

**EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF LESOTHO EDUCATION  
POLICIES TO PROMOTE A SENSE OF COMMUNITARIAN  
BELONGING**

**by**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis, **Exploring the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging**, submitted in fulfilment of the degree

### **Doctor of Philosophy**

is original and entirely my own work, except where other sources have been acknowledged. I also certify that this dissertation has not previously been submitted at this or any other faculty or institution.

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MANKA, M

'Maqenehelo Manka

November 2022

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my family, my friends and my colleagues who have supported me throughout my endeavour. I also dedicate this work to my late mother and siblings, I know you had faith in me and that gave me courage to persevere even when I felt like quitting.

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## **ACRONYMS**

CAP:	Curriculum and Assessment Policy
LIC:	Lesotho Integrated Curriculum
MoET:	Ministry of Education and Training
MECS	Ministry of Education Culture and Sports
MoFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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## ABSTRACT

Lesotho education system continues to impart foreign values through an inherited education that is purely academic and examination type that favours cognitive domain while marginalising inter alia psychomotor skills. Furthermore, a strong anthropocentric focus and the subsequent preference for individualism, feeds into a disconnection between students and the community spaces in which they find themselves. In order to tone down these educational problems, the Lesotho education system was undergoing a review of primary and secondary education through the promulgation of policies to give all Basotho access to relevant and quality education fully responsive to the country's needs.

The study aims to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging. This implies that the study works towards determining the extent to which policies are attuned to the immediate place in which students find themselves in which a localised web of life that incorporates humans and non-humans in a place is promoted. A sense of communitarian belonging depicts an African communal way of living, where there are embedded relationships established from a social and a physical connection of humans to the biophysical world. In addition, a sense of communitarian belonging is grounded on the geographic, cultural and relational experiences that are inherent in a place. African communitarian belonging exhibits morals informed by *ubuntu* and *ukama*.

This conceptual study seeks to answer the following research question: What is the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging? Pursuant to this question, African communitarianism is examined and unpacked to conceptualise education in the Lesotho policy context, as founded on a sense of communitarian belonging. A qualitative approach and research methods such as a literature review, document analysis and policy analysis would enable exploration of the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. For this study, no participants were involved but content analysis of the selected policies was undertaken to address the central question of the study through the adoption of themes derived from the conceptual framework.

The findings from document analysis revealed that Lesotho Constitution 1993 lays the foundation of laws and policies in the country hence it expects policies developed in education to introduce education that is responsive to the needs of the Basotho nation which is framing education from the community spaces in which students live. It was revealed that the Constitution aspires to promote moral development, but is silent on education framed from the community spaces in which students live and has excluded the skills and dispositions that would enable students to contribute meaningfully in their communities. The findings revealed that Lesotho Vision 2020 alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging as it aspires for teaching of environmental education in all levels, thus it considers the need for students to interact and learn from their immediate place, promotes cultural heritage and aspires for norms and values that define the Basotho nation and provide skills and dispositions that would enable students to unleash their potential.

The findings from policy analysis found out that Lesotho Education Act 2010 was meant to enact matters pertaining to education, it was enacted to legalise free primary education. In this context the Act 2010 is silent on the education framed from the community places in which students live. The analysis of that Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 revealed that the policy has adopted curriculum aspects that refer to the teaching and learning that considers the community spaces in which students live. In this aspect *CAP 2009* intends to root teaching and learning content from the environment thus, the student's lived experiences are acknowledged, the awareness of the self and others and the personal, social and spiritual learning envisions to inculcate moral values that are pertinent in students personal and social growth. The findings further revealed that *CAP 2009* anticipates to provide students with skills and dispositions that would enable them to fit in the world of work, it envisions to provide students with skills that places primacy in the survival of the students.

Key words: *sense of place, sense of belonging, communitarianism, African communitarianism, sense of communitarian belonging, education, policy.*

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## **CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Geographically speaking, places are where both human and the more-than-humans co-exist, and where life is enacted (Kolodziejcki, 2014). Malone (2016a) adds that place comes into being when there is an interaction between people, either inside or outside their boundaries. Interaction within a specific place “suggests ownership or some kind of connection between a person and a particular location or building” (Cresswell, 2011:2; Malone, 2016a). Place advances the connection between place and experiences, and as a result, people living in a place grow fond of it. As the connection with a place is advanced, people start to establish an attachment with the place and develop a sense of place. A sense of place subsequently refers to the sense of connectivity of people with a place, and its influence on engagement, and can, therefore, be perceived as “an experientially based intimacy with the natural processes, community and history of one’s place” (Sanger, 1997:2; Ardoin, Schuh & Gould, 2012). A sense of place strongly alludes to a sense of belonging in the sense that it relates to “the extent to which individuals feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in their social environment” (Goodenow & Grady, 1993:60). While a sense of place can be articulated as advancing a relationship to a place, it can also be conceptualised as an attachment to a community. According to Eze (2008), a community is formed by people who share a history and heritage, and also a common fate and destiny. In addition, Eze (2017:5) notes that a community is “a fluid habitation of interactive forces, beings, elements, and animate and inanimate matters of the environment”.

A sense of place, thus an attachment to a community, bring to the fore the notion of communitarianism. According to Arthur (2000) and Golby (1997), communitarians value the community itself as well as tradition, and subsequently uphold a typical set of values. As a movement for moral renewal, communitarianism is concerned with the erosion of communal life and the subsequent call for the rebirth of a commitment to

the shared values and institutions that sustain a community (Arthur, 2000). From an African communitarian perspective, the sense of attachment with a community is informed by the discursive relationship between the individual and the community in a communitarian space (Eze, 2008). Although Eze (2008:2) indicates that in the context of African communitarianism the community is given priority over the individual, it should be noted that “the individual and the community are engaged in a contemporaneous formation”, in other words not radically opposed. A sense of community involves a sense of oneness and unity characterised by a commitment to one another, an understanding that all community members matter and that the needs of all members will be met (Osterman, 2000). From an African communitarian perspective, that “[t]he self, community and nature are inextricably bound up with one another” (Le Grange, 2012:8). The advocacy of unity and oneness is not only confined to an obligation to uphold the values and traditions of communal life, but a sense of communitarian belonging is thus an all-encompassing concept that is inclusive of the human and of the more-than-human world (Kruger, Le Roux & Teise, 2020; Le Grange, 2012). It is within the context of the African communitarian sense of belonging that schools in Lesotho are compelled to reshape and restructure education towards a sensitivity to communal needs of both humans and non-humans. As such, it is a matter of shifting away from seeing education as being anthropocentric. Instead of placing the individual in the centre, education should be reconceptualised in terms of the interconnection between the individual, the community and the environment. Values enshrined in African communitarianism should be reconstituted, imparted and instilled in the minds of the youth to enhance a sense of communitarian belonging (cf. Lorio, Hamm, Parnell & Quintero, 2017).

By being in school, students need to develop a sense of belonging to a space that they can easily relate to, and where they can feel that they are valued, cared for, and respected (Uslu & Sidika, 2017; Combs, 1982; Finn, 1989). An internalised sense of belonging has the advantage of motivating students’ desire to learn, engender cooperative participation in school-related activities, and reduce student attrition (St-Amand, Girard & Smith, 2017; Uslu & Sidika, 2017; Goodenow & Grady, 1993). The school, however, is situated within the community, and students are part of the social

and cultural contexts outside the school. As such, the school is required to respond to societal needs through its commitment to the common good by enhancing students' ability to identify with the community within which they live (Arthur, 2000; Cheung, Cheung & Hue, 2017). A sense of communitarian belonging encrypted from an African communitarianism, would imply rethinking and reconstructing education to have "a direct bearing on the well-being of the social, ecological places people actually inhabit" (Gruenewald, 2003b:1). This type of education could recognise the interrelatedness and interdependence between humans and the-more-than-human world. It would, therefore, instill in students that all the habitants of place are equally important. Education couched in African communitarianism could thus aim to re-establish and promote the harmonious relationship between humans and the biophysical world, which would influence the flourishing of the entire community (Eze, 2017; Behrens, 2014; Kruger *et al.*, 2020).

Within the context of the educational landscape, policy enactments could play an essential role in incorporating education encrypted from a sense of communitarian belonging in schools. Education policy refers to the statements of intent, guidelines, values of authority, principles and regulations that not only govern the education sector but can be formulated to bring about change in schools (Gale, 2003; Bell & Stevenson, 2006; Ulla, 2018). According to Torjman (2005), the role of policy is to respond to the perceived problems or needs in society, and can, therefore, be proactive or reactive. For the purpose of this study, a reactive policy would be adopted. As noted by Torjman (2005:3), reactive policy "emerges in response to a concern or crisis that must be addressed". It appears that Lesotho is in a crisis of ills created by the Western type of education it followed. These ills include education crisis wherein the type of education offered is disconnected from the needs of the Basotho nation as it does not provide with content framed from student's immediate place as a result, students lack adequate skills and dispositions that would enable them to function as responsible and productive citizens. Failure to equip students with necessary and imperative skills and dispositions led to environmental crisis in which the land is degraded and agricultural lands are reduced due to soil erosion. By implication, the aforementioned crisis boil down to economic crisis whereby Lesotho's economic development is stagnant. It

could thus be assumed that reactive policy is required to respond to the concerns or crisis. As a result, a sense of communitarian belonging as a way of restoring and sustaining communities, extend such to the sense of communitarian belonging to be inclusive of both the human and more-than-human world, and to heal education injustices, which have been brought about by a colonial past.

My research interest is to explore the potential of education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. By implication, I am interested in the connection between individuals, schools and the communities in which they are located. Although my interest is in a sense of communitarian belonging, specifically as viewed from an African communitarian perspective, I noticed that related research is primarily focused on a sense of belonging. A search on databases such as Academic Search Ultimate, Eric, Education Source and Complementary Index revealed several studies on education and the development of a sense of belonging. Some examples include Perception of the parish sense of community: Does an elementary school's presence heighten parish belongingness? (2016) by Ferrari and Dosen; Community, philosophy and education policy: against effective ideology and the immiseration of contemporary schooling (2000); Rethinking ukama in the context of philosophy for children in Africa (2010) by Ndofirepi and Shanyanana. However, I could not find any studies undertaken on African communitarianism coupled with a sense of belonging, nor could I find any reference to studies undertaken on the role of education policies in advancing a sense of communitarian belonging in the African school context.

## **1.2 RESEARCH INTEREST AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Metz (2015) observes that many education systems in Africa carry the remnants of a colonial education perspective that inclines towards individualistic gain rather than collective gain. In drawing on the understanding of African communitarianism as a co-existing relationship between the individual and the community, the emphasis on the individual gain at the expense of the community is in sharp contrast to an African communitarian perspective. This observation aligns with Higgs's (2011:1) comment that "[t]he marginalisation of African values in African education has resulted in the

general Westernisation of education theory and practice in Africa". Lesotho, an African country with a colonial history, has continued to impart foreign values through an inherited education system that is purely academic, and an examination system that favours the cognitive domain, while marginalising inter alia psychomotor skills (Ansell, 2002; StateUniversity.com, 2020; Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002; Raselimo & Mahao, 2015). While Ansell noted in 2002 that the Lesotho education system still mimics the key aspects of colonial education, the revised Curriculum and Assessment Policy of 2009 (CAP 2009) is also regarded as a curriculum structure that "paradoxically marginalises the practical subjects, which were and still are intended to address the national goal of education with production" (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015:6). Arguably, Lesotho education has the challenge to address the disconnection between students and the place in which they find themselves, namely their community spaces.

The need subsequently arose for the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) to enact education policies that would enable education that enhances meaning connected with the place in which students live, and the community life to which they have to contribute meaningfully (cf. Cresswell, 2009). It can be argued that once students have developed an attachment to a place because of the meaning they have established, they are likely to develop a sense of belonging. Schools are one of the few shared social institutions that are best positioned to help students in developing a sense of being somewhere where you fit in and feel safe in your identity, thus, a feeling of being at home in a place and of being valued (Riley, 2017). In alignment with African communitarianism, it could be accepted that education based on the common good would encourage students to develop skills and attitudes that would ensure the flourishing of both humans and the more-than-human in community spaces. Enabling the development of a sense of communitarian belonging would require schools to work collaboratively with community members who are knowledgeable in matters concerning education drawn from their immediate environment. As noted by Kaya and Seleti (2013:4), "[t]he wealth of knowledge that still exists among the elders and other knowledge holders in African local communities" could be useful in pursuing education based on African communitarianism. In this sense, education should become a vehicle to educate students about their immediate environment by restoring cultural and

environmental education, and enhancing an African environmental ethic and interaction between the human and more-than-human world.

Since her independence in 1966, Lesotho has regarded education as one of the major strategies for promoting socio-economic development. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Lesotho (Constitution) (1993:Section 28(a)) guarantees that

Lesotho shall endeavour to make education available to all and shall adopt policies aimed at securing that education is directed to the full development of the human personality and sense of dignity and strengthening the respect for human dignity and strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

While the Constitution promotes education aimed at the holistic development of the human personality, CAP 2009 regards “education as the main vehicle towards achieving the national aspirations of self-reliance and economic independence” (MOET, 2009:2). Central to the achievement of these national aspirations are the change of educational content and practices to be relevant to the needs of the Lesotho people. This vision is also foregrounded by the Lesotho Vision 2020 (Government of Lesotho, 2004: Section 2.3.4), in the statement that the government aims to give access to all Basotho “to quality education fully responsive to the country’s needs”. Moreover, the Lesotho Education Act was also enacted in 2010 with the purpose of legalising all matters relating to education (Lesotho Education Act, 2010). Through the enactment of policies, MoET seems to not only aim at making education more relevant for Lesotho as a place, but also for teaching and learning to be founded on the immediate environment of the child (MoET, 2009). Arguably, Lesotho education policies that promote relevant education could, by implication, contribute towards the development of a sense of communitarian belonging. In light of the preceding exposition, this study was centred on the question: What is the potential of Lesotho education policies for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging? Driven by the primary research question, the following research sub-questions were derived:

1.2.1 How can place be conceptualised in relation to a sense of belonging?

- 1.2.2 In what way can place and a sense of belonging be recontextualised from an African communitarian perspective?
- 1.2.3 What are the implications of education for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging?
- 1.2.4 What is the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote the development of a sense of communitarian belonging?
- 1.2.5 What comments and suggestions can be made regarding the potential of Lesotho education policies for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging?

### **1.3 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Informed by the research question, the aim of the study was to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. From the general aim of the research, the study is conceptualised around the objectives to:

- 1.3.1 conceptualise place in relation to a sense of belonging;
- 1.3.2 recontextualise place and a sense of belonging through an African communitarian perspective;
- 1.3.3 consider the implications of education for the development of a sense communitarian belonging;
- 1.3.4 explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging; and
- 1.3.5 comment on and make suggestions regarding the potential of Lesotho education policies for the development of a sense communitarian belonging.

### **1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

My interest in undertaking this study was influenced by my observations as a classroom teacher for five years, and my role as acting school principal since 2013. I observed that the teaching and learning environment is not friendly towards students.

There seems to be a tense or rigid relationship, not only between the students themselves but also between the students and the teachers. While some students tend to disrespect the school rules continually, the performance of students is adversely affected, and many ultimately drop out of school. I started to consider the possibility that one of the contributing factors leading to students constantly breaking school rules, and wanting to drop out of school might be that they feel out of place. I also started to wonder about the lack of moral values and the extent to which parents transfer the responsibility of instilling moral values to teachers. In essence, I became interested in the extent to which the school enables the development of a sense of belonging by establishing education that aligns with community life and community values. As a former geography teacher, I observed how most topics are not drawn from the Lesotho environmental context, but are instead borrowed from outside the Lesotho geographical area. My experience aligned with Smith's (2002:3) reiteration that

teachers direct children's attention away from their circumstances and ways of knowing and toward knowledge from other places that have been developed by strangers they most likely will never meet.

MoET has launched several education policies, such as the *Lesotho Education Act 2010*, the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy (2009)*, *Child Friendly School Standards (2012)*, the *National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (2013)* and the *Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018)*. With the promulgation of these policies, I became curious about the extent to which they are attuned to the immediate place in which the students find themselves. I started to also wonder if teaching and learning aim to connect students with their environment, and if such a connection enables students to contribute towards the community and community life. In essence, I started to grapple with the question as to whether principles are embedded in education policies to reconsider the enhancement of the inculcation of moral values drawn from an African perspective. In addition, I also became intrigued by the possibility of policies to strengthen the interconnectedness and interrelatedness between the human and the more-than-human world, so that students can become part of and contribute towards the conservation and sustainability of the environment.

Against this backdrop, I decided to analyse the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* and *Lesotho Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009* to explore the potential of current Lesotho education policies to promote education aimed at the development of a sense of communitarian belonging. CAP 2009 was selected for analysis as it is the recent curriculum reform which is intended to bring change in basic education.

It was my contention that an analysis of Lesotho education policies could be of value to MoET to foreground the extent to which the development of a sense of communitarian belonging is promoted. By implication, the study can highlight the extent to which education policies give cognisance to the communities in which schools are located, and acknowledge African communitarian values such as harmony, cohesion, consensus, and the interrelatedness and interdependence between the human and the more-than-human world. The study could potentially also be of value to institutions of higher learning that are involved in teacher education. The findings of this study could be beneficial for the design of courses and programmes around communitarian belonging, including the development of an awareness and understanding of the interconnectedness between humans and the more-than-human world. It is through such programmes that teachers can become empowered to disseminate strategies to influence their students to realise that taking care of one another and the environment is imperative for sustainable living in the Lesotho context.

## **1.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

A conceptual framework explains “the way the researcher organizes and structures ideas, assumptions, principles, and related concepts as the basis for why and how” a research problem would be explored (McMillan, 2015:186; Adom, Hussein & Agyem, 2018; Ukwoma & Ngulube, 2021). By implication, a conceptual framework assists with an integrated approach of perceiving the research problem. A conceptual framework not only describes the connection between the concepts that have relevance for the study, but guides a researcher in the choice of methodology and drives the research question and the selection of research methods (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014; Adom *et al.*, 2018; Ukwoma & Ngulube, 2021).

This study was informed by a conceptual framework that I constructed from a recontextualisation of communitarianism through the lens of African communitarianism. The description of the relationship between concepts associated with communitarianism and African communitarianism, brought to the fore the notion of a sense of communitarian belonging. While a sense of belonging, or a sense of community, refers to a connection between a place and experience, African communitarianism constitutes the interconnection between the individual, the community and the environment (Le Grange, 2012). A sense of community involves a sense of oneness and unity characterised by a commitment to one another, an understanding that all community members matter, and that the needs of all members will be met (Osterman, 2000). Within an African conception of communitarianism, a sense of communitarian belonging contributes towards the interdependence and co-existence of all species on earth, without regarding one as superior to any of the others (Eze, 2017; Etzion, 2014). African communitarianism is associated with *ubuntu* (humanness) (Waghid & Smeyers, 2012) and *ukama* (relatedness) (Le Grange, 2012). These two notions extend beyond human beings to include a more-than-human world. A sense of attachment with a community would arguably emphasise humane interaction with the biophysical world. The enhancement of a sense of communitarian belonging foregrounds place-based education as a transformative tool to heal the ills caused by an education system that is not responsive to the needs of the society (Ontong & Le Grange, 2015). Education that is responsive to the needs of the immediate community will give students the opportunity to engage with the environment, acquire skills that could be used in real-life situations (Smith, 2002), and recognise and appreciate the interaction between the individual and the biophysical world for the benefit of the entire community (Smith, 2002; Gruenewald, 2003b). It is within such a context that education towards the development of a sense of communitarian belonging is curative in nature, because it calls for the inclusion of the more-than-human world, calls for the restoration of cultural knowledge, and recognises the inculcation of African morals.

In my attempt to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging, the conceptual framework assisted me to

arrange important concepts such as African communitarianism, *ubuntu*, *ukama*, place, and a sense of belonging in a logical structure, albeit based on the relationship between them. Serving as a guide for my study, the conceptual framework was useful for the selection of a qualitative approach and methods such as literature review, document analysis and policy analysis. In particular, the conceptual framework was considered insightful because it assisted me to gain an understanding of how to link and show the relationship between all the steps of the research.

## **1.6. RESEARCH PARADIGM**

A research paradigm “is a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which gives rise to a particular world view” (Nieuwenhuis, 2016a:6). Taking a similar stance, Mertens (2010:7; Held, 2019) informs that a “paradigm is a way of looking at the world. It is composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action”. A research paradigm not only forms the foundation for a study, but also befits the fundamental beliefs or philosophical underpinnings that guide the research in a study. The ontological assumption pertains to ideas about the nature of reality, and epistemological assumptions refer to the construction of knowledge about the assumed understanding of the nature of reality (Nieuwenhuis, 2016a; Mertens, 2012). Axiological assumptions relate to ethics and the assumed role of values in the research undertaking, while methodological assumptions relate to the approach most suitable for the research endeavour (Mertens, 2010; Nieuwenhuis, 2016a; Romm, 2015). A research paradigm subsequently grounds a study, as it constitutes the basic assumptions that will underpin the study, and would, by implication, direct decisions made regarding the choice of methodology and research methods.

My study was informed by the transformative paradigm. According to Mertens (2010), the transformative paradigm proceeds from the basic assumption that the social construction of multiple realities are informed by inequities based on *inter alia*, gender, race and socio-economic class. Ontologically speaking, structures of domination and associated asymmetric power relations lead to the marginalisation of certain groups and the privileging of others. As noted by Denzin and Lincoln (2018:38), the

transformative paradigm “challenges prevailing forms of inequality, poverty, human oppression and injustice”. As such, research that is underpinned by the transformative paradigm would recognise the prevalence of injustice and inequality, and would, by implication, be premised on the assumption that research and evaluation are important tools for addressing societal ills. The transformative paradigm seems to be emancipatory in nature as it gives voice to those who are oppressed. As noted by Mertens (2010:32), “the transformative paradigm’s epistemological assumption centers on the meaning of knowledge as it is defined from a prism of cultural lenses and the power issues involved in the determination of what is considered legitimate knowledge”. As such, the construction of knowledge about reality stands in direct relation to an understanding thereof from the perspective of the marginalised and oppressed. Methodologically speaking, a transformative study will use a methodology and research methods that would enable social change through the identification of social ills. The transformative paradigm subsequently stands in service of the pursuit of social change, and subsequently places priority on the axiological assumption that the research process must be informed by ethics that would yield an emancipatory research outcome (Mertens, 2010).

In drawing on the transformative paradigm, I worked with the assumption that education in Lesotho still carries remnants of colonialism. The school, through the implementation of the current curriculum, continues to disconnect students from their community spaces by teaching them content adopted from Westernised education, in other words content that is unresponsive to the needs of the Basotho (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015; Ansell, 2002, MoET, 2009). Lesotho education continues to impart education that promotes individualism, and this is evident in the examinations, which evaluate students on their cognitive achievement level (MoET, 2009). This subsequently creates the belief that competition is a natural human characteristic (cf. Lowenstein, Martusewicz & Voelker, 2010). In Lesotho, the promotion of individualism in education has been perpetuated by competition modeled by the type of examination. This has led to asymmetrical power relations which continues to marginalise students inclined towards the psychomotor domain (Matsela, 1979;

Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002; MoET, 2009). The acquisition of human-centred education has led to the anthropocentric assumption that “humans are superior to everything else on earth and have unchecked dominion over it” (Lowenstein *et al.*, 2010). In addition, the African conception of communitarianism as a communitarian sense of belonging that contributes towards the interdependence and co-existence of all species on earth (cf. 1.5), was ignored. As a result, MoET has embarked on the “review of the entire primary and secondary education curricula with the purpose of making education at these levels accessible, *relevant* [my emphasis], efficient and of the best quality” (MoET, 2009:V). The call for relevant education aligns with the aim of *CAP2009* to propose “a fully localized secondary education curriculum and assessment” (MoET, 2009:V). Arguably, fully localised education can be perceived as education that promotes a sense of communitarian belonging. This would mean education that is not only aimed at being responsive to the needs of the immediate community and Lesotho as a country at large, but to bring about the restoration of humane interaction with the biophysical world. The significance of the transformative paradigm for this study subsequently lies with the potential to identify the extent to which marginalised voices have been incorporated, or ignored in the development of education policy. Epistemology relates to “how things can be known” (Nieuwenhuis, 2016a:67). Although I aimed to explore the potential of Lesotho education to promote a communitarian sense of belonging, I worked with the assumption that it was important to expose the extent to which Lesotho education policies might be divorced from African communitarianism. As noted earlier, Mertens (2010) argues that knowledge is not only defined through cultural lenses, but power issues often foreground such knowledge as legitimate. I also worked with the assumption that the power relations, subordinations and inequalities that characterise Lesotho education policy, might have been duly accepted as reality. To consider the potential of education policy to promote a sense of communitarian belonging as an assumed form of relevant education for the Basotho, my study was informed by values such as humanness and relatedness, respect, cohesion and solidarity drawn from an African perspective of communitarianism. Ethics subsequently played an important role in my thinking around the incorporation of the human and the more-than-human world to not only

enhance a sense of communitarian belonging, but to also contribute towards the healing of the social ills that followed from colonial education. In alignment with the aim of transformative research to enhance social justice, I assumed that a qualitative approach and research methods such as a literature review, document analysis and policy analysis would be enabling in my exploration of the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. The transformative paradigm was thus most appropriate as the guiding paradigm for this study.

