

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES



**National University
of Lesotho**

**A HISTORY OF BLOCK FARMING IN LESOTHO: THE CASE OF MOKEMA AND
KORO-KORO FROM 1976 TO 2018**

BY

MATELA LIKELELI 201802264

**SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORICAL STUDIES IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF MASTER OF ARTS IN AFRICAN
HISTORY**

SUPERVISOR: DR GODFREY HOVE

AUGUST 2024

Declaration

I hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis entitled “A HISTORY OF BLOCK FARMING IN LESOTHO: THE CASE OF MOKEMA AND KORO-KORO FROM 1976 TO 2018” is my own, original work submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Master of Arts in African History at the National University of Lesotho. All sources used in the preparation of this dissertation have been acknowledged, and any assistance received has been explicitly stated.

Signature:

Date:

Certification

I certify that this dissertation entitled “A HISTORY OF BLOCK FARMING IN LESOTHO: THE CASE OF MOKEMA AND KORO-KORO FROM 1976 TO 2018” has been duly completed by Likeleli Matela (201802264) of the Department of Historical Studies, Faculty of Humanities, National University of Lesotho, Roma.

Supervisor:

Head of Department:

Abstract

This thesis examines the history of block farming in Lesotho, tracing its origins from 1976 to 2018, using Mokema and Koro-Koro as primary case studies. It explores how its revival in the mid-2000s impacted on the livelihoods of the people. Block farming was initially introduced under Prime Minister Leabua's leadership as a strategic response to declining agricultural productivity and increasing food insecurity among Basotho farmers. This programme aimed to enhance food security among Basotho farmers by increasing agricultural productivity through government support and sharecropping arrangements. Despite initial successes in revitalizing fallow lands and improving farmers' livelihoods, block farming has faced challenges that hindered its profitability and sustainability. Factors such as fluctuating government support, resilience to climate change and lack of commitment from farmers are explored to understand their impact on the effectiveness of block farming. It demonstrates that some farmers view block farming as not an initiative open to everyone, rather as a political propaganda. Thus, besides filling a gap in existing literature on the impact of block farming, this thesis also engages farmers' standpoint about this initiative. This study utilizes qualitative data to assess the impact of block farming on food security in Mokema and Koro-Koro. By analysing historical data, focus group discussions and interviews with stakeholders in Mokema and Koro-Koro, this study provides a nuanced understanding of block farming's contributions to agricultural development in Lesotho and assesses its potential for future adaptation in the context evolving socio-economic conditions.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge my supervisor, Dr Godfrey Hove, for the continuous support, outstanding mentoring and constant feedback during the course of this research. His extraordinary attention to detail helped shape my ideas. Without his encouragement, patience, dedication and guidance, this research project would have not been successful. Indeed, without him constantly nudging me to be ambitious, the writing of this thesis would have been much more difficult.

Secondly, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Mr S. Makhutla, for the input he rendered. I received invaluable ideas and suggestions from him, and for this, I am extremely grateful. I am indebted to the block farming coordinators, particularly Mrs Mathabiso Selibo who entertained my numerous calls for interviews and further connected me with many other interviewees. Indeed, the writing of this thesis would have been harder without their valuable input. My thanks are also extended to all the interviewees for their time and for indulging me in discussions which shaped many of the ideas in this thesis.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family for their continued emotional support during the course of this thesis. I thank my mother Makabelo Matela for her encouragement and prayers during this time. I am also grateful to my friends Kopano Moerane and Khahliso Khiba, for always believing in me; their prayers and encouragement during this challenging period will never go unnoticed. I, however, remain responsible for all the arguments and errors in this thesis.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Makabelo Matela, whose unwavering support made this journey possible.

List of abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
BCP	Basotho Congress Party
BNP	Basotho National Party
BOS	Bureau of Statistics
CCPP	Cooperative Crop Production Programme
FSSP	Food Self-Sufficiency Programme
GOL	Government of Lesotho
MFP	Marematlou Freedom Party
MFS	Machobane Farming System
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Policies
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

Contents

Declaration.....	i
Certification.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgement.....	iv
Dedication.....	v
List of abbreviations	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Introduction	1
Historical Background.....	3
Aim.....	4
Statement of the problem	4
Justification of the study.....	5
Literature review.....	6
Lesotho’s agrarian historiography since the initiation of block farming in 1976	11
Methodology	15
Structure of the study	19
Chapter 2: The Origins of Bock Farming in Lesotho.....	21
Background: the State of Agriculture in Lesotho after Independence	23
Block Farming under Leabua’s government.....	26
The Cooperative Crop Production Programme (CCPP), 1976- 1979	31
The Food Self-Sufficiency Programme (1980- 1990s).....	36
The Military Regime and Agriculture (1986-1993).....	38
The re-introduction of Block Farming.....	40

Chapter 3: Block Farming and Food Security	44
Background: An Analysis of Agricultural Productivity in Mokema and Koro-Koro.....	44
Contribution of block farming towards enhancing food security.....	46
Chapter 4: Block Farming and the Environment.....	59
The Environmental implication of Block Farming	59
Chapter 5: Conclusions	66
References	70

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

This thesis studies the history of block farming in Lesotho, from 1976 to 2018, taking Mokema and Koro-Koro, in the Maseru district, as case studies. The thesis specifically channels its focus on the contributions of block farming towards food security as well as its implications on the environment. With this being the case, this study assesses the extent at which the adoption of block farming affected food security in the country, not ignoring the environmental implications associated with this farming strategy. Numerous studies by scholars in different fields reveal that the world is in a dilemma whereby many countries are faced with the challenge of maximising agricultural productivity, thereby ensuring food security, while minimizing agricultural impact on the environment.¹ However, eradicating hunger in all its forms is a global challenge. Indeed, achieving food security through agricultural sustainability is one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that were adopted by world leaders.² In Lesotho, block farming is one agricultural strategy which was intended to boost agricultural productivity and therefore ensure food security.³

The term block farming has been employed by most African countries; nonetheless the meaning and application differ across the continent. In Ghana, block farming is viewed as a credit to farmers in terms of supply of agricultural inputs which include improved varieties of seeds, fertilizers and technical assistance for farmers to obtain considerable returns and pay for the

¹ Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office, 'Lesotho Food and Nutrition Policy' (Maseru: Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office, 2016).

² United Nations General Assembly, "The list of 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 Targets" available at <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/> [accessed on 23 February 2023].

³ A. T. Rants'o and M. Seboka, "Agriculture and Food Security in Lesotho: Government Sponsored Block Farming Programme in the Berea, Leribe and Maseru Districts" *Cogent Food and Agriculture*, 5, no.1 (2019) available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311932.2019.01657300> [accessed on 23 February 2023].

inputs after harvest.⁴ Upon realization that most farmers are regarded as not eligible for credit by financial institutions such as banks, the purpose of the Block Farm Credit Programme in Ghana enabled such farmers to access agricultural inputs, so that agricultural production is increased, thereby putting farmers at a better chance to reduce poverty, hence contributing positively towards ensuring food security. Moreover, block farmers ought to pay for the inputs after crop season, in a form of cash.⁵ This condition makes the application of ‘block farming’ slightly different from how it is applied in other countries.

In Lesotho, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security defined block farming as the farming system whereby block farmers engage in commercial production through the merging of fields, with the agreement of field owners to make them available to the private block and government block through share-cropping.⁶ This is to say, the concept of block farming in Lesotho is all about share-cropping. This involves the government supplying agricultural inputs such as artificial fertilizers and highly modified seeds, to a collection of farmers, whereby after crop season, unlike in countries like Ghana, the harvest is shared between the government and the farmers,⁷ and no financial payment is expected from block farmers. While the main purpose of block farming is to maximise productivity, the use of chemicals incorporated in synthetic fertilizers and seeds has led to noticeable complications on the environment.⁸ It is thus, within this context that this thesis adapts the term ‘block farming’ as a government-sponsored system

⁴ O. K., Julius, “Impact of Block Farming on Livelihood of Farmers in the Eastern Region of Ghana: A Case Study of Block Farmers in the Kwahu West Municipality and Kwahu South District”

⁵ A. Eliasi, “Effects of Block Farm Credit Programme Participation on Crop Output in the Northern region of Ghana”

⁶ Government of Lesotho, “Second Five Year Development Plan, (1975/76 – 1979/80)” (Maseru: Central Planning Development Office, 1975).

⁷ Seboka, “The Role of Block Farming in Assuring Food Security in Lesotho”

⁸ A. Burkovska, O. Shebanina, T. Lunkina, and A. Burkovska, “Ensuring Food Security in The Context of The Sustainable Development Of Agriculture” *Management Theory and Studies for Rural Business and Infrastructure Development* 43, no.3, (2021) <https://doi.org/10.15544/mts.2021.30>

which involves the sharing of crops between the government and block farmers upon harvest. By so doing, the thesis also examines key debates on how block farming has contributed towards food security in the country, as well as the implications of this farming system on the environment.

Historical Background

Block farming was initially introduced in Lesotho in 1976. According to Turner, this strategy was known as Co-operative Crop Production Programme (CCPP), and it was a response by the government of Lesotho, to food insecurity that pervaded Lesotho then.⁹ At first, the CCPP began as a sharecropping for winter crops, particularly wheat, in the lowlands. During this time, the government provided agricultural inputs and “adopted a mechanised approach that necessitated the consolidation of blocks of farmers’ fields into areas large enough for operation by combine harvesters and other heavy equipment.”¹⁰ The farmers’ role was to provide manual labour. At the end of crop season, the harvest was shared equally between the farmers and the government.¹¹ The CCPP ran for a couple of years before it was modified. Eventually in 1980, the CCPP was replaced by what became known as the Food Self-Sufficiency Programme (FSSP), which operated in a similar manner as the CCPP, but was funded by the Republic of China through the Government of Lesotho.¹² However, FSSP was also abandoned in 1996 upon the realization that agricultural production was declining even more than before its introduction.¹³ Nonetheless, sharecropping, or rather block farming as it was termed, was revived in some parts of the country

⁹ S. D. Turner, “Promoting Food Security in Lesotho: Issues and Options” (Priority Support Programme, Lesotho, 2009).

¹⁰ Turner, “Promoting Food Security in Lesotho”

¹¹ H. L.Ralebese, *Poverty Reduction Policies in Lesotho: The Case of Self-Help Projects*” (PhD Thesis, University of the Free State, 2011).

¹² N. R. Mokitimi, “Economic Analysis of Crop Production in Lesotho: A Household-Based Programming Approach” (Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, University of Natal, 1995) p.28

¹³ Ratij, “The Welfare Impact of the Removal of Input Subsidies for Crop Production in Lesotho” p.48

in the New Millennium after it collapsed in the late 1980s after the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs).¹⁴ In this case, the government of Lesotho got into sharecropping arrangements with subsistence farmers to reduce poverty by increasing agricultural food production.¹⁵ However, food insecurity remains a chronic challenge in the country, as the IPC statistics estimate that 16% of the rural population is food insecure, as of 2018.¹⁶

Aim

- To explore the origins and impact of block farming on the environment and food security in Mokema and Koro-Koro between 1976- 2018.

Objectives

- To analyse the origins of block farming in Mokema and Koro-Koro
- To examine the contribution of block farming towards food security in Mokema and Koro-Koro.
- To assess the environmental impact of block farming in Mokema and Koro-Koro.
- To evaluate different agricultural practices used to cope with the devastating environmental impact of block farming.

Statement of the problem

As a global challenge, there is vast literature on the issue of food security, for many scholars from different perspective have discussed measures to maximize agricultural production to

¹⁴ Niels Hermes and Ard Schilder, *Setting Priorities: The IMF and World Bank and Structural Adjustment Programmes in Public Priority Setting: Rules and Cost*. Eds P.B. Aarts, K., Steenge (Dordrecht, Springer, 1997) p.40.

¹⁵ Seboka, "The Role of Block Farming in Assuring Food Security in Lesotho"

¹⁶ IPC, Lesotho: Acute Food Insecurity Situation in July- September 2017 and Projection for October- March 2018. <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1118553/?iso3=LSO>

ensure food security. However, a gap still exists in counties like Lesotho, where low agricultural productivity continues to be a threat, mostly owing to erosion, low levels of mechanization and pollution, thus exposing the country to food insecurity.

Block farming is one agricultural strategy that was intended at increasing agricultural productivity in Lesotho, by use of improved agricultural inputs such as seeds, synthetic fertilizers, and modern technology, thereby contributing towards ensuring food security. Despite its initial implementation in 1976, this share-cropping agricultural approach faces challenges that have impacted its effectiveness and sustainability. This thesis seeks to explore these challenges, comprehending the historical context of block farming initiatives, and proposes strategies for improving its outcomes.

Justification of the study

The significance of this study is that it sheds light to researchers for future reference and can be used in advancing new knowledge about block farming in Lesotho. Moreover, insights into historical origins can inform future policy development and agricultural strategies in Lesotho. Lessons learned from past implementations can guide policymakers in designing more effective and sustainable agricultural interventions.

This study also contributes to the academic literature on agricultural development and rural livelihoods, particularly in the context of small-holder farming in Lesotho. It fills gaps in knowledge about the trajectory of block farming initiatives. Furthermore, this thesis contributes to the cultural and social context. Understanding the origins of block farming also sheds light on

its cultural and social dimensions, including community dynamics, traditional practices, and local perceptions towards cooperative farming models.

This study assesses the history of block farming in Lesotho, focusing more on Mokema and Koro-Koro as some of the areas where the government-sponsored sharecropping was practiced. Moreover, Mokema and Koro-Koro are part of the few areas where block farming was re-introduced in the new millennium, following its abandonment in the 1990s.¹⁷ As such, the two areas are suitable for providing an insight into the contributions and complications of block farming over the years. Moreover, the significance of the period 1976-2018 lies in the fact that the year 1976 marks the year when block farming was initially introduced in Lesotho, to increase agricultural productivity, while the year 2018 represents the last year block farming was implemented in the two areas, therefore this period provides a pattern of debates surrounding block farming in the country.

Literature review

The term block farming has been adapted by most African countries thus the meaning and application differ across the continent. In Ghana, Kwasi Julius¹⁸ and Eliasi¹⁹ both revealed in their writings that block farming in the country was viewed as a credit to farmers in terms of supply of agricultural inputs which included improved varieties of seeds, fertilizers and technical assistance for farmers to obtain considerable returns and pay for the inputs after harvest.

¹⁷ M. B. J. Seboka, "The Role of Block Farming in Assuring Food Security in Lesotho: The Case of Berea, Leribe and Maseru Districts" Master's Thesis, National University of Lesotho, 2018.

