

prominent reasons. Thus, many of the issues discussed in the following chapter concerning village management of self-help projects refer to communal gardens as well as village water supplies. One interesting characteristic of the failure rate is that the lowland failure rate for communal garden projects is higher than that for mountain projects. Possible reasons for this include the lack of alternative supplies of fresh vegetables in the mountains and the relative scarcity of cash in mountain village economies.

A third finding, by corollary, is that the success or failure of a communal garden project is very rarely related to the presence or absence of a village water supply. Cases were found of communal gardens working well when the only source of water was a spring or river, and equally, cases were found in which communal gardens had been neglected despite the fact that piped water was available. In Mokhotlong twenty nine per cent. of villages with completed village water supplies also have functioning communal gardens. And the existence of these projects is largely explained by the fact that it is the policy of Comrudev and other aid agencies to encourage joint water supply and vegetable garden ventures. As was the case in Terata, aid for one is often dependent upon a village taking up the other. Moreover, there has been a general trend in Lesotho for all rural development projects to accumulate in the most accessible, large and wealthy villages. There is no evidence that the provision of water in itself promotes or encourages communal gardens.²⁷

(vi) Village Mohair industries. A final hypothesis regarding water-related production which it was thought might apply to the Lesotho case was that the provision of an improved water supply may stimulate village mohair production. The village mohair industry is a potentially important and viable village industry in Lesotho and a number of mohair production centres have been established in villages. Village women purchase raw mohair, wash it, card and spin it and sell it in that form.

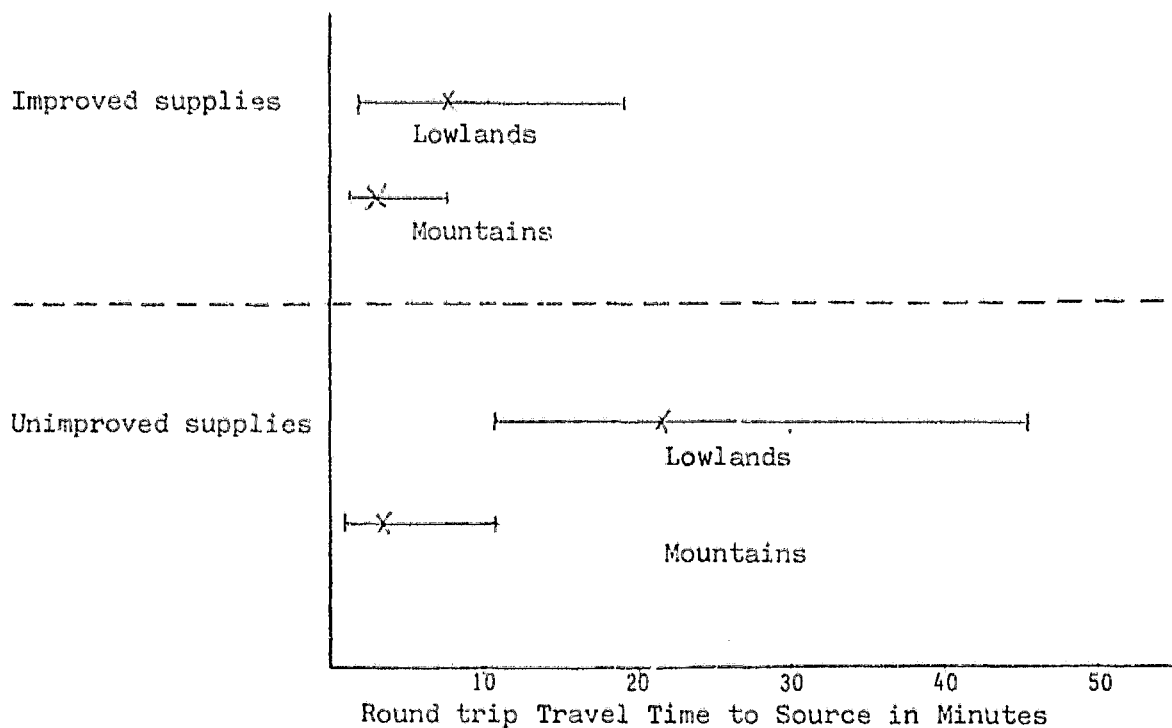
The potential for an improved water supply to have any beneficial effect on production is low at present as so little water is used. In the Lowland village of Peka, for example, only two to three water journeys were needed to collect the forty five litres required for a week's mohair washing. The provision of an improved water supply then does not have a significant effect on this village industry.

(e) Time saving.

The only clear benefit of improved supplies has been a reduction in the distance travelled to collect water. The average distance to improved lowland supplies was 290 metres as opposed to an average of 590 metres to unimproved supplies, whereas the mountain figures are ninety metres to improved supplies and 145 metres to traditional sources. The reduced distances are reflected in the changed round trip travel times to improved and unimproved sources. Figure 4.6 illustrates the difference in round trip travel times to improved and unimproved supplies in lowland and mountain villages.

Figure 4.6

Round Trip Travel Times to Improved and Unimproved Sources
in Lowland and Mountain Villages



Notes

— The range of village mean times.

—X— The mean of village means.

On average fifteen minutes is saved in lowland villages and seven minutes in mountain villages from shorter water collection journeys to improved supplies. A water collection trip to a tap as opposed to a spring also has an additional saving in that it takes about a minute to fill a bucket at a tap whereas

it takes about two minutes to fill a bucket from a traditional source. So the total time saved is sixteen and eight minutes in lowland and mountain villages. Given the average of three collections per day per household, this represents a daily average time saving of forty eight minutes in lowland villages and twenty four minutes in mountain villages. These figures underestimate the lowland time savings though, in that one third of the lowland households studied, the saving per trip was over half an hour. This means that in one third of lowland households there is a daily saving of over an hour following the installation of improved water supplies.

In order to understand the significance of these figures for village women, daily 'time budgets' for a total of 79 women-days of observation were conducted in mountain and lowland households at different times of the year. The main conclusions of this study are summarised below:

(i) Rural women in Lesotho work long strenuous days and value the time saved by improved water supplies. Analysis of the time budgets show that the time devoted to agricultural work, household work and water collection accounts for an average of over eleven hours of the average day. During the harvest season the work load is at its highest and the time devoted to agriculture doubles. It is interesting to note, however, that the time devoted to agriculture even during the harvest season is surprisingly small. Whereas housework accounts for over six and a half hours of the average woman's working day,

agricultural work on yearly average accounts for little over two hours.

Even the smaller savings recorded in the mountain villages in Mokhotlong became relatively important seen against the immensity of the burden placed upon village women in Lesotho. No evidence for example, could be found to support the common supposition that the opportunity for gossip while queueing at the tap is accorded an especially positive social value. On the contrary, it was observed that when the flow of water from a piped supply slowed markedly, women preferred an arduous walk of several hundred metres to an alternative source rather than wait their turn for their buckets to be filled. When village women were asked why they wanted improved supplies the majority replied that improved supplies saved effort. Saving 'effort' was not only seen in terms of saving energy, but also in terms of saving time. However small that saving is, the improvement of village water supplies is at least responding to a felt need.

(ii) The time saved following the introduction of an improved water supply only provides a welfare service; there is no significant opportunity cost to the time saved. The comparatively small amount of time spent on agriculture reflects the fact that agriculture is largely a marginal activity in Lesotho and is overshadowed by cash employment in South Africa.

The dominant constraints for households are availability of cash for seeds and fertilizers, land shortage, and lack of access to traction ploughing rather than shortage of female labour.²⁸

This suggests that even if time saved were spent on agriculture the opportunity value of that time would be minimal.

Even so analysis of the time budgets was undertaken to ascertain how the time saved by the implementation of improved water supplies was spent. The tentative conclusions of the time budget data are that the saved time is not spent on agriculture but rather on social and leisure activities, and that this is probably even the case during the weeding and harvest season when the proportion of agricultural work is at its highest.

(iii) While the time saved following the introduction of improved village water supplies cannot be said to have any opportunity value, its welfare function in helping to ease the burden of domestic life in a migrant labour economy must not be discounted.

5. Conclusion

The first part of this chapter has sketched the growth of a reasonably substantial water supply programme in the remote district of Mokhotlong in Lesotho. The programme's activity is characterised by a very low output up until the early 1970s, substantial construction and promotion of projects in the early 70s, and from 1975 a lower rate of output. The complex pattern of events in establishing these projects is illustrated in the case of one Mokhotlong village.

The second part of the chapter examined the material benefits

of the programme concluding that they are minimal. There has been little change in the quantity of water used and consequently little health impact; water quality has improved but there has been no significant impact on the unusual disease pattern in Lesotho; the provision of piped water alone has proved insufficient a measure to stimulate water-related village production. The only clear benefit of improved supplies is a small time and energy saving and while this is of great importance in the context of a migrant labour economy, it has no economic value.

The following chapter develops themes from both these parts: firstly, by returning to examine what motivated the growth of the programme in the early 1970s; secondly, by examining the village management of the supplies in more depth; and thirdly, by looking at the social and political impact of the programme.

Reference Notes to Chapter 4

1. The District Community Development Officer in 1976, Mr Mphunyane, was the grand exception to the general rule that staff rarely spend more than a year on Mokhotlong unless they can help it. Mr Mphunyane arrived in Mokhotlong at the beginning of 1973, the same date on which Mokhotlong's Comrudev office records start.
2. A few villages have had more than one supply installed. This is not taken into account in national estimates of the population supplied by piped water (see Table 4.1, Note C). This district figure does not include villages with water supply materials on site though not yet installed.
3. See note C of Table 4.1.
4. Again, some of the supplies which by January 1976 only had materials on site are to supply villages which already have access to some piped water.
5. A spring box is a collecting tank built over the eye of a spring to prevent pollution at the water source. See Cairncross, A.M. and Feachem, R., Small Water Supplies, 1978, p. 8.
6. This estimate is based on references to improved village water supplies in Ministry of Works reports 1953-1964.
7. The gravity fed supplies in Mokhotlong consist of a spring box, often a silt trap, a storage tank and communal standpipes. Steel or plastic pipe carries the water from the springs on hill or mountain slopes down to the standpipes

by gravity and no pumping is required.

8. The commonest cause of breakdown of spring boxes are discussed in Feachem, R. op. cit., 1977, p. F33.
9. Mokhotlong DCDO Annual Report, 1968, p. 5.
10. The numbers in brackets refer to Figure 4.3.
11. Mokhotlong DCDO Savingram dated 21/1/69.
12. The Department of Community and Rural Development, Development of Growth Centres in Lesotho, 1971, contains an outline of the growth centre strategy.
13. The collection of village cash contributions is discussed in Chapter 5.
14. Government of Lesotho, Second Five Year Development Plan, 1976.
15. The most recent analysis of the shortcomings of the organisation and management of the Village Water Supply Technical Section is contained in the United States Agency for International Development, Lesotho Rural Water Supply Project Proposal, 1979, Section III E.
16. Cross, E.P.W., "A Case Study of Intermediate Technology: Rural Water Supplies in Lesotho" Link, 1(3) 1978.
17. Ministry of Works files entitled "Mokhotlong Village Water Supplies" contain an assortment of correspondence and reports covering the period 1953-1964.
18. The normal procedure for costing self-help projects is for the village cash contribution to be deducted from the total cost of building a water supply. Thereafter an entirely fictitious figure is calculated for the village labour

contribution so that the project proposal sent to aid donors appears to be approximately half of the total project cost. The real labour input is always substantially less than that usually quoted in these documents. A typical village might, for example, have contributed between fifty and one hundred man-days of work to a project, whereas the mean figure stipulated on project proposals for Mokhotlong villages is 1,969 man-days.

19. The following chapter discusses village committees.
20. The institution of the letsema has altered in character and function from its traditional form. A letsema is "the old custom by which people would work on their chief's land" Haliburton, G. Historical Dictionary of Lesotho, 1977, p. 88. Since the 1940s, however, all chiefs are legally prevented from calling upon unpaid labour. Today private matsema (pl. of letsema) function very well in the form of reciprocal labour on private fields.
21. Compare this with the description of Manyakallo's position before the arrival of piped water in chapter 3.
22. The full argument behind the conclusions presented here are presented in Feachem, R. et al., op. cit., 1978, Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10.
23. Water quality from traditional sources is discussed in Chapter 3.
24. White, G. et al., op. cit., p. 129.
25. Bradley, D.J. "Water Supplies: the consequences of change" in CIBA, Human Rights in Health, 1974; Bradley, D.J. "Health

aspects of Water Supplies in Tropical Countries" in Feachem R., McGarry, M. and Mara, D., Water, Wastes and Health in Hot Climates, 1977, and Feachem, R., "Water Supplies for Low-income Communities in Developing Countries" Journal of the Environmental Engineering Division, 101, 1975.

26. For a definition of water-related disease see Bradley, op. cit., 1974, pp. 82-84.
27. This finding confirms the conclusion of a previous evaluation which concluded that:

"Gardens with a constant water supply are definitely not better than gardens with a seasonal water supply. The quality of a garden is governed more by the attitude of the communal owners than by the amount of water" Bus B.P. "Survey of Communal Gardens in Nutrition Plot Areas of Lesotho", 1968.

28. Murray, C., op. cit., 1976a, p. 100.

CHAPTER 5

Village Politics and Self-Help Management in Lesotho

1. Introduction

The previous chapter has examined the impact of the village water supply programme from a traditional planning perspective by measuring material costs and benefits. This chapter examines the costs and benefits from the villagers' perspective in terms of power and social control. Rural development necessarily implies rural control and this chapter is concerned with the form of social control that accompanied the improvement of water sources, and its consequences for effective and efficient management of the facilities.

Before examining these consequences it is necessary first to examine the objectives and method of implementation of self-help strategy applied to village water supplies in Lesotho.

2. The Stated Objectives of Self-Help in Lesotho

A policy statement hangs on the wall of the office of the Senior Community Development Officer in Maseru. It reads:

"Community development is not a method of doing economic development on the cheap and success cannot be measured by adding up the material projects completed. They are but a means to a social and political end. The chief end of successful community development is not wells, roads, schools and new crops. It is stable, self-reliant communities with an assured sense of social and political responsibility."