## **1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research design constitutes the plan for the undertaking of a study, and “describes a flexible set of guidelines that connect theoretical paradigms, first, to strategies of inquiry and, second, to methods for collecting empirical material” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018:78; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; McMillan, 2015). While a research paradigm constitutes the basic philosophical assumptions that underpin a study (cf. 1.6), a research design entails the research methodology and research methods to be employed by the study. Before I explain the research approach and the methods I utilised for this study, it is worth noting the difference between methodology and methods. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001), a research methodology is about the approach the research adopts to undertake a particular type of study. Various options are available, including a quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approach. While quantitative research entails the gathering of objective data that is analysed numerically (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014), qualitative research rests on the interaction between the researcher and research participants to obtain data in natural settings (McMillan, 2015:304, Nieuwenhuis, 2016a). Creswell (2014:32) refers to mixed methods research as an “inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks”. The choice for a particular research methodology subsequently assists a researcher to position him or her with regards to decisions about how a study will be undertaken. Research methods, however, are specific techniques or tools used by the researcher to collect and analyse

data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; McMillan, 2015; Cohen *et al.*, 2018). While a research methodology is the systematic approach geared towards the realisation of a particular research aim, research methods assist with the collection, generation and analysis of information to enable the answering of the research question. The choice for research methods is always influenced by the adopted methodology. As noted by Klenke (2016:31), a methodology serves as “the theoretical foundation for the selection of research methods”. While a mixed methods methodology would inform research methods that collect both qualitative and quantitative data, a qualitative approach would call for methods that do not require any statistics, but would enable the interpretation of data generated as subjective experiences in natural settings.

### **1.7.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

As indicated, a research methodology serves as a comprehensive tool that lays the foundation for decision-making on how research would unfold. In this study, I adopted a qualitative approach as it aims to interpret a phenomenon in its natural setting, in other words in a setting where the context and occurrence are not tampered with in an attempt to interpret the data during interviews or in written texts (cf. Nieuwenhuis, 2016a; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The value of a qualitative study lies with the collection and generation of data through first-hand information from, for example, analysed documents. My study was exploratory in nature because little is known about a sense of communitarian belonging as seen from an African communitarian perspective (cf. 1.1). Exploratory studies are linked to qualitative studies because they do not depart from a fixed theoretical framework, but rather work towards building a new understanding (Nieuwenhuis, 2016a; Swedberg, 2018). In this study, I did not work from a fixed and pre-determined theoretical framework. I constructed a conceptual framework to assist me to gain an in-depth understanding of the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. To explore such potential, I generated data in an open and flexible way through document and policy analysis, albeit without the interference of the policy writers (cf. McMillan, 2015; Cohen

*et al.*, 2018). I subsequently deemed a qualitative approach most appropriate for the generation, analysis and interpretation of data for this exploratory study.

### 1.7.2 RESEARCH METHODS

As indicated, research methods are drawn from the research methodology as strategies or techniques to respond to the research question and the sub-questions. Grounded in the transformative paradigm, my choice of research methods were informed by Glesne’s (2006:4) statement that “qualitative research methods are used to contextualise issues in their particular socio-cultural-political milieu, and sometimes to transform or change social conditions”. Mertens (2010) asserts that within the context of the transformative paradigm, research methods must be employed in an ethical manner so that the research outcomes will have the potential to lead to the enhancement of social justice. In this study, I worked with the assumption that the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging would indirectly entail the recentering of marginalised communitarian values in education. In alignment with this transformative methodological assumption, I worked with a literature review, document analysis and policy analysis. Before I explain my choice of research methods, I first give a brief summary of how the research methods were informed by and aligned with the research objectives I set out for this study (cf. Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Research methods and subsequent research objectives

Research methods	Research objectives
Literature review	<p>In drawing on literature, I was able to conceptualise place and to establish the link between place and a sense of belonging (cf. 1.3.1).</p> <p>To construct a conceptual framework for my study, I consulted the work of several scholars on African communitarianism. My conceptualisation of African communitarianism enabled me to reconceptualise place</p>

	<p>and a sense of belonging through an African communitarian perspective (cf. 1.3.2).</p> <p>To answer my main research question, I had to first foreground the implications of education for the promotion of a communitarian sense of belonging (cf. 1.3.3). Educational implications were derived from the respective literature reviews undertaken to realise the above-mentioned objectives.</p>
<p>Document analysis</p> <p>Policy analysis</p>	<p>In alignment with the aim of my study, I wanted to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote the development of a sense of communitarian belonging (cf. 1.3.4). In my pursuit of this objective, I analysed selected education-related documents and specific policies (cf. 5.2.1; 5.2.2; 5.4; 5.5)</p>

### 1.7.2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature study is a “written summary of journal articles, books and other documents that describe the past and current state of information review” (Creswell, 2009:89). Such an information review involves collecting, evaluating and analysing publications such as books and journal articles that relate to the research questions (McCombes, 2019). One of the advantages of a literature review is that it helps with the identification of gaps and ambiguities in the exciting body of knowledge, and subsequently provides a backdrop understanding of the research topic (Barbie 2010; Gray 2004). A literature review is also helpful with regards to the identification of suitable research methods once the researcher has gained a good understanding of the research topic. For the purpose of this study, I explained how a literature review was carried out. A literature review was conducted through consulting the work of several scholars. The review provided with an overview of existing knowledge and research gaps. I consequently, searched for relevant literature, I evaluated sources and then I identified themes

debates and gaps from the existing information, from there I was able to outline the structure to be followed and wrote a literature review for my conceptual framework.

My study was explorative in nature and I first had to gain an understanding of the concepts that I deemed relevant for this study. The literature on place and a sense of belonging enabled me to gain insight in how these concepts have been conceptualised and understood in literature, and what perspectives on these concepts are available in the existing body of knowledge. According to Mertens (2010; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001), a literature review describes theoretical perspectives and previous research findings. Thus, to deepen my understanding of my research topic, I consulted literature that describes theoretical perspectives on African communitarianism. In this manner, I was able to not only draw key issues regarding African communitarianism from the literature (cf. Bell, 2010), but to use these key issues to reconceptualise a sense of belonging through an African communitarian perspective. A literature review was instrumental in this study on two accounts. In the first place, it enabled me to construct a conceptual framework to reconceptualise place and a sense of belonging through an African communitarian perspective. Secondly, a literature review served as the backdrop for deriving educational implications for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging in school education.

### **1.7.2.2 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

According to Bowen (2009:1), “[d]ocument analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents - both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material”. Document analysis entails “collecting contextual information through an extensive review of documents” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019:6). As a method of data collection, document analysis can typically be done on written or text-based artefacts such as policy documents (cf. Nieuwenhuis, 2016b). Within the context of document analysis, documents are treated as the respondent or informant that provides the relevant information - the researcher asks questions and highlights the answers in the text (O’Leary, 2014). There are some advantages to document analysis. While document analysis enables the researcher to access the ideas of

people who are not available at the time of the research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007), “obtaining and analysing documents is often far more cost efficient and time efficient” (Bowen, 2009:31).

In this study, I used document analysis to review printed, official education-related documents namely; *Lesotho Constitution 1993 and Lesotho Vision 2020* to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. I worked with the assumption that a document will not necessarily provide adequate information because inherent mistakes may be depicted as incorrect or insufficient data. I subsequently opted to not use document analysis as a stand-alone method. To explore the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging, I decided to complement document analysis with policy analysis.

### **1.7.2.3 POLICY ANALYSIS**

Samuel (2017) argues that policy can be perceived as both a written text and a set of practices. On the one hand, policy is a printed document of linguistic and legal codified statements. On the other hand, policy refers to actions that take place within a particular context. The analysis of policy can take the form of “analysis of policy determination and effects, and analysis of policy content” (Simons, Olssen & Peters, 2009:25; Codd, 1988). The analysis of policy determination and its effects is concerned with various aspects related to the making of a policy. In this form of analysis, questions are asked about why and how a policy was made, and for whom it was intended, and impacts and effects of the policy. The analysis of policy content is focused on the development of the policy, specifically in relation to the values and assumptions pertaining to the policy process and content. As noted by Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard and Henry (1997:19), “policy analysis involves a critical look at issues such as development and implementation, politics in action and values embedded in the text”.

In this study, I was particularly interested in analysing the policy content. In alignment with my research aim, I analysed selected Lesotho education policies with the purpose

to explore the potential of policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. Samuel (2017) indicates that the content analysis of policy can focus on the written product and on aspects that are not written in the text. Content analysis can thus involve more than a mere summary of and interpretation of key terms, policy intent, and proposals for implementation. A more elaborate content analysis would also pay attention to the silences in a policy, thus things that are not mentioned in the text. For Taylor *et al.* (1997), content analysis is aimed at answering the *how* and *what* questions about a policy. As such, content analysis can include the foregrounding of the aims and objectives of the policy, the underlying assumptions, the values embedded in the document, the use of language in the text, and the extent to which equity issues are promoted.

I undertook a content analysis of selected Lesotho education policies namely; *Lesotho Education Act 2010 and Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009*. My analysis was specifically done in reference to policy aims, objectives and the underlying values to determine the potential of the policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. Content analysis was specifically helpful to explore the extent to which values drawn from African communitarians and the notion of the entanglement between the human and the more-than-human world are embedded in the documents. The Lesotho education system bears the scars of western education, and it was important to foreground the remnants of colonial education as potential unresponsiveness to the immediate community needs and needs of the Basotho in the broader context of the country. Since policies can be regarded as tools to bring about change (cf. Patton & Sawicki, 1993; Taylor *et al.*, 1997), I subsequently deemed it imperative to analyse the use of language in the policy texts, and attended to the silences in the texts. As noted by Taylor *et al.* (1997), what has not been said by policy writers are just as important as what is included in the policy text.

With regards to document and policy analysis, I used qualitative data analysis. Neuman (2014:477) defines data analysis as the “systematic organisation, integration and examination of data with the purpose of deriving ‘patterns’ and ‘relationships’ from the information we have gathered”. On the one hand, document analysis was used to

provide a broad base of information, which informed the analysis of policies. I categorised the education-related documents into manageable and workable themes. For policy analysis, I used coding to assign labels and organise data into different themes (cf. Creswell, 2014; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The use of a coding system helped me to closely examine, compare and contrast units of information from Lesotho education policies to generate meaning. Guided by an inductive approach, I used qualitative analysis to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging.

### **1.8. QUALITY OF THE STUDY**

Transformative studies are undertaken to bring about social change (cf. Mertens, 2010). As this study was underpinned by the transformative paradigm, it was important to employ criteria that could enhance the quality of the study to contribute towards an empowering and emancipatory outcome. In this study, I considered knowledge about the community, fairness, attention to voice, positionality, reciprocity, catalytic authenticity and ontological authenticity as important criteria.

Mertens (2010:261; Tracy, 2010) purports that it is important for a researcher to “know the community well enough to link the research results to positive action within the community”. To gain an understanding of the research context, it was imperative to conceptualise how African communitarianism could potentially be relevant for the Lesotho education policy context. Through the enshrined values encrypted from African communitarianism, I developed an understanding of the possibilities for education to promote a sense of belonging to the communities in which schools are located. The actualisation of the potential of Lesotho education policies to contribute towards the development of a sense of communitarian belonging, depends on an understanding of how education based on the common good could lead to the flourishing of both humans and the more-than-human in community spaces.

While it was important to get to know the context of the study, I had to ensure that the development of the conceptual framework was informed by the principle of fairness. Fairness in a transformative study aims to answer the question: “[to] what extent are

different constructions and their underlying value structures solicited and honored in the process?” (Mertens, 2010:260). Throughout the development of the conceptual framework (cf. 1.5), I foregrounded the connections between concepts relevant to the focus of my study. The conceptualisation of place in relation to a sense of belonging, and the recontextualisation of place and a sense of belonging through the lens of African communitarianism, involved an honest account of various perspectives. Underlying assumptions, values and principles, associated with the various understandings of place, sense of belonging and African communitarianism, were also foregrounded. In addition, this study involved the analysis of values underlying the education policy context. I therefore had to take care to avoid suppressing or upholding some values at the expense of others. To work against the latter, I gave attention to voice and stated my positionality as researcher from the onset.

As my study was focused on the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian, it was important to give attention to voice in policy text. Policies “exercise power through a production of 'truth' and 'knowledge', as discourses” (Ball, 1993). In my analysis of policy documents, I gave attention to what is being said, by whom and for whom. In addition, attention to voice was further accomplished when a more elaborate content analysis was undertaken to foreground the silences in policies, in other words aspects that are not mentioned in the text (cf. Mertens, 2010). By giving attention to the way in which language is used, I could gain an understanding of the policy writer’s position in relation to a potential promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging. It was, however, imperative to use critical reflexivity to remain aware of my own positionality (cf. Mertens, 2010; Berger, 2015; Carpenter, 2018). By implication, I had to focus on personal characteristics and experiences, including values, beliefs and biases, and the role they play in my construction of knowledge. In terms of my own positionality, I had to acknowledge from the onset how my educational background, which was informed by a strong Western orientation and an emphasis on individualism, could influence my study. Self-awareness of critical subjectivity played an important role in my research undertaking. Also, it was important to acknowledge and work with the assumption that the texts I

engaged with, are incomplete and represent the authors' specific positions. Mertens (2010:261) states that "[t]exts cannot claim to contain all universal truth because all knowledge is contextual". Within the context of my study, it was important to foreground how Lesotho education policies were constructed in reaction to her colonial history.

Although I did not work with any participants in this study who could potentially directly benefit from the research undertaking, it was important to share the research findings with MoET (cf. Mertens, 2010). Reciprocity in this sense, was aimed at creating a space for policy-makers to rethink how education policies could be strengthened to promote a sense of belonging that is couched in African communitarian values such as harmony, cohesion, consensus, and an interdependence between the human and the more-than-human world. While reciprocity involves the sharing of the research findings, catalytic authenticity determines the extent to which action is inspired by the research inquiry (Mertens, 2010; Shannon & Hambacher 2014). Framed within transformative research, it was important that my study should promote action during and after the research process. On a personal level, the inquiry process took me through a learning process that assisted me to explore new ways of reading literature and policy documents. Through a process of conceptualisation, reconceptualisation and analysis, I gained a more in-depth and sophisticated understanding of aspects related to my research topic, and ontological authenticity was subsequently enhanced. While this study was about an exploration of the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging, the transformative agenda would be pursued if action were to be taken by MoET to strengthen education policy towards achieving "the national aspirations of self-reliance and economic independence" (MoET, 2009:2). In this study, I worked from the assumption that national aspirations can be aligned with a strong sense of communitarian belonging aimed at the flourishing of the individual and the community, through an interconnectedness with the more-than-human world (cf. 5.1).

## 1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:129), “[r]esearch ethics are focused on what is morally proper and improper when engaged with participants or when accessing archival data”. In this study, I did not involve any human participants, but undertook an analysis of documents and policies. Within my research context, I subsequently focused on ensuring that no data was falsified, and that I did not make myself guilty of plagiarism. As such, all sources consulted in this research undertaking were acknowledged, both as in-text references and in the reference list (cf. Creswell, 2012).

As my study was grounded in the transformative paradigm, it was important to work with the transformative axiological assumption, according to which respect, benevolence and justice are perceived as the regulatory principles that underline the ethics in a study (cf. Mertens, 2007). Carpenter (2018:6) emphasises that “research must be worthwhile in itself and have beneficial effects that outweigh any risks”. I subsequently adopted ethical principles to enable the production of findings and outcomes that maybe beneficial to the government of Lesotho. Informed by my research question (cf. 1.3), I employed a research design and used suitable data generation methods, which I assumed would yield the best results. To ensure an honest report and true picture of the data generated from the policy documents, I give a detailed description of the education-related documents and policies which were analysed. I developed codes and themes, and used direct quotations to represent the original policy texts. To obtain sufficient data to respond to the main research question, I invested time to familiarise myself with the setting, nature and context of Lesotho education policies (cf. Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Mandal, 2018). As already mentioned, I regarded reflexivity as an important strategy to ensure that the results of the study were not influenced by my personal biases, beliefs and experiences (cf. Tracy, 2010; Berger, 2015; Carpenter, 2018). To ensure authenticity, I did not use my imagination to influence the research findings and interpretations. Rather, I critically evaluated my own positionality and constantly self-evaluated my actions with the aim to maintain transparency in the analysis and interpretation of the generated data.

Creswell (2014) is of the opinion that before conducting research, a researcher must seek approval for the project from his or her institution. As noted by Bell (2010), an ethics committee plays an important role in safeguarding that no badly designed or harmful research is permitted. To pursue this study, I requested and was granted permission from the ethics committee of the University of the Free State's Faculty of Education (cf. Appendix A).

### **1.10 DERMACATION OF THE STUDY**

Education policy refers to the statements of intent, guidelines, values of authority, principles and regulations that govern the education sector (Gale, 2003; Bell & Stevenson, 2006). Thus, education policy is about the rules and regulations made by authorities to advance and safeguard education in teaching and learning institutions. Education policy can involve various activities such as policy analysis. Policy analysis as a form of inquiry provides a basis on which policy is constructed, and is also concerned about the critical examination of existing policies (cf. 1.7.2.3). Policy analysis embarks on an explanation of the causes and consequences of why governments do what they do (Simons *et al.*, 2009; Codd, 1988; Hanekom, 1991), to a more complex analysis of "the relationship between elements contained in the text, and how the text is responding to the specific context" (Samuel, 2017:138). To realise the main aim of this study (cf. 1.3.4), I undertook an analysis of Lesotho education policies to determine whether they allude to or are in support of a sense of communitarian belonging. Lesotho Constitution 1993, as it is fundamental law that contains basic laws and principles with which all other laws must be consistent with (cf. 5.2.1.1). Lesotho Vision 2020 was also analysed as it outlines and explains comprehensive aspects and strategies that maps what the country would like to reach over a certain period of time (cf. 5.2.1.2). Lesotho Education Act 2010 was also analysed because it explains matters pertaining to education (cf. 5.2.2.1). as the study aims to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging, there was a need to analyse Curriculum and Assessment policy 2009 because it is the recent reform that is aimed to change the primary and secondary curricular. The analysis of thereof would help to determine the course of

study Lesotho education system envisions. Given the focus of this study, and accepting policy analysis as an important aspect of education policy studies (cf. 1.7.2.3), I argue that this study can be demarcated to policy studies in education.

## **1.11 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

In pursuit of the research aim, this study unfolds in six chapters that follow a logical sequence.

While Chapter 1 deals with the general orientation of the study, Chapter 2 aligns with the first research objective, namely to conceptualise place in relation to a sense of belonging (cf. 1.3.1). To realise this objective, I undertook a literature review with the aim to gain insight into different perspectives on these concepts. I was particularly interested to establish potential connections between place and a sense of belonging.

In Chapter 3, I draw on my conceptualised understanding of place as a sense of belonging, and reconsider the latter through an African perspective on communitarianism (cf. 1.3.2). In this chapter, I draw on literature to foreground notions of communitarianism in general and more in particular, as perceived from an African perspective. Based on an understanding of African communitarianism, I reconceptualise belonging as a sense of communitarian belonging.

To consider the implications of education for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging (cf. 1.3.3), I draw on my understanding developed in Chapters 2 and 3. Complemented by literature, I critically consider my conceptualisation of a sense of communitarian belonging to derive consequences for the development of a sense communitarian belonging in Chapter 4.

In Chapter 5, the study focuses on the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging (cf. 1.3.4). Education-related documents were analysed to obtain information that assisted me to establish the potential of Lesotho education policies for education, framed from the community spaces in which students live, to inculcate moral values couched from an African communitarianism perspective, and provide skills and dispositions that would provide students with

survival skills. In this regard, two education policies were analysed through the use of themes adopted from the literature review and the policy document. Although the emphasis in this chapter is placed on a sense of communitarian belonging in relation to immediate communities and the country at large, I also give cognisance to Lesotho's position in relation to global declarations, and their subsequent influence on Lesotho education policies.

The study concludes with Chapter 6 in which I comment on my research findings and make suggestions regarding the potential of Lesotho education policies for the development of a sense communitarian belonging.

## **1.12 SUMMARY**

In this chapter, I presented a brief overview of my study. To contextualise the study, I first explored what place as a phenomenon entail. Place was conceptualised in relation to a sense of space and a sense of belonging. It was further grounded within an African communitarian perspective. Following from an exposition of my research interest, the research aim was foregrounded as an exploration of the potential of Lesotho education policies for the development of communitarian belonging. Premised on the philosophical assumptions associated with the transformative paradigm (cf.1.6), this qualitative study aimed to achieve the main research aim through the pursuit of various objectives. A conceptual framework was constructed through an in-depth review of relevant literature to serve as a guide for the study. In pursuit of the research's aim (cf. 1.3), document analysis and policy analysis were identified to generate data.

In the next chapter, I report on a literature review to conceptualise place in relation to a sense of belonging.



## **CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUALISATION OF PLACE IN RELATION TO A SENSE OF BELONGING**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

As indicated, Lesotho education still carries the remnants of colonial education, and to some extent, the education system is disconnected from the students and the community spaces in which they live (cf. 1.2 and 1.6). Regarding education as a vehicle for social-economic development, it became imperative for MoET to enact education policies to enable students to connect with community life to which they have to contribute meaningfully. To explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging, I need to obtain a comprehensive understanding of what constitutes the relationship between place and a sense of belonging. The objective of this chapter was subsequently to conceptualise place in relation to a sense of belonging. It was my contention that the conceptualisation of place and a sense of belonging would serve as the first step in constructing the conceptual framework that would inform this study. As such, this chapter can be perceived as a prerequisite for the reconceptualisation of place and a sense of belonging from an African communitarian perspective (cf. Chapter 3).

In this chapter, I conducted a literature review to first conceptualise place by identifying and describing dimensions of place. To strengthen my understanding of place from different lenses, I explain different theories of place and the factors that influence a sense of place. I also discuss a sense of place in relation to the factors influencing a sense of place. I conclude this chapter by conceptualising a sense of place in relation to a sense of belonging.

### **2.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF PLACE**

Although the concept 'place' is commonly used, its meaning can be slippery and elusive (Saar & Palang, 2009; Cresswell, 2011; Koushik 2016). As noted by Vanclay (2008; Ardoin, 2006; Semken & Brandt, 2010; Gruenewald, 2003a), the concept

straddles fields such as anthropology, environmental education, geography, sociology, psychology and architecture, and has subsequently acquired different meanings. While Koushik (2016:5) explains place as a “holistic multidimensional concept”, Malone (2016a:2) refers to place as a theme that has

combined a range of foci such as location, architecture, place attachment, place identity, sense of place and in the arts the production, practice, and performance of place.

The concept place is multidisciplinary in nature and has subsequently acquired numerous definitions.