¹⁸ O. K., Julius, "Impact of Block Farming on Livelihood of Farmers in the Eastern Region of Ghana: A Case Study of Block Farmers in the Kwahu West Municipality and Kwahu South District"

¹⁹ A. Eliasi, "Effects of Block Farm Credit Programme Participation on Crop Output in the Northern region of Ghana"

According to Eliasi, the Block Farm Credit Programme was a measure to reduce the impact of credit constrain on agricultural productivity. This was after the realization that most farmers were regarded as not being eligible for credit by financial institutions such banks, due to lack of tangible collateral required by such institutions.²⁰ It can be noted then that in Ghana farmers ought to pay for the inputs after crop season, in a form of cash, and this condition makes the application of ‘block farming’ slightly different from how it is applied in other countries. For instance, in her study on the contribution of block farming on food security in Lesotho, Seboka explained that the concept of block farming in the country is all about crop sharing. This involves the government supplying agricultural inputs to a collection of farmers, whereby after crop season, unlike in countries like Ghana, the harvest was to be shared between the government and the farmers.²¹ This implied that Basotho farmers paid the government by sharing their harvest. While the conditions of block farming may differ across countries, one principle remains, block farming involves a contiguous farming area operated under shared ownership.²²

While numerous perspectives surrounding the aim of block farming emerged, many scholars seem to be in agreement that the objective of implementing block farming in various countries was to allow small, otherwise economically inefficient farmers to take advantage of economies of scale.²³ Nonetheless, Motsamai, whose study focused on the functional principles of block farming in Lesotho, argued that this initiative was not suitable for small-holder farmers. This, Motsamai justified by revealing that only farmers whose fields were a minimum of 1.5 acres

²⁰ Eliasi, “Effects of Block Farm Credit Programme Participation”

²¹ Seboka, “The Role of Block Farming in Assuring Food Security in Lesotho”

²² A. S. Mushi and D. D. Ngaruko, “Determinants of Financial Sustainability of Small Holder Sugarcane Farming Systems in Tanzania” *African Journal of Economic Review* III, no. 2, (2015).

²³ Mushi and Ngaruko, “Determinants of Financial Sustainability”

were to be considered for participation.²⁴ This implied that small-holder farmers with fields less than 1.5 acres did not qualify for entry into the government-sponsored block farming. Studying the small-holder sugarcane farming systems in Tanzania, Eliasi concluded by putting forth that indeed the introduction of block farming did bring positive outcomes for small-holder farmers who would else struggle to achieve such.²⁵ Mushi and Ngaruko offered a similar perspective by pointing out that block farming allowed farmers to overcome obstacles of fixed costs per unit which would have otherwise proven to be a challenge to individual farmers.²⁶ Moreover, Eliasi's study on the effects of block farm credit programme in Ghana further added that the programme ensures that farmers benefit from subsidised agricultural inputs.²⁷

Although block farming allowed for economies of scale, Mushi and Ngaruko's study asserted that most farmers showed that block farming was costly, and that they were better off with traditional individual farming.²⁸ Additionally, research findings of Mohlahatsa's study on the role agriculture plays towards livelihoods, found that some farmers believed that participation in block farming was influenced by political factors.²⁹ According to Mohlahatsa, such farmers further articulated that it seemed that areas with to be included in block farming were selected according to the amount of political following, implying that responsible government representatives selected areas where they had large political following. As a result, other farmers thought they were better off cultivating fields by their own, through traditional agricultural practices such as '*seahlolo*' which involves farmers with land, partnering with farmers with other

²⁴ Motsamai, "Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho" p.33.

²⁵ Eliasi, "Effects of Block Farm Credit Programme Participation"

²⁶ Mushi and Ngaruki, "Determinants of Financial Sustainability"

²⁷ Eliasi, "Effects of Block Farm Credit Programme Participation"

²⁸ Mushi and Ngaruki, "Determinants of Financial Sustainability"

²⁹ Mohlahatsa "The Role of Agricultural Support Programmes" p.54

agricultural inputs such as cattle and seeds get into communal farming. In most cases, the produce is shared equally amongst the participating farmers.³⁰

There are numerous benefits brought by block farming as outlined by different studies. Donkoh *et al.* attests that according to the report by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in 2012, farmers who were involved in block farming since its introduction in Ghana in 2009 pointed out that this strategy had brought some benefits inclusive of access to low-cost credit in the form of inputs and mechanization services which have led to increased farm productivity.³¹ Additionally, Julius who also studied the impact of block farming on livelihoods in Kwahu West Municipality and Kwahu South district in Ghana, further asserts that credit to block farmers invests in mechanization services which in turn enables for modernization of agricultural activities. For instance, Matenga writes that in Zambia, the implementation of a block farming system enabled huge investment in capital equipment as well as joint services such as levelling of land and provision of irrigation canals.³² However, these three studies failed to assess the impact of modernising agriculture on other sectors such as the environment. As such, there is need for a study that discusses the impact block farming imposes on other aspects of the environment, health and safety of people and animals that are to directly and indirectly consume yields from such production. Furthermore, there is need to explore the consequences of employing

³⁰ Khali Mofuoa, "Responsible Business Traditions Amongst the Sesotho-Speaking People in Southern Africa" in *Responsible Management in Africa, Volume 1: Traditions of Principled Entrepreneurship* (Leeds: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2019).

³¹ A. S. Donkoh, A. Eliasu, E. D. Setsoafia and I. G.K Ansa. "Participation and output effect of a Block Farm Credit Programme in selected districts of Northern Ghana" Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University for Development Studies (Tamale, Ghana, 2006).

³² C. R. Mutenga, "Outgrowers and Livelihoods: The Case of Magobbo Smallholder Block Farming in Mazabuka District in Zambia" *Journal of Southern African Studies* 3, no. 3 (Taylor and Francis Group: UK, 2017).

machinery in agriculture over the long as a study by Martinez *et al.* have shown that machinery such as tractors release hazardous gases that may necessitate climate change.³³

Block farming enhances an improved standard of living. This was a conclusion reached by Julius upon the completion of his study on the impact brought by block farming on the livelihoods of the people in two districts in Ghana. Julius reports that 98% of the respondents who were involved in block farming attest that indeed the initiative improved their standard of living. Julius goes further to show that through this initiative, respondents reported to have seen significant improvements in terms of children's education and increased ability to afford to pay their hospital bills.³⁴ However, Julius's conclusion contradicts the United Nations Capital Development Fund's (UNCDF) report that though credit may be helpful to reduce poverty, credit is never a permanent solution.³⁵ Nonetheless, Julius's study shows a significant increase (5.3%) in the number of maize bags obtained as compared to the number of bags harvested without block farming.³⁶ What Julius's study failed to acknowledge is the environmental cost at which all that increased productivity occurs.

In their study on Northern Ghana, Donkoh *et al.* put forth that, although block farming led to increased agricultural output, it imposed negative impact on the environment due to chemical herbicides used.³⁷ Concern thus rises- is increased agricultural productivity worth the danger it

³³ C. S. Martinez, M. Feddersen and A. Speicher, "Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Fresh Look on Agricultural Mechanisation" The German Development Institute (2016).

³⁴ Julius, "Impact of Block Farming on Livelihood of Farmers in the Eastern Region of Ghana"

³⁵ United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), "Enabling Poor Rural People to Overcome Poverty in Ghana" (United Nations: New York, 2009).

³⁶ Julius, "Impact of Block Farming on Livelihood of Farmers in the Eastern Region of Ghana"

³⁷ Donkoh et al. "Participation and output effect of a Block Farm Credit Programme in selected districts of Northern Ghana"

causes to other species inclusive of animals that may consume such chemicals unaware? Moreover, can it really be said that block farming is efficient in achieving food security, (bearing in mind, the UN's definition of food security – a situation whereby all people have access to nutritious food that suits their dietary needs, at all times.³⁸), if it also negatively affect others spheres such as the environment together with ecosystems and biodiversity, as well as the people's well-being? Resultantly, this necessitates a study that does not only assesses the contribution of block farming towards ensuring food security, but also brings to light, its complications on the environment and life surrounding it.

Lesotho's agrarian historiography since the initiation of block farming in 1976

1976 marks the year of the first initiation of block farming in Lesotho. According to Turner, this farming strategy was termed the Co-operative Crop Production Programme (CCPP).³⁹ The CCPP also marks the initial direct government participation in agriculture following the realization of lower agricultural productivity, hence the risk of food insecurity.⁴⁰ As such, the government of Lesotho implemented the CCPP to enhance food security and reduce poverty among rural households. In *“Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho”*, Motsamai offers the role of the government in the programme. She asserts that the government took over complete control over the management and operations of agricultural activities of the programme, and aimed to make available, tractors, fertilizers and improved seeds, as well as ensure timely planting of crops.⁴¹ On the one hand, Turner outlines that the farmers'

³⁸ Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office, “Lesotho Food and Nutrition Policy (LFNP)” (Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office: Maseru, 2016).

³⁹ S. D. Turner, “Promoting Food Security in Lesotho: Issues and Options” (Priority Support Programme, Lesotho, 2019)

⁴⁰ Motsamai, “Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho” p.33.

⁴¹ Motsamai, “Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho” p.34.

responsibility was to provide manual labour, nonetheless, Motsamai on the other hand, revealed that that was mostly not the case, indicating that farmers contributed virtually nothing but their fields.⁴² With its first initiation, this programme was only meant for winter cropping, particularly wheat. Turner goes further to show that the CCPP involved the consolidation of participating farmer's fields into areas large enough for the intended operations.⁴³

At some point, the CCPP was deemed efficient towards ensuring availability of food stuffs, therefore some scholars could not question the profitability of the programme⁴⁴. From the farmers' point of view, the CCPP was beneficial, for all the costs were incurred by the government. As Motsamai emphasised, the CCPP was highly subsidized by the government. The government borne all the costs, that is, it supplied all the agricultural inputs, covered the cost of tractors for all fields operations such as ploughing and planting. "If for any reason the crop was a failure, the farmers were guaranteed a certain amount on a per acre basis."⁴⁵ proclaims Motsamai as she further justifies the government's high subsidy towards the CCPP. However, Mokitimi argued that this subsidy created dependency on government subsidy that could not be sustained once the programme ended. Indeed, Mokitimi goes further to show that farmers were unable to continue producing at the same levels without government support,⁴⁶ and therefore went back to their old ox-driven ploughs.⁴⁷

⁴² Motsamai, "Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho" p.34.

⁴³ S. D. Turner, "Livelihoods and Sharing: Trends in a Lesotho village, 1976–2004" *Research Report Paper no. 22* (Cape Town, South Africa, University of the Western Cape, 2005) p. 42

⁴⁴ Mokitimi, "Economic Analysis of Crop Production in Lesotho" p.29

⁴⁵ Motsamai, "Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho" p.35

⁴⁶ Mokitimi, "Economic Analysis of Crop Production in Lesotho" p.29

⁴⁷ I. V. Mashinini, "Sustainable Rural Development in Lesotho" (PhD Thesis, University of Orange Free State, South Africa, 2000) p.144

Furthermore, by subsidising agriculture through the CCPP, the government hoped to make fAlthough the input costs were borne by the government, after harvest, the produce was shared on a 50/50 basis between the government and the farmers. It is no surprise then, that under such circumstances the farmers were keen to avail their fields for the CCPP as that meant substantial income without expenditure, risk or commitment of labour.⁴⁸ However, Motsamai's study failed to show the extent at which the CCPP contributed towards ensuring food security. That is, it is not clear as to whether or not the farmers' share of harvest sustained their (farmers) families until the next harvest.

Many scholars who assessed the efficiency of this initiative from the government's perspective put forward that the CCPP was not profitable. Ratii articulated that CCPP was not profitable as the government incurred great losses.⁴⁹ According to Ngqaleni, in its first year of operation, the CCPP used R723, 676.06 in operating costs while the returns after harvest amounted to R423, 467.92. Thus, in its first year of operation, the project incurred a loss of 42%.⁵⁰ Ralebese suggested that that loss was perhaps a call to the government that the CCPP did not yield its expected result. Moreover, the CCPP encountered problems which included a shortage of competent staff to manage the project, causing contractors to be overpaid, and excessive fertilizer and seed used.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Motsamai, "Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho" p.36

⁴⁹ Ratii, L. Motselisi, "The Welfare Impact of the Removal of Input Subsidies for Crop Production in Lesotho" (Master of Science Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2016) p.45.

⁵⁰ M. Mashinini. "Sustainable development in Lesotho". (PhD Thesis, University of the Free State, South Africa, 2000).

⁵¹ Ralebese, Poverty Reduction Policies in Lesotho: The Case of Self-Help Projects"

Consequently, the CCPP was modified, and that led to the birth of Food for Self-Sufficiency Programme (FSSP) in 1980.⁵² The FSSP covered a broader area as it operated in the lowlands and foothills, and according to Mokitimi, FSSP was initially funded by the government of China.⁵³ In its first year, FSSP was aimed at raising knowledge and awareness about the use of technology in agriculture, particularly in the production the two staple crops, maize and sorghum.⁵⁴ Moreover, while both programmes aimed to reduce poverty through increased agricultural productivity, FSSP set itself different from the CCPP by the fact that upon harvest, the project wanted to recover its costs, which were high and that discouraged farmers to participate.⁵⁵ Resultantly, its efficiency was thus weakened. Ratii stated that the FSSP was eventually cancelled in 1996 following the realization that agricultural production was decreasing even more than prior to the programme's implementation.⁵⁶ Although the FSSP was cancelled, its successes cannot be totally ruled out. This is because the programme ran for five years, as such, it can be argued that the FSSP might have been helpful towards agricultural productivity. Consequently, it is necessary to undertake a study that assesses the contribution of the FSSP towards agricultural productivity, and thus food security in the country. Also vital is a study that examines, in actuality, the extent at which the FSSP ensured food security, rather than drawing such conclusions from its proclaimed aims in theory. Such study would provide a clear image as to whether or not, the harvest from the programme sustained farmers' livelihoods until the next harvest.

⁵² Mokitimi, *Economic Analysis of Crop Production in Lesotho* p.46

⁵³ Mokitimi, *Ec.onomic Analysis of Crop Production in Lesotho* p.47

⁵⁴ Ratii "The Welfare Impact of the Removal of Input Subsidies for Crop Production in Lesotho" p.47

⁵⁵ Mokitimi, *Economic Analysis of Crop Production in Lesotho* p.48

⁵⁶ Ratii, "The Welfare Impact of the Removal of Input Subsidies for Crop Production in Lesotho" p.47

Upon the cancellation of the FSSP, Ratii proclaimed that the government saw it fit to withdraw direct involvement in agriculture as that caused the government great deficit. Resultantly, it is of no surprise then, that the government sought to new subsidies with conditions that such subsidies would only be given in years when there is low agricultural production due to climatic shocks such as floods and drought.⁵⁷ Ratii goes further continues to outline a number of subsidies untaken by the government, inclusive of the 2009/2010 Lesotho National Fertilizer and Input Subsidy programme.⁵⁸ However, in their study which focused on the contribution of block farming towards food security, Seboka and Rants' o revealed that block farming – a programme similar to the FSSP and CCPP, which involves direct government involvement – was re-introduced in some parts of country, with the aim of assisting farmers to boost agricultural productivity, and in the end contribute positively towards food security.⁵⁹ However, what the study does not give an insight into, is the respondents' views on the use of artificial fertilizers that the government insisted on using. It is thus crucial to undertake a study that focus on the environmental impact of block farming, and as such, one of this paper's goals is to look at the conflict between increased agricultural production through block farming, securing healthy and nutritious food, as well as the environment.