Self-help or community development has been the proclaimed rural development policy in Lesotho for two decades. The policy document, which continues to guide Comrudev's activities, was passed by cabinet in 1966 just prior to independence. In it community development is

"accepted as a national movement and as a process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governments to improve the economic social and cultural conditions of the community, to integrate the community into the life of the nation and to enable it to contribute fully to national progress."¹

These quotes and other internal memoranda² illustrate that the concept of community development adopted in Lesotho is identical with that drawn up by the British Colonial Office in the 1950s, which is discussed in Chapter 1. The phrasing of community development policy in the original formulation and internal memoranda dated as late as 1976³ rely heavily on the standard texts and statements by early proponents of the policy.

Previous evaluations of community development in Lesotho have not suggested that there was anything seriously amiss in the Lesotho government's formulation and method of implementation of the policy. An evaluation in 1969⁴ mildly admonished the 'project orientation' of community development in Lesotho but was enthusiastic about the stated objectives of the programme and the potential for these to be achieved in Lesotho. Other community development advisors have praised the Lesotho Government's formulation of the development strategy and method of implementation.

One observer recently depicted Comrudev as promoting

"change by willing co-operative effort of the community itself, the outside agent... merely acting as a catalyst to arouse a sense of cohesion and purpose in the community... Comrudev has a vital role to play as the spearhead of the Government's contact with people in the rural areas... The most enthusiastic response from village committees has been for village water supplies."⁵

The international aid donors sponsoring self-help development programmes in the country have also on occasion conducted evaluations of the aims and achievements of self-help in Lesotho. These, almost without exception, have presented the Lesotho Government's efforts in glowing terms. The Field Director's reports of one development agency between the years 1970 and 1973 illustrate donors' enthusiasms for the development programme and particularly stress the catalytic effect which was seen to be generated by the water supply programme:

"December 1970

I have visited several of the schemes we helped to build and I am most impressed... by the effect the schemes have had on the villages... In addition to having a clean water supply in the village, it gives enormous encouragement to the villagers as they are able to understand, often for the first time, that they are able to improve their way of life by their own efforts. Some of the villagers are now planning other schemes.. I feel that the water supplies apart from supplying an obvious need does act as a catalyst for further projects."

And again:

"May 1973

The human aspect of all these water supply projects was thrilling to see. In every project the villagers I spoke to talked of the project being 'theirs' and I

was frequently surprised at the trouble they had gone to to repair any broken pipes or taps... Every village had retained its village committee after the project had been completed... In most villages the committee had been very active and had improved the water project by protecting the standpipes, establishing a communal garden, building or improving the road to the village and in many hundreds of cases it seemed people were growing vegetables around their houses.

In almost every case therefore it seems that the implementation of the water project does act as a catalyst for further development."⁶

3. Community Development Policy in Practice in Lesotho

The examination of the practice of community development or self-help policy contained in this section illustrates the weakness of previous evaluations, based as they were upon little fieldwork and guided village tours. For, although the stated objectives of self-help in Lesotho have remained unchanged since their inception in the late 1950s, there has been considerable variation in the method of implementation, and the practical interpretation of the formal policy has at times differed greatly from that recommended by the doyens of community development.

The term community development was first used in Lesotho by colonial officials to describe independent agricultural efforts. In the 1950s a number of small agricultural and co-operative ventures were initiated, both by the British who began a co-operative movement and assisted community projects in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and by groups which formed around African nationalists in the beginnings of the Basutoland

African Congress⁷ (the forerunner to the Basotho Congress Party, BCP). The objectives of these two very different early stimuli to the growth of rural community projects were radically opposed to one another. The nationalists were eager to establish greater popular participation in decisions affecting their lives and saw the creation of co-operatives as a vehicle towards the eventual achievement of self-rule.⁸ The colonial government was, on the other hand, eager to contain the growth of the nationalist movement and intent on fostering the growth of 'stable, self-reliant communities'. One early independent agricultural co-operative is described in the Community Development Bulletin in 1958 as a forerunner of community development in Lesotho, and although the author is full of praise for the co-operative, he also warns against not relying on the expert advice of the colonial government.⁹ An early colonial policy modelled on similar community development programmes elsewhere in the empire was the establishment of a 'Progressive Farmers Association'.¹⁰ The effect of this policy was similar to that in India (see Chapter 1); the only beneficiaries were the most wealthy and well-to-do farmers in the country.

The first formal community development activity by the colonial government was the establishment of a mobile unit in 1959 in the Ministry of Local Government. The unit toured the country undertaking informal adult education. Its main function appears to have been to address and train district Council members and to secure their support for Government development projects.¹¹ In 1962 a Department of Community

Development was formally established in the Ministry of Local Government, and the budget and staff of the mobile unit slightly increased. But the early adult education work was, on the whole, ineffective; the staffing and budget were inadequate and the content of the courses of dubious value.¹²

It was only by the mid 1960s that community development was taken more seriously. In the uncertain days prior to the first election and granting of independence, the outgoing colonial government saw in community development a means to maintain stability as well as placate the demands for development from the long neglected rural areas. The content of community development also changed in this period and its focus moved from adult education to one of facilitating a wide range of development services such as roads, water supplies, dams, and communal vegetable gardens. In 1965/66 sixty water supply projects were initiated, along with 150 miles of intervillage roads and a great many communal gardens.¹³

There was a substantial expansion in staff in 1965 to implement the new policy and field workers were given crash training courses and sent out to the districts to establish District Community Development Offices. But, as has been the experience in many other similar programmes, the function of Community Development Officers with their lack of specialised technical expertise was unclear both to themselves, villagers and other Ministries, and a great deal of administrative confusion resulted. Moreover, the Community Development Officers were seen to be aligned with the colonial regime during a

period of great political tension and animosity towards the colonial government. The surprise defeat of the BCP at the first general election did not help the Community Development Officers either, as they now appeared to be aligned to the BNP. The comments of one observer at this period could well be applied ten years later:

"Any Government scheme was automatically the target for devastating criticism by the opposition and at this stage community development projects served more as a focus for political division than as an expression of village cohesion and co-operation."¹⁴

The years inbetween the elections saw on one hand a slow growth in community development activity, and on the other a swift and severe centralisation of government activities. One of the early acts of the new BNP administration was to disestablish the BCP dominated District Councils and to replace institutions of local government by local branches of a central administration. Despite the fact that community development policy was clearly endorsed by the newly independent Government the potential for the policy to succeed in terms of its stated objectives lessened with the removal of effective power from the district level.

The range of community development activities was increased when, following successive nation-wide crop failures, the by now Department of Community and rural Development (Comrudev) was enlisted to implement an emergency Drought Relief Scheme.¹⁵ Under this scheme food was provided to those who worked on a variety of self-help programmes from feeder roads to earth

dams. The scheme has grown substantially and with year round food shortages it has now become a permanent feature of rural development activity in Lesotho. The 'food-for-work' campaign is not really compatible with the broader aims of community development and as Community Development Officers are quick to point out it has made it that much harder for them to call for voluntary labour on self-help schemes. Yet even this basic welfare work became the focus of political division in many instances and in 1969 Botting mentions the refusal of BCP supporters to participate in the scheme.¹⁶ After 1970 food-for-work opportunities became, to a large extent, restricted to bona fide BNP supporters.

Community development achieved its greatest boost in the years 1970 and 1971, the year of the coup and that immediately following it. Just prior to the elections Community Development Officers were the centre of political publicity when it was discovered that district community development vehicles were being used for BNP electioneering, and OXFAM immediately withdrew the vehicles they had donated.

But it was the turbulent aftermath of the coup that led to increased Government support for community development. Government action against the civil disobedience following the coup consisted initially of police suppression of opposition, a further centralisation of decision-making, concerted overtures to foreign aid donors for assistance and the stripping of the public service of all but proven members of the BNP.¹⁷ Yet there remained considerable unrest in the rural areas

and the growth in community development activities, marked particularly by the speeding up of the village water supply programme (see Chapters 1 and 4) began in this period. Although community development project memoranda continued to be couched in optimistic community development language suggesting that self-help water supply schemes were a product of harmonious community action directed by democratically elected village representatives, unknown to the aid donors, a new policy appeared which makes it apparent that from 1971 at least community development was clearly used as a tool by Government to contain rural unrest and to establish BNP control in the villages. The policy affected the constitution of village committees, the bodies managing community development projects. A circular sent to all Community Development Offices in February 1971 to clarify the status of village development committees stated:

"4. In case of doubt it is hereby clearly stated that a Government representative (Prominent Citizen) in a constituency in co-operation with the District Community Development Officer or his assistant is fully responsible in selecting DEMOCRATICALLY the members of each Village Development Committee. The emphasis is here put on democratic diplomacy and group dynamics. That is, the government officials - as herein mentioned - and the villagers who are supporters of the Government will elect suitable candidates amongst whom the position of chairman, secretary as well as the treasurer are of paramount importance....

6. The members of the Village Development Committee should be tolerant and must have a direct approach to rural development. In fact these committees should represent the Government in every respect."¹⁸

From 1971 village development committees, the bodies which in community development parlance were the embodiment of community

interests, became, despite the above circular's especial emphasis on democracy, state appointed committees. What the circular fails to make clear is that the Prominent Citizen (Ra-Lebatooa) is the senior BNP member per constituency (often the person who stood for parliament for the BNP in the 1970 elections) and is a member of the BNP political machinery, not the administration. The effect of this policy was to combine the BNP and Government administrative structures so that the village development committees formed the bottom rung of the party ladder. The change is illustrated by comparing Figure 5.1, which shows the fundamentals of the pre-1970 administrative structure in which the Government administration is separate from the organisation of the ruling party, and Figure 5.2, a simplified model of post-1970 developments showing the overlap between Government and the ruling party in the villages. The notes to Figure 5.2 explain the functions of different tiers of the new administrative structure.

Further indications of the attempt to use self-help management of development projects to gain support for the post-1970 Government are contained in a Comrudev report entitled 'A Progress Report on Village Development Committees' dated in 1971. The report, which discusses orientation courses for Village Development Committees, set its objectives as making committees aware "that they are the standard bearers of the present Government's policy", and that committee members should be supporters of the "present Government" (the report's emphasis).

Figure 5.1 Pre-1970 Administrative Structure

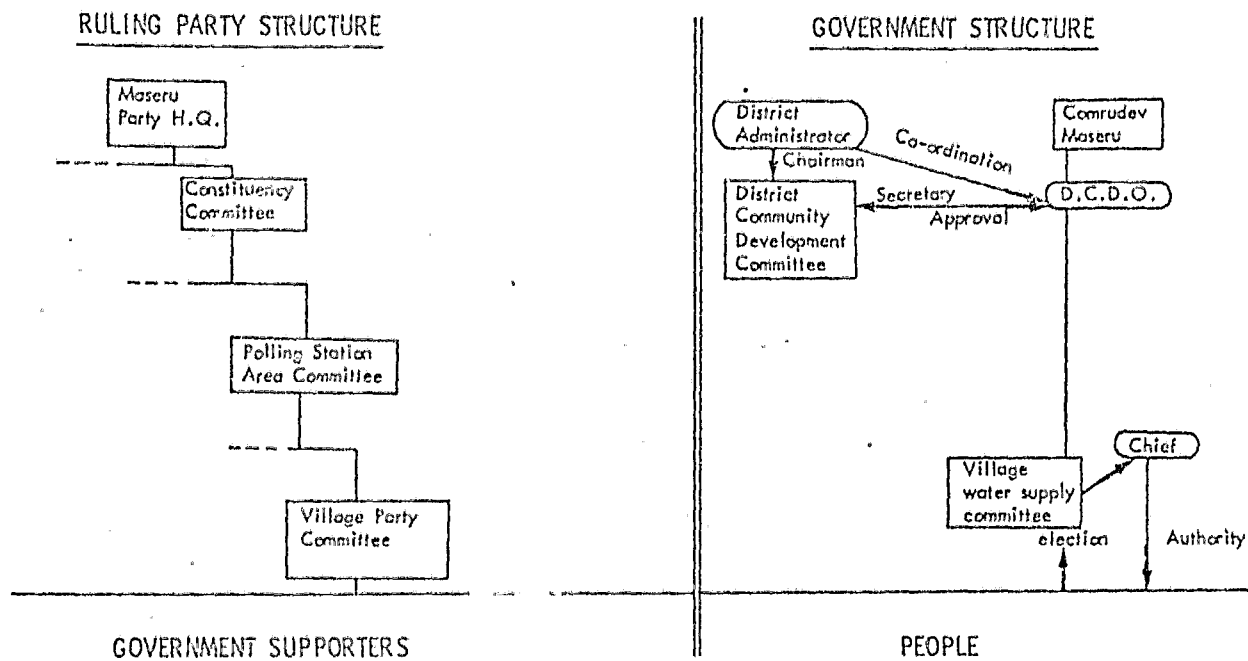
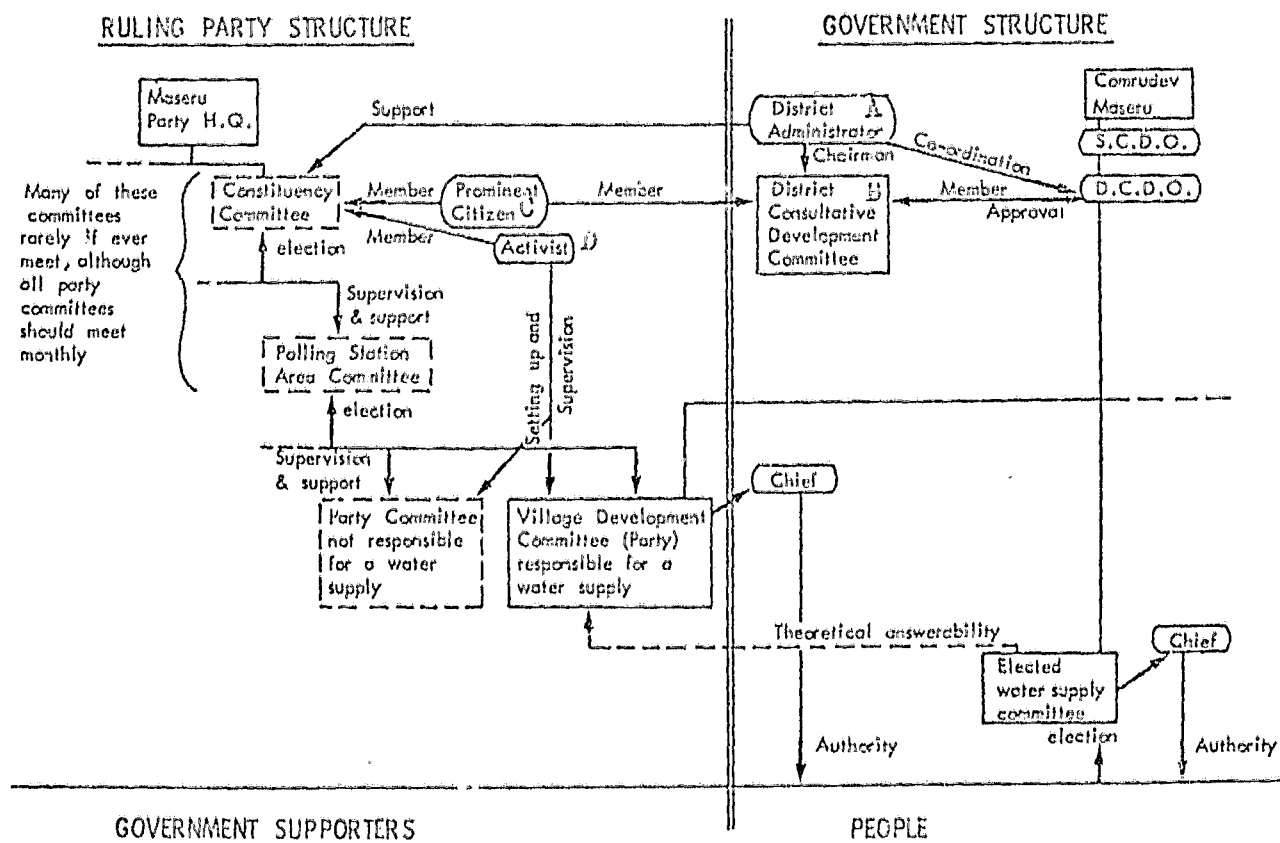


