

Rivers that become Reservoirs:
An Ethnography of Water Commodification in Lesotho

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Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AnSA	Anthropology Association of South Africa
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHAL	Christian Health Association of Lesotho
CSIR	Council of Scientific and Industrial Research
DF	Development Fund
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IFR	Instream Flow Releases
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LHDA	Lesotho Highlands Development Authority
LHWP	Lesotho Highlands Water Project
LHRS	Lesotho Highlands Rural Supply
LMS	Lesotho Meteorological Services
LTDC	Lesotho Tourism Development Centre
LTV	Lesotho Television
MCC	Maseru City Council
MCM	Million Cubic Metres
NES	National Environment Secretariat
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SADC	Southern African Development Community

SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TRC	Transformation Resource Centre
UN	United Nations
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WASCO	Water and Sewerage Company
WCD	World Commission on Dams
WHO	World Health Organization

Abstract

Through exploring the relationship of people to water and how that relationship changes when water becomes a commodity, this study addresses the devaluation of the relationship of people and water in the environment they live in and contrasts the devaluation with the value attributed to commodified water by neoliberal economic policy. Where the relationships between people and water are financialised, commodification sets people and water apart in planning and policies as if they are separate entities. Focusing on the effects of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project in the commodification of water in Lesotho, this study contrasts life lived with free-flowing water and with commodified water. Through ethnographic data collected over 18 months in three villages around the Katse Dam and the Mohale Dam, the dissertation demonstrates that development agencies do not take into consideration the human-nonhuman relationship that exist between communities and their environment. The study demonstrates that economic development through the damming of rivers has rendered people both ecologically and economically precarious. Drawing from these findings, the study proposes that development based on the extraction of natural resources and the assumption that people and environment are separate, should be replaced with an integrated theory of habitability and wellbeing that includes, in its social theory, the relationships of people with soil and water. The thesis was guided by multispecies, political ecology and economic anthropology theories.

Keywords: *Lesotho, Rivers, Development, Water Commodification, Katse Dam, Mohale Dam*

Preface

This research was inspired by my own life. My two lives: the life I knew, and then the life I was forced to know. The life I was forced to know was professed to give me a better life, but instead I experienced precariousness, in which my family and I were battered, scorched, and withered. As a study, the research presented here is an account of embodiment of environment as an identifier, of hope, of belonging and alienation. It is account of being on the wrong side of development and an account of birth, death, and rebirth, a study of policy contra the people, and a study of the struggle that pre-empt who stands to win in this neoliberal era we find ourselves in. With this research I hope to convey narratives of beliefs and resilience, documenting accounts of rural souls in an urban setting.

My own experience of resettlement was one of loss and pain. This dissertation documents the stories of others who have shared the same plight behind and below the great walls of Katse and Mohale dams, which now stand proud, chanting their victory over the network of rivers and fields that once adorned the topography of life in the Thaba-Tseka and Ha Mohale areas. This is also an account of Nthati, Maliehe, Matia, Molefi, Sabata, Thulare, and thousands of others whose homes are covered by the captured waters of the Katse and Mohale dams, alongside which their grazing lands have been turned into offices and residential areas for officers of the project. The graveyards of their ancestors are walked over daily because where graves once lay, now tourist centres are sprawled.

This is an account of those whose relationships were dismantled because profit and policies took precedence, of the rivers Bokong, Maliba-Mats'o, Senqu, and Senqunyane that were dammed in the construction of Phase I of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project when the Katse and Mohale dams were built. It is a narrative of *lesoko* (alepidea amatymbica), *sehalahala* (eriocephalus), *lekhala le le putsoa* (asphodeloideae), plants that were lost when the Earth's surface was scraped, and the ones that are left are in the botanical garden with an entry fee. Their direct relationship with the communities has been exchanged for tunnels and dams and botanical gardens where there is a 'look but do not touch' approach. It is an account of the village of Mokhotlong, which lacks water for months, yet Polihali dam is being constructed right at the heart of this district. It is an account of the people in Mohale who travel long distances to get water, yet there in their backyard stands 'the first rock-fill dam', imprisoning the water they once freely accessed.

Lesotho's acceptance of neoliberalism has declared war on its people, forcing so many out of their homes, and sending them to 'camps' where life is dictated by policy. Their houses are different from those of host communities, setting them apart. They question their own identity because their roots are not where the bodies of family and friends are buried. This study offers an account of the changed relationship of water and soil and multiple species, that in the writing, voices local knowledge of what it means to make a life amid disrupted earthly relations. It is an account of water, which knows itself as a unifier, but has found itself as a cause of conflict. It is an account of free-flowing water that is no longer free nor flowing.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Lesotho Highlands Water Project

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) is the largest project in Lesotho in terms of the size of land-use, the quantity of money invested, and the number of people affected. The LHWP, I will argue, changed not only the natural landscape of Lesotho, but also the social landscape. In past years, Lesotho was counted among countries which had an abundance of water. This led to studies by the World Bank and South Africa to investigate how Lesotho could meet South Africa's water needs (Thayer Scudder, 1995). Lesotho is situated within South Africa, making it the only country in the world that it totally landlocked by one country. Furthermore, Lesotho is the only country in the world to sit entirely above 1000 meters of elevation.

These geographic abnormalities have played major role in the commodification of Lesotho's water to South Africa. They also continue to influence not only the economy but also the politics, migration and diplomatic relations of Lesotho and South Africa. Scudder (1995) and M. Molaoa (2007) note that the engineering studies and negotiations for the LHWP date back at least to the 1950s and took more than 30 years to conclude. Some of the reasons for the lengthy process include the refusal by the government of then-Prime Minister Leabua Jonothane, to sell water; and the political unrest in South Africa in the 1980s and early 1990s (Scudder 1995).

In October 1986, the LHWP treaty was signed between the governments of Lesotho and South Africa. Lesotho was represented by General Thaabe Letsie who was of the military regime that had ousted the democratic government in May 1986, allegedly with the help of the South African army (Moeletsi oa Basotho, 1988) despite official denials of that claim. South Africa was represented by Mr Pik Botha, who was Minister of Foreign Affairs for many years of the apartheid regime. While speaking at the Leabua Jonothane Memorial Lecture in Maseru October 2018, Mantahli Jonothane, the wife to the late Leabua Jonothane, who was Prime Minister of Lesotho from 1965 to 1986, made the case that these talks and studies took a long time because "Dr Leabua was refusing to sign off Lesotho water rights to South Africa ... which lead to the infamous coup d'état of '86 ...". She noted: "My husband was a firm believer that you cannot sell your water *and* drink it ...". These thoughts are also widely shared among many men and women living in rural Lesotho, some of whom I interacted with for a period of 18 months during field research.

The LHWP was “a feat of engineering excellence; the real achievement being to use gravity tunnels and dams to divert the river from its natural flow ... to the Gauteng province” according to anthropologist Leslie Wentworth who worked closely with Thayer Scudder on dams and development in Lesotho (Wentworth 2013:1). LHWP is a billion-dollar project, consisting of a series of large dams that trap water in deep mountain valleys, then transport it by tunnel and canal to South Africa’s arid industrial and commercial heartland. The World Bank in its Project Information Document (PID) stated that the project was “world-class in terms of design ... meeting targets in bulk supply of water as well as electricity generation for sale to LEC” (World Bank 2012: 26). The project boasts two completed dams: the Katse and the Mohale, which are the focus of this study. Construction of the Katse Dam started in 1991, as the first phase (Phase IA) of the project. The Katse is situated in the rural district of Thaba-Tseka, which is about 200 kilometres out of the capital city of Maseru. Approximately 27 000 people were resettled, and four major rivers were dammed including the Bokong and the Maliba-Mats’o. It required “2 800 ha of rangeland and about 1 504 ha of arable land” (LHWP, 2001) for this phase alone. The dam was completed in 1997, with transfer of water to South Africa commencing in 1998.



Figure 1 Aerial picture of Katse Dam. Source: LHDA, 2016

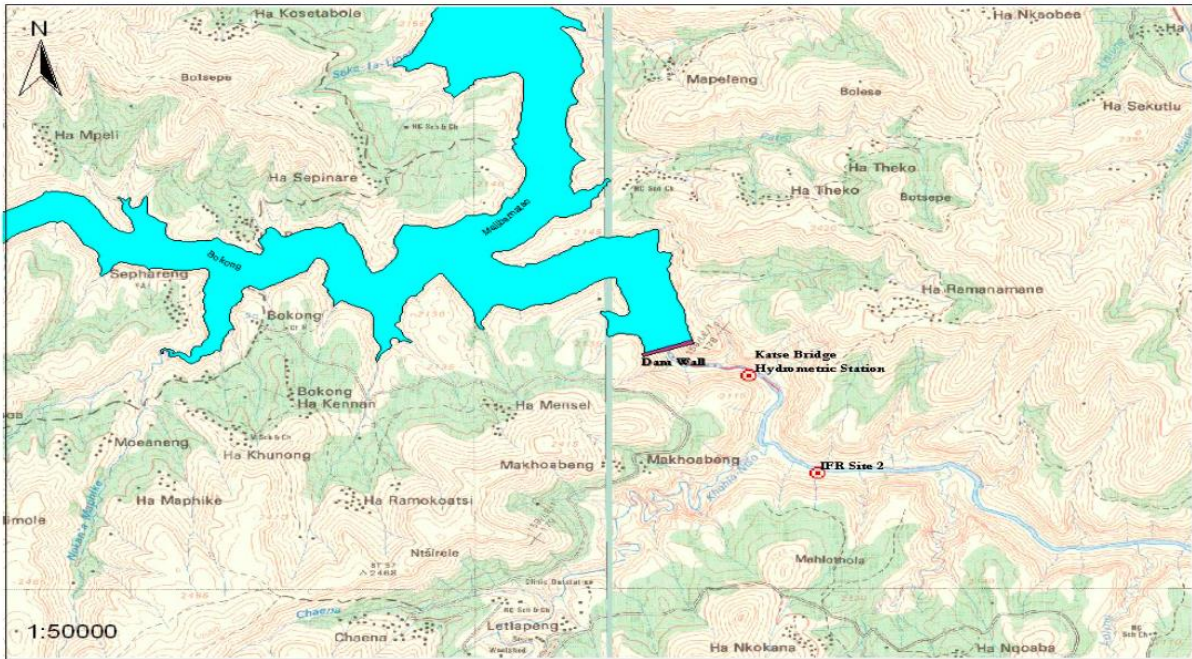


Figure 2 A map showing Katse dam, villages affected, and two main rivers (Bokong and MalibaMatso) affected. Source: LHDA, 2005.

The Mohale Dam is constructed on the Senqunyane River, on the outskirts of Maseru, some 100 kilometres from the city. In the construction of this dam, “an entire mountain was crushed and moved” to build up the dam wall. More land, rivers and houses were sacrificed for this project. Its main purpose is to be a reservoir for the Katse Dam, by trapping water from the south of the country, then sending it to Katse whenever water levels drop. Mohale has been transporting water to Katse since 2004. As was the case for the construction of the Katse, thousands of people were forced to move to make way for this dam too (Moeketsi Matli, 2005). For this mega project to take off not only were people resettled but they had to give up their grazing lands, fields, homes, and access to natural resources including rivers. The social and environmental impacts assessment carried out for the Phase I of the project is believed to have been tainted by politicians and corruption (World Bank, 2012) leading to the failure of the project in respect of the social and environmental issues. For example, the Chief Executive Officer at the time, Mr Masopha Sole, is alleged to have received over US \$ 2 million in bribes to allocate contracts to companies which would be involved in the project (State versus Sole and Others, CRI/T/111/99). These companies neither cared for the needs of people or the environment. Resettlement was given little thought as demonstrated by grievances aired by community members in the published works of multiple researchers (Scudder 2005; Thamae and Pottinger 2006; Molaoa 2007). Furthermore, fertile soil is covered with water, endangered

plant species died, and major rivers were turned into reservoirs. Many people relied on soil for food for their households and to exchange food for other services.



Figure 3 Aerial picture of the Mohale Dam. Source: LHDA 2016

Lesotho was handicapped in the birth and growth of LHWP in past decades. On her own, Lesotho could not autonomously carry out key decisions, because the geographical position of the country compromised the socio-economic and political decisions the Kingdom could make. Lesotho is totally landlocked by South Africa, which also has a larger economy, military force, and population, factors which instantiate Lesotho's reliance on South Africa for almost everything and in turn, becoming a *de facto* colony of South Africa. These factors, among others, I believe, led to the weak argument that Lesotho made at the time in response to the proposal that the waters of Senqu river of Lesotho could be diverted to Johannesburg, South Africa to meet the growing needs of this industrial city (Scudder, 1995), in exchange for water royalties. The claim was that the project would create employment opportunities for Basotho, and it would contribute to the overall economic development of the country, as defined by World Bank criteria focusing on increasing gross domestic product (GDP) without sufficient regard to the ecological consequences of extractivism.

1.2 Challenges of LHWP

There are many challenges arising from the project, principal among which is that Lesotho is exporting itself into a drought. While for many years Lesotho was believed to have abundant water, the country has also experienced long droughts, which left many rivers dry. According to Lesotho Meteorological Services (2013), rainfall patterns have decreased with over 29.6% since 2006. In the past, snow had contributed to increased water in rivers but as of 2017, there has been a sharp decrease in snowfall (LMS, 2013). Droughts also play a role, as they reduce soil biota and root matter, with the result that when they do come, rains sweep away soil particles which could retain moisture for longer. On top of that, with population growth, national water demands have increased. In April 1986, the national census estimated the population of Lesotho to be 1.5 million and in 2019 the Bureau of Statistics estimated the population to be 2.2 million (Bureau of Statistics, 2019). With such a high percentage population growth over three decades, demands on natural resources, including water, increase. However, natural resources do not increase as the demand increases, leading to some people being deprived of the same resources. With rivers and wells below the dam drying up, those who depended on these water sources are becoming increasingly vulnerable.

In 1986 when the treaty was signed, South Africa was to pay M700 million to Lesotho per annum for an estimated 780 million cubic meters (MCM/ million m³) of water. This billion-dollar project proposed to improve the economic status of Lesotho through Lesotho receiving

royalties for the water diverted to South Africa and by introducing community development projects for those who were directly affected by the project. To date, South Africa has paid over M1 billion in royalties, yet only M3 000 000 (3/1000, or 0,3%) has gone towards social and environmental rehabilitation. Over the same period, M120 million was spent on repayment of the debt which Lesotho incurred to be in the project and the rest of the money is used in LHDA up-keep (Hoag 2017; LHDA, 2018). Economist Kate Raworth (2017) and political anthropologist Jason Hickel (2017) both present evidence that the pursuit of economic growth comes at the expense of the poorer nations and their environment. The same can be observed in this instance where Lesotho and South Africa have signed an agreement which guarantees functioning of factories in South Africa, guaranteeing jobs for South Africans and improvement in her GDP, while Lesotho has to sacrifice soil, water, land and people. South Africa's Vaal River is guaranteed life because water from the Katse Dam is pumped into it, unlike the Maliba-Matšo which is desiccated.

Year	Planned water delivery (Million m³)	Actual delivered water (Million m³)	Amount of royalties paid in Million Maloti (M)¹
2014/ 2015	780	780.1	735,9
2015/2016	780	779.9	736,9
2016/2017	780	794.005	861,8
2017/2018	780	810	942,5
2018/2019	780	777.7	937,5

Table 1 The above table shows waterflow Katse dam to Vaal River in South Africa for the years 2014 to 2019, and the amount of money received per year. Data provided by LHDA.

The table above table shows the monetarised value of water through the Katse from the years 2014 to 2019. The amount of paid to Lesotho has increased over the years, while the amount of water delivered has remained more or less the same. Before celebrating the monetary increase, it is important to note that constant water delivery was attained, at times, by leaving

¹ 1 Loti (plural Maluti) is equal to 1 South African Rand and 16.29 US Dollar, as of September 18, 2020

some communities without water. Due to climate change, Lesotho experienced historic droughts and floods in the years 2014 to 2019 (LMS, 2019) leading to water shortages around the country. However, the treaty did not factor in natural causes like droughts and floods. Instead, the treaty states in Article 7.1 to 7.14 that Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) should find ways of supplying South Africa with water even if it meant diverting rivers. In essence, the target of supplying South Africa with water, in the years 2014-2019, was met at the expense of people living downstream of the Malibamatso and Bokong rivers, as these rivers became reservoirs. This causes an irrevocable rift in the social metabolism, demonstrating the point made by sociologists John B. Foster and Brett Clark (2020) that capitalism, with its private property relations, the closure of the commons, and its financializations, brings disequilibrium to the metabolic interactions between people and their environment.

The selling of water in Lesotho, especially during droughts or floods, indeed causes the metabolic rift between people and water, people and soil and people and other bodies within which water may be found. Professor of Theology at the National University of Lesotho, F. Rakotsoane makes a point that removing an African from his original place to resettle him in a new place breaks the ontological link between him and his ancestral and other beneficial local spirits with whom he has established strong friendly ties. This can expose him to various problems and may upset his well-being (Rakotsoane, 2001). This point speaks not only to the social metabolic rift, but also to the ways in which personhood and subjectivity take form in partnership with the landscapes in which people live. In his famous “I am an African” speech, former South African President, Thabo Mbeki speaks to personhood and social metabolism engulfed in ‘things’ around people, including water. He says:

I am an African.

I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land. ...

The dramatic shapes of the Drakensberg, the soil-coloured waters of the Lekoa, iGqili noThukela, and the sands of the Kgalagadi, have all been panels of the set on the natural stage on which we act out the foolish deeds of the theatre of our day. ...

I owe my being to the Khoi and the San whose desolate souls haunt the great expanses of the beautiful Cape

Some of the rivers which have been dealt a blow by this social rift from earthly metabolism, are listed below in table 2. The MalibaMatšo, Bokong and Senqunyane rivers were some of the

biggest rivers in Lesotho, serving water to over 15 villages per river (Matli, 2005). Not only did access to these rivers change but so did the landscape around the rivers themselves. Some rivers became inundated while others desiccated. With rivers being inundated or desiccated, communities relying on these rivers faced water scarcity. This unintended thirst brought forth by rivers becoming reservoirs, water management brought forth new environmental and social challenges. Chapters three and four discuss in depth these challenges, with chapter three discussing water commodification and chapter four delving on ethnographies of thirst.

Name of river	Dam Affiliation	Role
Maliba-Matso	Katse	Catchment for Katse
Nqoe	‘Muela	Catchment for ‘Muela Hydropower
Seaka	Katse	Tributary
Senqu	Katse	Tributary
Maletsunyane	Katse	Tributary
Bokong	Katse	Tributary
Seshote	Katse	Tributary
Senqunyane	Mohale	Catchment for Mohale
Sehonghong	Mohale	Tributary
Pelaneng	Katse	Catchment for Katse
Lesobeng	Katse	Tributary
Marakabei	Katse	Tributary
Matsoku	Mohale	Weir

Table 2 The list of rivers affected by the construction of Katse, ‘Muela and Mohale Dams, showing different ‘roles’ each river listed above played.

Furthermore, LHWP has been an engine that drove losses incurred at a personal and community level. To make way for Mohale and Katse dams, people had to be resettled. Not only the

humans had to shift but also houses, graves, kraals, and *lithotobolo* (ash heaps). All these structures, especially graves, kraals and ash heaps, form an intricate part of the family structure, which bears a specific meaning for the family and throughout the community. Graves are understood as resting places of ancestors, a place where family members would go to seek solace and guidance. Nonetheless, graves of in Ha Mohale, Pelaneng and Ha Kori were covered with water, while communities which were resettled to Maseru left the graves behind thus families lost access to ancestral connection. The kraal, while normally used to house livestock, it is also a symbol for how wealthy a family is and has a direct bearing on the fertility of fields and vegetable gardens, (Azariele Sekese, 1968). This means that the kraal has a direct bearing to the work ethic of the man in the household, as the kraal and livestock are the responsibility of the man, (Sekese, 1968). Some of the participants in this study shared that, it is believed that if the man in a family has used *muti* (herbs) to protect items, his household will not easily be attacked by evil events, and wealth will be guaranteed for him – in other words, wealth is measured by the kraal being full. An empty kraal is not only an indication of poverty but also of the capacity to counter external forces that may be in play: factors that are both spiritual, and physical in respect of health and wellbeing, as shown in figure 5 below. According to the study conducted by Molaoa (2007) kraals could not be relocated and for communities resettled in Maseru, they could not take their livestock with them because of animal control rules in urban areas. In the end, livelihoods, symbols, meaning and ecologies of wellbeing were lost. Lastly, the importance of an ash heap in families is as intricate as graves. These were also shared widely and causally by the majority of participants in this study, as will be evidenced in the coming chapters. Through oral traditions, I learned that an ash heap is where families bury their stillborn or the umbilical cords of new-born babies. Stillborn are not ancestors but are considered pure because they died before being tainted with sin, therefore they are venerated. All these structures mentioned, and their meaning were swept away when families were relocated to make way for dam constructions. These losses sit side-by-side with the loss of arable land, which has led to food insecurity and associated problems of precarity and ill-health in affected communities. Once abundant water sources, once signed away under the treaty, contributed to localised thirst.



Figure 5 An empty kraal. This, among community members is understood as poverty and or laziness. A social status of a family, especially a man, hinges on how full the kraal is. In the background are the new houses provided by LHDA and the green plastic tanks for collection of water.

Anthropologist Victor Turner defined the properties of symbols as “multivocality, complexity of association, ambiguity, open-endedness, primacy of feeling, and a propensity to ramify into further semantic systems – as connected with their dynamic quality” (Turner, 1975:155). Symbols could therefore trigger social action and can serve to script personal action in the public arena. From Turner’s perspective, “we master the world through signs, ourselves by symbols” (1975:156). It is from symbols that meaning is derived, therefore the meaning attached to environment in the continued socialization which takes place between people and their environment should have been taken into account when infrastructures were constructed or during relocation. Dams are built on lands which belong to people, to grow food, to raise children on, to practice rituals and to be healed from. Yet dams prove to be infrastructures of violence, tearing apart people, changing rhythms of social life and reproducing class divisions. For example, water from the Katse Dam is not accessible for the people in Thaba-Tseka, because it is solely for directing to South Africa. The same water that they once used to rely on for rituals is now off limits. The only means of contact with that water is if one is on a boat. Amita Baviskar, a sociologist and professor of environmental studies in India, writes about the same plight in her country, where the location of dams often disfavoured the poor, whom

“normally have strong ancestral lands and near-absolute dependence on localized natural resources” (Baviskar 2019, 28). Xaxa notes that tearing people away from their ancestral land could feel like a death sentence (Xaxa 2001): a sentiment often expressed by participants in this study. Across the world, over 50 million people were displaced to make way for large dams, with governments citing national development (Baviskar 2019). Instead of the patriotism that these communities were expected to feel, they instead were found feeling like “sacrificial victims on the altar of national development” (Baviskar 2019:32).

“Vomiting women and children hung over the sides of the lorries. Drinking water and water for cleansing was gone long before they reached their destination. This was near nightfall. They emerged exhausted and sick to find themselves in what they regarded as a wilderness ... They struggled to cook and eat. Then they lay listening to the trumpeting of the elephant ... Next day they rose to the task of turning a strange land into a home” (Colson, 1971: 44)

This narration of 6000 resettlers to Lusitu is not different from the many conversations I had with the 89 participants I worked with, or thousands of others whose stories fill the pages of books referenced in this work. From the same group, women who were mostly homemakers, thus stayed home while husbands were at work, took longer to recover than their husbands. What more of the poor who have to move, and could not even afford psychologists? How much more trauma. The governments of Lesotho and South Africa had trampled on their human rights, noted Scudder (2012), many years after he had conducted the initial studies:

“Even researchers such as I risk underestimating the associated trauma until we are reminded again and again by those involved of the difficulties they must face. But ignorance only partially explains why such people’s needs, rights and cultures, including their strong symbolic ties to their land and communities, continue to be ignored” (2012: 20).

The constant humiliation experienced by Nthati and Mpiti, the loss of power experienced by ‘Malejaha, the alienation by experienced by Thulare and many others whose stories fill the pages of this dissertation can be felt in the reflections of those who like Scudder, undertook ethnographic studies, visiting people whose lives that had once been lived along rivers and streams, or with accessible groundwater in lands that gave way to thirst. Their grief cannot be quantified into statistical measures, nor their trauma dissuade governments from damming

rivers. Earlier, I pointed out the emotional connections of people to water are expected to be replaced by economic gain, such that the violence of detaching people from their source of life is normalised. Dams are assumed, in this financialised paradigm, to show how modern a country has become, but the trade-off is in the loss of relationships of life, wellbeing, and habitability.

Collected primary and secondary data available in myriad publications on the LHWP and the lives of affected Basotho underscores the argument that development favours the rich and distributes precarity among the poor. The project was to provide employment for local people from project areas; however, these people were given odd jobs that did not last, while permanent jobs were given to South Africans and international personnel (Scudder 1995, Thamae and Pottinger 2006). The argument by LHWP had been that people from local communities were not skilled enough to hold permanent positions, hence the odd jobs they got. One would think a development project would also offer skills development for those whom the project is intended for. However, what has been evident is that LHWP serves to support capitalist accumulation. The electricity generated at the 'Muela Hydro dam is sold for profit, and the Katse Botanical Garden and Information centre charges fees for people to explore them. The Lejone Fisheries require one to have fishing licenses (which have hefty charges) to fish. Challenges like this one could have easily been avoided by making local communities part of the development project, instead of removing them through policies.

At the crux of this billion-dollar project are thousands of people. Thousands of people whose life histories are not known, even though the precise volume of cement that went into building the dam walls can be accounted for. Through her analogy to a doughnut, economist Kate Raworth (2017) points that if social foundations are neglected by economics, the result is critical human deprivation; if we extract beyond the ecological ceiling, habitability is compromised. Anti-dam movements in Latin America, Asia and Africa are in support of Raworth's assertions through their rigorous attack on developmental policies. These movements criticise capitalist industrialization of nature and advocate for socially just and environmentally sustainable development (Baviskar, 2019).

Socio-ecological problems are therefore seen as "consequences of competing symbolic meanings" (Molaoa, 2007: 83), emanating from lack of consensus by the LHWP in the symbolic meaning of the landscape, leading to the need for renegotiation of the symbolic meaning (O'Brien et al., 2002). This is because the debates around alterations to the physical

environment through construction of large dams, leads to questions such as whose landscape is being altered, exploited or protected (York et al., 2003, Molaoa, 2007). In the process this elevates the issue of symbolic politics when responses to economic needs find their way into the alteration of the biophysical environment. It therefore becomes important to understand groups with vested interests in a particular environment in order to include their landscape in the process of identification of mitigation measures. The World Commission on Dams was formed as a committee of inquiry on how construction of large dams were affecting communities, environments and national development. In their report, they showed that:

“... the perceived injustices in the distribution of the benefits and costs, and the increased concern about the environmental implications indicate that the debates, controversies and conflicts surrounding large dams are not about dams alone. They are part of a wider debate about development, a debate where diverging views on the use of natural resources and public financial resources confront each other” (WCD, 2000: 21).

Barry (2002) shows that the different schools of economic thought are based on particular analyses of a society and its social relations and hierarchies, as well as on the different moral principles and perceptions of human nature and the non-human environment. This is attributable to the dominant position that a particular version of natural resource economics, grounded in capitalist accumulation, has taken in political and economic institutions, shaping biophysical environments to the detriment of ecology and human wellbeing.

1.3 Background

Lesotho is caught up in neoliberal philosophy of politics and statecraft in an attempt to improve its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 1986, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project treaty, aimed at selling water to South Africa, was signed. By taking on this treaty, Lesotho plunged into a neoliberal whirlwind, which included accumulating over \$2 billion debt with the World Bank (World Bank Report, 1997) and adjusting the 1974 Environmental Act to accommodate new environmental changes which would be brought forth by water commodification. The demands made on the environment to improve the GDP are extreme. Rivers are diverted into tunnels, arable land is used for roads construction, and vegetation is scraped off the earth surface to make way for pavements and houses. In their report, the World Bank had asserted that the objective of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project treaty (LHWP) was to “improve Lesotho’s

economy by converting water into export income” (World Bank Report, 1997:3). Other "development projects" to increase GDP further undermine the sovereignty of Lesotho. In 2001, the Sehlabathebe National Park was merged with the Drakensberg Park in South Africa “to increase tourism and GDP” (Lesotho Tourism Development Centre, 2000:14). While no people were forced to move, the park became militarized, thus cutting off community members from accessing the park, and changing the relationship of communities to the regional ecology. In 2019, the wool and mohair trading, which is one of the most common sources of income among Basotho (Sean Maliehe, 2015) was handed to a Chinese company “because they could effectively and efficiently harvest the wool and mohair”.

The commodification of natural resources in Lesotho did not start and end with LHWP as the biggest driver of the philosophy, in the area, that ‘nature is a commodity’. In essence, not only is the natural environment compromised, but people too are compromised, by neoliberal resource economics which extracts to improve the lot of private companies and argues that "trickle down" from increased gross domestic product (GDP) will be to the benefit of all. This economic paradigm has brought forth a technocratic government, in which people and natural resources are available for conquering, extraction and commodification, while “compensation” is the protocol that renders these conquering, extraction and commodification processes acceptable within discourses of rights and equity. Violence against the Earth through extraction and commodification is among the leading causes of climate change, yet because this violence is argued to improve GDP, it is justified as “development” for a “lagging African country” (Ferguson, 1990; Easterly, 2013). In the name of that development, people are displaced, replicating the practices of colonial settlers. The resources that were once the basis of an everyday ecological economy, have been extracted and shipped off to benefit those with financial and diplomatic power, in the same way as during colonial times. While in the global south this is a familiar pattern in respect of countries of the global north, within the context of Lesotho, the version of this relationship that is in play is wholly within the global south, with its neighbour, South Africa.

The work of Walter D. Mignolo on coloniality and modernity cannot go unmentioned in this work because his approach to the world is grounded in the observation that settler colonialism established the idea of mastery over nature, without taking into consideration the rights of the natives/ poor. Modernity is a “European narrative that hides its darker side, ‘coloniality’ ... Coloniality, in other words, is constitutive of modernity, there is no modernity without coloniality” (Mignolo, 2009:39). For Lesotho, to be modern and progressive and part of the

global economy has meant that nature (including rivers that are dammed to meet human water needs be it for consumption or industrial needs) had to be subjected to 'man' (Mandel, 1978). While previous relationships of conquest were based on the quest to civilize Africa, the relationship between Lesotho and South Africa is framed on capitalist relations, where the economically dominant country is requires water to perpetuate its capitalist economy, while making economically precarious the futures of its neighbour. From this perspective, this research work addresses post-colonial-yet-still-colonised Lesotho, addressing the commodification of the water that evaporates from the Indian Ocean and falls when it reaches the mountains of Lesotho to become a commodity sold by the LHWP, affecting communities by transforming the relations of mountains, rivers, animals and people.

The purchase of Lesotho's water is not significantly different from similar resource grabs that became known to historians as the scramble for Africa. In 1952 when the first study on Lesotho's water potential was undertaken, Lesotho had an abundance of water (Molaoa, 2007). At the same time, Lesotho had no factories, the population was less than 800,000, climate change was not a concern and local water demands were few (Bureau of Statistics 2006). However, as its water-scarce neighbour South Africa developed its mines, coal-fired industries and industrial-scale farming, its water deficit became a capital problem. In keeping with the views of neoliberal economists espousing ecological economics (Baker 2010), the water of Lesotho came to be seen as an essential economic resource, a thing to be used, exploited, commercialised and conquered. As of 1998, Lesotho began to sell water to South Africa, initiating the re-colonisation of Lesotho through water – much as South Africa's Cape had been colonised for its water in the 1600s. If one was to trace how South Africa's people were dispersed during the colonial era and compare that to how Basotho in the LHWP areas became dispersed, it would be similar. The difference, however, was that this re-colonisation was sold as 'development' and supported by the World Bank (Ferguson 1990; Scudder 2005), and the end result was a change in traditional systems of land ownership, and ecological relations. Communities affected by the construction of Katse and Mohale Dams and other infrastructures that came with the project were told the projects would make their economy and their lives better, but over time, they found themselves facing new forms of ecological poverty that in turn were translated into financialised poverty.

The LHWP, a development project proposed by Sir Evelyn Baring who was British High Commissioner in Lesotho in the 1950s (www.water-technology.net) was agreed to by Lesotho

based on the claim that it would increase its GDP, provide employment and improve the lives of Basotho. However, many studies including those by Scudder (1995, 2005); Lorre Pottinger and Lenka Thamae (2006), and Molaoa (2007) have demonstrated that on the contrary, the lives of many have been negatively affected by this project. Some of the findings from my study were that resettled communities had lost access to grazing land and fields even though their primary economy and way of life was based on rearing livestock and farming. Moreover, those who depended on natural water sources, like traditional healers, lost connections to such sources. With resettlement across the country, families were dismantled. In his book *The Divide*, economic anthropologist Jason Hickel writes of how developmental interventions “miss the point by not addressing the real problem” (2017:20), making a case that development for Europe generated under-development for Africa, while later Europeans became affirming beacons of hope, setting a standard for Africa. Hickel makes a striking claim that global aid masks the true cause of poverty due to a development delusion (Allen Isaacman and Barbra Isaacman, 2013). For Hickel, the benefits of aid transfers are greatly outweighed by the problems caused by sovereign debt and the linked system of ‘remote control’ power. For instance, during the 1980s and 1990s, the International Monetary Fund helped poor countries finance ballooning debts, but only on the condition that they underwent programmes of so-called ‘structural adjustment’ – selling off public industries, opening up to foreign goods and limiting welfare provision (2017:154). This is backed up by David Graeber, an economic anthropologist who notes that “all modern [developed] nations are built on deficit spending”, (2011:15). For any one country to be developed, it has to have collateral against which the debt will be given. In the case of Lesotho and many other African countries, such collateral becomes natural resources and dispersed families (Murray, 1985).

Through addressing extraction, financial extremism and extinctions risks, this thesis calls for a different form of development - one which will not dominate and appropriate nature and people, and perpetuate binaries of culture and nature, people and environment but rather a form of decolonised development that fosters growth, ecological economies and interdependence. One of the recent ways the international community has tried to rethink development has been through framing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The seventeen SDGs are meant to be guidelines in which the nations of the world could have a more inclusive, sustainable and poverty-free future. However, the challenge with the SDGs, especially for the African continent, is that they do not address the protection of soils, without which no habitable economies are possible. The food availability (zero hunger, SDG 2), reduce climate change

(climate action, SGD 13) and human, animal and plant life (life on land, SDG 15) do not in any way account for soil. It is not possible to talk of water commodification without accounting for soil whose nutrients move with the water into plants and the bodies of all species, then to the atmosphere and back to the soil. Water availability in rivers and streams is controlled by soil texture over which a river flows, therefore soil management can account for a better river flow. Steve Banwart, a critical zone specialist at University of Leeds, who is the director of the Global Food and Environment Institute, attests that soil is a threatened resource just like water because “soil does far more than support farming and forestry. It stores carbon, filters water, transforms nutrients and sustains biodiversity ... and it is literally sealed up as cities pave and roof over” (Banwart 2011: 151).

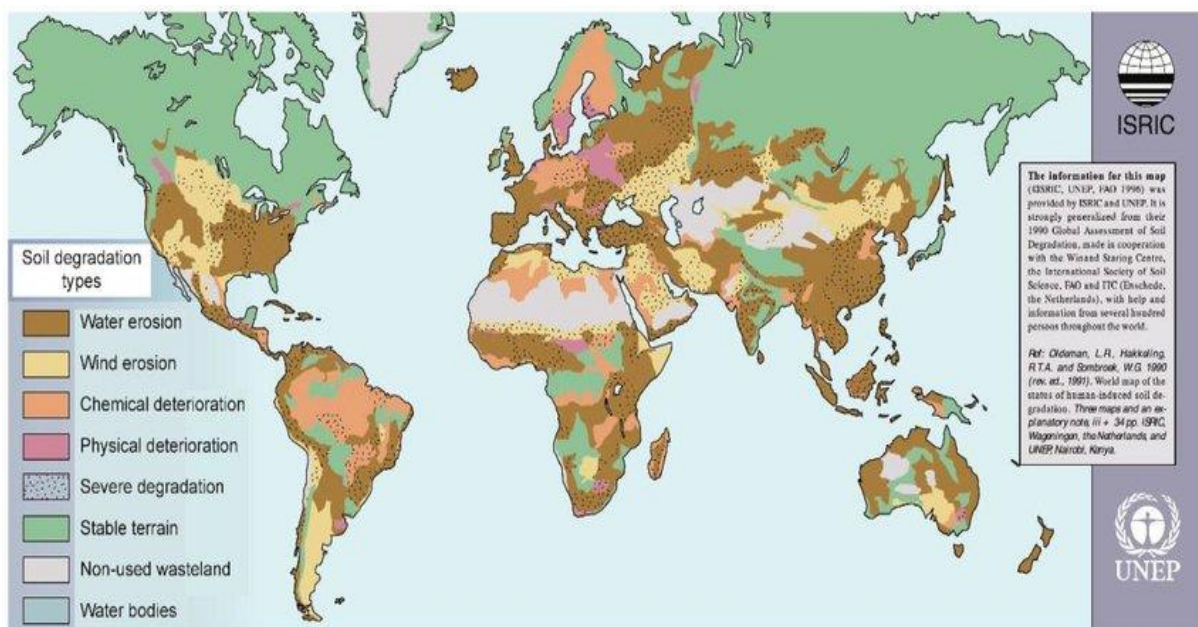


Figure 6 World Map Showing Human Induced Soil Degradation (International Soil Reference and Information Centre, 2017) source (Gauri Shankar Gupta, 2019).

The above map shows how dire the impacts of soil erosion are globally, yet soil is not included in the priority list in the Sustainable Development Goals. The map also shows that Africa, Middle East and South America are hit hardest by soil degradation due to water erosion. These are the same nations that are considered poorer compared to the rest of the world. Poverty and poor terrain go hand in hand, as demonstrated in vast economic literature, are linked by the difficulty of growing food, the basis of any society (Karl Marx, 1981). Furthermore, as noted by Banwart (2011), scraping the Earth's surface compromises soil particles, as when drought comes those scant soil particles can be swept away and what is left is barren, hard land that is

unable to support food production. With little rain hitting Lesotho due to climate change and arable land only around 400 000 hectares (ha) of which LHWP claimed 9000 ha for Phase I, not much arable land is left for food production or water retention. The soil-water nexus is further compromised by the ecological thirst of soils downstream of the dam, as discussed in chapter three. It is estimated that further 7000 ha of arable land will be used up for Phase II of the project, (LHWP 2014) which will further drive people who relied on that land into poverty and food insecurity. Had soil independently been among the SDGs, policies around soil use and management would have guided how the project used up land, thus achieving sustainable development for all, instead of arable land being used to build offices, roads or being covered by converged water like in the case of Ha Mohale.

