mabatho in the Study Club, her fellow members of the Liptopo presumably took the decision to give her a minor office themselves. In any case Mabatho's tactics were more subtle than a simple attempt to secure overt domination in the association. From the outset she established herself as the sole official means of contact with the government and other outside agencies. This was facilitated by her good command of English and her relative familiarity with the ways of bureaucracy. It was also facilitated by her acquaintance with me and other members of the university who had cars and who would sometimes take her into Blantyre to see various members of the administration. She soon became known, especially in the Ministry of Agriculture, as a progressive headman very anxious to co-operate with the government in developing her community. Thus before long the dealings between the government and Nkhokhong had grown considerably in volume and all communications and materials were passed on to the people through Mabatho. These were often accompanied by lavish praise from visiting officials for the progressiveness of the headman.

There was considerable risk involved in this undertaking.
If the Boipopo should fail Habatho would be much worse off
then before. She had invited the government representatives
to come in the first place. She had convened her subjects
to listen to the new deal being offered. She personally had
spoken very persuasively both in public and to individuals
about the prospects of future prosperity of the advice of the
government were followed. Visiting officials always spoke
to the people through her and she generally confirmed her
words. The members of the Boipopo had invested large sums
in this season's crops and Habatho stood to reap the praise
or blame for their returns. In addition Habatho had invested
a considerable proportion of her own resources in the enter-
prise. I have mentioned the bus fares and the gifts to
visitors, and also that she converted some of her land into
political capital, which I shall now discuss in greater de-
tail.

At Habatho's request I had asked a member of the Soil
Conservation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture to
recommend an erosion control measure for Nkholkhong. A
part of his programme was the intensification of agriculture
on the flatter and less erodable parts of the valley so that
the pressure might be taken off the steep slopes. He offered
technical and material assistance in building a concrete weir
across Philip's stream (cf. map of the Nkholkhong Valley)
and in grading the water out to irrigate an area of several
acres, all of which happened to fall within Habatho's own
holding. Habatho then announced that she was prepared to
donate to her subjects about two acres of her own land for a
irrigated from the new system. She appealed for voluntary labour to work on the weir and the channels and she promised to provide beer for those who came. The direct economic returns of this arrangement were extremely small for Kalatho for already had a large and highly productive garden which demanded far more labour than she could put into it. The effects of this gesture would presumably be to dissuade those who suspected her of economic self-interest in her various developmental activities and also to place those who would work the plots for their own benefit under an obligation to her. Some months later Kalatho donated an adjacent plot, of approximately equal size, to the members of the Study Club. This whole project has miscarried because, although a number of people were at first enthusiastic enough about the idea of irrigated plots to construct a series of neat terraces on the site, these have never been used. Nothing has yet been grown there and no water has yet been led on to the land. Questioned about the reasons for their failure to cultivate the plots some people say they are too busy in their fields or in their gardens at home, others say they are still getting around to it and when they have need and the time of year is right they will begin. But in the meantime the weir has silted up, the outlet pipe has become blocked with sludge, the gardens are overgrown with weeds, and all interest has been lost. It is unlikely that lack of time or of seed are the main reasons for the lack of activity, because great amounts of work were put into the construction of the weir, the furrows and the terraces, at times when there was plenty to be done in the fields. I suspect, but am unable to prove, that after the initial flush of enthusiasm people began to realise that the use of the land, although on the face of it...
free, had certain concealed strings attached to it, and that they were unsure what reciprocal demands would later be made of them in return for the use of the land. This I inferred from casual conversation with a number of people.

In Limpopo the allocation of land by a chief or headman is almost always a political, as well as an administrative, act. It is political because land is extremely scarce, there are many people wanting it, there is one person responsible for allocating it (in spite of the Land Allocation Committee), and there are no specific rules and procedures to be followed in determining who shall have precedence. Even the most fair-minded headman will therefore have to choose between a number of equally eligible applicants, and the choice may then well fall on those whose support is most valued. There is a flat area below and to the north of Thotong, which for about ten years before Jebere's death had not been ploughed. When it was last cultivated it had proved so infertile that crop returns were virtually nothing. It had reverted to grazing and Jebere had flatly refused the numerous requests to reopen this area to cultivation. His reasons were that it offered good grazing now, which has become extremely limited in Nokholungu; that it was needed for the cattle, and that even if it were ploughed it would yield almost nothing and would soon revert to fallow, but would take years before it provided good grazing again. But within three months of her husband's death Maketo had allocated most of this area, mainly to young members of the Matumang descent group but also to some of the more senior members as well. The pol
political significance of this allocation is that the Namaqualand
present group is by far the most powerful and the largest
single corporate group in the community and its support is
very valuable to Namaqua. I shall have more to say about
the relationship of Namaqua to this descent group later on.

I have tried to give a general and necessarily rather
brief description of Namaqua's assets and their political
significance, and I now pass on to explore the rather tangled
web of politically significant relationships between Namaqua
and certain of her subjects.

In the previous chapter the name of Alexis Nambata was
mentioned and I classified him with Namaqua as an 'innovator'.
He is secretary of both the Boipopo and the headman's
labourers. For no one else combines the qualities of senior
age, kinship status, command of written and spoken English,
continuous residence, and acquaintance with the way of the
bureaucracy as he does. The question of his kinship status
needs careful understanding, however. He is father of ten
living children, with three sons in their twenties, and has
thus established himself as head of a considerable nuclear
family. He has more land than any one else in the community,
eleven acres, and can thus hope to have his sons living near
him when they marry. His six daughters will bring him many
Kalahari cattle. On the other hand Alexis has only distant
blood and affinal ties with others in the valley, ties which
are too weak to have any political significance for him. In
other words, no one outside his nuclear family could feel
bound to support him on account of any kinship obligations.
Author  Devitt Paul
Name of thesis The Politics Of Headmanship In The Mokhokhong Valley. 1969

PUBLISHER:
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg Library website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the Library website.