Figure 5.2 Post-1970 Administrative Structure



Notes to Figure 5.2

A. The District Administrator has a closer relationship to the ruling party structure than is suggested in the diagram. Party Activists could appeal to him directly on party matters and the office of the District Administrator is used in limiting employment opportunities to members of the ruling party.

B. The District Consultative Development Committees consist of the heads of all Government departments in the district, the Principal Chiefs, the Prominent Citizens, and the heads of the three main churches. These committees have little power on their own; they act as a district reference group and refer all important decisions to the central administration.

C. A Prominent Citizen (Ra-Lebatooa) is the senior BNP member in each constituency and was often the BNP candidate in the last election.

D. The Constituency Activists (Mohlopisi oa Lebatooa) have among other duties, to attend the election of all village ruling party committees, though in practice the Polling Area Activists (Mohlopisi oa Tikoloho) often take on these duties. Each village committee was also supposed to have a party activist (mohlopisi) although none was appointed in Mokhotlong.

These documents are the most recent statements on community development strategy and the legitimacy of this strategy was confirmed in interviews with the Chief Community Development Officer. It would appear then that at the time of the evaluation, 1975/76, the Lesotho Government interpretation of the strategy of self-help management differed from that proposed by community development planners. Not only did the policy deviate from the ideal, but the structure of Comrudev became unsuited to implementing a grass roots self-help programme. This is evidenced by the following:

- The centralisation of the administration brought into effect by the independent government greatly limits the prospects for successful community development: the District Consultative Development Committees, the successors to the district Councils are powerless to implement their decisions as they are dependent upon central Government for all finance and other resources.
- The Comrudev head office frequently circumvents the DCDO ignoring his requests and recommendations and undertaking work in the districts without consulting the district office.¹⁹
- A recent policy has further weakened the DCDO's position by removing all technical capability from his control: the Field Technical Assistants, who are responsible for surveying and constructing village water supplies, have now been moved back to Maseru.

- The district offices are understaffed: in 1976 most district offices were only staffed by a single DCDO and one assistant, and there were no village-based field workers.
- Transport facilities for the district offices are quite inadequate; the vehicles confiscated prior to the 1970 election were not replaced, and in the remoter districts (such as Mokhotlong) the DCDO travels on foot.
- The overlap between the ruling party organisation and Comrudev not only creates administrative confusion, but weakens the authority of the DCDO. Furthermore, the resources of both the technical and community development branches of the Department were overextended attempting to get rid of the massive backlog of applications for water supplies.
- The resources devoted to Comrudev's educational, managerial and motivational activities were far outstripped by the increase in the capacity of the technical section. Though the latter section was itself not without problems,²⁰ building water supplies became Comrudev's chief concern. In an evaluation in 1969 Burke had criticised this trend recommending more of a "people-orientation" and less "project-orientation".²¹ By 1976 this imbalance had reached extreme proportions.

Inadequate implementation of community development strategy, the growing resentment against the inability of Government

to meet its self-help commitments, and an often bitter reaction against the overtly political nature of the programme have combined to create a crisis in the village management of water supplies. The following section examines this crisis in greater detail with the help of case-studies of village management.

4. Village-level Management of the Programme

Community development strategy has been applied in a variety of ways at different times and the response even to similar applications has varied enormously. In Chapter 4 the variety of the methods of implementation of village water supplies is illustrated in the village of Thabang. Table 5.1 gives a crude index of the variation in the style and record of management of sixteen Mokhotlong villages with improved supplies. It is clear from this table that the performance of village level management is mostly ineffective. The analysis of village management first examines the sources of authority of the villages and sites the management of village water supplies within the context of local-level politics. Thereafter specific functions of self-help management are considered.

(a) The Politics of Self-Help Management

The introduction of a new resource into any political arena is a potential focus for dispute and a potential vehicle for political ascendance.²² The community development approach is especially prone to political dispute since it places great

TABLE 5.1 Village Management in Makhotsong Villages

Village *	Number of households	Estie Dominant Political Allegiance	Date of implementation of supply	Institution managing Water Supply	Position of Chief	Relations between Committee and Village	Cash Collected	Maintenance	Committee Organising Capability	State of Supply
Ha Mofereferere	45	BCP/BNP enclave	1972	Dispute between BNP appointed VDC/elected water committee	Supports elected committee	Committees focus for dispute	R95	None organised	Poor	Working intermittently
Tsonlopeleng	23	BNP	1973	BNP elected committee	Strong support for committee, popular	Good	R56	Well organised	Good	Working well
Ha Likhaohano (2 villages)	112	Divided	1975	BNP appointed VDC and freely elected committee	Weak support for committee	Only elected committee effective	R110	Frequent sabotage in inter-village dispute, poor capability	Poor	Working intermittently
Boltseko	35	BCP	1974	Freely-elected water committee	Strong support for committee, popular	Good	R44	Preventive work regularly done	Good	Working well
Ehlokeng	51	MFP	1972	Freely-elected water committee	Strong support for committee, popular	O.K.	R79	Attempted but insufficient skills	O.K.	Working intermittently
Loana Keng (2 supplies)	70	BCP	1969 1971	Dispute between VDC(BNP) and elected committee	Disinterest in committees	Confused	R527	None by either committee	Very poor	1 intermittent 1 irreparable
Ha Lehloholo	65	BNP	1971	BNP elected water committee (Police at 'elections')	Weak support for committee	Poor	R65	Good; home of district water technician	Poor	Working well
Bohlabano	21	BNP/BCP enclave	1970	BNP appointed VDC	Strong support for committee	Dispute between BNP/BCP	R26	No capability among users	Only in BNP section	Major breakdown
Gaba (4 sub-villages)	94	BCP/BNP groups	1972	Two BNP appointed VDCs	Opposes committees, popular BCP supporter	Both committees opposed by BCP majority	R113	Limited capability on one committee	Only one committee functioning	Working intermittently
Rea Itokisa (4 sub-villages)	72	BNP	1973	BNP appointed VDC with four elected water committees	Supports BNP Committee	O.K.	R94	Good; home of skilled operator	O.K.	Working well
Ha Molapo	114	BNP	1973	Water committee appointed by BNP committee	Disinterest in committee, popular	Confused	R100	No capability: continual leaks	Poor	Working intermittently
Boltsekano	45	BCP/BNP enclave	1973	BNP appointed VDC	Supports committee, weak and unpopular	Dispute between committee and Bathapu	R88	Operates only in BNP section	Poor	Working intermittently
Mallang	130	Divided	1971	Freely-elected water committee	Weak support for committee	Poor	R104	No capability on committee	Poor	Working intermittently
Phapang	45	BNP/BCP enclave	1971	BNP appointed VDC	Senior chief supports committee	No representation for BCP villagers	R56	No capability: excluded expert from committee	O.K.	Working intermittently
Ha Kotsi	18	BCP	1973	Freely elected water committee	Weak support for committee	Poor	R30	No capability	Very poor	Major breakdown
Pherekanning (2 supplies)	71	BNP	1963 1968	BNP appointed VDC	Disinterest in committee but very popular	Committee not functioning	R150	No capability	Very poor: chief's sec. does all management	Working intermittently

Abbreviations: BCP - Basotho Congress Party
BNP - Basotho National Party
MFP - Maramatou Freedom Party
VDC - Village Development Committee

NOTE: * Village names have been changed.

emphasis on offering positions of power to those outside established structures of authority.

In Lesotho village political dispute in the course of the introduction and management of village water supplies was exacerbated by three factors. Firstly, the character of authority in the villages is changing rapidly. The principal authority in times past has been the chieftainship but in recent years new structures have emerged such as political parties and village committees so that today village leadership is more openly competitive. Secondly, the village water supply programme established itself in the politically tense period in the years following the coup when political feelings were high throughout the country. And thirdly, the method of implementing self-help management after 1970 further politicised the development projects.

This section utilises case studies of Mokhotlong villages to illustrate the effects of these factors upon the management of village water supplies. The effects are presented in the form of a review of the central institutions of village authority: the chieftainship and village committees.

(i) The Chieftainship

The chieftainship is far less important as a means of social control than it was in the past. Whereas Moshoeshoe I's kingdom was largely founded on a chain of chiefly alliances, today, although the idiom of chieftainship still remains important, the institution lacks substance and alternative structures

undermine chiefly authority. In Lesotho the effect of 'placing' royal chiefs in authority over hereditary rulers of subject groups, of depriving all chiefs of their most lucrative sources of income, and of ninety years of colonial rule have left the chieftainship in a precarious position. This is aptly illustrated by Jingoos' lament that a chief is no longer "a chief by the people" but is now "a chief by the government".²³

The position of the king, and by implication the position of the chiefs became the central political and constitutional issue surrounding Lesotho's attainment of political independence. Despite a pro-chieftainship election mandate, in practice BNP rule since independence has further diminished the importance of the chieftainship. This is less because specific measures have been taken against the chiefs than because of the emergence of alternative sources of power and leadership: the growth of a central Government administration has increased contact with villagers, and the establishment of political parties has fostered a competitive local level leadership. As a result, village chiefs and headmen today find that they are no longer the single significant source of authority amongst their people. Their authority is now confined to specific spheres in village affairs, most often merely fulfilling residual administrative and law and order functions. Chiefs may very often also be excluded from discussions concerning village development. Even if some villages still see the chief as having ultimate responsibility for events in the village, the chief may not have been fully consulted in the implementation

of a project and may himself be confused as to where authority lies.²⁴

Those chiefs who wish to be more assertive have to range themselves for or against the new sources of power and leadership. Which stance a chief takes will depend as much upon the political allegiance of his principal supporters as upon his own personal commitments.

Broadly, chiefs who do assert their authority find themselves in one of three different positions in relation to development projects. They can support, oppose, or attempt to retain an impartial but authoritative detachment from the incumbent management of a village development project.

Chiefs are most likely to support village water supply projects managed by BNP appointees where the majority of their village subjects are BNP supporters, or where they themselves, or members of their families provide BNP leadership in the district. Villages with united BNP support were a rarity in Mokhotlong in 1976, but the small village of Tsoelopeleng is an example of this type, and one of the few villages in the district to have a well-managed water supply.

Tsoelopeleng: A Case Study

The headman of Tsoelopeleng is young, ambitious and hard-working and has retained his headmanship despite attempts by a neighbouring senior chief to depose him by demonstrating that he has the full support of the villagers, over half of whom are related to him. He is an active BNP supporter and

has worked closely with the village development committee to secure for the village a piped water supply, fencing for a communal vegetable garden and shrubs for a communal tree garden. In 1976 the headman was assisting in negotiations with Government for an additional length of piping to provide the vegetable garden with a perennial water source.

With the exception of the communal tree garden, the self-help development projects are well managed and maintained and the village is hailed by the DCDO as the model example of community development in the district. The vigorous support of a popular headman and the lack of controversy surrounding the establishment and functioning of the village development committee have no doubt been instrumental in achieving this success. Another important factor has been the fact that since the committee's inception the chairperson has been the headman's first wife. This last situation although not common was by no means unique and it would seem that water supplies in villages where committee members are closely related to the chief generally have a better chance of being managed successfully. In these cases the chieftaincy is often literally married to the power of the party or the state.

A second position chiefs might adopt is one of opposition to the initiatives of new organisations that have been set up by Government in their villages in the name of development. Chiefs may adopt a number of courses of action in obstructing

village development committees. Chiefs may neglect or refuse to call public meetings, to organise communal work or to relay essential information. In Mokhotlong there were even instances when chiefs had used their position to try and sabotage development projects.