1.4 The arguments of the dissertation and problem statement

Building on the arguments of Jason Hickel (2017), Amita Baviskar (2020), Kate Raworth (2017), Scudder (1995, 2005) and other critics of development policies based on natural resource economics, this study proposes that the commodification of Lesotho's water has re-initiated relations of coloniality in Lesotho, in two respects: first, debt to the World Bank has instantiated a relation akin to that of a colonial power, and second that via the LHWP treaty, Lesotho's relationship with South Africa renders it dependent on financialised economics, rather than ecological economics resulting in a loss of habitability that has severely affected people and ecologies. Through development and modernity, so-called 'third world' countries like Lesotho have been encouraged to 'make use' of their natural resources. In order to achieve this, they have to take on large sum of money as loans from 'development partners. According to John Adams in Hickel (2017: 23) "there are two ways to conquer and enslave a nation. One is by the sword. The other is by debt." In this way, neoliberal resource economics have facilitated a new form of colonisation, that ignores the intricate relationships and interdependence of all forms of life found in that specific locality. In addition, this makes Lesotho complicit in South Africa's destructive hydro-fossil energy politics, in terms of which coal-fired water turbines generate 80% of South African electricity while severely polluting the atmosphere and putting South Africa in 19th place in the worst green-house gas emitters of the G20 nations (W Harald, 2006). Selling water to South Africa compromises Lesotho's liveability, that is, the conditions of relations between water, plants, people and soil that make for habitability are compromised.

The absence of acknowledgement of the traumas suffered by people, water and soil, in the official documents of commodification of water in Lesotho is as obvious of trauma suffered by colonies during colonization. Isaacman and Isaacman (2013:5) write that “the deleterious social and ecological consequences of massive state-imposed projects infringe on human and environmental rights”, replicating what colonialism did to colonies. At this point, I would also like to add how colonialism and Anthropocene go hand in hand in making liveability has been compromised. Author of *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, and professor of what she calls Inhuman Geography, Kathryn Yusoff, writes that colonialism declared land to belong to the white, thus dispossessing indigenous people of their own land. She goes on to mention that Blackness and geologic resources became extractable and “coded into colonial possession through dispossession” (Yusoff, 2018, 42). The trauma of losing connection to ancestral land, the imposed divorce of people-environment relationship due to resettlement and ultimate poverty that comes with changed livelihoods, are indeed an infringement on human and environmental rights.

Much research continues to be undertaken on issues of water and wellbeing of people, the connections made between the two are often one-sided, telling of water as a resource to be used up by people, water or lack thereof making people sick. With exceptions of few scholars like Strang, water is brought into academia as a subject of engineering, geohydrology or ecology (fresh water or marine). Until recent years, the narratives on environment revolved around natural sciences and applied sciences, with scant regard to human relations with water. With the recognition of the geological conditions that have taken the name of the Anthropocene, the effort to include the human in environmental studies has increased. However, the inclusion of the human often meant the exclusion of other species who also are part of the environment. The role of Environmental Humanities as a discipline has since changed the dialogue when it comes to inclusivity of other species as equal contributors to the biodiversity.

The re-colonization of Lesotho by the World Bank and South Africa through commoditisation of its water silences the relationship that exists between communities, the living environment and water, and magnifies the economic implications, just as colonialism did. With the voices of the community members absent from decisions about removing water from the rivers, this argument will draw a conclusion that dam construction in Lesotho has served to re-play the dynamics associated with colonialism extraction. Uruguayan scholar Eduardo Guydnas points that “extractivism in its diverse forms is presented as an indispensable means of promoting

development, but at the same time it is the object of growing questioning and resistance by citizens, popular sector organizations and social movements for its negative impacts”, (Guydnas in Munck and Wise 2018:61), these observations are reflected in Lesotho through the LHWP.

The second argument raised by this study is that commodifying water has dismantled the relationships communities had with water, thus giving rise to new forms of relating to water. The LHWP, the governments of Lesotho and South Africa and the World Bank view water as an extractable commodity. Communities in which this study was undertaken, however, view water as something that is part of life. This is not to say water matters because it is alive, but the fact that the communities believe it houses ancestors, makes it more important in daily lives and rituals. These differing views, ways of being, and practices bring forth different accounts of water: one that may be termed “water” and the other, “H₂O”. “Water” has social meaning and ecological relations, while “H₂O” is a transparent liquid that industrial life depends on (Jamie Linton, 2010). He further goes on to say, “premodern societies typically lived with the reality of various waters diversely known, whereas modern societies essentialize water to the point where it is extracted from the social contexts of human experience and treated as an invariant essence, be that essence H₂O or a “resource,” (Linton 2010: xi). Linton’s argument is key to this thesis because of the notion he raises that the way people knew and understood water has revolutionized, the revolution which separated its social and natural state, thus at the end robbing water of its social nature, (Linton, 2010).

Turning water into a mere commodity changes the relationship that exists among soils, plants, and people, thereby affecting not only this post-human relationships but also the survival of each species. In essence, when water ceases to be a right but a commodity, the relationship of people to water also shifts. I should also mention that before water became a commodity, amongst Basotho, there was no disparity of water as a right or H₂O. It was merely interactions with water which differed. Because this argument is so central to the thesis, it will be anchored to literature on contestations of nature (Green, 2013), equivocation and homonymic states of water (De la Cadena, 2018) and Bruno Latour’s work on inquiry into modes of existence (Latour 2015) so as to provide a clearer picture of the role of water and other nonhuman species in the narrative of being.

The third and last argument this study makes is a claim that development is not necessarily “pro-poor”. The LHWP was meant to be a development project for Lesotho and also for

project-affected communities, yet the communities claim that they are ‘poorer than before’. The failure of development projects in Lesotho has a long history, which, according to James Ferguson (1990), is caused by a top-down approach, and the LHWP is no exception. Ferguson claims that development in Lesotho was ruined by overzealous investors who do not match their expectations to the realities of people they intend to develop. For as long as global economic systems are organised in a way which favours the rich/powerful, no meaningful development will ever be achieved. Lesotho will receive aid, get loans, and start developmental projects but the country will remain poor unless development is done differently. Shackled by debt to lenders, Lesotho is currently exporting itself into a drought so as to be counted among modern/ develop[ed] countries. Baviskar (2020) on development points out that development discourses are repressive, address one social group over the other and ultimately promote violence.

1.5 Outline of the Study

The importance of water in the lives of Phase I communities and the tension that arises when water is commodified has been sketched out is shown in this chapter. By giving a personal experience of resettlement and how it affected me, I invite the reader to take a perspective on water interactions different from those commonly found in either development discourses or academic hydrology. The former perspectives have contributed to extraction of water as they present water as renewable, waiting-for-consumption resource. This work critiques the notion that Lesotho has an abundance of water, when one can barely hear the sounds of water around the country. It is the point of this research to show that the sacredness of water is under fire from capitalistic and neoliberal thinking, which affects people's everyday lives and the ways they interact with different water modalities found across Lesotho. When this conflict between the culturally understood and commodified water collides, people suffer, and interrelationships among humans and nonhumans are compromised. This research sought to bring awareness to the co-existence of water, humans, and other species and how important the preservation of these relationships is to sustainability of resources, both human and nonhuman.

The numerous studies in the humanities and social sciences isolate communities or societies from their environments. On the other hand, environmental or geographical sciences focus primarily on the biosphere and not so much on the human. However, guided by multiple scholars in the Environmental Humanities who work on water and development (Baviskar 2019, Ballesteros 2018, Hickel 2017, Neimanis 2012, Strang 2004, Scudder 1995, 2005), this

work contributes to the wholeness of understanding the environment by exploring different assemblages of water that focus on water not as commodity contained within property (defined by dam walls and pipelines), but water as a substance whose life-giving liquidity assembles ecologies, lives, habitability, ecologies and economies via its capacity to flow in and through bodies, at scales from the micro-capillary to the regional ecology, and the planetary.

This perspective raises the questions ‘How can we better understand how the ecological lives of LHWP Phase I communities are accustomed to being assembled via water? And how does that assemblage shift, when water becomes a commodity?’ In studying this relationship, subjectivities produced by the dam should be taken into account. Subjectivity in this instance refers to “when what has been silenced or derided finds its own voice...” (Stengers 2015) because such subjectivities form new political struggles and forms of knowledge. This question was important to ask because of the longstanding hold the LWHP treaty has on Lesotho and its water. By asking this question, I hoped to have a conversation about the silencing of water and the human-nonhuman relationships that are affected by the alteration of topography, which includes damming rivers, constructing roads on fertile soil and covering graves with water.

In order to answer this question, the material is presented in the following chapters.

Chapter One, titled “Lesotho, Water and Extractive Development,” addresses the extraction of resources in Lesotho in a broad perspective, considering wool, diamonds, coal and sandstone alongside water. The chapter, which continues the contextualization work that I began in this introduction, aims to show how extraction, though a violence against the environment, has become acceptable. In this chapter, I also discuss how extraction of resources is 21st century colonialism, where people and resources are rendered conquerable through symbolic, physical and representational violence (Maria Gomez-Barris, 2017).

Chapter Two presents the methodological framework that guides the following ethnographic chapters. It discusses in detail the data collection tools employed during this study, as well as the reasons for my methodological choices. This chapter provides details of how the data were collected, the methods employed, and the ethics that guided this research. It also constitutes an argument for the need for more diverse and holistic methods in relation to development projects.

Chapter Three, titled “Water Dynamics,” takes its inspiration from the words of Charles Fishman, who states that “Water is H₂O, Hydrogen two parts, Oxygen one, but there is also a

third thing, that which makes it water. And nobody knows what it is” (Charles Fishman, 2011:13). This chapter seeks to describe that third thing as the force that is responsible for birthing the difference between water and H₂O. The chapter thus explores the differences between water and H₂O by showing how water has many meanings, depending on its users. Lastly, it discusses water-on-water violence as a result of damming and the commodification of water.

Chapter Four, “Ethnographies of Thirst,” looks at how water in Lesotho is a scarce resource despite a belief that Lesotho has lots of water. It also looks at how the lack of local knowledge in informing policies results in one-sided delivery of knowledge. Lastly, it moves beyond a human-only frame to consider how the thirst of species to interact. It considers how the recognition of multispecies existence can be a form of knowledge that prevents one species from a solo/lonely existence in a time when there seems to be a disintegrating appreciation of species relations, forcing each in its own world.

In Chapter Five, “Conceptualizing the Lesotho Highlands Water Project,” I attend to how the LHWP has been ushered in as a developmental tool and how far reaching the effects of this development project are. This chapter also addresses policies that seem to favour the conversion of the environment into a commodity, disregarding the relationships that exist between people and environment/nonhuman species.

In the Conclusion, I make the case, based on the evidence, that commodification of water in Lesotho is a constant reminder that there is a disconnect between society and water. The disconnect is shown through the 7 sustainable goals which the LHWP failed meet in the construction of the dams, commodification of water and handling of the communities and the environment.

2 Lesotho, Water and Extractive Development

"All banks have money. All rivers have banks. Therefore, all rivers have money"

-James Ferguson, 1985:55

An anthropological understanding of water looks beyond water as H₂O to create a water-world, described by Orlove and Caton as the totality of connections that water may have in a given society (2010:403). Rather, water is understood as integral to societal domains that are religious, economic, and political (Veronica Strang 2004; Wilder and Lankao, 2006). Borrowing from Marcel Mauss' (1990) classical notion of water as a total social fact, water can be understood to cut across all domains of society. This implies that water should not only be understood through functional associations in the realms of economy, law, politics, religion, and so on, it should also be understood in specific situations where various economic, legal, political, religious, and bodily relationships overlap, including both animals and humans. Orlove and Caton make an emphasis that "anthropologists contribute by seeing water not only as a resource but also as a substance that connects many realms of social life" (2010:401). Water connects domains of life such that the water used in one will affect the water used in others, and if the notion of the system suggests more integration of these domains than is warranted, perhaps "connectivity" might be a better term for what we seek to define. That is, water connects different domains of social life to each other in ways that are not haphazard or accidental because they depend on each other. Water's connectivity is mediated by levels of social organizational complexity (Hannerz 1992).

As long ago as 1985, in *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*, James Ferguson discussed the distinctive discourse and conceptual apparatus of development experts, who, although good for keeping development agencies in business, screened out and ignored most of the political and historical facts that explained third-world poverty. The key argument in his book is that although enormous development schemes generally fail to achieve their planned goals, they have the major effects of strengthening and expanding the power of politically self-serving state bureaucracies. Ferguson makes the case that development experts misinterpreted "traditional" attitudes toward livestock via their complex calculus of gender, cash and power in the rural Lesotho family

(Ferguson, 1990). Similarly, reducing rivers to monetizable water sold across an international border overlooks the human-river relationships, which are layered with exchanges through interaction and mutual benefit.

The fundamental question in development should be, who does development really develop? According to Raworth (2017), development is essentially about what the funder can afford as opposed to what people need. For countries like Lesotho with a small tax-base, affordability inevitably depends on available loans. In the book *Tyranny of Experts*, William Easterly (2017) makes the case that development is meant for nation-building and does not take into account the needs of individuals or their human rights. Based on stories of development over many years, Easterly notes that economic development is sustained by experts and international agencies like the World Bank while at the same time trampling over human rights. Having worked for the World Bank, Easterly makes the case that the Bank works in authoritarian ways as opposed to democratic development, meaning that the Bank's mode of engagement is to push for overly top-down and expert-centred development, which, by his account, always failed. It is from this vantage point that this chapter will engage on matters of development, in Lesotho, paying close attention to the LHWP as a bilateral development project.

In Lesotho, the commodification of water and the building of large dams sits at the centre of an extractive, export-oriented strategy to generate national revenues by selling water to South Africa. Consequences of the LHWP include remote highland families' losses of agricultural fields, grazing lands, and communal resources. Perhaps most ironically, access to clean and reliable water has been compromised by the conversion of rivers into reserves of commodifiable water. Not only were property rights trampled upon, but the human rights of rural populations were overlooked. By selling water to South Africa, the project was meant to improve the lives of Basotho across the country, through employment and rural development projects. However, as observed by various independent researchers: "the project is said to have failed as none of the said projects ever took off" (Thamae and Pottinger 2006:45); "development projects in Lesotho is one of almost unremitting failure to achieve their objectives" (Murray 1981:19), and "for development history, failure in Lesotho seems to be a norm" (Ferguson 1985:8).

This chapter makes the case that development in Lesotho, rather than improving the lives of the marginalised, has further pushed them into economic distress. The question is how and why this has happened: what logics have made it possible for this to be so? Reviewing the literature

on development in Lesotho via the lens of the shifts in economic theory proposed by distinguished Oxford economist Kate Raworth in her book *Doughnut Economics*, this chapter will discuss how development as a colonial legacy aims to extract and exploit both natural resources and people within the frame of financialised economics. By contrast, Raworth offers an approach that links ecology to economy, making the case that when a country's economy is purely viewed in financialised terms it is unable to address either ecology or extreme poverty. Consistent with Raworth's thesis is the work of Thomas Piketty, who argues in *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2014) on the basis of extensive economic research, that the currently dominant logics of gross domestic product serve to enrich the wealthy, impoverishing those who are not strongly situated within a globally monetised economy. The ideas of both Piketty and Raworth are strongly linked to the work of African revolutionary thinkers Amilcar Cabral and Thomas Sankara, who both argued that soil ecology and farming ought to be central to Africa's recovery from colonial devastation. Both were assassinated, and without their intellectual contributions Africa remains impoverished in the grip of financialised economic thinking that extracts resources without regard to the relation of people and land and their mutual ecological relations.

Based on this rethinking of economic theory, this chapter will also discuss developmental policies and theories which are meant to benefit the state and its elite at the cost to the poor, while claiming to serve the nation as a whole.

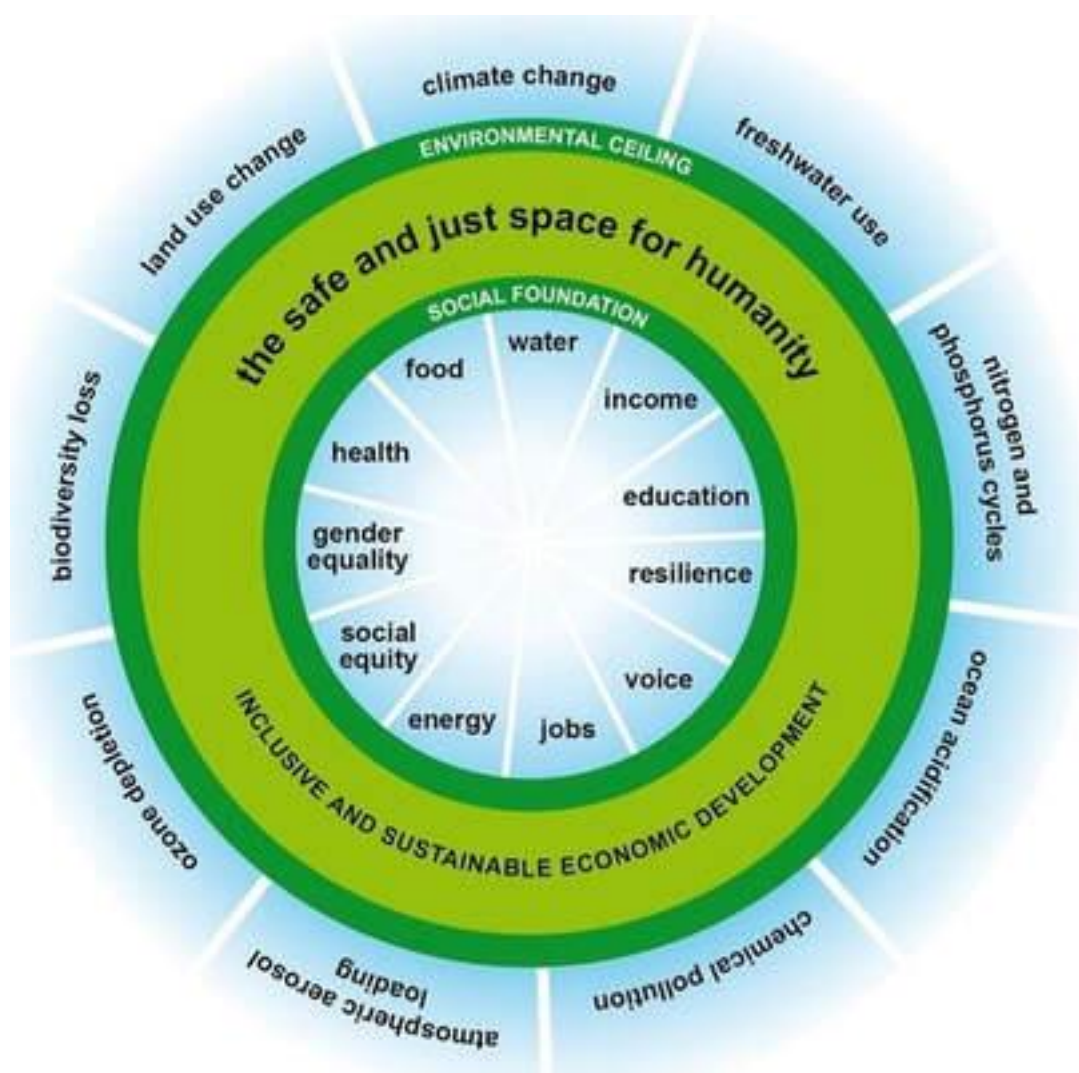


Figure 7 The doughnut economy as per Raworth. Source: www.openhorizons.com.

Kate Raworth describes the economy via the metaphor of a doughnut, showing on one side, the environmental ceiling, which includes ocean acidification, ozone depletion and biodiversity loss, and on the other side, the social foundation which is inclusive of social equity, water, voice and jobs. Living beyond the environmental ceiling results in environmental catastrophes while living beneath the social foundation results in critical human deprivation. The more a society reaches beyond the environmental ceiling, the more the aspects of social foundations shrink. The equilibrium is therefore brought forth by balanced attention to both environmental and social ceilings. This balance is what Raworth terms an inclusive and sustainable economic development, safe and just for both the environment and people.

Development as it currently stands in Lesotho, has required both neglect of social foundations and extraction beyond the ecological ceiling. In the conversations I had with affected people who took part in this study, the majority made the case that their lives were better before they became ‘developed’. “In my thatched house, I would be able to warm the house and cook meals for my family at the same time...but with these corrugated iron roofs, and cemented floors, I cannot do that...” one respondent explained. Another noted that “I am glad my children will go to better schools ... and I don’t have to worry about giving birth at home”. The other had said “I find my life is now based on having money...I have to pay for water bill, medical bill, and buy fuel. All these I had for free back at home”. Development comes at a cost to the poor and nature. The question that arises, then, is who does development develop? The figures below, show the same river, with an interval of eight years. The first photo shows the river almost full, with a healthy flow, while the second one shows a dried up river. These pictures I shared particularly to support the the notion that the LHWP development is not pro-environment or communities in which the projects are found. Had that been an issue, Maliba-Matso River (as pictured in figure 9) would not have dried up. Instead the sluice gates on the Katse Dam should have been opened to feed the river, but the treaty does not support that notion.



Figure 8 Maliba-Mats' o River in 2011. Photo credit- Jonathan Molapo



Figure 9 Maliba-Mats' o River 2019. This photograph, and the one above, are of the same river, but taken in different years: one a wet year; the other, dry. This particular picture shows how thirsty the land is, yet expectations to pump water into South Africa remained. Photo credit Jonathan Molapo

According to the treaty, Lesotho will always have to supply water to South Africa whether she has enough water or not. The conditions of the treaty did not take into account the droughts that have hit Lesotho in recent years. With changes in climate conditions, there has been less rainfall than there was in the 1950s when studies to have Lesotho as a reservoir for South Africa were made. In scouting this water for South African consumption, Lesotho is faced with water scarcity, which has led to citizens going days without water (LMS, 2019). Water scarcity, for communities that depend on subsistence farming like Basotho, can translate to food scarcity. The pictures above are of the same river with eight years difference, showing how drought has affected water flow. Drought was not factored in the terms of the treaty. Drought threatens food security and livelihoods, food and water are included in the Sustainable Development Goals (goal 2 and 6 respectively), yet the LWHP and the World Bank overlooked the impacts of this project on the SDGs as far as Lesotho and Basotho are concerned. The more water is siphoned

into South Africa for its development, the more the environmental ceiling, inclusive and sustainable development are overlooked.

The LHWP has changed the natural and social landscape of Lesotho. With construction of roads, mountains had to be compromised, vegetation scraped off the surface of the earth and aquatic life endangered. Moreover, a new type of nature was birthed: paid-for nature. At Katse Botanical Garden, to enter the gardens, there is a charge, even for local people. To go to the dam site, there is a charge, even for locals. At the Lejone Fisheries, run by the LHDA, one has to have a license to fish the trout. The Mohale area charges at the information centre. To get a tour of the old villages now covered by water, one has to pay. The money is collected by the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA), which is a corporate body that oversees Lesotho's side of LHWP. Even the views the LHWP has on water and land seem money-oriented, which then influences the decisions made. One of the objectives of the LHWP is "to export water as a commodity...using the least expensive means" (LHDA, 1986:52). The LHWP water is quite different from the community water. The LHWP developers see water as an extractable resource, a commodity, and a source of revenue, while the communities see water as sacred, alive, and unifying.

Resettlement divided families, leading to broken social ties. Social life in the highlands of Lesotho is mainly characterized by mechanical solidarity (as described by Emile Durkheim in 1893), which is based on kinship ties of familial networks. Yet, when the resettlement was carried out on a household basis rather than on a family basis, some family members were left behind while others were relocated. The role of family was undermined by this insistence on sorting by household, yet the very existence of the household is based on the extended family. The role of the grandmother or uncle, who may not live in the same household, is essential to the wellbeing of a household. Most Basotho rituals require elders of the family to be part of ceremonies, to bless and carry out the ceremony. For example, in the case where a woman gives birth at home, the grandmother is responsible for cutting off the umbilical cord and burying it at the ash heap. With families dispersed across the country, it was hard for families to properly perform the necessary rituals, thus leading to a negative view among the resettled communities of the LHWP and its operations.

In recent years, there have been debates among Basotho community members on the legitimacy of this treaty based on the governments that represented countries at the time the treaty was signed. Among the wide range of concerns, there has been a common question about whether

this treaty was of any benefit to Basotho, particularly the poor and the resettled communities during Phase I construction. My grandmother and I left Thaba-Tseka to come live in Maseru. Before relocation, we had fields where we grew food for ourselves and our cattle. Leftovers we sold to people who needed more food or those who did not have fields. At home, we had a huge vegetable garden, which more or less served the same purpose as the fields. Every last Saturday of the month we would go to the river to wash our blankets and clothes. The flowing water of the river guaranteed well-rinsed laundry. My uncle's grave was not far from the river, while we waited for the blankets to dry in the sun, we would visit his grave, which my grandmother found soothing. At times my friends and I would swim or just play by the riverbank, while adults watched on, engaged in their conversation. When I got ill, my grandmother would walk around in the garden to find herbs to give to me to get me back to health. However, when we moved, we no longer had fields. Our yard was paved with cement. Maintaining the paving needs money for the commodity that is cement, which would previously have been mud, gathered from the watery environment. We have tap water which is billed and of course when we get ill, we have to go to a hospital or clinic in town. This economic shock suffered at household level only increases at a community level. Ryan Hoover (2001) writes that people who had sustainable livelihoods before the project, got poor because "they had to move from herding their livestock to relying on temporary employment provided by the project" (Hoover, 2001:3). In their book *On the Wrong Side of Development*, Thamae and Pottinger (2006) note that "pastures of the host communities must be assessed as to whether they have capacity to carry a host of animals from the resettled communities. In the absence of sustainable grazing lands, fodder must be provided for 50 years" (2006:3).

In 2012, there was an outcry for the conditions of the treaty to be changed, such that Phase II of the project could be less detrimental to the lives of those involved. I participated in the drafting of the compensation packages and community involvement for this phase. At the end of 2015, I approached LHDA to get permission to visit the then 'talking stage' of the Phase II project. The intention was to see how much 'growth' had taken place since completion of Phase I. During the many talks which stretched from 2016 to 2019, I would give an opinion based on my then on-going research on lives of communities and their environments, which eventually earned me a spot in the drafting of compensation packages. Having read and seen the compensation package of Phase I, I was aware of which areas needed to be improved, to benefit communities better. It was at that point that I gave insight on how compensate differently. Compared to Phase I, there were significant changes, for example, monetary compensation has

been revised from lump sum to monthly or quarterly allowances. Phase I advocated for 'soil-for-soil' compensation, which means that if someone had to give up fields for the project, s/he be compensated with fields elsewhere. This form of compensation would guarantee a smooth transition from one locality to the other. By contrast, compensating fields with cash payments has led to many squandering monies and being poorer than they were before (Hoover 2006; Thamae and Pottinger 2001; Scudder 2005).

Conversations on how climate change is being propelled through the commodification and extraction of water in Lesotho through a World Bank funded project have not yet happened. Conversations on human and environmental rights, and how the targeted economic growth is killing Lesotho and the Basotho, are yet to happen. Conversations on how rivers are inundated and drying up, language dying off, traditional ecological resources being reduced, rituals shrinking away in the height of climate change are yet to happen. Conversation on how the commodification of water changes the relationship people have with water, how new attitudes birthed by this change are not 'climate smart' and births new forms of water within communities, is yet to be heard. Climate change is defined by the IPCC as "a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods" (IPCC 2007). Natural factors contributing to climate change include volcanic eruptions, variations in ocean currents and atmospheric circulation, solar output, and the earth's orbit around the sun (IPCC, 2007). Natural causes alone are, however, very unlikely to explain the speed at which observed changes in the earth's climate are taking place, (LMS 2013). Instead, anthropogenic factors offer a more likely explanation for recent changes in the earth's climate (EPA 2013). The anthropogenic factors linked to climate change include energy generation through the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas), deforestation and agricultural practices like cattle farming, (IPCC, 2007; UNEP, 2008).

2.1 Who does 'Development' develop?

In July 2019, over 10 000 farmers from across the country marched to the parliament in protest against a new wool and mohair development project. The government had introduced a new way of shearing, collecting and exporting wool and mohair in which, instead of farmers handling all these processes, the government had appointed a Chinese company to take over. This led to many farmers losing the money invested in the shearing and exporting of wool, with some even resorting to suicide, according to the *Lesotho Times* (2019). As with so many other

"development" projects, the question arises: whom did this 'development', develop? Judith Butler (2004) defines precarity as a condition in an unpredictable life. Precarity undoes a linear streamline of temporal progression and challenges progress' and 'development' narratives on all levels. Precarity has become a byword for life in late and later capitalism or, some argue, life in capitalism as usual. "It examines how dignity is activated through social interactions" (2004:5). The precarity of imagining future certainties while living amid current uncertainties problematizes the dependent relationship between life and work in a capitalist world. The farmers, the communities of Phase I where the LHWP (discussed in this thesis) and many other communities around Lesotho, face precarity every day because of the assertions of development.

In Lesotho, water continues to play a significant role in anxieties over power and identity. Water and water-related practices both carry and allow for adaptation and reinterpretation of norms and traditions. This allowance eventually determines who lives and who dies, as this chapter has been discussing. The ability to control and commodify water implies one can control and commodify social identities. Those favoured by development get to live better lives, whereas those whom development initiatives do not favour are marginalised. The empirical evidence to support this stance I found in the way participants in this study spoke of themselves and the water that was 'siphoned' to South Africa. As Strang (2005) says, perceptions of the environment are crafted via a preceding sociality. I grew up just by Maliba-Matso river. The role Maliba-Matso played in my socialization goes beyond learning to swim floating on a *Sta-Soft* (fabric softener) bottle. The river was a clock; depending on the shadow on the banks, we could tell if it was time to bath, eat or go back home. This river was a social space; we held swimming competitions there and many lovers had their dates by the shores of this river. Every Saturday morning, the river became a laundromat. Women and children would be seen walking down to the river, with heaps of laundry carried on their heads. They would reappear in the late afternoon, with clean dry laundry. Because the river was not too far, yet not too close to households, it provided a great hide-away for children to play without parents calling them to do this or that.

The social identities birthed by water or water sources around the globe often reflect how meaning "permeate all aspects of human life: the social, the spiritual, the economic, the political and the environmental. They flow into every interaction with water, whether personal, familial or collective, literal or metaphorical" (Strang, 2005:115). Below are some of the

conversations on how water shaped and continue to shape identities and meaning on daily occurrences.

“Thabang and I met at Bokong River. This river divides Ha Khauta from Mahobong. We had come to the river to help recover a body of a young boy who had been leered in by the *Khanyapa* (a snake believed to have extra ordinary powers) into the *koetsa* (deep end of a river) We all knew that it was no coincidence that the little boy drowned. The past week *leoliotsoana* (Whirlwind) had swept across Ha Khauta, right into the river, we all knew it was going to be a bad autumn -marked with dryness, deaths and fights. That snake was sent by the diviner from Mahobong, they use Bokong to get back at us while they deserted their ancestors most of us believed.” Mapolo*(a pseudonym) aged 39, recorded in the interview held in Ha Ntsi Nazareta, 2016. In this quote, Mapolo relates hers and many others from the two villages understanding of the river and how their relationship with the Bokong river changed. Bokong is one of the rivers which were inundated in the construction of Katse dam. The belief among the river users that it has to naturally flow without interruption caused a roar between villages, when communities of Ha Khauta had no reservations with river inundation while those from Mahobong had profusely been against the idea.

“Our *letsetsibolo* (firstborn) was born on a very cold winter morning. It had snowed heavily the night before. Thabang could not use the wet wood to make fire; the cow dung at the kraal was wet too. He had to sprinkle gasoline from his tractor on the wood to get the fire going. The smog was a little dense than usual, but it was cold, so the fire had to made. When the child was born, my mother in-law looked at him and said, “his name is Lehlohonolo (meaning luck), with such bad winter; he has to bring us luck ... in the morning we should take him to Bokong so he can conquer this extreme weather” She had then continued with the rites of passage of birth and introduction of a child into the world. The rites of passage involved burying the umbilical cord at the *thotobolo* (ash heap) so that evil would get burned whenever it wanted the child. The placenta was buried at the corners of the house indicating protection around the house and the cleaning material were buried at the gate of our compound. By morning, the snow had covered the foot path to the river...but if we did not go, our child stood to be a thief. We soldiered on ... our second child was born here. Obviously, we couldn't put him in a water tank. He has been in prison three times ...” Lipolelo* aged 44 said in an interview held in Ha Ntsi Nazareta, 2016.

“The cattle grazed peacefully along the riverbank. The atmosphere was filled with smog signalling that women were preparing supper for their families. Voices of children could be heard from the open fields. Every facet of Ha Khauta had served a purpose. The donga was a makeshift initiation area for women. The river itself was not only a place to do laundry and collect drinking water, but also a highly gendered space; a social place for women to gossip and vent. The mountain accommodated male initiates as theirs involved use of sturdy *lithlare*², which are perilous to crops, pregnant women and newborn babies. It is also home to most herbs that could be used as remedy for diarrhoea, *nyooko* (bile reflex), common colds and other socially recognized illnesses. It was on this day that our father died. We buried him under the willow tree where his parents had been buried 30 or so years before. His grave was not far from a shallow grave of my niece who died at birth. Though the graveyard was just behind our father’s house, we knew how important it was to keep that area away from strangers and children. Letting strangers meddle with *mabitla* (graves) would cause disasters unimaginable. Not only did father die that year, but our lives as we knew them, our memories, our heartbeat that thumped in the yield from the fields, our sweat that ran in the soil and our blood that was in the water was sold” alleged ‘Mantai* aged 53, who was also interviewed at Ha Ntsi, Nazareta 2016.

“Rumors ran across the village that we were to be removed because ‘they’ were building a dam. They were going to block our river from one end so that it inundates the Senqu River, we heard. They were going to sell our water, we heard. The same water that gives life was to be sold. Bokong could no longer be a place where women meet to discuss remedies, our diviners would have to travel long distances to find a *koetsa* for initiates. *Leoliotsoana* will blow away houses when it finds no place to hide. Within six months we were given papers to sign, and trucks came and took our belongings to an unfamiliar place. A place with no shade, a place where water runs through metal pipes, a place populated with plastic and hooting sounds. As the men dismounted our belongings, my eyes fell on a small patch of land that had obviously been over-used to grow some vegetables. Despair filled me, and I could not stop my train of thought; could this place ever be home? So, in this place both men and women go to the tap? How long would it take for peach-trees to grow? How do they prevent thunder here when they don’t seem to have *lebala* (an open space in front of the house)? My child’s life was rooted in

² Herbs administered by a witch doctor or diviner

Ha Khauta. My cattle were not allowed to come into this urban God-forbidden city. Could this place ever be home?" cried Mabokang* who was interviewed at Makhoakhoeng in Maseru.

These extracts are from interviews with different women, recollecting their lives blanketed by rivers and water. "Lesotho's water as consolidating within itself a multiplicity of ideas and functions, drawing on a familiar set of metaphors: it moves, it unites, it brings life", writes anthropologist Colin Hoag (Hoag, 2014). As observed from the above ethnographic examples, water is not just a biological need or scarce resource, but also an inherent part of people's identities, cultures, worldviews and religious perceptions. While the social, cultural, ideological and religious roles of water include "*deep ontological relations and identities ranging from personal perceptions and gender relations to rainmaking and fertility rites for the benefit of the whole society as well as perceptions of cosmological realms and religious beliefs*" (Oestigaard, 2009:16). The above quotations also show how development initiatives which do not take cultures and norms into account, end up causing more harm than good. Indeed, a question of who does development develop ought to be asked, if instead of bettering lives of stakeholders, it end it. The women in these quotations share similar views with many others across Lesotho including 89 others whose views are shared in this dissertation, which is development should not be done in isolation. Customs, environment, people and nonhuman species should all be considered in development initiatives- that, in my opinion would be sustainable development for all.

According to Ridout and Schneider (2012), precarity challenges the assumptions of social development as being a temporal progression. Instead, precarity suggests that all progressing social systems host individuals living in uncertainty, whose futures are not propped securely upon the past. Looking particularly at the LHWP affected communities, to them, a life of uncertainties and anxieties has been ruling their lives since relocation. The uncertainty of where to bury their deceased, since host communities do not share burial grounds. The uncertainty of having water because rivers are dammed or for those in Makhoakhoeng, they have water bills they have to settle. The uncertainty of performing rituals because as they resettled, they left their ancestors behind, covered in water. Uncertainty birthed by a development project. Precarity birthed by development. The curse of development. A precarious life is characterised by vulnerability and the uncertainty of social situations. Just like many of the participants kept pointing out. They are never sure of anything anymore. "*I can't fix this house because all I know is one day I might be told to pack and go*" proclaimed Sabata, aged 39, a key informant from Nazareta.

Development, in essence, is authoritative but ignorant. Rights and dignity, especially of the poor, are overlooked. Easterly writes that “development ideas for Africa took shape in the West, when the West was still racist...” (2013:82). It is therefore not surprising that development brought by the West is problematic and in principle undermines the empowerment of a community as a whole. An observation drawn from this argument is that development is peer pressure exerted by first world countries to third world countries, to ‘play catch up’, yet they (first world countries) have stripped off third world countries that which (minerals, and for the longest time, sovereignty) could afford them to catch up. Being autocratic in nature, the commodification of water in Lesotho, through the LHWP, gave a false promise of a win-win outcome, whereas what was placed ahead of the needs (material, social and psychological) of the poor was financialised economic growth of country that set-in motion the vicious circle of precarity in development areas. Looking at what is happening in Lesotho and South Africa currently, with the COVID19 pandemic, the same pattern can be observed. Both countries announced national lockdown in March 2020, in an attempt curb the spread of the virus. However, within a few weeks of the shutdown, those with money, demanded that the ‘economy’ be opened up. The industries which opened up were not pro-poor. In fact, in both countries, street vendors, house keepers and those at the bottom of the economic food chain, were the last to have their industries opened.