During the 1960s and the early 1970s, place was understood by early physical geographers as fixed, spatially bound, never changing and never-ending (Cresswell, 2009). A revival in the field of geography in the 1970s and 1980s led to the reconceptualisation of place as vibrant, dynamic and subject to constant change (Agnew 2011; Koushik, 2016; Semken & Brandt, 2010). Although positioned spatially, places do not exist in isolation, but they are interlinked with other places, either locally, regionally or globally (Preston, 2015; Malone, 2016a). As a result of the constant interaction between places and subsequent influences, places are perceived as dynamic and likely to change from their originality.

According to Agnew (2011; Cresswell, 2009), place can be considered in terms of location, locale and sense of place. Location refers to the where of place, in other words its exact coordinates and geographical location (Agnew 2011; Cresswell, 2009). In addition to location, place can also be conceptualised in relation to its surroundings. Tangible aspects of a place, such as buildings, streets and parks constitute the material setting of a place (Cresswell, 2009; Agnew 2011; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). However, as noted by Agnew (2011:23), “the location is not just the mere address but the where of social life and environmental transformation”. A geographical understanding of place cannot be divorced from the physical attributes which give a place life - interactions occur and social relations are built between the habitants of place. The latter refers to locale as the settings where everyday life activities take

place (Agnew, 2011; Koushik, 2016). It is an understanding of place as location and locale that leads to the development of a sense of place. A sense of place refers to the meanings and emotions induced by a place (Cresswell, 2009; Semken & Brandt, 2010; Kudryavtsev, Stedman & Krasny, 2012). A sense of place emerges from the connection between people and the environment they inhabit, and by implication, a sense of place is grounded on the personal feelings, tastes and opinions of an individual towards a place.

The concept of place is multidimensional in nature, and a myriad definition have been attributed to it. To further foreground the slippery nature of the concept, I now refer to Gruenewald's (2003a) different dimensions of place.

## **2.2.1 DIMENSIONS OF PLACE**

Due to the multidimensional nature of the concept place, it cannot be integrated under one dimension. Yuval-Davis (2006) notes that place is relational, cultural, historical and geographical. Given its multidisciplinary nature, it was imperative to explore the concept from different dimensions to obtain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of place. In the subsequent section, I give a brief overview of Gruenewald's (2003a) exposition of the ecological, ecological feminist, perceptual, sociological, ideological and political dimensions of place.

### **2.2.1.1 Ecological Dimension**

Place is the broad physical spectrum in which life exists. Humans are not the only inhabitants of place, but they cohabit the place with the biophysical world. Within a place, there exists an interrelatedness and interconnectedness of humans with the natural environment (Kruger *et al.*, 2020; Behrens; 2014, Koushik, 2016). Gruenewald (2003a:6) describes place as an "ecology of reciprocal, interdependent relationships between bodies and forms". The ecological dimension of place subsequently acknowledges that humans and the more-than-human world are entangled because they co-habit the place. Although an ecological dimension of place foregrounds the dependence of the human and the more-than-human world on each other, an

anthropocentric positioning of humans in relation to the environment has led to a disharmonious relationship that is valued insofar as it benefits humans (Eze, 2017; Gruenewald 2003a). Kruger *et al.*, (2020:3) inform that

the normalisation of these hierarchised relationships constitutes a logic of domination, which reproduces itself inter-generationally as the organising force of communities while material wealth remains in the hands of a minority, social majorities are impoverished as their ability to make decisions that impact on their well-being is eroded.

Such an anthropocentric orientation has led to overconsumption, the depletion of the natural resources and ecological degradation. Lorio *et al.* (2017:2) lament that a

human-induced state of the environment is evidence of the lack of connection between humans and the earth, calling for a rethinking of the relationships between humans and the planet.

To sustain natural resources for future generations, there is a need for strengthening the ecological dimensions of place by encouraging local inhabitants to apply their local knowledge in taking care of their environment. This calls for a bioregional understanding of place as

a comprehensive way of defining and understanding the place where we live, in the aim to live in that place sustainably and respectfully (Wahl, 2017:1; Gruenewald 2003a).

Bioregionalism is concerned with living in the local place and finding ways of reconnecting humans with the biophysical world to ensure its sustainability. As such, bioregionalism will serve as the compass point to reconnecting people with their land, nature and institutions (Ghai, 2018).

According Gruenewald (2003a:8), ecological philosophers are of the view that “although as human beings we cannot make a blade of grass, we might not have any grass at all unless it is acknowledged and cared for by us”. By implication, humans are responsible for ensuring the sustainability of the non-human world by establishing laws which will protect them. An ecological dimension of place highlights the notion of

domination because it recognises that there is hype-separation of the human world from the natural world. This separation has led humans to assume the right to exploit and dominate other creatures.

### **2.2.1.2 Ecofeminism**

Ecofeminism arose from the discourse of domination as a concern with “patterns of both social and environmental domination” (Gruenewald, 2003a:17). Such patterns foreground the relationship between person and place, and it is the anthropocentric positioning of this relationship that led to the emergence of ecological ecofeminism. By recognising the connection between the subordination of women and others, and the subordination of the environment, ecofeminism focuses on the welfare of the more-than-human world, and the unequal relationship between men and women (Kronlid, 2003; Warren, 2000). As such, ecofeminism is rooted in both environmental and feminist ethics. Central to ecofeminism is the recognition of embedded power relations entrenched by the patriarchal society of male domination, and the ongoing marginalisation of women and nature (Gruenewald, 2003a). According to the ecofeminist perception of place, place is conceptualised as an entanglement of humans and the more-than-human world, characterised by the domination of women and the subordination of nature. By implication, ecofeminists advocate for a thorough understanding of such domination and marginalisation, and its subsequent dismantling.

Grounded in the ecological dimension, ecofeminists accentuate the inseparable connection between the human and the more-than-human world, and advocate for the dismantling of any dominant power relations towards the realisation of a sustainable ecological system for all creatures.

### **2.2.1.3 The Perceptual Dimension of Place**

Whereas the ecological dimension of place defines place as the socio-physical setting connecting people and the biophysical world, the perceptual dimension recognises that places become what people make of them (Gruenewald, 2003a). In this sense,

places are the ground of interaction between the inhabitants of a place, be it human or the more-than-human. Through interaction, social relationships are established and a holistic understanding of place is developed. Individuals therefore, “enter into a participatory relationship with other phenomena through the multisensory perception of direct experience, and employ an intuitive mind to draw meaning and add meaning to the environment” (Gruenewald, 2003a:6; Kudryavtsev *et al.*, 2012; Masterson, Stedman, Enqvist, Tengö, Giusti, Wahl & Svedin, 2017). Information obtained through interactions and social relationships is subsequently organised and interpreted to develop a particular perception of a place. It can be accepted that such a perception will inform an understanding how one place is connected to others, and will guide actions towards taking care of the cultural and ecological lives of places. The perceptual dimension of place aims to “reawaken the sensual perception of the animate and inanimate world of human environments” (Gruenewald, 2003a:5). It is through the perceptual dimension of place that people’s sense of perception is awakened to regard humans and the more-than-human world as alive, vibrant and interdependent.

#### **2.2.1.4 The Sociological Dimension of Place**

Places are social constructions, and people attribute meaning to specific places based on their experiences (Semken & Brandt, 2010). According to Gruenewald (2003a:9), place is an “expression of culture and that it represents the outcome of human choices and decisions”. Gruenewald (2003a) acknowledges that the experience of a place is never pre-cultural or pre-social, instead, places are perceived as a product of culture. By implication, places are what people make of them and are therefore a reflection of human actions and decisions. Place is regarded as the focal point of experience and interaction, and constitutes the physical space where culture and people’s identity are interwoven. As noted by Gruenewald (2003a:7), place is where the “world manifests itself to human beings; as centres of experience, places can also be said to hold our culture and even our identity”. As such, place can be regarded as the backdrop against which all social life takes place (Koushik, 2016). The sociological dimension of place refers to the relationship between place, culture and identity, and by implication, to the

way in which the world manifests itself through people's construction of a relationship with place(s). From a sociological point of view, people live in shared places, and their connection and bond to such places portray who they are. As such, place is perceived as "experienced, felt, and sensed ... where (in an ideal world) we feel safe, secure, and loved" (Cresswell, 2009:5).

#### **2.2.1.5 The Ideological Dimension of Place**

Whereas the sociological perception of place does not reflect any implication of power, geographers inspired by Marxists, feminists and poststructuralists developed a critical approach aimed at pointing out the social processes involved in the construction of place (Cresswell, 2009). Even though social processes may seem natural, there are, however, decisions made by the very powerful to serve their own needs (Cresswell, 2009). Critical geographers go beyond acknowledging place as a just an ideal home for the development of a sense of belonging and of place. Instead, the critical geographer is concerned with the way that power has contributed to the construction of a place and the subsequent reproduction of social relationships of power and domination (Gruenewald, 2003a). It is the concern with the reproduction of power that feeds into the ideological dimension of place.

According to Gruenewald (2003a:10), spaces and places "are expressive of ideologies and relationships of power." Space is formed and shaped by historical and natural elements and political process. These determinants of place are dominated by unequal power relations that determine the kind of relationships that characterise a place. Consistent with this idea, Gruenewald (2003a:10) regards space as "always inscribed with politics and ideologies, simultaneously replicates and reproduces social relationships of power and domination". It can be argued that place is a reflection of dominant values and beliefs which are often protected and promoted as way of dictating how humans should relate to physical places. Cresswell (2009; Butz & Eyles, 1997) posits that ideology is rooted in a place and plays a deterministic role in leading to connectedness. Thus, an ideological dimension of place contributes to the formation of spaces aligned with the interests of those who have power to maintain and uphold

their ideology. If an individual does not subscribe to the ideology of a place, his or her sense of place is likely to be compromised. By implication, place “simultaneously reflects and reproduces social relationships of power and domination” (Gruenewald, 2003b:628).

#### **2.2.1.6 The Political Dimension of Place**

A political dimension of place highlights the entanglement of politics and place (Gruenewald, 2003a). By implication, places are a reflection of the dominant political system and the norms, values and laws that legitimise the acquisition and exercise of power. Thus, politics and subsequent domination and marginalisation play a significant role in shaping place (Gruenewald, 2003a). As noted by Malone (2016a:3), place is full of power and symbolism, and is constituted by “a complex web of relations of domination and subordination, of solidarity and co-operation”. In places constructed through the entanglement of power relations, one can expect “the unequal distribution of resources within and across places” (Preston, 2015:3). By implication, a political dimension of place reflects inherent conflicts due to unequal power relations. As a result of such power relations, place becomes a contested space. A political dimension of place advocates for a radical multiculturalism that continually challenges the regimes of perceived and institutionalised forms of oppression and domination. Such advocacy relates to the notion that place is culturally constructed, as culture reflects people’s shared beliefs, values and norms inherent in a place.

In the light of the foregoing exposition, it can be accepted that place is a construct of various dimensions - it is situational, historical, cultural, political, environmental, personal, and social (Ardoin, 2006). Place is also characterised by power and dominance, hence the relationship between humans and humans, and humans and non-humans are characterised by unequal power relations. The different dimensions of place are helpful to understand how place manifests itself in terms of social relations, and the connection between humans and non-humans. Arguably, an understanding of the different dimension could assist in articulating the type of

education that would take cognisance of the interrelatedness and interconnection of humans and the-more-than human world.

As I explored place by looking at different dimensions of how place can be constructed from different attributes, I enhanced my conceptualisation of place by referring to different theories of place.

## **2.3 THEORIES OF PLACE**

In this section, I discuss different theories of place. It is my contention that different theories might be helpful in providing an organised set of lenses through which aspects or parts of place can be understood and analysed. In my attempt to further my understanding of place, I discuss post-humanism, spatial theory, assemblage theory and the new materialistic turn.

### **2.3.1 POST-HUMANISM**

Post-humanism came into being because of the dissatisfaction with the anthropocentric tendency of humanism of positioning human beings as superior over other entities (Bolter, 2016). By implication, a humanistic approach regards human beings as invested with the rational ability to decide on behalf of other species. In line with the above, Peters (2020:5) defines humanism as a “philosophical doctrine that places the highest ethical value on human beings and their agential status”. Framed within a Western philosophical context, a human being in relation to the environment hold moral rights and the non-human is valued insofar as it could be used to the benefit of humans. This means that plants and animals can be appropriated, abused, and exploited at our [human] will (Eze, 2017:2).

It is against this backdrop that post-humanism advances the disruption of the assumed exceptional position of humans. A post-humanist approach intends to shift the focus to entities that were and/or are still marginalised by an institutionalised anthropocentric positioning of nature (Zembylas, 2018). Malone (2016a; Bayley, 2018), is of the view that post-humanism developed because it intended to dismantle the divide between

humans and other entities. In taking a similar stance, Zembylas (2018:2) avers that a post-human approach

decentres the human and dismantles humanism, suspending and collapsing the binary distinctions between human and non-human entities (e.g. animals, plants, environment, technologies etc.).

Post-humanism subsequently advocates for the strengthening of the interconnection with other beings such as non-humans, and aims to disrupt anthropocentric views by considering new ways to engage with the more-than-human world (Malone, 2016b).

As noted by Lorio *et al.* (2017; Stedman, 2008), we exist because of our embeddedness within systems of links between humans and non-humans. Humans are an integral part of the cosmic life, and are therefore expected to relate well with other entities by developing a moral ethic towards them. Thus, humans as rational beings are responsible for ensuring the sustainability of the biophysical world. According to Behrens (2014; Kruger *et al.*, 2020), moral consideration is not only reserved for human beings, but should also be extended to the more-than-human world. By implication, each entity has a role to play in ensuring the sustainability of the ecosystem. Post-humanists therefore aim to bring social justice for the benefit of the entire ecosystem.

### **2.3.2 SPATIAL THEORY**

The conceptions of time and space are very important for understanding the role of phenomena in the natural world. Spatial theory is framed within the relationship between time and space. As noted by Malone (2016a:4), “place is often theorised as having both elements of order and chaos”. All spatial locations can, in principle, be explained in time. Whereas the presence of order and place leads to a rapid series of changes in a geographic area, the arrangement of a phenomenon in space is attributed to the events occurring at any given time. Order is of fundamental value in understanding place, because it describes how a group or phenomenon is organised on the earth’s surface and interwoven in cosmic space. Chaos comes into existence due to our varied conceptions and perceptions of place (Semken & Brandt, 2010).

Thus, while place develops sets of phenomena which are a result of the inherent perceptions of place, perceptions of place often lead to a displacement and mismatch between sets of phenomena (Malone, 2016b).

According to Cresswell (2009), the spatial science theory is based on the assumption that people are objects rather than subjects. Whereas the spatial science theory regards humans as endowed with rationality, they can use their senses to apprehend or make sense of the world they live in. Perceiving people as objects, this theory is not concerned with how people use their experiences to relate to the world. In this sense, people, as objects, do not develop feelings and thoughts towards a place, and subsequently do not create their own meaning. In this conception of place, there is no relation between the world and the humans. Instead, people are just treated as part of the world (Cresswell, 2009). By implication, if there are no experiences, feelings and thoughts created of a place, that place cannot be known.

### **2.3.3 ASSEMBLAGE THEORY**

Having realised that the spatial arrangements of a phenomenon is due to our inherent understanding of place, there was need for a theory that would advocate for building different parts into one complete entity. The assemblage theory is grounded on the Deleuze-Guattarian conception of ontology or an ethico-political orientation (Fox & Alldred, 2019), and shifts the focus away from an understanding that “matter across the space is conquering distinct and delimited spaces” (Deleuze, 1988:66). Rather, as a non-anthropocentric understanding of place, the assemblage theory does not confirm a single substance, but advocates for an association of humans and non-humans in a space. By implication, the assemblage theory foregrounds collective agency.

The shift from an anthropocentric positioning of the human to an assemblage of all the entities of the world enables engagement in a process of bringing about transformative change (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988). According to Braidotti (2018), the process of becoming calls for the restructuring and recomposing of all phenomena across space.

The bringing together of all matter is relational and open, and produces an effect, or change, within an assemblage. Muller (2015:2) confirms that assemblages are “relational, they are arrangements of different entities linked together to form a new whole”. In other words, an assemblage is a tool that combines different elements together with the purpose of doing something and producing something. Assemblage thinking works toward bringing to order aspects that are coherent and have similar characteristics. As entities are linked together, they produce new territories, organisations, new behaviours, new expressions, new actors and new realities (Muller, 2015; Buchanan, 2015). As noted by Savage (2019:1), within an assemblage, relation constructs comprise heterogeneous and emergent component parts “arranged together towards certain strategic ends in particular spaces and times”. Relationships are established amongst elements as they come together in an assemblage. In the process of becoming, there is movement of matter across the space and might eventually join the territory of another, which in turn, could lead to each unit changing its value and form a new unit. The assemblage theory subsequently moves beyond institutionalised structures to a position of rethinking the rearrangement of matter across space. By implication, the assemblage theory breaks away from the perceived notion that each entity has its own specified space, with limited interaction with other entities. With matter combined on a plane, there are no established hierarchies, hence there’s no defined principle to explain how an assemblage would be planned (Muller, 2015; Braidotti, 2018). Rather, the assemblage theory advocates for all matter combined together to produce one social world which will benefit all entities. Thus, when one element is drawn into the territory of another, change is effected - in a territory, each entity has the capacity to act, affect and be affected. In conceptualising territoriality, Malone, (2016b:12) comprehends it as

intimately related to how humans and nonhumans come to the environment, how they organise themselves in relation to place, and how they come to give meaning through attachment to a place.

According to Buchanan (2015), the assemblage theory is always concerned with questions of power. Fox and Alldred (2018:1) describe power as a

flux of forces or 'affects' fully immanent within events, while resistance is similarly an affective flow in events producing micro-political effects contrary to power or control.

Place is a contested space with "coherent, territorialising and deterritorialising forces" (Malone, 2016a:4) having an influence on the relationships between phenomena. Visibly or invisibly, power penetrates the territories and "resides in the affective flows between relations in assemblages, the aggregations and singularities these flows produce" (Fox & Alldred, 2015:5). Whereas assemblages create territories as they develop and congeal, they constantly transfigure, transform and disintegrate (Muller, 2015). De Landa (2006) explains that the processes of territorialisation and deterritorialisation help to stabilise the identity of the assemblage. Territorialisation is a process that leads to the formation of an assemblage. It involves the ordering of matter across the space, including both human and non-human bodies, and actions and reactions emanating from relations formed from the flows. Relationships amongst the assemblages are subsequently affected, and once there are affects embedded in an assemblage, a process of becoming is enhanced. From the ongoing exposition, it is eminent that the assemblage theory is framed within the notion that places become logical wholes made of parts. Place is subsequently regarded as not fixed, but dynamic due to changing relationships. Even though entities are connected, each of them bears its autonomy and is likely to disconnect when nature calls as such, an assemblage is likely to break up.

### **2.3.4 NEW MATERIALIST TURN**

The new materialist turn emerged as a theory in response to a dominant Euro-Western tradition that perpetuates human agency at the expense of all other matter (Gamble, Hanan & Nail, 2019). New materialism constitutes a move towards a focus on the materiality of humans and non-humans, by advocating for an "entangled and complex materiality of bodies and entities" (Malone, 2016a:4; Shomura, 2017; Martin, 2019). As a key component of lives and worlds, matter is considered as a social production constituted by human actions and non-human forces alike (Fox & Alldred, 2019). By implication, the advocacy for the entanglement of entities includes an understanding

that the human and more-than human world are not confined and detached from each other (Lynch & Mannion, 2021). As such, the conception of all things as “intra-acting with” and “being in the world”, supports a re-configuring of space, time and matter away from humans as the focal point of social inquiry (Shomura, 2017:1; cf. also Martin, 2019; Muller, 2015).

New materialism is characterised by post-humanist and post-anthropocentric approaches aiming to replace the institutionalised conception of human agency (Fox & Alldred, 2018; Lynch & Mannion, 2021). A new materialist ontology is premised on the assumption that human beings form part of the other entities which exist in a place, and do not have superiority as the assumed centre of social inquiry. As aptly noted by Sanzo (2018:1), “post humanism and post anthropocentrism seek a repositioning of the human among nonhuman actants”. By implication, post-humanism and post-anthropocentrism provide “an opportunity for rethinking the position of humans as exceptional and outside of nature” (Clarke & McPhie, 2014:14; Malone, 2016b; Lynch & Mannion, 2021; Fox & Alldred, 2018). The intention is not to regard all of cosmic life as one entity, but to rather explore the effect of each entity on the others. By challenging the favouring of humans over the more-than-human world, the new materialist turn seeks to dislocate the compartmentalisation of space by disrupting the perceived inherent social relations by reconceptualising the notions of space and time (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). The rejection of the distinction between the materiality of the physical world allows for cutting across the perceived dualistic boundaries of the social and natural worlds.

The mission of new materialism is not to describe and explain matter, but to explain how a variety of diverse elements from different facets such as the physical, biological, economic, cultural and other realms may be assembled to produce a phenomenon that may bring social justice. In elaborating on this, Martin (2019:2) explains that the onus of new materialism is to advance what matter does, not what it is. It further explores the relations of matter by focusing on the ways in which these relations are productive. As a social inquiry concerned with providing solutions to the social and

environmental problems, new materialism's advocacy for the inclusion of all entities in the cosmic life enables an understanding of how all the facets of social and cultural processes influence each other. As noted by Fox and Alldred (2016:2), new materialism

assail us on all sides; to make sense of the social world in ways that can offer solutions to social problems; and to try to frame and support activism towards environmental and social justice.

Inclined to complex interactions of matter, new materialism advocates for an assemblage of everything that exists in the world, but decentres human beings as the main players in social activity (Martin, 2019). The focus is rather placed on how assemblages of the animate and inanimate together produce the world (Fox & Alldred, 2015; Martin, 2019). Through the lens of an assemblage perspective, new materialism focuses on how the bringing together of different entities function, and how each affect the other to produce a social world which would bring social justice to all social, economic and environmental ills. The new materialist turn does not only focus on the assemblage of matter, but also on how power circulates through networks (Martin, 2019). Different elements in an assemblage have different abilities to act, affect and be affected (Mannion, 2019), and it should be borne in mind that in the conglomeration of different elements, such elements would perform differently (Clarke & Mcphie, 2020). New materialism subsequently advocates for the repositioning of humans in the social order.

In the light of the foregoing exposition, it could be noted that the entanglement of different entities is not a smooth operation. Such an entanglement requires compromise and mutual understanding, because each entity would have to abandon its independence. In this regard, Barad (2007:x) aptly observes that "to be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another as in the joining of two separate entities, but to lack an independent self-contained existence". The lack of an independent self-contained existence alludes to the notion of agential realism, in which

the primary ontological unit is not independent objects with independently determinate boundaries and properties but rather phenomena that signify the ontological inseparability of each (Barad, 2007:23).

By implication, once the elements are fabricated into one unit and there is intra-action between them, they produce a phenomenon which reflects the whole. As no entity could claim a privileged position, it is necessary to limit human action. New materialism subsequently advances a monist ontology characterised by multiple permutations of matter that are liberated from dominant human superiority (Martin, 2019). Fox and Alldred (2018) suggest that all humans and the more-than-human world have agentic capacities that arise due to the inter/intra-actions with other forms of matter.

In effect, it could be argued that all of these theories are post-humanist critical theories characterised as post-anthropocentric. The common denominator of these theories is the decentring of human agency and a call for the resonance of human and non-humans. Post-human theories regard place as a process of becoming, as they advocate for an assemblage of all matter to produce a world that would bring social justice. In this context, place is not a predetermined space; rather, the continuous rearrangement of phenomena across space reflects place as dynamic and ever-changing. As mentioned, place is in the process of becoming, as it permits the shift from anthropocentric positioning of human beings to a place recognised by the interrelations and interdependence of all entities. It is my contention that the theories on place could be meaningful to draw the attention to attributes that would help fuse humans and non-humans when dealing with implications of education for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging (cf. Chapter 4).

In the next section, I conceptualise a sense of place as the connection that an individual develops towards a place.