A common tactic where the majority of villagers did not favour the ruling party was for the chief to trust in the support of the people and side against the committee, often encouraging the creation of an alternative committee. A chief in this position is effectively falling back upon the traditional source of chiefly authority: "a chief is a chief by the people".²⁵

Ha Moferefere: A Case Study

The village of Ha Moferefere in Mokhotlong provides an example of a chief's attempts to oppose a village development committee. The BNP constituency activist visited Ha Moferefere in late 1970 and prompted the village's BNP committee to assume the management of development activities in the village. The committee renamed itself the village development committee, organised the collection of cash subscriptions for a village water supply and assumed responsibility for the supply when it was put in in 1972.

It was at this point that the village chief intervened. He expressed concern at a pitso about the legitimacy of a committee of a political party managing the water supply and, a year later, when other villagers were establishing a communal

garden in liason with the Ministry of Agriculture the chief took it upon himself to arrange that the elected communal garden committee also took responsibility for the water supply.

The members of the village development committee appealed for assistance through the BNP Party Activist to the superior of the chief of Ha Moferefere, a noted BNP supporter. The senior chief intervened and appointed the chairperson of the village on the grounds that the superceded chief 'obstructed the work of development in the village'.

The deposed chief, with the backing of the majority of the villagers and the elected committee, has recently decided to sue for his reinstatement in the local court. In the meantime the condition of the water supply has deteriorated. While the issue of management of the water supply has become a vehicle for village political dispute, lack of regular maintenance has resulted in more frequent breakdowns. The village now faces the prospect of less and less piped water, and a drawn out series of court cases which are not likely to resolve the deep divisions in the village.

The history of the supply at the village of Qaba is another example of a chief's attempts to oppose a village committee. It also illustrates several points to be mentioned later about the functioning of village committees.

Qaba: A Case Study

Qaba is a large village containing four subvillages: Leboea, Boroa, Bochabela and Bophirimela. The village is an opposition party stronghold but does contain pockets of ruling party supporters predominantly in the latter two subvillages. The village was the site of unrest in 1970 when the police frequently visited the village and kept a close watch on prominent opposition party supporters. The village chief claims not to be concerned with party politics though is considered to be sympathetic to the opposition viewpoint expressed by the majority of his subjects.

An elected committee was established in 1969 to collect contributions for a village water supply. In February 1971 a BNP member in the village requested that the DCDO transfer the responsibility for the collection to BNP members. Despite opposition this was carried out and the funds already collected were divided between two BNP committees in the village. Each of these committees had jurisdiction over two of the subvillages.

The Leboea/Boroa BNP committee had a short and checkered career and by 1976 was virtually dormant. The committee's major preoccupation since its formation has been writing letters to the police and District Administrator denouncing BCP supporters or recommending BNP members for employment in Government, or on food-for-work parties. The committee seems to have made no real attempt to maintain that part of the supply under their control. Neither the majority of the villagers nor

the village chief recognise the committee's authority, and the chief has clearly used his authority to weaken the committee's standing by obstructing the committee's attempts to call a pitso and refusing to help the committee negotiate with villagers.

The Bochabela/Bophirimela BNP committee has been more successful, both because it has more political support in the subvillages under its control and because a special relationship between the chairperson of the committee and the DCDO has enabled the committee to demonstrate its ability to gain Government assistance. Again, the opposition of the chief and many of the villagers has hampered the committee's work and affected the standard of maintenance and repair work. On one occasion the chief, who holds the valve key, shut off the supply without warning and it was only reopened once the DCDO wrote a letter at the request of the chairperson of the committee berrating the chief and informing him "You should....support and accomplish the obligations of the Government in your village."

Similarly in 1974 when the new land committees were being established (see below) the chief attempted to use the confusion at the time over the responsibilities of the various committees to wrest control of the supply away from the BNP committees. The chief had had considerable influence over the previous land committee, which was said to be dominated by opposition supporters, and the chief hoped that he would be able to control

the new committee in a similar fashion. There was some justification for the chief's argument in that the new committees were to be called 'village development committees' (likomiti tsa ntlafatso). The chief was unsuccessful however for the chairperson of the Bochabela/Bophirimela committee once again appealed to the DCDO who intervened and prevented the disestablishment of the BNP committees.

Management of the supply is not only made more difficult by lack of recognition by the villagers and the chief, but the existence of two committees has been a constant source of dispute. For example, the complete lack of maintenance in the subvillages of Leboea and Boroa had lead in June 1976 to six leaks and persistant complaints from the Bochabela/Bophirimela committee that this was lessening the water in their pipes. With insufficient water many of the households in this part of the village were reverting to unimproved sources. The village has been extremely fortunate in not having a major breakdown, but when this occurs there is sufficient illwill and factionalism surrounding the management of the supply to keep it out of action for a considerable period.

The third position that chiefs in theory might adopt is one of impartial detachment. The image of the chief as the spokesman of his people is likely to be maintained best amongst those chiefs who do not succumb to any party or to their role in the central government hierarchy. Although the limitations on the power

of the chief are increasingly constraining, people like to think that chiefs have power, and may grant them authority where they are strong enough to take an independent stance. In this a chief is encouraged by the fact that alternative means of expressing the will of the people, or of giving authority to corporate decisions, have not been found. However, such ideal detachment is seldom achieved by chiefs who, resenting their declining power, take a more active role one way or another in village events. The only chief in Mokhotlong who came close to this position was the chief of Thabang, the village described in the previous chapter. He was a very popular chief and he scrupulously avoided involvement in local power struggles. His position was in all probability enhanced by the very senior position he held in the traditional hierarchy.

Whatever positions chiefs take (they may not be consistent in their stance) it is clear that they still have enough power to alter the pattern of events. The idiom of chieftaincy, so bound up with access to land, remains strong. But in the face of the growth of village committees the chieftainship appears as an institutional relic whose power is fast diminishing.

(ii) Village Committees

Informal groups of advisors have always assisted the chiefs, but the earliest formal committees established at village level appear to have been committees freely elected by the villagers under the auspices of the District Councils that were established in 1959. There do not appear to have been very many such committees

and for the most part they were set up to control specific projects such as communal gardens. The evaluation team came across one lowland committee which had been elected in 1959 to install a water supply. The committee, though not the diesel pump that it controlled, still survives in something like its original form in 1976, though this is very much the exception. From the pre-independence stage there have been successive attempts at village committee organisation. This has lead to an extraordinarily complex picture today.

The second wave of committees to be established in the villages came in the mid 1960s just before the general election of 1965. The early sixties saw the emergence of rival political parties, each attempting to gain support in rural areas by setting up committees to fight the election that would lead to national independence. These disappeared or disbanded soon after the election, due to weak party organisation and to the fluidity of party allegiances in the early years of independence. Some simply slipped into dormancy to be revived again at the next general election while a few remain active to this day.

It was in the post-independence period that committees began to be established in earnest. The two major parties which emerged from the 1965 election sought to consolidate their support in an increasingly competitive drive to establish permanent supporters in the villages. As has been illustrated, it was at this time that Comrudev became active in the villages with self-help projects. The District Community Development Officers toured the districts encouraging villagers to form committees and apply for development

projects (there was little choice other than water supply projects). These committees were commonly freely elected by the villagers themselves, although even at this stage some were already in effect party committees.

In a previous section of this chapter it has been shown that a new phase of committee activity began in the months immediately following the coup with the official introduction of village level management by BNP appointed committees. As Figure 5.2 indicates, the new policy meant that while village committees were ostensibly set up to manage water supplies, they were also, the bottom rung of the BNP political party structure. The widespread establishment of committees in this manner had drastic consequences for the effectiveness of self-help management.

One of the factors which determined villagers' responses to the new policy was the political allegiance of the village. The policy was least disruptive in villages that were politically united. The village of Tsoelopeleng described earlier is an example of a party appointed committee which has largely been successful in managing the village's development projects. The village of Boiteko is another example.

Boiteko: A Case Study

Boiteko is a small, politically united village: it contains thirty five households, all of whom are said to be BCP supporters. Unusually the village has a well-organised committee and a well maintained supply.

The idea of having a water supply came initially from a Community Development Officer, though the village chief, an exceptionally well educated and capable man, played a large part in encouraging the villagers. Cash was collected through the office of the chief in 1973, and in 1974 the supply was installed. At that time, against the opposition of a BNP committee based in a neighbouring sub-village, a water committee was freely elected by villagers to manage the running of the supply. The chairperson of the committee is the chief's charismatic wife.

The committee, then, not only has the active voice of the chief's wife and the support of the chief, but the committee is also openly elected, is recognized as legitimate in the village, and has not become a focus for political dispute. Indeed, the attempts on the part of the neighbouring BNP village committee to wrest control of the supply away from the elected committee has solidified support for the latter committee within the village. The responsibility for maintenance of the self-help scheme is also clearly understood by the committee and they have initiated and organized a system of routine maintenance whereby the village is divided into areas, each of which maintains the section of supply closest to it. The village's impressive organisation is no doubt also due to the small size of the village. However, being small it also lacks sufficiently skilled people to attend the supply if something major were to go wrong. So far, their preventive maintenance has been of sufficiently high standard to prevent major breakdowns, but the committee themselves suggested that they needed to have a villager trained in the

basics of water supply repair.

The effectiveness of the management of the supplies in the villages of Boiteko and Tsoelopeleng is exceptional. Not only are they politically united villages but both are especially fortunate in having conscientious and active chiefs whose wives are influential on the village development committees. Moreover, both villages are united in the face of an outside threat. These conditions are not administratively repeatable and it is necessary to look at the present policy's effects in less exceptional circumstances to see the average response to the self-help programme.

The majority of villages in Lesotho in the mid 1970s were politically divided. The effect of community development policy in politically divided villages was very often to escalate village political dispute, to reproduce the divisions of national politics at the local level and to widen the divisions between existing factions.

The most conflict-prone supplies were in villages in which the majority of villagers were not supporters of the ruling party and yet the village contained an enclave of BNP supporters. In these situations the formation of a BNP committee to manage the village supply was seen by the majority of the villagers as a manoeuvre to enhance the position of the BNP enclave, and opposition or simply lack of cooperation from the majority of the villagers often lead to mismanagement of the supply.

This occurred in a number of case-study villages and has, for example, been illustrated in the villages of Ha Moferefere and Qaba. The village of Boitsekano is a further example, although it is exceptional in that it illustrates a case where ethnic and political allegiances overlap.

Boitsekano: A Case Study

The village of Boitsekano provides an example of a politically divided village in which management of the supply became the focus for political dispute. The majority of the villagers in Boitsekano are Bathepu (a non-sesotho speaking group) although the village also contains a number of Basotho households. The village water supply and the village communal garden are managed by a single committee, a BNP committee appointed by the Prominent citizen in 1970. Both the chief and the entire committee are BNP-supporting Basotho, and the Bathepu villagers are united in their opposition to the BNP.

The history of the management of the supply has been marked by dispute between these two groups. When cash contributions were being collected, contributions from the Bathepu community were only forthcoming when the chairman of the committee invited the police to attend a pitso at which villagers were told they could be arrested for failing to contribute. The distribution of taps in the village (decided upon by the committee and the DCDO) favours the Basotho portion of the village and in one Bathepu portion no reticulation was provided. Instead the villagers in this area were to have two springs boxed. These have never

been built.

Recently the other Bathepu portion of the village has also been without piped water. Following the breakage of one of the taps in this part of the village when a cow belonging to a BNP villager ran into it, the Bathepu villagers refused to pay for the cost of the repair arguing that it was the responsibility of the owner or the committee. The committee responded by closing off that section of the pipe and depriving the whole of the Bathepu section of the village of water.

The situation in mid 1976 was that the Bathepu villagers in Boitsekano were bitterly resentful of how they had been 'deceived' by the BNP supporters. With no representation on the committee and only token support from the chieftainship they were rightly doubtful if they would ever be able to benefit from their contribution to the piped supply.

The reverse situation in which a village was divided politically into a dominant pro-ruling party faction and a smaller opposition faction was a less common situation in Mokhotlong. It was also generally less conducive to protracted dispute since the appointment of a BNP committee did not provoke such widespread resentment. Although there were instances of sabotage in this situation, more often the problems in managing these supplies were a result of the ineptness of the village committee than conflict over the committee's legitimacy.

Bohlabano: A Case Study

Bohlabano is a small remote village containing just twenty one households. The piped water supply installed in 1970 only served thirteen of these households. The committee managing the supply has been appointed by the BNP and is made up solely from members of the thirteen supplied households. All those served by the supply are BNP supporters and all had to contribute R 10 per household towards the supply. All other villagers are prevented from using the supply, ostensibly because they have not contributed towards the cost of the supply. It should be added that although the villagers believe that they paid for half the cost of the supply, in fact their total contribution accounts for only a tenth of the cost of materials.

The chieftainess is one of the supplied households and supports the discriminatory arrangement by alleging that she will prosecute non-contributors from drawing from the piped supply. Members of the committee justify the division between the haves and have-nots by pointing to the fact that those using the supply contributed a relatively large sum per household for their privilege, and claim that the other households cannot afford this amount. Members of the excluded households argue that some of them are prepared to pay for the supply, but the committee will not accept 'late applications' or consider extending the supply to new clusters of households because they are not ruling party supporters.

The numbers of users is so small and contains no-one with technical expertise and as a result maintenance and repairs have been a constant problem for the committee. In 1973 an exposed

area of plastic pipe was 'pierced with a pick, at night': the village became embroiled in argument and the unsupplied portion of the village was accused of sabotage. No culprit could be found and no specific accusations were made, but the incident further polarised the divisions in the village. The leak was finally repaired with the assistance of the manager of a local store who has access to tools.

In 1976 the metal pipe sheared off completely near the source putting the whole supply out of use. In the opinion of an engineer the break was caused by the collapse of a pipe support in the middle of a donga (an erosion gulley). However, the village committee members implied that it was the work of saboteurs from the opposition enclave. The supply now requires a major repair and without the necessary tools or expertise in the village it will be sometime before the supply is functioning. In the meantime relations between the two sections of the community are further strained and there is little prospect for an early resolution of the dispute.