In her book titled *Death without Weeping* Nancy Scheper-Hughes talks of poverty, political suppression, death and violence poverty, the political suppression, death and violence that she found in Bom Jesus, in Brazil. This I equate to the 'deaths without weeping' one finds in project areas around the world. While the suffering in Bom Jesus and in project areas may be different, they are similar in that at the end people are suffering due to implementation of a policy or failure thereof, resulting in standards of living less than acceptable. Ross (2010:205) speaks of "humiliation, dreams thwarted, questions of progress and its opposite... the rendering of human life in animal terms, the nearness of social isolation and the real possibilities of absolute destitution" as some of the unintended results of the failure of policies, as evidenced in the population she studied in Cape Town.

She continues to say, "changing people's environments does not necessarily produce radical social change unless accompanied by changes in their material circumstances" (2010: 205), while addressing present state policy which aims to eradicate shacks, but which has not yet been successful inequitably redistributing wealth, resources and opportunities. The result has been the death of hope, dreams and eventually death of the body. These forms of policies are

to me necropolitics; being a coinage between necro (death) and politics. This politicized deaths through policies can further be understood as "necropower". Mbembe, (2004:114) terms necropower as "sovereign power that is set up for maximum destruction of persons and the creation of deathscapes"- meaning areas where death reigns. In the case of this study, death is experienced by humans and post-humans alike.

Policies have given priority to GDP and some parts of the ecosystem, excluding other forms of life. Social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life convening them to the status of the living dead. In the introductory chapters of their books, Scheper-Hughes (1992) and Ross (2010) portray how normalized suffering and death had become, chaired by policies, in their areas of study. In the same manner, there are stories of those who died due to policy and power in Lesotho. Those who are trapped in the deathscapes and have no way out. Necropower and neoliberalism's grasp on people's hopes and lives extends beyond the 'here and now' that often guides these ideologies. Beyond space and time, identities, relationships and way of life has been strangled by policies which were only beneficial for a moment in time. The extract below is an example of how the LHWP paid little to no attention to the communities in the project areas nor the environment in which they live. This extract is from the LHWP treaty signed in 1986 and amended in 2012, yet it still reads as follows:

(1) The purpose of the Project shall be to enhance the use of the water of the Senqu/Orange River by storing, regulating, diverting and controlling the flow of the Senqu/Orange River and its affluents in order to affect the delivery of specified quantities of water to the Designated Outlet Point in the Republic of South Africa and by utilizing such delivery system to generate hydro-electric power in the Kingdom of Lesotho.

(2) Without prejudice to the provisions of paragraph (1) each Party shall be allowed the opportunity to undertake ancillary developments in its territory including:

(i) the provision of water for irrigation, potable water supply and other uses.

(ii) the development of other projects to generate hydro-electric power, and

(iii) the development of tourism, fisheries and other projects for economic and social development.

The above segment is from the LHWP treaty of 1986 responsible for resettlement and displacement of over 20,000 people. The arguments that have arisen among scholars and

community members alike is that this treaty did not have people of Lesotho in mind. Senqu river is one of the biggest rivers in Lesotho, being fed by multiple other rivers; meaning Senqu is the ultimate carrier of the waters in Lesotho. To revisit the issue of water flows and meaning, the implication of water in Senqu is it carries many ancestral spirits, pleas and thanks-givings ever done in smaller rivers. Yet, the same river is compromised and treated as a merchandise or *khomo ea lebese* (a milk cow). From inception to the present day, there has been death (metaphorical and literal) and suffering. In 1986, three months before this treaty was signed, there was a coup de tat in Lesotho where the military withdrew the then Prime Minister. This had resulted in bloodshed and official commodification of the sacred resource of Lesotho.

While it would be nobler to think people are responsible for their own lives, this treaty has continued to reign sovereign over people's lives, leaving heartbreaks, loss and suffering in the wake of its passing. Scudder (2006), Pottinger & Thamae (2006) and Lesley (2010) talk of how structural loss that people suffered as a result of the LHWP in Lesotho. Instead of upward mobility they expected, they found themselves even deeper in the gutters. They, for the rest of their lives, will suffer because of the necropolitical policy they are subjected to. Policy implementation failed to take into consideration how the relationship of people and water played out, where the resettled communities are likely to be relocated, the dynamics of host communities and the role of family roles and structures. This did not only affect Phase I communities but rather Lesotho as a nation. While it may still be addressed as one of the countries with plenty of water (WHO, 2000), Lesotho's water woes are beginning to emerge, giving a new conversation on whether Lesotho does have water or not.

In 2012, there was an outcry from Basotho on radio stations, community gatherings and social media platforms for the amendment of the treaty was lodged as per "Protocol VI to the Treaty on the LHWP" (LHDA, 2004 unpublished article). According to (LHDA 1986, World Bank Report, 2004) Lesotho bore many more of the expenses than anticipated, which forced extreme majors to be taken to recuperate the monies used. Some of the majors taken included policing of Katse Dam and the nearby rivers, controlled and licensed fishing and fencing off some of the lands (as parks) which were rich in wild vegetation. The control and policing of natural resources were a blow to communities that have already lost so much. Most of the people rely on wild vegetation for medicine, fuel and food, yet that was taken away. This 'conservation' appears to me, to be central to capitalist expansion, creating new forms of nature and providing new opportunities for accumulation (Brockington, Duffy and Igoe 2008; Büscher and Fletcher 2015; Igoe, Neves and Brockington 2011).

The neoliberal conservation as a capitalist project can be discerned through the *intensification* of a political ideology which reframes 'saving' nature into something which is best achieved through producing it as a commodity with a marketable value (Büscher and Fletcher 2015) and the *expansion* of material practices and policies which aim to bring this goal about through new products such as parks, fisheries, green spaces and commodification of nature. The amendment of this death treaty allowed Basotho with fishing licenses to fish, though the main people who fish in the Katse dam are mainly farmers from South Africa and professional fishers who import the trout to Japan. Also, part of the amendment was controlled *ho roalla* (gather firewood) and non-fee entry for locals in the 'parks'.

However, while the compensation and resettlement policies were of better quality, issues of siphoned rivers were still unattended. If anything, more rivers stood to be dammed because of Phase II which is currently underway in the district of Mokhotlong. Having visited Mokhotlong as a comparative study to the one discussed here, I found that not many people were likely to be affected as compared to the Phase I project. However, natural capital is highly compromised. Though Mokhotlong for the past years has been the lowest in population, due to the impending dam construction, it is slowly experiencing an influx of people- experts and those seeking employment. This directly affects the natural capital in the area. For example, there is a nursery and orchard in the area, which had provided fruits and seedlings to the Mokhotlong population, currently, the orchard and nursery are under strain as the demand of crops, fruits and other forms of life found on the habitat increased. While the high demand could have been ideal, the challenge is that because of its impending closure production is low and infrequent- causing friction for those who relied on it for ecosystem services like food. Moreover, with the consultants having pitched temporary structures close to the nursery, some of the crops are not getting sufficient sunlight, weakening the photosynthesis process, and thereby affecting the food chain; thus, the policy here became an economic driver.

Lauren Berlant (2011) writes about 'cruel optimism', which she describes as a relation of connection to conceding conditions of possibility, precarity is a condition of dependency in which one's future is in someone else's hands. This fits together with Butler's proposal that "precariousness implies living socially, that is, the fact that one's life is always in some sense in the hands of the other" (2009:14). The LHWP treaty has placed lives of 2 million people at the mercy of governments of Lesotho, South Africa and the World Bank. For as long as there is water to harness and sell, people around prospective project areas are disposable.

Development speaks to the poor's glaring inability to sustain future livelihood since their future livelihoods are controlled by others' appropriation of power and function as a by-product of volatile capitalist and neoliberal markets. In essence, development creates uncertain lives since 'development policies' are meant to solve 'eco-political' problems, yet, in the process, destabilize people's certainties (Ferguson 1995).

The World Summit on Sustainable Development emphasizes people's direct participation in these projects as well as to be direct beneficiaries of these projects, yet it too still fails to explicitly lay down the importance of post-human species in the narrative of development and conservation. The World Commission on Dams (2000) was one of the most prestigious assemblies ever to address the issue of large dams and their effects on neighbouring communities and the biosphere. The purpose for this Commission was "to heal the deep and self-inflicted wounds torn open wherever and whenever far too few determine for far too many how best to develop or use water and energy resources". The opening page of the report from the Commission reads "... this document is a work of art. It redefines what is possible for all of us at a time when water pressure on governments has never been more intense ... less than 2.5% of our water is fresh, less than 33% of freshwater is fluid, less than 1.7% of fluid water runs in streams ... We dammed half our world's rivers at unprecedented rates of one per hour over a period of 30 years ..." (WCD 2000: iii).

The WCD recommends no dam should be built without the 'demonstrable acceptance' of the affected people. It states that "adversely affected people are recognized as first among the beneficiaries of the project," and calls for "mutually agreed and legally protected benefit-sharing mechanisms" to ensure implementation, formal and legally enforceable mitigation, resettlement and development entitlements" (2000: 23). The Curitiba Declaration of 2007 came as a cry to the people whose lives were forever affected by the construction of dams, thus leaving them with dismantled lives. One could say this declaration is the opposite of the LHWP treaty- Curitiba declaration puts people and their environment first, while the treaty considered financial benefit first. The argument this declaration supports is that development projects, especially dam constructions, should put local ecologies communities first. While this declaration might be critiqued by the multi-species scholars for not including other nonhuman species, it by far a more inclusive of policy, treaty or declaration known. If amended to include post-human species, it could be the blueprint of how development projects should be handled such that communities benefit from it.

Large infrastructure projects are primary catalysts for spreading HIV/AIDS on the African continent. Desperate, because the poverty of women and girls in particular is aggravated in the Highlands by the loss of garden plots and other resources essential to the survival of families, and who therefore often turn to transactional sex as alternatives to subsidizing their livelihoods. Many families were dismantled because men went to work as cheap labour in the campsites, and never came back while and women found comfort and companionship from the many men who came into Lesotho for construction work. According to medical researchers, AIDS took off in the Lesotho Highlands because construction workers on the project were infected and moved into communities that were already socially traumatized by their impending resettlement, (Molaoa 2007, Scudder 2005). An August 1995 report in the medical journal *Archives of Internal Medicine* describes the startling changes brought on by the project. "In the early years of the worldwide pandemic, there were no reported cases of AIDS in Lesotho," the authors note

”since construction began in 1986, the HIV that causes AIDS had been introduced by dam workers and quickly made inroads into local populations. By 1992, HIV infection rates in villages around the dam were 0.5 per cent, and infection rates in the dams' work camps were over 20 times higher (5.3%). The town of Leribe, which is a gateway to LHWP project areas, had a low HIV infection rate in the early stages of project construction. By 1993, it had the highest rate in the country. The rate among Leribe's population between the ages of 15-24 skyrocketed from 3 per cent in 1991 to 12.6 per cent in 1993” (Archives of Internal Medicine, 1995; 308-309)

By the year 1999, tests of antenatal women living in the mountains around Katse Dam indicated 22 per cent of them were HIV positive. In their report, LHDA acknowledged the problem: "It is apparent that the impact of the Phase IA construction workforce on local communities has been much greater than was originally anticipated. While many of the economic benefits have not materialized, most of the social disbenefits have, leaving the social fabric of these communities visibly disintegrating" (2006: 67).

In addition to effective public information campaigns and education directed specifically at women and girls about the dangers of HIV/AIDS, this type of project needs to include specific measures to ensure that women have the means to feed their families. Permanent public health services accessible to local communities, especially women and children, are essential, as is permanent monitoring of the public health situation. Given the large numbers of people now

already infected, the project must ensure access to free care and retroviral drugs of all people in the affected communities. According to UNICEF (2005) "Progress made in [Lesotho's] human development and poverty alleviation over the past decades are being rapidly reversed by one of the most severe HIV/AIDS pandemics in the world. National prevalence rates are estimated at 31 per cent and over 40 % in the capital district of Maseru. Choosing development over species (human and non-human) is a slow death that the world is trying to get away from by implementing such measures as the Sustainable Development Goals.

Though this research addressed the relationship of Basotho, particularly those of Phase I, and water, the pattern of devastation and helplessness is common among many nations whose rivers have been dammed, pushed across as economic development strategies. Countries like Zambia, Ghana, Egypt, Sri Lanka, China and India have been suffered the same fate as Lesotho due to dam construction. From the 1950s when the Kariba Dam in Zambia was built to 2000s when Mohale dam was completed, the justification for large dams has been given and benefits emphasized, yet problems and challenges growing from these dams remain unentertained. Construction of large dams has resulted in the displacement of an estimated 40 to 80 million people worldwide (WCD, 2000). Displacement of people can be harmful and with far-reaching effects, thus end results could lead to ecocide. Being a 'survivor' of ecocide birthed by resettlement due to the construction of Katse dam and having shared stories of 106 other people whose lives shared the same plight, I can attest those lives were lost- both metaphorically and literally.

Taking the Thaba-Tseka camp in Ha Thetsane as an example of how people lost lives due to the ecocide, one could tell how life had oozed out of those who were resettled in that camp. While in their previous lives before relocation, signs of life could be livestock, vegetation, and an abundance of flowing water, in the Thetsane camp, there is none of that, meaning for them there is no life. Many left these houses and went to live with relatives who were not resettled. Participants in this study, in the Makhoakhoeng area, shared horrific stories of how there were two cases of suicide due to failure to cope with new environment. If life as I know it is taken away from me, what I have left is not life, no matter how the next person may term it. The Thetsane camp was the first of the seven camps within Maseru where LHDA resettled thousands of people. These camps, as described earlier, comprise brick houses, corrugated iron, small 'vegetable' garden, a *jojjo* (a large green plastic tank) tank or WASCO tap. Each household is separated from the other by a barbed wire fencing, and each has a gate. The houses alone are

impractical for the type of dwellers. These houses do not allow one to cook on the floor as the mud houses did.

To warm the house, one has to buy paraffin or gas, whereas, in their former homes, they could just take cow dung from their kraals or datura from the backyard, cost-free, and warm the house. For those with livestock, the camps have no room for kraals, the best they can rear is chickens. The gates and barbed-wire fences are foreign; for people who lived with free access, to have such control of movement and entry is dehumanizing. The *Jojo* tanks and WASCO taps replaced wells and rivers, which were not only sources of water but also social spaces. However, the compensation policy had stipulated how the houses should be built, how big they should be and where, what should go hence this chapter on policy, theories and people's interests. In the end, many deserted the Thaba-Tseka camp and went back to their 'primitive' lives to regain life, leaving most houses as *lithako*³ while others are occupied by tenants who work at nearby Chinese factories. Displacing these communities from their habitus to a place totally different from what they knew and were able to be constitutes a national ecocide.

Ecocide goes hand in hand with capitalism. By cutting people off the land, not only do people suffer but so does land. In capitalism people are always displaced, land over used just to maximise profits. John Bellamy et al (2010) write that capitalism is marked by seeking accumulation and environmental degradation. Elsewhere, Bellamy and Clarke write that “capitalist production...disturbs the metabolic interaction between man and the earth” (2020:7), which in essence will lead to the ecocide discussed above. We cannot speak of capitalism and commodification without mentioning Karl Marx. His metabolic rift asserts that the rupture in the metabolic interaction between humanity and the rest of nature emanating from capitalist agricultural production and the growing division between town and country is problematic, (Marx, 1976). By analyzing the distorted relationship that capitalism imposes between humans and the rest of nature, Marx used developments in the agricultural science of his day to argue that by radically transforming socio-economic relations, it is possible to repair the rift between humans and nature. His theory is a materialistic theory of human society, its dynamics and historical evolution. Marxist theory states that material conditions and relations within societies, not their ideologies, determine their character (Molaoa, 2007, Roseberry, 1997). Since the construction of large dams is closely associated with industrialization, Marx

³ An abundant house

recognised that the achievements of industrial capitalism required the non-human environment to be dominated for the purpose of accumulating material wealth (Mandel, 1978).

“Socio-political drivers encompass the forces that influence decision making in the large conceptual space between economics and culture,” notes Young (2002:66). Berhe (2000) pointed out that “one important element of socio-political drivers, that is human conflicts, acts both as a direct and an indirect driver of change in ecosystem services and human well-being when nature becomes the recipient of collateral damage.” He further argued that “war-driven environmental degradation can initiate social degradation and protracted cycles of social and environmental decline by creating poverty, overexploitation of marginal resources, underdevelopment, and, in extreme cases, famine and social destruction” (Berhe 2000: 18). The ‘cold war’ between South Africa and Lesotho has often seen SADC or even bigger bodies like the UN intervening to solve disputes. One of the main disputes that arise time and again is that the then-South African government under the apartheid regime signed the treaty with ‘terrorists’, referring to the military which had staged a successful coup d’état just a few months before. The treaty binds Lesotho to construct six large dams, damming rivers, losing any terrestrial land Lesotho has. One can also look at this treaty, the aim to ‘improve and develop’ Lesotho and question the intentions of funders for the people of Lesotho.

According to Molaoa (2007), local organizations that are formal or informal associations disappear as a result of the dispersion of their members. She goes on to explain that “traditional community and authority systems can lose their leaders, while symbolic markers such as ancestral shrines and graves are abandoned, thereby breaking links with the past and cultural identity and further compounding impacts on the social capital”, (2007: 98). Nonhuman species, especially those that are area-specific, also tends to shrink for simple two reasons; first, most these nonhuman species survive because of the value and meaning attached to them by communities. Secondly, with excavation and construction, some species simply die from contact or disturbed homeostasis. The World Bank further states that whenever relocation occurs, it more often than not affects the lives of very ordinary people. This is mainly because development in majority of times is brought to those areas that are chiefly underdeveloped and are characterized by high levels of poverty amongst their community members (World Bank 1994; Molaoa 2007). In areas like these, there are usually low to none forms of infrastructure services, and which are, in most cases, inhabited by the marginal groups such as subsistence farmers, as exemplified by the participants of this study.

Involuntary resettlement itself is compulsory in that people are compelled to move out to a new environment in order to make way for the construction of large dams, it tends to create much stress because people are not moving out of their own initiative (Molaoa, 2007, Scudder 2005). By extension, resettlement leads to complicated social relations, strained natural capital services and increase in population-related problems. To this point, Scudder (2005), refers to what he calls the multidimensional characteristics of stress caused by involuntary resettlement. This includes physiological stress, which in most cases results in a high mortality rate due to an increased morbidity rate from the interplay of factors resulting from high population densities in the new settlements (Molaoa, 2007). Hence, contact with the new diseases caused by an increase in the incidence of diseases like *malaria* parasites and the likes were observed among the resettlers in Kainji, Northern Nigeria, HIV in the Katse construction site and TB in India.

Secondly, psychological stress resulting from being forced to move to a totally different environment leads to mental and emotional stress. Thirdly, there is the socio-cultural stress that tends to be more apparent among those sectors of the population who have derived most of their support from the local resources for as long as they remember (Molaoa, 2007), leading to early deaths, depression and crowding (as exemplified by those who left their houses in the Thetsane Camp, to stay with families in the Thaba-tseka district). However, if involuntary resettlement is handled well, it can prevent some of these adverse effects like stress, pain, impoverishment, and even reduce poverty by rebuilding sustainable livelihoods (De Satgé 2002). The relationship communities of Phase I have with waterfall under all the above-mentioned causalities, yet not much was done to elevate their situation. It is often up to policymakers to put to effect better policies, which protect people and their environment, yet in this case, communities are side-lined by the policy in favour of financial gain. The role of policies, academia and institutes of knowledge production, governing laws, international bodies and ideas of development are some of the variables which perpetuate structural ecocides, affecting the relationship communities have with their environment.

The most common understanding among ‘development agencies’ is that water is just a mineral or a chemical compound, just like gold, diamonds and silver, among others. But the most important part/thing which we do in social sciences is that we use water as a window or mirror to see social challenges associated with commodification of ‘natural resources.’ Through it we see how Ashanti Gold or Implants invades a communal area in southern Africa and chases

away people, most of the time without any compensation. Development agencies in the context of Lesotho fail to merge their ideals with the realities of communities they want to 'develop'. In the case of this study, the ideals were that selling water would improve the lives of Basotho. While the reality is water has polyvalent meaning, meanings which would need to be navigated carefully before such ideals are turned into a full-blown billion-dollar project. The results are more devastating for people whose reality was interrupted by ideals. While development is sold off as a tool which would eradicate national poverty, international aids by their very nature, do not make radical changes in political and economic structures, which would empower the poor (Lappe and Collins 1979). Approaching LHWP as one of such projects in Lesotho, I find it to have been misleading to have expected it to eradicate poverty, seeing that LHWP actually reinforces the system which in the first-place causes poverty; taking away the means of livelihood from communities, and replacing it with means of survival.

The Rural Development Project (RDP) was set up to make sure that the affected communities in the Highlands would have access to training and micro-credit to re-establish their livelihoods (which, ironically, were destroyed by a development project), but it was poorly conceived, under-funded, badly implemented and, ultimately, ineffectual in addressing the needs of local people (who were not consulted for Katse, and only minimally so for Mohale). The RDP was widely criticized; even World Bank (2009) reports called it "the sick man of the project," a statement that attests not only to the difficulty of the task at hand but also to the ineffectiveness of its implementation. The Development Fund (DF) was set up by the World Bank to ensure that the LHWP was a poverty-reduction project, thereby justifying the Bank's financing, (World Bank, 2009).

An analysis of Lesotho politics and government capacity to handle such a project might have indicated early on that simply setting up such a Fund would be insufficient to the task. Specific rules on ensuring transparency in the management of the Fund and public information on its activities and programs should have been put in place. An independent oversight committee with the participation of civil society representatives could have helped ensure that the funds would have been allocated to benefit the population of Lesotho and in particular the affected communities in the Highlands. DF, into which royalties and receipts from customs were paid, was to be the centrepiece of Lesotho's overall poverty reduction strategy. According to the World Bank, the Development Fund would be community-driven to finance the priority areas of local communities. In practice, the DF became an instrument of political patronage, and the World Bank attempted to restructure the fund after concluding that its activities were highly

unsatisfactory. In September 2003, the failed Development Fund was closed. Money continued to be pumped into developmentalist "white elephants", while people's lives continued to spiral out of control, (Scudder, 2005).

Development, because of its tendency to promote a neoliberal ideology, has sought the marketing of nature (Duffy 2013; Lorimer 2012). That which is freely found is commodified, over-extracted and eventually diminished. Had development agents paid attention to the importance of multispecies relationships, they would have understood how the interaction of people with water, animals, plants and other species is of importance. However, with the neoliberal approach and its fragmentational approach to the extractable, the focus of knowledge production is the extraction of resources for developmental (financial) gain. In order to refuse the politics of neoliberalism, the dominant contemporary form of capitalism, researchers and policy advisors "should adopt a non-anthropocentric view of the agency of nature and interrogate the status of non-humans as political subjects" in the words of Bakker (2010:34). Further, animals, plants and land have long been used as 'free' labour and 'cheap' nature in the expansion of capitalism (Moore 2015a), drawing attention to how they are bodily enrolled in marketized conservation (Bakker 2010). Beyond viewing other creatures as mere symbols, resources, or background for the lives of humans, scholars in multispecies studies have aimed to provide "thick" accounts of the distinctive experiential worlds, modes of being, and biocultural attachments of other species (Geertz 2003).

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As I approached the camp, I could not help but see how bare it looked. Traces of life were still visible here and there, but the nakedness was much more apparent. I slowed down my pace to take in more of what was before me. A million questions rushing through my mind. The loudest voice was "I wonder how they survive". I found it odd that there were no children playing in the streets nor livestock grazing nor kraals or sties to indicate the presence of livestock. The time I chose to arrive is the time when women are preparing dinner, and men are shouting orders to children who would in return run even further away pretending not to hear the instructions to come help in the home. I continued to walk. Closed doors. Drawn curtains. No curtains. No vegetable gardens. How do they survive, I thought to myself. After six empty houses, I met a lady who explained to me "most of them went back home...there was no life for them here". Home. Life.

The above extract is from my field-notes in March 2016 from my visit to Ha-Tsolo which is one of the first resettlement camps. Due to resettlement, to make way for harnessing and commodification of water, 250 000 people had to make sense of home outside of the home. Out of the 22 households resettled to Ha Tsolo, affectionately known as Thaba-Tseka, only 6 households remain. The rest have either left the houses vacant or have rented them to workers from the nearby factories. The precarious life these people experienced, led to them leaving the camp to go stay with relatives who were not resettled. The same fate of precarity is experienced by people of Makhoakhoeng, Nazareta and Ha Mohale, due to the neoliberalist claws of the commodification of water in Lesotho. The capitalist notion of development embraced by the Lesotho government through the Lesotho Highlands Water Project treaty with South Africa is responsible for the injustices these communities continue to experience due to water extraction as a guise for development.

2.2 For whom is development meant?

For whom is development meant? This question I pose because usually "development agencies are in the business of selling packages and try...to find the right kind of problem that requires a solution they are there to provide" (Ferguson 1985:70). The package sold to Basotho of Nazareta, Ha Mohale and Thaba Tseka was that of a 'better life'. However, large-scale dam and infrastructure projects remain a common and controversial means toward development and poverty reduction in the Global South (Scudder 2006; World Commission on Dams 2000). The social and environmental consequences of large dams have been extensively debated, critics arguing the local effects; resettlement, dislocation, decreased access to natural resources, reveal the contradictions and flawed logic of dams as national development solutions (Scudder 2006). Typically, the poor and marginalized absorb a disproportionate share of the costs of these projects (Roy 2000), such as development-induced resettlement (Hussain 2008). The project prophesied employment, schools, tar roads, running water and electricity as part of a better life. A closer look at these developments will show the demands they made from nature for them to be carried out. Hectares of land which could have been used for food production were sacrificed for roads; roads which do not necessarily benefit affected communities as they are horse riders, not vehicle owners. Running water might have guaranteed safe drinking water, yet it also meant limited human-water interaction, altered customs and introducing new forms of water as discussed in the previous chapter.

Development introduced bare life for communities of Phase I. Displacement of people for a development project suggests to me that those people were in the way of development hence they had to move. The same phenomenon is true for the mass killing of people anywhere in the world. An example may be of the Holocaust. Laws were passed which excluded others from civil society, camps were set up for them; they were in the way for a perfect, untainted, developed Germany. While the scale of the holocaust to resettlement may not be equal, it is the trauma suffered and continuing to be experienced years later that I really want to compare. Just like those in the concentration camps, resettled populations due to large dam construction experienced loss of jobs; many were employed as herd boys or tended to fields, which they could not continue with when they were resettled to Maseru. Furthermore, they experienced a change in health care. Instead of finding cures from their immediate environment, they had to rely on western medicine which is characteristic of health care in Maseru. Some of the visible harsh conditions caused by resettlement brought forth by construction of Katse and Mohale dams include inconvenience, the need for re-acclimatisation in the new environment, loss of jobs, destabilisation and the disruption both of established market system(s) and social order (Scudder, 2005, Molaoa, 2007).

The infinite terror of yet another resettlement program, the insecurity that comes with never belonging anywhere and knowledge that they are disposable, governs the lives of people of Phase I. Policy modifications have increasingly and silently neglected vulnerable communities further pushing them into the margins, thereby permitting their disposability. The empty houses that stand as evidence of death in the Ha Tsolo camp, reflect how life oozed out of that camp. The monetary role of resettlement through policy cannot be ignored or ruled out just as a periphery. Bodies, souls and spirits were left to shrivel and die in an exchange for industries, dams and political power. At the writing of this research study, the continued victory of policy over people was underway. Phase II, where approximately 27000 people were yet to suffer the same fate, was underway. 27000 people yet to be trampled over by policy and money, with bare life awaiting them. The policy vigorously exercises sovereignty over what it had labelled as the value-less portions of the Lesotho population.

In his 2003 article, "Necropolitics", Mbembe theorizes the portrayal of sovereignty in cases where "the generalized instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations" is the central project of power, rather than autonomy (2003:14). The previous chapter on water dynamics portrayed the importance of water and how intricate it is to the communities of Makhoakhoeng, Nazareta and Ha Mohale among many others, yet

the same asset was siphoned from them, leaving them with no power, no identity, no life and battling death daily. I should make an anecdote that death in this context will not be used in the normal context of the absence of life, but it will be used in the context of lack of purpose, identity and fulfilment. The normalised commodification of water acts as a determining factor of who gets to live. Water is life, as LHDA slogan goes can only be attained by a select few, those who can afford to buy water. Those who cannot afford water are therefore facing a life with no life (referring to the water is life slogan). This choice to exercise sovereignty over people, does in fact determines what kind of life one can have, depending on which side of the policy they are on. Should one be on the wrong side of development policy, they have Zoë or bare life; of which the differences are set out in the paragraph below.

The Greeks had multiple ways of defining life; Zoë, which expressed the simple fact of living common to all living beings (animals, men, or gods), and bios, which indicated the form or way of living proper to an individual or a group. Looking at the lives of these communities I interacted with, I found that the life they led was a life of mere existence; bare life, compared to the life they led before in their former homes. A life marked with negotiating and navigating the intricate meaning of life whatever life may be. One Moorosi, aged 65, said "they brought us here to die. Who takes people away from their blood and expect them to continue living?" He and many shared the view that resettlement was a form of death exercised through the LHWP treaty. A higher authority or power determined whether they lived or died. According to Agamben, sovereignty is the exercise of power over others determining if they live or die. Mbembe takes it further saying, "to exercise sovereignty is to exercise control over mortality and to define life as the deployment and manifestation of power" (2003:12).

In a very different type of project, Orlando Patterson's 1982 article on the power relations undergirding the institution of slavery throughout history looks at the politics of death in the form of social death (Patterson, 1982). Where Mbembe sees the power over life and death, and the creation of 'bare life' and sovereignty today through spaces of exception, Patterson's study of historical examples argues that 'bare life' and the 'state of exception' are also produced through certain slave-to-master relationships of power, which create the slave through producing social death. I agree with both scholars' notions of life, death and reproduction of life because looking at how Phase I communities lead their lives, find identity and negotiate existence, I am of an opinion that they are barely living, thus negotiating with death daily. This bare life they continually navigate is because they are slaves to neoliberal thought on development which continues to sideline the poor. Many Basotho and other nations across

the world who have been subjected to similar atrocities, find themselves subjected to greater poverty because often project-affected people are not primary beneficiaries of development but rather they are part of the cost-benefit analysis to be negotiated and minimised, (Goodland, 2007) in Braun (2005). The communities of Brazil, Congo, India and many other nations where social order and form was disrupted through development have suffered the same fate of high psychological costs due to uncertainty, social conflicts, insecurities, loss of land and other resources (Scudder, 1997).

2.3 Capitalism and Development

Through Phase I of the LHWP, the national turn to neoliberal economics in Lesotho, capitalism (to borrow the words of Jason Moore) has been inserted into the web of life. Moore proposes understanding capitalism as a way of organizing nature, including human nature (Moore, 2015). In his book *Capitalism in the Web of Life* he shows how the critique of capitalism-in-nature, rather than capitalism *and* nature is key to understanding the connection between capitalism and ecology. Moore emphasises how the development of capitalism relies on raw materials, labour and livelihoods to maintain ecological surplus (2015: 95). To understand the decree declared by commodification of water has on lives of people of Phase I, I make a connection of neoliberalism to biopolitics and sovereignty, which were discussed in the sub-chapter above. Through access or lack therefore, of money, people can die or live.

As a theory neoclassical approach provides an outline on how the economy can grow based on labour, capital and technology. Often times these variables have a direct impact on the environment. As indicated by Marxist anthropology, the means of production is driven by the extraction of resources, thereby causing a scramble and over-extraction of these resources. Traditional neoclassicals recognise that economic development has generated insurmountable environmental problems, the challenge however is, neoclassicals view economic development as a necessity for achieving a higher level of affluence, which would, in turn, result in more sensitivity to the issues of environmental preservation, (Molaoa, 2007). When addressing the many crises that arise due to the extraction of resources, the foundation is often this theory.

This is because neoclassical theorists assert that, as the level of affluence increases, there will be an exponential increase regarding concerns for environmental protection (York *et al.*, 2003). This line of thought is premised on the notion that environmental quality is a luxury good, affordable and of interest only to the affluent segment of society. Similar views are also shared

by the ecological modernisation theorists. Unless there is the propagation of protection of both human rights and environmental rights - these being more or less two sides of the same coin - then there will not be a future for anybody. Humanistic ethics and bioethics, therefore, recognise the inherent relationship between 'natural history' and 'social history', though the latter has always taken precedence over the former York *et al.*, 2003, Blanco, 2001). Capitalism brews inequalities and violation of civil rights. Beck (1992), in his analysis of a society at risk, states that with capitalism, costs far outweigh the benefits; and the results thereof have been the elevation of the debates on the costs *versus* benefits associated with the construction of large dams against other options of providing reliable water supply. Similarly, Beck (1992) sees technological advancement used in the construction of large dams as increasingly causing modern environmental risks. This is why, despite the economic successes achieved through some of these dams, they have, on the other hand, created significant changes in the pre-existing environment, which has been detrimental to both the biophysical and also the social environments (Beck 1992, Molaoa 2007).

Until recently, Lesotho's economy depended on the export of water, diamond extraction and workers remittances from SACU. With the decline in the mining industry, many workers were retrenched thus the decline in the economy that depended on their remittances. An African Outlook Report compiled by UNDP stated that with the fall in remittances and an increased need of water in South Africa, the volume of water being pumped into South Africa was increased, pushing water export from 25% contribution to GDP to 26%, (UNDP, 2016). According to International Monetary Fund (2016), the annual growth rate of GDP is at 4.6%. The fact that nature can supply, and support capital creation has become a key move within the neoliberal camps. Nature (including human nature) can no longer produce anything for the sake of producing- the chase for an improved GDP has forced a transition to a higher level of capitalism and extraction. To push the GDP, nature is always compromised, that is because "capitalism is not an economic system; it is a way of organizing nature," Jason Moore (2015:2), therefore it will through policies, pack and quantify nature to serve economic growth. Simply put, GDP driven policies often overlook the need for balance between natural capital and ecosystem services. GDP, as man-made capital, is an anthropogenic asset benefiting from the ecosystem services.

Neoliberalism encourages modernity, which of course is money and economy driven. In an ideal world of neoliberal economy, fictitious commodities like water and land can only be accessed by those who can give money in exchange of such a commodity. Capitalism dressed

as modernity is the engine behind neoliberal nuances, determining who lives and who dies. Though it may appear to have apprehension for analytical de-centring of capitalism in the economy, neoliberalism can still be recognized as a political, social and cultural practice, grounded in a financialised economic rationality that enshrines social contradictions and cuts people off from the metabolism of the soil, in the process fomenting social injustices. As far as this research work is concerned, neoliberalism is “a violent logic and sadistic discourse that promotes a diabolically horrid set of economic policies and self-making practices” (S. Springer 2016: 14). He goes on to say neoliberalism should be met with offensive language and action because it bears vulgar outcomes. To this he continues to say “fuck neoliberalism...fuck the way it ravaged the environment. Fuck the endless cycle of accumulation and the cult of growth...fuck the desire for profit over the need of community” (Springer, 2016: 9).

2.4 Conclusion

While modernity and development claim to improve lives of people, that claim is not supported by the literature reflected in this chapter. Not only are people burdened with the need to have money to fit into the monetary system, but they have also lost the resources to which they previously had free access because it was part of the commons. The idea that the financialisation and commodification of nature will lead to better livelihoods for all is ecologically illiterate, and economically unfeasible. To quote Jason Hickel from Twitter on October 12, 2020: “We call them "advanced economies", but on what grounds can they be considered "advanced" if they fail, systematically, to operate in balance with the living world...? The "economy" is ultimately our material relationship with each other and with the rest of the living world. Do we want that relationship to be based on extraction and exploitation? Or do we want it to be based on reciprocity and care?”

3 Research Methodology

“The method of science is logical and rational. The method of the humanities is one of the imagination, sympathetic understanding.”

Andrew Louth, 1983

As the hired taxicab negotiated the narrow gravel road into Ha Thetsane, a village surrounded by clothing factories in Maseru, I stared out the window, captivated by the barrenness of the land that we were passing. The cab driver was singing along to the song blasting on radio:

“Ngoanaka bona botle ba Lesotho, (Look at Lesotho’s beauty my child)

O khabile ka botala, (She prides herself in being green)

Metsi ke liphororo (Water flows everywhere)

Lijo ke mantletsetletse” (Food is abundant)

The song was sung by Mantša, a Lesotho singer, and titled 'Ntsune ngoanaka', and released in 1992). Almost three decades later, I wondered if Mantša still felt the same about water’s abundance in the land of his birth. Would he ever consider writing another song, on the current Lesotho that I was seeing through the window of this taxicab? When the taxicab finally dropped me at Thetsane, I was met by Mookho. She and I met at a taxi rank, where she was talking about water shortages in her area, Ha Thetsane, the first host community for the communities resettled for the construction of Katse Dam. The conversation at the taxi rank ended up with Mookho and I agreeing to meet again in March 2016 when I start my data collection. She is a member of the host community, who had lived in the area long before the LHWP settlement program. Her knowledge of the village before and after hosting the resettled communities made her an ideal gatekeeper.

The fieldwork started with identifying prospective participants, who would be easy to spot because their houses are similar yet different from those of host community members. The concrete block with corrugated iron roofed houses, with small plots, water taps, and barbed wire fencing stretched across the village. We walked to the house closest to Mookho’s house, the aim being to introduce myself and the purpose of my stay in the area. The woman washing clothes in a steel tub quickly explained that she had hired that house from the owner. Mookho

and I moved to the following house, which was empty. There were no curtains on the windows, no furniture inside the house and no vegetables from the small garden. It took us two hours to go around the camp and realise that only three houses were occupied by original tenants, while the other 35 houses were either empty or rented out to factory workers.

“What happened? Why are these houses empty”, I asked a tenant called Mpho*. “They brought us here to die ... so most of us went back home to the lives we were used to ... there is a certain way of doing things, and this, this is not the way!” she had replied. It took me 18 months in the field to comprehend what Mpho meant. Eighteen months of interviews; of sitting and grinding mealie meal; of attending funerals; of walking people to doctors; of group discussions. From March 2016 to September 2017, I was actively collecting data in the Lesotho Highlands Water Project affected areas of Makhoakhoeng, Nazareta and Ha Mohale. At the time of writing this thesis, I still stayed in Makhoakhoeng, pursuing more stories on water commodification and its effects on relationships people have with ecology, life, and wellbeing in their ancestral lands.