## 2.4 CONCEPTUALISING A SENSE OF PLACE

When people interact with their immediate place, they connect meaning to the place and develop an attachment to it (cf. 1.1; 2.2). A sense of place is developed when the place offers security, love and acceptance, and a relationship is subsequently formed between an individual and place. Finding a satisfactory definition of a sense of place from the literature is a challenging task, given that there are various disciplines that contribute to the body of literature (cf. 2.2). A definition is further complicated by the fact that the “relationship between an individual and a place often transcends the physical reality, representing a living force and spirit imbued with value” (Ardoin, as cited in Koushik, 2016:9). As a consequence, various meanings and different concepts associated with the notion of a sense of place contribute to the quality of people’s place attachment and relationships with a place. Concepts associated with a sense of place may include the following: place attachment, topophilia, place dependence, rootedness, dwelling, belonging, genius loci, biophilia, and place identity (Cross, 2001; Najafi & Shariff, 2011:1; Chen, Paulsen & Orum, 2018).

In general, it is accepted that people connect to a place through their feelings and emotions (Kudryavtsev *et al.*, 2012). When the development of a bond to a place follows from its ability to satisfy people’s needs, place attachment is enhanced. Najafi and Shariff (2011:2) explain *topophilia* as a “love of place”. For Malone (2016a:2), topophilia is the “affective bond between people and place and argued that people come to know the world through places”. As responses to the environment are determined by whether a place is appealing, tangible and captures one’s emotions, the affective bond can differ in intensity, subtlety and mode of expression (Cross, 2001).

Kolodziejski (2014) writes that *place dependence* is mainly used in sociology and studies of natural resources. According to Kudryavtsev *et al.* (2012), place dependence is when an individual depends on a place for its ability to satisfy his or her needs. Thus, place dependence is conditional because it only surfaces when a place provides the activities and services that would enable a person to fulfil his or her

goals. As noted by Najafi & Shariff (2011), people depend on a place only when it is meaningful and significant to them. In contrast to place dependency, *rootedness* is perceived as a strong community attachment (Cross, 2001). When people develop a strong attachment to their place of residence, rootedness implies a feeling of being at home. Rootedness is unconsciously earned with the passage of time through interaction, residence and accumulated experiences.

A *dwelling* is used in phenomenological studies or disciplines (Kolodziejcki, 2014:31), and refers to the “location for place dwellers to connect to the real, material geographies of place and with the imagined, symbolic geographies of space” (Malone 2016a:3). Dwellers spend a great deal of their time to develop meaning and eventually develop an attachment to a place. A dwelling is where people develop their own culture, which contributes to their own identity manifested through the values and principles they uphold. Values and principles define a community which dwells in a particular place, and “places could then become the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood” (Malone, 2016a:3).

As noted by Lampinen, Konu, Kettunen and Suutala (2018), *belonging* is a notion commonly used in the psychological and sociological realms. According to Chakraborty (2020), belonging is an emotional connection manifested through intrapersonal and interpersonal connection to a place. This concept will further be elaborated on as the chapter unfolds (cf. 2.5).

*Placelessness*, as noted by Cross (2001:13), is “characterised by a lack of place-based identification and a lack of emotional attachments to particular places.” Places characterised by this aspect are regarded as insignificant, as they have lost their cultural identity or uniqueness. This may be attributed to emerging trends and changes. “Due to modernity, post modernity, globalization and the information society, the role of space and places in contemporary society is currently undergoing fundamental changes” (Najafi & Shariff, 2011:6). In the context of placelessness, people feel as if one place is no different to the next because they do not have any

emotional connection to it. When a place no longer carries any meaning for people, they will not connect themselves to the place and experience a sense of home.

## **2.4.1 COMPONENTS OF SENSE OF PLACE: PLACE ATTACHMENT AND PLACE MEANING**

A sense of place consists of place meaning and place attachment (Kudryavtsev *et al.*, 2012; Semken & Brandt, 2010). In the subsequent sections, I give a brief overview of the two components and how they connect with a sense of place.

### **2.4.1.1 Place Meaning**

Place meaning refers to the symbolic meanings attributed to a place, and centres on the meaning that a specific place has for an individual (Kudryavtsev *et al.*, 2012). The meaning attributed to place are derived from the spatial location of a set of phenomena, and cultural or political values. Relph (2007:5) notes that

meanings of places may be rooted in the physical settings and objects and activities, but they are not a property of them – rather they are a property of human intentions and experiences.

Therefore, meaning can be drawn from diverse locations, objects and any other entity(ies) that an individual may interact with. Ardoin (2006) notes that since place meaning is imbued with a myriad of meanings, there may be a mix of reinforcing and contradictory personal experiences. These meanings may express individual interactions with the human, animate and inanimate. Place as a social construct is prone to different meanings, because people in the same physical location are likely to have different perceptions about a place (Adams, Greenwood, Thomashow & Russ, 2016). Place meanings may serve as the reason for place attachment, and depend on the value that people attach to those meanings (Brehm, Eisenhauer & Stedman, 2013; Stedman, 2006). A sense of place is also conceptualised as human interaction with the biophysical environment (Marques, Freeman, Carter & Zari, 2020; Masterson, *et al.*, 2017:3; Adams, 2013). Meaning is subsequently not only developed on the physicality of a place, but is extended beyond ecological, biological, social and cultural factors.

#### 2.4.1.2 Place Attachment

Place attachment is a concept derived from the field of psychology, and although it has proliferated to other disciplines, it integrates the “physical, perceptual, psychological and the socio-cultural dimension of place” (Najafi & Shariff, 2011:6; Kudryavtsev *et al.*, 2012; Cross, 2001). Place attachment is obtained through a holistic engagement of the mind and body. Taking a similar stance, Lestari and Sumabrata (2018:3) emphasise that place attachment is an “integrated concept that encompasses different patterns of association (affective, cognitive and behaviour), places, actors and social relationships (individuals, groups and cultures)” where all the senses are employed to derive meaning.

Kudryavtsev *et al.* (2012:6) write that a sense of place, thus including place attachment and place meaning, can be expressed for various types of places to operationalise a sense of place. Place attachment is an emotional connection between individuals or groups, and their environment (Masterson *et al.*, 2017; Adams *et al.*, 2016; Chen *et al.*, 2018). In the same vein, Khaled (2017:4) explains place attachment as “people’s emotional attachments not only to physical setting, but also to the people and lifestyles of people that those settings support”. Place attachment subsequently explains the extent to which a place is important to people, including their reasons for establishing a connection to it. As aptly explained by Pretty, Chipuer and Bramston (2003:5), place identity is a “self-definitional attitude towards a place”. Whereas place identity is subject to the life experiences accumulated by the individual, it also entails a cognitive and emotional connection to an environment, as it is evaluative in nature (Escalera-Reyes, 2020; Masterson *et al.*, 2017). Place attachment is inclusive of both place identity and place dependency (Kudryavtsev *et al.*, 2012).

An attachment to a place is regarded as a multidimensional concept, and Figure 2.1 illustrates Scannel and Gifford’s (2010:2) understanding of place attachment as a three-legged framework.

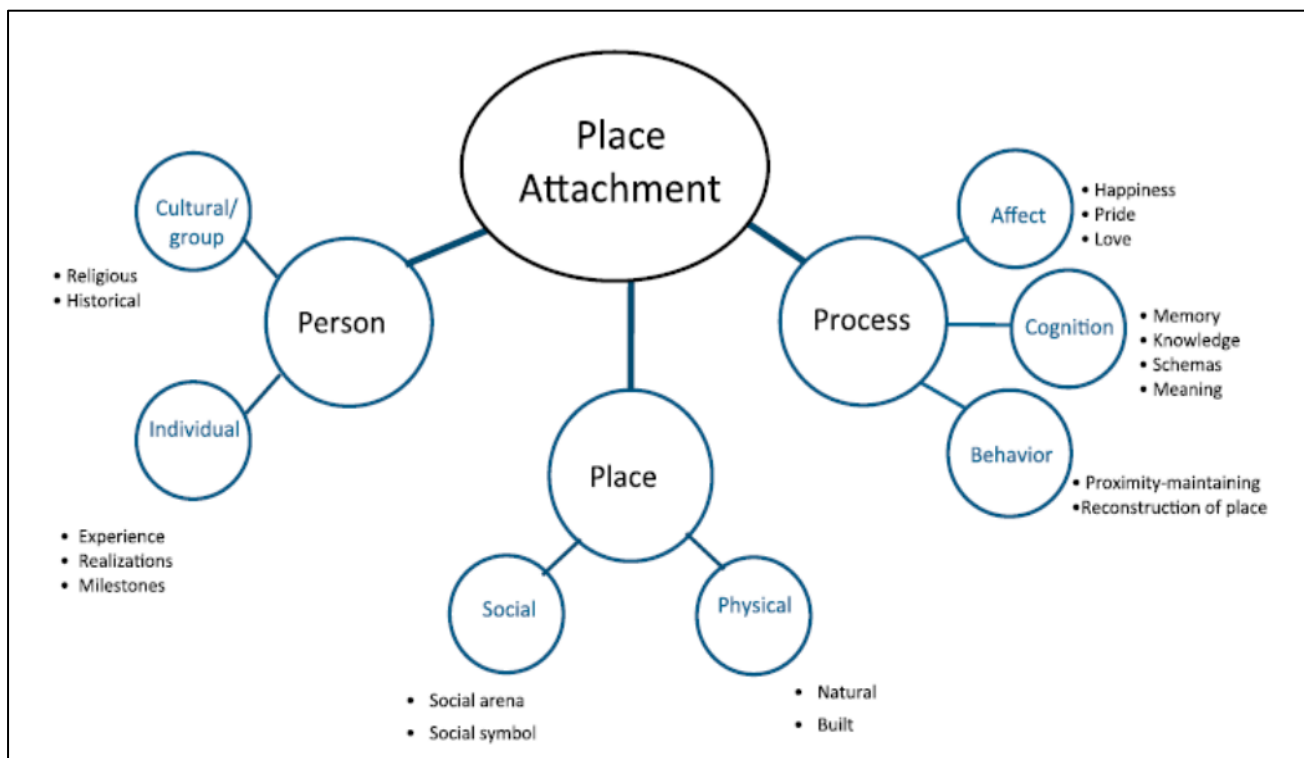


Figure 2.1: Three-Dimensional Model of Place Attachment

Place attachment occurs at both the individual and group levels (Scannel & Gifford 2010; Saar & Palang, 2009; Najafi & Shariff, 2011; Low & Altman, 1992). At the individual level, it involves personal connections with a specific place (Scannel & Gifford 2010). The personal connection to a place is deeply rooted and intensified, and may be attributed to memories that the place holds for the individual. Meaningful contributions made by a place to individual personal growth, and experience-in-place that creates meaning (Najafi & Shariff, 2011; Manzo, 2005). At group level, place attachment is reflected in different cultures, genders, and religions, and comprise of representative meanings of a place that are shared among members (Saar & Palang, 2009; Scannel & Gifford 2010). Najafi & Shariff (2011) notes that place attachment may be culturally based when a bond with cultural practices and sites is formed.

Place attachment as a process encompasses “affective, cognitive and behavioural changes” (Scannel & Gifford, 2010:3; Lestari & Sumabrata, 2018:3). An affective bond is illustrated by the love, happiness and pride one develops for a place as needs are

satisfied (Najafi & Shariff, 2011). A cognitive structure encompasses the “construction of, and bonding to, place meaning, as well as the cognitions that facilitate closeness to a place” (cf. Scannel & Gifford, 2010:3). Such a construction is achieved through memory, knowledge and perceptions about a place, and when the meaning of a place is generated and linked to the self. The behavioural dimension of place is expressed through action. People who have created an emotional bond to a place, develop close ties to it and usually and live close by or regularly visit the area. Najafi & Shariff (2011:4) highlight that “besides the feelings people have about a place, they hold certain beliefs or memories about it, and act certain ways in places”. Thus, place attachment influences how people behave or act towards a place.

The third dimension of place attachment is the place itself, which constitutes social and physical attachments (Scannel & Gifford, 2010:4; Lestari & Sumabrata, 2018). The social attachment to a place is attributed to the social relationships that an individual forms with neighbours and surrounding people (Lestari & Sumabrata, 2018). Physical attachment is attributed to the landforms, water, air and ecosystems (Semken & Brandt, 2010) in the area. Because people cohabit a place with non-humans, they both directly or indirectly interact and form relationships (Kudryavtsev *et al.*, 2012). Stedman (2008) claims that the physical environment and its characteristics contribute to the development of a sense of place. The meaning developed from physical characteristics strengthens both place attachment and satisfaction (Manzo, 2005).

#### **2.4.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING A SENSE OF PLACE**

According to Kudryavtsev *et al.* (2012:9), place attachment is

developed through direct experiences with places, especially long-term, frequent, and positive experiences and learning about places and from indirect sources rather than direct contact.

As place attachment describes an individual’s emotional bond to a place, it subsequently feeds into the development of a sense of place. Factors such as place

satisfaction, place preference and activities, and alienation can influence the development of an attachment to and a sense of place.

Place satisfaction emanates from an individual's or collective's direct or indirect experiences with a place and the subsequent relationship with a place as a consequence of the latter being able to satisfy particular needs (Masterson *et al.*, 2017; Najafi & Shariff, 2011). Place satisfaction develops over a short or longer period of time. Also, the preference of a place contributes to an attachment to a place (Najafi & Shariff, 2011). Attachment develops when a particular setting provides meaning, characteristics or attributes which an individual has grown fond of. Physical and man-made aspects of the land, people's work, places where time is spent and leisure activities may feed into the development of place attachment. According to Yazdanfar, Heidari and Nekooimehr (2013), activities may connect humans to a place, which in turn, could lead to place attachment. In addition, the place itself with its physical characteristics, can influence people to develop their own sense of place attachment (Najafi & Shariff, 2011). Physical characteristics are outstanding features, and based on this, people can immediately form their own perceptions on whether they can positively or negatively relate to a place.

Alienation is both a sociological and psychological condition that embodies the feeling of displacement and an inability to develop a sense of belonging (Parra & Jover, 2020). For Elmore (2014), a sense of belonging is curtailed when a person is alienated from nature and culture, when these seem remote and unattainable. When the space an individual occupies generates negative experiences, the negative side of place identity and attachment is created. Alienation from a place can manifest in a number of ways, and seems to involve particular feelings. Barclay (2018) notes that cultural estrangement involves feeling removed from established values, whereas a sense of meaninglessness creates a feeling of no purpose. Normlessness relates to a feeling of being disconnected from social conventions, and powerlessness links with a due belief that one has no effect on outcomes. Self-estrangement, for Barclay (2018),

alludes to a feeling of being out of touch with oneself, thus being unable to form an own identity.

From the above exposition, it can be concluded that a sense of place consists of place meaning and place attachment. Place as a social and physical setting advances the interaction of place and people. As a result, place resonates with the meanings and bonds developed towards a place. Although a sense of place can be defined through various notions, a feeling of being at home seems to be a common characteristic. Such a feeling develops when a place is able to satisfy a person's needs, and when an individual is able to develop meaning and attachment. A sense of place subsequently resonates with a rootedness, which may unconsciously lead to the development of a sense of place and place attachment. The process of developing a sense of belonging incorporates cognitive, affective and behavioural arenas. Various factors influence the development of a sense of place and place attachment. Whereas factors such as place satisfaction, leisure activities, and physical and natural resources have an influence on enhancing a sense of place, various forms of alienation hamper the development of a sense of place.

In the next section, I explore literature on a sense of belonging, and place as a sense of belonging is conceptualised. The aim of this section is to enable me to gain an understanding of how a sense of place can be considered in terms of a sense of belonging (cf. 2.6).

## **2.5 CONCEPTUALISATION OF A SENSE OF BELONGING**

Belonging is perceived as an emotional need to experience a feeling of being at home, thus, a sense of security, care and affection (Escalera-Reyes, 2020; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Antonsich, 2010). OECD (2017:2) aptly articulates a sense of belong in terms of the human desire for “strong social ties and value acceptance, care and support from others”. People long to develop a social bond and connection with others and with their spaces as a way of finding a home to belong. A sense of belonging is a constituted by a feeling of fitting in, feeling safe with one's identity and experiencing a

sense of being valued (Riley, 2019). By implication, a feeling of belonging is realised when an individual feels loved, cared for, accepted, and supported by others in the social sphere. A sense of belonging allows individuals to identify with and feel part of a group. Yuval-Davis (2006:4) regards belonging as “an act of self-identification or identification by others, in a stable, contested or transient way”. Central to a sense of belonging are shared values and aspirations, underpinned by a need for affirmation, friendship, and to be part of the group (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010).

The concept of belonging is broad, and has been defined as relatedness, connectedness, rootedness, sense of community, sense of classroom membership, support, and identification (St-Amand *et al.*, 2017; Allen & Bowles, 2012; Antonsich, 2010; Osterman 2000). A community is relational in nature, and subsequently encompasses the concept of belongingness through a shared emotional bond and a sense of community belonging (Slee, 2019; Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010; Osterman, 2000). A sense of community pertains to a feeling that “members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together” (Osterman, 2000:3). A sense of group membership is accomplished when some individuals join a group with the same common character traits and “are differentiated from other groups through the development of shared feelings of belonging and attachment” (Escalera-Reyes, 2020:3). People desire to develop relationships with others, and once they feel that the group realises their needs, they develop a bond to that group, and a sense of belonging is enhanced (Dunleavy & Burke, 2019; St-Amand *et al.*, 2017; Osterman, 2000; Goodenow, 1993). Although belonging is personal, intimate, and existential, group life and feeling part of a community have a significant impact on well-being (Allen & Bowles, 2012). From the on-going exposition, it seems that a sense of belonging develops when individuals share a social position in a socially and politically constructed and structured community.

Belonging is both spatial and temporal. as it relates to the place where social locations and positionalities are manifested (Anthias, 2018; Youkhana, 2015; Antonsich, 2010).

Daily activities are performed in different social spaces, and belonging is linked to daily experience, practices and emotions. As such, the notion of belonging is a process of becoming, rather than a status (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Belonging is on-going and keeps on evolving due to global forces which may contribute to the reconstruction of the self. The evolution of the self-highlights that belonging is continuously contested in different social contexts, and are therefore always in the process of becoming (Allen, Kern, Rozek, McInerney & Slavich, 2021; Halse, 2018).

### **2.5.1 ANALYTIC LEVELS ON WHICH BELONGING IS CONSTRUCTED**

Yuval-Davis (2006) refers to different analytical levels on which belonging is constructed, namely the level of social position, identity narratives and the level of ethical and political systems.

On the level of social position, Yuval-Davis (2006) notes that different classifications position people along an axis of power into different categories. Within socially constructed locations, belonging is “constructed and negotiated along multiple axes of difference, such as class, race, gender, stage in life cycle, sexuality, and ability” (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 4). Whereas people identify with different categories in which they belong, these categories and social divisions should not be regarded as isolated from each other but as constituting each other (cf. Yuval-Davis, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Anthias, 2008; Youkhana, 2015). In recognition of the intersectionality of these categories, belonging becomes multidimensional as it interconnects different social sections (Youkhana, 2015, Anthias, 2018). Social divisions affect people differently, depending on social power relations and the subsequent hierarchical positions that locate people. Due to a network of power relations and social positioning, social divisions shape people’s lives. The navigation of a sense of belonging requires the acknowledgment of power struggles and the recognition of social power axes (cf. Yuval-Davis, 2006).

According to Yuval-Davis (2006:7), “[i]dentities are narratives, stories people tell themselves and others about who they are (and who they are not)”. One way in which

people can identify and have an emotional attachment with a place is through the stories they tell. Whereas cognitive narrations are central to the construction of belonging, emotional attachments are constructed through the experiences people develop towards a place. Stories enhance belonging, especially when they relate to the self or any other perceptions a person holds. Whilst identity construction contributes to the process of belonging, the latter is always furnished with narratives of identity (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Identity narratives can shift and change, they are multiple and contested, and as a consequence, the development of a sense of belonging remains a continuing process.

Ethical and political value systems look at the “way in which social locations and constructions of individuals and collective identities and attachments are valued and judged” (Yuval-Davis, 2006:8). Thus, any social division or any social category, including individual identities and attachments, are always in constant evaluation. Due to the permanent presence of unequal power relations, there is a need to assess and determine the influence of such relations on the development of a sense of belonging. The role of a power network in the construction of a sense of belonging foregrounds the need to explore belonging as a discursive resource.

### **2.5.2 POLITICS OF BELONGING**

Antonsich (2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2011) synthesises belonging as a concept ranging from a personal feeling, affiliation and development of a sense of belonging, to a certain group, place, or social location or categorisation, to a means to draw social demarcations and establish border regimes. Antonsich (2010:13) further avers that “[e]very politics of belonging involves two opposite sides: the side which claims belonging and the side which has the power of ‘granting’ belonging”. In this sense, belonging is perceived as a discursive resource that constructs, claims, justifies or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion or exclusion. Yuval-Davis (2006:10) aptly articulates that “[t]he politics of belonging involves the maintenance and reproduction of the boundaries of the community of belonging by the hegemonic political powers”.

The politics of belonging is therefore the basis for contestations, struggles, resistance and negotiations.

The politics of belonging are concerned with boundaries, not necessarily a physical geographical demarcation, but rather a socio-political demarcation which separates people. The boundaries of interest can include “the boundaries of the political community of belonging, the boundaries which, sometimes physically, but always symbolically, separate the world population into ‘us’ and ‘them’” (Yuval-Davis, 2011:6). Whereas boundaries are created by exercising power, boundaries promote and position whilst determining who belongs and who does not. Claims and attributions of belonging are characterised by struggle and contestation in the community (Anthias, 2018). Contestations, struggles and negotiations inform people’s affective placement in terms of what they share with others.

The politics of belonging strongly determines who is eligible to belong and what belonging entails. As noted by Pollini (2005:8), “a person’s role as a member of the collectivity entails acknowledgement and internalisation by the individual personality of the symbolic complex”. Individuals resume socially constructed duties through identifying with a group. I agree with Yuval-Davis (2007; 2006) that the identification of self and of the other plays an important role in constructing a binary division between those who belong and those who do not belong. In addition, whereas people are situated or positioned to be members of a group, their membership is further determined in relation to issues of status and entitlement. The politics of belonging are subsequently clouded by power struggles, inclusions and exclusions.

### **2.5.3 FACTORS INFLUENCING A SENSE OF BELONGING**

A sense of belonging is influenced by auto-biographical, relational, cultural, economic and legal factors. As noted by Yuval-Davis (2006), belonging is a dynamic concept shaped by relational, cultural, historic, geographic and contextual factors. All these factors contribute to the development of a sense of belonging.

Belonging develops from daily practices and experiences (Yuval-Davis, 2006). A sense of belonging is enhanced through *auto-biographical factors* that constitute individual encounters with the place where relationships and memories are formed. The place where an individual was born and raised creates memories, and assists the individual in developing emotional and intimate feelings towards a place.

*Relational factors* refer to the bond between an individual, friends and family members. As noted by Antonsich (2010), personal and social relationships enrich the life of an individual in a given place. Relational factors may be long-lasting only if they are positive, stable and if there is affective gain. Whereas continued interaction and occasional interaction may contribute to strong ties, weak ties may result from relationships that do not matter, and would therefore not contribute to a sense of connectedness (Buonfino & Thomson, 2007).

A sense of belonging can be attributed to shared commonalities that are inclusive of *culture*, traditions and beliefs (Anthias, 2018; Yuval-Davis, 2006). People in a collective are likely to identify with shared values and beliefs. Cultural factors resonate with autobiographical spheres, and an emotional feeling can, for example, be expressed through an attachment to and identification with other forms of culture such as language (Anthias, 2018). A sense of community can further be generated when an individual uses a language that can be understood by those who share the same semiotic universe (Antonisch, 2010). However, cultural factors such as language can contribute to the demarcation between the 'we' from the 'them' (Yuval-Davis, 2011; Anthias, 2018). By implication, language forms boundaries because it constitutes an identity of different locations.

Antonisch (2010: 10) notes that *economic factors* play an important role in creating "a safe and stable material condition for the individual and her/his family". People would develop a sense of place once the latter is able to satisfy their economic needs. A strong sense of belonging would thus be realised if people are engaged and feel integrated in the economic activities of the place, which is able to respond to their

needs. An individual who feels connected and embedded in the economic sphere of a place, will feel the need to contribute towards sustainable economic development.