Methodology

This study employed qualitative research design. According to Creswell, qualitative research design refers to "... an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem... and is

⁵⁷ Ratii, "The Welfare Impact of the Removal of Input Subsidies for Crop Production in Lesotho" p.48

⁵⁸ Mohlahatsa, T. The Role of Agricultural Support on the Livelihoods of Smallholder Maize Farmers in Lesotho: Assert Utilization, Productivity and Perceptions. (Rhodes University, 2018).

⁵⁹ Seboka and Rants' o, "Agriculture and Food Security in Lesotho" p.12

conducted in a natural setting.”⁶⁰ This implies that a qualitative research design is one that strives at understanding the qualitative features of society and human behaviour. In this case, this study strived to understand how block farming impact on the environment as well as its role towards enhancing food security, that is it studies how people’s desire to achieve food security through block farming has an impact on the environment.

The advantages of using qualitative research design were that, due to its narrative nature, it enabled the researcher to get in-depth information and was flexible because data was collected in the respondents’ natural setting. Data was collected from farmers who had participated in block farming. This allowed the researcher to observe what the respondents were referring to. In this case, the researcher was able to view the surroundings (like fields) that the respondents were referring to.

In this study, qualitative research design was relevant because the study itself required the collection of narrative data that would help the researcher trace the history of block farming, particularly focusing on the relationship between agriculture (block farming) the environment, and food security in Mokema and Koro-Koro between 1976-2018. Qualitative research design also allowed the researcher to observe respondents' non-verbal expressions.

The thesis also made use of primary sources, particularly archival material such as newspaper articles. Archival sources included newspapers, from the Thomas Mofolo library which came in handy for this study as they provided an insight into the factors surrounding the introduction of

⁶⁰J. W Creswell, ‘Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative research’ (4th ed.) (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill, 2012).

the CCPP, FSSP and block farming. The problem with newspapers, however, is bias, which can lead to misinterpretations hence wrong conclusions. To avoid this, the researcher consulted as many newspapers as possible to try to minimize the risk of bias. Government gazettes, especially from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, formed also archival sources that came in handy, for they provided the government's intentions for the implementation and functioning of block farming.

The study will also rely on oral interviews as source of primary data, because these are a great source of data; they allow the researcher to get detailed information, and to also capture the non-verbal behaviour of respondents.⁶¹ However, the disadvantage of oral interviews is that they are time consuming, and it might be difficult to find enough suitable respondents who can provide data about the history of block farming in the 1970s. This is because some potential respondents might be dead, while some may not be in their right state of mind due to old age. However, by use of snowball sampling, the researcher hopes to reach a number of suitable respondents for the purpose of this study.

The study made use of focus group interviews, which provided more insight on the issue of how block farming impacted on the environment as well as food security in Mokema and Koro-Koro. Additionally, the use of semi-structured open-ended questions allowed the researcher to source out more data. This is because, in a focus group, respondents freely interacted with each other and added more on the issues that other respondents had already raised.⁶²

⁶¹ Maree, 'First Steps in Research' p.53

⁶² Maree, 'First Steps in Research' p.53

The study also relied on oral interviews as source of primary data, because these are a great source of data; they allowed for collection of detailed data, and to also capture the non-verbal behaviour of respondents.⁶³ However, the disadvantage of oral interviews is that they were time consuming, and it was difficult to find enough suitable respondents who could provide data based on their experience about the history of block farming in the 1970s. This was because some potential respondents might have been dead, while some were not be in their right state of mind due to old age. However, by use of snowball sampling, the researcher reached a number of suitable respondents for this study.

Focus group interviews, which were often comprised of 12 to 15 block farmers, also formed a significant source of primary data. Focus group discussions enabled the researcher to collect relevant data from farmers who had participated in block farming. These provided more insight on the issue of how block farming impacted on the environment and livelihoods. Additionally, the use of semi-structured open-ended questions allowed the researcher to source out more data from the interviewees. This is because, in a focus group, respondents freely interacted with each other and added more to the issues that other respondents had already raised.⁶⁴

Moreover, this study also consulted secondary sources inclusive of journals and other publications from the National University of Lesotho's ISAS collection, which have also shed light on the debates around the origins of block farming in Lesotho. Other secondary sources included online journal articles and books.

⁶³ Maree, 'First Steps in Research' p.54

⁶⁴ Maree, 'First Steps in Research' p.54

Structure of the study

This thesis is divided into 5 chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the study and gives a background to the study, aim and objectives of the study as well as the review of existing literature by other scholars on role of block farming on food security. This chapter also addresses contributions of block farming towards the environmental challenges and discusses such taking instances from other African countries. The literature review section concludes by taking Lesotho as a case study, and briefly reviews literature on block farming since its initiation in the 1970s. The methodology is also included.

Chapter 2 discusses the origins of block farming in Lesotho, by exploring reasons behind its initiation. It focuses on the socio-economic circumstances under Leabua's reign, which gave rise to the policy's launch in 1976. The chapter also discusses the principles governing the functional activities of block farming, including the roles of the parties involved as well as the modifications block farming underwent until 2018.

Chapter 3 assesses the contributions of block farming towards food security. It also dwells on the debates surrounding this farming strategy, and examines the extent at which block farming ensures food security. It discusses the respondents' views on block farming, including their perspectives on how block farming has been of assistance as well as its shortcomings.

Under chapter 4, the focus shifts to implications of block farming, giving special attention to the environmental aspects. Moreover, this chapter further explores cases where block farming acts as mitigation and enhance environmental sustainability.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

This chapter summarises the previous chapters and provides the researcher's recommendations.

Chapter 2: The Origins of Block Farming in Lesotho

Introduction

As a programme, block farming was the first government programme aimed at increasing agricultural productivity under Chief Leabua Jonathan's government. Launched in 1976,⁶⁵ it was part of Leabua's developmental strategies, which some have viewed as having been driven more by his political agendas than a genuine desire to increase agricultural production. In an attempt to build a strong political base following the contentious elections of 1970 in which apparently lost but used executive powers to suspend the results, Leabua came up with several developmental strategies. One such developmental strategy – a share-cropping system which became known as block farming – is the focus of this paper. While the country was faced with declining agricultural productivity at the time, coupled with increasing poverty,⁶⁶ Leabua put in motion, the first-ever direct government participation in agriculture which enabled individual farmers to pool their fields together so they could be farmed as a block.

Moreover, Leabua's government decided to get into a share-cropping system together with farmers with arable land, but could not put such land under cultivation. The introduction of a share-cropping system was ostensibly aimed at boosting agricultural productivity, as agriculture formed the backbone of many families' subsistence. Initially, the government's participation in promotional activities for agriculture was aimed at assisting in increased winter wheat production.⁶⁷ However, over the years, the programme was amended and more crops were included. Moreover, the programme alteration also came with changes in the sharing ratios

⁶⁵ Kingdom of Lesotho, "Lesotho First Five-Year Development Plan"

⁶⁶ GoL and FAO, Lesotho Country Programming Framework, 2013-2017

⁶⁷ Motsamai, "Programs to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho" p.15

between the stakeholders, as well as the roles of stakeholders.⁶⁸ However, this approach was exceedingly politicised, as participation in block farming required one to be a member of the ruling party, the Basotho National Party (BNP).⁶⁹ Within this context, this chapter dwells on the origin of block farming, paying special attention to the changes the programme underwent over time, from its first initiation whereby it was known as the Cooperative Crop Production Programme, then later was modified and referred to as the Food Self-Sufficiency Programme, and later modified and called block farming, as well as the political implications associated with this approach. It documents a pattern of changes the programme underwent to meet the changing agricultural concerns over the years, from its initial espousal in 1976.

While this paper finds it fitting to give a background on the state of agriculture in the country after independence, a brief overview of agriculture on the eve of colonialism also comprehends the agricultural situation upon independence. On the cusp of independence, many viewed Lesotho as not a traditional subsistence peasant society mainly because it had been integrated into the regional economy through both agricultural production and migrant labour. Coupled with limited land, drought, and the arrival of railways, these factors had altered the country into a net importer of food and exporter of labour.⁷⁰ Resultantly, it was such economic reality that highlighted the dependency on external sources of food. Furthermore, such situation was worsened by the colonial belief that Lesotho was primarily an agrarian society.⁷¹ This belief ignored the changing dynamics of Lesotho's economy. Nonetheless, Machobane, an agronomist

⁶⁸ None, Mokitimi. "Analysis of Performance of the Lesotho Grain Marketing System" Research Report No. 27 (Institute of South African Studies: National University of Lesotho, 1990).

⁶⁹ H. L. Ralebese, "Poverty Reduction Policies in Lesotho: The Case of Self-help Projects" (PhD Thesis, University of Free State, 2011).

⁷⁰ J. Aerni-Flessner, "Development, Politics, and The Centralization of State Power in Lesotho, 1960-1975" *Journal of African History*, 55, no. 3 (Michigan State University, 2014) p.406.

⁷¹ Aerni-Flessner, "Development, Politics and the Centralization of State Power" p.406

articulated that there was a way many could earn a living from agriculture. He came up with what became known as Machobane Farming System (MFS) in the 1950s, by which he believed that it would enable every farmer to produce different types of crops all year round.⁷² The MFS discouraged the use of synthetic fertilizers and advocated for organic agricultural practices. Employing the use of wood ash and animal manure as fertilizer, the MFS engaged crop rotation, relay cropping and intercropping.⁷³

Background: the State of Agriculture in Lesotho after Independence

Many government publications give a clear background on the state of agriculture in Lesotho after independence. In the First Five-Year Development Plan, Prime Minister Leabua explained that, after Lesotho gained independence the country experienced “exceedingly difficult economic problems...”⁷⁴ owing to, among others, limited agricultural land. Due to its mountainous nature, only about 15% of Lesotho’s entire area was conducive to agriculture. Of that arable land, about three-quarters were in the lowlands and foothills, where also three-quarters of the population lived. According to the First Five-Year Development Plan, there were three most important crops grown: maize, sorghum and wheat, with maize being the most principal subsistence crop. Maize growing accounted for over half of the entire arable land. There were also other crops inclusive of beans, peas, barley and oats.⁷⁵

⁷² A.F. Robertson, “Popular Scientist: James Jacob Machobane and “Mantsa Tlala” *African Affairs*, 93, no.370 (1994) p.99.

⁷³ Robertson, “Popular Scientist: James Jacob Machobane and “Mantsa Tlala” p.99

⁷⁴ Kingdom of Lesotho, “Lesotho: First Five-Year Development Plan, 197/71- 1974/75” (Central Planning and Development Office: Maseru, 1970)

⁷⁵ Kingdom of Lesotho, “Lesotho First Five-Year Development Plan” p. 14.

While the scarcity of arable land seemed to be a veritable challenge, there was a problem of poor crop yields. Various reasons were blamed for low agricultural returns, including adverse climatic conditions, sandy soil with low fertility, lack of irrigation, and shortage of suitable labour for heavy agricultural work, as a result of the fact that most able-bodied men (of the age group 18-49 years) had migrated to South Africa in search of jobs. Moreover, the First Five-Year Development Plan, which ran from 1967-1972, also identified 'primitive' farming practices and a lack of sufficient agricultural tools and implements, inadequate credit facilities and limited development funds as well as the land tenure system, as factors that contributed towards poor agricultural productivity.⁷⁶ As the government of Lesotho stated, the output of maize amounted to 2-3 bags per acre, on average, compared with 30-35 bags an acre on irrigated experimental cultivations.⁷⁷ This showed that the traditional production strategies that had been used to provide family subsistence food supplies were failing to meet the population's food requirements. Hence, the government, through a series of development plans, intended to revolutionize agriculture in an attempt to boost agricultural productivity.

The First Five-Year Development Plan focused on introducing "better crop and livestock husbandry techniques".⁷⁸ In the end, the government hoped to achieve an increase in yields, and a shift in production towards more profitable crops. However, this plan was met with obstacles hindering its success. Agriculture was then organised in a manner that reflected the country's historical context. Most importantly, the land tenure system appeared to have been responsible for several major obstacles to the modernisation of agricultural production. The Lesotho traditional land tenure system was hallmarked by the principle that all land was vested in the

⁷⁶ Kingdom of Lesotho, "Lesotho First Five-Year Development Plan" p.14

⁷⁷ Kingdom of Lesotho, "Lesotho First Five-Year Development Plan" pp. 14-15

⁷⁸ Kingdom of Lesotho "Lesotho First Five-Year Development Plan" p.25

Basotho nation, and the king had all authority over the land.⁷⁹ This meant that the king, as the head of the state, was the one holding the land in trust. This further indicated that there was no private or individual ownership of land in Lesotho.

In particular, the traditional land tenure system was said to impede the consolidation of scattered land holdings into larger and more efficient units.⁸⁰ In his work on ‘*Who Owns Land in Lesotho?*’, Thabane outlines how the traditional land tenure system was an obstacle to agricultural development. According to him, the customary land tenure system made individual farmers reluctant to invest in, and improve land, as there was no security of the tenure. Land was allocated by the king, through delegation to chiefs in a hierarchical manner.⁸¹ Some scholars argue that the traditional land tenure showed that nobody owned land in Lesotho, because the chiefs were just administrators who had the administrative title, meaning their responsibility was to allocate land and see to it that it was used according to its intended purposes.⁸² Therefore, the traditional land tenure system also made the extension of agricultural credit difficult because of a lack of individual ownership.⁸³ In this case, Thabane and Pule add that the customary land tenure did not allow the use of land as security when taking out loans because no one owned land, rather there was communal use of land. This meant that when taking loans from financial institutions such as banks, land could not be used as security.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Motlatsi, Thabane, *Who owns the Land in Lesotho? Land Disputes and the Politics of Land Ownership in Lesotho*, Research Report no. 29, Institute of Southern African Studies, 1998, p. 6

⁸⁰ Kingdom of Lesotho, “Lesotho First Five-Year Development Plan” p.15

⁸¹ Pule, N. W. and Motlatsi Thabane, Neville W. Pule and Motlatsi Thabane, “Lesotho’s land tenure regimes: experiences of rural communities and the calls for land reform”, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 42, 2 (April 2004), p. 283.

⁸² Pule and Thabane, “Lesotho’s Land Tenure Regimes” pp. 282- 283.

⁸³ Kingdom of Lesotho “Lesotho First Five-Year Development plan” p.25

⁸⁴ Daemane, M. M. Moses, *Problems of Land Tenure System in Lesotho Since Post- independence: Challenging Perspectives for Sustainable Development in Land Administration*, *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 14, 8 (2012), p. 166.

Apart from the traditional land tenure system, agriculture was also organized through numerous policies, programmes and development projects, which the government introduced as per the challenges agriculture faced at that time. Prior to 1976, initiatives aimed at boosting agricultural productivity, ensuring food security and supporting rural livelihoods were put in motion.⁸⁵ Moreover, various agricultural development projects were initiated during Leabua's tenure to modernize farming practices and increase agricultural output. Such projects intended to introduce new technologies such as irrigation systems as well as enhance the overall efficiency of the agricultural sector.⁸⁶ The Thaba-Tseka Rural Development Project and the Thaba-Bosiu Development Programme were among the initiatives that were put in place in an attempt to improve agricultural output.