Upon realising that the Thetsane camp had been abandoned, I decided to move to the nearest Lesotho Highlands Development Authority camp, which was Makhoakhoeng. Noticing how Makhoakhoeng was enclaved in the suburb of Ha Matala in Maseru, I decided to add a camp in a different demographic data, which lead to Nazareta and Ha Mohale. While there are few other villages which suffered the same plight of relocation, loss and resilience, these three villages have a high number of people affected by construction of Katse and Mohale Dams. The stories of the participants differed depending on the degree of loss they had experienced but were similar in respect of the things they lost and had to recreate.

The photographs below are of the two types of housing participants in this study live in. Figure 10 shows the most common form of housing in the Mohale and Thaba Tseka areas. These houses require little to no money to be maintained, as the building and roofing material are found in the area, for free. Majority of the participants prefer these houses as they are cheap to maintain, including to heat. Figure 11 shows houses built by LHDA, made of brick and corrugated iron. Maintaining these houses is more expensive, as one has to get tiles and paint among other. Heating these houses is also an expense as one cannot use the traditional form of heating like in the huts. For these reasons, some of the people vacated the houses to go back in staying in huts like those in figure 10.



Figure 10: Houses at Ha Kori, a village in the Mohale Catchment. Residents here lost grazing lands and fields but they did not have to relocate. Photograph by author 2016



Figure 11: New form of housing provided by the LHWP when, to whom, where. Also visible in this picture are the Jojo tanks used to collect water . These tanks are significant because they replaced wells and river banks, which served both as water sources and socialization spaces. Photograph by author 2016

This research study had 106 participants of which 89 were available throughout the study, which meant I was able to have talk with them throughout the eighteen months of research I spent in the area. Of the 106 that I came to know, 30 participants were from Nazareta, 23 participants were from Ha Mohale, and 53 participants were from Makhoakhoeng. In all the research areas there were more women participants than men, yet during conversations and focus group discussions men were more vocal than women. The fewer number of men available was since men were generally in one form of employment or the other, while women usually stayed at home to look after members of the household: a familiar pattern in rural Africa where ecologies had been impoverished, and cash earnings were needed. In the presence of men, women are usually less vocal because men are said to be mouth pieces of the family and decision makers. But when I was with women alone women were able to speak up and even correct or gave more clarity to some of the statements the men had said.

Through the conversations I had with the participants of this research, I came to understand the dam in all its possible modes of existence: as a political structure; a collection of water, and an assertion of humanity's victory over the landscape. I came to understand how identity of Phase I communities were reproduced by loss of water which they so closely identified with. Bearing in mind the sacredness of water and the current state of water being a commodity in Lesotho, this research study outlines the way lives had to change, how norms and cultures had to make way for development and how alternative lives and forms of worship came to be part of everyday life for those whose lives were affected by these mega infrastructures.

It was my hope that the study will benefit from the techniques of ethnography to give an account of how the communities of Phase I reconfigured relationships and lives post Katse and Mohale Dam. Daily experiences which manifest in social meanings are best observed and understood through ethnographic research. I rented a two room *lelaene* (rented house) from the local chief, which removed the title of researcher from me and automatically endorsed me with a *moahi* (a resident) title. As *moahi*, I found I had an easier access to people and their life stories. Basking in the sun, canning peaches, myself and other women from the villages I participated in, would talk about issues of childbirth, marriage, death and rites of passage, which all had roots in the local ecology of water, soil and livestock tending. Through these conversations, the relationship people had with the landscape and its ecology became apparent. Other months, I travelled to Nazareta, where I mainly interacted with livestock keepers like Sabata. From attending animal shows, going sheep shearing and attending community dispute settlements, I attended funerals and weddings. All these functions not only made me one with communities but also acted as a blueprint for understanding communities.

At Ha Mohale, I found communal activities were more age- and sex-organised than in the two other localities. This organization included and excluded persons, guaranteeing the passing of knowledge as and when needed. Initially, it had proved hard to gain entry to some of groups and their activities because I was titled *ofisiri ea morero* (an officer from LHDA) but as soon as the community understood I was a learner, they opened up and granted me access to all groups with exception to male circumcision. This 'being one' with the people, was the best way to go around collecting data as opposed to other means of data collection, because these communities have been subjected to research protocols by differing categories thus dehumanizing them in some way. One participant once said, "they come here with papers, and all day if you're not answering "yes-no", you have to tell them how poor you are ... and we now know how to answer them ... I am glad you are not asking such questions ...". Thus, I

came to understand that questionnaires and structured interviews would not be the best options for this kind of research.

In this chapter, held together by the argument that the relationship people have with water is of co-dependence, I narrate, describe and show through use of pictures how I went about identifying the field, collecting data and other research designs that go into making comprehensive research. According to Waldo Emerson et al (1995), ethnographic field research involves “the study of groups and people as they go about their everyday lives” (Emerson et al 1995: 1). Face-to-face interactions allow an ethnographer to be able to capture the ‘otherness’ of a group or people being studied through writing down accounts of what happened during face-to-face encounters, which according to anthropologist Clifford Geertz is meant to “inscribe the social discourses...” (Geertz 1973: 19).

When talking about an entry into a field, I am not referring to going a particular place or space but rather entering into a space or place where I am fully conscious the rawness and availability of data. Leaning on Gupta and Ferguson (1997), I therefore considered my daily observations and experiences as field because the field site can not only be interpreted by space or place, but rather by being in a place or space. This chapter is anchored on autoethnography and ethnography as methods of data collection. Autoethnography and ethnography are similar in that they both allow people’s emotions and experiences to be presented in the data, while other scientific methods may not be that flexible. The only difference between the two is that autoethnography is a personal account of the ethnographer, whereas ethnography is an account of participants in the study. Because of the nature of this study, which is looking at relationships of people to water and other nonhuman species, I needed a research tool which could be able to “translate the moments and meaning of human [and nonhuman] social interactions” (Tony Adams, Stacy Jones and Carolyn Ellis, 2015: 9). They further note that social life in itself is messy and full of uncertainties therefore researchers should employ a method which will embrace the chaos of doing life (Adams et al, 2015). In the paragraphs which follow, the dissertation will have narrations of my experiences and of other participants in the study. Names of participants who required their names changes are marked with an asterisk (*) to portray that such a name is pseudonym. The choice was given to each participant as they signed the consent form (attached in appendix).

3.1 Research Methods

3.1.1 Narratives

“...I don't know my child, I don't know” nkho Nteboheleng Mothobi, aged 83 murmured as she wiped the tears oozing her wrinkled old face. She was one of the oldest participants in my research study. She lived alone a gated compound in the Makhoakhoeng camp. The three roomed house she lived in was cold -- from lack of heat and the lack of human voices and laughter. Her husband had died a few months after they had been resettled from Likalaneng. Recalling the drama that had unfolded when her husband had to be buried was the cause of the tears oozing down her tears ten years after the incident. “I don't know why they would be so cruel ... they exhumed him you know. Two weeks after he was buried ... the skin from the cow used to bury him had not even dried up ...”

Her story was repeated in scores and scores of conversations I had with the people I encountered during my time in the field. For most people, storytelling is a natural way of recounting experience, a practical solution to a fundamental problem in life, creating reasonable order out of experience. Not only are we continually producing narratives to order and structure our life experiences, but we are also constantly being bombarded with narratives from the social world we live in. We create narrative descriptions about our experiences for ourselves and others, and we also develop narratives to make sense of the behaviour of others (Zellermayer, 1997). For psychotherapist Donald Polkinghorne (1988), there are no people without narratives. Every person has a story, what they find to make them. One time in a PhD workshop, we were required to narrate why we chose our research topics. Many of colleagues had professional reasons as to how they came about their research topics. When my turn came, I recalled the huge truck that had loaded the belongings of my grandmother and I and taken them and us to a place 300 kilometres away from what we called home. Tears oozed down my cheeks, in that moment, I became my story, my story became me.

Later on, when the time came for me to listen and write about my participants, I recalled this day and made sure I presented each person well through the story they shared. Life itself might thus be considered a narrative inside which we find a number of other stories. A poet and author Ben Okri says “in storytelling there is always transgression, and in all art. Without transgression, without the red boundary, there is no danger, no risk, no frisson, no experiment, no discovery, and no creativity” (Okri, 2014: 86). Much of what we in social sciences and

humanities know is based on storytelling, and following the trail led by the stories narrated. Therefore, this method as a research technique formed much of my research because narratives allow for people's voices to come forth as allowed by ethnography. As a research tool, it "provides researchers with rich framework through which they can investigate the ways humans experience the world depicted through their stories" (Webster and Mertova, 2007: 1).

The context of how people living together relate to a dam through various activities, or lack thereof by comparison to the experience of living with a river or stream, can best be understood through the narratives of the people themselves, triangulated with the observations of the researcher within the society. In order to participate in their daily lives, I needed to form close relations with residents. Listening to people's narratives, both as individuals and groups, achieved this. Listening to them narrate how they related with different water bodies, how they interpreted river behaviour and negotiated with water gods gave me insight into what they meant when they said, "selling water is selling our souls". Narration was best suited for this research as it opened the floor for people to exchange stories and shared experiences with water, tanks, taps and other nonhuman species around them. The similarities in conversations lubricated our discussions leading to the discovery of numerous shared insights on issues of water, identity and reconfiguration of life after loss and resettlement. Moreover, because this study was different from various studies in these locations before, it meant people were able to discuss different aspects of their lives.

Many studies on the LHWP (based on reading widely on this subject) are either on natural science or socio-economic (which inclined more to the economic aspect of the research). These subjects do not engage these particular subjects in totality. With the majority of participants holding a primary leaving certificate, I do not think they could give better input into previous studies. On the other hand, this research was about lived experiences. This means people in this study were subjects rather than objects of the study. Moreover, ethnography and its many methods employed here, allowed for a natural unwinding of events. Narration as being discussed in this section was at times done through song, through weeping and at times through both. This manner of collecting data cannot be found in a questionnaire or survey. One time, while discussing childbirth, I had noticed that Nthathi had been silent. My first thought had been, just like me, she did not have a child nor experienced pregnancy. She then started sobbing. The room went silent. 'I can still remember the foul smell' she wept. I gave her an eye, which she knew meant 'can I record this?' she nodded. I pressed my recorder.

“I was 14. I had not told my grandmother about my pregnancy. Where would I start? We never really spoke about periods, so she never asked why I had skipped so many months. {weeping} I decided to keep the baby. Then on that day I felt cramps. {weeping} You know, I didn’t know what to expect. Then I felt hot water on my legs. {weeping} and a foul smell.” This was Nthati narrating her miscarriage. While the aim for the day had been rituals of childbirth and the eminent role of water in such rituals, but the nature of the research allowed variety such that even unintended subjects were brought up. After the narration by Nthati, these women spoke of how *metsi a popelo* (amniotic fluid) is as special as a flowing river. They spoke of how Nthati’s foul smelling water represented an uninvited presence in her womb.

As we make our way through life, we have continuous experiences and dialogic interactions both with our surrounding world and with ourselves. All of these are woven together into a seamless web, where they might strike one as being overwhelming in their complexity. According to anthropologist Francis Nyamnjoh (2011), narratives substantiate the ethnographic data interpreted and analysed by the researcher. Social narratives allow informants to be acknowledged in knowledge production, it authenticates the theory the researcher might have indicated. These narratives portray local meanings of everyday life through a locality existing in a world which is in permanent mobility (Nyamnjoh, 2013).

Narrative research is increasingly used in studies of educational practice and experience, chiefly because teachers, like all other human beings, are storytellers who individually and socially lead storied lives (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). Narrative research is thus the study of how human beings experience the world, and narrative researchers collect these stories and write narratives of experience (Gudmundsdottir, 2001). Growing up in Lesotho, I knew about *khanyapa*. Among the many stories shared by Nkhono Maleshapa, more of which are found in the coming chapters, is the story of the *khanyapa*. This is a snake which is known for healing powers it possesses, it is said to be as big as anaconda. It is found in the *koetsa* and can only be visited by select few, some traditional healers and certain chiefs. What is not known is whether there is one of this snake or a couple. However, whenever it changes localities, there is always a havoc. Whirlwind uprooting trees, roofs being blown off, people drowning, all these are associated with this snake. This snake is so prominent among community members that even the LHDA personnel had to be told about it as they mapped how Senqunyane river would be inundated. In narrating this story, Nkhono shared specific knowledge about the relationship of the community to a snake, which is much better than just general information of large groups of people, which surveys turn to do.

The aim of this research was to understand the relationship people have with water and how its commodification changes that the relationship without acknowledging that it has done so. When talking of relations of meaning and social relations anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2004) points out that the purpose of some things may be similar, yet the premise may not be so. Water may be seen as life for both Phase I communities and LWHP but the meaning of life to each group is different. The similarity of viewing water as “life” subjected Phase I communities to forced resettlement, to life of precarity and introduced them to new type of water. When talking to ntate Moleleki, one of the residents of Ha Mohale, he says “water is life. Without it my wife would have died. She uses that water cleanse herself every morning.” At the same time ntate Mokhathi* from WASCO says “water is life. Last year alone millions of Maluti (Lesotho currency) were spent on water. And millions more are owed by people around Maseru alone”.

The best way to understand this from the residents’ individual and shared meaning was through the narratives they gave. According to Nyamnjoh (2011), narratives substantiate the ethnographic data interpreted and analysed by the researcher. As much as research is objective to some extent, social narratives allow informants to be acknowledged in knowledge production. I relied on ethnography, participant observations, open-ended interviews and focus group discussions to be able to smell, see, taste, touch and embody the different forms of data that was made available through different senses and methods. Mbembe (2000) argues that in order to understand the visible we first have to investigate the invisible. Engaging all my senses through ethnography, observation and listening, I was able to decipher data differently and more accurately than if I would have chosen other methods like surveys and questionnaires. Listening to narratives, looking at people’s faces, sharing food and extending empathy assisted in gathering more authentic information which could not be observable otherwise.

Makhoakhoeng residents shared many of their life stories and personal opinions on the meaning of sociality and how relationships are maintained. These stories allowed for conceptual flexibility as residents shared on relationships at large, talking about how relationships are configured as well as the conflicts that arise. Ethnography itself is a narration of daily social practices and therefore produces knowledge about social experiences, beliefs and personal feelings. These narratives portray local meanings of everyday life through a locality existing in a world which is in permanent mobility (Nyamnjoh, 2013). Furthermore, narratives reveal individual aspirations which are not observable.



Figure 13: Pictured with Sabata. One of the Key informants from Nazareta. Behind us is a temporary structure he had to construct for his livestock. He says he is sceptical of making any long-term plans lest he has to move again. 2017

3.1.2 Participant Observation

“No, hold his head up with the curve of your arm...now spin, slowly...yes that way...the rain should soak both of you, don’t shield him...yes like that...now put him on his back and leave him alone...so now you know how to *beheletsa ngoana puleng* (a ritual for an infant, which is believed to prevent a child from being a thief)”. In the field I was an observer and also a participant as exemplified in the text above. Participant Observation allows a dense engagement with the residents helping to limit being a visible researcher. According to Ross (2010), participant observation requires attentiveness in research so that the researcher eliminates preconceived research ideas in order to observe the actual status quo. This method was integral in developing an understanding of how people understand water, how they negotiated with the water sources as well as dialogues on water and other Beings that inhabit

the water bodies. These observable performances together with the residents' interpretations were integral in my ability to use the experience-distant concept.

Participant observation was a crucial technique as I was able to experience and engage in daily practices which would boost my understanding of how residents related to each other. Observing residents' interactions, conversations and bodily gestures assisted in my understanding of relationship formations, feelings and sociability. Participating in activities like the ancestral appeasement at nate Mohlomi's place not only opened my eyes to the new ways of doing things for him and his family, but I also got to feed the Mohlomi ancestors as a guest. Being a participant and observer meant I got to relate with and understand negotiation of use of space and resources. My presence and participation further helped me to better understand some of the particular discussions I engaged in with residents about resilience, make-do-life and alternatives. In figure 14 below, I am among the people of Ha Jobere, Mokhotlong, who were gathered to hear about relocation for the construction of Polihali Dam, as part of LHWP Phase II. It was important to attend this gathering so as to see how different the community participation would be as opposed to Phase I, which was my area of study.

“Go check the meter. Maybe these children messed with the meter ... still nothing? How are we going to have a baptism without water? You see Kefiloe, this is what I was telling you about. WASCO can decide to switch off their water just like that, and it will be up to you to make a plan ... now tell me, how do I baptise these people when there is no water? Already using a hose pipe was bizarre but I have gotten used to it ... what do I do now?” hammered Motlatsi, a young pastor who inherited a house at Makhakhoeng when his aunt died. He pastors a small branch of a Zionist movement, and they all congregate in one of the rooms. On this particular Sunday, I had visited the church because of the impending baptism, and I had wanted to see how a hose pipe baptism was to be carried out. Stories like this one filled pages of journal.



Figure 14: Attending a pitso (public gathering). Picture by author. 2017

Being a participant, I found myself making suggestions, providing solutions, which we were informed by AnSA ethical stances, and at times failing forward. An instance of "fail forward" was when I attended a pitiki, which is generally for married women, but I was given access because of my position as a researcher. At the pitiki women talk of their birthing experiences, especially *ho phumuha nkho* (when the amniotic water breaks) and if there is any pregnant woman, she is used as a mannequin on whom examples are hung. On this particular incident there was no visibly pregnant woman, so I was chosen to be a mannequin. "You are here to learn, isn't it", the women were saying, as I was undressing. Having never given birth or seen one give birth, I did all the wrong things, breathing when I had to push, not opening my legs wide enough and so on. The next day, my failure granted me access to have a focus group discussion in which birthing, and initiation schools were being discussed- these topics are off limits to unmarried or uncircumcised.

To further broaden my understanding of communality and social relations, I walked around the village visiting different families helping mainly with chores that involved water as I saw that

doing so easily brought forth the issues on water. The plastic water tanks in Ha Mohale and Nazareta often caused a stir in conversations. “Unless it’s a lake, still water is not good for us,” Nthati, who often accompanied me everywhere once pointed out. While I understood Nthati did not worry that *jojo* tanks may have Bisphenol A, I was aware of the health hazards of still water she implied. These polythene water tanks are made of plastic that is BPA free (Pioneer Water Tanks, 2000). In many conversations, including the public gathering pictured above, people had voiced how *metsi ana a emeng a ba kulisang* (the still water made them sick). Geertz (1993) remarks that small facts speak to large issues, this pathway mapping assisted in carefully observing choices that residents take to configure social relations. Moreover, sharing different ideas and observations of this research in discussions helped me to further understand different values of socialization by the riverbanks and depths. It also helped in refining my approaches of this research. Ross (2010) attests that all knowledge is produced in relation to other people we share ideas with such as those that we work with and those against the research findings. The findings of this research have therefore produced knowledge through the ethnography of communities and the space the rivers occupied in their hearts.

3.1.3 Focus Group Discussions



Figure 15: Having a laugh while waiting for others to arrive for a focus group discussion. In the picture, from left to right: Ntathisi, Mamaliehe, ntate Molefi, Mantatisi and Itumeleng. Picture by author 2017

As part of data collection, I held a Water Day workshop for Phase I communities to open up conversations on water generally but also to hear deeper thoughts on how lives that revolved around flowing water, viewed life marked by bottled, dammed and tanked water. In this workshop I had participants from Ministry of Natural Resources, their role was to discuss how the water from Katse and Mohale dams was being used, what benefits came out of the project and if Lesotho was facing water scarcity. Among other participants also were LHDA, Transformation Resource Centre and Seinoli. The last two organisations are mainly involved in social justice concerns and benefitted the discussion by drawing on legal issues concerning uprooting people's lives, that were otherwise out of my league.

I also had two group discussions in each community towards the last days of collecting data, as pictured in figure 15 above. The first discussion was at Manthati's place. This discussion had nine participants including Nthati who was always with me. The number group was supposed to have been four, but some participants did not show up, while others excused themselves. In these discussions I opened up the discussion on small gardens and how hail was destroying their crops. My intension was to get the conversation and discussion around traditional healing and the role of ancestors in protecting water and crops. While conducting interviews I had learned people had different views on how and why gardens and water were to be protected hence the conversation. The groups had more men than women which was odd because most of the participants were women. The discussions differed in language, depth and length depending on location. The groups in Makhoakhoeng didn't give much detail on issues of muti and strengthening but expressed their views more on water use and how the change in accessing water affects their lives. Differently, people in Ha Mohale gave more details in use of muti for animals and crops, protection of wells and streams. The discussions at Nazareta were more on social lives and changes that came with moving away from their locality.

3.1.4 In-depth Interviews and Life Histories

According to Geertz (2000), ethnographic research methods allow one to immerse in the research field to gain poignant insights of social experience. He also talks of "hanging out" as an alternative or complementing method of collecting ethnographic data. After identifying three women, in 2016, who acted as my gatekeepers, I met them and their families and enjoyed many casual conversations with people about daily occurrences. Quantitative research

methodologies can produce data which gives general dynamics of social statistics. For instance, through quantitative research we can numerically assess social demographics such as age, income and gender. These research methods, however, cannot quantify experiences, meanings of day-to-day practices, processes that form social relations or people's value of social processes. Through the discourse of cultural relativism, anthropology embraces the very fact that people create meanings in the worlds they live in, they create their own values and practices which may differ globally but remain realities to people that create and share them. There is therefore uniqueness in each society which is understood through immersing oneself in the context of those that socially relate through space and time. Through ethnographic methods the meanings people make are only able to be understood when put into context. I am not ignoring the concept of globalization, which has increased urban mobility, where there is rapid social change through the influence of global connections. However, people reside in their local worlds and to understand the meanings they create within their locality, ethnography is vital.

I spent most of my research period conversing with residents who eventually contributed enormously towards this research. This method opened up a platform of storytelling and residents sharing their everyday experiences and practices. Conversations that we exchanged were made possible by building mutual trust through hanging out. In some instances, I was able to learn personal stories about residents' family life and abuse which people at times faced. Such information would not have obtained merely through interviews due to the context of this research. Such sensitive stories are only shared in circumstances where trust is mutually established between people. Moreover, through these conversations I was able to judge characters to some extent which allowed me to learn the kinds of stories people tell about the others. The "hanging out" method together with participant observation therefore made it possible for me to understand people's narratives and social meanings from individual context.

I found that as a researcher one of the skills that I always had to polish is learning to listen, thinking and talking almost at the same time. The interviews were long and most times back-to-back, and careful listening was important. One time I had to comfort a crying baby, while the mother washed clothes. It was hard to have a proper interview over a crying baby, but it was also the only day that the mother was available. I found listening skills helped because when I kept silent, the baby stopped crying. All I said for thirty minutes was "oh? Really ... oh? Really?" This I did while I thought of follow up questions I would ask once the child was asleep. The other skill that came with in-depth interviews is probing. It allowed me to ask questions like "how is that? In what way? How do you mean? What would be an example of

that?" Which in return gives a participant more room to give information that would otherwise have escaped through the cracks. The interviews were open-ended which meant participants gave as much details as they wished, but also, they often left much unsaid or brought in a lot of not so relevant information.

3.1.5 Field-notes and Photographs

Jacobson (1991) speaks of recording one's thoughts and observations as frequently as possible, in order to see the patterns that form from the observations. I kept a research journal which I scribbled in my observations, thoughts, follow up questions, details of participants and ties for meetings. I prepared field notes on my observations and conversations during fieldwork and after as I reflected on the data. I wrote detailed notes on reported experiences as I also recorded descriptive accounts of my observations. Moreover, I made more notes of my own interpretations as I observed, and these helped to develop further lines of questioning towards understanding notions of social relations. As far as possible, I noted down specific words and phrases that were significant in helping to conceptualise residents' life experiences.



Figure 16 aerial picture of Mohale dam and the Senqunyane river. Also visible in the picture is the village of Likalaneng, which was resettled to Makhoakhoeng. Some of the villagers in Makhoakhoeng refer to Makhoakhoneng as Likalaneng, 2019.

I read that journal the other day and found it had more that I realised. Some of the entries in the journal I could have forgotten otherwise, some did not make sense at the time but as I read them now, they contribute a lot to what I learned. This journal was also important to supplement the technologies. An example is of how one day after having 20 long interviews on my audio recorder, I found I had only 19, the longest interview and most detailed bay far was somehow deleted. If I had not recorded that interview in my journal also, I could have lost everything concerning that specific interview. I also carried audio recording equipment and a camera with me to complement my notebook. The importance of photographs is that they capture on document life crises and ceremonies, transmits cultural events to successive generations, and documents social conflicts (Jacobson 1991). I look at some of the pictures, of the landscape, people and things and I come to have a clearer picture of what was said that I really didn't understand or missed. Looking at the pictures of water levels before and after resettlement in the Katse and Mohale areas, I could see how it would be easy to have intimate relationship with water. The water was one with the people, yet not threatening or dangerous. Also, looking at the pictures of old and new forms of housing, one can see why the communities would be disgruntled over the new houses, yet also understand why LHWP could have viewed those new houses as a form of making 'better life'.



Figure 17 A village around Maliba-Matso river. Before being inundated, people in this community would do their laundry on the banks, have animals graze here and children swim in the river. Visible now, is an overflowing river and empty houses and kraals. Photograph by Thuso Green

Figures 16 and 17 above show the proximity of houses and villages to the Senqunyane and Maliba-Matso Rivers respectively. These photographs form an intricate part of my methodologies, as they give a visual representation of how I went about data collection and why each location is imperative for the study. They also give a visual representation of how life was before resettlement, the proximity to water sources and thus the relationship to these water sources.

3.1.6 Multispecies Ethnography and Framework

This research work is based on Basotho's understanding of water as alive, as part of social life almost to the point of being understood as a species, or as a body with personhood, and how these understandings change when the same water is commodified. To engage with water as a subject, I need to interact with it as I would a person. Allowing for the personhood of water (in ways that are dissimilar to the legal personhood of a company such as LHWP), I needed a research tool and theoretical framing which would allow for water to be seen and heard for what it is, not what it is perceived to be in a different world-experience. Moreover, I needed a research tool which would allow decentering of humans and allowed multi-layered relationships of human and other species to unfold. The ethnographic of multispecies ethnography writes the human as a kind of corporeality that comes into being relative to multispecies assemblages, rather than as a biocultural given as the papers from the World Archaeological Congress of 1986 reveal (Ingold 1994). A definition of "multispecies ethnography" as ethnographic research and writing tool could be that it is attuned to life's emergence within a shifting assemblage of agentic beings, (Tsing 2015).

The intertwined existence of people, water, animals, ancestors, and other species is the context within which I will be referring to multispecies relations, both as a theory and as a data collection tool. A multispecies approach as a theoretical framework I employ in an attempt to decentre the human in conversations of life and relationality, giving platform for other species to be treated as subjects not peripheries. In studying dams and its effects on species, there has been a predictable tendency to lean towards scientifically understood species only like people, vegetation, aquatic life and water (in its chemical form). Landforms, rivers (and dams) and animals are social beings, that is, they are forms of persons, without necessarily being human.

These nonhuman entities have relationships, and a way of being. According to Basotho belief systems, ancestors occupy rivers, caves and grave and this means the waters flowing from Bokong and Maliba-Matso Rivers are therefore alive, making Katse Dam alive. During cleansing ceremonies, when someone has been widowed or a woman who lost a baby, they are dipped into a river, to connect them to their ancestors who will in turn take away the misfortune of death. The living and flowing waters are believed to have direct powers from the ancestors who make rivers and caves their homes.

The way people interact with each other, with themselves and other beings around them (alive or not), is characteristic of multispecies existence. This includes the water snake, the rain god and ancestors, in the daily lives of many Basotho. Anthropomorphism (Rakotsoane, 2003), which is a practice of revering animals, especially snakes and cows, is at the centre of life for Basotho. The role of the water snake in the daily lives of Basotho is profoundly one of the reasons that people nurture their relationship to water. With cows, the worship is less obvious, but can be traced in the language and reference to cows. Though Lesotho is 90% Christian (CHAL, 2006), most people practice syncretism. Before colonisation, Basotho belief systems included snake worship, water cleansing and ancestral worship. While colonialism and the coming of Christianity opposed these practises, many have found ways of interacting them in their lives as more of cultural norm than a religious one. These new ways of interactions with other species, especially water, is important in this study because it explains why water commodification is detrimental to social norms. Multispecies relations afford this work a strong point from which I argue that commodification of water by the LHWP dismantles not only relationships people have with water but also their identities as birthed by interactions with water and others around them.

My choice of a multispecies approach is because I found it allowed me to go beyond 'the normal' way of doing research. The norm in Anthropology, for the longest time, has been to study people. However, studying water or other species needed a more inclusive technique, like multispecies relations. The conversations participants had were well accommodated because of this new school of thought. New, especially in the context of studying water and other ecologies around Lesotho. Often studies are either solely social, environmental or religious, as though these entities are not intertwined and constantly influencing each other. It will be for the first time, to my knowledge, that a multispecies approach is applied to tackle issues of water commodification and its impacts on Basotho. For as long as there is linear way of understanding water (which is that of an extractable resource) or its relationality to people,

projects like the LHWP will continue causing irreversible harm to co-existing communities of people and non-human species.

To narrate better the stories of multispecies relationship in the Phase I communities, I undertook an ethnographic study which started in March 2016 to October 2017 in Lesotho. My aim was to follow stories of water as depicted by those who were affected by the LHWP. The most important aspect of undertaking this research was to be aware that stories and accounts of life are told from a multispecies context. I had to follow the flow of water and unpack stories it told. This I did by following the flow of Maliba-Matso river that spits into the Katse Dam. In essence, by following the stories and flows of Maliba-Matso, I followed flows of belief systems, connections and disconnections birthed damming of this river and commodification of water. Ethnography allowed me to be the main instrument in the research and to also bring along with me other different species in the study as subjects not objects. Unlike many other research methodologies, ethnography as a method of inquiry immerses the researcher in the participants' lives and enables a relationship to be cultivated throughout the study's duration and beyond. This relationship becomes important in understanding subjects in their own context; contexts which otherwise would be tainted by researcher bias. Ethnography was best suited for my research because it allowed me to follow the flow of stories and rivers and draw a conclusion on how the changing flows of water impacted the flows of relationships among the multispecies communities.

These are 106 of 27 000 people whose plight and suffering are documented based on socio-economic gain; new brick houses, water taps, shortened distance to services. The two dams represented here sought to justify their presence through engaging me through flow of the many rivers mentioned in this work. The other six people were professionals, whose fields and expertise fed my own work. Professor Rakotsoana is a lecturer at National University of Lesotho, in the department of Religious studies. He has written widely on Basotho belief systems and their relationship with the water snake. He also speaks of appeasement of ancestors is closely linked to the relationship Basotho have with water and thus with the water snake. Pictured below is Tseli, performing one of the common ways to appease the ancestors.



Figure 18 Tseli, one of my key informants who uses water to heal. In this picture she is seen pouring goat blood into the river to appease ancestors of one of her patients. Photograph provided by Tseli.

I also engaged with two officials from LHDA, one is a resettlement officer for Phase I. She shared information on how resettlement programs were rolled out and how the mistakes committed against people and environment were to be resolved in the next phase of the project. The second officer was the branch manager at the Phase II offices. He had allowed me to contribute, based on my findings, to the compensation policies for Phase II which is currently underway. Transformation Resource Centre (TRC) is one of the NGOs in Lesotho which has been fighting and documenting war against LHWP on issues of compensation for resettles. I had two officials from this organization, namely Mabusetsa Thamae, whose work with Lorri Pottinger is referenced in this work, and Tsikoane Peshoane who was, at the time, Democracy and Human Rights officer. They spoke on how they were advocating for social justice as far as development agencies and communities were concerned, especially mining and large dam construction. Lastly, I spoke with Thabo Lesoetsa* from WASCO who was at the time the compliance manager. While this does not deal with water distribution or its management in Lesotho, it was important to converse with this person to have an idea of water consumption in

Maseru, and what how water was distributed on the backdrop of water commodification and impending droughts.

The stories of the 106 participants differed in nature depending on the degree of loss they suffered and resilience they each faced, post-resettlement. These stories, to me unfolded like postnatal depression stories, where a pregnant woman was told how exciting it would be to hold her new-born baby but was never told of all other issues that would arise, leading to the postnatal depression. Moreover, the accounts varied because of localities they are each found in. Lesotho has three types of physiographic and each of the region was represented by a village in which I worked: Highlands (Ha Mohale), Lowlands (Makhoakhoeng) and Foothills (Nazareta). Each region has distinct characteristics, making communal stories different from each other. People who were relocated with Ha-Mohale region mainly grieved loss of houses and other immovable structures, like kraals, during resettlement, while people who were resettled to Makhoakhoeng mourn loss of houses, immovable structures, social ties, broken kinship structures, access to rivers and much more. These differences in stories were in fact, a motivation to have a multi-sited research study.

This was a multi-sited research study because the dams are in different districts, thus the challenges and stories that came out of these constructions were different. The communities of Phase I comprise the districts of Maseru (the district in which Mohale Dam is situated) and Thaba-Tseka (the district in which Katse dam is situated). These two are astonishingly different districts in all characteristics. Maseru is the capital city, comparatively modern. It is in the foothills, and the population structure, biodiversity and societal make up are all different. Thaba-Tseka is notable for its gently rolling mountains and valleys, low population densities, abundant natural resources, and pastoral farms. Maseru is the capital city, with a high population and fewer farmlands. These two districts also differ in organizational patterns which are usefully understood with the terms of mechanical and organic solidarity. Mechanical solidarity, as named by Durkheim ([1983]1969) is the social integration of members of a society who have common values and beliefs. These common values and beliefs constitute a “collective conscience” that works internally in individual members to cause them to cooperate. In contrast to mechanical solidarity, organic solidarity is social integration that arises out of the need of individuals for one another’s services. In a society characterized by organic solidarity, there is relatively greater division of labour, with individuals functioning much like the interdependent but differentiated organs of a living body. Society relies less on imposing uniform rules on everyone and more on regulating the relations between different groups and

persons, often through the greater use of laws. Thaba-Tseka is marked by mechanical solidarity while Maseru is mainly of organic solidarity. Laying out these forms of social organization is essential because they are corner stones of understanding why resettled communities struggled to assimilate into host communities.

The research areas represent three types of localities found around Lesotho, namely the Highlands (Ha Mohale); the Lowlands (Makhoakhoeng), and the Foothills (Nazareta). Each locality has distinct characteristics, not just the geographical make-up, thus making each stand out. Ha Mohale is mainly an agrarian community, with little or no use of money. People in this community rely on barter system to obtain goods and services. People who do not own fields or livestock provide labour for those who have fields or livestock to earn a living. This means that people who were resettled from one village to another within Ha-Mohale were able to continue with life with minimum disruption. However, the greater challenge was faced by those who were resettled to Makhoakhoeng and Thetsane, both which are suburbs. The plight of those relocated to Makhoakhoeng was more intense because of the use of and reliance on money is higher than it was in Ha Mohale. LHWP made arrangements to give more monetary compensation to people resettled to Makhoakhoeng and Thetsane, but not much financial education was given to these people, whose lives had rotated around barter system. This resulted in them being poorer than they were before resettlement, also the desertion of the Thetsane camp was because of the poverty that people experienced. Nazareta being in the foothills, oscillates between use of money and barter system depending on the season of the year. Many of the participants from this area had opted for seeds and food compensation because many of them lost houses due to their proximity to the dam but kept their fields. This meant that they could continue with ploughing and rearing of livestock, but they would need to have money for transport to Ha-Mohale. These bodily experiences (resettlement, culture shock, loss and separation) caused by different localities for the participants are therefore evidenced in this ethnographic account.

When one looks at Makhoakhoeng Community which is within Matala suburb, they are governed by Maseru City Council (MCC), a city authority responsible for planning of the town, the layout and landscape and practices in the city. The implication of being under MCC is that the MCC is like a king. Under MCC, the power of a chief is not recognised, meaning if one was a chief in their previous village, they automatically lose the chieftaincy position. This happened to every chief who was resettled within a host community. This was the experience of Maliehe Lejaka, of Ha Mohale when he got to Makhoakhoeng. This meant loss of income

for Maliehe's household. Moreover, the demotion that followed because of the systematic hierarchy within Makhoakheng meant Maliehe's identity as a chief, as an authority figure changed. Furthermore, Makhoakheng as an MCC ward, does not allow livestock in residential areas. Most of the resettled people practised mixed farming. with no fields nor livestock, it meant people had to adjust to using money to maintain livelihoods. On the other hand, Nazareta (is hosted within Ha Ntsi community. People like chief Makotoko who were resettled here were able to retain chieftaincy because the community within which he was resettled had no local chief. However, chief Makotoko still needs to report to an area chief at Ha Ntsi. He is experiencing resettlement different from Maliehe above. Thus, the data collected from these two people will give a broader understanding of relating to water post construction of Katse and Mohale dams.



Figure 19 An aerial picture Nazareta. Picture captured using Google Earth, (2019).



Figure 20 An aerial picture of Makhoakhoeng within the suburb of Ha Matala. From this picture one can see the streets and also lack of fields which are visible in the figure 3 above. Picture captured using Google Earth (2019)

The total number of households resettled due to the construction of Katse and Mohale dams is 14500 to date. The actual number of people resettled is estimated to be 27000 but has never been confirmed (TRC 2009). Of the 27000 people estimated to have been affected by LHWP Phase I, 106 people participated in this study. Although this may appear like a small percentage, this was ethnographic research, giving more depth to conversations and observations. Of the 106 people, 89 were available throughout the 18 months for continued conversations, interviews, focus group discussions and invitations to different ceremonies. Of these people I was able to work with 38 to gather their life histories, in order to give more depth to the research. The other 51 participants were residents who worked and were available occasionally or were young at the time of resettlement, thereby providing limited insight. Their stories appear throughout this dissertation.

Through conversations I had with the participants and observations I made throughout the course of this research, I came to understand the dams in question are evidence of political choices, environmental compromises and new ways of interacting with water. As Ashton (1952), Scudder (2005) and WCD (2000) put it, many dams exist because ecologies could not speak for themselves, or perhaps they spoke but no one listened. The case of political choices

is specifically for the LHWP case, where interests of Lesotho and Basotho were side-lined by need for power and control by the South African government, (Leslie 2010, Molaoa 2007). It is in these varied opinions of the dams that I engaged with them and came to some of the conclusions discussed here. I came to a conclusion that these dams signify the collection of disappointments by citizens of Lesotho, they are a continuation and legacies of colonialism. I go in depth on this issue in the Ethnographies of Thirst chapter, showing how colonialism led to thirst in Lesotho.