Citizenship is perceived as an essential *legal factor* in producing security, which in turn, is a vital dimension of belonging. When an individual formally belongs to a place, his or her rights are respected and this constitutes a condition for effective participation (Antonisch, 2010). Legal factors and individual identity are intended to give an individual a sense of protection, and would therefore trickle down to a sense of belonging.

From the foregoing exposition it is clear that belonging is a personal and intimate feeling that constitutes an emotional attachment towards a place. Belonging is situated in reference to collective identities where there are shared commonalities such as culture, ethnicity, citizenship and race. Belonging, as a multidimensional concept, extends beyond the construction of individual and collective identities to the attachments that people form, and to ethical and political values. These ethical and political values determine and judge social locations and individuals' identification with and emotional attachments to various collectives and groupings. It was noted that belonging is dynamic, and as one longs to fit in, there are constant struggles, contestations, negotiations, exclusions and inclusions embedded in a place. Due to inherent power relations in a social location, people belong to socially constructed social locations and subsequent boundaries. These boundaries constitute the separation of society into us and them, whilst also determining who belongs and who does not. Although various factors can contribute towards the development of a sense of belonging, the process of belonging is a process of becoming – always dynamic and changing.

## **2.6 CONCEPTUALISATION OF PLACE AS SENSE OF BELONGING**

Place is where action takes place and is therefore an appropriate point of departure for the interaction between humans and non-humans (Butler & Sinclair, 2020; Koushik, 2016; Cresswell, 2004). Place foregrounds a web of life that incorporates the human

and the more-than-human world, and advances interrelatedness and interdependent relationships (Behrens, 2014). The interconnection between humans and the more-than-human world constitutes dependency on each other for survival. Place is where life exists because there are daily activities, and such activities can enable the development of a connection or belonging to a place. As belonging is both spatial and temporal, it relates to the place where social locations and positionalities are embedded. Place can therefore be conceptualised as a sense of belonging because it advances the connection between place and people. Through their experiences of and a development of meaning towards a place, people establish a bond to a place. Place as a sense of belonging is therefore relational in nature (cf. 2.5). Whereas a sense of place is explained as a longing to fit in a place, a sense of place attachment is strongly entangled with a sense of belonging as both constitutes a feeling of being accepted, valued and respected (cf. 2.4). A personal involvement with a place influences a human being's perception of him- or herself as an indispensable and an integral part of cosmic life. Arguably, place necessitates an identification with place as a safe space, and in this sense, a sense of place and belonging can be perceived as "a central element of the human psyche" (Riley 2019:2) and a "bedrock of human meaning and social relations" foundations of social relationships and human purpose (s; St-Amand *et al.*, 2017). Place and a sense of belonging is intricately linked. Once people feel that they fit in a place, they are able to express in their own words their sense of life's meaning. This enhances a sense of belonging, and people do so better and more effectively than people with a weaker sense of belonging (Lambert, Stillman, Hicks, Kamble, Baumeister & Fincham, 2013). When place enables inhabitants to live an enriched life, a sense of place is generated as a sense of belonging (Gorgul, Luo, Wei & Pei, 2016).

A sense of place also strongly alludes to a sense of belonging in the sense that both relate to the extent to which individuals are rooted in a place (Najafi & Shariff, cf. 2.4). A sense of rootedness is determined by the extent to which a place satisfies an individual's needs, which in turn, enables the development of an affective bond towards a place. Whereas people's memories and experiences convert a place into

an anchor of their identity (Escalera-Reyes, 2020), place identity and place dependence play a prominent role in enhancing a sense of belonging. A sense of place insinuates belonging in the sense that it permits people to connect with their local environment, and enables an appreciation for their own locale. A sense of belonging subsequently cultivates the advancement of responsiveness to a place, and a connection with its social and cultural practices and the environment. An appreciation for the location nurtures the development of caring and responsiveness, and enhances a feeling of belonging. Places are more than just locations, because human attachment linked to a place enables a sense of belonging as an emotional bond. Place is dynamic, characterised by struggles, influenced by the ever-changing world and always in the process of becoming. It is within this context that a meaningful place can be translated into a sense of belonging, whilst the latter enhances the reconstruction of the self within the place (cf. 2.2.1.6; 2.3.3; 2.5). Place as a sense of belonging is a socially constructed characterised by inherent power relations.

While a community is conceptualised as the entanglement of human and non-human elements (Eze, 2017), a sense of community advances the unity of humans, allowing them to feel part of a community. A sense of community constitutes the feeling that a “community exists when its members feel a sense of belonging” (Osterman, 2000). By implication, it could be argued that a sense of community extends beyond human beings to non-humans, as it accentuates the integration of all inhabitants of the ecosystem. Behrens (2014:8) avers that “all things that are part of the interconnected web of life that is all individual living things, groups of living things such as families, species and ecosystems, as well as inanimate natural objects such as rivers and mountains”. Thus, Behrens’ position regards community as relational in nature as it accentuates the connection of human beings with others and the world of nature (Kruger *et al.*, 2020). A sense of community therefore advances *ukama* (interconnectivity) (Le Grange, 2012) as an African communitarian principle, and subsequently alludes to a sense of belonging as an attachment to and self-identification with shared commonalities. While a sense of community relates to a feeling that members of the group matter to one another (Osterman, 2000), their

commitment can be translated to the betterment of their space. A sense of place can be extended to a sense of community, as this permits the engagement of humans with natural processes. A sense of place, thus an attachment to a place, implies that an individual in the location develops an intimate relationship with the cosmic life which encompasses the human and the non-human worlds.

## **2.7 SUMMARY**

The purpose of this chapter was to conceptualise place as a sense of belonging. This was achieved by drawing on literature on place in general and on a sense of belonging in particular. With regards to the conceptualisation of place, I explained the dimensions of place to foreground it as a multidimensional notion that can be understood from different perspectives. From these dimensions, it was noted that unequal power relations between humans and non-humans often result from the centralisation of power, enabling humans to completely take control of and over non-humans. Theories on place provide diverse lenses through which place can be explained and analysed. Following an exposition of the theories of place, it was noted that all the theories are post-humanistic and advocate for a post-anthropocentric view that advances the recognition of the interconnectedness and interrelatedness of all entities. Post-humanistic theories centre on dismantling the perception and conception that human beings are more important than other beings, and advocate for the assemblage of all entities across the space to bring social justice.

The conceptualisation of a sense of belonging foregrounds belonging as an individual's or a collective's emotional attachment or investment in a place. Belonging manifests in a myriad of ways such as connectedness and rootedness. Belonging, as a multidimensional concept, involves the construction of individual and collective identities, attachments people form, and ethical and political values inherent in a place. Yuval-Davis's (2006) analytic framework for the construction of belonging concerns social locations and ethical and political value systems. The politics of belonging refer to the struggles, contestations and negotiations embedded in social division. Due to inherent power relations in a social location, people belong to socially constructed

social locations and concomitant boundaries. The development of a sense of belonging include auto-biographical, relational, cultural and economic factors. Due to these varied factors influencing place, place remains in a process of becoming, as it is constantly influenced by ever changing global forces.

From this chapter, it has become clear that there are connections between place and a sense of belonging. Place, as a sense of belonging, is a social construct which is influenced by constant struggles and negotiations embedded in a location. Whereas life occurs in a place as a location, the creation of a bond towards a place alludes to people's ability to identify with and be depended on the place for the satisfaction of their needs. In addition, and of importance for this study, is the conceptualisation of place as the connection between humans and non-humans. Given the connection between place and the development of a sense of belonging, the latter can be extended to a sense of community, which in turn, strengthens an understanding of the interconnectivity of human beings and non-beings in cosmic life.

In the next chapter, I recontextualise place and a sense of belonging through an African communitarian perspective. It is my contention that such a recontextualisation would be helpful in developing a conceptual framework to consider the implications of education for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging from an African perspective.

## **CHAPTER 3: RECONTEXTUALISING SENSE OF PLACE FROM AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The objective of this chapter is to recontextualise place and a sense of belonging from an African communitarian perspective (cf. 1. 3. 2). It is my assertion that a recontextualisation of place and a sense of belonging could serve as a step towards constructing the conceptual framework for my study. As such, this chapter is perceived as a necessity for considering the implications of education for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging, as discussed in Chapter 4.

In this chapter, I conduct a literature review to recontextualise place and a sense of belonging from an African perspective. I draw on my conceptualised understanding of place as a sense of belonging, and reconsider this from an African communitarian perspective. In considering African communitarianism, I explore the concepts of *ubuntu* and *ukama*. Based on my understanding of African communitarianism developed in this chapter, I recontextualise belonging as a sense of communitarian belonging.

### **3.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF COMMUNITARIANISM**

Communitarianism is often distinguished from classical liberalism (Samuel & Leonard, 2018; Majeed, 2018), a philosophical position that emphasises individual rights over those of the community (Molefe, 2017). Classical liberalism expresses the idea that each individual should articulate the good on his or her own as an isolated individual. The proponents of liberalism are concerned about the centrality of the individual in the community, and that the individual has to formulate the good on his own (Etzioni, 2014). In this section, I discuss communitarianism and will, by implication, foreground how it stands in contrast to liberalism.

My subsequent discussion of communitarianism in a general sense serves as a means to contextualise the discussion that follows on African communitarianism. As noted by Asante (2019:1), communitarianism is a concept derived from the term community. Community is key in understanding communitarianism, and is defined as “a group of persons linked by interpersonal bonds, which are not necessarily biological, who consider themselves primarily as members of a group who share common goals, values and interests” (Asante, 2019:5). Communitarianism is regarded as a world view which defines how people relate to their immediate environment. As noted by Bell (1993:24-25), communitarianism is a

perspective on ethics and political philosophy that emphasises the psychosocial and ethical importance of belonging to communities, and which holds that the possibilities for justifying ethical judgements are determined by the fact that ethical reasoning must proceed within the context of a community’s traditions and cultural understanding.

In recent years, communitarianism has not only been attributed to the social connection of human beings but has been extended to “plants, animals, and other non-living things of our natural habitat” (Samuel Leonard, 2018). This perspective of communitarianism describes the coexistence and interdependence of all humans and non-humans. In drawing on the conceptualisation of community articulated by Asante (2019), communitarianism is a worldview that advocates for a collective being of the community, based on common features that bind all the members of the community together. According to Maqoma (2020; Asante, 2019; Arthur, 2000; Gyekye, 1992), communitarianism is a philosophical stance that considers an individual as inherently embedded in the community. Such a person is regarded as constituted in the community, and Gyekye (1992:104) points out “[t]he fact that a person is born into an existing community suggest a conception of a person as a communitarian being by nature”. Yet, the question of whether the individual supersedes the community or *vice versa*, is an area of debate. Eze (2008), for example, states that the individual and community are contemporaneous and co-constituted. By implication, communitarianism stresses not only the connection between the individual and the

community, but highlights that neither precedes the other, or can exist without the other. A similar understanding is alluded to by Waghid (2002:3), who describes communitarianism as a

thesis about the social construction of the self; that is, the self cannot be understood apart from the social relations in which it is embedded. For communitarians, individuals make up social practices and institutions in which they pursue their aims in collaboration with one another.

By implication, the self-description and identity of an individual is realised through an affiliation to constitutive communities (cf. Maqoma, 2020). Thus, an individual does not come into personhood in isolation, but rather with reference to the immediate community s/he relates to and depends on (Samuel & Leonard, 2018). With regard to this mode of thought, Letseka (2013:3) avers that “no person is considered to be a self-sufficient entity in and for him or herself. Rather, the existence of others is an essential part of the very structure of the self, from which emanates the communitarian exigency”. Thus, an individual is not an isolated entity but inherent in the community in which s/he is born, and as such needs other people to survive. Communitarianism subsequently foregrounds an individual as embedded in the community.

Authoritarian communitarianism, however, emerged to counter the liberalist conceptualisation of the common good and individual rights and responsibilities, as it elevates the notion of the common good to the community over that of the individual (Etzioni, 2014; Rawlings, 2018; Longley, 2021). In the authoritarian version of communitarianism, the individual is expected to find meaning through the contribution that s/he makes towards the flourishing of the community. In rejection of liberalism, which describes the individual as an isolated entity outside the community, the authoritarian perspective on communitarianism seeks to balance the notion of the common good and individual autonomy and rights, which should precede the other (Etzioni, 2014). As noted by Rawlings (2018), there is a need to synthesise individual rights and the common good, as this is understood to be essential for the flourishing

of the individual and the community. Responsive communitarianism advocates for the social fabrication of individual rights, community rights and individual responsibilities.

Communitarianism as a philosophy emphasises the realisation of the common good. As noted by Etzioni (2014:1), the common good denotes “those goods that serve all members of a given community and its institutions, and, as such, includes both goods that serve no identifiable particular group, as well as those that serve members of generations not yet born”. Eze (2008: 389) sees the common good as the “collective pursuit of ends as shared by members of a community is the primary political aim”. Thus, the common good is a normative concept that signifies and uphold the interests of the community. The notion of the common good is represented through consensus. In making decisions for the community, the elders and eligible persons who have accumulated a wealth of experience, wisdom and power, and who possess rich cultural knowledge of the society (Mbele, 2004), are given an equal opportunity to deliberate on a matter. When consensus is reached, the common good would have been obtained. As noted by Majeed (2018:4), an individual has to “act in furtherance of the collective interest of the community”. Thus, when an individual advances the good of the community, s/he is directly or indirectly advancing good. In taking up a similar stance, Kruger *et al.*, (2020:209) are of the view that an “individual’s and community’s flourishing depend on the flourishing of those individuals around her”. Communitarianism advances the creation of the conditions that enable the realisation of the common good, such as the “goodwill, holistic approach, co-operation, consensus, respect of the taboos and totemism, protection and promotion of harmony, cohesion and interdependence” (Samuel & Leonard, 2018:5; Metz, 2020:5).

In this section, I engage with the concept of communitarianism through considering its conceptualisation and provide a brief overview of different notions thereof. Communitarianism advances the connection between the individual and the community. While authoritarian communitarianism seeks to protect the common good of the community over individual autonomy and rights, responsive communitarianism bridges the gap that is perpetuated by liberals and authoritarian communitarians.

Responsive communitarianism recognises that there is a close relation between the individual and the community and as a result, there is a need to synthesise the common good and the individual's autonomy and rights for the flourishing of both the individual and the community. In the next section, I focus on how communitarianism finds expression within the African context to establish the potential contribution of African communitarianism in foregrounding education couched in a sense of communitarian belonging.

### **3.3 CONCEPTUALISATION OF AFRICAN COMMUNITARIANISM**

Having provided a broad description of communitarianism, I now provide an overview of African communitarianism by considering radical communitarianism, moderate communitarianism, and qualified communitarianism. In addition, in my attempt to fully understand communitarianism, concepts associated with African communitarianism such as *ubuntu* and *ukama* are explored. The exploration of the concepts was helpful in conceptualising education in the Lesotho policy context as founded on a sense of communitarian belonging. My exploration of African communitarianism thus enabled me to reconceptualise place and a sense of belonging through an African communitarian perspective, and to reflect on its potential value for education.

According to Metz (2020), African communitarianism is a philosophy which is espoused in indigenous sub-Saharan African countries. Matolino (2018:59) argues that

African communitarianism was not entirely theoretical but was based on the historical appraisal of traditional African communities as well as the desire by politicians resisting western colonialism ... to use these references in their fight against colonialism.

By implication, communitarianism emerged as a decolonising approach against oppressive Western values and practices imposed on African communities. In addition to being used as a means to wage a political struggle against colonialism, as an identity, "communitarian ethos is accessible to Africans as both a lived experience and

something they hold to be good” (Matolino, 2018:60). Thus, communitarianism finds expression as a way of living in African communities. This conception is based on the understanding that African societies are inherently communitarian or communal in nature (Chemhuru, 2018). As articulated by Samuel and Leonard (2018:5), and as based on the work of Gyekye and Menkiti, an individual is “inherently a communal being embedded in a context of social relationships of interdependence”. What is prominent in this understanding of community is that it advances an entanglement of the community and the individual. It is important to note that there are three broad streams in which this entanglement has been conceptualised within African communitarianism. The most salient feature of African communitarianism from the radical point of view, as noted by Molefe (2017:1; Matolino, 2018), is that “the community takes priority over an individual”. By implication, as the community comes first, the individual is expected to conform to the societal organisation, and as a result, an individual is acknowledged only in relation to his/her “environg community” (Menkiti, 1984:1). In pursuit of this conception, African traditional communities “accord individual rights a secondary status while communal concern are accorded a primary status” (Matolino, 2018:60). By implication, from a radical version of African communitarianism, individual rights are not given special consideration, but rather the community’s rights are. This conception of the community’s rights superseding those of the individual has attracted a lot of debate. Yoo (2000:3) observes that there are disputes over this conception since different communitarians have different views of what communitarianism is, of what society or community constitutes, and of in what way society or community is important.

From the moderate account of African communitarianism, both the community and the individual have an equal moral standing, while qualified communitarianism differs from a radical and moderate account of communitarianism because it proposes a framework which regards community and individual rights as compatible, and should be defended as such.

### **3.3.1 DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO AFRICAN COMMUNITARIANISM**

It is clear that African communitarianism is conceived differently by different scholars. Next, I discuss these different notions of communitarianism, namely radical, moderate, and qualified communitarianism.

#### **3.3.1.1 RADICAL COMMUNITARIANISM**

According to Majeed (2018; Molefe, 2017; Maqoma, 2020; Matolino, 2009), radical communitarianism advocates for the community to take priority over the individual. Thus, the interests, well-being, values and goals of the community are supreme, and those of the individual follow. Radical communitarianism is espoused by Menkiti, Mbiti and Mosolo, but can be traced from the work of Placide Tempels (Maqoma, 2020; Ansah & Mensah, 2018; Matolino, 2009). Radical communitarianism upholds the conception that an “individual is naturally a social being who is embedded in the community” (Ansah & Mensah, 2018:2). Although the individual and community are entangled, no individual is self-reliant but needs the community to survive. Consequently, there is an attachment that exists between the individual and the community. As noted by Kruger *et al.* (2020:210), within communitarianism “the position of an individual is understood as the encumbered self”. Although an individual is regarded as the encumbered self, individual rights are not dependent on the rights of the community. From the radical version of communitarianism, individual autonomy is not given the first priority, but is situated or constituted in the community with which an individual is socially integrated. This is attributed to the fact that the self can only be understood within the community that s/he is an integral part of. The key proponents of radical communitarianism opine that this understanding is based on the assumption that “an individual is a person only if she/he belongs to a community and adheres to the rules and rituals of that community” (Maqoma, 2020:3).

The conception of the community is central to communitarianism, and as a result, in a traditional African society, the community is vested with the responsibility to produce and shape individuals according to societal needs (Molefe, 2018; Matolino, 2018; Menkiti, 1984). Menkiti (1984:172) extends this notion by noting that “in the African

view, it is the community which defines the person as person, not some isolated static quality or rationality, will, or memory.” Thus, an individual is defined by the immediate (social) environment s/he is part of. As noted by Maqoma (2020; Majeed, 2018; Ansah & Mensah, 2018), personhood is defined by the community, that is, a person’s existence is derived from the community, and as such, it is the community in which an individual is born that plays a fundamental role in shaping him/her into a person who contributes to the well-being of the community. Furthermore, personhood is attained only if a person subscribes to societal rites of passage and has undergone these. Consistent with this idea, Menkiti (1984) argues that an individual has to be “incorporated ... into a long process of social and ritual transformation”. A community has to take an individual through communally determined rites of passage as a means to mould him/her into a moral person that is entirely assimilated with the community (Menkiti, 1984). In sub-Saharan African societies there were and are social institutions that are enacted to facilitate learning and the attainment of the norms of a society (Maharasoia & Maharasoia, 2004). In essence, personhood has to be achieved. Personhood is not a given, and is attainable only when a person participates in the community’s affairs and feels obligated to participate in them. Arguably, when an individual undergoes rites of passage as per their community’s expectations, s/he is in the process of becoming incorporated and perceived as a responsible person in the community.

From an African perspective, the community is regarded as a “moral entity which moral principles generate and in which individual moral wills and aspirations converge” (Majeed, 2018:11). By implication, a set of morals is developed within a community based on associated cultural practices that is an enactment of people’s lives (Waghid, 2016). From this perspective, the morality accentuated by the community influences one’s personhood, which means there exists a relationship between morality and personhood (Majeed, 2018). Consequently, through a moral obligation that a person has towards his/her community, radical communitarianism endorses an arrangement of control through which there are set values which the members of the community are expected to abide by. Maqoma (2020:3) notes that

Both Mbiti (1970) and Menkiti (1970) aver that in traditional African communities, kinship controls social relationships between people in a given community: it governs marital customs and regulations, and determines the behaviour of one individual towards another. It is in this sense of kinship that binds the community together and also sets the direction of the community.

By Implication, Kinship in an African community is an institution vested with the responsibility to oversee and protect the interests of the community. In essence, kinship binds all the community members, and in return they identify with it as indicative of a sense of belonging. Therefore, these sets of values describe and prescribe how individuals must conduct themselves within a particular community. Consequently, “communal ethics has epistemological and ontological precedence over the reality of individual life” (Menkiti, 1984:3). Personhood is socially constructed due to the norms and values of the community he owes allegiance to, and for Mbiti (1970:171), this conception is advanced by the perception that “I am because we are and since we are, therefore I am”. According to Ansah and Mensah (2018:2), communitarianism is a “theory that emphasises the moral supremacy of the common good - the good of the community as a whole”. By implication, radical communitarianism advocates for the realisation of the well-being of the society as a whole, and the individual is given the social responsibility to protect and promote the common good. Central to this version of communitarianism, the community precedes the individual and as such, the community is vested with the responsibility to mould an individual into a responsible citizen. It upholds the ideology that individual rights are rendered a secondary status. The fundamental perception of radical communitarianism led to the emergence of moderate communitarianism.

### **3.3.1.2 MODERATE COMMUNITARIANISM**

Having discussed radical communitarianism, I now consider what has become known as moderate communitarianism. In drawing on the work of Gyekye (1997), a key proponent of moderate communitarianism, Maqoma (2020) highlights that moderate

communitarianism emerged as a view in contrast to radical communitarianism, which emphasises the predominance of the community over an individual (cf. Metz, 2020; Ansah & Mensah, 2018; Majeed, 2018; Molefe, 2017). Gyekye's (1997) version of communitarianism ascribes equal moral standing to both the community and the individual. He (Gyekye, 1997:49) discards the moral subordination of the individual that radical communitarianism upholds, and opines that the "community is a reality in itself and not as a mere association of individuals". Thus, he ascribes to an equal ontological standing of both the community and the individual, and by implication, an individual is perceived and understood as an integral part of society. The proponents of moderate communitarianism argue that

although the African society is communitarian in character, it accommodates individuality as well: to the extent that not only are the rights of the individual recognised but also, she plays a crucial role in the definition of (her own) personhood. And that African communitarianism is not, thus, unrestricted (Majeed, 2018:3).

It could be argued that moderate communitarianism emerged as a position that advocates for the recognition of an individual's rights and freedoms within the community in which the individual has been born. As noted by Matolino (2009:1), moderate communitarianism "takes full cognisance of the individual's autonomy and her rights." As such, the rights of an individual within the community are recognised, along with the acknowledgement that an individual possesses his/her own rationality that provides freedom and enables the making of choices outside the community. This view is supported by Maqoma (2020:7), who asserts that Gyekye notes that an "individual possesses characteristics of autonomy, freedom and dignity". Arguably, an individual's characteristics must be recognised and respected by the society of which s/he is part. In essence, moderate communitarianism does not only acknowledge the imperative role that the community plays in shaping an individual. Instead, while it recognises that a person has rationality and freedom to make decisions outside of the community, s/he can extend such rationality in shaping the community s/he is part of.

In Gyekye's (1997:45) version of moderate communitarianism, the common good is perceived as

a good that can be said to be commonly, universally, shared by all human individuals a good, the possession of which is essential for the ordinary or basic functioning of the individual in a human society.