Block Farming under Leabua's government

When the BNP came to power as the first government in independent Lesotho, there were only three major political parties: the Basotho National Party, the Basotho Congress Party (BCP), and the Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP). The BNP won the elections in 1966 with a narrow margin, taking only 31 seats of the 60 parliamentary seats, with most of the remaining seats occupied by the BCP. Further worsening matters was the fact that the BNP leader had lost his constituency and was therefore forced to await a by-election.⁸⁷ Contrary to all these, it was expected that upon attaining power, the BNP would attempt to build a strong political base. Indeed, as expected, the BNP government, upon assuming power, focused more on building a

⁸⁵ John Aerni-Flessner, "The History of Development in Lesotho"

⁸⁶ John Aerni-Flessner, "The History of Development in Lesotho"

⁸⁷ M. Thabane and N. Pule, *Essays on Aspects of the Political Economy of Lesotho: 1500-2000*, (Roma, Maseru: Department of History, National University of Lesotho, 2002) p.160.

solid political base and entrenching itself in power. In the process, it publicly abused state power and resources.⁸⁸ This misuse of government authority coupled with the rise of nepotism, corruption and favouritism in the public sector tainted the BNP's relations with other political parties, which further alienated the electorate.⁸⁹

Between 1966 and 1970, the year of the second national election, the Lesotho political environment was characterised by internecine battles, especially before the 1970 national election. In fact, Mashinini gave a clear image of the relationship between the BNP and other parties, quoting the physical violence that claimed the lives of many, such as the Rothe massacre in 1966 of the BCP cadre, and the Thaba-Bosiu political inferno.⁹⁰ Machobane on the other hand, revealed that it was the Prime Minister's association with South Africa that worsened the relations between the three parties in Lesotho. The BNP government was not at ease with the BCP-dominated civil service, and therefore chose to rely largely on expatriate advisers, especially South Africans. This angered many Basotho who thought that it should be Basotho who should be promoted, while there was also fear that Lesotho would be sold out to South African interests. Leabua's government further angered the public when BCP-inclined civil servants began to be pushed out and replaced by BNP members, many of whom were not qualified.⁹¹ It was in such political tensions that Lesotho was plunged to the 1970 elections, in which Leabua had not anticipated defeat.

⁸⁸ Ralebese, *Poverty Reduction Policies in Lesotho*, p.84

⁸⁹ Ralebese, *Poverty Reduction Policies in Lesotho*, p.84

⁹⁰ IV Mashinini, *Sustainable Rural Development in Lesotho*, (PhD Thesis, University of the Free State, 2000).

⁹¹ Gill, *A short History of Lesotho*, p.160

There were numerous reasons that weakened Leabua's chances of winning the elections in the country's second general elections. In Machobane's perspective, one such outstanding reason is the fact that Leabua had put little effort towards campaigning for people's votes.⁹² The BNP only used Radio Lesotho and other government agencies to augment its image. The people were, however, not impressed by such campaigns as they did not provide a proper platform for the public to thoroughly discuss their views on how to improve life.⁹³ While the BNP was overwhelmed by the task of running a growing bureaucracy, the BCP embarked on a massive (propaganda) campaign which exposed the weaknesses of the ruling party.

When Leabua realised that the results of the 1970 elections would not be in his favour, he was not willing to accept defeat. He instead "annulled the election results, suspended the Constitution and ruled the country in a civilian dictatorship."⁹⁴ Leabua further declared a State of Emergency and violently harassed the opposition. Many opposition members were imprisoned while some were exiled after a failed 1974 uprising⁹⁵. Moreover, Ralebitso also revealed that about 600 people lost their jobs and their pension rights. The reason for this lay in the fact that Leabua considered them a threat to his authoritarian rule, as those were likely to hinder Leabua's policies.⁹⁶ The period between 1971 to the mid-1980s was characterized by what scholars have referred to as Leabua's civil dictatorship.⁹⁷ However, some accounts suggested that it was the opposition's doings that led to such excruciating experiences. For instance, in his biographical

⁹² Gill, A short History of Lesotho, p.160

⁹³ Gill, A short History of Lesotho, p.161

⁹⁴ M. Thabane, "Fragment of an Oral History of Opposition to the 1986 Paramilitary Overthrow of Chief Leabua Jonathan's Government"

⁹⁵ S. Maliehe, "Commerce as Politics: The Two Centuries of Struggle for Basotho Economic Independence" *The Human Economy*, 8 (New York: Berghann Books, 2021)

⁹⁶ M. E. Ralebitso "Traumatic Experiences Suffered By Mathebe Residents During The 1970 State of Emergency in Lesotho" (Masters Dissertation, National University of Lesotho, 2017).

⁹⁷ Ralebitso, "Traumatic Experiences Suffered By Mathebe Residents" p.36

work- *But Give Him an Army Too: Leabua Jonathan a Biography*, Tse'epo Desmond Sixishe who was a BNP member, and a journalist who later became Leabua's principal secretary,⁹⁸ argued that it was the BCP's actions since 1966 that influenced Leabua's declaration of the State of Emergency.⁹⁹ It was during that period that Leabua, in an attempt to placate the predominantly rural electorate, put into place several agricultural initiatives.

In 1976, an agricultural policy of share-cropping was introduced. Code-named the Cooperative Crop Production Programme (CCPP), one of the political factors that led to its introduction was the need for political stability and control.¹⁰⁰ Government publications offered a positive view of the government's introduction of the CCPP, putting forth that the programme was aimed at centralizing power and authority, and implementing a cooperative farming system that allowed for better control over agricultural activities in the country.¹⁰¹ By promoting cooperation among farmers, the government could ensure a more organised and structured approach to agriculture, which was essential for maintaining stability and order.

Another factor that led to the introduction of the CCPP was the government's focus on economic development and modernization. Leabua sought to improve agricultural productivity and efficiency in Lesotho through the CCPP. By encouraging farmers to work together and adopt modern farming techniques, the government aimed to boost agricultural output, increase food security and stimulate economic growth in the country.¹⁰² The CCPP also served as a tool for

⁹⁸ Ralebitso, "Traumatic Experiences Suffered By Mathebe Residents" p.36

⁹⁹ Tšepo Desmond Sixishe, *But Give Him an Army Too: Leabua Jonathan a Biography*, (Maseru: Mokorotlo Publications, 1984).

¹⁰⁰ Kingdom of Lesotho, *Lesotho First Five-Year Development Plan*, p.67

¹⁰¹ Kingdom of Lesotho, *Lesotho First Five-Year Development Plan*, p.67

¹⁰² John Aerni-Flessner, "The History of Development in Lesotho"

fostering social cohesion and community building in the country. In that sense, promoting cooperation among farmers from different backgrounds and regions meant that the government created a sense of unity and solidarity among the rural population.¹⁰³ This not only helped in improving agricultural practices but also contributed to strengthening social ties and promoting national unity. National unity is one principle that many scholars claim to have been lacking since Leabua took governance.¹⁰⁴ This was following a phase of political instability and discomfort on the government, which was characterised by internecine battles.¹⁰⁵

Moreover, the structure of land ownership and allocation in the country shaped the government's decision to introduce the CCPP. The traditional land tenure system at that time stipulated that there was communal ownership of land, therefore the CCPP allowed for adherence to socialist ideologies.¹⁰⁶ Leabua's governance was influenced by socialist ideologies that emphasised collective ownership and cooperation. The introduction of the CCPP aligned with these ideological principles, as it promoted communal ownership of land and resources, as well as collective decision-making in agricultural activities.¹⁰⁷ Hence, this political ideology played a significant role in shaping the government's approach towards agriculture and rural development.

It can be concluded that the government's decision to get into share-cropping with farmers was part of a grand political strategy to strengthen its political base, and therefore win the votes of the

¹⁰³ John Aerni-Flessner, "The History of Development in Lesotho"

¹⁰⁴ Gill, A Short History of Lesotho, p160.

¹⁰⁵ IV Mashinini, Sustainable Rural Development in Lesotho, (PhD Thesis, University of the Free State, 2000).

¹⁰⁶ Mashinini, Sustainable Rural Development in Lesotho, p.44

¹⁰⁷ J. Aerni-Flessner, "Development, Politics, and the Centralization of State Power in Lesotho, 1960-75" *The Journal of African History*, 55:3 (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

electorate. Nonetheless, there are views that this agricultural strategy was not entirely a political agenda, arguing that Leabua had the best interest of the people by introducing a system that would allow them to boost agricultural activity and perhaps lower agricultural imports from South Africa. Mashinini supports this argument stating that, at the time, there was fear that South Africa would fail to maintain a supply of agricultural exports to Lesotho due to the apartheid regime that had been taking place then.¹⁰⁸ Additionally, according to the *Lesotho First Five-Year Development Plan*, the decision to get into share-cropping was the best alternative to enable people (especially women and old people) with arable land to put their land under cultivation. This was following the realization that many able-bodied men had migrated to South Africa to seek work as mine and farm workers. This migration implied that only women and old people were left, and these were not capable of engaging in heavy agricultural work.¹⁰⁹ The next section thus details the implementation of the CCPP, its aims as well how it functioned.

The Cooperative Crop Production Programme (CCPP), 1976- 1979

The Cooperative Crop Production Programme (CCPP) was aimed at improving agricultural productivity following a steady decline in crop yield, which resulted in Lesotho losing its position as a net exporter of grain by the end of the 19th century.¹¹⁰ The decrease in agricultural productivity was influenced by numerous factors, notably a considerable amount of cropland that was left fallow after many migrated to the South African mines and farms. In any given year, it was recorded that 20% to 30% of cropland was not put under cultivation. While sub-optimal weather conditions were to blame, it was also notable that such productive land was in the hands

¹⁰⁸ Mashinini, *Sustainable Rural Development in Lesotho*, p.44

¹⁰⁹ Kingdom of Lesotho, *Lesotho First Five-Year Development Plan*, p.25

¹¹⁰ Mokitimi, "Analysis of Performance of the Lesotho Grain Marketing System"

of people who neither had the capacity nor the interest to put that land to good agricultural use.¹¹¹

As such, in 1976 the government of Lesotho, through the Ministry of Agriculture undertook to share-crop large areas of arable land in the lowlands for the growing of winter wheat. This was because most arable land was left fallow in winter.¹¹²

The CCPP was based on the traditional concept of share-cropping, with the government and farmers as partners. A report by the Ministry of Agriculture on agricultural policies in the country revealed that, one of the intended purposes of the CCPP was to also contribute to the government's effort to reduce food deficits.¹¹³ The CCPP was primarily targeted at the growing of wheat, after the realization that most fields remained fallow in wheat. The focus area of this programme was mainly the lowlands.¹¹⁴

According to Motsamai, the implementation of the programme included the announcement and explanation of the government's intentions to the farmers in areas that were to be included in the programme. The country's lowlands, extending from north to south, were included in the programme. Moreover, locations included had to be reachable by road for tractors to operate and for input deliveries.¹¹⁵ All fields were measured and for a field to be included, it had to be at least 1.5 acres. Motsamai further showed that farmers who had interest in joining the programme registered their names with the local extension agent and "had to sign contract forms between government and individual farmers, which confirmed ownership of the land and stated

¹¹¹ GOL and FAO "Lesotho Country Programming Framework, 2013-2017" p.8

¹¹² None, Mokitimi, Analysis of Performance of the Lesotho Grain Marketing System, p. 26

¹¹³ Ministry of Agriculture, "Summary of All On-going Agricultural Projects 1988- 1989"

¹¹⁴ Mokitimi, Analysis of Performance of the Lesotho Grain Marketing System, p.21

¹¹⁵ Motsamai, "Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity" p.35

conditions of sharing of the crop after harvest.”¹¹⁶ For financing, the programme was initially to be funded by the Deferred Pay Fund in which migrant miners earnings were collected and held until they return home.¹¹⁷ Set up in 1974, the Deferred Pay Fund kept a certain percentage of money paid to Basotho mineworkers and utilized it in the domestic economy.¹¹⁸ Therefore, a total of M3.2 million was borrowed from the fund through the Lesotho Bank, to finance the production activities of the CCPP, on the expectation that the programme would be self-financing thereafter.¹¹⁹

One of the components of the CCPP was the agreement that harvest would be shared equally between the stakeholders (government and farmers). Consequently, one would expect that the agricultural costs would be spread over the two parties involved, nonetheless, the government bore all the expenses of agricultural inputs including seeds, ploughing, planting, disking, harrowing, fertilizer and combine harvesting.¹²⁰ The government also took complete control over the management and operations of agricultural activities of the programme, and aimed to make available, tractors, fertilizers and improved seeds, as well as ensure the timely planting of crops.¹²¹ By providing tractor power to the farming community, the CCPP intended to enable the preparation and timely completion of primary field operations.¹²²

¹¹⁶ Motsamai, “Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity” p. 36

¹¹⁷ Motsamai, “Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity” p.36

¹¹⁸ ILO “Migrant Worker Remittances in Lesotho: A Review Deferred Pay Scheme”

¹¹⁹ Motsamai, “Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity” p.36

¹²⁰ Mokitimi, “Analysis of Performance of the Lesotho Grain Marketing System” p.15

¹²¹ Motsamai, “Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho” p.34.

¹²² Ministry of Agriculture, “Summary of All On-going Agricultural Projects”

On the other hand, non-mechanised activities, such as weddings and threshing in the case where combine harvesters could not reach the fields, formed the responsibilities of the farmers.¹²³ Conversely, farmers contributed virtually nothing but their fields for they seldom provided any manual labour.¹²⁴ Consequently, the farmers christened (perhaps the use of this word came from the fact that the Catholic Church favoured the ruling government at that time, which was led by Leabua¹²⁵) the programme *Ahlama U-je* (which implied that land owners did not engage in agricultural activities, but were waiting for their share of crop yield) for manna has fallen from heaven).¹²⁶

During the course of its running, the profitability of the CCPP could not be questioned by farmers. From the farmers' view-point, the CCPP was beneficial as the government incurred all the production costs, while land owners only awaited their 50% share of the wheat harvest. Moreover, Motsamai proclaimed "If for any reason the crop was a failure, the farmers were guaranteed a certain amount on a per acre basis."¹²⁷ This meant that no matter the amount of harvest, farmers were assured returns after harvest. It was not surprising then, that under such circumstance's farmers were keen to avail their fields for the CCPP as that meant substantial income without expenditure, risk or commitment of labour.¹²⁸

On the other hand, the CCPP was viewed as not profitable from the government's standpoint. Numerous studies that viewed the efficacy of the programme from the government's perspective

¹²³ S. D. Turner, "Promoting Food Security in Lesotho: Issues and Options" (Priority Support Programme, Lesotho, 2019).

¹²⁴ Motsamai, "Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho" p.34.