I had wondered how I would feel going ‘back’ to people I once believed were my own now that I ‘belonged elsewhere’. I had moved from Thaba-Tseka in 1987, just as talks of the LHWP and resettlement began to spread in our village. I had adopted new forms of knowing, in Maseru. I was now a Maseru woman. I collected my water from a tap. I ran a bath, added foam bath to my water as opposed to *lekhala* (aloe) or crystallised salt. I preferred still water to sparkling water. My swimming pool was heated. My relationship to water was different to those I was to study. I was now used to modern water, which Linton (2006) explains as harnessed in hydrology, abstracted from ecological and social relations. Aware of my position, I went into the area of Makhoakhoeng to start my journey of re-living water differently. This long stay in the area of study was necessary because people in Makhoakhoang, and other areas which have been delegated to host resettled communities, have become hot spots for data. Other months, I travelled to Nazareta, where I mainly interacted with livestock keepers like Sabata. From attending animal shows, going sheep shearing and attending community dispute settlements, I attended funerals and weddings. All these functions not only made me one with communities but also acted as blueprint for understanding communities.

3.1.7 Life Mapping

As I grew up in Maseru, watching how different my life had unfolded, watching with dismay how others like me also had their lives take a turn they did not anticipate, I began to question the discomfort I had resettlement. What was it about resettlement that had rattled me so deeply? The conclusion was the loss of relationships. To narrow it down, I wanted to see which relationship I felt was affected most, and I perceived it was relationship of people with water. While people could travel to see family members scattered around Lesotho, they could not un-sell water to South Africa. To understand people’s relationship to water I then had to ask: how do people relate to water? Does their relationship change as water become a commodity? By

asking these questions I hoped to unpack the relationship people have with water and other non-human species, which is often oblivious to those who implement development projects.

For most people, storytelling is a natural way of recounting experience, a practical solution to a fundamental problem in life, creating reasonable order out of experience. Not only are they continually producing narratives to order and structure their life experiences, but they are also constantly being bombarded with narratives from the social world they live in. This method as a research technique formed much of my research because narratives allow for people's voices to come forth as allowed by ethnography. As a research tool, it "provides researchers with rich framework through which they can investigate the ways humans experience the world depicted through their stories," (Webster and Mertova, 2007: 1).

As we make our way through life, we have continuous experiences and dialogic interactions both with our surrounding world and with ourselves. All of these are woven together into a seamless web, where they might strike one as being overwhelming in their complexity. According to Nyamnjoh (2011), narratives substantiate the ethnographic data interpreted and analysed by the researcher. Social narratives allow informants to be acknowledged in knowledge production, it authenticates the theory the researcher might have indicated. These narratives portray local meanings of everyday life through a locality existing in a world which is in permanent mobility (Nyamnjoh, 2013). A context of how people living together relate to a dam through various activities, or lack thereof can best be understood through the narratives of the people themselves, as well as the observations of the researcher within the society. In order to participate in their daily lives, I needed to form close relations with residents. In doing so my aim was to understand the concepts of social relations, water index on relations and conviviality. Listening to the people's narratives- as individuals or groups achieved this. Listening to them narrate how they related with different water bodies, how they interpreted river behaviour and negotiating with water gods gave sense of what they meant when they said, "selling water is selling our souls". This design saw formed the breakthrough of my research as I too suffered the fate of relocation earlier in life. The similarities in conversations lubricated our discussions leading to numerous discoveries on issues of water, identity and reconfiguration of life post havocs.

Narrative research is increasingly used in studies of educational practice and experience, chiefly because teachers, like all other human beings, are storytellers who individually and socially lead storied lives (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). Narrative research is thus the study

of how human beings experience the world, and narrative researchers collect these stories and write narratives of experience (Gudmundsdottir, 2001). The stories of Nkhono Maleshapa for example, gave shape and volume to the ‘snake’ theory that most people referred to when they spoke of Maliba-Matso river. She narrated a story of a snake that inhabits the rivers; it causes trouble for those who disturb it through swimming or misdirecting water yet saves those who acknowledge it as the ‘king of the jungle’. The same snake was taken into consideration when LHDA officials came for resettlement consultation. The same snake saw ntate Thulare relocate to Sehlabeng sa Thuathe (Thuathe valley) in pursuit of another snake which inhabited that valley. All these were informed by narratives.

In order to articulate the importance of multispecies ethnography in projects like the LHWP and lives of stakeholders whose lives are affected by projects, I call on institutes of learning; not only questioning theories which have been used in perpetuating top-down approach but also suggesting new ways of knowing and learning which are more inclusive. The modern society relies heavily on academia and research institution for production and dissemination of knowledge. Much research continues to be undertaken on issues of water and wellbeing of people, the connections made between the two are often one-sided, telling of water as a resource to be used up by people, water or lack thereof making people sick. With exceptions of few scholars like Strang, water is brought in academia as an object; to be used. It is not just water that has Until recent years, the narratives on environment revolved around natural science, often excluding the human being. With the dawn of Anthropocene, the effort to include the human in environmental studies has increased. However, the inclusion of the human often meant exclusion of other species who also are part of the environment. The role of Environmental Humanities as a discipline has since changed the dialogue when it comes to inclusivity of other species as equal contributors to the biodiversity.

To further narrate and map people’s relationship to commodified water, I held a Water Day Workshop for people in the project areas. This included people who were from other villages, not particularly those in my field sites. The purpose for this workshop was to create a platform where communities and authorities could engage on issues of water; all forms of knowing water. This workshop was attended by an official from LHDA, WASCO, TRC and Urban and Rural water supply. The aim of this workshop had been to open up a conversation of eco-water versus H₂O. In the presence of LHDA and WASCO officials, members of communities expressed views on the water as a basic human right and how it was intertwined with the sacredness of water. One of the participants whose story stood out was ntate Thulare,

a *lethuela*, (traditional healer) who uses water and herbs to heal people. He was resettled from Ha-Mohale and chose to stay at Sehlabeng sa Thuathe (Thuathe valley) because of the network of rivers in that area.

Sehlaba sa Thuathe was not on the list of relocation areas. He fought nail and tooth to relocate to Sehlabeng sa Thuathe. His argument was that the Nazareta and Makhoakhoeng had no rivers nor lakes, in which he could continue to heal people and land. He mentioned that waters in Lesotho are influenced by *khanyapa* [water snake] which has a direct liaison between ancestors and the living. The relationship people have with their ancestors determines how the water snake can be observed through the behaviour of the snake. In this workshop, the language used by both officials and community members needed no translation; both groups understood the importance of rituals, sacred spaces and appeasements. It was when officials wore their 'official' hats that meaning was lost. My observation was that policies and bureaucratic red tape were responsible for the equivocation on water.

Some of the arguments I make in this work are supported by data from that day. To get to a point where I say policy affects water flows and interactions of water, it was because of the responses and presentations of those in the policy sector.

Some other ways of mapping people's lives are to get them to talk about themselves, with each other. While individual interviews are important in understanding persons, focus group are invaluable when it comes to a wider knowledge spectrum. I held in-depth interviews to have an understanding on how individually people felt about water and its subsequent commodification, how they constantly navigate and negotiate the sacred-secular status of water. Much of this work is based on responses from those in-depth interviews. Yet, for more communal information it was the group discussions which provide more insight. It was during these group discussions that I learned about rainmaking or rain-stopping ceremonies and how they are challenged in urban environments. Because a person exists both at an individual and social levels, it was important to map their lives to both setting, to make better the understating of water dynamics.

3.2 Ethics

For the entire duration of this research study, I was firmly grounded in the ethical guidelines of the ASnA. No harm was anticipated or came to those who participated in my study. Before officially starting my research, I got ethical clearance from Environmental Humanities South

at the University of Cape Town. Upon arrival in Lesotho, I went to the local chiefs of Makhoakhoeng, Nazareta and Ha Mohale where I introduced myself and what the purpose of my study was. I prepared consent forms written in Sesotho (it can be found in the appendix, translated to English for the purpose of examination) for participants to read and sign if they felt they were comfortable in participating the study. I also made participants aware that this study was for my doctoral study and was not paid work, therefore their participation was voluntary and there would be no compensation for their time. Having been exposed to much interest from researchers, this was the easiest part to explain. Since relocation, these communities have been under the scrutiny of many researchers. I also explained that if at any time one felt they could not continue they were free to withdraw their participation. This actually happened in Nazareta where one household had a clash with another over grazing-lands in the weekend leading to our focus group discussion. The family that withdrew sent their 9-year-old son to tell me they would not be joining the focus group and would not be continuing with participation. I went to see them, hear them out and thank them for their time. Turned out the misunderstanding had been caused by a camera I had carried with me. They thought I was going to take them pictures and publish them in newspapers. This misunderstanding showed that extended presence of a researcher, in this instance my camera, could jeopardize research. I had to add to the consent form a note that photos of people will only be taken upon agreement and used only in my report of the study. The family continued with the study after this issue of photos was ironed out.

It was after this misunderstanding with this family that I recalled Nyamnjob, saying “researchers should be mindful of participants from the design stage, including how subjects are recruited...to the consequences of their participation in the study, to publishing the results,” (Nyamnjob, 2010:31). One of the ethical issues that researchers struggle with is what I want to call ‘post field obligation’. From what Nyamnjob says in the quote above, researchers have responsibility of how participants are recruited, including making clear the use of data (including photographs) and of what happens to their data post research. After exiting the field, it is a researcher’s obligation to see that story of people whose lives make up reports, are a true reflection of what the lives and stories of people portray. In interacting with participants, I treated them with respect, asked questions where I needed clarity and recorded their stories with truth. I refrained from romanticizing their stories or being condescending with their views. While I shared many similarities of thought and loss with them, I had to be mindful of my position as a researcher, making sure our shared loss does not cloud their own voices.

I should also note that for participants whose real names and photos are used in this thesis, they had pointed out that they preferred so. People like Sabata, Nthatisi, ntate Maliehe and Molefi understood anonymity but chose not remain anonymous. To denote a pseudonym used, I put an asterisk.

3.3 Limitations of the study

The LHWP is the biggest project Lesotho has ever undertaken. This project drew local and international interest alike, thus making data on the LHWP easily accessible. However, when it came to this study, there were a few challenges that affected how the study was received and undertaken. These limitations are:

- Familiarity of participants with being ‘participants’. Due to LHWP being a huge project it is, those affected by the project have been subjects of studies for many years. This became problematic because the assumption for these people was that this study was going to follow similar styles of questioning or engagement. When I first started my fieldwork, simple conversation, which were meant to be icebreakers, would always lead to compensation not being sufficient. To get people to understand how this study differed from many other studies they participated in took long, leading to 18 months of fieldwork, when I had anticipated 12 months.
- Migration of key population from areas I had selected as field sites. I had previously selected my field sites as Thetsane, Nazareta and Ha-Mohale. The Thetsane camp is found close to a high-end residential and industrial area. This made the camp interesting, as the life lived in this area is very different from the life lived in Thaba-Tseka, where these people were resettled from. I could not continue with this field site because the resettles had moved back to live with relatives who were fortunate enough to be resettled. Two had committed suicide and the remaining were just too few to form an enough sample population.

Much of the literature on the LHWP and water management in Lesotho is the same. In avoiding sounding like every other literature available, I found myself having to refer to studies carried out elsewhere. Trauma suffered by Basotho whose land is inundated or those who lost rangelands or access to water, is not well documented. I therefore lacked references of first-hand, already published material to support data collected and the autoethnography at the beginning of the thesis.

3.4 Conclusion

In order to gather the data undergirding this research, ethnographic methods were used, spanning group interviews, life histories, photographs and maps. The objective was to gain insights into the multiple ways in which people interacted differently with dammed water than rivers and streams. This material presented in the chapters that follow, illustrates how stories of struggles and livelihood trajectories portray their relationship to water.

4 Water Dynamics- commodity or a basic need?

"Water is patient. Dripping water wears away a stone. Remember that my child. Remember you are half water. If you can't go through an obstacle, go around it. Water does"

-Margaret Atwood

Water is polyvalent. It can be understood in different ways. In many discussions with the people displaced by Phase I of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), I learned how different are their views and relationship with water, from that of the LHWP employees, experts and government officials. I learned that equivocation underscores the discord between communities and the LHWP. The meaning of water to the communities and their everyday experiences of life with free water differs greatly from their experience of living with dammed water that is a commodifiable resource, as viewed by development projects. The purpose of my work is to argue that economic development as a capacitating tool, using water and dams, has served to commodify natural environments while disregarding ecological living. Using the material gathered during field research, I aim to demonstrate that what has been presented as "development via dams" to rural communities in Lesotho has engineered what I call "water violence": a form of violence (be it physical, emotional or environmental) that occurs when one way of living with water, based on its extraction, is used to violate another form of living with water.

However, before getting into the debate on water dynamics and equivocation, I would like to lay a foundation of comparability as far as water is concerned. As anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2004) demonstrated in his work on comparison, comparability does not mean translatability. In other words, what may look the same, may not be perceived the same. The implicit comparison of water by communities and LHWP is one such example. What the communities understand as water and what LHWP understands as water is different. These two groups see the same subject, but their perspectives differ. This difference in perspective is equivocation. The argument I seek to make is that the meaning of water is lost in translation as far as LHWP is concerned. Walter Benjamin, as quoted by Talal Asad (1986) describes translation as best when it betrays the destination language in favour of the source language. The LHWP's assumption that extractable and commodifiable water is water, betrays the source language, imposing a homonymic version of water, as if commodified water is water itself.

What communities see as worth saving, LHWP sees as worth millions of dollars. In order to set these different forms of water that are at play in apart in this chapter, I will refer to commodified, dammed water as H₂O and "mountain water" as eco-water. The difference between the two will be mentioned in the paragraphs that follow below. This chapter deals with water in three main parts; the first part is the eco-water versus H₂O. This part lays a foundation of the different ways in which water is perceived in Lesotho, while also being a commodity. The second part explores the hydro-social aspect of water, differentiating between the hydro-social and hydrologic. This is done through discussing histories of water in Lesotho. The last section addresses a new type of water: that is, water as a commodity.

4.1 Eco-Water vs H₂O

Philosopher and social critic Ivan Illich (1985) proposes that there is a difference between H₂O and water. He says, "H₂O is produced by burning gases ... it is liquid that is metered and distributed by authorities..." (1985:30). I understand him to say that H₂O is technical, chemical and abstract, while water has "social meaning ... has unlimited ability to carry metaphors ... purifies and cleans ... invites the user to interact and share in, in its many forms" (1985:30), Astrida Neimanis speaks of water's "unknowability" (Neimanis, 2012). This difference between H₂O and water is key to the argument that flows through this thesis: water is socially defined, relatable, alive, part of society, and has agency, while H₂O is a chemical liquid that can be used for many purposes in households and industries. H₂O can be bottled or piped, treated with other chemicals and it can be sold for profit. The people in communities of Phase I had relationships with eco-water before being resettled, but they were introduced to H₂O in their host communities. This new relationship has been hard to navigate, as will be shown in the following pages.

Having made the distinction between eco-water and H₂O, throughout I will continue by discussing water rather than H₂O. One of the qualities of water is, according to Neimanis (2012), that water can be like a messenger. It can bear good and bad news, leaving to those who receive it to interpret the message. Neimanis was alluding to the fact that water cannot be boxed into one thing but rather varies depending on a state in which it is found. Once, in the village of Nazareta, I was forced to sleep over at one of the participant's houses because "*metsi a ne ale kotsi*" (water was dangerous). We sat inside one of the huts while it poured outside. The rain turned into a storm. When the rain stopped, we walked out only to be met with rushing

waters, carrying with them plastic bags and other items found on the ground. From what I could see, this water was safe for me to walk in and get to my rented hut. "You will not make it to your house, these waters are dangerous ... though they may appear shallow, I can see they are dangerous", Sabata, a participant, in whose hut I had been trapped, repeated. While I was still trying to make sense of what Sabata was saying, a cry came from afar. Turning to see who was shouting, I saw a cow being carried away in the 'shallow' water. The owner was screaming helplessly for us to throw in food for the waters to eat, not his cow. In the evening, Sabata and his wife related to me how they knew the water was dangerous. "*Metsi a fetisa molaetsa* (water passes messages), his wife said. I had learned that water can be angry and 'eat a cow'.

Water, just like the poor, is always being sought to be developed (Veronica Strang, 2004). She writes "there are close ties between power structures and the control of resources [and people], between access to water and political enfranchisement", (Strang 2004:4). In the meantime, it is silenced and controlled. Through damming and inundating rivers, people have tried to control the water by 'developing' it. As a living entity, it then 'rebelled' through floods, crashing dams and droughts. The development of water, just like colonization, is responsible for water-on-water violence. As mentioned earlier, water on water violence is the violence that stems from different types of water, in this case, the eco-water versus H₂O. In initiatives that sort to develop people, some people are used to violate and control others. It is in the very nature of development, to birth castes such that the lower caste can aspire to be in the higher caste. In the same manner, controlling water through damming, inundating rivers, or piping water through metals, is water-on-water violence; one form of water is made superior over the other.

As a living entity, this eco-water contains and carries, and it and transmits identity, power, and authenticity. It carries no trademark like "Valpre" as pictured below, 'provided by 'WASCO' or 'live young' which is a slogan for Evian bottled water, which is one of the most expensive bottled water in the market, with a 1 litre bottled costing M 50.00. Looking particularly at the water in rivers around the Phase I project, these waters had exchanged with communities the identities, powers, and authenticities they carry, but their relationship with the water changed when they had to relocate to make way for dam constructions. When rivers became reservoirs, eco-water became M50.00 per litre, it became a bill from WASCO, it became a commodity over a need while eco-water as undeveloped, raw and ungoverned.



Figure 21 A bottle of Valpre water. It costs about M 20.00 for 1 litre. Going to a spring to get the same amount of water or more, costs M 0.00. Picture acquired from www.makro.co.za, 2020.

A human body is 70 % water. That water is responsible for the survival of organs, for blood flow, for transportation of oxygen and renewal of cells. A human body shares many characteristics with other water bodies on earth, including the earth itself. When applying this logic to allow water as an interlocutor (Neimanis 2012), I found that water in rivers and human bodies share agency; that is, both can act, the difference being the bodies in which they are found. The multiple modalities of water as discussed by Neimanis (2012) provide a meaningful window into how water in human bodies and other bodies can be understood. I however, found myself riddled with question of which water is in human bodies? The water in my brain, the water diluting toxins in my body and the salty water that comes out as I cry - how do I then understand it? These questions led to the discussion on hydrologic and hydro-social cycles of water.

4.2 Hydrologic and Hydro-Social Cycles of water

There are two ways to think about Lesotho's water; in hydrologic terms and in hydro-social terms. The hydrologic is the H₂O, the commodity, while the culturally understood is based on interactions and understanding of communities, which is hydro-social. There is a need to recognise water's wider meaning within societies. This need paradigm shift of understanding water is necessary to understand both the Eco water and H₂O. Eco water as described above, for the purpose of this study, is the water flowing from the mountains into rivers and wells and H₂O is the produced water, through chemical processes. However, an essential point to make at this point is that H₂O also has histories and assemblages use like eco-water, that weaves the social landscapes together. Hydrologic is the difference between eco-water and H₂O. however, through the concept of hydro-social cycles, we are then able to unite eco-water with H₂O. In their work on defining and mobilising a relational-dialectical approach to water, Linton and Budds describe hydro-social cycle as a socio-natural process by which water and society make and remake each other over space and time while the hydrologic cycle has become the dominant popular means of representing flows of water in the hydrosphere, (Linton & Budds, 2014).

Additionally, the effects of climate change have harshly affected Lesotho and its water flows. Some tributary rivers have dried up, putting a strain on local communities' water access. With no snow or too much snow, the levels of Katse and Mohale water levels have also fluctuated, resulting in prolonged lack of water reported by communities around the reservoirs who depend on boreholes or wells. Also, with heavy rains, which cannot be absorbed by the soil due to soil erosion in some areas and de-vegetation in other areas, food security is threatened, leaving multitudes vulnerable. In the 18 months I spent collecting data in Lesotho, the communities I lived in lacked water for at least three days in a week, all year round. The morning routine for many was waking up to queue at the nearest borehole at 4 am to get water, which would be finished by 10 am.

At 7 pm, again scores of people who did not get water in the morning would be back in the hopes of getting a few litres. This water collection routine caused conflicts among the community members, as there was no proper regulation on how much water each household could access. Also, because some of the smaller rivers have dried up, wells and boreholes had to provide water for livestock too, shrinking further the litres people could access. Furthermore, with water shortages, people were confronted with reassigning meaning to social spaces like

wells and collecting water. Figure 22 below show women and children as the majority of people cuing for water at Nazareta. From observation, I made that women and children have more interaction with eco water than men do. Many of the rituals and rites of passage which required water were either carried out by women or carried out on or for children. In the same light, men were more involved in H₂O, which included construction, larger water bodies like boating and packaging of bottled water.

Shortages of water in the above mentioned communities have let to conflict, which at times let to physical altercation among community members. At one instance, while cuing for water, one of the participants in this study had to fight off two other women who had moved her water cans to the back of the line. Not only do these conflict happen at community level, but they also happen at national level and across the globe. According to Adrien Detges, Benjamin Pohl and Stella Schaller, (2017) Water is indispensable to human life. Though plentiful, it is limited and global demand for freshwater has been growing rapidly due to population growth and greater affluence. At the same time, climate change and environmental degradation are altering the regional and seasonal availability and quality of water. The resulting competition over water use may lead to conflict and sometimes violence, though researchers emphasize that it is rarely the lack of water as such that fuels conflict, but rather its governance and management. For example, There has long been a conflict over water rights among the riparian countries of the Eastern Nile Basin (Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia). The dispute escalated in 2011 when Ethiopia began construction of a major new dam, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), in the absence of any agreement with downstream Egypt. A series of talks since then have largely failed to produce a consensus among the concerned countries, with tensions rising again after Ethiopia announced its intention to begin filling the dam in July 2020. Ethiopia and Sudan are currently developing and implementing water infrastructure developments unilaterally- as Egypt has done in the past and continues to do. These parallel developments appear to be elements of a bigger hydro-political strategy wherein the riparian countries aim to increase their water utilisation to put facts on the ground (and underpin legal claims based on those uses) and increase their bargaining position for renegotiations of volumetric water allocations. However, this threatens the basin's long-term sustainability (as water use expands beyond what is environmentally feasible) and suboptimal in terms of capital allocation (as higher water use upstream may make downstream projects uneconomical (Swain, 2011). While this means new opportunities to develop extended

irrigation-based agriculture for the Sudanese, it represents also a new threat for Egypt's' current Nile water utilisation (Whittington et., 2014).

Another example is that of Afghanistan, which like Lesotho is landlocked. As a landlocked country, Afghanistan shares many of its river basins with neighboring countries. As part of reconstruction efforts, Afghanistan has formulated plans for significant water infrastructure development on these transboundary rivers to fully exploit their irrigation and hydro-electric potential. As a result, water-related concerns have been intensifying in downstream riparian states. Since no formal dialogue processes or effective agreements on water are in place between Afghanistan and its neighbors, few direct institutional venues exist for resolving these tensions in a cooperative manner (King & Sturtewagen, 2010) To illustrate the state of water cooperation in the region, this case study focuses on the two river basins that Afghanistan as the upstream riparian shares with downstream Iran: The Helmand River Basin and the Harirud-Murghab River Basin. Afghanistan's agricultural and dam projects in these two basins have been perceived by Iran as security threats. Climate change can be expected to further exacerbate the existing political tensions between the two countries. The Helmand River is the longest of Afghanistan's rivers (1,150km). It originates northwest of Kabul, from where it travels to Iran. The basin is inhabited by more than 7 million people. Both Afghan and Iranian farmers are highly dependent on the Helmand waters for irrigated agriculture. In Afghanistan, approximately 97 percent of the water withdrawn from the river is used in the agricultural sector. Similarly, in Iran, around 80 percent of the downstream flow is allocated to irrigation purposes (King & Sturtewagen, 2010). At the same time, the river is also crucial for sustaining wildlife and biodiversity in the Hamun wetlands, which span parts of Afghanistan and Iran and whose international importance has been recognized under the Ramsar Convention.

While three decades of war have prevented Afghanistan from fully harnessing the Helmand River waters, the country has now embarked upon a path of agricultural expansion under U.S.-supported plans for post-conflict reconstruction. Increased agricultural production is not only supposed to feed Afghanistan's growing population, but it is also intended to serve as a bulwark against the opium economy by providing alternative livelihood strategies. To achieve its ambitious objectives, Afghanistan urgently needs to rehabilitate or construct new water infrastructure on the Helmand River in order to increase storage capacity, improve irrigation efficiency, and generate electricity. One current project is the Kamal Khan dam on the Helmand

River, which was resumed in 2011 after having stalled for a long time because of the war (Aman, 2016).

While such projects can be expected to benefit socio-economic development in Afghanistan, they have caused alarm in Iran, which perceives Afghanistan's aspirations on the Helmand as a direct security threat. If upstream water consumption increases, water supply to Iran could be diminished. Iran fears that the resulting water shortages could further destabilize its eastern province of Sistan and Baluchistan. The Helmand is the only water source for the main cities in this province, which is generally regarded as the country's most volatile region due to its disenfranchised Sunni majority (Dehgan et al., 2014, King & Sturtewagen, 2010). Existing water-related tensions on the Helmand River and the Harirud will likely be further exacerbated by a changing climate, which is expected to alter patterns of water flow and availability in the shared basins. While the exact impacts of climate change are difficult to predict, it has been estimated that glacial melt, decreases in rainfall, and increases in temperatures may cause long-term water stress in parts of Iran and Afghanistan (Dehgan et al., 2014, King & Sturtewagen, 2010).

Lastly, I make mention of the Mekong River Basin dam projects. The Mekong is the world's seventh largest river in terms of discharge, and ranks tenth in terms of length. It originates in China, and then flows 4,200 km through Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, where it empties into the South China Sea. Often described as the "hydrologic backbone" or "current of life" of mainland Southeast Asia, the Mekong River Basin is exceptionally rich in natural resources, and is vital in supporting the livelihood of more than 70 million people (Hudson-Rodd & Shaw 2003; Jacobs, 2002).

The MRC is the main mechanism to promote regional cooperation on Mekong water development and management. Since its establishment in 1995, it has achieved important results in conducting technical studies, and has served as a knowledge platform for the four Lower Mekong riparians (Litta, 2012). Yet, as the Xayaburi episode demonstrates, the MRC's capabilities to prevent unilateral moves and solve regional tensions over dam construction among its members are limited. One of the main reasons for this lies in the MRC's weak enforcement powers. Notably, there is a marked resistance among the riparian states to cede any sovereignty to the MRC over the shared resources in the basin, (Litta 2012). This is, however, an institutionally sanctioned position, since the 1995 Mekong Agreement only stipulates "...cooperation on the basis of sovereign equality and territorial integrity in the

utilization of the water resources of the Mekong Basin”, (Earle et al., 2015:76). This has led to diplomatic tensions as countries downstream of the dams fear the negative impacts they may bring about, from greater flooding to seasonal lack of water.



Figure 22 Ha Ntsi, Nazareta. These people wake up as early as 3 am to cue for water. before relocation, they got water from Senqunyane River at Ha Mohale. Picture by author. 2016

Water in Lesotho is not merely a productive, connective force that conventional water metaphors portray, it is also alive and with the ability to act. Water has been found at the centre of many domestic and social scenes among the Basotho (Scudder 1995, 2005), forming meaning understood within such contexts. Rain, river, or well waters are perceived differently and have different purposes. Rain is usually perceived in Lesotho and throughout Southern Africa as a signal for peace in the land, therefore rain is interacted with in a deliberate manner unless the rain is that of a *likhoohola* (thunderstorm), which is considered a sign of ancestral rage. An example of good perception of rain is a ritual in which an infant is placed in the rain naked to prevent such a child from being a thief. The child is placed for a few seconds on the ground, attended by an adult whose behaviour is deemed exemplary by the infant’s parents. After the first drops of the rain lands on the infant, s/he is taken back into the house. It is

believed the purity of rain would have washed off the original sin as per the Bible (Romans 5:12). The high regard in which rain as the main source of water in Lesotho is evidenced by rain being included in the nation's coat of arms; "*Khotso, Pula, Nala*" meaning Peace, Rain, Wealth. Thus, rainwater gives meaning to the rest of the water in the country, including water in rivers, wells, and lakes. Rivers and wells are regarded as hosts of living water, in which the spirits of ancestors' flow.

While Lesotho continues to make profits through commodifying H₂O, people who interact with water are pushed to the margins. Water as a social fact is overlooked by economics and development policies. The monetization of the environment has dire effects on the environment yet countries like Lesotho still continue to construct more dams under the pretence that they create the conditions for economic development. We encounter water no matter where we live and work. It trickles across forest floors and consolidates in rivers. It collects behind dams, runs under cities, and is diverted into irrigation systems. It is pumped from wells and travels in plastic bottles. It makes up our bodies and shapes our institutions. Water has emerged as a critical matter of concern for, and often point of tension, between policymakers, corporations, resource managers, and numerous user communities. At the same time, anthropologists and other social theorists have increasingly deployed "watery metaphors" (flows, fluidity, circulation, etc.) to theorize the era of globalization and development. Symbolic representations, like the flow of water or rainfall, are believed to illustrate cultural ethos and meaning to the Basotho.

Geertz (1993) demonstrated how symbolism is used as a vehicle of cultural meanings which are representative of how to comprehend the world. Water through a river system represents flow and continuity which connects social domains and people with nature (McCool and Martin, 1994). As Turner (1975) attests, symbolic meanings change over time and space, meaning attached to such symbols also change, which is exemplified later in the discussion where communities have started to neglect rivers because they no longer view them as sacred but rather as cash cows for LHWP. Symbols used in societies represent multiple meanings that people attach values to in order to solidify social interactions (Lyon, 1995). The flow of water is both physical and cultural, both literal and figurative, (Workman, 2019:11)

Until recently, Lesotho was among the countries which could be thought of as endowed with water when compared to most of its neighbouring countries (WHO, 2000). With its

geographical location in proximity to the warm Indian Ocean and high altitude of the eastern lands of Southern Africa, the mountains and meanders of rivers of Lesotho could meet its own water needs, as well as contribute to regional developments as exemplified by the LHWP where she supplies South Africa with water. However, due to lack of capital investment to exploit the resource and owing to a lack of proper management of the water resource, the results have been the variability of river flows and seasonal shortages in water availability both in terms of quantity and of quality (NES, 2002), leading to water shortages and frustrations for communities in Lesotho. Water in Lesotho is political, it is used as a measure of control. In 1800, it was used by the British to control paramount chiefs and later on used by the Boers to control Basotho. In the Post-Colonial Lesotho, water is used as a political tool to create scarcity- as a commodity, water becomes scarce for some people- those who cannot afford to pay the water bill, those who cannot afford to have standalone taps or those who cannot wake up early enough to draw water from communal taps. With minimum water needs met, Lesotho can rely on aid to keep her people alive. Aid is, as suggested by Ferguson (1990), J. Aerni-Flessner (2014), another form of coloniality. Only this time it is done by South Africa and the World Bank. One could conclude that Lesotho's poverty and 'abundance' of water are for the benefit of South Africa and its partners in the LHWP development project.

Although Lesotho is still thought to have water in abundance, it is confronted with challenges of how to meet the water demand domestically and within the region. Part of the water demand in the country is satisfied through a river abstraction system, boreholes, and well fields. Lesotho is located entirely within the Senqu River basin. The major sub-basin river systems in Lesotho are Senqu, which drains two-thirds of Lesotho (24 485 km²), originates in the extreme north of the country and leaves Lesotho near Quthing. In its catchment area, four large dams will be LHWP. The Makhaleng River, with a catchment area of 2 911 km², originates in the vicinity of Mount Machache and leaves the country near Mohales Hoek. The Mohokare marks the border with South Africa and has a catchment area of 6 890 km². Due to Lesotho's commitments in the framework of the LHWP, its water sources will have decreased to 3.03 km³ /yr by 2020 (Lesotho Water Commission, 2017). Groundwater resources are estimated at "0.5 km³ /yr. Aquifer yields are low: of a sample of 818 wells, only 12 per cent yielded above 1 l/s; average well depth was 65 m in intrusive, sedimentary or volcanic rock, and 28 m in alluvial rock", (Lesotho Water Commission, 2017:33).

The depreciating value of water, and its contested local status (as sacred vs. the infrastructure that renders it a commodity), has caused friction among those who interact with water and those who package and sell it. This friction that is birthed by the disconnect between water and society is what Dimitra Koumparou (2018) terms hydroschizophrenia. Depicted from schizophrenia which is a mental illness characterised by thoughts or experiences that are out of touch with reality (www.mayoclinic.org), hydroschizophrenia is experienced by those whose interactions with water have changed, leaving them somewhat confused and with an unrealistic feeling of strangeness. “I still don’t believe have to pay that much money for water ... I can’t water my plants because I have to worry about the water bill” proclaimed ‘Manthathi who was a participant from Makhoakhoeng in one of the conversations we shared. Many other participants shared her sentiments, pointing that lack of understanding of meaning of water attached to communities, especially those in rural areas, was responsible for hydroschizophrenia rampaging communities.

To evidence this point, this chapter focuses on how water commodification and shortages give new meaning to water, asking do people consider water shortage as a climate change issue or manifestation of ancestral wrath? How does this then change the way in which people formulate their identities? For instance, if they believe the drought is a sign of ancestral wrath, how do they see themselves as they live in a continuum of wrath? Ultimately, I link water to human dignity. If "water is life" (as set out in the LHDA slogan), it means even the poor should have water, yet the poor have been exposed to extended water shortages by the damming of rivers and commodifying what they had previously enjoyed as a free resource.

Water status in Lesotho births conversations about types of water: the commercial and the hydro-social water. This is not to say there are no other ways in which water could be understood, but these are the two that I will be focusing on. LHWP has birthed commercial, extractable water, while communities in which this water is found see the water as something with more than a financial value that ought to be treated with care. Through exploring different meanings of water, I show how births of Katse and Mohale dams changed and contributed to ongoing disputes on identity and relationships people have with other species, at the centre of which is water. The meaning attributed to water is dependent on the interpretation each stakeholder drew from the interactions they had with water. The very water that can make millions of dollars for Lesotho is the water that one wishes to be baptized in, to gain a certain identity within a setting in which baptism is understood.

Water plays a significant role in anxieties over power and identity among the Basotho. Looking at the history of the Basotho nation, one finds that water has been in the midst of historical conflicts. In 1820 when Moshoeshoe II left Butha-Buthe, a lowland area in the east of Lesotho, to move to Thaba-Bosiu, a small plateau in the Maseru district, it was water trails he was following (Sekese 1993). Moshoeshoe and the small nation fled from Butha-Buthe because of how easily accessible to the enemies the area was. It is believed his choice of Thaba-Bosiu was not only determined by its many fortresses but also by the natural springs on top of the plateau. It was vital for Moshoeshoe, as the founder of the Basotho nation, to have access to natural spring water because of water-related rituals he would need to perform to 'strengthen' his nation. Water and water-related practices allow for adaptation and reinterpretation of norms and traditions. The main objective of this study is to understand the relationship people of Thaba-Tseka have with Katse Dam thus appreciating the local realities and knowledge of people and the fact that Katse has "agency, relationality and potentiality" (Palmer 2015: 33). Identity created by connectedness to water is often made visible by how water sources are named, treated, and protected.

Phase I communities' conceptions of and relationships with eco-water, and what eco-water's agency, are connected and mutually informing. According to Law and Lien (2013:10), "realities; objects, animals or people are multiple...and [where] their realities intersect with one another deserves careful attention". Water and people are materially co-productive. Water in human bodies, draws water from and near the earth's surface, intertwining needs and wants, thus giving the water a 'more than just a liquid' meaning. Water can act as both a cultural and natural substance. As a cultural substance, "it connects many realms of social life" (Orlove and Caton, 2010:401). Kirsten and Frida Hastrup say, "water is the heart of human life, sensory experiences and cultural meaning" (Hastrup and Hastrup, 2016: 6). Not only does it is the heart of human life, but it also flows through our lives, it also quenches our thirst, sustains our crops, generates power, cools industries and carries ships. Water holds all life on earth together. From the fish in the ocean, trees, and human body composition to the very air we breathe, all are dependent on water. Strang (2004) goes on to say, "in every cultural context it is densely encoded with social, spiritual, political and environmental meanings, and these have a powerful effect upon patterns of water use and upon the relationships between water users and suppliers" (2004:35).

The extract below is from Maliehe, who was a participant in this study. In this particular conversation, he was relaying the cultural context in which water is understood by him and members of his community:

"Why do you think we were mad when they told us to move? Our rivers are dangerous when provoked, yet helpful when respected...these rivers are sacred to us" said Maliehe Motlohi, a 65-year-old man from Ha-Mohale, relocated to Makhoakhoeng. This was in response to one of the many chats we had on issues of his relationship to water, particularly water as a commodity. He continued to say "it is not the water per se that's important, it is how you understand the water, what you know to be in the water. Had these people (referring to LHDA personnel) valued water, they would have never let South Africa make a mockery out of us."

Kefiloe: How do you mean South Africa made a mockery out of us? Who exactly is us?

Maliehe: Why do you think South Africans wanted our water specifically? With the money they have, they could have afforded to harness water in a million ways. Water is power. Water is an identity. With our water running through the pipes of South Africa, we are as good as their 10th province and that is what they want. Our ancestors are irrigating the fields of *maburu* (Boers), and we wonder why they sell to us that we can grow in our gardens- they have our power. Given to them by that LHDA of yours.

In order to have an academic view which would support the data from my participants, most of whom are illiterate, I interviewed Professor Francis Rakotsoane, who is a lecturer in theology and religious studies at the National University of Lesotho. In the interview, I sought to understand how and why Basotho perceived water in a certain way. Having carried out extensive research on snake worship among Basotho made him an ideal participant in understanding views of Basotho and their myriad relationship to water. The extract below is from that interview, showing how the cultural context is indeed embedded in daily lives of people, as per Strang (2004):

Rakotsoane: ... Africans are notoriously religious...because of that, they have a connection with the earth and the beings that they believe exist in and around it. If they have a good relationship, it helps make their life run smoothly. That is why when Mosotho gets to a place, a traditional Mosotho tames the land.

Kefiloe: Tame the land?

Rakotsoane: Yes, to tame it in the sense that he will perform certain rituals, to prevent the invisible beings from making the land wild...Rivers too. That is why the life of

Africans is coloured with rites of passage and rituals and the other way of connecting with the invisible. Getting back to your question on what relations Basotho have with *mats'a* [a lake] among other things, *lethuela* [a traditional healer] has special relations with the snake water...*Lethuela* believes that it is the snake water that enables him to communicate with all other beings in the water, including the ancestors...so when you resettle people without guaranteeing their livelihood, the connection to the water, you are messing with their future. To tell the truth you would have crippled that individual economically, socially and spiritually.