Thus, Gyekye perceives the common good as the desirable things needed in pursuit of an individual's goals and aspirations. As a consequence, moderate communitarianism considers the individual's achievements as having the potential to contribute to the development of the community. It does so because moderate communitarianism believes that "individuals make up the community" (Maqoma, 2020:7). For moderate communitarianism, an individual must be allowed "to exercise rational autonomy, and use their freedom to think of new ideas to contribute to the already existing community for the betterment of all individuals" (Maqoma, 2020:7). Subsequently, an individual has to be given an opportunity to use his/her potential for the community to flourish and to "ground [his/her] duties to secure the well-being of all" (Molefe, 2018:5).

Having discussed the above notions of communitarianism, it is observable that the two versions are in conflict, insofar as there exists a difference between how individual and community rights are conceived. Qualified communitarianism rejects the distinction between the priorities of community rights against individual rights, but rather advocates for a view of African communitarianism which sees the rights of the community and the individual as compatible and to be defended as such (Chimakonam, 2018).

### **3.3.1.3 QUALIFIED COMMUNITARIANISM**

According to Chimakonam (2018:122), while western logic fails to situate autonomy and rights within the radical version of communitarianism, there is a need to shift to an African logic, which defends individual autonomy and rights within a qualified version of communitarianism. Chimakonam (2018:122) alludes that

an African logic can be used to ground a qualified version of communitarianism in order to bring out an important African cultural value such as complementarity which affirms the identity of the individual first, so as to justify of the communal values such as solidarity and common good ... Qualified version is the correct specimen for analysing the individual-community relationship in African philosophy in which autonomy and rights can be defended.

The quest for the need to frame individual autonomy and rights is imperative because the “individual is the index that makes the community and everything that characterises it” (Chimakonam, 2018:123). The community and the individual are inalienable; therefore it is essential to advocate for a version of communitarianism that acknowledges that the individual and the community, and complement each other. Qualified African communitarianism is a theory proposed by Matolino and Eze. Eze (2008) proposes a realist perspectivism, while Matolino (2018) proposes limited communitarianism (Chimakonam, 2018) as a way of envisioning their particular versions of qualified communitarianism.

In rejection of the dominant view of some African scholars on the primacy of the community over the individual, Eze (2008:386) proposes realist perspectivism to “re-present African Communitarianism as a discursive formation between the individual and community”. In pursuit of his conception of African communitarianism, Eze (2008) acknowledges the fundamental role that the community plays in realising the good of the individual, but views the community as not superior to the individual. In this view, the individual does not pre-exist the community. The individual and the community are not radically opposed in the sense of priority. Instead, they are engaged in what Eze (2008:386) calls “a contemporaneous formation”. Even though the community and the individual are co-constituted, an individual, as alluded by Kruger *et al.* (2020:210), “remains imbued with autonomy and self-determination”. Eze (2008) sees the community and the individual as entities that need each other and are in a position to complement each other, albeit in an atmosphere where none can claim superiority

over the other. Wiredu (2008:334) extends his view beyond contemporaneity and opines that

to adjust the interests of the individual to those of the community is not to subordinate the one to the other. The relationship is a purely symmetrical. We could just as well have described it as the adjustment of the interests of the community to those of the individual.

Eze's realist perspectivism provides a novel approach to understanding the relationship between the community and the individual. From a conventional African communitarianism perspective, the common good is realised through consensus, however, Eze's (2008:386) perspective disregards consensus, as he alludes that it "does not give an adequate account of the praxis of common good in African Communitarianism. Eze (2008:391) implies that "[c]onsensus neither accommodates autonomy nor alterity, but suppresses these core values of human identity". Thus, consensus does not accommodate individual autonomy and differences, and as a result, is not inclusive to all participants. In this regard, Eze (2008:391) proposes realist perspectivism as

a more coherent account of the politics of common good in the African value system. It is a perspectivism that shuns unanimity in favour of a dialogue that is not oppressive. The focus is on understanding and experiencing the other in his/her context before any judgment.

This disposition seeks to re-examine and evaluate one's mindset in relation to the experience and context of the other before a judgement can be made. This mode of thinking demands adequate attention and sensitivity in understanding every situation. Consequently, "[t]his experiential moment informs and enriches my [one's] own perspective and frees me [one] from dogma in judgment" (Eze, 2008:394). The relationship between the individual and community is achieved through creative dialogue, in which every context is examined and re-examined to make sense of before any conclusions can be made. According to Eze (2008:395), realist perspectivism is "a process of discovery and understanding not logical deduction". Arguably, in the process of edifying, "the other's uniqueness is maintained and protected".

Chimakonam, (2018:130) notes that Matolino advances qualified communitarianism through proposing limited communitarianism to ground how “individual autonomy and rights could be defended within the communitarian setting”. Matolino’s theory is grounded in the notion that “individual rights are an inherent component of classical African communitarianism” (Matolino, 2018:58). Whereas Matolino (2018:69) rejects the perception that community rights are given primacy over individual rights, it is suggested that rights must be understood as the “enabler of both the good of the individual and of that of the community”. Arguably, Matolino’s perspective of qualified communitarianism advocates for the mutual understanding of the community and the individual, whilst taking into cognisance rights. In pursuit of his framework, Matolino (2018:71) advocates for a “separation of basic concepts and their functions”:

we should allow the definition of persons to be properly limited to what a person strictly is, what their constitutive elements are and how they combine to create this entity that we identify as a person. We should then move this sort of concept into a consideration of how it relates to the concept of community and what the community really is.

By implication, limited communitarianism emphasises the need to explain the distinction between the community and the individual, their fundamental elements and how they relate.

In conceptualising African communitarianism, limited communitarianism rejects the distinction between traditional and western societies (Matolino, 2018). Instead, this approach intends to weave the communitarian perceptions of traditional and western societies together. According to Matolino (2018:71-72), the rejection of the distinction is premised on the assumption that “traditionalists accounts are now incapable of informing us of anything useful about a communitarian scheme that could prove beneficial for the individual yet satisfying some notion of a shared good for everyone”. Matolino’s theory, as noted by Chimakonam (2018:130), “attempts to keep up with the trend of modernity where liberal values have come to be preferred since the dawn of enlightenment”.

In defending individual rights within the communitarian framework, Chimakonam (2018:135) proposes a “specific version of communitarianism - the African version - that is based on a system of logic”. As noted by Chimakonam (2018), the African qualified version of communitarianism is grounded in the principles of complementarity and trivalence. On the notion of trivalence, he (Chimakonam, 2018:136) notes that “for any two polar truth values, there is an intermediate point at which they may come together to form a complementary truth value”. In attempting to establish a system of logic, there is a need to synthesise any differences without compromising the other, and build a whole that would be valuable. For Chimakonam, an African logic of thinking acknowledges that there are contradicting views on the notion of rights and obligations, but also gives priority of the principle of complementarity. In this mode of thinking, Chimakonam (2018) notes that there exist two independent identities, namely that of community and that of individual rights. To bring about a new concept in a different context, these entities need to be conflated to form mutual complementation. As such, within this proposition, African communitarianism neither prioritises the community nor the individual but rather advocates for an infusion and upholding and retaining of the identity of each entity. Consistent with the above exposition, Chimakonam (2018:137) opines that “African communitarianism thus is not about the community alone, it is about the individuals that form the community and the community that defines the individual”. African communitarianism, premised on the principle of logic, disregards the perception that individual autonomy and rights are dependent on the community. Instead, this perception takes the stance that “individual autonomy and rights must be able to stand on their own or as inalienable before one can say that they are defensible in a system that is communitarian” (Chimakonam, 2018:137).

Based on the foregoing, it can be inferred that there are different notions of African communitarianism. For the purpose of this research, I considered radical, moderate and qualified communitarianism. Radical communitarianism (cf. 3.3.1.1) endorses the primacy of the community over the individual. Thus, an individual is understood to be

embedded in a community and hence his/her identity is defined by the community. Radical communitarians advocate for the realisation of the community's rights and goals over those of the individual. Based on the radical perspective, the community is vested with the responsibility to mould a person through certain rites of passage. Radical communitarianism advances the common good, and as a consequence, an individual has an obligation to pursue the good of the community in order to make a positive contribution to its well-being. In contrast to radical communitarianism, moderate communitarianism rejects the dominance of the community's rights over those of the individual. Rather, it advocates for the equal standing of both the individual's and community's rights. From the perspective of moderate communitarianism (cf. 3.3.1.2), the common good is universal, hence an individual must be given room to exercise personal autonomy to better the self for the benefit of the community. In this regard, by advancing the good of an individual that of the community is also advanced. Qualified or limited African communitarianism took a novel turn in explaining the relationship between individual rights and obligations (cf. 3.3.1.3). This approach is premised on the principle of complementarity, because it advocates for the infusion of both the community and the individual in the communitarian set-up. The two variables are conflated, but each retains its identity. This approach influences a mode of thinking which is neutral to both community and individual rights and obligations. Qualified communitarianism rejects the distinction that is made between the community and the individual, but rather advocates for understanding both as entities and to see how they might relate for the betterment of both. Within the qualified version of communitarianism, the individual's rights and obligations are harmonised and mutually shared by all humankind. Next, I discuss the concepts of *ubuntu* and *ukama* that are often associated with African communitarianism.

### **3.4 CONCEPTS ASSOCIATED WITH AFRICAN COMMUNITARIANISM: *UBUNTU* AND *UKAMA***

African communitarianism can be explained in relation to *ubuntu* and *ukama*. In the subsequent sections, I give a brief overview of these two concepts and how they relate

to African communitarianism, and by implication, to education couched within a sense of communitarian belonging.

### **3.4.1 UBUNTU**

*Ubuntu* is an African philosophy which is found throughout sub-Saharan Africa (Mahaye, 2018; Oviawe, 2016; Waghid, 2016; Letseka, 2000). Le Grange (2012:7) informs that *ubuntu* originates from the isiXhosa expression *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, meaning “each individual’s humanity is ideally expressed in relationship with others and in relationships individuality is truly expressed”. There are similar proverbial expressions in IsiZulu, Sesotho, Setswana and other African languages. *Ubuntu* is perceived as an African worldview or belief system that informs all spheres of life. *Ubuntu*, as a way of life, describes the self as living in the midst of others. As noted by Letseka (2013:3),

no person is considered to be a self-sufficient entity in and for him or herself. Rather, the existence of others is an essential part of the very structure of the self, from which emanates the communitarian exigency.

Arguably, the concept *ubuntu* advances and advocates for interdependence amongst humans. Oviawe (2016) notes that the “relationship between a person and her/his community is reciprocal, interdependent and mutually beneficial”. By implication, the community of which an individual is an integral part, plays an imperative role, as relationships are formed and a sense of belonging is realised.

The concept *ubuntu* is defined as humanness (Waghid & Smeyers, 2012; Le Grange, 2012). According to Le Grange (2012:9), humanness is an “expression of interconnectedness between people themselves, and between people and the biophysical world”. By implication, *ubuntu* firstly describes the inextricable interaction and closeness between people, although its interpretation has also been extended to be indicative of the interconnectedness to the biophysical world of which human beings are part. *Ubuntu* as humanness, expresses and emphasises values such as

compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony, and humanity (Nzimakwe, 2014; Nussbaum, 2003; Broodryk, 2002). To be fully human, an individual in an African community must possess these values and practice them towards others. Furthermore, if such values are shared within a community, they would play an indispensable role towards the maintenance of such a community. By implication, to enact *ubuntu* entails embodying virtues that are imperative in building relationships that are required to enhance humanity. A further implication would be that humanness finds meaning in a communal context, where an individual relates to others in a reciprocally beneficial way.

As noted by Nzimakwe (2014), *ubuntu* encapsulates group solidarity, which is fundamental to the survival of communities. The concept denotes a collective approach which perceives an individual not as an isolated entity, but rather constituted in and through a community of which s/he is an integral part (Maris, 2020; Maqoma, 2020; Nzimakwe, 2014). Consistent with this idea, Mahaye (2018:15) opines that “[o]ne becomes fully human to the extent that he/she is included in relationships with others”. In essence, in a community where solidarity surfaces, it advances a unified articulation of oneness in which the community would be in a position to tackle social ills in a cooperative manner, for the betterment of all. Thus, as Nzimakwe (2014) notes, *ubuntu* promotes solidarity where individual concerted efforts are brought together for the betterment of the community. In a similar vein, Tomaselli (2016:10) avers that *ubuntu* is a “unique African concept that promotes the communitarian idea of human interconnectedness”. Thus, the concept of *ubuntu* expresses the values needed to promote cohesion and harmony within the community.

The concept, however, does not only express specific values, but as an enacted practice, it has the potential to serve as a transformative tool that advances social justice. According to Broodryk (2006:4),

one of the goals of social justice is social equality which refers to the full participation and inclusion of everyone in a society’s major institutions such as schools, churches and other organisations, and

the socially supported substantive opportunity for all to develop and exercise their capacities and realize their choices.

Based on the meaning and values attributed to *ubuntu* and as discussed above, it can be argued that *ubuntu* embraces a social justice orientation in the sense that it regards all individual as equal within a community. Consistent with this idea, Nzimakwe (2014:1) acknowledges that *ubuntu* “empowers all to be valued to reach their full potential in accord with all around them”.

### **3.4.2 UKAMA**

*Ukama* is a concept derived from the Shona language (Ikeke, 2015:2; Le Grange, 2012; Murove 2009) and is “akin to the African worldview seeing all of reality as interrelated”. For Murove (2009:316), *ukama* implies a “relationship and understanding of reality in terms of independence”. According to Murove (2009:316)

[g]rammatically, *ukama* is an adjective constructed *u-kama*. *U* is an adjective prefix and *-kama* an adjectival stem. *Kama* becomes a verb meaning to milk a cow or goat. In Shona the idea of milking suggests closeness and affection.

In drawing on Murove’s analogy, *ukama* is expressed as beneficial to the community, because the extracted milk feeds the family and the community. This expression signals the mutual benefit that is accrued as “the milk provided by the cow sustains human life” (Ndofirepi & Hungwe, 2021:115). In turn, to ensure that the cow is able to keep on providing milk, it is taken care of by the community. In African societies, *ukama* foregrounds the relatedness between humans. The family is the focal point in which relationships are formed amongst the members of the family (Ndofirepi & Shanyanana, 2015). Relatedness is expressed not only through blood but also through marriage ties. Importantly, however, is that *ukama* does not only advance relatedness between humans, but it expresses the relatedness of all entities in cosmic life. Based on this interpretation of the concept, *ukama* can be argued to encompass

interdependency and interwoven relationships between humans as well as between humans and the wider ecological community.

According to Le Grange (2012:62; Murove 2009), *ukama* refers to the relatedness of all elements in cosmic life - “humanity’s relatedness to the natural (biophysical) world, which is advanced through totemic ancestorhood”. To advance relatedness and the inseparable bond between humans and animals, indigenous African societies identify with “some animal species, plants or other natural elements especially if it has to do with the origin of their ethnic group” (Ikeke, 2015:208). Totemism reflects an intimate relationship between humans and plants and animals (called totems), and consequently human beings feel a sense of belonging as they are connected to the earth, the past and the present (cf. Murove, 2009). Thus, *ukama* portrays the interrelation and interdependence of all cosmic life as expressed in indigenous African societies. In a similar vein, Ikeke (2015: 202) asserts that *ukama*

implies close relationship and interdependence. This interdependence is not only that between one human and another human, it involves the reality that all things, including nature are closely related and depend on one another for existence.

Arguably, *ukama* as an African value, provides an anchor for unity and togetherness of all humans and non-humans. In pursuit of further clarity, Ikeke (2015:210) brings forth the notion of mutual coexistence or interconnectedness of all things that cohabit a place. He notes that *ukama* enshrines beliefs and practices that espouse respect for the earth and its inhabitants, as humans are entrusted with preserving and sustaining the earth for the present and future generations. This understanding echoes that of Murove (2009:317), since *ukama* recognises the intimate relationship between humans and non-humans, and it “provides the ethical anchorage for human, social, spiritual and ecological togetherness”. Furthermore, as articulated by Murove (2009:316), “*ukama* is not restricted to marital and blood ties” but extends to ties with all people, not only with present generations but also with past and future generations (cf. Le Grange, 2012). Thus, *ukama* denotes oneness as it is not only confined to the nuclear family, but also extends beyond the extended family to the entire community.

As aptly noted by Murove (2009:316), “the presumption behind *ukama* ... is that being human entails living in relationships, seeing one another as a relative, or seeking to establish this relationship as actuality”. Arguably, *ukama* sees all people as relatives and endorses collectiveness of the past, present and future generation. The bond between the present generation and the ancestors is maintained through ritual practices performed to indicate that the ancestors are still considered to be the pivotal force behind the existence of the present generation. Murove (2009:319) adds that

through anamnesis human actions are sensitised to all dimensions of existence past, present and future, and that the connecting thread in all three dimensions of existence is the moral values that have been inherited, treasured and passed on to future generations.

*Ukama* enhances the continuity and sharing of the moral values from one generation to another. As *ukama* encompasses interdependence and the inseparable bond between the ancestors, the present and the future generation, it promotes the continuation of the values and ethical norms that define the community across generations. Having discussed the concept of *ukama*, I next consider the relationship between *ubuntu* and *ukama*.

### **3.4.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN *UBUNTU* AND *UKAMA***

From the previous sections, it can be accepted that whereas *ubuntu* refers to humanness, *ukama* refers to the notion of relatedness (cf. 3.4.1.and 3.4.2). The resonance between *ukama* and *ubuntu* is aptly expressed by Le Grange (2012; Murove, 2009:63) as the need for humanness to be understood relationally. In this sense, *ubuntu* is perceived as a concrete expression of *ukama*. As *ukama* is concerned with relatedness, it affirms the network or a web of life that cohabits place and as a result, interrelationships are formed in the society. Thus, “humanness is an expression of interconnectedness between people themselves, and between people and the biophysical world” (Le Grange, 2012:63). As humanness suggests that an individual finds him/herself within the midst of others, thus in relationality, there are ties that bind people in the community, even if they are not related by blood. Arguably,

such ties enhance a sense of place and of belonging. Humanness as relationality enhances oneness in the community and “emphasises the primacy of the greater environing wholeness over that of human individuality” (Murove, 2009:323). *Ukama* and *ubuntu* appreciate the value and the existence of past and present generations and as a result, “*ubuntu* through *ukama* bestows upon the individual the need to pass it (inheritance of *ubuntu*) on to the future generation” (Murove, 2009:322). *Ubuntu* subsequently strongly alludes to *ukama* as it advocates for the need to establish harmonious relationships in the community characterised by love, respect, reciprocity, companionship, and mutual beneficence. Relatedness can thus be fully realised if individuals display these values in every interaction with others – individuals and the more-than-human - for the benefit of the community.

In this section, I explored *ubuntu* and *ukama* as concepts associated with African communitarianism. *Ubuntu* (humanness) and *ukama* (relatedness) advance the interconnectedness of the community of humans and non-humans as the “microcosm of the relationality within the universe” (Murove, 2009:316). In this sense, all entities in the biophysical world and human beings form a network of interrelationships which is interwoven and inseparable. The two concepts describe the interdependence of humans and non-humans, as none can survive without the other. It can be argued that *ukama* embodies the complementarity of entities which is advocated by qualified communitarianism (cf. 3.3.1.3). The relationships formed should therefore be characterised by certain values such as compassion and reciprocity, which are expected to influence harmonious relationality between people and between people and the earth. *Ubuntu* and *ukama* subsequently express an African way of living that advances an entanglement of the community and the individual. Such an African worldview acknowledges that there is “another in the self and self in the other” (Ndofirepi & Shanyanana, 2015:6), and captures the perception that “I am because we are, and we are because I am”. However, the perception of being with others is not limited to human beings, but extends to cosmic life. Of central importance in African communitarianism as manifested by *ukama* and *ubuntu*, is the interaction between the

individual, community and the environment, which leads to the formation of interwoven relationships characterised by humanness, relatedness, closeness and affection.

In the next section, I recontextualise a sense of belonging through an African perspective based on the preceding discussion of communitarianism, *ubuntu* and *ukama*.

### **3.5 RECONTEXTUALISATION OF PLACE AND A SENSE OF BELONGING THROUGH AN AFRICAN COMMUNITARIAN PERSPECTIVE**

In this section, I reconsider place and a sense of belonging from and through an African communitarian perspective as informed by *ubuntu* and *ukama*. Lesotho continues to impart foreign values through an inherited education system that disconnects students and the community from the spaces in which they find themselves (cf. 1.2 and 1.6). Given the education crisis that Lesotho faces, my interest in doing this study is to explore how place and a sense of belonging can be re-imagined from an African communitarian perspective, and how such a re-imagination could positively contribute towards the Lesotho education policy context.

A sense of belonging exhibits elements that engender relatedness, connectedness and rootedness to a place (cf. 2.5). Rootedness implies a feeling of being at home, and is unconsciously acquired through interaction, residence and accumulated experiences. An individual's rootedness is accrued when the place s/he resides in is characterised by reciprocal relationships in a community (Oviawe, 2016). Arguably, place as a sense of belonging denotes social connections of human beings in a specific place. By implication, place as a sense of belonging and the subsequent rootedness in a place allude strongly to communitarianism as a way of living in African communities. As noted by Koushik (2016), place is the backdrop against which social life is enacted due to constant interaction between individuals and their surroundings. By implication, a sense of belonging is attained. A sense of belonging strongly alludes to *ukama* which denotes relatedness between humans and their immediate place (cf. 3.4.2). Thus, rootedness and connectedness could be construed as *ubuntu*

(humanness) and *ukama* (interconnectedness), and the interdependence of all the spheres of life that cohabit a place (cf. 3.4.2; Murove, 2009). These elements exhibit communitarianism from an African perspective. A sense of place as an attribute of place is developed when the place offers security, love, acceptance and satisfaction, and subsequently alludes to a sense of belonging (cf. 2.6). These attributes reflect *ubuntu* and *ukama*, which are important for the flourishing of all in African societies. Arguably, when a place is able to satisfy an individual's needs, place dependence is promoted, which subsequently leads to place identity, and that boils down to a sense of belonging (cf. 2.4). For connectedness and relatedness to flourish, humans must enact humanness toward each other, but also extend it to other non-human entities as well as the biophysical world. *Ukama* and *ubuntu* are associated with African communitarianism because interconnectedness, relatedness and humanness are extended beyond the social connection between humans to include other ecological, biological, social and cultural spheres of life (cf. 3.4.1; 3.4.2). By implication, when an individual connects with these dimensions, s/he is expected to integrate into the community through enacting *ubuntu* for the survival and sustainability of the environment. As place foregrounds a web of life that incorporates humans and the more-than-human world (Behrens, 2014), *ukama* as a concept permeates in everything that exists (Murove, 2009). It advances an assemblage of different entities linked together to form a complete whole. As *ukama* is associated with African communitarianism, it regards the entanglement of humans and non-humans in a place which they cohabit. Place as sense of place resonates with *ukama* because it encompasses different dimensions which are interconnected, such as the biophysical, socio-cultural, and socio-economic worlds. The interconnection of these dimensions therefore leads to the sustainability of African communities. Arguably, sustainability of the biophysical world could be attained when *ukama* beliefs and practices that espouse respect and caring for the cosmic life are advanced.

A sense of belonging is constructed through the narratives and the stories told (cf. 2.5.1). The stories told in African societies are inclusive of the past, present and the future, and drawn from the immediate environment (Murove, 2009). Such stories

exhibit life as derived from the continuum of everything that exists or existed (Murove, 2009). Consequently, people develop an attachment to meaningful places that they have created through the conversations and interactions they have had with others. By implication, African stories emphasise that an individual or a community lives in connection with the natural world. As such, the inherent mutual interdependence between people and their environment is not only depicted, but resonates with *ukama*. *Ukama* could inform a sense of belonging in the sense that when people interact with place as a social and physical setting, relationships of interdependence and interconnectedness are formed (cf. 3.4.2). An attachment to a place is advanced, which, in turn, trickles down to a sense of belonging. Similarly, a sense of belonging could be reimagined as *ukama*, which portrays elements of connecting and forming an attachment to past, present and future generations. A sense of belonging embodies ancestorhood as the guiding principle for one's survival through *ukama* (cf. 3.4.2).