The effects of the overtly political policy on the establishment of self-help committees were not restricted to fostering political dispute. Very often the political responsibilities and objectives of these committees were the prominent activities and the management of water supplies simply neglected. This is illustrated in the case study of Qaba. Another common effect was for the

committee to attract politically aspirant committee members and party hacks, and to exclude those best qualified to manage the supply. The case-history of Phapang exemplifies this.

Phapang: A Case Study

The majority of villagers in Phapang are BNP supporters although the village does also contain a small number of villagers who support the opposition parties. The village water supply was built in 1971 and is managed by a BNP committee. Until 1975 the committee was elected by the village, but a senior chief from a neighbouring village, an ardent BNP supporter, normally attended the election to ensure that an all BNP committee was elected. He did not attend the 1975 election and two months later objected that two BCP supporters had been elected to the committee in his absence. One of the BCP supporters, the treasurer of the committee, appealed to the DCDO that he should at least see out his term of office. This was granted, but the 1976 committee was appointed 'behind doors' by the senior chief and the local BNP organisation, and the treasurer excluded from the committee.

The exclusion of the 1975 treasurer has had serious consequences for the maintenance and repair of the supply. The supply was poorly constructed by a Peace Corps volunteer and has needed constant attention. The most successful maintenance in the village has been carried out by the ex-treasurer, a well-to-do former employee of the Ministry of Agriculture who learned to repair

pipes on the mines and possesses the only tools in the village. In mid 1976 the supply was barely functioning: several taps did not work, there were numerous leaks and the quality of the water was particularly poor. The committee, having excluded the only skilled water technician in the village from the committee for political reasons and receiving no technical support from the district Comrudev office were powerless to repair the failing supply.

A further effect of the post-1970 policy on the management of village water supplies was to create tremendous confusion as to who was the responsible authority for water supplies and other development activities.

Firstly, the post-1970 policy creating BNP-appointed committees was neither clearly expressed nor fully put into practice. In 1976 it was estimated that just over half the self-help village water supply projects in the country were in fact controlled by BNP committees.²⁶ The other cases are an assortment of elected committees which remained untouched by post-1970 Government policy. These include villages in which a previously existing elected committee, having established itself firmly as the village authority, simply took on the new function of managing water supplies. There were other villages where there were not enough BNP supporters to constitute a committee, so that members were freely elected. In a few villages, the committee responsible for the water supply was elected by all the villagers

at the chief's insistence, while in others again, the BNP committee supervised the election of an independent water committee which was in theory, though hardly ever in practice, subordinate to the BNP committee.

The cloak-and-dagger style of implementing the new policy and appointing new committees added to the confusion. Even BNP supporters themselves in a number of case-study villages were confused as to who managed the supply and how the authorities were appointed. Confusion over the selection of the committee was exacerbated by the use of the party euphemism "komiti li khethoa ke sechaba" (committees are chosen by the people). the sesotho phrasing hides the fact that the new policy implied appointment by the party machinery and did not allow free election by villagers, and confused both aid donors and villagers alike.

A third source of confusion is that over the years an impressive array of village committees has been established. Earlier in this section the history of the establishment of village committees was reviewed. By 1975/76 all of the following committees could be found (many of which in the same village):

BNP Committees - These village committees are in theory ultimately answerable to the central Party headquarters (Figure 5.2). They are set up and supervised by the local Prominent Citizen and are also encouraged by the constituency party activist. Their chief functions are to recruit new party members, to keep a watchful eye on the opposition and to control access to Government employment. If a development project, such as water supply or communal garden,

is set up in the village then the BNP committee may become the village development committee (BNP).

Communal garden committees - These are committees elected by subscribers to manage plots in 'communal' gardens. They are committees of parallel status and function to the water committees (see below) and in many villages they are one and the same committee.

School committees - These are parent-teacher associations which meet to discuss local school problems and organise food preparation, etc.

Village development committees (BNP) - These are committees which were established post-1970 by the Prominent Citizens for development projects. They may either be made up by established BNP committees or they may constitute new BNP committees. Their function is to manage self-help development projects.

Village development committees (land) - These are committees established in the villages of gazetted chiefs and headmen to advise them on land allocation. The 1974 regulations outline an election procedure in which just under half the members are government Party supporters appointed by the Minister.

Water committees - These are independent committees elected by villagers to manage water supply projects. They are theoretically

answerable to the local BNP committee but in practice may very often function on their own. They may, however, combine management of a water supply with the management of communal gardens and effectively become an elected 'village development committee'.

Other formal committees may exist in a few villages to run specific projects, such as clinic committees, dairy committees, or committees managing livestock improvement programmes, etc. Informal village organizations such as rotating credit associations for brewing, womens groups and funeral societies are also prevalent. In sum there are a great many organisations which expect a degree of participation from villagers and it is not surprising that villagers, not to say administrators, are confused as to how the complex system of committees is supposed to operate.

Finally, a particular source of confusion with regard to village committees is that two different sets of village committees go under the title of village development committees (likomiti tsa ntlafatso). Besides those set up by Comrudev in conjunction with the BNP to concern themselves with water supplies and other development projects, there are the statutory committees, established in 1974 as successors to the 'land committees' (likomiti tsa mobu), which advise the chiefs on land allocation. The Lesotho Government Gazette²⁷ makes no mention why these committees should also be termed 'development committees'. No function is officially given to them other than that of land allocation. However, the title has created speculation, and not a little confusion, in

that some chiefs (see the case study of Qaba), villagers and even Government workers are under the impression that these are the village organisations which will manage local development projects.

In conclusion, this subsection has discussed a number of factors and combinations of factors which effect the village management of water supplies. The supplies are being implemented at a time when the character of authority is in flux in the villages and the supplies' arrival precipitated considerable political dispute. The prominent factors which affected the course of the management of the supplies are: the standing and type of village committee responsible for the supply; the position adopted by the chief with regard to the new committee and his subjects; and the political allegiance of the villagers. It is concluded that there are no simple and sure prescriptions for successful management; for the conditions which lead to successful management in the few villages with well-maintained supplies cannot readily be recreated by an administration.

However, there are some pointers to more effective management. Firstly, the support of the chieftaincy for the project is important. Secondly, supplies in politically divided villages are more prone to mismanagement than are those in politically united villages. Moreover, because of the overtly political method of establishing committees, supplies in villages consisting of opposition party members with a small ruling party enclave are most prone to mismanagement through political dispute. Finally, and most importantly

the present practice in the establishment of village development committees has clearly provoked political dispute and exacerbated the problems of project management. Chapter 6 proposes alternative methods of establishing village committees which would create less confusion, depoliticise water supplies and make for less maladministration.

(b) Self-help Procedures

This section turns from village politics and the establishment of village committees, to examine how effectively village committees carry out the functions of managing water supplies. Village committees managing water supplies have three main functions: (i) collecting the initial cash contributions; (ii) organising labour during implementation; and (iii) undertaking maintenance and repairs. These functions are discussed below following some general comments on the functioning of village committees.

Despite the establishment of such a battery of village committees there are no guidelines or statutes defining the functions of these committees. The only committees to have statutory powers are the land committees. As a result, most committees managing water supplies are confused about what their functions are and how they should go about fulfilling them. A few committees have adopted their own constitution though these are often imprecise and fail to clarify responsibilities.

The policy combining the objectives of promoting the image of the BNP and managing water supplies has lead to further confusion

over committee functions. For example, the constitution of one BNP appointed village development committee reads (in translation) as follows:

- "1. This committee works on food aid works, and recruits new BNP members.
 3. It issues party membership cards.
 4. It manages the water supply.
 5. This committee together with other BNP Supporters (manazis) has made regulations for the running of the water supply and passes them to the chief for approval that they can be used to help the committee in its work. And it goes to the Community Development Office that they be read, typed and stamped."
- (dated November 1970)

The interests of this committee and most BNP-appointed village development committees were oriented towards strengthening the party rather than managing water supplies, and committee members were appointed on this basis. Phapang, for example, illustrates a village where those best suited to the task of managing the supply were excluded because they would not work to promote the BNP.

Another general point is that in lacking statutory powers the committees managing water supplies were unable to implement their decisions. There were numerous occasions when committee

members and the DCDO acted as if they could legally enforce participation in self-help projects. But they had, in practice, no such powers either to protect the supply from misuse, gain villagers' contributions or to prevent non-contributors from using the supply. Although the legal responsibility for water sources lies in the hands of the chieftainship in customary law (see Chapter 3) it is not exactly clear who should have responsibility for self-help piped water supplies. As physical property subsidised by Government the supplies are probably the legal responsibility of the Government. But lack of clarity on this issue often means that it is difficult for a committee to invoke the sanctions of a village court, particularly when the chief's perspective on a local dispute is different from that of the committee. Instances were even recorded in which the committee failed to muster a work party because they did not feel entitled to call a pitso, and were reliant on the whim of an uncooperative chief.

(i) The initial cash contribution

The first step a village committee must take in its application for a water supply is to collect a cash contribution from the villagers. A village pitso is called and the amount and form of contribution agreed upon. Most villages attempted to raise around R1 or R2 per household, though the village of Bohlabano illustrates an example where the contribution was set at R10. Once the secretary has raised enough to purchase a notebook and pen the collection can be extended to the whole village and house-to-house visits are made.

Contributions were rarely forthcoming from every household. Households headed by women or destitute households may not be asked to contribute, and there were always households who, for a variety of reasons could not or did not want to contribute. Committees may attempt a number of ruses to put pressure on non-contributors to pay, including ostracism, public denouncement, requesting the DCDO to write reprimanding or threatening letters to the offenders, or asking the chief to intervene. The problem of non-contributors tended to have a domino effect: if one household defaulted their neighbours would also refuse to pay. The committees could not legally enforce their claim for a contribution although they often expressed the need to acquire such powers.

Mismanagement of the funds held by the committee could often cause tremendous problems. In one village the treasurer's inability to account for R4 lead to a delay of almost two years before the committee regained sufficient trust to continue the collection. In a few cases a lack of basic accounting ability was a handicap, but there were also cases where the treasurer, although unable to count, was regarded as trustworthy and carried out her duties without difficulty.

A result of all these problems was that cash collections were often long drawn out affairs and were invariably below target. Nevertheless, once a reasonable sum had been collected the treasurer would take the funds to town. Pre-1975 it would be deposited with the local sub-accountancy office and then the village would anxiously await the arrival of the Government water supply technician.

This procedure illustrates a basic problem in self-help strategy, for by depositing a nominal amount a village could effectively commit Government to a hardware handout. The prospect of this handout helped to stimulate the tremendous demand for supplies in the early 1970s illustrated in Chapter 4. As has been shown earlier in this chapter, mobilising such interest clearly brought with it political gains at a time of political unrest in that it boosted the position of BNP controlled committees in the villages. Yet it was also a short-sighted policy for it stimulated demand way beyond the Government's capacity to build supplies and lead directly to the creation of the massive backlog of applications which is now one of the most serious problems facing the future of the programme (see Chapter 4). In the short term it may have strengthened the Government's grip on the rural areas, but over the years the backlog lead to frustration and increased the widespread disillusionment of the BNP. Lesotho is by no means unique in this response to self-help strategy. The pattern in a great many countries is for the strategy first to stimulate considerable interest and then for the administration to be unable to respond to the demand.²⁸ The final stage, which Lesotho has not yet reached, but has been the pattern elsewhere, is for the self-help principle to be dropped altogether.

In 1975 the procedure of depositing initial cash contributions with the sub-accountancy office where they could not be withdrawn was altered and villagers were encouraged to open savings accounts until such time as it was certain that they were about to receive a supply. This has not entirely solved the problem because many

villagers still regard their money as being 'with the Government' and they will still be disappointed not to receive a supply.

Another problem with existing policy on village cash contributions is that the purpose of the initial contribution is not clear. While current policy assumes that the initial payment is a contribution to the cost of the materials, in practice village contributions only amount to an average of seven per cent. of the total cost of the average supply, and the only practical purpose of the contribution is as a measure of villagers' enthusiasm for the undertaking. Similarly, villagers generally presume that they are matching Government funds on a fifty-fifty basis and are quite unaware of the extent to which Government (with the support of aid donors) is subsidising the programme.

(ii) The Labour contribution²⁹

Case studies of the installation of supplies in Lesotho indicate that what is often considered as the least problematic of the self-help components can also be fraught with difficulty. Several factors recur as influences on the process of installation: conflicts of authority between the Comrudev technician, the village committee and the chieftainship; political factionalism; the efficacy of the letsema (communal work party) tradition; and inter-village rivalry.

Village labour is called on primarily to dig trenches. In a typical operation the Comrudev technician in charge sets out the trench lines and explains to members of the water supply committee the line and depth of the trenches. Then, either the

village chief or the water committee themselves call a meeting to make arrangements for the work to be carried out. Digging is normally done by such men as are available, using their own picks and shovels, but women participate also, either directly in the digging or by preparing food and drink for the workers. Sometimes the arrangement is that different sections of the village take it in turns to dig, sometimes one large party is assembled.

The technician, the village committee and the chief may all be involved in supervision of the labour force. Technicians frequently were frustrated by a poor turnout or by an inadequate standard of work and often became embroiled in village dispute. In one village where there was a consistently poor turnout the Comrade technician attempted to ignore the committee, who had taken responsibility for organising the labour force, and asked for permission to report absentees directly to the chief. In the village of Terata the technician's indiscretion and insensitive behaviour on installation of the supply fostered a factional dispute which continued years after his departure (see Chapter 4).

Political divisions often became more marked where political committees attempted to organise communal labour and often support was forthcoming from one faction only. In a group of lowland villages an ex-member of a village development committee had a record of daily attendance for communal work on the water supplies in her care, but claimed that it was inaccessible in a locked cupboard. The woman was a BNP supporter and her description

implied that BNP members had been the main participants in the digging. Such records are perceived as a threat by many people who are unsure within the presently ill-defined procedures and tense political situation what measures may be taken against them by Government officials. Where one party in the village is ranged against another, obscure threats of record keeping carry the unfortunate connotation of dominance of one party over the other. Moreover, such sanctions are not always effective. In this group of villages, work proceeded so slowly that the Government felt obliged to call in the Police Mobile Unit to dig the trenches.