Kefiloe: I did not look at it that way. Interesting.

Rakotsoane: Other than that, it looks like for Basotho the vegetation around the water seems to have more value than other vegetation. Take *lehlaka* [reed] for example, it has so much meaning to Basotho. You erect it when a child is born because they believe that a child is from *lets'eng* (cave) and *lehlaka* is from where?

Kefiloe: *Lets'eng*.

Rakotsoane: When you take *leloli* [a type of grass] for example, the child's umbilical cord is cut off with *leloli* too. Most of the household utensils and traditional rituals are conducted using this with water vegetation.

I use these extracts, one from a resettled man and the other from a scholar, to illustrate a broad point about water practices in Lesotho within which life is infused with the embodied presence of water. The oneness of water and people is obvious to all in Lesotho, as well as the sense of water and its as life-power. The question of water crosses all African cultures-water as the critical factor for a happy life (life-water) or water mastered as a source of malediction (death-water). Even when found in other objects like reed and *leloli*, the power of water never dies, "it can never be unusable or spent...it is life...", (Iba Diadji, 2003: 274).

4.3 Water as a Connective Force

While there are certainty aspects of Basotho relations to water that are unique, they share many similarities with other indigenous communities. The Batswana of Botswana who announces births using water. When a child is born among the Batswana, the father of the child gets a cup of water delivered to him. According to their custom, Batswana say this is a 'you have been delivered a precious gift' gesture, just as a cup of drinking water is in the desert, which Botswana is known to be because of Kalahari Desert. Among the Dogons of West Africa,

especially Burkina Faso and Mali, they have nommo, who is a female bush spirit, who lives “on the mouth of the well, and she must be conciliated with appropriate sacrifice... we make offerings to ask them to give water. Where rites have been forgotten, the water is scarce and therefore there is no life,” writes an anthropologist Jacky Bouju, (2003: 278). The Dogons of Mali also believe that it is the union of two waters (nommo and nyemo) that gives life to the human race. They believe that “the encounter between a man's sperm and the moisture of a woman's vagina brings and maintains the humidity necessary to human procreation...and the Nommo [the spirit of water], by this means transforms the water into a seed, and gives it gives the appearance of a human” (Diadji, 2003: 274). A musician, Camel Zekri, who has in the past organised a water festival around the world, says that he took the initiative to honour the memory of water because “water is not just something to satiate thirst...but something that links us to life.” (2003:284). These examples are provided to show just how intricate the relationship of people to water, eco-water is. Commodifying this water means doing away with any of the above-mentioned bodily experiences of water and people.

Yet there is also variation within these overall similarities – both across world regions and among communities living near each other. Cultural and identity variation is based upon similarities and differences at various levels, which is often closely tied to the relationship to water, water source, and soil. From a water perspective, the various water-worlds and types of water may transcend politics, enabling other identities since political boundaries may not correspond to the cultural units (Jenkins 2008). According to Durkheim, social facts are values, cultural norms, and social structures that transcend the individual and can exercise social control (Durkheim 1982). Marcel Mauss takes it further and says, "a total social fact is an activity that has implications throughout the society, in the economic, legal, political and religious spheres" (quoted in Edgar 1999:64). Water as a social fact means it influences the way people see, value and identify themselves. Among Basotho, who mostly are subsistence farmers, to speak of peoples and water is to speak of cultural diversity and identity. Across the nation, inhabitants share a similar understanding of water, yet they practise diverse forms of water management, according to their differing realities, histories, and experiences. In the indigenous world, there is no single 'model' for using water resources, but multiple alternatives and forms of management that change from region to region and from time to time (UNESCO, 2006). The common element underlying these diverse forms of interaction with water is the respect for water users have, "considering water resources not as an input or a commodity, but

as a living part of Nature, as a being with which one must interact to ensure the rights and participation of all living beings" (UNESCO, 2006:118).

Neimanis (2012) talks of differentiation as central to these water modalities. She says "watery bodies do not all flow into one amorphous puddle. Each body takes up a new instantiation, in always new forms..." (2012:5). The point she makes supports my argument that water in different forms- flowing, dammed, or piped – cannot be the same, thus people will feel differently about different waters. However, once water is perceived as universal to all users, the implication is that all users see water the same, and that water itself takes one form. "Humans are thus not conceptually alienated from the places and the material environments [including water bodies] that they inhabit, instead of enjoying deep affective attachment to these and having a commensurate concern to achieve sustainable modes of production and ensure the long-term well-being of social and ecological systems" (Strang, 2008:31). Thus, while I write here about general patterns among Basotho, it is important to bear in mind that differences are continually birthed by interactions with varying water bodies. I thus speak from my own situated experiences, recognizing that they tell a story that is singular but also deeply resonant with others about lively relations to water and how they are ignored and fractured by the making of H₂O.

4.4 History in Our Water

Where I used to live, there is a river, Maliba-Mats'o, which is a huge, long river with a lot of stories that go back to cannibal days. My grandmother told me stories of how that river swallowed cattle thieves. She said one Saturday they had woken up to the river roaring. The roaring of the river was uncommon on the days there had not been any floods or heavy rain days before. Saturday was usually their laundry day. Cattle would be left to roam in the fields herded by young boys because men would be helping with carrying heavy laundry across the river, they decided to listen to the river's roar and stayed at home. She related that a young boy had come running to report a group of men who carried weapons, who were approaching the fields, where the cattle were. By describing their blankets, the village men knew they were cattle thieves. Measures were taken to stop the cattle thieves from getting to the fields, thus cattle were saved. These men were aware of the Saturday norm, of cattle being herded by young boys and absence of men in the fields. They, however, did not know that the river had signalled for villagers to stay at home. Maliba-Mats'o was not only the main source of water for several

villages in the Thaba-Tseka district, but it is also a refuge for those around it, those who can hear it, those who can relate to it.

However, as Maliba-Mats'o stands today, it is a tributary into the Katse Dam. The misfortunes that have since followed in the Thaba-Tseka and Mohale areas have been linked to the profane act of disturbing the ancestral resting spaces. In 1998, when the political riots took place in Maseru which is about 200 kilometres from Thaba-Tseka, 13 members of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) were killed at Katse dam. Their deaths were officially noted as political, but among members of the villages around the Katse dam, they claimed the bloodshed was associated with the long-awaited ancestral appeasement that ought to have been performed by LHWP. In 2012, for the first time, Lesotho experienced an earthquake, (LMS, 2012). Upon visiting the LHDA information centre at Ha Mohale, I learned that the quake resulted in the Mohale dam wall cracking and flooding the area. Engineers working on the dam ruled the quake as a tremor caused by the wall of the dam settling in its foundation. However, the communities around the area understood the quake as dissatisfaction of those whose graves have been covered with water with no rituals having been performed for them. Eco-water should be understood as a locus of regeneration of relations, identity and non-financial wealth. Nonetheless, paradoxes of peripheral modernity (Fenda Akiwimi, 1998) connected to water extraction and violence of water commodification overlook these loci.

Moleli Sekese, who is a Mosotho poet and author speaks of amniotic fluid as sacred water, (Sekese 1992). The point he makes is that due to the challenges the child will face once he is born; the child purifies and strengthens himself with the placenta water. At one of the focus groups discussions I had with *lingoetsi* (newly married women) brought Sekese's point up. Having no child of my own, I have not yet experienced rites of passage when it comes to pregnancy and birth. While their views and experiences differed from custom to custom, they seemed to have a unified view about the importance of that water in a child's life. One woman said, "the greener the water, the more fights and tension the child had dealt with. If your child is stillborn, your water will be black in colour...the colour of the water tells how pure the child is". While scientific reasoning might dismiss their views as illogical, it is important to bear in mind that what creates their worlds is not a theory discovered by a western man but rather their experience of the world as is. systems. This I also witnessed when I attended the funeral of one of the key informant's family members. At the gate of his home, there were buckets of water for mourners to wash their hands, in the water was also aloe pieces. Washing of hands, while

it may be understood as hygienic, it is also a symbol of innocence in the death of a person. I had been sceptical to wash my hands because of the number of people who had shared the same bucket. However, Nthati (one of the key informants) who I was with showed me that people were scooping water and washing their hands outside the bucket. She relayed also that it is only the guilty, in the death, who do not wash their hands.

The practices related to water as sacred are not limited to Lesotho only. In the north-eastern Congo, several rituals and taboos are also observed. "Someone crossing a river for the first time has to give an offering to the river as a sign of being blessed by the spirits," writes Raphael Tshimanga (2009:36). This resonates with what Rakotsoane said above, about taming the land among Basotho. In the Wagenia culture, also in the Congo, there was a tradition that relatives of a deceased person should bathe in the river after the funeral to get rid of the odour of the deceased (Tshimanga, 2009). This also happens in Botswana, Kenya, India and Lesotho. This shared belief is not only about cleanliness but also a belief in the purity and sacredness of flowing water. In Baikoko culture, the infant's first river bath half a year after it is born was a signal that the child had survived the first months of its life and had not fallen victim to the high infant mortality (Sikusima 2009). "After this bath, the child was allowed outdoors and outside the village. A child born after the premature death of one or more children of the same mother was placed in a canoe, which could float freely on the water without human intervention" (2009:63). Among Basotho, to prevent a child from being a thief, in the first three months of the child's life, the child is placed in the rain naked. As he cries, adults would ululate saying "the pure waters are cleansing you". If a child or an adult is a thief, often it will be said he was not placed in the rain or the one who placed him in the rain was a thief. Rainfall as a source of water and therefore a source of life. Water from rainfall is also used in healing rituals (Ogbu, 1973).

According to an anthropologist Camille Tounouga, "every kind of water- rain, river, spring, pond, dew is invested with a particular significance," (Tounouga, 2003: 283). This significance is indeed what separates eco-water from H₂O. With commodification, the meaning is dissolved to 'sparkling', 'still' or flavoured water. Tounouga also continues to give more examples of how eco-water is understood among other people in different parts of Africa. She mentions the Fali of Cameroon, who associate the presence of water with fish. I understand this to mean food, survival and livelihoods. Another example is that of the Bamileke from western Cameroon, she writes "a father blesses his daughter on her wedding day with water in

which *fefe* leaves have been soaking. *Fefe* is a spinach-like plant that symbolises sweetness and harmony” (Tounouga, 2003: 283). Extraction and commodification of water is sorcery against such practices. Because water is a ‘renewable’ resource, extractivists are always finding ways of turning water into profit, side-lining the human-nonhuman relationships found within such ecosystems.

4.5 Water and Identity

Through the conversations I had with the participants of this research, I came to understand the dam in all its possible states: that is a political structure, a collection of water, and 'humanity's victory over the landscape. Building on the idea of water as a total social fact, meaning the values, cultural norms, and social structures that transcend the individual and can exercise a social constraint, I came to understand how the identity of Phase I communities were birthed by but not limited to their water bodies and soil. Water creates identities and crafts societies in many ways, both as symbols but also as a primary agency in culture. Cultural variation is based upon similarities and differences at various levels, which may or may not coincide with ethnicity or political or financial units. This I observed during the Water Day workshop and celebration that was geared towards finding common ground for users of water and those harvesting waters for South Africa. From a water perspective, the various water-worlds and types of water may transcend or divide states, enabling other identities since political boundaries may not correspond to the cultural units. These identities have their point of departure in the very physicality of the different forms of water and the biological necessity of the daily water (Jenkins, 2008).

A well and a river both house water, but these waters are different in use and social significance. Well water is used in domestic consumption for cooking, cleaning and bathing, while river water is mainly for rituals, 'heavy-duty' cleaning, and baptism. Which types of water are present at a given time creates human practices, responses, and solutions? The availability of water creates practices and organisations of collecting, distributing, and sharing of water, particularly when there is water scarcity (Jenkins 2008; Schoffeleers 1992; UNESCO 2006). Customarily, at a household level, collecting water has normally been the task of women and girls, thus creating gender relations but also relations and divisions between different age groups of women. These spaces (rivers and wells) have not only been crucial in teaching about the

importance and differences of water, but they have also been socialization spaces. Participants in this study had given evidence to the assertion above, as demonstrated by a quote below.

"Look at my granddaughter's breasts, they shouldn't be this big at her age. But there is no space for me to teach her and her friends about breasts and stopping them from growing. At Ha Mohale we knew that every afternoon when the girls were going to the well for water, myself and other grannies, would go with them to teach them about issues of puberty. Sometimes through mystical stories, sometimes with our own experiences, but they would learn. The well or riverbank played an important role you see. But here! Here! I can't get the girls to line up and show me their breasts or litsebe tsa 'mutla [elongated labia minora] here. I am grateful that at my age I don't walk long distances to get water, but what I lost, what these children of mine have lost, is more valuable." Nkhono Mamokheseng, 83, a participant from Makhoakhoeng.

The above statement was in response to a question to Nkhono about her relationship to water after its commodification by LHWP, compelling her to resettle to an urban area. From this, I gather that the steel pipes and cement have invaded not only the physical space in many households but also the invasion is made on the way of being and living. To add clarity to the breasts and the *litsebe tsa 'mutla* narrative, girls reaching puberty would go to the well (wells are at the outskirts of villages), grannies would join them and strip them naked. If any among them had breasts deemed to be huge for her age, grannies would sprinkle her with water from the well while chanting "go back to where you came from, this child is still young...." By morning the breasts would have shrunk. *Litsebe* are meant to adorn a vagina and protect it from "dust," meaning "easy penetration of a penis.". To elongate them, the grannies use the well water as a lubricant as they pull them downward. Once there is the length, the grannies leave *litsebe* to the girls to continue pulling. Therefore, the journey to the well would not only end at collecting water but also dealing with sexuality. With tanks and taps provided for each household, communal water collection has been cut out, thus cutting out socialization spaces that would give identity to those within the spaces.

The landscape played and continues to play an important role in creating meaning and socialization for communities across Lesotho. Euphemisms and proverbs are often related to nature. These meanings do not come about in isolation but simultaneously take place with the approval of personhood and identity. In adopting Fowler's (2004) concept of personhood, which is common behaviour practised within a group and by individuals outside of the group

(Fowler 2004: 18), I observed how the relationship communities of Phase I related to the Katse and Mohale dams not only for water connectivity but also because the dams shape their identity in the long run. The hope I have is that one day, idioms and proverbs will grow from the communities' interactions with the Katse and Mohale constructions. This would mean the dams are no longer viewed as monsters but worthy to be included in the linguistical make-up of Sesotho.

As a product of culture, the symbolism of water makes it possible to transform vulnerability and randomness into interdependence and continuity (UNESCO, 2008; Williams 1993). Rituals make it possible to interpret a real vulnerability and reliance on the water into a concept of mutual interdependence between people and water. Water-environments and water-worlds that have impacted traditions and cultural values are crucial to understanding the cultural change from a historical perspective. Without integrating water as a relevant variable for considering people's identities, cultures, and religions in the past and present, one omits crucial aspects of historical agencies and structures at work in society and religion with implications for future developments. Water is a foundation for re-creating diversity over space and time, in community organizations, and people's participation, enabling communities to practice self-determination through ongoing dialogue and exchange with nature (Iatsenia et al 2004; Castree 2014; Jenkins 2008).

From funerals, *pitiki* (a type of baby welcoming party), focus group discussions, interviews, and over 500 days being in these villages, I have come to value the villagers and ritual participants and how they perceive water as a response towards nature. As subsistence farmers, they not only are recipients of water and interpreters of its meaning, but they also create this meaning through their agricultural work and by performing folksongs, ceremonies, and rituals. During harvesting of maize and beans, which I participated in, people are taught the lyrics to sing to the harvest gods so that no storm or strong winds may come before the task is finished. In the lyrics, we promise gods to look after water sources, to leave some food in the fields, and to teach the children about the importance of gratitude. An anthropological understanding of water looks beyond water as a biological fact to illuminate how it is understood as integral to societal domains that are religious, economic, and political (Strang 2004; Wilder and Lankao 2006). Borrowing from Mauss' (1990) classical notion of total social fact, the water manifests itself in specific situations where various economic, legal, political and religious relationships overlap.

Furthermore, water is an instrument that regulates people's behaviour and interactions (Wateau, 2011). Water mobilises social values such that people can distinguish dirt from cleanliness, and there are cultural meanings where water a crucial role in religion, such as baptismal ceremonies (Wateau, 2011). In elaborating on the linkages between environment and social facts, Greidera and Garkovich (1994), through their work on the landscape framework, bring to the fore a long history between environment and culture in the social sciences. The landscape framework provides a better understanding of the definitions ascribed to individuals, their relationship with each other and the environment, through symbols and concepts. Greider and Garkovich (1994) explain that the natural phenomena are socio-cultural phenomena in the sense that they are constructed through social interactions among members of a culture as they negotiate meanings of nature and environment based on their cultural mythology. The different cultures thus ascribe different meanings to nature, and in the process construct their reality, which is then socialised, reorganised, and made into material manifestation. A good example is the case of the Basotho regarding the alternating of the Maliba-Mats'o and Senqu Rivers, which feed into the Katse and Mohale dams, respectively. Altering the flow of rivers was unthinkable to them because their definition of themselves was manifested in the way in which the river was perceived as being very holy and habitat for spirits. Yet, on the other hand, some people saw the river as a reliable source of water that could be harnessed to generate hydroelectric power for much-needed economic development and pump much more water to the industrial city of Johannesburg, thus, to them, the water became a means to an end, a capitalistic driven end. To fully comprehend the impacts emanating from the construction of large dams and, accordingly, to mitigate their adverse impacts, it is vital to understand these relationships, the definition of symbols and the meanings that have been socially constructed on the affected landscape, waters, identity, and relationships.

4.6 The New Type of Water: Hydrologic

How is it that H₂O has come to Lesotho, where it adversely affects water-as-life? How is it that some people came to see the capitalization of water as legitimate, appropriate, and even 'necessary'? To explore such questions, it is important to situate water in relation to particular framings of development and economy. According to Scudder (1968), there is a tendency to accord a disproportionate emphasis on the material aspects of development. The tendency to value the material aspects of development more than the intangible aspects amounts to a

violation of human rights (Brokensha and Scudder, 1968). As a historical underdog to South Africa, almost completely economically dependent on its neighbour, Lesotho accepted less than optimal terms in the Treaty, allowing South Africa rights to 40 percent of its water, what some have termed a "reservoir of goodwill" (Qaddumi, 2008: 7; Tilt et al., 2008; Rothert, 1999). Lesotho would pay for the hydroelectric component of the Project and cover compensation for socio-economic losses (SAICE, 2002). Many authors have criticized this outcome for its unfairness to Lesotho because all major infrastructure work would occur within its borders, thus a disproportionate share of costs of the Project would fall on Basotho shoulders (Maema and Reynolds, 1995).

At the time of the Project's inception, economic sanctions against South Africa, resulting in de-investment of R15 billion between 1982-1984, prevented the country from receiving international funding. This was easily overlooked by naming Lesotho as the primary borrower for project loans (Rothert, 1999). Co-financed by the governments of Lesotho and South Africa, German, British and French bilateral aid, the World Bank (World Bank), the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the United Kingdom Commonwealth Development Corporation (UKCDC), the African Development Bank (ADB), numerous private banks and Africa export credit-backed loans, the estimated cost of the LHWP is approximately US\$8 billion (van Gelder et al., 2002; Tricarico, 2000). By 2002, the Project had an aggregate outstanding debt of R17,588 million (US\$1,552 million).

In light of the above statistics, I argue that water commodification for Lesotho was not primarily for the benefit of Lesotho but rather for the World Bank and South Africa. The capturing of Lesotho's water is indirectly the capturing of this small kingdom. With the debt that Lesotho has since accumulated, it cannot escape the World Bank. Some of the political unrest that Lesotho has experienced is a trickle-down effect of the World Bank's involvement in Lesotho's water. An example is the killings of Lesotho Defence Force commander Maaparankoe Mahao, who was assassinated in 2015 because he spoke against the grip of the USA through the African Growth and Opportunity Act AGOA (World Bank funded). To continue its funding in Lesotho, AGOA demanded the commander to step down, failing which, funding to Lesotho would cease (Lesotho Times, 2015, vol 34). To contextualize the implication of the AGOA demands, consider this: "29 of 50 firms in Lesotho depend on the export of garments to the US, the US embassy provides 3175 Basotho with jobs, US provides

scholarships for Basotho students..." (Joshua Setipa, minister of trade and industry Lesotho in an interview with Lesotho Television).

The World Bank reasoning for support of the LHWP falls in line with an ideological insistence on the part of megaproject development proponents that massive development projects have trickle-down effects that improve local populations' qualities of life. Thamae and Pottinger (2006) describe such attitudes as part of an "institutional culture...built on incentives to make loans and keep disbursements flowing rather than achieving actual sustainable development" (Thamae and Pottinger, 2006: 37). One of the major economic benefits of the LHWP to Lesotho is the payment of water royalties for a period of 50 years (LHDA, 1999). LHWP water royalties comprise two components, namely a fixed component, which is paid monthly and calculated based on amounts of water transferred to South Africa, and a variable component, which depends on the difference between electricity costs attributable to pumping operations and operation and maintenance of the alternative projects (Mokorosi, 2007). While World Bank initially estimated that royalty payments would reach estimates of US\$55 million per year, in actuality Lesotho has received an average of US\$18 million annually. Lower values are attributed to extended droughts occurring in Lesotho in which water levels are much lower than were originally assumed (Tilt et al., 2008). By the end of 2006, Lesotho had received R1,918 million in royalty payments (World Bank, 2007).

Despite the World Bank's assertion that the Project established productive long-term employment prospects in Lesotho, 3,000 Basotho were employed by the project, most of whom found jobs as low-paid labourers with most skilled positions filled by foreigners (Matli, 2005). Listing local employment creation as one of the Project's central benefits, this report asserted that the LHWP was essential for improving Lesotho's economic prospects and bringing the country's domestic absorption under control (World Bank, 1991). The World Bank identified the entire population of Lesotho (with emphasis on poverty-stricken Basotho) as industrial and urban. The World Bank's involvement in the project was essential for bringing other funders on board. A 1991 World Bank Staff Appraisal report initially stated that the environmental and social impacts of the LHWP would be minimal, estimating fewer than 16,000 Basotho would be directly impacted by the project. Their estimate proved to be almost half the number of people whose lives were disrupted by the LHWP (World Bank, 1991).

The simultaneous existence of water as an extractable commodity and as a living resource is the key argument in this research work. People of Phase I have to constantly negotiate and navigate their way around water and H₂O. While their relationship with water remains the same, resettlement has forced them to also interact with H₂O because of how their new residential areas are structured. The pleasure of interacting with flowing water has been replaced by pipes and tanks, meters and taps- which too need to be understood. Those who are pro water commodification, like Water and Sewerage Company (WASCO) and LHWP, claim commodifying water helps manage water and make users of water more responsible. In my observations, however, wasteful behaviour was more prominent among those who can afford to pay for H₂O than those who relied on water.

To understand water's sociality, we must understand the social dynamics around water. Meaningful relationships can emerge through precarious conditions whereby people are unified by mutual interests and value systems as their survival strategies. Since Basotho believe that ancestors reside in flowing rivers, their relationship with a dam comes from the recognition that a river is an ancestor in its own way. A river flows from the past to the present; therefore, a dam becomes a museum, an archive, an ancestor's resting or still place. As a social fact, water is an agent of power, of politics, of inclusion and exclusion. Flowing water, as in a river, has power that it exercises over the people. They constantly must negotiate and navigate their lives around a flowing river, which is different from negotiating and navigating their lives around a dammed river.

When compared with most countries in the same region, Lesotho has lots of water. Because of visible water bodies, water was easily socialized. Water is the only natural resource Lesotho has had in abundance. Rivers and wells were common water sources. People knew how to distil their water in their homes, they knew which water was useful for what. For example, water from a well is normally for drinking, while water from a river is for cleaning/cleansing. However, there has been a new type of water introduced – tap water. This water has to be spoken of because for many of the participants in this study, it seems tap water was positioned to replace rivers and wells, causing challenges for water users. This 'new' water offers itself almost as an entirely new substance altogether and thus demonstrates how, in this case, water arrives in this community – treated and regulated - has transformed the substance into a different manifestation of 'itself'. The chlorine added at the WASCO plant has replaced nrate Mohlomi and his traditional medicine. The tap is both a river and a well. This new water cannot

tell of imminent danger. Then can this new water be considered a social fact? As alive or sacred?

"This unusual 'new' water demands distinctive relationships with it. Not only because of the economic cost associated with it, but also because to collect it demands to alter practice – for example, the use of different paths, queuing for access and the resulting waiting times", (Attala Lucienne, 2018:67). Thus, as different waters become part of people's lives, they have the power to remodel social and individual behaviours through the methods by which people can engage with them. 'New' water dictates new terms of use. It does not allow much interaction or relationship with users; its dominance is evident in how users can only wait for it. One cannot perform a 'tap water ceremony' nor appease the WASCO gods.

While Lesotho can meet its own water needs, as well as contributing to regional developments as exemplified by LHWP, the organization's views on water differ from that of the locals. Though initially established that Lesotho can meet its demands for water, (NES 2002, UNESCO 2006, Scudder 2005, Hoag 2014), the actions of LHWP have left many without water while chasing to meet the needs of South Africa, which practically owns the water harvested by the LHWP. The lack of shared understating of the value water has amongst Basotho has led to the alienation of LWHP and the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA), which is the administrative arm of LHWP. In my early days in the field, I faced a challenge of participants either refusing to converse with me, or they would simply give me rehearsed stories of how their lives have been since relocation.

At Nazareta one lady introduced me at a public gathering as "*ofisiri ea morero*" meaning an officer from the Authority (implying LHDA). I had to rectify this misidentification by producing my student card and a proof of registration I had carried with me. Once I had created a rapport with participants, they shared their views on LHDA with me, especially on the commodification of water and resettlement. This division has caused LHDA numerous court cases, uprisings, and vandalism to some properties. One of the observations I had made while walking through the villages was that houses were not looked after while the gardens were well-groomed. Household after household I would see how unkept the houses were, especially in Nazareta and Ha Mohale, and a few houses in Makhoakhoeng. One day I asked Nthathi what she thought of her house (hers was unkept too). She replied with a stern face "*ase ntlo eaka ena kea morero*" (it is not my house, it belongs to LHDA). Further probing revealed that she

and many others share the view that LHDA will one day come and tell them to move. "If they dared to move me from my land, my land! You think they will hesitate to move me from this cold house they built for me?" she cried. Water wars indeed. People of the same nation, divided by water – water that belongs to no one, but everyone.

Water in its many facets matters for humans, while the social, cultural, ideological and religious roles of water include deep relations and identities ranging from "personal perceptions and gender relations to rainmaking and fertility rites for the benefit of the whole society as well as perceptions of cosmological realms and religious beliefs" (Oestigaard 2009: 7). How and to what extent water creates identities and constitutes social values and how different and changing water-environments and water-worlds have impacted traditions and cultural values are crucial to understanding the cultural change from a historical perspective. Without incorporating water as a relevant variable for understanding people's identities, cultures, and religions in the past and present, one neglects crucial aspects of historical agencies and structures at work in society and religion with implications for future developments, which was the case for LHWP when undertaking studies to construct Katse and Mohale dams. While there are traces to show there was a Social Impact Assessment undertaken for the Phase I construction, there is no evidence to show it was followed. Participants crying foul play was the order of the day from consultation to resettlement to livelihood projects that were planned for them.

As thus water in Lesotho is not merely the productive, connective force that conventional water metaphors portray, it is also a stumbling block, reminding people, especially Basotho highlanders, whose lives had to change, of the contradictions and complications of life in Lesotho. The struggle they face daily is to understand themselves and their new experiences, and how to negotiate them. While humans continually and decisively change their realities, they are also historical and social products of the same realities. It is therefore important to understand multispecies relation through examining the corollary of spiritual ecology and the hydro-social cycle of water that the Basotho so deeply believe. Water is alive because of its very movement and is therefore a source of life. Thus, a river among the Basotho is feminine, related to a woman who is fertile and a giver of life. Life is linked to water for people. The mountains and the rivers are also believed to be habitants of spirits of those that have died. Sekese, writes "they sit and watch over us from the high mountains and the flowing rivers..."(1992:34). These rivers and mountains and their relationship to Basotho are key to

this study. Water flowing from the mountains through the rivers and soil of Lesotho carries more meaning for the inhabitants than is normally perceived by rulers and the neighbouring economic giant, South Africa.

Since 1952, the commodification of this resource has led to many of the country's injustices and frictions. Ecocide was one of the greatest end results of commodification of water. Through the LHWP, water harnessing in Lesotho has the primary purpose of being tunnelled to South Africa. This has caused frictions between the implementing body and communities. It has also infringed on relationships between people and water and among people who, in the past, had lived peacefully side by side. Ecofeminist writer Astrida Neimanis (2012) makes the case that water is characterised by its unknowability, and for that reason it remains 'undomesticated'. Because it can evaporate, take the shape of a container, cleanse, heal, and dilute other substances, water can never be fully controlled. In the quest to control it, developmental projects like damming have caused havoc in water's redistribution. Its new relations with local biology, geology and society throw household economies into disarray, flooding one part of the landscape, and desiccating another. The dams have changed critical zone relations, which means this piece of the earth is in an altered relation to the planet, the water is now part of the hydro-fossil economy that is increasing GHGs via SA's coalfired power stations, which in turn increases the feedback loops onto this area's weather systems leading to increased frequency of droughts, and changing the snow season, with significant secondary impacts on the ecology; rains come as floods rather than snows that trickle away slowly and thus risking loss of top soils whose end result is food insecurity.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter explored different views of the water. To explain the different meanings of water, I showed how water and H₂O differ. The social context in which H₂O is found, defines the difference. H₂O is assumed to be devoid of life, of context and relationality, and the practices built up around it, in that paradigm, pay no attention to life, or context, or relations. It is a brutalist regime that pays no attention to the interrelations of life and non-life, that is, "bios" and "geos". It is the interaction people have with water that grants it meaning, and it is the meaning of water that give people the satisfaction and preference. The interrelationship between people and water is changed by development projects like the LHWP, which introduced a 'new' type of water, with its brutalist relationalities, for the communities of Phase

I. This new type of water, coming through taps is not relational. H₂O is dominating and needy. It can stop coming out without a warning. H₂O needs to be looked after but not in a way that allows any relationship to form.

Through the lens of hydro-social cycles, I established the relationship that communities of Phase I have water via empirical examples of the different ways water's sacredness is valued among Basotho, especially among women. However, this sacredness of water cannot be observed in new host communities where there are no rivers or wells. Taps and tanks insert plastic or cement barriers between people and water, where a river or a well would be integrated with both ecology and society. Through influences beyond communities' control, Lesotho's water has been reduced to H₂O, a mere commodity.

5 Ethnographies of Thirst

"When the well is dry, we know the worth of water"- Benjamin Franklin

A river was here
and it had two banks
and a heavenly mother who nursed it on drops from the clouds A small river moving slowly
descending from the mountain peaks
visiting villages and tents like a charming lively guest
bringing oleander trees and date palms to the valley
and laughing to the nocturnal revellers on its banks:
'Drink the milk of the clouds
and water the horses
and fly to Jerusalem and Damascus'
Sometimes it sang heroically
at others passionately
It was a river with two banks
and a heavenly mother who nursed it on drops from the clouds But they kidnapped its mother
so it ran short of water
and died, slowly, of thirst.

The above poem is published in a book titled *A River Dies of Thirst* by M. Darwish in 2009. It speaks to this thesis, to the communities who benefited from rivers which flowed through their communities. Rivers mentioned through throughout this thesis were indeed the providers of “the milk of the clouds” (Darwish, 2009:33). The poem encapsules the relationship the communities of Thaba-Tseka and Ha-Mohale had with their own rivers which are now reservoirs. When they became reservoirs, some rivers ran short of water, thirst gripped in, and the rivers died of thirst. At a larger scale, the impacts of “kidnapping the mother so [the river] ran short of water” (Darwish, 2009:33) may not be seen, but it is those who relied on this river who can speak of the thirst that came as unintended consequence of water commodification. This chapter will discuss literal thirst and other forms of thirsts which were brought about by water commodification in Lesotho.

“Is Lesotho exporting itself into a drought?” was a question that kept on crawling into many conversations and thoughts throughout the period of field research. The thirst that concerned me is not only of people for water, but also the thirst experienced by soil, by ancestral lands, kraals and graveyards. Lack of rain, or heavy rains, instead of snows affect the soil: it becomes dried up, barren, and readily eroded and in turn, less able to support the plant life which normally holds water in the soil. People were removed from their ancestral land, which caused a rift between people and their ancestors. Kraals stand empty because host community laws do not accommodate livestock in these areas. Lastly, graveyards have disappeared under weeds and can no longer be identified because they were left behind while the living relatives were relocated elsewhere. This chapter addresses the looming thirst people are to face due to water scarcity, and changes in what soil scientists call "the critical zone" relationships of Lesotho's mountain valleys: the relationship between flows of water from bedrock to treetop (Banwart, 2011). The stories of water shortages against the backdrop of plentiful nuances, in Lesotho, in relation to past, present and future, undergirds the conclusions and recommendations made in the next chapter. However, to get to that, the changes that occurred over time in the river valleys, due to the dams, need to be accounted for, in regard to the new regime of thirst and desiccation below the dam walls.

Because water is vital for life, the thirst of the people and the soil can be looked at as a thirst for freedom too. The capturing of water meant imprisoning of lives, identities, relationships, livelihoods and hope. Some miss the social and ecological relationships of the flow of the water: they neither see, nor understand what lived relations with flowing water entail. Baviskar (2019) relays accounts of how communities in India faced social and ecological injustices because of dam construction. She points out that some of the gruesomeness even led to death of minors and civilians during anti-dam marches. Scudder (2005) and Pottinger (2006) also relate stories of loss in Asia, Latin America and other African countries, where uprising from communities were met violence as their grievances were perceived as unlawful. In a film “This is not a burial, it’s a resurrection”, the director Lemohang Mosese shows a widow who fights the government who plans to flood her village (including graveyards) while making a way for a dam. This film is actually based on true events that took place in Nazareta, which is one of my field sites. Weaving together ideas on capitalism, relocation and “collective identity and history” (Guardian News and Media). To understand what has been lost, and the multiple losses and feedback loops of that loss, requires understanding the ways in which lives, ecologies and wellbeing are assembled, created and recreated by those who live with the river and whose

lives are one with the river. The transformation of rivers subsequently transforms lives that depend on the river, in the same manner, the environment around the river changes the river. People and rivers are intertwined. The observation raises a question: has the capture of the river in a dam ultimately translated to capturing people?

Lesotho generally receives low rainfall ranging from 400 mm to 650 mm per annum across the lowlands where there is the most arable land. In recent years the country has experienced poor rainfall amounts and distribution. Future climate scenarios made in 2010 show higher chances of further deterioration in rainfall amounts with projections of a water stress period by 2019, which indeed happened. The Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC) noted that the 2014/15 season was poor due to the dry spell in January to February of that season (LMS, 2015). Following the poor season, an El Niño event was announced to start from March 2015 to June 2016. El Niño events, which arise from sea-surface temperature anomaly in the Atlantic Ocean (LMS, 2015) result in drought conditions for 2015/16 due to high sporadic, erratic, insufficient and rainfall characterised by the late start of the season, prolonged spells interspaced from November to January (LMS 2015). The impact of this drought continued into 2017, worsening food insecurity in households, especially those who rely on subsistence farming like the LHDP Phase I communities. Following the observed negative impacts of the El Niño-induced drought, which was estimated to be the worst in over 15 years, the government of Lesotho declared 2015/16 season a drought emergency and appealed to the international community for support in relief actions to mitigate the effects of drought. However, there were no talks on harnessing water or allowing communities to use water in the Mohale catchment or the Katse reservoir. This failure to adjust international agreements is the pre-eminence of the LHWP treaty, which forces Lesotho to honour the agreement at the expense of its citizens.

In recent years, drought has swept over Lesotho and many other countries in Africa, leaving communities destitute. The wrath of the drought was felt especially by agrarian communities, as the direct implication for them was hunger, thirst and loss. Through-out Lesotho, Botswana and South Africa headlines made waves of animals and crops dying due to the drought. Addressing Lesotho in particular, the drought raised a lot of questions for locals because of the water sales to South Africa. When the treaty was signed in 1986, the effects of climate change in Lesotho were not as harsh as they are now. A year and six months in the field, taught me that most households resettled at Makhoakhoeng struggle to obtain water. The *Jojo* tanks (green plastic tanks) as pictured in figure 23, provided for many stand empty: witnesses of the empty promises of a better life made to their owners. Many rely on boreholes scattered around

their villages. These boreholes cater not only for the resettled communities but the host communities too, causing friction between the host and resettled communities. Scores of people can be seen queuing for water, often very early in the mornings or late afternoon into the evening.



Figure 23A jojo tank with a home-made water dispenser for people to wash hands at the local chief's home. While this dispenser is meant to save water and guarantee less human contact during the COVID-19 season, it is also a sign of how little water people have. Scores of people who come to the chief's home for different services, all have to share those five litres. Picture by author, 2020.

Lesotho has experienced a decline in water levels in many catchment areas as well as groundwater with some water bodies drying in December 2018 due to erratic rains and low recharge of water bodies. As of the end of January 2019, the country is estimated to have received less than 50% of its average rainfall. This led to inadequate surface water and poor recharge to the aquifers. Although there was some improvement in the January rainfall figures,

these rains did not make a significant difference to water resources since it did not manage to adequately recharge groundwater which is the main contributor to the water resources. The monitoring of groundwater sources, traced through springs, river flows, and wetlands, (LMS 2019) evidences a small change but are still way below normal during this time. The forecast of rainfall until March still has higher chances of normal to below normal rainfall. Nonetheless, water scarcity is expected to remain until the next rainy season. Limited water supply negatively affects households, and institutions. All communities reported that rationing is still being done, and in some extreme cases, water is only available three days per week. One of the participants I spoke to during field research asked the obvious rhetorical question: "Will we stop selling water, now that we don't have it?"

With more rivers being diverted to feed the Katse dam whose water will be unavailable to locals, the thirst among the people will increase. Some are already thirsty because of dried-up rivers due to climate change. Resettlement to Maseru has put WASCO under an immense pressure to meet water demands and increase water networks. When the demand increases, the supply also has to increase but economic policies cannot guarantee increased rainfall, hence at times, certain areas lack water in order to secure the supply to other areas. Also, to meet the expenses of transferring water, the cost of water has increased thus some are thirsty because of high bills with WASCO which led to the water supply being cut off.