¹²⁵ Pule and Thabane, "Essays on the Political Economy of Lesotho" P. 162

¹²⁶ Mokitimi, Analysis of Performance of the Lesotho Grain Marketing System, p.15

¹²⁷ Motsamai, "Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho" p.35

¹²⁸ Motsamai, "Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho" p.36

articulated its inefficiency. Assessing the efficiency of the CCPP from the government's perspective, Ratii expressed that the CCPP was not profitable as the government incurred great losses.¹²⁹ According to Ngqaleni, in its first year of operation, the CCPP used R723,676.06 in operating costs while the returns after harvest amounted to R423,467.92. Thus, in its first year of operation, the project incurred a loss of 42 per cent.¹³⁰ Ralebese suggested that that loss was perhaps a call to the government that the CCPP did not yield its expected result. Moreover, the CCPP encountered problems which included a shortage of competent staff to manage the programme, causing contractors to be overpaid, and excessive fertilizer and seed used.¹³¹

Moreover, the project was criticized for promoting laziness, as the involved farmers did not participate in decision making and implementation activities of the CCPP, apart from availing their land and waiting for their share of the harvest. In other words, the programme failed to promote farmer's self-sufficiency, it rather promoted dependency on the government. There was also a problem with the harvested grain. The government reportedly sustained losses of between 300 000 and 400 000.¹³² Resultantly, minor changes were made to the programme, including sharing production costs between the government and farmers, except for the ploughing costs which were still fully covered the government as a subsidy. Nonetheless, such alterations did not prevent the programme from incurring further substantial losses.¹³³

¹²⁹ Ratii, L. Motselisi, "The Welfare Impact of the Removal of Input Subsidies for Crop Production in Lesotho" (Master of Science Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2016) p.45.

¹³⁰ M. Mashinini. "Sustainable development in Lesotho". (PhD Thesis, University of the Free State, South Africa, 2000).

¹³¹ Ralebese, "Poverty Reduction Policies in Lesotho:"

¹³² Government of Lesotho and BOS "2009/2010 Lesotho Agricultural Census Volume V: Technical Report" (Maseru, Lesotho, 2010),

¹³³ Government of Lesotho and BOS "2009/2010 Lesotho Agricultural Census Volume V: Technical Report" (Maseru, Lesotho, 2010).

The Food Self-Sufficiency Programme (1980- 1990s)

Following much criticism, the CCPP was hastily abolished in mid-1979, and that led to the birth of the Food Self-Sufficiency Programme (FSSP) in 1980, which was taken over by the Technical Operations Unit (TOU).¹³⁴ TOU was a special unit formed under the Ministry of Agriculture, for overseeing the programme.¹³⁵ Among other reasons that necessitated the implementation of the FSSP were uncertainties associated with food supplies, as there was fear that South Africa might decide to close its borders because of the apartheid regime that prevailed at that time. Moreover, the government (of Lesotho) planned to reduce dependency on migrant labour's income and attain rural income through agricultural production.¹³⁶ Therefore, the FSSP was introduced to promote food self-sufficiency at the national level and decrease the country's dependency on food imports from the then apartheid South Africa.¹³⁷

Initially funded by the Republic of China for the first five years, the programme aimed at attaining self-sufficiency in the production of the main staple food- maize and sorghum, within a period of five years; achieving full utilization of government-owned agricultural machinery and equipment; and lastly to initiate agricultural production based on village co-operation.¹³⁸ Moreover the FSSP differed from the CCPP for more crops including beans, maize, sorghum and wheat on "50 000 acres using improved technology consisting of mechanization of farm operations, and use of a recommended package of inputs."¹³⁹ This implies that the FSSP covered a larger amount of land and a wider variety of crops. Under this programme, the government

¹³⁴ Mokitimi, *Analysis of Performance of the Lesotho Grain Marketing System*, p.22

¹³⁵ Malerato Lekhooa, "Assessment of the Sustainability of Donor Funded Agricultural Projects: A Case Study of Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Development Programme in Mafeteng, Lesotho

¹³⁶ L. M. Ratii, "The Welfare Impact of the Removal of Input Subsidies for Crop Production in Lesotho" (Master of Science Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2016) p.45.p.31

¹³⁷ L. M. Ratii, "The Welfare Impact of the Removal of Input Subsidies for Crop Production in Lesotho, p.32

¹³⁸ GOL, "Summary of On-going agricultural projects"

¹³⁹ Motsamai, "Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho" p.34.

provided agricultural technology including tractors, harvesters and aeroplanes for spraying fields.¹⁴⁰ Upon the end of the cropping season, the output would be shared between the government and the farmers, with the government taking over 70% to recover the production expenditures.¹⁴¹

Motsamai gave an outline on the implementation procedure of the FSSP. According to her, the implementation of the FSSP began with the TOU covering all stages of production from the purchases of inputs through land preparation, to the marketing of crops. Just as the CCPP, a field had to meet a minimum length of 1.5 acres to be considered for entry into the programme. Moreover, farmers were mobilized into cooperative blocks. Initially the TOU performed all operations, including negotiation of production loans on behalf of farmers. The farmers also received a risk-free return to the average yield attained through traditional production methods.¹⁴² Unlike the CCPP, under the FSSP, farmers had to bear all the production costs, except a fixed amount of subsidy for inputs. Farmers enjoyed a 30% subsidy on the cost of fertilizer. Moreover, farmers in the programme were enabled to directly apply for loans from the Lesotho Agricultural Development Bank, where they were not required any collateral for such loans.¹⁴³

In its first year, FSSP proposed to demonstrate the reliability of the technology used and all costs were to be borne by the programme. Similar to the CCPP, the fact that all expenses were borne by the project, with the individual farmers only providing their fields, led the FSSP to be

¹⁴⁰ GOL, "Summary of On-going agricultural projects"

¹⁴¹ GOL, "Summary of On-going agricultural projects"

¹⁴² Motsamai, "Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho" p.34.

¹⁴³ GOL and FAO "Lesotho Country Programming Framework, 2013-2017" p.8

christened *Ahlama-U-je*.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, one respondent brought to light that some farmers were reluctant to participate in manual labour including weeding and harvesting simply because “they did not like farm work.”¹⁴⁵ This proves that indeed there were free riders who only provided their farms and waited for their share of the harvest. Likewise, harvest from the project would be shared equally between the farmers and the project. Subsequently, in the second year, farmers were to cover half of the production costs, and in return receive 75% of the output. From the third year onwards, all costs were to be borne by farmers.¹⁴⁶ The FSSP was not without shortfalls, however, most shortfalls only became evident after the fall of Leabua’s government, hence the beginning of the military regime. The next section discusses the influence of the military regime on agriculture.

The Military Regime and Agriculture (1986-1993)

The year 1986 marked the end of Leabua’s authoritarian rule when he was finally toppled by the military. A group of military officers staged a coup d’état against Prime Minister Leabua’s government. In the aftermath of the coup d’état, Major General Justin Metsing Lekhanya led a military government consisting of civilian cabinet made up of individuals, some of whom, like Major General Lekhanya himself were members of the BNP.¹⁴⁷ This suggests that there were BNP members within the military who were dissatisfied with Leabua’s leadership for various reasons and thus sought to remove him from power. In January 1986, South Africa put in place a

¹⁴⁴ Mokitimi, *Analysis of Performance of the Lesotho Grain Marketing System*, p. 22

¹⁴⁵ Unidentified Informant. Interview by Likeleli Matela, 23 March 2024.

¹⁴⁶ Mokitimi, *Analysis of Performance of the Lesotho Grain Marketing System*, p. 23

¹⁴⁷ M. Thabane, “Fragment of an Oral History of Opposition to the 1986 Paramilitary Overthrow of Chief Leabua Jonathan’s Government” *Oral History Journal of South Africa*, 7:1 (Roma: National University of Lesotho, 2019).

massive border blockade, which allowed little traffic between South Africa and Lesotho.¹⁴⁸ The blockade was a way of punishing the Lesotho government because Basotho had failed to meet the South African government's plea to expel the African National Congress (ANC) members from Lesotho, and sign a security accord. South Africa had long believed that Lesotho had harboured Umkhonto we Sizwe combatants.¹⁴⁹ In his work, *Politics since Independence*, Pule brings to light that within days after the blockade was put in place, Lesotho began to feel the effects as foodstuffs and fuel supplies were running very low.¹⁵⁰ This implied that at that time, Lesotho was faced with a risk of shortage of food supplies, therefore it can be said that there was need for Lesotho to find alternatives for increased agricultural productivity, and hence reduce dependency on South Africa.

Even though many scholars have not directly addressed how the military regime affected the functioning of the FSSP, some have suggested that the programme might have still been operational.¹⁵¹ However, the programme experienced challenges owing to weather variability and neglect by the paramilitary.¹⁵² The military regime mainly focused on consolidating power and maintaining control over the country. In this regard, Thabane adds that this may have led to negligence of the FSSP. Moreover, since the programme had been associated with politics, political instabilities and uncertainty that prevailed under the military regime could have created an unfavourable environment for agricultural activities. Furthermore, there were policies

¹⁴⁸ N.W. Pule, "Politics since Independence" in *Essays on Aspects of the Political Economy of Lesotho:1500-2000*, edited by D.F. Ellemberger, (Moriya, Lesotho: Morija Museum and Archives,)

¹⁴⁹ Thabane, "Fragment of an Oral History of Opposition to the 1986 Paramilitary Overthrow of Chief Leabua Jonathan's Government" p.15

¹⁵⁰ Pule, "Politics since Independence" p.188

¹⁵¹ Simon Baynham and Greg Mills, "Lesotho: between Dependence and Destabilisation" *The World Today*, 43, no.3 (Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1987).

¹⁵² Pule, "Politics since Independence" p.189

introduced during this period, which impacted the agricultural programmes like the FSSP. In the late 1980s, the introduction of the SAPs in the country articulated the minimization of government spending, including cutting subsidies on agriculture.¹⁵³ This implied that the FSSP collapsed for the programme was subsidized by the government.

The re-introduction of Block Farming

Due to the shortfalls acquired by the FSSP, the government relinquished the share-cropping programme and came up with other ways to subsidize agricultural inputs only during the period when the country was hit by natural disasters such as severe drought.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, the share-cropping scheme was reintroduced in the financial year 2005/2006 to assist farmers in engaging in commercial farming. In this case, the scheme was termed block farming and was partly government-owned and involved the Standard Lesotho Bank providing loans to block farmers to enable them to access agricultural inputs.¹⁵⁵ According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, block farming is a farming system in which farmers avail their fields to be consolidated into 10 hectares for winter cropping, and 20 hectares for summer cropping, to engage in commercial farming through share-cropping. This was done with the fields' owner's written consent.¹⁵⁶ The government officer (who is a block farming coordinator) revealed that in Mokema and Koro-Koro, block farming was implemented in the 2016/2017 crop season.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Rants'o, "Rural Development Policies and Programs" p.8

¹⁵⁴ A. T. Rants'o and Seboka, M. "Agriculture and Food Security in Lesotho: Government Sponsored Block Farming Programme in the Berea, Leribe and Maseru Districts" *Cogent Food and Agriculture*, 5, no.1 (2019) available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311932.2019.01657300> [accessed on 23 February 2023].

¹⁵⁵ Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Intensive Crop Programme,

¹⁵⁶ Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, "Intensive Crop Programme 2016-2017"

¹⁵⁷ Unidentified Informant. Interview by Likeleli Matela, 23 March 2024.

Additionally, research findings show that joining block farming was free. All farmers were free to join given the fact that their field was within areas selected for this type of project.¹⁵⁸

Block farming was primarily put in place after the realization that most agricultural land belonged to the people who had no means of putting their land in good use, hence such land remained fallow. The amount of fallow land seemed to increase yearly, and according to the FAO statistics, in 2012, about 20% to 30% of crop land was left fallow.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, the Bureau of Statistics (BOS) Crop forecasting report (2012) further showed that the 2011/2012 crop season saw most of crop land left fallow. In 2011/2012, about 48% of arable land was not put under cultivation.¹⁶⁰ In this case, the sub-optimal weather conditions were also blamed for an increased amount of fallow land, as most farmers feared that the prolonged drought that occurred in the 2011/2012 crop season would thus result in a lower agricultural harvest.

In this regard, there were attempts made to try to find mitigation for the increasing amount of productive land which remained fallow, thus an approach for encouraging people with the necessary means (which is the government in most cases) to partner with land owners who often fail to cultivate their lands mostly because of financial constraints, through some contractual agreement to put such land under cultivation.¹⁶¹ In this case, the management of the whole process would be under one farmer with the necessary capabilities and skills to manage such a block. The basic principles of this share cropping system include the fact that all fields involved need to be planted with the same crop by the suggested recommendations for crop production

¹⁵⁸ Rants'o and Seboka, "Agriculture and Food Security in Lesotho" p.7

¹⁵⁹ FAO 'Lesotho Country Programming Framework 2013- 2017' (Maseru, Lesotho, 2017).

¹⁶⁰ Government of Lesotho and BOS "2009/2010 Lesotho Agricultural Census Volume V: Technical Report" (Maseru, Lesotho, 2010).

¹⁶¹ FAO 'Lesotho Country Programming Framework 2013- 2017'

including mechanical operations, inputs, and field maintenance.¹⁶² According to the block farming coordinator in Mokema, fields under block farming were used for wheat growing in winter, and maize growing in summer.¹⁶³ In Koro-Koro, however, mostly wheat was grown under block farming, with maize growing only beginning lately.¹⁶⁴ To determine the type of crop to grow, soil sample is collected from each field and is taken for testing.¹⁶⁵ The introduction of such cereals (maize and wheat) was a response by the government to try to ensure food security which, among other reasons, was hindered by the failure of productive land owners to put such land to their best agricultural use for many years.

According to the block farming coordinators from both areas, joining block farming has been free, meaning any land owner who had an interest and desire to have their arable land put under cultivation could avail such land. However, that only applied to fields within areas or villages selected by the government to carry out block farming. In this respect, the government and farmers get into a three-year contractual agreement, in which some conditions govern their agreement. One such condition was division of labour between the farmers and the government, where the government's responsibility is the provision of agricultural inputs. One respondent who participated in block farming in Mokema asserted that their responsibility as farmers was to provide their manual labour-that is- weeding and harvesting.¹⁶⁶ However, respondents from both Koro-Koro revealed that they contributed nothing more than availing their fields for block farming, thus justifying Mokitimi's popular definition of block farming system – *ahlama u je*.

¹⁶² Rants'o and Seboka, "Agriculture and Food Security in Lesotho" p.17

¹⁶³ Coordinator, interview Likeleli Matela, 23 March 2024.

¹⁶⁴ Unidentified Informant. Interview by Likeleli Matela, 23 March 2024.

¹⁶⁵ Unidentified Informant. Interview by Likeleli Matela, 23 March 2024.