Although village committees often argue that organising the labour for installing a supply was their responsibility villagers often look to the chieftainship when a work party was being called. There is a tradition in Lesotho of communal work, both in individual households' fields and in village projects. In the latter case it has been the prerogative of the chief to call out the people for a letsema (communal work party). Communal labour often worked better if the chief called for the labour, both because it fitted within the traditional understanding of work for the communal good, and was therefore to some extent above 'politics', and also because it increased people's expectation that their neighbours would also turn out to dig. However, it is clearly the case that village leadership is no longer confined to the chieftainship; committees are increasingly taking the initiative and themselves calling on village resources of labour.

Villages are sometimes so located that several can most conveniently be served by one reticulated water supply. In such cases inter-village rivalry and jealousy or disputes between headmen can disrupt operations. Village identity provides a clear cut basis for division so that their chiefs, committees or party leaders can easily find themselves opposed to their opposite number in rival villages. Cases of sabotage of water supplies were usually attributable to inter-village rivalry of this kind. For example, one village within a group of three lowland villages that were due to receive a supply, withdrew its labour for a while when the chairperson of the water supply committee, who was on poor terms with his counterparts, believed that his village was going to be supplied later than the other two.

Other difficulties in the initial installation were that migrant labour restricted the number of men able to work, and that there was a frequent occurrence of technical hitches because of inadequately trained technicians and the difficult terrain.

An effect of all the complications that have been mentioned was that the time taken to dig the trenches could vary greatly from one village to another, and in general self-help installation was extremely time-consuming. Despite these problems a comparison of the costs between self-help and paid labour reveals that installation by self help is clearly the least costly method of building supplies.³⁰

(iii) Maintenance and repairs

A major shortcoming of present policy on water supplies in Lesotho is that it contains no reference on how to, or who should, maintain and repair supplies. The self-help formula implies that it is the responsibility of villagers and village committees, and certainly the only maintenance or repair work done is carried out by villagers on their own supplies. But the record is very poor and lack of maintenance and an inability to carry out repairs is the chief cause of the high breakdown rate discussed in Chapter 4.

Maintaining and repairing supplies are the most difficult tasks facing the village committees. Maintenance is a never-ending, time consuming task with little visible reward requiring foresight, considerable labour and good organisation. Repairs require tools, technical skills and repeated cash collections to purchase spare parts and hire special tools. With no outside assistance, few resources and little authority it is no wonder that village committees have so poor a record in keeping their supplies in working order. Table 5.1 illustrates that only very exceptional villages in exceptional circumstances and with well-organised committees, such as the case of Boiteko, have successfully adopted a system of maintenance; and the only villages to have successfully conducted major repairs are those like Rea Ithokisa and Ha Lehlohonolo where the village is lucky enough to have a skilled artisan who is accepted by the committee with tools resident in the village.

Village committees have found that labour for routine maintenance has been very difficult to organise. By comparison the response to the installation of supplies seemed enthusiastic and relatively problem-free. The work that needs to be done on a routine basis is to ensure the pipes are covered and the standpipes protected. In the village of Boiteko households are divided into clusters each of which is responsible for the routine maintenance in their area. Apart from this village the only other preventive work that was found to be done was carried out by occasional highly enthusiastic committee members. Other than these exceptions committees generally only act when a breakage has occurred.

One of the first tasks a village committee may have to undertake when a breakdown occurs is to raise more money to buy a spare part. Although the amount needed is often very small, cash collections for repairs are invariably less successful than initial collections. The novelty of the supply has now gone; moreover, many villagers contributed initially under the impression that one payment would cover all the costs and often refuse to contribute a second time. The result is a drawn out series of meetings in an attempt to gather an additional fifty cents per household while the supply remains out of order and disused.

A lack of technical skills in the village presents another problem. Often the only villagers with experience in working with pipes are migrant labourers who cannot be relied upon to be present when a repair is needed, or to be motivated to undertake

the repair. Migrant labourers after months at the mines often regard visits 'home' as their 'leave' and may not feel concerned about the supply. Furthermore, drawing water and more often than not organising the committee is a woman's task and men are not under direct pressure to work on the supply. The example of Terata in the previous chapter illustrates how these factors can mean that a breakdown is simply not repaired at all.

A shortage of tools and spare parts is another problem. Most repairs are effected with wire, string and bicycle inner tubing, but these are rarely able to hold the pressure for any length of time before they need to be redone. A proper repair requires that the committee raise sufficient money to buy a spare part from Comrudev and borrow the correct tools. More specialised equipment such as welding equipment or a die for threading pipes have to be hired at considerable expense from a local trader if Comrudev is unable to help.

The complexity and frequency of maintenance and repair work required varies with the level of technology of the supply. The more complex technologies, such as diesel-powered pumped supplies in the lowlands, not only need considerable skill in keeping the pump operating, but require that voluntary contributions are collected every month. This is clearly an unworkable system in the long term given all the problems attendant upon cash collections, and all diesel supplies in the country have run into serious problems. By contrast the gravity fed systems in Mokhotlong are relatively maintenance free and require the lowest number of repairs of any of the technologies

that could conceivably be used in the country. Despite this, the village committees have difficulty carrying out any preventive maintenance and often even the simplest repair, with the result that a great many supplies quickly fall into a chronic state of disrepair and those that are lucky enough not to be put completely out of action with a major breakdown only work intermittently.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has examined how self-help strategy has been implemented in Lesotho and what effect it has had upon the management of water supplies. It is evident that behind the lofty ideals contained in the stated objectives of the community development programme in Lesotho and the effusive encouragement from previous development advisers and international aid donors, self-help strategy has been used by the Government in power as a means of extending its influence in the villages during a period of widespread opposition following the events of 1970. The most important specific measure to this end was the replacement of elected community representatives to manage self-help development projects by committees appointed by the ruling party's political hierarchy. The manoeuvre paid off in the short term: the open-endedness of self-help strategy created a considerable demand for village water supplies, and as a result BNP controlled committees have established themselves in a great many villages throughout the country. But in the longer term, the political gains have been negated by the very serious problems the programme now

faces, many of which are a direct result of its partisan design. Not the least of these problems has been the effects on village politics where the policy has precipitated a crisis in the village level management of the programme.

The political bias of committees exacerbated an already tense political situation in the villages. Water supplies became a focus for political dispute around which the dominant institutions of village authority - the chieftainship, a variety of village committees, the political parties, and the Government extension agents - were ranged. Few supplies survived unscathed and fully operational during the course of scenes of bitter dispute between these parties.

Furthermore, the open-endedness and lack of control characteristic of self-help policy set in motion a chain of requests for supplies which grew so fast that it became impossible to administer, and created a large backlog of applications. The policy also provided no support or guidelines to assist village committees carry out their management functions: committees were confused over their responsibilities, lacked technical expertise and were powerless to enforce their decisions. As a result village cash collections could only scrape up nominal amounts, the village labour force was poorly organised on installation of the supply, no preventive maintenance was carried out and few supplies properly repaired.

The situation at the time of the evaluation appeared very bleak indeed, all the more so because the primary cause of the unsatisfactory state of the programme seemed inaccessible to

the development planner. The first and minimum requirement appeared to be to come to grips with the unstated aims and assumptions which lay behind Government policy on the programme. The concluding chapter describes a set of policy recommendations which attempt to improve the situation.

Reference Notes to Chapter 5

1. Cabinet Memorandum by the Ministry of Local Government,
Community Development Policy appendix 1, para 1. The whole
of the document is appended in Burke E.N. Community Development
in Lesotho, 1969, annex 2.
2. See for example "The Role of Community Development" (n.d.)
and a Ministry of Rural Development memorandum on "Common
Elements of Community Development", 1976.
3. Ministry of Rural Development internal memorandum ibid.,
1976.
4. Burke, op. cit.
5. Moody, E. "The Role of Community Development in Lesotho"
Development: Southern Africa (1), 1975, p. 43.
6. These excerpts from the OXFAM Field Directors reports are
quoted in Feachem, R. et al., op. cit., 1976, ch. 3.
7. Winai Strom. G. op. cit., 1978, pp. 59-60.
8. ibid.
9. Lewis, L.J. "Mochlabane's Co-operative Movement" Community
Development Bulletin 10(4), 1958, p. 80.
10. "Progressive Farmers in Basutoland" Community Development
Bulletin 12(2), 1960.
11. Botting, J.H.A. "Community Development and Famine Relief:
International Aid for Self-Help in Lesotho" Community Development
Journal 4(2), 1969, p. 89.
12. ibid.

13. ibid, p. 90.
14. ibid.
15. ibid.
16. ibid.
17. "Strom, op. cit., p. 100.
18. Department of Community and Rural Development Savings
Village Development Committees Ref. A8/CD/CONF31/CRS/am
4th February, 1971. The emphasis was in the original.
This circular originated from a low level within Comrudev
but there appears to have been no other Government policy
directive which either clarifies the status of village
committees or suggests a change of policy from this.
19. Feachem, et al., op. cit., 1978, p. 69.
20. See Feachem, et al., op. cit., 1977, annex F.
21. Burke, E., op. cit., p.
22. The approach adopted here derives from political anthropology,
particularly that developed in Bailey F.G. Stratagems and
Spoils, 1969; and Schwartz, M. (ed.) Local Level Politics,
1969.
23. Jingoos, S.J. A Chief is a Chief by the People, 1975, p. 183.
24. Wallman, S., op. cit., 1969, p. 100 gives an example of
similar confusion in another rural development project.
Wallman develops the point in "Lesotho's Pitso: Traditional
Meetings in a Modern Setting" Canadian Journal of African
Studies 2(2), 1968.

25. Kuper, A. "The Kgalagari Lekgota" in Richards, A. and Kuper, A. (eds.). Councils in Action, 1971, p. 97 makes a similar point in noting that "the headman usually speaks only when an agreed point of view is emerging."
26. Feachem, et al., op. cit., 1978, p.69.
27. "Land Regulations 1974 and Land Act 1973" Lesotho Government Gazette 9(13), 1974.
28. Schaffer, op. cit., p.205.
29. There were no installations in Mokhotlong in the course of fieldwork and this sub-section is compiled from interviews with participants and from data on lowland villages collected by Sandy Cairncross.
30. Feachem, et al., op. cit., 1978, pp. 56-59.

PART THREE

CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER 6.

Managing Village Water Supplies by Self-Help

1. Introduction

This chapter examines the lessons the Lesotho case-study offers for the management of water supplies and self-help policy. It discusses the benefits and implications of managing supplies by self-help and makes policy suggestions to improve management at the local level.

2. The Benefits of Self-Help Water Supplies

The dissertation began with a reference to the abundance of international aid donors in Lesotho and ended with a series of case studies of village water supply projects with village committees locked in political dispute while pipes, tanks and standpipes lie cracked, broken and unused. A chain of decisions connects these two poles. At every state in the process of implementing a self-help village water supply - initiating and planning the programme, funding the cost of the materials, administering the programme, organising villagers' contributions, and building and maintaining the supply - different parties perceive the costs and benefits of the supply in different terms.

At one end of the spectrum there are the community of international aid donors. The considerable power of the aid agencies has been the driving force behind both the present vogue

for rural water supplies and the oscillating popularity of the concept of self-help (both of which are discussed in Chapter 1). Aid donors explain their interest in water supplies in terms of humanitarian concern for improving health and well-being in poor countries and in terms of the theoretical benefits of self-help strategy. Yet it is common knowledge that many aid agencies, particularly multilateral and bilateral agencies, have as their foremost concerns undeclared political, economic and even military objectives, and that they utilise seemingly humanitarian means to attain these ends. Self-help water supplies are sociologically particularly well-suited to the demand for an innocuous cloak for covert interests.

For aid donors, water supplies provide cheap, highly visible evidence that their money is reaching the rural poor. It is often extremely difficult to demonstrate tangible material benefits from investment in other areas of rural development such as agriculture and communications, however great the need. Furthermore, it is often extremely difficult as a donor to execute improvements in many areas of rural development without exacerbating inequality or having to take difficult and unpopular decisions, such as altering land tenure. By contrast, the benefit of having clean water close to the home is presumed to be undeniable and is universally acclaimed. Also, the speed with which investment in water programmes can demonstrate results enhances their appeal to charitable aid donors dependent upon donations. All these factors combined with the symbolism of water and the relative ease with which low-cost water supply technologies can be implemented

make them a very attractive and highly saleable product for aid donors.

The strategy of self-help is also well-suited to the demands of aid donors. Implementation by self-help means that the major programme cost lies in technical assistance and the capital cost of materials and machinery. At the same time, bilateral and multilateral aid agreements are often restricted to personnel and purchases from specific donor countries and thereby stimulate donor domestic economies. Furthermore, self-help policy enables donors to avoid the logistical problems of administering a development programme. Villagers' contributions cut the cost of implementation and hold out the possibility of achieving a greater impact for less expenditure. There are two other reasons why donors find the concept of self-help appealing: the first (as has been shown in Chapter 1) is that community development has been used as an anti-communist, anti-insurgent ideology and donors retain it as a tool for extending western influence; the second is an unspoken premise in the nature of charity which requires that the poor shall not receive alms without making a contribution towards their own plight, if only as an acknowledgement of culpability for their poverty.¹

The governments of poor countries, the recipients of aid, stand at a second level and perceive self-help water supplies in a slightly different light. For recipient governments the political benefits are paramount. Water supplies are a relatively easy way of responding to the clamour of donors and villagers for rural development, and newly independent governments and

governments needing to consolidate their political position may find a water supply programme to be popular, easy to implement, an opportune political symbol and a convenient means of visibly seeming to tackle underdevelopment. More important, from Government's perspective, is the fact that, in the usual course of things, water supply programmes do not require structural change or changes in land tenure in order to achieve some initial success.