Water in Lesotho has become what Karl Polanyi 1944 refers to as a "fictitious commodity" which means objects treated as commodities, but which are part of the commons, and effectively not available for commodification, such as land and water. Everyday existence and the social reproduction of the lives of communities of Phase I are entangled in water, and it is those relationships that have been invisible in the process of the marketization of water in terms of the paradigm of H₂O. To describe and understand the full range of effects of the commodification of water on the lives of people of Phase I, I made a connection between neoliberalism, biopolitics and sovereignty, which were discussed in the previous chapter. Through access or lack therefore, of money, people can die or live. Neoliberalism encourages modernity, which of course is money and economy driven.

In an ideal world of the neoliberal economy, fictitious commodities like water and land can only be accessed by those who can give money in exchange for such a commodity. Capitalism dressed as modernity is the engine behind neoliberal nuances, determining who lives and who dies. Though it may appear to have apprehension for analytical de-centring of capitalism in the

economy, neoliberalism can still be recognized as a political, social and cultural assemblage, grounded in the economic rationality, social contradictions and therefore breeding social injustices. In his book *Capitalism in the Web of Life* Jason Moore basically shows that capitalism has entangled itself in all aspects of life. He highlights that habituality depends on the availability of money and that the ecology has been replaced by a financialised economy which is failing the people (Moore 2015) and instead leading to ecocide. This tying of ecology to money has caused many people to experience immense shortages, suffering and thingification of water.

Any discussion of capitalism and commodification begins with Karl Marx. His theory explored the materialities of human society, its dynamics and historical evolution, and the study began with his observations of the changing ecology of farming under industrial capitalism (Bellamy 2010). The Marxist theory states that material conditions and relations within societies, not their ideologies, determine their character (Roseberry, 1997). Since the construction of large dams is closely associated with industrialisation, Marx recognised that the achievements of industrial capitalism required the non-human environment to be dominated for the accumulation of material wealth (Mandel, 1978). According to the Marxist view, to be modern and progressive meant nature (including rivers that are dammed to meet human water needs be it for consumption or industrial needs) had to be subjected to patriarchal capitalism that is, Man (Mandel, 1978). I once carried bottled water with me during an interview during my research and one person asked how much the water had been. "M10.50", I had responded. Long after his question, I looked at the label on the plastic bottle: "from the Springs of Lesotho. Bottled in Botshabelo" (a small town in the Free-State Province, South Africa) it read. I remembered how we had been taught in school that our water was not clean enough. Wells, rivers and springs should not be sources of drinking water, modernity dictated. You must boil the water they said.

I draw as an example of the life of Manthati, from Makhoakhoneng the need for land. Before resettlement to the green space, she had cattle in her yard. The cattle dung from her cattle, she used as fuel and as manure. She paid her child's school fees through barter system with one of her cows. In the new, 'better' space, she cannot rear cattle as they are pollutants of the city. She must buy paraffin or gas for fuel, she buys chemical manure for her small garden and of course, she should find money to pay her child's fees. To afford this lifestyle, she used the compensation money. When it ran out, she sold a portion of her land to be able to keep living. At a larger scale, Lesotho is extracting from itself to keep itself alive, which resonates with

“we may be devouring our future” as written by Julie Livingston (2019: 9) in her book titled *Self Devouring Growth*. She points out that self-devouring growth is a cancerous model, which depends on out-of-control growth that eventually kills the organism in which it is found. Speaking of development, Livingston argues that it is always looked at as an economic growth, with developers assuming that if everything grows, there will be enough whereas that is a fairy tale because resource scarcity will increase (Livingston, 2019). Manthati sold land on which she grew food, to afford food. The Lesotho Government sells water so that it can give life to its people. In the end, hunger and thirst become a choice to be made if continuation of life has to be pursued, cancerous self-devouring growth indeed!

5.1 Thirst of rivers

Rivers are alive. The continued presence of ancestors in water keeps the rivers alive and sacred. In some countries like New Zealand, rivers are even recognised as persons; with rights and worth protecting. However, in countries like Lesotho, due to Christian ideologies of human dominion, rivers are treated as extractable resources. None-the-less, that does not take away the relationship and value placed on rivers by the fewer neoliberalist users. Local knowledge guides these users that 'the rivers are sentient, therefore, they should not overuse resources'. This applies to water (in rivers) and other species. When rivers are diverted for purposes of commodifying water, they lose the track on which they naturally flowed. Meaning they lose the connection to their natural selves. Sense of being and place changes because of commercialisation.

A dried-upriver is an obvious example of a thirsty river, but the less obvious example would be that of occluded rivers like Maliba-Matso. Neither can fish grow nor people interact with Maliba-Matso. If it had any duties at all, like a river, those duties it can never meet. No life can come forth from Maliba-Matso because of its new commercialised position as a catchment. It can only retaliate in anger by overflowing, destroying vegetation around it and pushing against the concrete wall. A conversation with this great river would probably be a call to be personified like the Whanganui and Ganges rivers but unfortunately, the legal thirst when it comes to nature is rife. If anything, in Lesotho the GDP depends on the environmentally damaging activities like damning rivers.

The relationship people have with water and other natural worlds form the uniqueness of life on earth. Depriving one of them the other is denying personhood and identity to each. Strang

(2004), mentions how water usage is driven by the need for "social reconnection and reconciliation with nature", (2004:1). Rivers and other water bodies are there to be interacted with; by those who value them, not the profligacy of resources that is encouraged by political enfranchisement. Dams and water capturing are of colonial ideology; controlling that which was otherwise free. As a living entity, a river's thirst for freedom is constantly denied by those who stand to endlessly sponge off it.

5.2 Social Thirst

The social thirst in this context is the unquenchable desire for lifestyle people had at a certain point in time. Malehana Motanyane (70 years old, from Ha Mohale) had lived more than half her life in the village valley which is now the Mohale Dam. She still remembers the old days when everything was plentiful—firewood, fertile riverbanks, cropland, good pastures, and peace of mind. "Today it is different, we are poorer than before, I miss having neighbours. I miss owning a horse ... little things" she says. Her story is a common one, especially among those whose houses had to be relocated. One of her complaints is that many promises were made by the project authority but never met. For instance, the new houses were to be equipped with small fireplaces or stoves, which she claimed would be easier to use like they did paola (a small stove curved out of a tin used to make a fire in mud houses). Her plight goes beyond material necessities, extending to what she calls lost family ties. Now living in Maseru, she can only see her children once in a while. They were not resettled because their houses were not in the way of the dam or infrastructure. She also claims when she visits her children, she cannot attend funerals of relatives and friends who live across the valley because of the water. "The footbridges are far and wide apart. A journey that used to take me an hour now takes three hours because I have to walk around the dam," she explained.

According to Molaoa (2007), followers of Marxism view those opposing human domination over nature as either simple-minded sentimentalists or reactionaries who just want to protect the feudal system of pre-industrial social order. Marxists reason that within the capitalist system, there is intensive use of science and technology that is seen in the case of the construction of large dams, division of labour and extensive exploitation of nature and the working class by the owners of the means of production (Mandel 1978, Molaoa 2007). The system thus calls for human beings to use their labour-power, skills and creativity to transform the non-human world into goods and services required for living. These goods and services include water supply, energy supply and food which can be attained through the construction

of large dams, and all of which are necessary to reach the post-capitalist era of Utopia, (which is the highest level of wealth and affluence). Marx and Engels are critical of the capitalist system of production concerning private property because they assert that it holds back the forces of production to produce even more wealth, thereby not exploiting the non-human environment efficiently and to its fullest potential to redistribute material needs to people efficiently. While they recognised that capitalism had elevated the status of human beings, it had also not been able to eradicate poverty (Mandel, 1978).

A global campaign for the human right to water has grown enormously over the past decade in the wake of the market economy and fictitious commodities. Commercialization re-introduces water as an economic good rather than a public good and redefines users as individual customers rather than a community, (Vandana, 2009). Neoliberalism thus rewrites water as a commodity, an economic good encouraging those who can afford it to place incentives and rules on how to access it. In contrast, the commons view of water asserts its unique qualities: water is a flow resource essential for life and ecosystem health; non- substitutable and tightly bound to communities and ecosystems through the hydrological cycle (Shiva 2002; TNI 2005). Water has important cultural and spiritual dimensions that are closely articulated with place-based practices; as such, its provision cannot be left up to private companies or the state. The loudest cry of those I interacted with was "we have to pay for water, our water"! I cannot imagine how much it would cost for nstate Maliehe to baptize his patients in this transactional use of water. While it might be viewed as an incentive for 'better' use of water to put a price tag on water, it has also removed the sacredness and social meaning of water. The social role of water will further be discussed in the sub-chapter on water and identity.

However, the point I wanted to make was that water is a local flow resource whose use and health are most deeply socialized at the community level; the notion a neoliberal approach seems to be oblivious to. The water crises that the world is facing is a result of cooperates controlling that which ought to be controlled by communities. An understanding I have is, if water belonged to communities, they would know how to protect, use and regulate but because it has become a commodity, their relationship with water has changed. Talking to some of the participants, they gave responses like "...we pay the bill anyway...", "...I am back to collecting water from the river, they closed the tap due to unpaid bill...", "...I am sure one day they will charge us for the tanks as well...". The narratives were different when speaking of uncaptured water. The sincerity and mutual respect were often audible from the tone and choice of words to describe the relationship with the rivers and wells which freely provided the water.

Anthropologists, geographers, and STS scholars use the term local knowledge to describe the agroecological knowledge of subsistence communities in geographically and politically marginal communities in the developing world (Dove, 2011). Local knowledge producers are typically dismissed outside of the critical social sciences as "holders of culturally embedded knowledge rather than active builders and curators of changing bodies of knowledge", Radcliff (1966:18). Saad- Filho and Johnston (2005) made a claim that "we live in the age of neoliberalism," with neoliberalism being "the dominant ideology shaping our world today," which as a hegemonic discourse has pervaded all aspects of human life, (2005:1). This is expected considering that neoliberalism is characterised by "the consistent expansion of the economic form to apply to the social sphere . . . transpose economic analytical schemata and criteria for economic decision making onto spheres which are not, or certainly not exclusively, economic areas" (Lemke, 2001: 197).

In the context of LHWP and Phase I communities, Local knowledge critiques neoliberal tendencies focused on commodifying nature by through bilateral contracts. This is because it seeks to protect alternative forms of the creative world making from appropriations and exploitations in Western commodity markets (Coombe, 2003). At the same time, the inevitability of participation in such a regime is bolstered by the neoliberal argument that the global South has many "unpriced" and often un-owned biophysical assets that, if inserted into global markets, could create revenue that would be able to support much needed socio-economic development (Castree, 2010). Thus, the South's 'poverty' is used against it to enter into the much-unwanted commodification of invaluable resources.

Reading the WCD (2000), there is a sense of incredulity as to how far-reaching the effects of resettlement and dam construction are. The powerlessness experienced by one being removed, less of control of space, the abrupt ending of relationships, with people and environment are yet to be documented accordingly. Communities like those in Nazareta rely on *jojo* tanks for water. Many suffered water-related illnesses due to the stored *jojo* water. Not only do these people have to adapt new ways of living but also, they have to deal with new illnesses and cures. According to what Scudder (2005) termed "the grieving for the lost homes syndrome", (2005:27) is an end result of removal from home (home being a familiar surrounding or people). People like Mpiti and Nthati blame their inability to bear children to being away from 'home'. Their thirst for a place the call home remains unquenched, their thirst for water they can drink freely remains unmet, their souls are parched because their rivers have become reservoirs. In the picture below, is a group of girls who are doing laundry. I spent an hour with these group,

on this particular day, to observe how different doing laundry on a cement slab would be. The woman in a blue hat, seen sitting down, is giving instruction on how the girls should do laundry, how to save water and also sharing nuggets of wisdom on why girls have to always be clean.



Figure 24 laundry day. The cement structure has replaced the river and its bank. The new normal is hanging clothes on the cement block until they dry. This is at Nazareta. Photo by author, 2020.

Some of the challenges that arose from the LHWP Phase I programme could have been avoided. Many of the cases that rest with the Ombudsman are civil cases that reflect how starved of local knowledge projects like these are. Many more form rivers of disconnect between the implementing agency and the communities. Ajibade (2003) says local knowledge describes the knowledge system developed by communities as opposed to scientific knowledge. This makes local knowledge is more applicable for community-level developmental projects, like the LHWP. Unlike most schools of thoughts, Local knowledge can inform both scientific and traditional processes. An example which one can easily make is of the graves, kraals and ash hips which were not 'resettled' with owners. To the organization, resettling these other structures meant spending more money, whereas to the communities,

resettling those items could have meant complete lives. Hailing from a neoliberal school of thought, many are driven by the need to maximise profits, extract as much as from the mute and defenceless earth and leave just enough to make 'green declarations'. The various meaning of water to Phase I communities have been discussed throughout this dissertation.

Often local knowledge is sold off as 'emotional' by those in other forms with different voices to it. However, the need for local knowledge in projects such as these, is so that questions like 'who speaks with authority about Africa's environment? How do we handle contemporary successes and failures in an African context?' can be addressed in ways most relevant to communities. Thus, framing of Africa, its people and environments in the context of which in turn shifts boundaries of knowledge production, allowing an African voice and school of thought to inherently be intertwined with scientific knowledge. The thirst for Local knowledge is made paramount by an increasingly technological and developmental project brought forth by the West.

With technological and developmental advancement in Lesotho and many other African countries, there is a loss of sense of community. Individual WASCO-run taps, while viewed as 'making life easier' for Phase I communities, have also dismantled the communal feeling of sharing resources. Wells and rivers were spaces for socialization, hence no single household had a well, though it could have possible to do so. Individual taps reflect a politics of individualism. Instead of individual taps, which are more expensive to keep and alienating, communal taps could have been a better deal. Not all could have been lost; community members would still have a place to continue socializing- that tap could have taken a place for a well. The obvious disconnect between LHWP and communities, as far as water is concerned, is the lack of local knowledge or appreciation thereof, by LHWP.

Movement and flow of water, transnational, captured and socialized water, form larger politics of water. Therefore, the needs to be more voices in the nuances of water interactions. Multispecies approach, I have found, allows voices like Local knowledge to be heard. By giving agency to dams and other non-human species, we allow other forms of knowledge to also be heard, appreciated and contextualized to be a better fit for projects. Development is highly embraced yet contested, it is, therefore, essential to find ways which will not bring compromise human and non-human species in the process. By including Local knowledge in policymaking and development projects, we rethink alternative ways that benefit communities, biosphere and the GDP.

5.3 Economic and Environmental Thirst

The above sections on thirst spoke to the social and literal thirst which people face when water becomes a commodity. This section will dwell on economic thirst, which cannot be isolated from politics of Lesotho. Water in Lesotho is a political tool, it was used by Boers to control Basotho and their movement. A good example of this is that all Lesotho- South Africa borders are marked by rivers. V. Wiegleb and Bruns (2018) write argues that water scarcity in Lesotho is caused by political structure more than lack of water in itself. They assert that development and neoliberal economic policies are key in understanding how scarcity is created and upheld. Lesotho improved SA's economy in the 1980 all through 1990s through migrant labour and now, it improves its economy by providing Gauteng Province, which is an industrial province, affectionately known as place of gold, with water. Ironically, Basotho go days without water. When South African mines closed down, the remittance 'well' dried up with migrant labours forced to come back home, which in return "forced Lesotho to look within her own borders" to keep the "GDP well" (V. Wiegleb and A. Bruns, 2018) filled up through commodification of nature. Lost means of livelihood implies changing hydro-social relations in Lesotho. An example is that of rise of HIV infections and its direct correlation to water scarcity. Women are usually the ones who manage water in households and at the same time they are the once mostly affected by livelihoods patterns and HIV prevalence. Shifts in any of these variables (livelihoods or health) contributes to water scarcity.

While construction of Katse and Mohale dams is sold off as a development project, the underlying fact is this project is a neoliberalistic power machine. This World Bank funded project has not in the true sense benefited Lesotho. In order to determine whether communities, households, and individuals are better off, the same, or worse off as a result of project activities, it is necessary to get detailed baseline data against which changes can be monitored and measured. Social impact assessments done as part of safeguards policies should ensure that various categories of people are interviewed and monitored, breaking the population down along gender, age, class, ethnic, occupational, vulnerability and other lines. No matter how good a development policy is, it is likely to fail if it goes against the interests of the local populations and if local people are not involved in decision-making and planning. Public participation, therefore, is crucial to the success of large-scale water projects. Free, Prior, and Informed Consent should include not just consultation but meaningful information dissemination, local-level discussion, and real consent.

The debt Lesotho incurred for this project cannot be paid off by a decade or two. While Lesotho is exporting itself dry, it has also got itself neck deep in debt- and as the saying goes “he whom you owe is your master”. Moreover, the water flow is controlled by South African authorities. One could say Lesotho is hosting South Africa’s water; thus, Lesotho is hosting South African power; South Africa has power in Lesotho. From how it currently stands, Lesotho rivers and mountains have been signed off as a natural infrastructure for South Africa and needs. Just like a slave-master and slave relationship, so is the relationship of South Africa and Lesotho. Two well-abled nations, both capable of running themselves, but one has its power under the other because of deed of ‘sale’ that puts it at disadvantage, with the World Bank acting as auction master; laying down the term of ‘sale’ yet much aware that those will not necessarily be followed from an ordinary citizen to the king, South Africa has stripped Lesotho off her power. The power dynamics are always at play; South Africa and World Bank stripped Lesotho, LHWP stripped Basotho in affected areas, and host communities stripped the resettled communities, leaving them with a sense of hopelessness. With Polihali resettlement plan underway, resettled communities are forced to relive their horror and come to terms yet again how powerless they are.

It is necessary to have a policy environment that is appropriate and positive for all concerned, one which takes into careful consideration international, regional, national, and local level policies and practices and places significant emphasis on local culture, heritage, and traditions. Parties involved in dam construction and water resource management project formulation must pay close attention to the social, political, economic, and environmental situations in the project areas. The power exercised by those in power also comes in the form of necropolitics; through sovereignty of policy and treaties, humans, plants and animals alike, are left to die. By taking away that which they rely on for life, death is automatically declared, thus exercising power.

6 Reconceptualising Lesotho Highlands Water Project

“Can we contribute, by carefully staging how things hold together, to more sustainable caring relationalities and life conditions in an aching world?” (de la Bellacasa 2011).

6.1 Thulare: The Water Healer with No Water

He was initiated in the Bokong River. This is how it started. At age 12, he had a dream that he was waist-deep in the Phuthiatsana river. In the dream, a local *mochonoko* (one who trains others to be traditional healers) appeared to Thulare to follow him. Thulare had followed *mochonoko* deep into the river. The river waters had covered them, yet they did not drown. At the bottom of the river, he found all sorts of plants, animals and also human beings. *Mochonoko* had shown him how each plant served as medicine. He had shown him how the animal powers were transferred to the humans and how the river waters had kept those in the water alive and healthy. Still in the dream, he had been asked if he wanted to join this community of people, to which he replied yes. Then he woke up. When he woke up, he related his dream to his grandmother, who took him to the *mochonoko* who had appeared in the dream. A few weeks later, dressed in white linen, he was initiated as a *mochonoko* in the Bokong River. He had to collect water from Phuthiatsana, as it acted as a direct beacon of his *bochonoko* training.

As a healer, Thulare used water ho *laola* (to divine) and heal. Whenever he had a patient, he could take them to the Bokong river, then leave the patient at the bank while he would go into the *koetsa*. In there, he would consult the ancestors and the underwater community on how to go about the healing process. When he comes out, he would then do as he was instructed. To the patient, it often appeared as though he was swimming in the deep end. The process was often quick unless he was dealing with a spiritually controlled ailment. Sometimes if his patient cannot go the river, he would take a bucket, draw water from the *koetsa* then have the conversations with the underwater community before heading to the patient's house.

In October 1999, Thulare got the news that there was going to be a dam in the Ha Mohale area. He was excited over the job prospects everyone was talking about. He spoke to his fellow community members and excitedly they all agreed it would benefit their community. Little did he know Maliba-Matso was going to be dammed. Little did he know a study by LHWP experts

would find his house to be dangerously close to the dam area. Little did he know that in 10 years his house would be covered by the Mohale dam water. He had had to find alternative relocation area where he could be close to a river still. He settled at Sehlabeng sa Thuathe (Thuathe valley) not far from the banks of the Molele river. But before this, he was a healer. He shared many cases of how medicinal water was. Before this, he had delivered babies. Before this, the river of his life flowed endlessly and overflowed to those around him.

One cold day of June 2016 we sat around the cow dung fire as he related a story of how he had assisted a woman give birth after she was pregnant for eleven months. The woman had come to him because she had been turned away from the maternity ward for the 100th time. When she came, he asked her to wash her feet in the plastic washing basin nearby. That morning he had gone to Bokong for daily consultation when he was told about the lady in distress. As she washed her feet, the water had changed colour from clear to muddy green. “Water from the sea and rivers can't take bad spirits. Changing colour is an indication of uncleanliness” he said. He had given the woman more water from the river to gaze into, as she did that, he saw how her womb had been sealed to make sure she couldn't give birth. It took him going back to the river, engaging with the water, to get necessary help for the woman. One September day as we harvested his field, Thulare told me of the man who had been brought to him because he had suddenly been lame. No one seems to know what the cause nor the cure was. From his interactions with Bokong and its underwater community, he had learned a great deal on the movement of water and the healing offered therein. He had filled a bigger washing basin with water and put the lame man in it. Repeatedly sponging the man's feet, he spoke to water-reminding it of its might, of its healing power and of its ability to purify. Two days later, the man moved his feet on his own. That man is Sabata, one of the key informants who walked me around the Nazareta camp.

These and many other stories were part of his life- before he had to relocate. For him, Mohale dam seals the fate of many who can never get help from the healing waters of Bokong. Water is pure in form and make, that is how it can give life. The story of Thulare serves as a call, in this chapter, to engage in integrated thinking, where the encounters of humans and non-humans share the centre stage in everyday life. Thulare's story speaks of water as a flow that assembles the world and revitalizes whatever it reaches. This approach to water has nothing in common with the water of dams, and pipes, and hydrological engineering. Instead, it calls to a way of worldmaking that does not distinguish between life and non-life (Povinelli 2017). Using a similar approach, that is equally consistent with cutting-edge thought in the bio-geo-sciences,

ecofeminist scholar Astrida Neimanis (2013) argues that if we all become aware that we are water bodies, we will make better choices when it comes to handling water. Her work makes a case that water is not only a solvent or a socially appropriated liquid but also as a living thing thus allowing the more-than-human in the academic analysis.

At one of the focus group discussions intended for people who lost their social statuses as a result of this project, Thulare had invited a fellow healer. She was not resettled; however, she too relied on the flow of river waters to heal and consult. Her name is Tseli. Hers is a life of healing through water and interaction with water beings like '*mamolapo* (mermaid) and water horse. Though she was not from the Phase I communities, her relationship with water, as a Mosotho made her instrumental to the study. She is 36 years old and lives in Maseru East. The location she says she chose due to its proximity to Maqalika dam.

In 2002, she was instructed by her ancestors to go collect water from 'Maletsunyane waterfall, which at 192 meter-high, is the longest, single-drop, waterfall in Southern Africa. After collecting water, she prayed for it and started using that water to heal people. As people came, she learned that there is energy in water. There are spirits in water- there is life in water, communities even. There are many spirits; the spirit of fire, the spirit of the forest, the spirit of the earth but hers is the spirit of water. This means she uses water and water-based species to heal. She uses water to consult with her ancestors. Because of her gift, she works mainly with mermaids and water-horse. She went on to say that though Lesotho does not have crocodiles, in the water community, there are crocodiles. These crocodiles and other species are seen by certain people, with a particular gift.

Her gift allows her to use natural resources to help people. Natural water is preferred over tap water because of the energies that flow in natural water. The energy in natural water is used to clear the chakras and aura of patients. When one is born, the earth energies disrupt the chakras and water is used to clean these chakras; and the energy in water has the ability to purify again. This is because the water energy is the highest energy. Every form of life is dependent on water. The importance of water, she said, is seen from biology to chemistry, to spirituality. The building of dams and damming of rivers interferes with water energies, which at the end destroys life in the water. When the natural flow of water is disrupted, the energies move elsewhere, leaving such places in danger. The implication is that areas that were once safe because the energies are left exposed. Many a time when the water horse changes position, it

leaves havoc. This was the case with Katse and Mohale dams, which cracked and caused a tremor respectively.

Due to the nature of this dissertation talking to the commodification of water, political economy theory had to come to play. The nature of this study is informed by neoliberalism and capitalistic nuances. In competing for Lesotho's water, the power struggle is between those who view water as a commodity and those who feel it should be left a 'member of society'. Neoliberals, demand through policies that the world economy be expanded, and capital flow be accepted based on the Anglo- American models, (Polanyi, 1957). Because of the pressures to have an "Anglo-Americanly" acceptable standing, Lesotho and many other countries have turned to political economy methods to find their feet. However, what this has done is to continue the legacy of coloniality in the modern-day. Through the race to a higher GDP, countries remain entangled in colonial discourses, making it "increasingly difficult to get nature to yield its free gifts", (Moore:160) which are free from the West's demands.

In contrast to landscape theory, the political economy perspective; in recognising the interconnection between the human and the non-human environment, points to the uneven distribution of power which is inversely manifested in the unequal spread of risks and benefits associated with high capital-intensive technologies among individuals, groups, communities, regions and societies. The view proposes that how people relate to their social structures, predetermines their ability to deal with consequences emanating from changes occurring in the non-human environment, owing to man's action of altering the natural environment. The above, in highlighting the links between the social and the natural environment, make it evident that in the development paradigm, the natural environment and communities are so intertwined that trying to separate the two is almost impossible (Molaoa, 2007).

Political Economy does not take into consideration what Tseli said in the conversation above, which was one of the many we had on Lesotho's natural capital and its relatedness to other species, humans included. She, like Thulare relates to water beyond water as a solvent. She says, "meddling with water sources interfere with mother Gaia...the energy Lesotho waters carry is directly proportional to the power the country ought to possess", yet here we are. Leaving natural resources to belong to governments has let to unintended consequences like the exploitation of such resources. It is a common phenomenon in top-down approaches that people look after their own, with government-owned resources, the relationship people ought to have with natural resources is shifted to that of irresponsible usage.

Through engaging in multispecies approach, exploring water, soil, animals and human relationships afforded me a chance to understand how more-than-human relationships have always existed among these communities. Studying these relationships also gave an insight into why conflict among community members and LHWP had ensued, that it, the communities have a wider understanding of their relationship with water, animals, soil and other things, whereas LHWP just see the consumption-based, supply-demand relationship based on a business model of the world of people and water. Scholars like Haraway (2010), Latour (2014) Tsing (2015) and Kirksey and Helmreich (2010) among others challenge modernist ways of defining the boundary between the human and the non-human interactions. Taking into account the overlapping boundaries which exist between species, and between life and non-life, this chapter turns now to show why it is important to take understand the relationship of water and people in terms other than the hydrological model of supply and demand.

6.2 The Entangled World

Mohale village is further high in the mountains as opposed to Nazareta and Makhoakhoeng. The previous night I had had a proper view of stars and of course the distant fires of families preparing supper had reminded me I was further out of the city. The striking difference of geographical lay out plays a huge role in the interaction the people in this area had with their natural and social environment. My host, Nkhono Mapulumo Leshapa, a 75-year-old traditional healer, shared with me her frustrations of being moved to a different area. While she and 31 other households had the luxury of remaining in Ha-Mohale, they were also burdened with the reality of new lives in same spaces. She explained that as a traditional doctor, it was important for her to have a view of the moon and the stars. *“Nature is part of us...when the moon is out and big, I know what dangers lay ahead...we just have to have our eyes open”* she had added. She felt nature was not there to meet her needs or to entice her desires, but she and it were one, depending on each other. Had she been relocated to Makhoakhoeng, the luxury of interacting with the stars could have been far-fetched as Makhoakhoeng is adorned with streets light and high mast lights, removing any sight of stars.

Nkhono had also explained to me her co-dependence on wild animals. *“Those animals are not just anywhere. They indicate season and time. Seeing a wild rabbit in my yard tells me of approaching winter. Winter tells me of the need to protect my household and the initiation school...nature and we are one.”* She took me around the yard to show me how she had *strengthened*, meaning to use *muti* (a mixture of traditional herbs) to protect it. Being a

traditional healer, she is able to mix all sorts of ‘dangerous’ medicine found in her immediate environment, she told me. ‘All those mountains you see, are filled with what I can use to make a bomb to shake this world... don’t ever look at a tree as just a tree or a horse a just a horse. These things are stronger than humans, you just have to know how to mix them,” she said laughing out loud. Her words describe exactly what the multispecies encounter is about: the understanding of a world not as objects, but the relationships between them, that can be curated, and managed. Her insight was that not all power or wisdom lies with humans “I am a believer in use of traditional medicine. My son rears bees for food production but those bees to me operate like a weatherman. Depending on their buzz, I know how the weather is likely to be...” she added.



Figure 25 Nkhono Maleshapa with an owl and a rat she was going to use to make muti to protect her sheep from theft. Photograph by author, 2016.

The above conversation with Nkhono is the narrative of more-than-human republics. One of the critics of multispecies approach has been that still leaves out some of the micro-organisms and plants (Smart 2014), I found in this study that if understood broadly, micro-organisms and plants are included the many stakeholders of more-than-human orchestra. Thom Van Dooren et al say “Life cannot arise and be sustained in isolation. But relationships also have histories. Beyond a static ecological exchange, like the energy circuits mapped by early ecologists, organisms are situated within deep, entangled histories.” (2016:1) Multispecies relationality tuned to the temporal and semiotic registers makes evident a lively world in which “being is

always becoming, becoming is always becoming-with” (Smart, 2014:6). It is important to state that species here mean heterogeneous kin (Haraway 2003), we are all related, even if we do not all look the same. This understanding of our world could provide a more sustainable solution to environmental problems we are currently facing and can also offer better inputs for policies like the LHWP treaty.

The agency of animals and other non-human beings is disputed and denied the minute we name them. A pet, a meal, a dam these are names of objects that alter the power these beings have in relation. Water loses its power the minute it is confined to a dam. A dam is a sign of victory of men over nature, whereas water is a natural state; powerful and free. Appaduari (1996) adds “the problem of a voice (speaking for or speaking to) intersects of a problem of place (speaking from, speaking of). By refraining from use of terms like nonhuman, which is the same as non-white, is degrading. The implication is that which is spoken of lacks something. Often times this is because these species lack speech which is the main distinctive tool among humans. But there are humans who lack speech ability. Representation and naming have limited other species to pets and meals or medicine or fictitious commodities, they no longer or should no longer be viewed as “representation of human life but rather part of human life...but not peripheries of,” (Tsing 2015:34).

Multispecies ethnography engages several related endeavours in social theory that seek to reconsider nature and society, de-centre the human in ethics and theory, as well as experiment with alternative epistemologies (affect and nonrepresentational theory). Latour says a multispecies approach is like adding a new voice to the chorus (Latour, 2005). The relationship of people to dams, across the world, has proven to be more than just survival but prove that human nature is in itself an interspecies relationship, (Tsing, 2015). In other words, multispecies ethnography is a project that seeks to understand the world as materially real, partially knowable, multi-cultured and multi-natured and emergent through the contingent relations of multiple beings and entities. Decentralizing the human ushers in the relationship of care and concern as illustrated by responses of participants above. To them, their interaction with other bodies were not of “master-slave” basis but rather of mutual care and appreciation. Moving away from an environment that fed that kind of relationship meant to them loss of self and others.

In the village of Nazareta, Maliehe Motlohi complained of pets dying, as one of the many things he felt affected him when he relocated. “My dogs are very special to me...they don’t only guard

the yard; they keep me company. *Motobong (animal post)* gets lonely, but their presence makes much of a difference. They provide warmth and keep bed-bugs at bay.” In her writing on companion species, Donna Haraway supports the notion that, animals, viewed as companion species, messmates at table, eating together, whether we know how to eat well or not (Haraway 1991). She brings forth the dog as man’s best friend in the light of not just an animal but also as a companion, but as equal, a different equal.

Equally, de la Bellacasa (2011) provides a theoretical corner stone on relationships of care, which relating to the argument above, says pay attention to the treatment extended to other species. In anthropology, for instance, the classic taxonomies of social difference are based on multispecies relations, albeit through the materialist perspective of adaptive or “subsistence strategies” Animals and plants have served as repositories of totemic power, structural order sexual innuendo, symbolic ecology in the context of global capitalism, and ethno-ecological knowledge (Plumwood, 2007). Environmental Humanities as a discipline makes rational linkages of the interplay between environmental elements and social facts; for instance, the human ecologists, in applying ecological principles to the understanding of human societies, recognise the importance of how the existing biophysical factors such as climatic conditions can have a direct influence in determining developmental patterns.

In elaborating on the linkages between environment and social facts, Greider and Garkovich (1994), through their work on the landscape framework, bring to the fore a long history between environment and culture in the social sciences, which environmental humanities is part of. The landscape framework basically provides a better understanding of the definitions ascribed to individuals, their relationship with each other and the environment, through symbols and concepts. Greider and Garkovich (1994), go on to say that the natural phenomena are socio-cultural phenomena in the sense that they are constructed through social interactions among members of a culture as they negotiate meanings of nature and environment based on their cultural myth.

Ecological modernisation theorists also opine that in modern industrial societies, more modernisation is necessary for reducing environmental impacts. The proponents of this theory suggest that as industries mature, ecological impacts will be reduced because the production systems will become more sensitive to the ecology, thus calling for the restructuring of the systems (York et al., 2003). In the same document, they state that the restructuring of the production systems on the basis of democratic governance is anchored on the promotion of

political freedoms and civil liberties as these are seen as vital in influencing the environmental change. This is because democratic governance creates and often expands a political space for the social movements and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) concerned with issues of political rights and civil liberties, as well as for those concerned with environmental rights. However, in the case of Lesotho, we find that the narrative is different as the very same bodies are instead fighting tooth and nail to have control of Lesotho's ivory.

In contrast, the political economy perspective - in recognising the interconnection between the human and the post-human environment - points to the uneven distribution of power which is inversely manifested in the unequal spread of risks and benefits associated with high capital-intensive technologies among individuals, groups, communities, regions and societies. In China for instance, the construction of large dams has contributed towards the growing gap between the rich and the poor (Busgen, 2006). This view propagates that how people relate to their social structures, predetermines their ability to deal with the negative consequences emanating from changes occurring in the non-human environment, owing to man's action of altering the natural environment. People want to live; no matter what life means, or the variations of life are. As the consumption patterns change, the social organization, maintenance and continuity are adjusted. This was evidenced by the people of Makhoakhoeng, Nazareta and Mohale whose lives have shifted from being absolute farmers to being partial farmers- forcing them to adopt other ways of life. While they might have tried to resist, through protests, the alternative life presented to them, they eventually had to choose life of precarity, over the zoe they initially knew. As I walked the villages of Makhoakhoeng, Nazareth and Ha Mohale, I realized that people were more concerned of being able to be alive than the standard of life itself.

In the opening chapter of this dissertation, I shared my own story of how I had to be content with life, any life. Soon after the LHWP treaty was signed, officials from LHDA came to our village to inform our parents that would be moving to make way for the dam. As a little girl, I got excited over moving to a new area. Perhaps there would be more trees, or the river there flows better. Maybe the people there have a better choir. I remember seeing the bareness of the ground and immediately thinking 'I want to go back home'. Little did I understand that 'home' was now a foundation to a large dam. The first days and months were the most horrific. The new environment was different from what I was used to. Every day my grandmother would complain about how far she had to travel to get fresh vegetables or water. At first, I could hear my grandmother and mother complain for hours about how bad things were, how they were

brought here to die, how their ancestors were wandering around like Cain after killing Abel. In their complaining they made a vegetable garden, met with other neighbours to have a community tap and of course the ancestors will have to find their way from Ash River. I cannot really say this was assimilation or adaptation but rather a choice to live. The same I observed in the communities I studied. The choice of a certain lifestyle has been taken away, what remains is the option to live. Understanding, or lack thereof, multispecies relations to daily lives of people could be essential to policy makers as they would not readily destroy lives by taking away the ‘invisible worlds’ people so heavily depend on.

Ntate Mathe Matia (age 49) is one of the people who was quite vocal about rather living a precarious life than not living at all. Unlike many who pointed fingers at the project, he was honest in saying “*nna ke jele chelate laramu-ramu*” (I spent the money they gave me carelessly). “At the end *ausi*, I would rather be here and hustling than to be back home sitting under a tree...or staring at what used to be my family home. I don’t have anything left for me there” he had added. Later I wondered of what tree he spoke: a tree of complacency, a tree of indifference, a tree of objectification? What is clear is that he too felt the choice he had to make was that of survival of the fittest. Matia survived the ecocide declared by his country. He carried his new title as ‘patriot of national development’ (Baviskar, 2020) with grace and determination of rebuilding his life. In his new life, he understood entanglement differently, he made small gardens out of five litre plastic bottles, which still allowed him to tend the soil.

On the other hand, there was Nkhono Malejaka Lejaka (82), who felt that whether in Makhoakhoeng or Mohale, for as long as she was still alive, she was ok. She felt her grandchildren were benefiting from her being alive because at the end of the day her life “was in her bones more than it was in a place” and she can still share it from any space. Intrigued to know her views on commodification of water and loss thereof, she said “*ngoana nnake, motsotso feela oo ba neng ba rekisa metsi ao, metsi a tlohetse ho ba bohlokoa ho rona. Re ka se rekisi tlasa mabaka a feng kapa a feng se bohlokoa ho rona*”, (My granddaughter, the minute they sold that water, it lost its value. Under no circumstances can we sell what is valuable to us.) I understood this to mean eco-water carried more weight than H₂O in terms of value and connectedness to users. Nkhono’s comment when closely scrutinised goes back to the idea of water and identity, that in the water passing through the tunnels of Katse Dam is nothing but H₂O, with only financial and chemical meaning attached to it. There is a Sesotho proverb that says “*ntja ha e ts’ela molatsoana ke boraki*” (once a dog crosses a stream it becomes a puppy), this proverb can be applied to Nkhono’s comment about eco-water being tunnelled into Ash

River. There is no ancestral life in that water, because it has been extracted from all its mountain-based relationships, soil flows, plants and bodies. The life in it will be of the fish or other biodiversity. Sold water is no longer in any relationship with the Earth: it rendered as a commodity. The commodification of water overlooks the importance of multispecies occurrences and interactions between people and other post-human species.