While a sense of belonging encompasses a sense of community - a feeling that the community exists when its members feel a sense of belonging (Osterman, 2000) - place and a sense of belonging could be understood from an African communitarian perspective as it reconsiders the connection of an individual in relation to others. As an African way of living, the self is described as living in the midst of others, and as a result, African societies are inherently communal in nature as they promote oneness and solidarity within the community (cf. 3.3). However, in drawing on how relatedness is expressed in *ukama*, the relationships formed within the community are extended to be inclusive of non-humans. *Ukama*, as an African value, provides an anchor for unity and togetherness of all humans, non-humans and the biophysical world (cf. 3.4.2). By implication, a sense of belonging can be reimagined as *ukama*, which expresses the relatedness of humans and the more-than-human world in a shared cosmic life. As noted by Murove (2009:324), "an individual sense of belonging can be understood in obtaining meaning from a continuum with all that exists".

*Ubuntu* can be understood in relation to the values and principles that denote an African way of living. These values include social justice, respect, reciprocity,

benevolence and compassion (Nzimakwe, 2014; Waghid, 2014; Nussbaum, 2003; Broodryk, 2002), and act as guidelines as to how an individual should conduct him/herself to be a good citizen and relate well with others. By implication, these values express humanness which is a profound ethic encapsulated in the concept of *ubuntu* (cf. 3.4.1). *Ubuntu* therefore “engenders dignified and humane action” (Waghid, 2014:71) towards others. *Ubuntu* might inform a sense of belonging, as these virtues can be extended to the concern of others. They describe how human beings in a social and physical place should relate. As a result, a sense of belonging is attained when an individual feels respected, loved and cared for, and lives in community with others or feels affiliated to a group. Thus, a sense of belonging is not an individualist concern but could be construed to the collectiveness and inclusion of all in the community. As a consequence, one’s humanness is expressed in relation to others in all spheres of life as *ubuntu* entails virtues that are imperative in building relationships that are required to enhance humanity (cf. 3.4.2). Inherent to a sense of belonging are shared values and aspirations underpinned by a need for affirmation. In “most African communities ... sharing and connecting with the group are seen as paramount” (Waghid & Smeyers, 2012:11). Similarly, a sense of belonging is expressed when one feels to be an integral and indispensable part of the community which foregrounds communitarianism from an African perspective. A sense of belonging can thus be re-imagined from an African communitarian perspective when an individual’s morals and inspiration are converged with that of the community, and as such, *ubuntu* conceives the other as belonging to the group (Waghid & Smeyers, 2012). *Ukama* foregrounds continuity and the sharing of moral values from one generation to the next. Arguably, there are moral values and practices which underpin African societies and are therefore intergenerational.

From the foregoing exposition, it could be inferred that a sense of belonging framed in African communitarianism, can be (re)conceptualised as a sense of communitarian belonging.

Arguably, the notion of a sense of communitarian belonging foregrounds the nexus between humans and non-humans. Not only is a sense of communitarian belonging based on the localised place and everything that exists in it (Behrens, 2014), but it also advances the relatedness, interdependence and interconnectivity (Le Grange, 2012) of the animate and the inanimate. The notion of a sense of communitarian belonging is premised on Eze's (2017) conceptualisation of community as an entanglement of humans and non-humans. This entanglement is described as a web of interrelated and interdependent harmonious and all-encompassing relationships embedded in indigenous African communities, and the moral values and practices that drive them (African communities). Thus, a sense of communitarian belonging constitutes humanity in all spheres of life as it recognises interdependence and co-existence of earth species without regarding one as superior over another. As such, each entity within the cosmos should be valued and respected to enhance its survival for the sustainable development of the ecosystem for present and coming generations. In essence, a sense of communitarian belonging envisages humanness and interrelatedness in all respects.

In sum, framed from an African communitarian perspective, a sense of communitarian belonging describes an African way of living, which denotes the social connection of humans in a place characterised by humanness and interconnectedness with the more-than-human world. Shaped by an interplay of relational, geographic and cultural factors eminent in a place, a sense of communitarian belonging promotes and advances the collectiveness and interrelatedness of all the entities in the cosmic world. By implication, a sense of communitarian belonging enables a deeper understanding of our world. Driven by an African communitarian perspective, a sense of communitarian belonging allows for localised cultural experiences that characterise a community to be revitalised to influence a sustainable way of living for both humans and non-humans. In this sense, communitarian belonging brings forth the notion of the participation, connection, entitlement and responsibilities of all communities in the biophysical world.

From the foregoing exposition, it could be argued that education couched in a sense of communitarian belonging could be a transformative tool geared towards healing the injustices of colonial education inherent in the Lesotho education system. My contention is influenced by the belief espoused by Peters (2017:944), that there is a “growing awareness of the interconnectedness of all living things”, and that it can be re-established through education driven by an environmental ethic premised on an African communitarian perspective. The implications for education constitute the focus of the next chapter.

### **3.6 SUMMARY**

The objective of this chapter was to recontextualise place and a sense of belonging from an African communitarian perspective (cf. 1.3). This was achieved through considering literature on communitarianism in general and African communitarianism in particular. To realise this objective, I used my conceptualised understanding of place as a sense of belonging, and reconsidered it through an African communitarian perspective. This chapter unfolded first through a conceptualisation of communitarianism in general, and then as a means to contextualise the discussion informed by African communitarianism. Communitarianism is understood as a worldview that advances the connection between the individual and the community, and as such, emphasises the importance of belonging to communities. Contentious within the discussion, are the different notions of communitarianism. Whereas authoritarian communitarianism seeks to protect the common good of the community over individual autonomy and rights (cf. 3.2), responsive communitarianism recognises a close relation between the individual and the community, and seeks to synthesise the common good and individual autonomy and rights for the flourishing of both the individual and the community (cf. 3.2).

Following the general discussion, I indicated how communitarianism finds expression as an African philosophical position that foregrounds the inherently communal nature of African societies (cf. 3.3). In this context, an individual is regarded as embedded in the community, and social relationships of interdependence are formed. Different

notions of African communitarianism exist (cf. 3.3.1). Radical communitarianism advocates for the primacy of the community over the individual and renders individual rights secondary in the community in which an individual is socially integrated (cf. 3.3.1.1). Moderate communitarianism advocates for the equal moral standing of both the community and the individual, and advocates for the recognition of an individual's rights and freedoms within the community (cf. 3.3.1.2). Qualified communitarianism rejects the distinction between the priorities of community rights over individual rights (cf. 3.3.1.3). It takes a novel turn in explaining the relationship between individual rights and obligations as compatible. This approach is premised on the principle of complementarity because it advocates for infusion of both the community and the individual in the communitarian set-up where rights and obligations are regarded as compatible.

African communitarianism can be understood in relation to *ubuntu* and *ukama*. *Ubuntu* is an African worldview which refers to humanness (cf. 3.4.1). *Ubuntu* describes the self in relation to others and advocates for the interdependence of humans within the community. *Ukama* refers to relatedness and foregrounds the close connections, interdependency and interwoven relationships between humans and non-humans (cf. 3.4.2). The relationship between *ubuntu* and *ukama* refers to *ubuntu* as a concrete expression of *ukama* – the prevailing of humanness through the interconnectedness between humans and non-humans cf. 3.4.3). *Ubuntu* and *ukama* articulate a communal practical way of day-to day-living in indigenous societies where humanness and the relatedness of the individual and the community are instituted.

The chapter culminates in the recontextualisation of place and a sense of belonging through an African perspective (cf. 3.5). Place and sense of belonging could be reimagined from an African perspective in the manner that the self could be reconsidered in relation to others. As a communal way of living in an African community, there are inherent connections between human beings in the social and physical setting of a place. These constant interactions lead to the establishment of harmonious relationships. Consequently, an individual's sense of belonging could be

construed as *ubuntu* when s/he becomes an integral member of the community, which is a prominent feature of African communitarianism (cf. 3.3). A sense of belonging could be construed from the continuum of relatedness and interdependence of humans and non-humans that exists in a place. From an African perspective, a sense of belonging could be understood as the unity of humans and non-humans in a shared cosmic life (cf. 3.5). In this sense, African communitarianism is enhanced when there is relatedness of humans to the wider ecological community. Interwoven relationships are formed and the survival of such relationships could be managed if humane actions are put in place. A sense of belonging can be reimagined as a combination of *ubuntu* and *ukama* that allows for the attachment of an individual to the community and the biophysical world (cf. 3.5).

It is my contention that a sense of belonging encrypted from African communitarianism could be understood as a sense of *communitarian* belonging, which allows for a localised network of life that incorporates humans and non-humans in a place. In such a context, the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of all the entities found in the biophysical world are promoted and advanced. A sense of communitarian belonging depicts an African communal way of living, where there are embedded relationships established from a social and a physical connection of humans to the biophysical world. In addition, a sense of communitarian belonging is grounded on the geographic, cultural and relational experiences that are inherent in a place. African communitarian belonging exhibits morals informed by *ubuntu* and *ukama*. Thus, a sense of communitarianism denotes the humanness, interrelatedness and interconnectivity of all species in the ecosystem.

In the next chapter, I consider the implications of education for the development of a sense communitarian belonging. It is my contention that education aimed at the development of a sense of communitarian belonging would be inclusive of both the human and the more-than-human world.

## CHAPTER 4: EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SENSE OF COMMUNITARIAN BELONGING

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Lesotho as a colonial country was affected by the spread of colonialism in which the super power countries controlled the development of the country. The spread of colonialism brought Eurocentric education (Metz, 2015; Higgs, 2011) of which Lesotho was forced to follow. It is essential to mention that Lesotho had its own informal education where indigenous practices and values were imparted to the youth (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002; Raselimo and Mahao, 2015; Matsela, 1979). Due to the adoption of colonial education, indigenous education was displaced, marginalised and subjugated. In spite of gaining political independence, Lesotho education system continues to impart foreign values through an inherited education that is purely academic and examination type that favours cognitive domain while marginalising interalia psychomotor skills (cf. Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002; Raselimo and Mahao, 2015; 1.2 and 1.6). Furthermore, a strong anthropocentric focus and the subsequent preference for individualism, feeds into a disconnection between students and the community spaces in which they find themselves. It could be argued that the remnants of colonial education are detrimental to the development of Basotho nation. By implication, colonial education does not provide lifelong education that equips students with skills, knowledge and attitudes that would enable them to tackle issues in their immediate place. Consequently, there are inherent socio-economic, political and environmental problems that characterise Basotho nation.

To address such a disconnection, the *Constitution of the Kingdom of Lesotho (Constitution)* (1993:Section 36), assures that

Lesotho shall adopt policies designed to protect and enhance the natural and cultural environment of Lesotho for the benefit of both present and future generations and shall endeavour to ensure to all citizens a sound and safe environment adequate for their health and well-being.

While the Constitution intends to protect and ensure the sustainable use of the environment for the present and coming generations, MoET regards “education as the main vehicle towards achieving the national aspirations of self-reliance and economic independence” (MoET, 2009:2). Central to the achievement of these national aspirations is the change of educational policy, content and practice to be framed from the immediate place and community spaces in which students live so as to be relevant for the Lesotho people. Education encrypted from a place sensitises students about the need to infuse humans and non-humans, and further aims to restore humane interactions informed by the values and ethics drawn from an African perspective of communitarianism (cf. 1.1; 1.2). It could be argued that place-relevant education can enhance a sense of communitarian belonging, as it regards the incorporation of an African environmental conception that there is an inseparable bond between all the entities of the biophysical world, and that none is superior to another.

To explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging, I need to first foreground the implications of education for place and for the promotion of a sense of belonging. The decision to first explore these implications is premised on my understanding of place as the site where action takes place and attachments are developed, because of the constant interactions amongst people and between humans and non-humans (cf. 1.2; 2.2). Arguably, education framed from the immediate places of students can serve as responsive and transformative teaching. It is responsive in the sense that teaching and learning respond to the local area which students are familiar with and bear relevance to them. Place-based teaching and learning can be transformative in that the centering of community spaces could mean the strengthening of the relationship between humans, and the establishment of an affirmative relationship with the immediate environment. Within the context of education that has become disconnected from the immediate place, the implications of place-based education and the subsequent potential for the development of a sense of belonging are relevant to education in Lesotho. Also important is to consider the educational implications for place and the development of a sense of belonging, I will use my understanding of an African communitarian sense

of belonging (cf. 3.5) to derive and foreground educational implications for a sense of *communitarian* belonging. The objective of this chapter is to consider educational implications for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging (cf. 1.3.4). It is my contention that considering educational implications for communitarian belonging would serve as an important step in exploring the potential of Lesotho education for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging (cf. Chapter 5).

In this chapter, I conducted a literature review to determine the implications for place-based education, in other words education that takes cognisance of the immediate place in which students find themselves, and which is sensitive to both humans and non-humans. Thereafter, I discuss the educational implications for the promotion of a sense of belonging, followed by what is required to promote education aimed at a sense of communitarian belonging.

## **4.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR PLACE-BASED EDUCATION**

It has been noted that Lesotho's education system remains influenced by a colonial legacy characterised by individualism and anthropocentrism. The subsequent disconnection between students' lives and their community spaces (cf. 1.2; 1.6) finds manifestation in teachers directing

children's attention away from their own circumstances and ways of knowing and toward knowledge from other places that has been developed by strangers they most likely will never meet (Smith, 2002:586).

As a result, students gain information through reading texts and listening to lessons by their teachers, rather than through lived experiences of the world. Arguably, education that is not grounded in the lived experiences of students is not responsive to the needs of society and does not prepare students to participate meaningfully in their communities. If we want to use education as a vehicle towards realising national aspirations, we need to foreground the implication of education from the place in which the students live.

According to Smith (2002; Gruenewald, 2003a; Darron & Sharon, 2019), place-based education is a transformative education approach to curriculum development that centres on students' lived experiences and rests upon using the immediate environment, (humans and non-humans/ natural and cultural environment) to teach ideas about a phenomenon. Place-based education is subsequently rooted in the locale of the students, and serves as the primary resource for learning. Place-based education rejects the divide between humans and non-humans and introduces a shift from the anthropocentric positioning of humans over the non-humans, to the acknowledgement of the entanglement of humans and the more-than-human world (cf. 2.3.1). Ontong and Le Grange (2015) perceive place-based education as a transformative educational approach that advocates for the dismantling of any dominant power relations that hamper the realisation of a sustainable ecological system for all creatures.

#### **4.2.1 FOSTERING OF INTERRELATED AND INTERDEPENDENT RELATIONSHIPS**

Couched in a web of life that incorporates humans and the more-than-human world, place-based education advances the interrelatedness and interdependence of relationships by reconnecting students to their local environments (Behrens, 2014; Lowenstein *et al.*, 2010; McInerney, Smyth & Down, 2010). Through place-based education, students are given an opportunity to “experience being human in connection with the others and the world of nature, and the responsibility to conserve and restore our shared environments for future generations” (Gruenewald, 2003b:6). It (place-based education) is informed by a view that there is a strong and entrenched connection between humans and non-humans. Arguably, place-based education foregrounds humanness and the interconnectivity of all entities in the biophysical world (cf. 3.5; Ngubane & Makua, 2021). Thus, teachers are expected to promote and instil humane actions in students that are meant to regard the self in relation to others and the ecosystem at large. As place-based education promotes the entanglement of humans and non-humans. It can be argued that it is premised on the new materialist

turn theory of place which subscribes to the idea that humans and non-humans are not detached from each other but exist collectively across the space (cf. 2.2.4).

As the education system is clouded by the legacy of colonial education, which is disconnected from the places that students inhabit, student's local environment have been depleted and destroyed because such places are exploited and not cared for. As noted by Ontong and Le Grange (2015:5), "place-based education is critical to the field of environmental education because it encourages environmental conservation ethics among learners". Arguably, place-based education has the potential to engender the ecological dimension of place and bioregionalism that calls for the application of local knowledge in taking care of the environment to ensure its sustainability (cf. 2.2.1.1). Place-based education further aims at making students "aware of the deeper social, ecological and political forces that are embedded in places" (Ontong & Le Grange, 2015:5). In drawing on my understanding of the assemblage theory (cf. 2.3.3), place-based education advocates for an assemblage of all entities to bring about transformative change. In such a space, schools are expected to connect the classroom to outdoor learning so as to generate a deeper understanding of place (Johnson, 2012).

To strengthen the interrelatedness and interdependence between the human and the more-than-human-world, place-based education promotes the skills and dispositions needed to rejuvenate and sustain communities (Lowenstein *et al.*, 2010). It is the teacher's responsibility to instil skills such as critical thinking, inquiry and problem-solving. These skills and dispositions would be framed from an African perspective and would provide students with the opportunity to apply these skills in real life situations for the well-being of both human and non-human communities. In such a context, teachers would need to foreground teaching and learning from the student's immediate environment so as to enable them to interact with the environment. Arguably, students would develop knowledge and attitudes that would enable them to care and take responsibility of their environment. Proceeding from the assumption that place is a contested space, there are inherent contestations, struggles and

negotiations which lead to ecological imbalance and crisis (cf. 2.5.2). As such, place-based education is corrective in nature as it attempts to question the long-established unfriendly cultural practices to our environment, which “are often ignored and raises questions that are left unanswered” (Penetito 2009:6; Preston, 2015). As such, it can be accepted that

place-based education is critical in that it entails, on the one hand, the recognition and confrontation of those deeply entrenched cultural assumptions that lead to social and ecological injustices (Kruger *et al.*, 2020:208).

Place-based education subsequently goes beyond questioning long-established cultural assumptions; instead, it aims to identify and strengthen cultural and environmental common grounds for the promotion of more sustainable communities (Kruger *et al.*, 2020:208). Arguably, place-based education advocates for the (re)establishment of traditional and indigenous practices, which were and are meant to provide the environmental consciousness required for the maintenance and sustainable development of the ecosystem. Through the skills and dispositions provided by place-based education students, they would be able to confront those deeply institutionalised cultural assumptions that are unfriendly to our environment and enhance social justice for all.

#### **4.2.2 EDUCATION GROUNDED IN THE LOCAL PLACE**

Place-based education advocates for teaching and learning experiences grounded in community spaces, and subsequently promote the connection between environment, culture and education (Smith, 2002; Gruenewald, 2003a). By implication, this form of education serves as a transformative tool that calls for the infusion of humans and non-humans, and promote their equal co-existence into policy development and school curricula (cf.4.2.1). School policy should provide a framework that enhances the implementation of place-based education as a means to provide education relevant to the needs of the people (cf. 1.1). It is assumed that when students learn from their immediate place, a sense of place will emerge from the connection between the people and the environment they inhabit, which in turn, will strengthen the

development of a sense of place (cf. 2.2). Thus, when students learn about their immediate place, they will acquire a deeper understanding of the local area and could then work towards regenerating the place for the coming generation. Place-based education can be described as community-based learning that takes learning from the classroom to the nearby environment to help students relate what they are learning with real life situations (Lowenstein *et al.*, 2010:103). In essence, place-based education centres on outdoor learning activities that

engage learners with their community and natural environment, learners in place-based educational programmes learn about their place and learn to care for it; gaining knowledge and skills are inextricably connected with feeling and acting in new ways (Ontong & Le Grange, 2015:20).

Student engagement with community life is promoted when the curriculum content is connected to the local environment (Gruenewald, 2003a:7). When students are granted the opportunity to interact with the self, communities and the natural environment (cf. Ontong & Le Grange, 2015; Gruenewald, 2003a; Smith, 2002), they are likely to establish meaning and an attachment to a place. In such a context, a sense of place is enhanced and relationships are formed (cf. 2.4). It can be argued that place-based education draws on the constructivist theory (cf. Olusegun, 2015; Smith, 2002) as it regards learning as a social activity. Constructivist learning promotes a sense of community in that the teaching and learning process paves the way for collaborative and cooperative learning. As outdoor learning is central to place-based education, students need each other in the field to construct knowledge (Smith, 2002). A sense of belonging is articulated when strong social ties are formed and care and support for others are promoted (cf. 2.5). Consequently, when students interact with their community spaces, they will be able to

(1) identifying serious problems in their communities, (2) analysing the roots of those problems in the larger socio-economic and cultural system, and (3) creating localised, healthy relationships with mentors and with each other in the context of our immediate ecosystems (Lowenstein *et al.*, 2010:103).

In a similar vein, McInerney *et al.* (2010:6) are of the opinion that place-based education constitutes the engagement of “students in learning that addresses both the environmental problems confronting humanity and the oppressive social and economic factors that contribute to poverty, exploitation and oppression”. Thus, when students are engaged in the learning process through place-based education, they are involved in service learning where the skills and dispositions acquired can be used for the benefit of the community. By implication, when students are engaged in learning, their critical thinking skills are awakened and their perceptions about their environment is challenged for the better. It is through the perceptual dimension of place, that people’s sense of perception is awakened to regard humans and the more-than-human world as alive, vibrant and interdependent (cf. 2.2.1.3). Place-based education reconstitutes responsive teaching which offers a localised response to teaching and learning processes. It provides a framework that grants students the opportunity to participate, make informed decisions about their spaces, and consequently foster an appreciation of their immediate environment. Since place-based education appreciates and promotes students’ engagement with local environment, it aims at producing students who will employ sustainable development approaches to support their livelihoods. In such a context, students would be able to face real-life situations and create their own means of survival without trying to fit in the marketplace (Gruenewald, 2003a). Place-based education extends to producing responsible citizens who can work collectively to address the inhumane actions that destroyed their environment. Thus, place-based education promotes oneness in dealing with the environment.

In summary, this section looked at the implications of place-based education, and at what it means to teach place-based education. Place-based education has implications for both policy and teaching and learning. If we consider place-based education as a means to realise national aspirations, reactive policy should be adopted to reconnect students with their immediate environment, including with the more-than-human world (cf. 1.1). Arguably, policy must provide directives, based on the nature

of place-based education, for effective curriculum implementation. By implication, for a curriculum to be relevant to the needs of the people, it should be grounded in the immediate place or local environment. It was further noted that place-based education serves as the localised response to responsive teaching. Thus, schools and teachers will have to liaise with stakeholders with an interest in education to mobilise their communities to assist in providing students with opportunities to interact with their environment. By implication, the local environment which consists of the socio-cultural, biophysical world should be utilised as a resource for teaching, learning and for building relationships. However, schools should consider an assemblage of all the dimensions that form the network of life that constitute place. By implication, teaching and learning should be aimed at developing an awareness amongst students of the deeper social, ecological and political forces that are embedded in their immediate place. To assist with reconnecting students with their immediate environments, schools and teachers will have to liaise with people who are knowledgeable in indigenous morals and values. In addition, couching education in a place also entails encouraging an environmental conservation ethic among students driven by the morals and values of their societies. As such, teachers have the responsibility to endorse children and the youth with skills they could use for the welfare of both humans and non-humans. Arguably, teachers must provide students with opportunities to question and challenge established cultural practices that are harmful to others, and to the environment. Also, teachers who advocate for place-based education must be able to encourage community learning through the identification and strengthening of cultural and environmental practices towards more sustainable communities. To ensure that teaching and learning experiences are grounded in the immediate place, teachers need to make learning concrete and meaningful within the places that the students find themselves. Place-based learning implies that teachers must engage outdoor learning where learning is taken from the classroom to the nearby environment. Such teachers would premise their teaching on the assumption that learning becomes easier and more meaningful when students relate their learning to real-life situations. By implication, students are required to be fully engaged in their

learning - they would be expected to construct their own knowledge within a context that is familiar to them.

### **4.3 EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROMOTION OF A SENSE OF BELONGING**

The purpose of this section is to foreground the educational implications for the promotion a sense of belonging in schools. In the subsequent sections, I explain the importance of involving the school community for the building of relationships that can feed into the development of a sense of belonging. Thereafter, I elaborate on the development of a communicative culture in the school context, followed by foregrounding the educational implications from the community spaces in which students live.

#### **4.3.1 INVOLVEMENT OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

Schools are social institutions of teaching and learning, and teachers are vested with the responsibility to ensure that students feel valued, cared for and connected to the school community (Riley, 2019; Allen, Brodrick & Waters 2016). By implication, teachers play an important role in the promotion of a sense of belonging. As aptly noted by Dukynaitė and Dudaitė (2017:39), a sense of belonging relates to

the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, involved in common activity and supported by teachers, and other community members in the school environment.