Self-help strategy too has especial advantages for Third World governments, many of which have already been mentioned in Chapters 1 and 5. Lamb has noted in the Kenyan case that for Government, self-help

"offer(s) a potentially useful and inexpensive source of economic growth and, it is safe to say, a convenient way of accommodating demands for development which it would otherwise (be) difficult to satisfy."²

Furthermore, by relying on villagers to maintain and manage projects, Government is able to limit its recurrent costs, a particularly important consideration for non-productive economies and economies dependent upon foreign aid (which generally only makes grants of development capital). But self-help is attractive for reasons other than cutting costs. It is able to relegate to villagers administrative decisions and management functions which a bureaucratic administration would find difficult to execute without becoming extremely unpopular. Lamb's comments on the Kenyan experience are again apposite in Lesotho where Government hopes that self-help will enable them to

"relate effectively to the rural population... while ensuring the retention of sufficient control to avoid situations which would be bad for planned development and which might be unfavourable in their political repercussions."³

Governments see in self-help programmes a tool of political patronage for winning political support. Lamb makes the additional observation that the use of the word 'programme' in this context conceals an implicit process of politicisation.⁴ As has been shown at length in the previous chapter, the Lesotho example illustrates that self-help became a covert means of attempting to maintain rural political control.

At the end of the line are the recipients. Their response to the offer of self-help water supplies is more various than that of either their Governments or the donors. For some, they present an opportunity for political ascendance and for re-ordering the balance of local politics. For others, piped water supplies remove yet another activity from villagers' control and establish new dependencies: villagers become reliant on new technologies and new skills for what was once a resource within their own domain. The perceptions of chiefs and village committee members are different again and are discussed in Chapter 5.

Amongst all these opinions must be set those of the majority of village women who are the true recipients of the whole endeavour, and in whose name the whole chain of decisions is made. For them, piped water supplies are a desired amenity because they lighten the burden of water collection from traditional sources and save time and energy which are highly valued by women in the migrant labour economy.

These then are the benefits of the self-help water supply programme as perceived by all those participating in it. Much is expected of water supplies. The remainder of this section summarises the field results from the Lesotho case study and measures them against these expectations.

Chapter 4 has presented the results of field evaluations and showed that the material benefits of the programme in Lesotho have been negligible: health has not been significantly improved; there have been no economic benefits; the only clear benefit has been a small saving in the time and energy expended by village women collecting water in villages with piped water supplies.

The evidence in Chapter 5 shows that neither the social nor the political expectations of the programme have been met. Take, for example, the thesis of catalysis described in Chapter 1: none of the three forms of catalysis has occurred in practice. Firstly, piped water has not in itself been sufficient to stimulate other water-related production. Secondly, although the self-help procedure has generated a considerable demand for water supplies, there is no evidence to suggest that it has promoted further initiatives by instilling in villagers a greater confidence in their own abilities (or indeed any evidence to suggest that lack of confidence is even a problem). Something closer to the reverse has happened since the self-help process has been interpreted as an object lesson in how to persuade Government to hand out a substantial subsidy. Moreover, the new technology, appropriate as it is, has resulted in greater rather than less dependence upon outside authorities, and so

further limits a village's chances of achieving self-sufficiency.

Another problem with this aspect of the catalyst thesis is that village participation is not the harmonious awakening of latent energy that it is portrayed to be. Rather than stimulating concerted community action, self-help widens the political arena, exacerbating competition and rivalry between social groups. The logic of the thesis can, in fact, work against itself. If a successful undertaking is a spur to further initiatives, it must follow that an unsuccessful project can hinder them.

The third expectation of catalysis has also failed. The disruptive method of establishing village committees has neither created stable community representation nor a base from which the community might organise new activities.

Because political objectives are veiled it is more difficult to gauge the political benefits of the programme. It is not possible, for example, to measure what aid donors have gained or lost from their investment in Lesotho's water supplies since their motives are obscure.

The Lesotho Government's political reasoning is more apparent than that of donors, but not altogether clear. There has obviously been an attempt to use the programme to build up support for the ruling party and to control unrest in the villages, but in practice the process has not always followed a coherent plan. Many of the inconsistencies in implementation of the policy must be explained in terms of administrative confusion. This would explain why some committees were freely elected even after 1971. But it is not clear, for example, whether, in particular

instances, villages received supplies as an act of political patronage, to bolster party membership or to placate opposition strongholds. The inconsistency of the strategy is demonstrated by the manner in which supplies appeared to be equally distributed between known BNP and BCP strongholds.

But whatever the motive force for the process and however the strategy was implemented in specific instances, ruling party membership did not increase. This assessment is derived from discussions with committee members and from the numbers of ruling party members in villages at different times. Often BNP committees used the same minute book to record both party and water supply business and it was apparent from figures gleaned from these books that there was no obvious increase in the numbers of supporters in a village after a supply was installed. The reason why the programme did little to enhance the image of the ruling party was that the problems posed, namely, the long delays after application, the inability of village committees to manage the new resources and the subsequent failure of so many supplies, generated acrimony, disillusion, despair and little gratitude.

In conclusion, it is apparent that few of the high expectations for the programme have been met. The central reason for the gulf between hopes and achievements lies in the inappropriateness of the development strategy used to implement the programme. The following section summarises the aspects of the critique of self-help developed in Chapter 1 which have been illustrated by the Lesotho case-study.

3. The Critique of Self-Help

The Lesotho case study illustrates a number of the shortcomings of the self-help development strategy suggested in Chapter 1.

The first point is that self-help strategy is inappropriate to conditions in Lesotho. Chapters 1 and 2 describe the extent to which the national and village economies in Lesotho have been underdeveloped and the social institutions skewed towards the demands of a migrant labour reserve. Yet self-help strategy makes no attempt to counter or even acknowledge the structural causes of underdevelopment in the country. It is assumed that the mountain villages of Mokhotlong are tightknit, traditional entities and that their essential problem is lack of motivation. As several of the case studies in Chapter 5 illustrate, what is lacking is not so much a need to mobilise but a real shortage of manpower, cash, skills, tools and efficient institutions. Another sign of the inappropriateness of the strategy in Lesotho is the way the policy espoused in Lesotho consists of verbatim quotes from Colonial textbooks and documents describing experiences in countries such as Israel and Ireland, and no attempt is made to ask what is best for the particular conditions in Lesotho.

A second set of points concerns implications of the concept of self-help. The paternalistic hopes of community developers expressed in the pump-priming metaphor and the ideal of helping people to help themselves indicate naivety and a failure to acknowledge that the process of development is one of political competition about the control of resources. Self-help strategy

assumes that administrative initiatives in prompting action and avoiding 'cultural obstacles to development' are the crucial issues.⁵ The Lesotho case study shows these assumptions to be false: Chapter 3 has shown that 'cultural fit' has not affected the water supply programme, and Chapter 4 argues that it is the ability of the administration to respond to the tremendous demand for supplies rather than mobilising that demand which is the critical issue.

The concept of catalysis implicit in self-help thinking (discussed in the previous section) demonstrates further conceptual and logical problems: an unsuccessful experience with a water supply project may positively hinder the possibility of a village adopting further projects; moreover, while the matching of village and Government contributions signifies a response to a 'felt need' from Government's perspective, for villagers they are simply taking up the offer of Government assistance. Villagers had no choice of services and their response did not indicate that lack of water was their most urgently felt need.

The vague and ambiguous social objectives of self-help strategy outlined in Chapter 1 have masked the range of underlying benefits discussed in the previous section and, as a result, facilitated the use of self-help as a political ideology in Lesotho. In consequence both the Government's development planners and donors are able to discuss the strategy in popular and apolitical terms such as 'community participation' and 'self-help' without reference to each's political objectives.

The Lesotho example too confirms Schaffer's observation

quoted in Chapter 1 that community development is 'a' la administrative' and consciously avoids the difficult task of managing village activities. The effect of this has been that there has been no village-level management, and without any form of evaluation or feedback, the situation has been allowed to deteriorate to the point where it will take years to deal just with the backlog of applications, let alone to attempt to resuscitate failed supplies.

Finally, there is the point, noted by Lamb in Kenya and which has been illustrated extensively in the previous chapter, that self-help is particularly susceptible to political influences at the local level.⁶ This is because it entails establishing new institutions of authority in villages, because implicit in the community development approach is an attempt to order the individual's relationship to government, and because, in the Lesotho case, community development became an overt political tool of use to the BNP during a period of considerable opposition to government. In Lesotho political dispute proved to be the most significant and debilitating feature of the water supply programme, and it is to a proposal for limited measures which might be taken to resolve this issue that the next section is addressed.

4. Appropriate Local-Level Management

The evaluation, from which the material for this study is drawn, concludes with a formidable array of recommendations to try to set the water supply programme aright. The principle

recommendations are:

- a method of dealing with the backlog of applications;
- a strengthening of Comrade's mechanical capability;
- numerous recommendations regarding the choice and implementation of the technologies;
- measures which would lead to greater improvements in environmental health;
- a substantial decentralisation and strengthening of the district offices;
- the creation of a maintenance policy operating at the district and village levels;
- methods to improve the effectiveness of the management of the supplies in the villages.

The final item mentioned here contains two areas of recommendation. The first is to enable village management bodies to take care of their own supplies: this includes clarifying management functions; training committee members; creating a cadre of village water mechanics to maintain and repair supplies who would be trained, remunerated and supplied with tools; and arranging for the supply of spares. The second area concerns the establishment and powers of local-level management. These recommendations are discussed below.

Essentially the recommendations attempt to convert existing self-help policy into an efficient means of managing supplies, yet retaining local participation. A first question to face is why the concept of popular participation in management is

retained in spite of the poor record of self-help?

There are several reasons. The first is that it was judged that the Lesotho government and the donor community are so fully committed to the general concept of community participation that recommendations outside this ambit would not be considered. A second is that, however tempting it may be to try to avoid the difficulties of community involvement by centralising managerial responsibility, there are practical grounds for the retention of local-level control. The experience of several countries in trying to arrange for the installation, maintenance and repair of popular small-scale technologies through a central agency has been that within a short time the task outstrips central capability. What may at first seem a simple job of routinely inspecting a few supplies and tightening a joint or two quickly becomes a nightmare of breakdowns scattered over a large area, many of them in almost inaccessible places, of written-off vehicles and of resignations of overworked and irreplaceable staff. In addition, many of the simpler technologies, such as gravity fed water supplies, do not warrant full-time attention by skilled personnel. The use of self-help labour does achieve an economic saving and, moreover, some form of popular participation or local-level control is necessary if managerial decisions are to be made in the full knowledge of local conditions.

The approach adopted in the recommendations was, then, to strip the ideology of self-help down to bare managerial functions and to improve the capacity of local-level management not only in its technical capability, but also in its ability to survive

political dispute.

The premise to the approach adopted on the latter issue was that Government development planners would not be bound by established planning theory which, in the liberal democratic tradition, suggests that executive and legislative functions be separate, but that they accept that development is, at all levels, also a political process. The argument behind this part of the recommendations begins with the acceptance that rural development is not only an economic phenomenon, but also has social and political consequences. A water supply is not only a beneficial material resource, but potentially a new source of power within a political arena. Control over a resource like a water supply, although not of the same order as, say, ownership of land, still presents an opportunity for some to hold sway over others, both in the sense of the possibility of materially affecting the lives of others, and in the sense of increasing their own power and influence at the expense of others. The concept of power, then, although of its nature not a 'limited good', may effectively become one because institutions can monopolise it and cause resentment amongst others.

The recommendations made on the establishment and powers of institutions of local-level management take cognisance of the ground rules of political dispute and, so far as it is possible, are intended to insulate water supplies from destructive conflict. they are presented in the form of a series of choices which development planners should consider when designing the institutions for local level management. These are:

- (a) What is the institution most appropriate to local-level management of the supplies?
- (b) Should committees be general-purpose or single-purpose committees?
- (c) How should committees enforce their decisions?
Should they have statutory authority?
- (d) Should committees be elected or appointed?

(a) The Choice of Institutional Forms

The management of water supplies may be effected by a number of institutional forms, each of which has different management procedures and different consequences for participants, for the powers of command and, in consequence, for the sociology of conflict. The basic alternatives,⁷ each of which is discussed below, are: management by

- i) a customary authority;
- ii) private ownership;
- iii) a communal village authority;
- iv) a user association.

(i) Customary Authority

In many societies, including Lesotho, traditional authorities continue to command considerable respect from rural dwellers. For this reason and because traditional authorities were generally responsible for the protection of water sources before mechanical supplies, it might at first appear that the powers of traditional authorities should simply be extended to manage new supplies.

But there are sound reasons why traditional authorities may not be suited to this task. As Chapter 5 illustrates, despite the idiom of leadership through the chieftaincy in Lesotho, the power of village chiefs and headmen has become confined to residual functions as the Government has increased its influence in the villages. In Lesotho and similar societies, there is an ever-present tension between traditional leaders and Government representatives and certainly in Lesotho the Government would be strongly opposed to the prospect of managing water supplies through the chieftainship. Traditional leadership is founded on judicial and ritual functions, is inflexible to new demands, is not suited to routine management tasks, and, as a result, it is generally accepted that water supplies cannot be managed solely by traditional authorities.

A variety of other customary ways of managing water or similar resources exist which might also form the basis for the management of improved supplies. Leach, for example, has documented the well-established rules which maintain the system of ponds and irrigation channels in villages in Ceylon.⁸ One customary institution that was considered for the management of supplies in Lesotho was the system for protecting the communal winter grazing lands (maboella). A senior man is appointed by the chief to ensure that cattle do not graze on this land out of season. He has powers of prosecution and derives a small honorarium from the fines paid by those prosecuted.