¹⁶⁶ Mokitimi, Analysis of Performance of the Lesotho Grain Marketing System, p. 23

When this block farming initiative was reintroduced in Mokema and Koro-Koro in the 2005/2006 crop season, it was initially proposed that the produce would be shared in a ratio of 60:40.¹⁶⁷ However, the agreement was revised and it was agreed that the produce would be shared equally between the two. That still implied that the government, including, in some cases, people with the necessary capacity, would be responsible for provision of agricultural inputs. In that case, it can then, be concluded that block farming was highly subsidised by the government.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the challenges faced by the agricultural sector after Leabua had come into power. It traced the political implications on agriculture, and also showed how politics shaped Lesotho's agricultural policy. By so doing, it has brought to light the fact that the government's strategy of share-cropping began as political propaganda. The chapter also covered the modifications the share-cropping approach underwent, as well as the political, economic and social factors that have necessitated such modifications. While this chapter provided the political sense and gave an account of how the government's share-cropping system came into being, the intentions as well as implementation of the system, the next chapter dwells on contributions of this government-sponsored block farming towards food security.

¹⁶⁷ Coordinator, interview Likeleli Matela, 22 April 2024.

Chapter 3: Block Farming and Food Security

Introduction

Block farming, as discussed in the previous chapter, was introduced ostensibly by the government as response to problems associated with food in Lesotho. As seen from the previous chapters, one of the notable obstacles to achieving food security in the country has been the inability by Basotho to put arable land under cultivation. Most peasants lack the financial means to enable them to access agricultural inputs. In this respect, the government sought to encourage such land owners with productive land by getting into share-cropping with them, as an attempt to assist in increasing agricultural output, hence contribute towards reducing food insecurity. This chapter discusses the impact of block farming towards ensuring food security, focusing specifically on the period between 2005/2006 to 2017/2018 agricultural year, which marked the duration of block farming in the two study areas. It records the research findings on how the produce from block farming impact on the farmers' lives, as well as how the government uses its portion of the produce to address the issue of food security in the country.

Background: An Analysis of Agricultural Productivity in Mokema and Koro-Koro

Agriculture has been the backbone of the economy in Mokema and Koro- Koro, with the majority of the population relying on farming for their sustenance. Before the introduction of block farming in the two areas, farmers were typically used to traditional methods of farming. Such methods were labour intensive and less efficient. Farmers agreed that they used cattle to cultivate their fields. Planting and tilling were also done by the help of cattle. For manure, farmers stated that they depended on animal waste including kraal manure. While other farmers stipulated that they also used wood ash as manure, some revealed that the use of wood ash was

not practical for them, since ash was required in big amount which they could not get.¹⁶⁸ Resultantly, such traditional methods were often less efficient and lacked the potential to achieve maximized crop yields.

Furthermore, most farmers attested that lack of access to inputs also hindered their potential to boost agricultural productivity. Farmers had restricted access to quality seeds, artificial fertilizers and agricultural machinery. As such, they had to practice rain-fed agriculture,¹⁶⁹ and that therefore increased vulnerability to weather changes. Resultantly, many fields remained fallow for prolonged periods, thus leading to decreased agricultural productivity and hence lower food availability. The inability of the majority of farmers attested to the fact that they fail to cultivate their fields mainly due to the high costs of agricultural inputs. Additionally, farmers that admitted to have managed to put their fields under cultivation even before the introduction of block farming stated that they faced low productivity because the soil had lost fertility, which was attributed to poor farming practices. According to the block farming coordinator, it was such situation that necessitated government intervention to enhance agricultural production, and this was to be achieved by providing agricultural inputs, through block farming.¹⁷⁰

With the introduction of block farming in Mokema and Koro-Koro, the government aimed to meet peasants half-way, by providing agricultural inputs. This was following realisation that lack of access to such inputs was the major factor that hindered agricultural productivity, hence contributing to food insecurity. Moreover, other reasons for the implementation were to

¹⁶⁸ Unidentified Participant, interview by Likeleli Matela, 24 April 2024

¹⁶⁹ Rants'o and Seboka, "Agriculture and Food Security in Lesotho" p.15

¹⁷⁰ Coordinator, Interview by Likeleli Matela, 23 March 2024

“subsidize farmers...”.¹⁷¹ In an interview with the block farming coordinator, it was also revealed that the program also aimed to create job opportunities for the programme intended to hire tractors from farmers, which would be used for cultivation under the program. The agreement between the government and farmers was verbal, and it included the sharing ratio, roles and responsibilities expected of the participating parties.¹⁷² Moreover, the government intended to sell its portion to the local flour mills, to reduce the amount of grain import.¹⁷³

Contribution of block farming towards enhancing food security

Benefits for farmers

One of the primary advantages of block farming is that it has the ability to increase agricultural productivity. Many farmers agreed that indeed the agricultural output was increased significantly.¹⁷⁴ It was also stated that the reason behind the increase was due to the use of good quality seeds as well as synthetic fertilizers, which helped improve crop yields and overall production levels, leading to an increased amount of food availability per household during the sharing of the produce. Moreover, the fact that soil samples were taken for testing to confirm suitability for the type of crop that can be best grown ensured an increased output. When asked for their opinions on how their share of produce brought change to their livelihoods, many farmers pointed out that their share of the produce does not sustain them until the next harvest.

¹⁷¹ Coordinator, Interview by Likeleli Matela, 23 March 2024

¹⁷² Coordinator, Interview by Likeleli Matela, 23 March 2024

¹⁷³ Coordinator, Interview by Likeleli Matela, 23 March 2024

¹⁷⁴ Unidentified Participant, interview by Likeleli Matela, 24 April 2024

Additionally, some farmers wished they could sell their share of produce to cover other non-food expenses, but fail to do so, as such produce was barely enough for subsistence.¹⁷⁵

Block farming had the potential to enhance economic empowerment. It gave small-scale farmers more financial influence by encouraging teamwork and shared accountability in the agricultural activities. Farmers could attain economies of scale that resulted in higher earnings and better living conditions by working together on the planning, production and marketing stages. Block farming thus gave farmers a greater sense of economic empowerment, which lowered poverty and increased food security for both individuals and communities.¹⁷⁶ The government of Lesotho established marketing channels that allowed farmers participating in block farming to access the formal marketing channels. These marketing channels were inclusive of the Co-op Lesotho, Lesotho Flour Mills (LFM), traders, wholesalers, and retailers.¹⁷⁷ However, none of the participants in Mokema and Koro-Koro attested to have ever sold their share of produce, for they claimed that their share was often very small.

Block farming also allowed for efficient resource utilization. Through block farming, resources such as land, water, seeds, fertilizers and equipment can be more efficiently utilized, resulting to ultimately higher productivity. Many farmers who participated in block farming stated that, before the implementation of the programme, their fields had remained fallow for years due to various reasons. Such reasons included lack of agricultural inputs such as capital in the form of machinery, and improved seeds, as well as irrigation facilities. Furthermore, some farmers also showed that their fields were located outside the village; as a result, crops grown on such fields

¹⁷⁵ Unidentified Participant, interview by Likeleli Matela, 24 April 2024

¹⁷⁶ Rants'o, "Rural Development Policies and Programmes" p.2660

¹⁷⁷ Mokitimi, "Analysis of the Performance of the Lesotho Grain Marketing System" p.24.

were prone to theft. However, many attested that risk of theft was reduced when the number of fields planted increased.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, such research findings also suggest that block farming fostered a sense of community development. Such findings support the work of Mohlahatsa who found that, by working together towards a common goal of increasing food production, and improving their livelihoods, participating farmers develop stronger social ties and support networks within their communities.¹⁷⁹

Block farming promoted sustainable land use practices. Sustainable land use in this case occurred through promotion of efficient utilization of arable land which minimized its negative outcome on the environment. In an interview, both block farming coordinators asserted that this farming initiative strived to put arable land to the best use and achieve maximized agricultural output, whilst minimizing negative bearings on such land. This was done by implementing techniques that preserved soil fertility, prevented erosion and promoted long-term sustainability in agriculture. “In spite of the problems posed by climate change, block farming employs agricultural methods that promote environmental resilience and sustain food production”¹⁸⁰ responded one governmental officer when asked about the intentions of the programme regarding environmental sustainability.

Block farming created job opportunities. Large-scale block farming operations often had the possibility to create employment opportunities for local communities. Such opportunities may have been both seasonal and permanent jobs in planting, harvesting, processing and other

¹⁷⁸ Unidentified Participant, interview by Likeleli Matela, 24 April 2024

¹⁷⁹ Taole, Mohlahatsa, “The Role of Agricultural Support Programmes on the Livelihoods of Smallholder Farmers in Lesotho: Assert Utilisation, Productivity and Perceptions” (Master’s Thesis, Rhodes University, 2018) p.53.

¹⁸⁰ Coordinator, Interview by Likeleli Matela, 24 April 2024

agricultural activities.¹⁸¹ Some farmers asserted that when they were initially informed about the programme, they were informed that the programme would hire people who owned tractors to cultivate the block fields. Nevertheless, that was never the case, as one farmer stated, “We just saw tractors, which we assumed belonged to the government and were blue in colour, cultivating fields. The coordinators were quite about hiring local tractors owners as promised.”¹⁸²

Despite this, research results suggest that block farming contributed to income generation and poverty alleviation. Block farming further had the capability to generate income for farmers, especially when the programme was mechanized and commercialized; it held the potential to increase agricultural productivity and income. Focusing on high-yield crops and economies of scale, block farming enabled for higher profits compared to traditional small-scale farming.¹⁸³ However, one government official indicated that the programme promised no financial award for the farmers’ manual labour. She continued to show that one of the programme’s operational principles was that both parties had their own roles. The government covered the financial costs, provided machinery and other agricultural inputs, while the farmers were responsible for non-mechanized activities such as weeding.¹⁸⁴

Block farming helped mitigate risks associated with its agricultural activities by spreading them across a group of farmers. In cases of natural disasters, inclusive of adverse weather conditions or pest outbreaks, farmers were less vulnerable when they were part of a collective effort in

¹⁸¹Ornas and Salih, “Environmental Stress and Security in Africa”, p.106

¹⁸² Interview by Likeleli Matela, Koro-Koro, 24 March 2024

¹⁸³ Ornas and Salih, “Environmental Stress and Security in Africa” p.107

¹⁸⁴ Coordinator, Interview by Likeleli Matela, 27 April 2024

block farming.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, the government was more capable of financing means to mitigate such unfavourable events for it also stood a chance to suffer a deficit. While it was shown that did not aim to make much surplus from the programme, however, the government had hoped to recover the costs of agricultural inputs.¹⁸⁶ Block farming provided a more structured and organized approach to agriculture, therefore allowing for better risk management and planning. According to Orna and Salih, this would be achieved by diversifying crops within the block, or implementing insurance schemes.¹⁸⁷ Additionally, Motsamai's study revealed that in the event that the crop failed for any reason, the farmers would receive a guaranteed sum per acre.¹⁸⁸

Challenges for farmers

While some scholars like Motsamai put forth that being a collective reduced potential risks, respondents argued that it was not always the case that the government introduced mitigation measures to deal with agricultural challenges. Such failures have often led to lower agricultural productivity. For instance, respondents made reference to the 2017/2018 wheat growing season, where the government delayed provision of harvesters, and that resulted in a great loss, for by the time farmers were allowed to at least harvest what was left of the wheat manually, most of the wheat was already destroyed by rain. Farmers described how painful it was watching wheat being destroyed by rain, only because the government delayed to provide harvesters. In an interview, one female farmer bemoaned thus,

I remember vividly the 2017/2018 wheat growing, it was very successful, I had never seen such good crops on those fields for a long time. It indeed showed that the seeds used were of good quality... We experienced high rainfall around harvest time, and we

¹⁸⁵ Mohlahatsa, "The Role of Agricultural Support Programmes" p.54

¹⁸⁶ Motsamai, "Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho" p.34.

¹⁸⁷ Ornas and Salih, "Environmental Stress and Security in Africa" p.106

¹⁸⁸ Motsamai, "Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho" p.35

contacted the block farming coordinator, who gave us the same answer a number of time. We were told that harvesters were not yet available and that we could not harvest manually for that was against the laws governing the activities of block farming. We therefore had no choice but to watch, in great sorrow, wheat getting destroyed by heavy rainfall.¹⁸⁹

Moreover, they could not harvest such wheat manually because it was against their agreement with the government. When the government finally gave permission to harvest manually, much damage had already occurred.¹⁹⁰

Although the government put in place numerous marketing channels, many farmers attested that they had never sold their share of produce. The reason for this is that their share is often only utilized for livelihood subsistence. This reasoning aligns with Mohlahatsa's research findings that smallholder farmers struggle to maintain a constant supply of their produce to supermarkets and retails.¹⁹¹ Chamberlin further adds that smallholder farmers typically face low output production and are subsistence oriented; therefore they do not have a stable marketable surplus to meet local supermarket demand.¹⁹²

The block farming coordinators from both areas attested that lack of commitment from farmers was one of the challenges the programme faced.¹⁹³ One of the principles governing the functioning of the programme was that both parties – the government and farmers – had a hand in the functioning of the programme. Farmers were expected to contribute manual labour, while the government focused on the provision of non-labour activities. However, farmers were

¹⁸⁹ Unidentified Participant, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Koro-Koro

¹⁹⁰ Unidentified Participant, interview by Likeleli Matela, 24 April 2024

¹⁹¹ Mohlahatsa, "The Role of Agricultural Support Programmes" p.54

¹⁹² J. Chamberlin, "It's a Small World After All: Defining Smallholder Agriculture in Ghana" Discussion Paper 00823. Development Strategy and Governance Division.

¹⁹³ Coordinator, interview by Likeleli Matela, 24 April 2024

reported not been involved in any of the activities of the programme. Coordinators thus justified Mokitimi's theory that farmers were just free-riders who only availed their fields and awaited their share of the produce.¹⁹⁴ Consequently, the research results suggest that block farming promoted laziness, and created livelihood vulnerability. Of 19 farmers interviewed in Koro-Koro, 13 stated that they were unemployed, and 5 farmers out of 13 relied on old-age pension, while the remaining 8 articulated that they relied on some money given to them by their kids, which hardly met their needs. Therefore, most farmers depended on block farming as the primary livelihood strategy. This reliance made communities vulnerable to challenges that threatened agriculture, such as climate change impact and policy changes.

The implementation of block farming was inconsistent. During focus group discussions, farmers seemed to agree that the government-sponsored block farming lacked consistency. Farmers put forth that the implementation of block farming was stopped, without any given reason from the government.¹⁹⁵ In Koro-Koro, block farming was last implemented in the 2017/2018 farming season,¹⁹⁶ while in Mokema, the government last executed this system in the 2020/2021 crop season.¹⁹⁷ In this regard, 8 out of 12 farmers interviewed in Mokema shared the view that the block farming was unreliable. This view thus questions the efficiency of block farming towards reduction of food insecurity. Furthermore, 7 of 12 farmers in Mokema also pointed out that, their fields have remained fallow after the 2020/2021 crop season, as they lacked the ability to put

¹⁹⁴ Mokitimi, *Analysis of Performance of the Lesotho Grain Marketing System*, p. 22

¹⁹⁵ Unidentified Participant, interview by Likeleli Matela, 24 April 2024

¹⁹⁶ Unidentified Participant, interview by Likeleli Matela, 24 April 2024

¹⁹⁷ Unidentified Participant, interview by Likeleli Matela, 24 April 2024

such fields under cultivation.¹⁹⁸ Thus, it is such findings that the programme's objective of decreasing the amount of fallow land was questioned by scholars such as Rants'o and Seboka.¹⁹⁹ Although the government intended to enhance food security by assisting farmers to put their fields under cultivation, entry requirements made it impossible to accommodate all farmers. Such requirements included the length of the field, which was not to be less than 1.5 acres, meaning that anyone whose land was less than 1.5 acres would not qualify for the programme. Moreover, accessibility also formed a crucial principle for entry into the programme. This meant that even if one owned a large piece of land, they still could not qualify to join this programme.²⁰⁰ These research findings supported the work of Ulrichs and Mphale who found that block farming is not suitable for smallholder farmers even though they too had interests in participating.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Unidentified Participant, interview by Likeleli Matela, 24 April 2024

¹⁹⁹ Rants'o and Seboka, "Agriculture and Food Security in Lesotho" p.17

²⁰⁰ Unidentified Participant, interview by Likeleli Matela, 24 April 2024

²⁰¹ M. Ulrichs and M. Mphale, "Strengthening Coherence Between Agriculture and Social Protection: Lesotho Country Case Study Report" *Overseas Development Institution*, (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2016).