Molefi Matsustsu (56) shares the experiences I had. He had just married when his family was resettled to Maseru. Being a miner at the time, having seen the town of Welkom and how good life was, he was excited to sign the documents sending him to Makhoakhoeng. He thought of all the stories he and his fellow miners exchanged about life in the city and joy boiled up in him. An envisioned future was upon him. Electricity. Running water. Better infrastructure. Hope. Life. He too would be among those gossiped about, he thought. When Lilly Mine retrenched him few months later, he was jubilant to go live a life of wonders in Maseru. His wife had written to tell him about the brick house and tap. But had she forgotten to mention electricity? Soon after being home, he had to re-adjust. The tales he wrote to his friends from the mines had to include water bills, charging with solar energy, being a 'no body' and many other failures of 'the fairy tale' life they envisioned deep in the heart of the gold mine. He missed minding his cattle. In the city one cannot have cattle. Policies and economic governance do not, as yet, appreciate the role and contribution of 'other species to the holistic lives humans lead.

The way people interact with each other, with themselves and other beings around them, is characteristic of multispecies existence. The ecosystem of life in these villages is supported by the ontology of dominoes, agency of soil and water and relationships formed through place identity. When all these variables are at play, one can see how the blanketing value is appreciation of other species beyond the human. The shock of adjusting to the lowlands economy is one of the most serious traumas experienced by people resettled from the Phase I area. Resettled people rarely possess skills that are marketable in urban and peri-urban environments, therefore few are able to earn living wages. Manthati Moshoeshoe, a single mother, who had been resettled to Makhoakhoeng with her invalid grandmother complained of the high cost of living at her new home and noted that she has not received any skills training and was now trying to resell porcelain knick-knacks to supplement her annual compensation check.

The point she made was that in the mountains all things worked together. “The animals spoke to soil, which spoke to the vegetables, which spoke to our bodies and our bodies have a direct connection to the ancestors,” she explained. Extra expenses of living in the lowlands are difficult for highlands residents to predict, and often to cover. School fees tend to be considerably higher in the lowlands. The scarcity of fuel wood means that money must be spent on paraffin and a heater to burn it. People resettling to urban areas are billed for water. Added to these dilemmas are the pressures of “keeping up with the Jones” in a comparatively wealthy neighbourhood. The ‘Jones’ also practice a syncretic lifestyle which often the resettlers experience as profoundly unsettling -- perhaps a version of "culture shock".

The role of water snakes, ancestors, rain gods and other beings which inhabit rivers form an intricate relationship to the people of Phase I. These beings form a complete picture for an ideal life of many. The interdependence of human and post-human species among these communities serves as a perfect example of why other species survive, and others do not. Even in death, there are species whose interpreted role is to die, one could say it is a “*noble death*”. This I was pointed to by nkhono Maleshapa, saying, “some of these birds are reared as sacrifices...to save the rest one has be given up...!” The importance of spirituality and identity in African cannot be over-emphasized. Throughout the period of research, and throughout this thesis, the theme of river snakes and other spirit beings has recurred. According to various Basotho spiritualities, humanity lives in a religious universe, so that natural phenomena and objects are intimately associated with god (Maleke, 2000) which includes rainmaking.

The phenomenon of rainmaking, according to Basotho as form of spirituality, is the work of the universal spiritual powers called “*Tlatla-macholo* – Basotho’s ancestral super-human spirits or their god”, (Elias 2017). Basotho’s spiritual powers emanate from the past and the relationship to the present—hence *Molimo o mocha, rapela oa khale* (“new god prays with the old”). In Lesotho, according to Historian L. Johnson (2016: 6), “Basotho herd boys are custodians of the culture as they are able to predict the weather patterns using the environment, animals, and their behaviours.” This goes to show how animals and people are interconnected. In one community meeting, a traditional Motebang* gave a different view of the “*moroka-pula*” (call for rain) rain prayer. He showed that *moroka-pula* instead is a particular frog which would croak, indicating that the rain was soon to come, not the prayer made per se. When that frog croaked in the evenings the healers know that rain would soon fall.

A deep literature on African worldviews speaks of respect for nature, and reverence for hills, forests, animals, and rivers. Water has deep ontological values, which therefore means spiritualities and divinities can both be understood through water symbolism, and the cosmological realms can be expressed and defined by the gods, as perceived by humans, through water. “Multispecies relations” as a field of study in the social sciences, emerged from more boutique fields, cultural studies broadly and ethnography in particular. It is mostly still associated with a method: ethnographic accounting for located relationships and encounters among species. But its connotations are disconcerting, for multispecies relationality, as a theoretical framework, dethrones the dominance of the human, hence the phrase “post-humanism”. Solutions to the crisis of the Anthropocene must entail post-human relations, and life-non-life relations, which also must be within ‘development’ projects, compensation and resettlement packages.

Haraway rejects metaphysics in favour of a “philosophy of the ordinary”, that considers species as constituted by relationships with other species: relationships made of mutual recognition, non-verbal, dance-like communication, bodily gestures, gazes, greetings and respect. She urges us to view “multispecies” as part of the larger mix of discourses and methods drawn upon by post-humanists, new materialists, new political thereby implying that other species have the potential to rise to the top and perhaps even unify the others around it. Most of her work deals with the critique of nature as a universal category and the totalizing power of natural science. As a biologist and historian of science, Haraway is aware of the importance and significance of scientific research, but also of its shortcomings and abuse. She claims that science cannot be assumed as separate from ideology by default.

Accordingly, the post-human world of multispecies encounters has its own logic and rules of engagement that exist within the larger articulations of the human world, encompassing the flow of nutrients and matter, the liveliness of animals, plants, bacteria, and other beings. The ethnographic of multispecies ethnography writes the human as a kind of corporeality that comes into being relative to multispecies assemblages, rather than as a biocultural given. *Animals, Plants, People, and Things*. Referring to these relations of becoming as multispecies “assemblages,” an approach indebted to the relational philosophy of Haraway and Latour, each proposes an approach to understanding world making, or life, as a process of becoming through knotty assemblages of humans, other species, and things (Haraway 2000).

Multi species involves the becoming of the ‘other’. This exchange allows for the leverage of the power play among animal, plants, human and the rest of the post human species. In this change, the human gradually becomes more like the other species and vice versa (Ogden et al). This is exemplified by the relationship Basotho have with certain animals and plants. Totems are classic examples of how humans and other species become the other. An animal or plant that is a totem cannot be eaten or killed by those who take after it.

Totem	Clan name
Crocodile	Bakoena
Hare	Bafokeng
Pumpkin	Batlokoa
Monkey	Batsoeneng
Elephant	Batloung
Cat	Basia
Lion	Bataung

Taking an example of Bakoena, they cannot eat or kill crocodile as that would mean killing themselves. Also, the characteristics of totems are believed to be transferable to the human. Mokoena is believed to be as strong as a crocodile, but also, as cunning. When King Peete was eaten by cannibals who belong to a different clan, King Moshoeshoe incorporated them into his kingdom because they were his father’s graves, therefore had to be treated with respect. In marriage, totems can marry, or marry different clans. After years of marrying from different clans, totems cannot be eaten (except for pumpkin) because the totems are all related now. Marriage and clans have a direct in preserving of other species among Basotho.

Lits’omo (bedtime stories), *maele* (idioms) and *maelana* (proverbs) serve as social tool to teach children about other worlds and how important these worlds are to the survival of the universe. Most times these stories, to those who don’t know, are said to be myths, yet to those who have experienced these worlds they take great care of the species in the stories. *Litsomo* like that of Mosimuli le Mosemotsana (names of twins in the bedtime story) bring awareness of species in

the water, the role played in the protection of human species and how harming them would be detrimental to human society. In the story, Mosimoli, a kind girl, feeds the water species, respects them and protects the environment around the river. On the other hand, her twin sister ridicules the species and pollutes the water. Finally, when there is an apocalypse, Mosimoli is saved by her friends while her sister faces the doom. *Maele* and *maelana* usually taught as parables but yet deliver same lessons.

The relationship of a man to a cow is marked by “*khomo ke molimo o nko e metsi*” (a cow is like a god), “*khomoo moo se lea moreneng, ha ella motsaneng e ea hlonamana*” (a cow is a sign of wealth, if ever it is seen amongst the poor, it is a sign tragedy [because cows give life]), among many others. The importance of cattle and sheep amongst Basotho becomes ultimate during weddings and funerals. During the marriage process, the unity of families is sealed by gifting of cows and sheep - this is to say, we are trusting you with our best possessions (our child and our livestock), sealing a lifetime of partnership and unity. At this juncture, I however, want to critique multispecies scholars who have ignored the social roles of multispecies existence. By merely looking at a scientific relationship that form amid multispecies relations, there is a neglect on the social bonds. Often, the emphasis is made on the biophysical relations, neglecting the nontangible ones like the one above. In death, a cow is slaughtered to accompany the dead into the afterlife. While some might view this as animal cruelty, it is seen as an honour for the cow and the deceased to enter the afterlife together: man, in this context, a person and his ultimate companion.

6.3 Currency and Flows

Haraway and Tsing claim living an inclusive life where we take care of the non-human species makes lives more meaningful. The relationship of these communities to their water was made meaningful by their understanding of how the rivers and their environment took care of them, ensuring continued life. The distinction between the old and new water became distinct as interactions with water itself happened. Some of the participants would offer me water (from the tap) followed by excuses of how “the water might have a metal smell” or “maybe ‘hot’” or another way to say, “this tap water is not as good as well water”. While there were some people who felt nothing changed for them when water got captured, many were disdainful of piped water. Furthermore, what became clearer was the difference in the demographics of those who felt new water was an inconvenience and those were satisfied with having “water at your doorstep”. The younger generation, those who were young (20 and under) at the time of relocation,

had adjusted to the new forms they interacted with water, while the older generation felt more had been lost, that “their children were likely disrespect way as they can **earn** it”.

The price tag on water has shifted the way these communities interact with water. This new type, that can be purchased has removed the social structures that governed water in the previous state. The men who entered Maliba-Matso, Bokong and Linakeng rivers to build tunnels in them were not interacting with those waters as scared or social space or carriers of ancestral spirits but rather as “*to do*” or “*job descriptions*”. This removes the agency and subjectivity of water as understood before capturing. Care (Puig 2017) and concern (Latour 2005) cannot be practiced as long as social spaces, sacred resources are treated like fictitious commodities. While writing this dissertation, Cape Town was facing a ‘serious water’ crisis. The noise made by media houses and public figures prompted the government of South Africa to take measures of avoiding or delaying day zero⁴. However, what I understood was that it was not that water shortages were new in Cape Town or South Africa at large, but rather, money could no longer *rename* water as a commodity. With or without money, access had been shifted. Communities of Langa, Gugulethu, Imizamo Yethu and many others around Cape Town have lacked water (Qhobela, 2014), yet their lack of water had not prompted the government to take serious action on water distribution and access. These communities are characterised by poverty and crowding. Communal taps and water trucks became a norm, a socializing space, which shifted their view and interaction with water. On the other side, areas like Bishop’s Court, Rondebosch and Constantia had remained unaffected by the water struggles in their neighbourhoods. Lawns remained green, steam rooms functioning and pool parties a norm. The capacity to pay a water bill meant to many in these posh areas that water was a commodity rather than a resource linked to the environment.

This water situation in Cape Town is similar to what has happened in Lesotho with the commodification of water. The care and responsibility that people had for water has been replaced by ability to pay WASCO. Initially water was treated as a unifier, a source of life. The monetary value placed on it acts a sovereign body; deciding who can live or can die, depending on who affords it. This new type has alienated people instead of unifying them. “With a tap on my doorstep, I don’t have a reason to leave the house” proclaimed Rethabile (21). “...those who owe WASCO go to the public tap...but not many people go there, some would rather go to their neighbours or relatives,” he had added. Issue of accessing or collecting water has

⁴ Currently, 12 April, when the city will run out of drinking water.

become impersonal. Announcing births has become impersonal. The breaking of placenta water has become impersonal. Commodification of water had made water impersonal. Bodies like the World Bank who fund projects *anti-rivers* often focus on the development and increase of GDP in nation states (Molaoa, 2007, WCD, 2000), while forgetting or neglecting the role rivers play in the same nation-states. The use of GDP as a measure of national well-being has been the focus of critique by many scholars. In support of this argument, Cotaza et al state the following viewpoint:

“GDP is an estimate of market throughput, adding together the value of all final goods and services that are produced and traded for money within a given period of time. It is typically measured by adding together a nation’s personal consumption expenditures (payments by households for goods and services), government expenditures (public spending on the provision of goods and services, infrastructure, debt payments, etc.), net exports (the value of a country’s exports minus the value of imports), and net capital formation (the increase in value of a nation’s total stock of monetized capital goods)”, (Cotaza et al 1997: 3).

The above synopsis of GDP cannot alone determine how well a nation is doing because it is not always that the economic growth is equivalent to improved lives or vice versa. More than 50% of my respondents shared that they relied more on selling dagga and shared cropping for livelihoods than they did on other forms of income. These forms of livelihoods do not pop on the radar when the GDP is measured, yet they contribute so much to the welfare of people. Growth of a nation should instead be measured by how well basic needs are met -- not how steep the market economy graph is. “The economy draws benefits from natural, social, and human capital... By measuring only marketed economic activity (the inner circle), GDP ignores changes in the natural, social, and human components of community capital on which the community relies for continued existence and well-being,” (Cotaza et al 1997: 9). The World Bank and other financial institutions continue to use GDP as measure of success to continue their grip on nation-states by declaring them ‘poor’ or ‘undeveloped’ thus providing a doorway for their ‘development projects’ in such nations. Robert F. Kennedy, in a speech at the University of Kansas on March 18, 1968, noted that

...the Gross National Product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither

our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country, it measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.

Kennedy's words underscore that the paradigm of profiting from natural resources shifts the relationship people would possibly have with water and all other non-human species. Herman Daly, formerly the senior economist at the World Bank, once commented, "the current national accounting system treats the earth as a business in liquidation" (cited in Cobb, Halstead et al. 1995). When monetary value is placed on human, social or natural capital, depletion of these resources is encouraged. Mokhotlong is a Sesotho term meaning the place of the bald ibis because of a large number of these birds in the area. Mokhotlong includes the highest terrain in the Maloti ranges and is also the source of the Senqu River – Lesotho's and Southern Africa's primary watershed. With only 23% of the land being arable, this area faces a danger of land-overuse and over population, which will lead to extreme extraction of resources. In 2017, the bald ibis started to migrate from bird town due to the noise caused by geological explorations underway in the area in preparation of Phase II of the LHWP.

Though Mokhotlong has had for many years the lowest population Lesotho, due to the impending dam construction, it is slowly experiencing an influx of people, both professionals and those seeking employment. This directly affects the ecology and person-land-water ratio, leading to scarcity, thirst and disconnection. An example of the disconnection that faces Mokhotlong community is the relocation of an orchard which is located close to Khubelu River. Besides fruits, this orchard also houses some of area-specific vegetation used in home remedies and traditional medicine. With consultants for the Phase II project having pitched temporary structure close to the nursery, some of the crops are not getting sufficient sunlight, weakening the photosynthetic process, and there by affecting the food chain. The main driver identified is economic activity; 'improving the GDP'. Economic activity is an end result of societies improving their well-being through consumption and production, even if that results in social metabolic rift.

Throughout the fieldwork period, participants voiced their dismay of losing land and water over making money for 'the country'. "Tell me, how have my sheep benefited from me relocating to Nazareta? They haven't, if anything, thieves are having a time of their lives with my livestock" exclaimed Sabata, who was one of my key informants. Nazareta does not have *metebo* (cattle post), this resulted in 140 sheep being stolen from his *motebo* in Ha Mohale. during my fieldwork, I also visited the area of Mokhotlong, where the LHWP Phase II is

underway. One of the key persons I had an interview with is the owner of the orchard discussed above, Mapele Moorosi. He told me that the orchard and nursery are located in an area which be inundated soon after dam completion. This fertile land is to be covered by masses of water, implying loss of land, biodiversity and any potential that the land had. He indicated that some of the species like *Lesoko (Alepidea amatymbica)* cannot grow in new identified area for nursery. *Lesoko* is particularly used as a medicinal plant for infants or pregnant women. Due to differing soil types, the new nursery cannot house some of the indigenous plants thus some of the plants are going to be extinct. To quote Kennedy (1968) again, “GDP counts everything except the things that matter.” As the world at large operates on the GDP-driven relationship with the ecosystem in what Jason Moore calls "capitalism in the web of life" (Moore, 2015), there comes a shift in relationships, and this births shift in creativity in taking care of the self through caring for the non-species. As Haraway said, taking care of others translates to taking care of ourselves but if we view others as tools, then equally we treat ourselves as commodities Haraway (2015).

6.4 Sustainable Policies, or are they?

Policies act as guidelines for governments and leaders when planning the layout of societies. Policies vary based on their target and scope of reach. It is important for policies to be holistic and informed by more than one school of thought, as doing so give a broader yet inclusive approach. Taking the relocation policy of LHDA as an example, had community representatives, anthropologists and traditional leaders been part of the conversation in the drafting of the policy, many of the grievances could have been avoided. Instead, the policy was drafted by officers from Maseru, informed only by their thought-based knowledge. I address local (in the context of Lesotho) and global policies which may have favoured the project over the people. In the. In response to the intensifying biodiversity loss, Lesotho entered into a number of multilateral environmental agreements; these include the following:

- Convention on the Protection of Flora and Fauna, signed in London in November 1933.
- Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, signed in Washington DC on 3rd March 1973.
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) signed in Rio de Janeiro on 11th June 1992, ratified on 10th January 1995.

- Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety acceded on 31 July 2001.
- Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operation directed at the Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, 1996
- Ramsar Convention also is known as Convention Wetlands of International Importance. This is aimed to provide an impetus to the conservation and sustainable utilization of wetlands. Lesotho entered the agreement on the 1st of November 2004.

These policies, together with the resettlement policies of LHDA played a major role in the plight of Phase I communities. Instead of addressing the needs of these communities together with the environment, the communities were attended to separate the environment. This failure to recognise the human-nonhuman relationship is responsible for the current disconnect with policy development. I also address some policies, articles and documents of the World Bank, United Nations and other socio-environment impacting guidelines that have a role in altering the relationship people have with certain resources in their vicinities.

Within the same treaty, one can discuss the socio-political drivers which continue to perpetuate neglect and overuse of natural resources. "Socio-political drivers encompass the forces that influence decision making in the large conceptual space between economics and culture," (Young 2002:66). Berhe, (2000:16) pointed out that "socio-political drivers and human conflicts, act both as a direct and an indirect driver of change in ecosystem services and human well-being when nature becomes the recipient of collateral damage." He further argued that "war-driven environmental degradation can initiate social degradation and protracted cycles of social and environmental decline by creating poverty, overexploitation of marginal resources, underdevelopment, and, in extreme cases, famine and social destruction," (Berhe 2000: 18).

The 'cold war' between South Africa and Lesotho has often seen SADC or even bigger bodies like the UN intervening to solve disputes. One of the main disputes that arise time and again is the LHWP treaty which favours South Africans at the expense of Basotho. LHWP Community Participation Report (unpublished), indicates that some of the species like *Lesoko* (*Alepidea amatymbica*) only grows in certain areas of Mokhotlong, yet those areas are going to be covered by water once the Polihali dam is complete. *Lesoko* is particularly used as a medicinal plant for infants or pregnant women. An interruption of human wellbeing can be expected as a result thereof.

Human well-being is mainly influenced by economic development and its distribution. Though there is economic growth that stands to come with the amendment of the treaty, especially for the Phase II communities, there are chances of culture shock that will come with this development. "Income received by individuals and families determines their level and nature of consumption. As per capita income grows, the nature of consumption changes, shifting from basic needs to goods and services that improve the quality of life," Bush and Marschke (2014:45), however, the question what will the money be spent on of food production has been limited. The role of trees, flowing water and other greenery or plants in human and community well-being is crucial and no price tag can be placed on them. Most of the respondents voiced that gardening or the ability to see or experience green space or other forms of nature was therapeutic for them. This treaty could be improved by adding a potential management approach for the ecosystem which could likely be a Social-Ecological System, particularly the socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes (SEPLS) because it addresses the issues of survival of humans and at the same time takes into account the land on which production is taking place. UNDRIPS, among other international bodies, made a statement in support of socio-ecological systems, they declared that they are:

Recognizing the urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of indigenous peoples which derive from their political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources,

Recognizing also the urgent need to respect and promote the rights of indigenous peoples affirmed in treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements with States,

Welcoming the fact that indigenous peoples are organizing themselves for political, economic, social and cultural enhancement and in order to bring to an end all forms of discrimination and oppression wherever they occur,

Convinced that control by indigenous peoples over developments affecting them and their lands, territories and resources will enable them to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures and traditions, and to promote their development in accordance with their aspirations and needs,

Recognizing that respect for local knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment,

Emphasizing the contribution of the demilitarization of the lands and territories of indigenous peoples to peace, economic and social progress and development, understanding and friendly relations among nations and peoples of the world. (UN DRIPS, 2007: 2)

According to the above text, the UN is aware that indigenous populations suffer due to policies that overlook their ability to organise themselves as a people. Unlike the LHWP treaty, this declaration takes into consideration some of the less popular narratives like reparation of bodies and shrines. In 2008, Lesotho experienced a tremor which left Mohale dam cracked. The engineers of the dam claimed the cracking of the dam to be related to the setting of the dam into its foundation, while the Phase I community claimed the dam was cracked by ancestors who were angry that their graves were covered in water and spirits hovering over the dam. While I am aware the declaration came after the construction of Mohale and Katse dams, which can still be used to make lives of those affected better. The policies of MCC (Maseru City Council) are contrary to the ones projected here. Indigenous people find themselves as outcast under the MCC. As livestock keepers, they have had to cut their relationship with livestock because one of the regulations of MCC state that livestock cannot be kept in the vicinity of the town.

When relocating people, LHDA claims to align itself with the constitution of Lesotho and larger bodies like the UN through its many agencies like UNEP and UNESCO yet fail dismally to adhere to the very functions and regulations of the same body. While the DRIP, on paper seems to have covered most of the concern that indigenous people around the world have, it seems to have overlooked the posthuman species which also need as much care as the humans themselves. This gap in coverage, not only leaves the posthuman species 'unspoken' for but it also indirectly says they are not as important. The SDGs as the engine of the UN include fish and water as key, yet when moving to communities, the very things are removed. The exclusion of these overlooks the interdependence of these elements to humans, their identity and meaning.

In 1982, when the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations came into being, a representative of the Cordillera in South America, participated and presented this case. It won

international support and, by the mid-80s the World Bank decided to cancel the project. This battle was won but not without heavy sacrifices, displaced communities, and divisions between families, clans and tribes, (UNDRIPS, 2007). Many of the sacred sites of indigenous peoples all over the world are water bodies. The right to water, which includes access and control over water resources, is one of the most basic demands of indigenous peoples. Water is an integral part of our ancestral territories and resources, and when we claim our right to our ancestral territories, this includes our right to the water found there. The stories of our struggles to assert these rights, from colonization to the present day, are replete with cases where water was the central issue, according to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR 2013:45).

A large part of the Lesotho environment has been vastly modified by unsustainable human development activities, which have resulted in heavy loss of biodiversity. While it is worth noting that Lesotho is not in control of global-scale climate change and the associated environmental threats, there are, however, a number of activities in the country that degrade biodiversity and contribute to an unsafe environment, these activities particularly harm youth living in rural areas, (LHRS, 2015). Looking at other nations like those of Brazil, they protested against large dam construction, citing death as their prominent fear. Like Basotho living in the rural areas, these Brazilians depended mainly on their natural environment for food, health and socialization, which they felt was slowly dying due to unsustainable practices. In the quotation below, an environmental writer, Patrick McCully pens the concerns of people of Brazil, who at the time of this speech had swamped the streets, rioting against large dams.

We, the people from 20 countries gathered in Curitiba, Brazil, representing organisations of dam affected people and of opponents of destructive dams, have shared our experience of the losses we have suffered and the threats we face because of dams. Although our experiences reflect our diverse cultural, social, political and environmental realities, our struggles are one. Our struggles are one because everywhere dams force people from their homes, submerge fertile farmlands, forests and sacred places, destroy fisheries and supplies of clean water, and cause the social and cultural disintegration and economic impoverishment of our communities. Our struggles are one because everywhere there is a wide gulf between the economic and social benefits promised by dam builders and the reality of what has happened after dam construction. Dams have almost always cost more than was projected, even before including environmental and social costs. Dams have produced less electricity and irrigated less land than was promised. They have made floods even more destructive. Dams have benefited large

landholders, agribusiness corporations and speculators. They have dispossessed small farmers; rural workers; fishers; tribal, indigenous and traditional communities.

Our struggles are one because we are fighting against similar powerful interests, the same international lenders, the same multilateral and bilateral aid and credit agencies, the same dam construction and equipment companies, the same engineering and environmental consultants, and the same corporations involved in heavily subsidised energy-intensive industries. Our struggles are one because everywhere the people who suffer most from dams are excluded from decision-making. Decisions are instead taken by technocrats, politicians and business elites who increase their own power and wealth through building dams. Our common struggles convince us that it is both necessary and possible to bring an end to the era of destructive dams. It is also both necessary and possible to implement alternative ways of providing energy and managing our freshwaters which are equitable, sustainable and effective. To reinforce our movement, we will build and strengthen regional and international networks. To symbolise our growing unity, we declare that 14 March, the Brazilian Day of Struggles Against Dams, will from now on become the International Day of Action Against Dams and for Rivers, Water, and Life.

Aguas para a vida, nao para a morte! Agues para la vida, no para la muerte! Water for life, not for death! (McCully, 2001)

Humans, animals, plants and landforms have a story to tell, and each one's story is shaped by the other. This often-overlooked fact has led to a binary way of approaching life around us. As argued by Haraway (2003:7), "subjects, objects, kinds, races, species, genres and genders are products of their relating". She highlights the importance of challenging the human-nature binary and suggests the use of feminist epistemology which places emphasis on "how things work, who is in action, what might be possible and how worldly actors might somehow be accountable to and love each other less violently" (2003:7). Looking at the relationship the communities of Phase I have with water, soil and other landforms, this chapter urged policy makers to be wary of human-nonhuman relationships. In these products of relating, the actors human and non-human – are patterns in which the players are neither whole nor parts but exist in "significant otherness" where states of being are interwoven. The implication of taking these relationships seriously is to imagine futures that address the inequalities brought about by capitalist ideas and one-sided policies.

7 Conclusion: When the Rivers Dry Up

The objective of this study has been to understand better how the ecological lives of LHWP Phase I communities are accustomed to being assembled via water and how the assemblages shift when water becomes a commodity. Throughout the thesis, I showed that these communities have an interdependent relationship with water. Water is to them an identity giver, and an ecological connector, and the foundation of the rural economy and its commonness. Many of the rituals, ceremonies and day to day happenings is intertwined with water, such that life is shaped and shapes water within these communities. From pregnancy, birth, marriage, death and childhood rearing practices, water places an intricate role in the lives of these people. With phrases like “*metsi ke bophelo*” (water is life), “*metsi ke sethlare*” (water is medicine) and “*metsi ke mpho ea balimo*” (water is gift from ancestors), Basotho show the kind of relationship they have with water. This relationship does not perceive water as a commodity nor as an object to be treated blithely.

As an answer to the main question, the main argument in this thesis pointed that the single view of water by officials has led to its commodification. In failing to perceive water as more than just a natural resource, its many ways of being are stripped off. Through development projects, like the LHWP, water is perceived as a milk cow, which can be milked to feed those around it. This view on water and other naturally found resources not only encourages over-extraction as these resources are alleged to be infinite. Water is not an economic good, it is a scarce resource and should be managed like any other scarce resource. While in the past water in Lesotho was abundant, the wheel of climate change is creaking, leading to less water actually being in the river system. Floods and droughts claim much of the water which should be flowing in rivers, leading to water stressed rivers and scarcity for communities which depend on these rivers. On top of water-stressed rivers, some rivers are desiccating while others are being diverted to be tributary for the reservoirs.

There are different types of water. For South African authorities, Lesotho government and LHWP, water is a natural resource like any other, coal, diamonds and uranium- all for extraction and commodification. For the communities affected by this view, water is life-giving and defining who they are, hosting more of themselves in different body form. Water as perceived by authorities is H₂O, while the relationship understood by communities makes it eco-water. The difference between eco-water and H₂O socially constructed and understood.

Eco-water can turn to H₂O, whereas H₂O cannot turn back into eco-water. Water in rivers, wells, lakes and rainwater are eco-water, while water in taps, swimming pools, bottled water and tunnelled water is H₂O. The construction of Katse and Mohale dams, and the commodification of the water, introduced these types of water in Lesotho. This research study provided evidence supporting the importance of water as part of the social fabric, thus discussing the importance of water as pervading all species, including humans. Through understanding of these dams and rivers a new angle to perceiving water was introduced. The extensive work done on the LHWP has always treated the subject of water as independent of the people, without emphasizing the meaning people draw from water and vice versa. Not even the WCD addressed water as more than a resource, if anything, water was then viewed as a catalyst for peace - whose negotiation and sharing would achieve world peace. In the past, water was treated the same by authorities despite communities having a different view.

The disconnect between society and water, when water becomes a commodity is what was never discussed in previous works regarding LHWP and dam construction in Lesotho. This hydroschizophrenia, as discussed in chapter three, caused by commodification of water disregards the needs of communities which shape these bodies of water. River, lakes and wells are socialized and understood as part of the community. In this study I showed how people relied on water not just for drinking and cooking, but for other purposes like healing as evidenced by Thulare who relied on River Bokong to heal, Tseli whose choice of home was based on Lake Maqaliks's proximity to her house, which allowed her to interact with mermaids and many others whose relationship with water is shared in this thesis. I tried to show that the hydroschizophrenia actually affects even the way people view themselves. In chapter three I discussed ways of knowing water and how the relationship becomes an identity which one wears throughout their life. It was also in this chapter that I discussed that ways of knowing water should not be based on pre-existing ideas of what water is. LHWP is a failed project as far as social and environmental concerns because it based its engagements on the faulty assumption that water was just H₂O. This false idea that water is an economic good is responsible for the hydroschizophrenia in communities and the thirst that people of Lesotho face.

Governments and donors dominate and appropriate nature forgetting that the "economy" is ultimately their nations' material relationship with each other and with the rest of the living world. "Do we want that relationship to be based on extraction and exploitation?" as Hickel tweeted on his page on Twitter, where he was discussing extractive economies. It has become

a norm for people to view nature as something to be “commercialized, fetishized and colonized”, (T. Demos, 2016: 200). My own experiences and those of communities within my study areas have embedded in me the necessity to change the narrative when it comes to prostitution of nature. LHWP is presented to the world as a development project, and as such this thesis has traced just how unsustainable this project has been for the people and environment of Lesotho, both economically and ecologically. Also, there was a need to question if development was for the project-affected communities or perhaps development is just another colonial history that we have inherited. I made a connection between development, capitalism and colonialism in chapter one, showing that colonialism birthed capitalism, which has undertones in development. Capitalism encourages extraction of resources for a profit, which in turn has a dominant presence in modern and developed world.

As mentioned earlier, LHWP is the biggest project in Lesotho, having claimed the largest surface area, largest labour force and largest financial injection. Much as colonisation saw men and women as uncivilised and wild, the LHWP project has portrayed the waters of Maliba-Matso and Bokong as unruly and needing to be controlled. The cement walls of Katse dam, the tarred roads, houses, offices, lodges and electricity substations, all are evidence of victory that capitalism guised as development has declared over nature. The (un)settlement of people and things has longstanding history of coloniality in Lesotho, which has continued well after 1966. Through modernity and development, coloniality continues to rampage lives of many; people are still put up in camps, what matters to them (in this case, water, animals and soil) is taken away and replaced with capital exchange. The unseen consequences of these, as evidenced in this work, are loss of identity, loss of access to free-flowing water (and the meanings thereby attached to the flow), loss of sense of community and death, people and of hope.

Through ethnographic data collection that stretched for 18 months, I established that this development project did not take into consideration a holistic approach on which Lesotho highlands life is based. When constructing Katse and Mohale dams, LHWP did due diligence as far as the engineering of the needed infrastructure but overlooked the complex social and environmental entanglements that it would affect. Because development is often tied to economic growth, the emphasis of the project is often made with financial growth in mind, in the meantime overlooking issues like successful relocation, inclusive and sustainable socio-environmental programs which will make the project an overall success. With LHWP relocation did not look into the relationship communities had with their environment, instead they were sent to suburban areas, with brick houses and running water- everything that marks

financial growth but a huge miss on the inclusivity of program. I had three field sites, which were chosen based on location, population size and demographics of the population. Ha-Mohale represented a group of people who experienced minimum culture shock due to the fact that they simply moved within the same locality. I found that Makhoakhoeng, however had the most people who had suffered loss, alienation and slowest assimilation. This is a group of people who were relocated from Ha-Mohale to a suburban area in Maseru. I found that their relationship to water changed when they got to Makhoakhoeng. Not only did they no longer have access to eco-water, but they also had to navigate H₂O in stringent ways at the same time see which of their norms related to water they could salvage. I found that, not only had meaning of water changed for them, but also who they were and perceived to be had to change, meaning commodification of water repurposed their identities.

In this research, I also critiqued and challenged knowledges; new and old. The old knowledge that I critique is mainly that of experts' roles in advancing monetary driven theories, which have no concrete use for people at the bottom. The new knowledge that I hope can be explored further in development projects is employment of multispecies approach, which will lead to water being treated as a person, with personality, traits and characteristics. Above all, the relationship of water to people, through a multispecies approach view, allows and savours the unspoken truths on water multiple and its relationality and connectedness to people and soil. The LHWP is likely to continue until 2032. The conclusion made here are in light of this fact. Moreover, while construction of dams may end in 2032, the water from Lesotho to South Africa will continue to flow until Lesotho has no more water. Some of the key issue which form part of the findings are as demonstrated in chapter three, where types of water are discussed, it would be beneficial to revisit the relationships communities have with water- this may assist in decision making in similar projects, especially Phase II of the LHWP.

Throughout the dissertation, I aimed to show how policies and development projects could be beneficial to both funders and communities if attention was paid to existing relationships between people and their environment. Many of the abortive developmental projects in Lesotho failed from policy and implementation stage, where policies were meant to improve the economy at the expense of communities and the environment. At a local level, involvement of stakeholders with different knowledge systems will be useful and may minimise friction going forward. This is supported by chapter 4 on development and who it really benefits. Project affected communities in this research faced precarious life post the dam construction, yet they were promised better lives. This common misconception of development is responsible for the

ecocide which many people become victims of because resources would be taken out of care of communities, only to be over-extracted and sold back to those communities at a higher price leading to social and ecological injustices.

In 2021, at the time of concluding this study, the Earth is in the geological era known as the Anthropocene. Some of the decision made 30 years ago like the LHWP treaty, are no longer sustainable today. For example, the treaty requires that Lesotho builds three more dams as to increase the volume of water sent to South Africa is not sustainable and is at odds with the sustainable development goals to which most of the governments of the Earth have committed to achieve. Of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the LHWP failed:

- Goal 1: No Poverty- majority of participants in this claimed they became poorer after they were relocated than they were before. Many were given monetary compensation, which they squandered due to no prior financial literacy. This monetary compensation was given in place of land which they used to till to grow food from.
- Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being- two people in the Thetsane camp committed suicide due to loneliness suffered at the new place away from other family members. Many other left that camp and went to stay with relatives who were not resettled.
- Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth- people in project affected communities were given part-time jobs which ended as soon as the construction project was completed.
- Goal 10 and 11: Reduced Inequality and Sustainable Cities and Communities- communities outside the Katse village (a world class camp where LHDA workers reside) do not have electricity or water, yet they live across the road from a three-star hotel and second largest dam in Africa.
- Goal 13: Climate Action- the treaty still maintains Lesotho has to build three more dams despite the environmental upheaval the world is in.
- Goal 14 and 15: Life Below Water and Life on Land- with exception for trout, no other fish can be harvested in the Katse dam given how cold the water has gotten. Many indigenous plants became extinct when the earth surface was scraped for roads, dams and offices.
- Goal 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions- with exception of the Ombudsman within the organization, there is no other body set up to handle issues of peace arising due to injustices birthed by this project.

International bodies like the World Bank can and should be accountable to shoulder some of the responsibilities to address the failures of development projects that they have funded. Chapter five speaks to policies, treaties and conventions which govern development projects and how they are loopholes in the detriment of communities and environments in which these projects are found. This chapter asserts that international bodies have perpetuate unsustainable development by funding projects, like the LHWP, which are not geared towards better life for humanity and the ecosystems they are found in.

As its rivers have become reservoirs for another country, Lesotho has exported herself into a drought. Through the LHWP treaty, Lesotho will continue to export her water to South Africa, despite the climate change, increase in population and water demands. Many Basotho are already having water shortages. In the Nazareta area, people queue for water as early as 4 am, while in Mokhotlong where the Polihali Dam is being constructed, communities go days without water. The incontestable knowledge that this thesis has produced communities have an organic relationship with water than development agencies do. They can therefore inform better the decisions on water than scientific, or engineering studies conducted by those whose relationship with water is fictitious and monetary. Moreover, the clarity birthed by this thesis as far as water is concerned in Lesotho is that there are two ways of understanding water; eco-water and H₂O, the common and most treasured among Basotho being eco-water.

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9 Appendix

BOITLAMI

'Na: _____

Ke ananela hore ke fumane ke bile ke utloisisa kopo ea nka karolo boithutong bona.

Lirekoto le litaba tsohle tseo ke tla li qoqa li tla sebetsa feela mabakeng a boithuto, mme li tla sebelisoa ke batho ba fokolang mabakeng a ho ithuta kapa ho ruta boithuti ba junifesithi. Ke utloisisa hore ka nako tsohle ha ho motho ea tla tseba ka taba tsena ntle le ea nang le kobo ea bohali.

Ke utloisisa hore ho nka karolo ke boithapo mme ha ho tefo eo ke tlang ho e thola. Ke bile ke utloisisa hore ha kea tlamelloa ho ba boithutong bona

Letsatsi _____

Tekeno _____

Sesotho consent form

Consent

I: _____

I understand and agree to take part in this research study. I also understand that records, information and all material gathered during this process will only be used for the purpose of this study. I also understand and agree that only people who are stakeholders in this study (researcher, research institution and supervisor etc.) will have access to this material.

I understand that my participation is voluntary in this study, there will be no payment of any form and I can withdraw my participation should I feel the need.

Date _____

Signature _____

Translated consent form