But this and other customary institutions have the general difficulty that it may not be possible to re-create the often

complex system of rules and benefits in customary institutions, particularly since Government's involvement would certainly alter users' expectations. Adapting the system of village-level control of grazing lands to the control of piped water supplies has the specific difficulties that maintaining a water supply requires considerably more skill and effort than policing grazing land, and there is the additional problem of the source of the honorarium without legal sanctions to enforce community subscription. In Lesotho at least, it is necessary to look beyond customary institutions for the management of supplies.

(ii) Private Ownership

One option which, despite its unpopularity, also deserves consideration is that of having supplies managed privately. The reason this should be considered is that evaluations of other water supplies have found the breakdown rate of privately-controlled supplies to be very much less than that for communally managed supplies. In Kenya private concessionaries pay for the right to sell water from kiosks established by Government but maintained by themselves.⁹

But this option should only be considered by Governments if controls can be built into the private ownership of supplies to ensure public access. These controls are difficult to design and it may be impossible to see that they are enforced, with the result that the supplies would simply enhance the position of 'big men', storekeepers and the like, who already command considerable power over the rural economy. Management by private

owners is not recommended in Lesotho.

(iii) Communal Ownership

This is the form of management that has generally been adopted in most self-help programmes, including that in Lesotho. The facilities are built as a joint venture between Government and villagers, but the villagers are left with the responsibility for ongoing management. All members of the community should have right of access to the supply, and participation in the communal venture is compulsory.

The record of management by this means is poor as the Lesotho example illustrates. In Tanzania, for example, a study of the management of supplies in Ujamaa villages pointed to a growing inequality of access within villages.¹⁰ A recurrent problem with such communal responsibility is an intensification of factionalism and political dispute. One of the reasons for this is that a communal authority does not allow dissidents or those who, for whatever reason, do not want to co-operate with the new leadership, to opt out of participating without undermining the credibility of the leadership or initiating a chain reaction of non-contribution. Chapter 5 has shown how these processes have occurred in Lesotho and it is suggested that the present system of communal ownership be redefined.

(iv) User Associations

Water-user associations differ from communal village authorities in that they only represent the interests of paying members

of the association. Management by means of user associations, like private ownership, may not provide facilities for an entire village, but their great benefit is that they may have the effect of reducing factionalism and conflict.

As an essentially voluntary body, an association may to a large extent become disassociated from Government and so not have the effect of supplanting the divisions of national politics into the management of the supply. Water user associations allow those villagers that do not wish to contribute to bow out without undermining the powers of the association. If one faction takes control of the association an opposing faction can easily opt out of the struggle by not contributing and the association and the management of the supply may remain relatively unaffected. User associations will be only one of many decision-making bodies in a village and so not limit access to power and have the effect of making water supplies such a critical political resource.

Yet user associations do have problems. One danger is that a user association might become an exclusive group (like the case-study of Bohlabano). This is undesirable both because it is precisely the creation of strict social boundaries which leads to disruptive conflict, and because only one faction will then be receiving the benefits of what will undoubtedly be a state-subsidised supply. The problems could be overcome if villages were only supplied where a high proportion of households were members of the association, and if the whole village had the right to elect a committee of association members. A second

problem is that it may, in practice, be difficult to restrict usage to members. But if associations can be removed from the mainstream of village politics and it remains a truly voluntary association, disputes over issues such as these have less chance of disrupting the supply. It is for these reasons that user associations are the recommended institutional form for the management of village water supplies in Lesotho.

(b) General-Purpose or Single-Purpose Committees

A distinction similar to that between a user association and a communal authority is the difference between a general- and single-purpose village committee. As a general rule the former committees have been established under self-help programmes. The logic behind general-purpose village development committees is contained in the catalyst thesis which predicts that one undertaking will stimulate others, all of which might then be managed by the same institution. In Lesotho the prediction has been overoptimistic and sorely wrong, and the opposite has often occurred: by creating a monopoly on sources of power in the community the single committee has become a central focus of political dispute and division.

Single-purpose committees, by contrast, are only one of several decision-making bodies in a village, and have the additional benefit of associating their committee members with a practical function. The vagueness of the functions of general-purpose committees such as the village development committees (described in Chapter 5) has facilitated the misuse of committee powers.

In Lesotho the creation of single-purpose, water associations would greatly improve the management of supplies in the villages.

(c) Source of Sanction: Legal Powers or Support of DCDO

In Chapter 5 it was remarked that lack of authority to enforce decisions was a problem faced by village committees. There are two possible sources of sanction for village committees. The first is that committees be given legal authority to levy contributions and restrict usage when necessary. This option might in theory make for more efficient management, but it would also put a potent weapon in the hands of one village faction and, once used, would be a recipe for disruption and even sabotage.

The other source of sanction is to appeal for support from an outside authority, preferably the chief or the DCDO. Where a chief cannot resolve a dispute, the moral support of the DCDO should become the effective sanction, relying on legal powers only in the event of serious sabotage. The support of the DCDO may appear too weak a sanction, but overly strong powers in what, after all, should be a voluntary association is likely to breed resentment. The DCDO must, however, be able to support the village management, and the recommendation against establishing statutory village committees must be taken with the recommendations to strengthen district offices.

(d) Appointed or Freely Elected Committees

While governments may feel that there are good political reasons for wanting to implement water supplies through committees

appointed by the ruling party, the present system of appointed committees achieves very little and is perhaps the measure which has caused the most harm in undermining the credibility of village management. In the previous section it was noted that Government is even deluding itself in supposing that the policy of appointed committees enhances the membership of the party. To the extent that Government is concerned with managing supplies efficiently, there are a number of reasons why appointed committees are not the best alternative. The most important of these is the fact that the use of BNP appointed committees often disenfranchises a large part of a village. The committee is distrusted, village rifts widen and the potential pool of village resources from which a committee can draw is greatly reduced. These effects are described at length in the previous chapter.

Elected committees, on the other hand, do not provoke such immediate political factionalism since the leadership is not imposed from the BNP structure. There is also a greater chance that elected committees will be accepted as legitimate village representatives, and with greater support they have more chance of being able to utilise a village's best resources. Open elections are an established form of legitimizing political leadership, and furthermore elections at least enable more villagers to know who the village representatives are.

The creation of freely-elected committees is a much needed change of policy and a necessary condition for an improvement in the record of local-level management. It goes without saying that this and previous recommendations are not sufficient to

guarantee conflict-free local-level management since conflicts are bound to arise in any participatory institution. But the recommendations are designed to reduce the grounds for dispute detrimental to the supply of cleaner, more accessible water, and, taken with the other recommendations of the evaluation, should improve the effectiveness of local-level management.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the implications and limitations of self-help or community development policy in Lesotho, and has offered suggestions for changes in existing policies which might ensure that supplies are kept in better order. As the introduction to this study makes clear, although the discussion has gone well beyond the bounds of what is traditionally regarded as development planning, the orientation of the study has been pragmatic. In particular the recommendations are offered within the narrow limits of what it is conceivable the present Government in Lesotho might be persuaded to implement.

This, of course, is a substantial limitation on the sort of recommendations that could be put forward. In defense of this approach it must be said that the study grew out of a practical, policy-oriented evaluation, and that the intention of the recommendations is to find a better method of providing a welfare service to improve environmental health in remote, powerless and impoverished villages in Lesotho. The recommendations, unlike the ideology of self-help, do not pretend to contribute

towards rural development in the sense of tackling the causes of underdevelopment. Effective rural development in Lesotho necessitates structural change which cannot be brought about through the offices of development planners or social anthropologists. What can be done is to document the process of underdevelopment and the effects of existing policies, seek limited reforms within the present context, concentrate on questions whose resolution will be beneficial whatever their context, and be attentive to changes in the political economy of Southern Africa.

Notes to Chapter 6

1. Linden, op. cit., p. 16 makes a similar point.
2. Lamb, op. cit., p. 80.
3. ibid.
4. ibid., p. 81
5. ibid.
6. ibid., p. 54.
7. A more detailed comparative model of these different institutional forms was first developed in Feachem et al. op.cit., 1978, Chapter 13, and has been extended and applied to the case of sanitation in Cross, E.P.W. "Social and Cultural Aspects of Rural Sanitation in Lesotho", United Nations Development Programme, Project No. GL0/78/006, 1980.
8. Leach, E.R. Pul Eliya, a village in Ceylon: a study of Land Tenure and Kinship, 1961.
9. Carruthers, I.D. Impact and Economics of Community Water Supply, 1973.
10. Tschannerl, G. "The Political Economy of Rural Water Supply" Ekistics, 43(254), 1977.

The Epilogue

The formal report on the evaluation was written up by the evaluation team in August and September of 1976 in Birmingham. We elected to present our findings, particularly as regards the political difficulties of the village water supply programme in full but in as diplomatic a way as we could without misrepresenting the results of our evaluation. The recommendations attempted to deal with the real issues in the villages within the ambit of what changes we might expect Government to adopt. The draft report was presented to OXFAM and the British and Lesotho Governments late in 1976.

The British Ministry of Overseas Development greeted the report with little enthusiasm, but were content in the knowledge that they had obtained a comprehensive study employing nine persons over a period of two years for the ridiculously low price of about £26,000. The document was regarded as being of interest to the sector as a whole, rather than of particular importance to the Lesotho programme, and no funds were specifically tied to the outcome of the evaluation. With minor modifications the Ministry continued to support village water supplies in Lesotho but did not make a concerted attempt to implement the report's recommendations. OXFAM for its part, alarmed by the recommendations, took steps to improve their internal project evaluation and reduced their commitment to village water supplies in Lesotho.

The presentation in Maseru caused a furor; the final meeting in December 1976 ended in hostile argument between evaluation team members and Lesotho government representatives. Comrudev (which had by now become a Ministry) were affronted by the open references to the political control of the committee system and resented their apparent exposure by expatriates in front of colleagues in other Ministries. They attempted to dispute basic facts about water supply management and the meeting tailed off in a series of "'tis" "'tisn't" confrontations.¹ Predictably perhaps, when word of the contentiousness of the report filtered through to the politicians the report was declared "classified" and its distribution prevented. Yet a subsequent paper on the Lesotho Government's response to the report by a senior development planner in the Government at the time points out that not all the ministries were as hostile to the report as Comrudev.² The Central Planning and Development Office, having expressed grave concern about the future of the village water supply programme and being less threatened by the political exposures of the report, recognised that the report was unusually comprehensive and might possibly be of use in resurrecting the crippled programme. The British High Commission for their part were highly embarrassed by the report's apparent lack of diplomacy and, having privately hoped that the report would be rejected by Government, were surprised to receive a favourable response by the Central Planning Office.

Because of the Central Planning Office's support, and possibly because of Comrudev's inability to provide any evidence to dispute

the report's evidence, the Lesotho Government did not formally reject the report. Moreover, when asked for their official written comments on the draft, Comrudev's passionate opposition to the report was repressed and only minor amendments were requested. Comrudev had to be content to wreak a more private vengeance by cancelling a request that had extended to the present author to undertake an evaluation of the communal garden programme.

So it was in April 1977 that despite the appearance of what was acknowledged to be one of the most all embracing water supply evaluations in Africa, the programme in Lesotho remained in a critical state. The "classification" of the report and Comrudev's opposition to it meant that its recommendations could not be implemented; the British were not forthcoming with additional funds; and meanwhile the whole programme appeared to be collapsing: breakdowns increased, output diminished, and the growing backlog of applications lead to increased resentment from villagers and village committees.

Comrudev's response was to turn to other donors to bail them out. The obvious source was the Americans, and in mid 1977 a firm of American consultants, hired by the United States Agency for International Development, undertook two months field-work for a rumoured \$150,000, and in October of that year presented a two volume report³ of some 500 pages which did little more than recount the safer recommendations made in the earlier report. The report, undertaken entirely by engineers, completely ignored the social and political issues affecting the programme. On the basis of their recommendations the United States Agency

for International Development hired yet another team of consultants who visited Lesotho for one month to prepare a detailed project proposal. The final report⁴ proposes a seven year programme costing over \$12 million, by far the largest single lump of aid to be given to the Ministry. The project is burdened down with expatriate personnel and American technology and is heavily weighted towards improving the managerial and technical capability of Comrudev, biases openly endorsed by the Ministry. The Central Planning Office fought to include many of the recommendations of the earlier evaluation, such as the measures proposed to achieve a greater health benefit, but all parties have studiously ignored reference to the issue of village management of supplies.⁵ The project agreement has now been signed, the new consultants have been hired and engineers, hydrologists, 'organization specialists', 'communicators' and rotary drilling rigs are presently moving into Maseru. USAID is happy to be seen to be providing 'basic resources' to the rural poor; civil servants and planners in the capital are overjoyed at having completed so large an aid agreement; and the politicians may relax in the knowledge that they have additional resources with which to retain rural support.

In retrospect it should finally be asked whether an alternative method of presenting the report would have been more advantageous. In the paper quoted above Devas predicts that although the explicit discussion of politically sensitive issues was "foolish and naive", the long term effect of so comprehensive a study will be beneficial and he cites as evidence for this the fact that

many of the original recommendations have been reiterated in the American proposal.⁶ Yet there have also been crucial omissions. The original recommendations might perhaps have had a greater chance of being accepted if they had been made by a donor agency with funds specifically dependent on the recommendations of the evaluation. But here again it is unlikely that any donor in Lesotho would attempt to apply such leverage, and it is by no means certain that this would result in a better executed programme. The case study would seem to confirm that certainly within the political economy of Southern Africa planning can do little but play second fiddle to politics.

Reference Notes to Epilogue

1. Devas, N. "Village Water Supplies in Lesotho: Observations on the Government of Lesotho's Response to the "Feachem Report", 1979, p. 2.
2. ibid.
3. Metcalf and Eddy International Inc. Lesotho Rural Water Supply Report, Volumes 1 and 2, 1977.
4. USAID, op. cit., 1979.
5. The USAID Project Proposal, ibid, includes a token 'social soundness analysis', but its implications are ignored in the final analysis.
6. Devas, op. cit., 1979.

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1. Devas, N. "Village Water Supplies in Lesotho: Observations on the Government of Lesotho's Response to the "Peachem Report", 1979, p. 2.
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Author Cross E P W

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