Figure 2.1: Fields that have remained fallow after the 2017/2018 wheat growing season in Mokema.

Therefore, such farmers often believed that they were better off cultivating their fields without help of the government; rather, they relied on social networks through practices such as *seahlolo* which typically involved smallholder farmers and/or those without land partnering with those with larger arable land, where the non-farmers usually provided agricultural inputs and agreed on the division of manual labour.²⁰² These social networks functioned in a similar manner as the government-sponsored block farming, but smallholder farmers reportedly found them a better alternative for the size of their fields did not determine suitability.

²⁰² Mohlahatsa, "The Role of Agricultural Support Programmes" p.54

Available evidence also suggests that block farming was still politicised. According to the respondents, the fact that the government-sponsored block farming in Koro-Koro was last implemented in the 2017/2018 crop season, convinced many farmers that the geographical targeting criteria might have been politically influenced.²⁰³ Even though respondents admitted that association with certain political parties was never mentioned by the responsible government officials – block farming coordinators in this case – most farmers failed to understand why the government just stopped the project without the government stating reasons, but the programme still continued in other areas. Farmers, who seemed to believe that the selection of areas to continue block farming was determined by politicians, voiced out that the programme continued in areas where such politicians had a large political following.²⁰⁴

Furthermore, during a focus group discussion in Mokema, the researcher realized the hesitation in some farmers when the issue of political involvement in block farming was brought up. However, it was later discovered that some farmers, who appeared uncomfortable during focus group discussion were of the view that, just as participation in this share-cropping system was only opened to members of the BNP in the 1970s, perhaps that was still the case, where participation was in favour of areas where politicians in government had large following, thus neglected other areas. Such farmers supported their views by pointing out that block farming had stopped in the study areas after a change of government in 2017. The results of the 2017 general elections ruled in favour of the All Basotho Convention (ABC), defeating the Democratic Congress (DC) which had previously led the country.²⁰⁵ Koro-Koro never saw the execution of

²⁰³ Unidentified Participant, interview by Likeleli Matela, 24 April 2024

²⁰⁴ Unidentified Participant, interview by Likeleli Matela, 24 April 2024

²⁰⁵ IFES Election Guide, “Elections: Lesotho National Assembly 2017 General” <https://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/3016> accessed on 29 June 2024].

the government-sponsored block farming after the 2017/2018 crop season, but the programme continued in other areas which the government probably had certain interests in.²⁰⁶

Profitability and Challenges for the government

One of the notable challenges regarding the CCPP was the misallocation of agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizer, as well as inconsistent measurements of acreage which was mistaken to have been cultivated by the tractor conductor.²⁰⁷ This suggests that the programme lacked managerial staff with the suitable skills, thus, this contributed towards the programme failure. While the CCPP proved to have been beneficial to farmers, as the amount of cultivated land as well as the number of farmers involved in agriculture had increased, that was not the case from the government's view point. Farmers benefited at high expense to the government. The government reportedly sustained losses of between 300 000 and 400 000.²⁰⁸ However, an economic analysis report of the CCPP pointed out that the programme was not intended to make profits; it was rather meant to make farmers aware of the agricultural potential of their land.²⁰⁹ According to Motsamai, the government had intended to sell its portion of the produce to Lesotho flour mills, so as to reduce the amount of grain import.²¹⁰ This would ensure that the amount of money lost in imports was to be reduced.

Resultantly, minor changes were made to the programme, including sharing production costs between the government and farmers, except for the ploughing costs which were still fully

²⁰⁶ Unidentified Participant, interview by Likeleli Matela, 24 April 2024

²⁰⁷ Mokitimi, Analysis of Performance of the Lesotho Grain Marketing System, p. 23

²⁰⁸ Government of Lesotho and BOS "2009/2010 Lesotho Agricultural Census Volume V: Technical Report" (Maseru, Lesotho, 2010),

²⁰⁹ Motsamai, "Programs to Increase Agricultural Production" p.37

²¹⁰ Motsamai, "Programs to Increase Agricultural Production" p.37

covered the government as a subsidy. Nonetheless, such alterations did not prevent the programme from incurring further substantial losses.²¹¹ When block farming was introduced in the study areas, it was agreed that the sharing ratio would be 70:30 between the government and farmers respectively, compared to the 50:50 ratio when the programme was initially in 1976. One of the problems the programme was faced with was an increase in the vulnerability to pest outbreaks. Some respondents put forth that they had come to realize that the planting of the same crop or crops (maize and/or wheat) across a vast area fostered an environment that is favourable to some insect outbreaks. Crop-specific pests can swiftly spread throughout the entire block farm, resulting in significant crop losses. In their study, Ornas and Salih have further shown that this problem can also be worsened by inadequate pest management techniques, which in the end affect food production.²¹² This, thus, challenged the government's intention to boost agricultural productivity.

Additionally, shortage of agricultural machinery hampered the programme's efficiency. Coordinators from both areas; Mokema and Koro-Koro have reported that one of the challenges that face block farming was the untimely availability of agricultural inputs. According to them, the untimely provision of agricultural resources such as tractors, seeds and harvesters not only reduced the quality of the produce, but it also encouraged theft.²¹³ This happened when community members, especially those not participating in the programme, stole inputs or crops before harvest, thus affecting overall productivity.

²¹¹ Government of Lesotho and BOS "2009/2010 Lesotho Agricultural Census"

²¹² Ornas and Salih, "Environmental Stress and Security in Africa" p.

²¹³ Coordinator, Interview by Likeleli Matela, 27 April 2024

Conclusion

From its initial implementation in 1976, block farming has emerged as a crucial approach that has shaped Lesotho's agricultural landscape. It has significantly contributed towards enhancing food security through several key mechanisms. The research findings have shown that it promoted efficient land use by consolidating small, fragmented plots into larger, more manageable blocks, thereby leading to economies of scale and boosting productivity. Bringing together small plots and thereby forming one larger area facilitates improved access to resources such as irrigation, fertilizers and modern farming techniques, which were crucial for increasing crop yields and ensuring food availability. Moreover, block farming has proven to be a collaborative approach by which focus was not only limited to strengthening community resilience, but also enhances agricultural productivity through pooled resources and expertise.

Block farming is not without drawbacks, though. According to research findings, one notable challenge was the untimely availability of agricultural inputs, which has deemed the programme a failure. Furthermore, the execution of this share-cropping system was still politicised, and that has raised doubts about the efficiency of the programme's goal of assisting farmers boost agricultural output.

Chapter 4: Block Farming and the Environment

Introduction

From the previous chapters, it is evident that the government of Lesotho has continued to encourage the execution of block farming due to its various benefits towards improving livelihoods and enhancing food security. Nonetheless, this agricultural approach has had profound implications on the environment. Even though block farming promised improved yields and resource optimization, its environmental effects, which range from changes in soil health and biodiversity to difficulties with water management, as well as the use of agrochemicals, are crucial in determining the sustainability of agricultural practices in the future. Comprehending these implications is important for reducing potential risks and promoting environmentally conscious agricultural practices. In this regard, this chapter discusses the impact of block farming on the environment in Mokema and Koro-Koro between 2006 and 2018.

The Environmental implication of Block Farming

Block farming influenced resource management and soil health through several interconnected mechanisms. Consolidating multiple farms into a contiguous block posed a risk of soil erosion. According to the block farming coordinators, soil erosion was among the major effects associated with block farming. This was mainly due to the fact that block farming involved intensive cultivation practices, and this led to increased soil erosion. Relevant evidence suggested that soil erosion was also intensified by the constant use of large machinery, including tractors, which use heavy disc plough and, as one interviewee pointed out, “Tractors left soil denser and at risk of being easily blown away by heavy rainfalls because their tillage was deeper

than that of the traditional ploughs.”²¹⁴ Therefore, tillage erosion often occurred when tractors repeatedly tilled soil, leading to soil being dislodged and easily splashed away by wind and rainfalls.

Other potential threats that resulted from intensive cultivation practices included compaction and nutrient depletion.²¹⁵ Compaction reduced soil porosity, thus decreasing the ability of soil to hold in moisture. Block farming was believed to result in the depletion of nutrients due to the fact that this agricultural approach involved repeated planting of one type of crop, therefore, this uniformity of cropping patterns in large continuous areas had the potential to deplete certain nutrients that the crop utilizes to grow, from the soil. The soil was likely to lose its fertility if appropriate crop rotation or soil management techniques were not engaged.²¹⁶ Such monoculture practices further enabled the build-up of pests and diseases that targeted those crops,²¹⁷ thereby necessitating the use of chemicals, such as pesticides, to control such diseases. Block farmers from the two study areas admitted to have witnessed the use of fertilizers in the block farms, which they were told that it enhanced soil fertility.

Block farming significantly impacted biodiversity and habitat conservation. Activities of block farming resulted in changes in species composition.²¹⁸ Planting the same specific crop type altered the composition of local species. This was because the number of animals that depended on the planted crop, perhaps for food and/or habitat, was likely to increase, while other animal

²¹⁴ Unidentified informants, Interview by Likeleli Matela, 27 April 2024.

²¹⁵ Paul F. Donald, “Biodiversity Impacts of Some Agricultural Commodity Production Systems” *Conservation Biology*, 18, no.1 (2004) available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3589112> [accessed on 29 June 2024].

²¹⁶ Andres Hjort af Ornas and M. A. Mohamed Salih, “Environmental Stress and Security in Africa” *Ecology and Politics*, (Sweden: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1989) p.247.

²¹⁷ Donald, “Biodiversity Impacts of Some Agricultural Commodity Production Systems”

²¹⁸ Donald, “Biodiversity Impacts of Some Agricultural Commodity Production Systems”

species that did not favour such crop may have vacated the area. In some extreme cases, some animals may have left and found habitat in other favourable areas, thereby leading to their extinction in the former areas.²¹⁹ This loss of biodiversity in turn disrupted ecosystems services. Essential functions like pollination, water purification, and soil health management are provided by natural ecosystems,²²⁰ therefore it is evident that changes in the species composition affected such services. In the end, not only did this affect ecosystem health, but also impacted agricultural productivity. For instance, in Mokema, it was reported that in the 2016/2017 agricultural year, maize production was significantly affected by the porcupines that had consumed corn before it was harvested.²²¹ Moreover, farmers asserted that even though maize growing was replaced with wheat production, porcupines still roamed the place, and they continued to feed on many other crops. Additionally, continuous planting of the same crop had the potential to minimize ecosystems as only certain plants and animals could survive the atmospheric conditions created by such crops. In this respect, block farming disrupted natural habitats and migration patterns of wildlife, leading to habitat loss and fragmentation.²²² Resultantly, this has had cascading effects on local biodiversity and ecosystem functioning.

Block farming also brought changes in water usage and pollution. In some cases, large-scale block farming made use of significant irrigation facilities which were often extracted from rivers and lakes. Excessive water extraction for irrigation exposed local water sources to depletion and potentially led to conflicts over water resources. Such activities could also cause challenges in

²¹⁹ Akinagum Fidelis Esenjor, "A Community-based Conservation Programme for the Management and Conservation of Land Resources in Lesotho" (University of Free State, 2004).

²²⁰ Donald, "Biodiversity Impacts of Some Agricultural Commodity Production Systems"

²²¹ Unidentified informants, Interview by Likeleli Matela, 27 April 2024.

²²² Ornas and Salih, "Environmental Stress and Security in Africa" p.107

water management, such as scarcity and negatively affect ecosystems.²²³ Moreover, the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides in block farming often resulted in water and soil contamination. Large-scale monoculture farming left soil dense and vulnerable to erosion. When topsoil erodes, it carries sediments, nutrients, and pollutants into rivers and streams.²²⁴ This affected aquatic ecosystems. Such water pollution not only affected marine life, it also affected animals that drank from polluted water bodies, and in turn posed health risks for nearby communities, as such may consume animals that might have been affected. Culturally, cow meat was not thrown away even if the cause of death was not known; therefore this was risky to the health of those who consumed it.²²⁵ Due to the rural nature of Mokema and Koro-Koro, this practice was still prevalent in the two areas.

Among the environmental effects of block farming identified was also the issue of greenhouse gas emission. Farming activities in block farming promoted the use of heavy machinery. Tractors and harvesters were some of the major equipment frequently used in block farming. Such machinery consumed fossil fuels when performing activities such as planting, cultivating and harvesting. When fossil fuels are burned, greenhouse gases are released into the atmosphere, including carbon dioxide.²²⁶ The emission of other gases depends on the type of fuel used and farming methods, and these include nitrous oxide and methane.²²⁷ Furthermore, it was also

²²³ Patrick, Gwimbi “Climate-Smart Agriculture in Lesotho: Initiatives and Perspectives” in *Milestones in Green Transition and Climate Compatible Development in Eastern and Southern Africa*, no.37 (OSSEREA: Ethiopis, 2015) p. 3

²²⁴ Kate B. Showers, “Soil Erosion in the Kingdom of Lesotho and Development of Historical Environmental Impact Assessment” *Ecological Applications*, 6, no.2 (1996) available at <https://doi.org/10.2307/2269399> [accessed on 02 July 2024].

²²⁵ A. Sekese, “Mekhoa le Maele a Basotho” (Morija, Lesotho: Morija Sesotho Book Depot, 1907) p.58

²²⁶ Mphethe Isaac, Tongwane and Mokhele Edmond, Moeletsi, “A Review of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from the Agriculture Sector in Africa” *Agricultural Systems*, no.166 (2018) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agsy.2018.08.011> [accessed 02 July 2024]

²²⁷ Tongwane, and Moeletsi, “A Review of Greenhouse Gas Emissions”

asserted that the transportation of crops and other agricultural inputs over long distances also added to carbon emissions.²²⁸ Farmers from Koro-Koro and Mokema admitted that they were aware of the environmental impact associated with the use of heavy agricultural machinery; however, many were of the view that the use of such machinery should not be stopped on the account of its environmental effects. Farmers argued that such machinery has been frequently used in large-scale farming in South African farms, as such, even if the use of such machinery was to be abandoned in Lesotho, the impact of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere would still be felt in Lesotho, while the country would also continue to lose money on food imports from South Africa.²²⁹

Research findings suggested that reliance on chemical insecticides further degraded soil quality. Since block farming in the study areas aimed to achieve increased agricultural yield, the programme often depended heavily on the use of artificial fertilizers and insecticides to maintain crop yields. The excessive use of these chemicals could have led to soil and water pollution, thereby harming local ecosystems and wildlife.²³⁰ Nonetheless, the block farming coordinator in Koro-Koro stated that to reduce heavy reliance on chemical inputs such as insecticides and fertilizers, soil testing was performed, and this helped to determine the type of crop that could be grown with minimized use of chemical inputs.²³¹ This proved that even though block farming negatively impacted on the environment, there were practices within the programme, which acted as mitigation.

²²⁸ Tongwane, and Moeletsi, "A Review of Greenhouse Gas Emissions"

²²⁹ Unidentified informants, Interview by Likeleli Matela, 27 April 2024.

²³⁰ P.S Hooda, A. C. Edwards and H. Anderson and A. Miller, "A Review of Water Quality Concerns in Livestock Farming Areas" *Science of the Total Environment*, 250, no. 1- 3 (2000) available at [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0048-9697\(00\)00373-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0048-9697(00)00373-9) [accessed on 19 April 2024].

²³¹ Unidentified informants, Interview by Likeleli Matela, 27 April 2024.

Relevant evidence showed that block farming employed farming methods that were climate resilience. The block farming coordinator in Mokema put forth that this farming approach relied on seeds that could withstand extreme weather conditions.²³² According to the World Bank, Lesotho has been highly vulnerable to drought, and high temperatures including heat waves, floods, hail and frost.²³³ Reliance on improved quality seeds allowed crops to withstand such weather conditions, and this was revealed in increased yields. Indeed, in a focus group discussion with farmers, farmers admitted that agricultural productivity was increased during block farming.

Block farming also encouraged crop rotation, thus protecting biodiversity to some extent. During the early years of the programme, its focus was on wheat growing. Nevertheless, it was discovered that block farming in Mokema was structured in a way that allowed for the seasonal rotation of crops. After harvesting winter wheat, soil preparations for maize growing were then begun, asserted one farmer in Mokema.²³⁴ One government official from the Ministry of Agriculture, Nutrition and Food Security emphasized that following a planned sequence of crop rotation helped maintain soil fertility and reduce pest and disease build, as crops differ in their nutrient requirements and how they interact with soil microorganisms.²³⁵ This implied that the nutrients that maize required may not have been the same as those needed by wheat, resultantly, the crop rotation prevented nutrition depletion, thus enhanced soil fertility.

Even though this dissertation focused on the environmental impact of block farming, it also delineated on the socio-economic effects. Research findings revealed that even though farmers

²³² Coordinator, Interview by Likeleli Matela, 27 April 2024.

²³³ Gwimbi "Climate-Smart Agriculture in Lesotho: Initiatives and Perspectives" p.7

²³⁴ Unidentified Informant, Interview by Likeleli Matela, 30 April 2024

²³⁵ Coordinator, Interview by Likeleli Matela, 27 April 2024

were involved in this government-sponsored block farming, little to no knowledge about the potential threats associated with the functioning of this initiative were made aware to the farmers. Some farmers demonstrated that, had they been provided a platform to voice their opinions about this initiative, they would have put forth the dangers of using fertilizers, where they emphasized that they often use the remains of maize plants to feed their cattle and use as firewood. Therefore, they brought forth that smoke from such plant remains often imposed health issues to some who might be exposed to it for some time. Speaking in a focus group discussion, one farmer asserted after the researcher asked if they were aware of the potential risks of using artificial fertilizers and other inputs like insecticides:

The government official who firstly introduced this imitative to us informed us about how this system would function. A public gathering (*pitso*) was called by the chief where the entry requirements and how the produce would be shared after harvest. However, we were never told about the possible damage that the use of some chemical inputs would impose on the surrounding. Also, the government did not make efforts to hear our views on how we can go on about this initiative. Had the government maybe held a public gathering to hear our thoughts, we would have suggested that other crops such as beans and potatoes. We would have also gathered animal manure to be use together with the store-bought fertilizers. This would have helped reduce the amount of scientific fertilizer used.²³⁶

Conclusion

In summary, while block farming boosted agricultural productivity in the short term, its practices and activities led to significant environmental risks over time. Biodiversity loss, soil degradation, water resource depletion, use of chemical inputs, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from the negative effects block farming impose on the environment, and in turn can also impact negatively towards achieving food security.

²³⁶ Interview with Farmers, Mokema, 30 May 2024

Chapter 5: Conclusions

This dissertation has traced the origins of block farming in Lesotho since its initial introduction in 1976. It has given a background on the state of agriculture, as well as the factors that eventually led to the implementation of the programme. Chapter 2 of the study revealed that political unrest was one of the leading reasons that had ultimately led to the birth of the first ever, direct government participation in agriculture, block farming. Leabua, the first Prime Minister of independent Lesotho had narrowly won the elections for he had to await the bye-elections after failing to win in his own constituency. It has been discussed that Leabua was not at ease due to a huge number of the opposing party's (BCP) majority in government. Therefore, he put in place, numerous development strategies, which many scholars viewed as a cover-up for strengthening his political base. Among such development strategies included a share-cropping approach whose aim was supposedly to boost agricultural productivity. Therefore, chapter 2 has showed that the implementation of block farming was just a way of pushing Leabua's political agenda.

Furthermore, as chapter 2 outlined the modifications this share-cropping approach underwent over the period between 1976 and 2018, the socio-economic and environmental implications associated with these modifications were covered. The chapter has also assessed different regimes since independence, from Leabua's government which many scholars have regarded as a dictatorship regime, the paramilitary government and finally the move to democracy. This assessment has thus resulted in the conclusion that the type of government played a role in determining the areas as well as who should be considered for the programme. Chapter 2 also showed how the programme, in all the three modifications, functioned. It revealed the roles that were expected of each concerned party, inclusive of the sharing ratio. This chapter further

demonstrated how the government enhanced agricultural productivity through block farming by sharing resources and providing government support.

Chapter 3 focussed on the contribution of block farming towards food security in Mokema and Koro-Koro. It displayed that while block farming has contributed increased food production and improved livelihoods for some farmers, it faced significant challenges that limited its effectiveness in reducing food insecurity. Some key findings under this chapter highlighted that despite the introduction of block farming, most farmers still found it necessary to purchase foodstuffs as they claimed that their share of produce was not enough to sustain them until the next harvesting season. In a nutshell, chapter 3 demonstrated that even though block farming has had some positive impact, it has not been sufficient to comprehensively address food security in the country.

Implications of block farming on the environment have been covered in chapter 4. Chapter 4 dwelled more on the relationship between block farming and the environment, validating that block farming imposed both negative and positive effects on the environment. On the positive contributions, the block farming coordinators put forth that this alternative enhanced land management practices, potentially reducing soil erosion and improving soil fertility by employing fertilizers, as well as by testing soil sample to determine the best suitable crop to be planted. However, it was also revealed in this chapter that planting the same type of crop for prolonged periods brought changes to biodiversity. Resultantly, although mainly focusing on the environmental effects, this thesis has also delineated on the socio-economic factors which had resulted from the implementation of block farming.

This thesis has sought to fill a narrow gap in the historical studies of block farming in Lesotho, which has risen when scholars failed to record the environmental implications of this agricultural system as well as the opinions of the hosting communities in the country. This thesis has, therefore, gathered a vast majority of the hosting communities' views about block farming, its operations and long term effects. It has gone beyond the government's perspective and the public interpretations that have viewed the programme as *ahlama-u-je*. However, this thesis has demonstrated many had agreed to get into this share-cropping system without complete knowledge of the programme.

This thesis found it necessary for the government to engage what is known as the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) which is an effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management. IPM takes into consideration, the life cycles of pests and their interaction with the environment. Moreover, this would call for further research on how the combination of organic and inorganic agricultural practices could be engaged to try to boost agricultural productivity, while enhancing environmental sustainability.

The researcher thus found it necessary for the government to educate farmers about the importance of preserving the environment. This conclusion arose after the realization that what most small holder farmers were interested in was to have their fields under cultivation, with better yields. However, such farmers unknowingly ignored the environmental and socio-economic impact of such farming activities on the sustainability of the environment. Furthermore, the government should also look into diversifying crops and livestock production

so that the failure of one crop could be spread over other crops. This could be done taking into consideration the concepts of crop rotation and inter-cropping. Admittedly, the researcher learnt from the field, that most farmers had an idea of how crop rotation and inter-cropping work, from the famous application of the Machobane Farming System (MFS). While Mokema and Koro-Koro had not experienced the practice of the MFS over the past numerous years, oral history could help shed light into the benefits and shortfalls of this farming system. Oral history could also come in handy in undertaking further research on how the combination of non-organic agricultural practices (such as those employed under the MFS) and organic practices could be used to boost agricultural productivity.

References

- Aerni-Flessner, J. "Development, Politics, and the Centralization of State Power in Lesotho, 1960-75" *The Journal of African History*, 55:3 (Cambridge University Press, 2014).
- Creswell, J. W. 'Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative research' (4th Ed.) (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill, 2012).
- Donkoh, A.S., Eliasu, A. Setsoafia, E. D. and Ansa, I. G. K. "Participation and output effect of a Block Farm Credit Programme in selected districts of Northern Ghana" Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University for Development Studies (Tamale, Ghana, 2006).
- Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office, 'Lesotho Food and Nutrition Policy' (Maseru: Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office, 2016).
- Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office, "Lesotho Food and Nutrition Policy (LFNP)" (Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office: Maseru, 2016).
- Government of Lesotho and BOS "2009/2010 Lesotho Agricultural Census Volume V: Technical Report" (Maseru, Lesotho, 2010).
- Government of Lesotho, "Second Five Year Development Plan, (1975/76 – 1979/80)" (Maseru: Central Planning Development Office, 1975).
- Hermes Niels and Schilder Ard, Setting Priorities: The IMF and World Bank and Structural Adjustment Programmes in Public Priority Setting: Rules and Cost. Eds P.B. Aarts, K., Steenge (Dordrecht, Springer, 1997) p.40.
- Hjort af Ornas Andres and Mohamed Salih M. A, "Environmental Stress and Security in Africa" Ecology and Politics, (Sweden: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1989) p.247.
- Julius, O. K. "Impact of Block Farming on Livelihood of Farmers in the Eastern Region of Ghana: A Case Study of Block Farmers in the Kwahu West Municipality and Kwahu South District"

Mabitsi, M. Motsamai, “Programmes to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Lesotho” (Master’s Report, Washington State University, 1984), p.33.

Machobane Farming system

Maree, K. ‘First Steps in Research’ (Pretoria, South Africa: Van Schaik, 2007)

Martinez, C. S. Feddersen, M. and Speicher, A. “Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Fresh Look on Agricultural Mechanization” The German Development Institute (2016).

Mashinini, I. V. “Sustainable Rural Development in Lesotho” (PhD Thesis, University of Orange Free State, South Africa, 2000) p.144

Mohlahatsa, T. The Role of Agricultural Support on the Livelihoods of Smallholder Maize Farmers in Lesotho: Asset Utilization, Productivity and Perceptions. (Rhodes University, 2018).

Mokitimi, N. R. “Economic Analysis of Crop Production in Lesotho: A Household-Based Programming Approach” (Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, University of Natal, 1995) p.28

Mushi, A.S. and Ngaruko, D.D. “Determinants of Financial Sustainability of Small Holder Sugarcane Farming Systems in Tanzania” *African Journal of Economic Review* III, no. 2, (2015).

Mutenga, C. R. “Outgrowers and Livelihoods: The Case of Magobbo Smallholder Block Farming in Mazabuka District in Zambia” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 3, no. 3 (Taylor and Francis Group: UK, 2017).

Paul F. Donald, “Biodiversity Impacts of Some Agricultural Commodity Production Systems” *Conservation Biology*, 18, no.1 (2004) available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3589112> [accessed on 29 June 2024].

Pule, N. V. “Politics since Independence” in Essays on Aspects of the Political Economy of Lesotho:1500-2000, edited by D.F. Ellenberger, (Moriya, Lesotho: Morija Museum and Archives,)

Rants’o, A. T. and Seboka, M. “Agriculture and Food Security in Lesotho: Government Sponsored Block Farming Programme in the Berea, Leribe and Maseru Districts” *Cogent Food*

and Agriculture, 5, no.1 (2019) available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311932.2019.01657300> [accessed on 23 February 2023].

Ratii, L. Motselisi, “The Welfare Impact of the Removal of Input Subsidies for Crop Production in Lesotho” (Master of Science Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2016) p.45.

Seboka, M. J. “The Role of Block Farming in Assuring Food Security in Lesotho: The Case of Berea, Leribe and Maseru Districts” Master’s Thesis, National University of Lesotho, 2018.

Sekese, A. “Mekhoa le Maele a Basotho” (Moriya, Lesotho: Morija Sesotho Book Depot, 1907)

Simon Baynham and Greg Mills, “Lesotho: between Dependence and Destabilisation” *The World Today*, 43, no.3 (Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1987).

Sixishe, Tšepo, Desmond, But Give Him an Army Too: Leabua Jonathan a Biography, (Maseru: Mokorotlo Publications, 1984).

Thabane, M. “Fragment of an Oral History of Opposition to the 1986 Paramilitary Overthrow of Chief Leabua Jonathan’s Government” *Oral History Journal of South Africa*, 7:1 (Roma: National University of Lesotho, 2019).

Turner, S. D. “Livelihoods and Sharing: Trends in a Lesotho village, 1976–2004” *Research Report Paper no. 22* (Cape Town, South Africa, University of the Western Cape, 2005) pp. 42-58.

Turner, S. D. “Promoting Food Security in Lesotho: Issues and Options” (Priority Support Programme, Lesotho, 2009).

Turner, S.D. “Promoting Food Security in Lesotho: Issues and Options” (Priority Support Programme, Lesotho, 2019)

United Nations General Assembly, “The list of 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 Targets” available at <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/> [accessed on 23 February 2023].

Oral Interviews

Coordinator, 59, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Koro-Koro, Maseru, 22 April 2024.
Coordinator, 64, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Mokema, 23 March 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 41, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Mokema, 23 March 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 32, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Mokema, 23 March 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 45, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Mokema, 23 March 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 50, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Mokema, 27 April 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 49, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Mokema, 27 April 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 45, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Mokema, 27 April 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 44, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Mokema, 27 April 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 38, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Mokema, 30 May 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 61, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Mokema, 30 May 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 43, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Koro-Koro, 23 March 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 44, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Koro- Koro, 22 April 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 44, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Koro- Koro, 27 April 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 52, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Koro-Koro, 30 May 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 50, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Koro-Koro, 30 May 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 55, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Koro-Koro, 30 May 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 49, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Koro-Koro, 30 May 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 41, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Koro-Koro, 30 May 2024.
Unidentified Informant, 57, Interview by Likeleli Matela, Koro-Koro, 30 May 2024.