Students' sense of school belonging depends largely on the school's community of teachers, classmates and parents (Dukynaitė & Dudaitė, 2017). It can be assumed that teachers are expected to create a warm and welcoming environment where students would feel loved, cared for, supported, accepted and respected (cf. Goodenow & Grady, 1993). The promotion of an environment where positive social relationships between teachers, students and the school community at large can be built, is important for enhancing a sense of connectedness with the school community (Uslu and Giziri, 2017; Allen, Slaten, Arslan, Roffey, Craig & Brodrick, 2021). As noted

by Allen *et al.* (2016; Riley, Coates & Allen, 2020; Osterman, 2000; Korpershoek, Canrinus, Fokkens-Bruinsma & De Boer, 2019), when students feel that they fit in or belong to a school community, they feel free to establish relationships and their academic performance is likely to improve. St-Amand *et al.* (2017:112) suggest that positive social relationships would only be realised if there is

constant support for students having difficulties; constant support for students in order for them to meet the standards and skills required by the school; constant support so that students feel included in society; and constant efforts to help students establish and maintain respectful relationships.

The building of relationships is integral to human beings, and central to the promotion of a sense of belonging is teachers who “offer emotional support to students; be [are] sensitive to students’ needs and emotions; show interest in students; and try to understand students’ point of view” (Pedler, 2018:1; Uslu & Giziri, 2017). By implication, building relationships where students feel that they are accepted, with their strengths and weaknesses, is likely to cultivate a sense of belonging (Zaatari & Ibrahim, 2021; Riley, 2019; Uslu & Giziri, 2017). In a similar vein, Allen *et al.* (2021:528) posit that “when students feel that they have good relationships with their teachers and peers, they gain a sense of belonging, which results in greater school engagement”.

One way of enhancing connectedness in the school is for teachers to encourage and build a supportive school community that “represents perceptions of acceptance and connection” (Gravett & Ajjawi, 2021:3). It can thus be accepted that a supportive community can cultivate a sense of belonging where individuals may form bonds with others. As a result, shared goals and values might be accomplished in the school. Similarly, Capps (2003:50) avers that

students who experience the school as a caring and supportive environment, in which they actively participate and have opportunities to influence, will feel attached to the school community and will, therefore, come to accept its norms and values.

To further foster a sense of belonging in schools, parents and or guardians must be given the opportunity to provide assistance to their children in schools. When parents are involved in their children's schoolwork, students would feel that their parents have an interest in their education. Zaatari and Ibrahim (2021:3) foreground the importance of parental involvement:

[p]arental involvement could play an imperative role in promoting a sense of school belonging when they provide their children with academic and social support both at home and school. When parents are involved in their adolescents' education, care about their performance, and discuss their future plans, their children are likely to become more motivated to work harder, cope with academic challenges, have positive beliefs about their abilities to succeed.

When students receive constant support from the school community and their parents or guardians, a sense of school belonging is enhanced, which in turn, could have a positive effect on the functioning of students in their learning environment (Allen & Bowles, 2012; Osterman, 2000; Wingspread Conference, 2004; Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Finn, 1989).

#### **4.3.2 DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNICATIVE CULTURE**

In schools, a sense of belonging could be accomplished when all the voices are heard (Riley, 2019; OECD, 2017). As aptly noted by Allen *et al.* (2021:536), to "honour student voices" is of the utmost importance in creating a sense of belonging in schools, because students would feel to be an integral part of the school community, and greater connectedness will be enhanced. As a social institution, the school community comprises of members from different backgrounds and it is imperative to create an inclusive environment in which all school community members, including students, are given the opportunity to air their views. The school and subsequently the teachers must engage students in decision-making processes. Contributors to the Wingspread Conference (2004:1) suggest that "[a]pplying fair and consistent disciplinary policies that are collectively [my emphasis] agreed upon and fairly enforced" would cultivate a

sense of school belonging. If students are involved in the development of rules and regulations, the act itself will give them a sense of ownership and they will feel safe and secure.

According to OECD (2017:122), a

disciplined and fair learning environment creates a quality school environment which can help adolescents construct the social skills they need to establish worthwhile relationships with their educators and peers.

There is a strong likelihood that when students are connected to a school environment which exhibits justice and fairness (Allen *et al.*, 2016) to all, they are less likely to engage in school violence. To promote a sense of school connectedness, the lines of communication must be open between students and teachers. An established culture of communication would enhance the passing of information to and from the school community and subsequently, successful communication could yield positive results in the achievement of desired goals (Albert in Dukynaitė & Dudaitė, 2017). Arguably, a sense of belonging can only be promoted in a trusting environment where all school community members feel respected.

#### **4.3.3 EDUCATION DRAWN FROM THE IMMEDIATE PLACE**

A sense of school belonging largely depends on the type of education that a school offers. The type of education that has no connection to the environment in which students live, will most likely disconnect them from the school and their immediate community (Smith, 2002). Consequently, it is imperative to design and develop a type of education encrypted from community spaces, and the integration of the latter into the school curriculum (cf. Sobel, 2004; Ontong & Le Grange, 2018). As noted by Dunleavy and Burke (2019:40),

schools and teachers who wish to increase student participation should incorporate a class curriculum that offers students the opportunity to examine and share their values and experiences and learner preferences, which builds a sense of belonging and wellbeing at school.

Education derived from the local area exhibits an inseparable bond between humans and the more-than-human world. Thus, both humans and non-humans are afforded equal coexistence, and none is superior to another. The school curriculum is expected to merge environmental and cultural ethics that will equip students with humane actions and provide an adequate knowledge and understanding of the entire ecosystem inclusive of the human component. Consequently, students would realise that the human and non-human worlds are interrelated, interconnected and interdependent and as a result, establish harmonious relationships with the biophysical world. When schools give students the opportunity to learn from their local area, the students are likely to have a deeper understanding of their locale, identify the social ills prevalent in the area, and be able to provide solutions to solve these ills. When students acquire education that is framed from their immediate place, a sense of belonging will be enhanced because students will have an opportunity to interact with their environment and develop an attachment (Stedman, 2008). A sense of belonging will further be entrenched when place-based education offers the relevant skills and dispositions (cf. Lowenstein *et al.*, 2010) that students could use to solve problems in their real-life situations. Thus, students would have the desire to learn, as what they learn at school could be imported and extended to their communities. According to Dewey and Piaget, the proponents of constructivism, students' learning experiences must be incorporated and be emphasised to enrich students' knowledge. Similarly, when students realise that teachers build knowledge on the learning experiences that they bring to class, a sense of belonging will be fostered as they would feel that teachers have an interest in what they raise in class. As a result, student participation is increased. A place-based approach centres on collaborative learning which will, in turn, enhance a sense of community and by implication, a sense of belonging (Smith, 2002; Ontong & Le Grange, 2015). Similarly, Dunleavy and Burke (2019) are of the opinion that a sense of school belonging could be fostered when students are provided with an opportunity to share their values and learning experiences either in or outside the classroom. Thus, when an individual's values and experiences from the immediate place are recognised, a shared identity is established. The sense of school belonging is advanced when teachers engage students in school

activities which are meaningful and can contribute to their personal development. Albert (in Dukynaitė & Dudaitė, 2017) notes that the degree of participation in the education process of a student is accomplished when students acquire a positive learning experience and constant academic support from their teachers. A school sense of belonging significantly contributes to students' engagement with their education, and is likely to contribute to their academic achievement (cf. Osterman, 2000). Allen *et al.* (2016:101) are of the view that "when young people feel connected to their school, they are more likely to find school useful and be academically motivated".

From the ongoing exposition, it could be argued that schools and teachers are responsible for enhancing a sense of belonging where students would feel loved, supported and respected. To foster a sense of school belonging, teachers are expected to create a conducive teaching and learning environment that is receptive to all students, irrespective of their diverse backgrounds. In such a space, teachers will be sensitive to students' needs and emotions, and accept and respect their strengths and weaknesses. By implication, teachers will be responsive to the diversity of students. Teachers are expected to create a harmonious school environment where social relations could be built amongst the members of the school community. The latter, however, will continue interaction coupled with constant support. If the school allows parents and guardians to participate in their children's schoolwork, students would recognise that their parents have an interest in their schoolwork, which will advance a sense of connectedness. A sense of school belonging could be accomplished when students are given the opportunity to participate in decision-making and in activities that are geared towards the development of the school. It could be argued that when the school communicates its vision and mission to the entire school community, shared common values and aspirations could be attained holistically. Arguably, when students feel an integral part of the school community, greater school connectedness is enhanced. A school could foster a sense of school belonging when a disciplined and a fair learning environment, with supportive and just disciplinary policies, is provided. Thus, when a school applies fairness and justice to

all, a sense of rootedness to a place is promoted. When the school offers the type of education encrypted from a local area, students are likely to develop a sense of school belonging, as they would be learning from the community spaces in which they live. In such a space, home-grown education gives students an opportunity to interact with their immediate environment where they would be able to apply what they have learnt in school to solve the challenges that they may come across in their local areas.

#### **4.4 EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITARIAN BELONGING**

The purpose of this section is to foreground the educational implications for communitarian belonging. In the subsequent sections, I explain the educational implications derived from the African communitarian perspective that can feed into the development of a sense of communitarian belonging. Thereafter, I elaborate how educational implications couched from place-based education and educational implications for the development of a sense of belonging could be blended to feed into the development of a sense of communitarian belonging, followed by foregrounding the educational implications for communitarian belonging from the previous sections of the study.

##### **4.4.1 INVOLVEMENT OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY: INTERCONNECTEDNESS**

Schools as social institutions of teaching and learning consists of various members such as teachers, students and non-academic staff who make up the school community. The school community has a stake in ensuring that education takes place as anticipated by the concerned ministry. By implication, a school as a social institution is not an individualised entity but a place where students are defined in relation to others. The school has to pave the way for the establishment of positive relationships with the community so as to create a school environment that would enhance a smooth teaching and learning process. In so doing, the school would have enhanced *ubuntu*, which advances and advocates for interdependence amongst humans in a specific place (cf.3.4.1). To foster the involvement of the school community in the school's affairs, the school has to advance and promote relationships amongst the school community members to encourage participation in school affairs. (cf. 3.4.2; 3.5). Thus,

a school has to establish constructive relationships that would enable members of the school community to pursue their roles. In this way a sense of belonging is established. Arguably, the flourishing of the school also depends on *ukama* beliefs and practices that espouse respect and caring for the entire school community (cf. 3.4.2; 3.5; 4.3.1). The involvement of the school community denotes a collective approach (cf. Odari, 2020), which strongly alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging as it advocates for solidarity espoused from an African perspective (cf.3.4.1). Consistent with the idea, Ngubane and Makua (2021:2) aver that “[s]olidarity entails working together and cooperatively to achieve a common goal”. Arguably, solidarity as one of the indigenous principles that describes an African way of living alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging. It (solidarity) denotes the social connection of humans.

#### **4.4.2 FOSTERING MORAL EDUCATION**

Communitarianism from an African perspective calls for moral renewal. It could be argued that the school as the second line of defence (Arthur, 2000) is expected to instil a community’s moral values by imparting moral education couched from an African perspective. Such moral education should inculcate values and principles that describe an African way of living. These virtues include *ubuntu* (social justice, respect, reciprocity, benevolence, compassion) and *ukama*, (relatedness and interconnectivity) (cf. 3.4.1; 3.4.2; 3.5; Lorio, *et al.*, 2017; Broodryk, 2002). Arguably, values enshrined in African communitarianism should be reconstituted, imparted and instilled in the minds of the youth to enhance a sense of communitarian belonging. These virtues describe how an individual from an African society must conduct him/herself in relation to others, and must be extended to include concern for non-humans. In essence, a constellation of moral values that define African societies must be restored, as they have been undermined by colonial education systems (Behrens, 2012) for the sake of the welfare of both humans and non-humans. The earth as the communal resource is shared by both the animate and the inanimate, as a result there is a need to develop a reciprocal moral obligation towards the biophysical world to ensure its sustainable development. Consequently, the “interconnectedness of the parts of the web of life transcends generations” (Behrens, 2012:182). It could be argued that values and

principles enshrined in an African perspective inform a sense of communitarian belonging. Arguably, the school must promote and emphasise the significance of these virtues. The virtues encapsulated in African society must inform school policy development and the school curriculum. To enhance the adoption of these virtues, they must be displayed holistically on the school premises and amongst the school community, and can also be extended to the immediate environment of the students. Thus, moral education drawn from an African perspective could be construed as a sense of communitarian belonging as it regards the entanglement of all the entities in the ecosystem.

Schools are not only concerned about learning, but are also institutions vested with the responsibility to lay a foundation that prepares young people to become responsible citizens (Ngesu, 2020). As a result, the school is expected to provide character education (Arthur, 2000) which provides students with the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that define a society. These character traits are derived from the immediate society in which they form an integral part. Such character traits are imperative in “moulding the characters and personalities of the students” (Odari, 2020:65) that build them into responsible citizens relevant to their communities (Ngesu, 2020). Character education is considered significant because it provides lifelong guidelines and norms that reflect the common ethical values upheld by a society (Ngesu, 2020). Schools are expected to develop appropriate rules and regulations that set the moral tone of the school and describe the character traits embodied in them. When schools develop rules and regulations to govern them, the school community including students must be given an opportunity to air their views (cf. 4.3.2). When every member of the school community is considered in the school affairs, a sense of ownership and unity is promoted. Arguably, when the school community participates, cooperates and reflects togetherness (cf. Ngubane & Makua, 2021; 3.4.1) *ubuntu* is envisaged, as a sense of belonging is developed and it can therefore be translated to a sense of communitarian belonging. As one of the school’s roles is to prepare students to engage in community affairs and fit comfortably into the community, schools should provide students with the skills and dispositions that could

be extended to real-life situations (cf. 4.2.1; 4.2.2). By implication, students must be socialised into democratic principles (equality, equity, inclusiveness and active participation). These principles would enable them to live in harmony with others and develop a close interaction with their community spaces, thus, a sense of communitarian belonging is advanced.

#### **4.4.3 EDUCATION COUCHED FROM THE LOCAL AREA**

The education crisis in Lesotho, which is perpetuated by the Western type of education, continues to disconnect students from their community spaces (cf. 1.2; 1.6). The school as an institution of teaching and learning is vested with the responsibility to provide education encrypted from the local area which students inhabit and are familiar with. Thus, schools are compelled to reshape and restructure education drawn from students' localities, and this should be reflected in a classroom (cf.4.2.2) to enhance teaching and learning. Consequently, schools should teach context-specific content and engage students (Darron & Sharon, 2019; Gruenewald, 2003a) in the teaching and learning process. It should draw content from students' contexts and incorporate their lived experiences (Moss, Godinho & Chao, 2019). As education reflects on the students' way of life, it means that it is foregrounded from an African perspective (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3.3). The type of education drawn from the students' locale would reconnect them to their community spaces and would further serve as a learning experience which would assist them to acquire prior knowledge that they can use to construct their own knowledge (cf. Smith, 2002; 4.3.3). When students acquire education framed from their immediate place, they are likely to develop a sense of communitarian belonging. It could be argued that when students learn from the community spaces in which they live, they will interact with non-humans. As a result, schools are expected to encourage students to form harmonious relationships that would promote the interrelatedness and interdependence of humans and non-humans. Such relationships can only be established if students reflect a humane interaction with the biophysical world (cf. 3.4.2; 3.5) and consider them (non-humans) as part of the community. By building relationships with the non-humans, students are likely to develop a sense of belonging (cf. 2.5) which boils down to a sense of

communitarian belonging. Arguably, a community of humans and non-humans would be established, and a post-anthropocentric positioning of humans and non-humans (cf. 4.2) would be established to enhance an assemblage of all entities. Arguably, a sense of communitarian belonging considers the world as entangled or interrelated and interdependent, and calls for social justice (cf. 3.4.2; 3.5) as it enhances the close interaction between the humans and non-humans. Educational content framed from within the immediate environment of the students enhances their satisfaction, as it is relevant to their needs and will assist them to solve the challenges that they may encounter. Thus, as noted by Ezeanya-Esiobu (2019), education must be meaningful and respond to the demands of society.

From the ongoing exposition, it could be argued that education framed from a local area provides a deeper understanding of the world inclusive of humans and non-humans (cf. 4.2.2). Education premised from place advances relatedness and interdependence of the animate and the inanimate (cf. 3.5). As such a sense of communitarian belonging takes cognisance of and promotes the entanglement of humans and non-humans. Ezeanya-Esiobu (2019:8) is of the opinion that education framed from community spaces “views the world as interrelated, it does not necessarily subordinate all other life forms to mankind as they are all interrelated and interdependent parts of one ecosystem”. Arguably, a sense of communitarian belonging regards life as a network of harmonious relationships. Thus, this sense of communitarian belonging constitutes humanity and relatedness in all facets of life (cf. 3.5). It could be argued that education framed from a local area inclusive of humans and non-humans should inform policy development and school curricula (cf. 4.2.1; 4.3.3). It could be further articulated that schools need to “work with place and community” (Brennan & Widdop, 2020:2). School policy should provide a framework that would facilitate the implementation of education encrypted from the students’ immediate place as a means to provide education that would connect students to their community spaces, encourage a close interaction and would be meaningful to the needs of the people (cf. 1.1; Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2019).

In summary, the section looked at the educational implications for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging, in other words what schools must do to promote communitarian belonging. In order to realise the national aspirations of Lesotho, schools are expected to consider education encrypted from a sense communitarian belonging. As a result, schools are expected to develop a reactive policy which sets out what has to be done to implement education derived from a sense of communitarian belonging. Such a policy would have to entail directives which would reconstitute education couched from a locale. Thus, schools must relate teaching and learning experiences to students' immediate place. By implication, schools have to foreground teaching and learning experiences which enshrines the entanglement of humans and non-humans. The content must emphasise and strengthen the interdependence and interrelatedness of all entities in the biophysical world. It could be argued that a sense of communitarian belonging advocates for an assemblage of all the entities in the ecosystem. Thus, it shifts away from the anthropocentric positioning of humans over non-humans to a post-humanist approach, which regards all entities in a space as equal. For schools to promote communitarian belonging, education should be framed from the moral values that define the community in which students are an integral part. Arguably, the school has to offer moral education that is intended to mould the students into responsible citizens. Since a sense of communitarian belonging denotes a collective approach, it calls for the involvement of the school community in its endeavour to mould a learner into a responsible citizen. Thus, the school and the teachers must give school community members an opportunity to take part in the teaching and learning experiences that are expected to provide meaningful education.

#### **4.5. SUMMARY**

The objective of the chapter was to consider the educational implications for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging. Thus, what should be done in the school context to promote education drawn from a sense of communitarian belonging. This was achieved through considering literature on the implications of education for place and for a promotion of a sense of belonging. It was further achieved

through considering the educational implications grounded from the students' immediate place. The last section of the chapter was blended from the aforementioned sections and the preceding chapters of the study to foreground educational implications for a sense of communitarian belonging.

The first section of the chapter focused on what it entails to teach place-based education in schools. It was noted that place-based education is an educational approach that is intended to reconnect students with their immediate environment, inclusive of the non-humans (cf. 4.2; 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3). Thus, place-based education acknowledges an assemblage of all entities across the space. As place-based education takes cognisance of the need to incorporate the non-humans in the school curriculum, there is a need for the schools to develop a reactive policy. The policy will conceptualise the approach and describe explicitly what should be done in schools to effectively implement it (cf. 4.2.2). Place-based education as responsive teaching and learning calls for the classroom to be taken outside, and into the environment, where students would be able to relate what is learnt in the classroom to their environment inclusive of humans and non-humans (cf. 4.2.2). For schools to shift from one type of education to the another is quite an extensive exercise that requires concerted efforts from different stakeholders. Schools would therefore be expected to liaise with different stakeholders and mobilise the immediate community to assist and give students an opportunity to interact with the local environment (cf. 4.2.2). Arguably, place-based education espouses an assemblage of all humans and non-humans, and advances bioregionalism where the immediate community would be incorporated to provide knowledge of indigenous moral values that define the society in which the school is located. Schools as agents of change are expected to provide students with the skills and dispositions (cf. 4.2.1; 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.2) that would enable them to apply to their community spaces so as to eradicate the social ills that have been created by the anthropocentric type of education that disconnected students from their immediate places.

The second section of the chapter focused on the educational implications for the promotion of a sense of belonging that could foreground educational implications for a sense of communitarian belonging. It was noted that schools and teachers are expected to create a warm and welcoming school environment through offering love, support and care to all school community members, irrespective of the different backgrounds, strengths and weakness (cf. 4.3.1). Arguably, teachers could accomplish a sense of belonging only if they are sensitive to students' needs and emotions. In such a space a sense of connectedness is promoted. Schools are also expected to a create school environment where social relations could be built amongst school community members. The enhancement of strong and positive relations would facilitate a sense of belonging where care, support and trust would be promoted across the school environment (cf. 2.5; 4.3.4). The school is further expected to establish a communicative culture where the school communicates the mission and the vision of the school to the students. The students in turn are given the opportunity to air their views about the development of the school (cf. 4.3.2). By implication, students would feel an integral part of the school community, which would enhance connectedness in the school environment. The school is also expected to create a school environment that encourages the involvement of parents in the school affairs and in the education of their children. In such a space, students would feel that their parents have an interest in what they are learning, and as a result a greater bond to the school is advanced (cf. 4.3.3). It could be argued that students would feel a sense of connectedness to a school if the curriculum offered is encrypted from the community spaces in which they live, and to which they can easily relate. This type of curriculum makes students aware of the social ills inherent in the community in which they live. It provides students with knowledge that they could use to lessen the destructive practices that destroy their environment, and would capacitate them with the skills and dispositions to tackle inherent challenges in their communities

The last section of the chapter focused on the educational implications of a sense of communitarian belonging. It could be argued that education couched from a sense of communitarian belonging is a transformative educational approach that is framed from

the community spaces in which students live. In such a context, schools are expected to develop a reactive policy that would serve as the foundation to implement a school curriculum that draws content from the students' immediate environment (cf. 4.2.2). In this type of education, teaching and learning practices must be connected with the students' communities (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3). In such a space, grounding education from a local community translates into education that is inclusive of the human and the more-than-human world. As an educational shift, it is founded on connectedness, hence it promotes the entanglement of humans and non-humans (cf. 4.2.1), drawing from different spheres of the environment. Thus, weaving a web of life would enhance a deeper understanding of the students' environment and consequently, a sense of place is advanced. When students are connected to their environment, they would be able to understand, appreciate and form relationships with and ultimately work towards the restoration of the environment. Education framed from a sense of communitarian belonging does not only focus on community learning, but incorporates students' prior knowledge (cf. 4.3.3) which schools need to emphasise and strengthen. By implication, it is through education couched from the local community that students would be able to explore, expand on their existing knowledge, and apply to the real-life situations to solve the inherent challenges in their communities. Arguably, teaching and learning grounded from the local context offers experiential learning (cf. Smith, 2002) where students' engagement is highly emphasised. In this manner, teachers are expected to employ pedagogical methods that gives students an opportunity to be hands-on and advance learner-centred teaching and collaborative learning (cf. 4.4.2; 4.3.3). It could be inferred that education grounded from the community spaces in which students live aligns to constructivism, which advocates for social learning, where cooperative learning amongst the students and teachers is promoted (cf. 4.3.3). Teaching and learning from community spaces in which students live relates to social constructivism. It emphasises an individual's interactions with culture to create knowledge. According to Akpan, Igwe, Mpamah and Okoro (2020:50), in social constructivism "language and culture play essential roles both in human intellectual development in how humans perceive the world. In this way, learning concepts are transmitted by means of language, interpreted and understood by experience and

interactions within a cultural setting”. It is through language and culture that students could understand the physical world through interactions between humans and non-humans. It could be argued that schools are expected to strengthen the value of language, and the inclusion of culture in the school curriculum is imperative. There is a need for schools to incorporate learning experiences that bear the cultural knowledge of the community spaces in which students live. In such a context, students would be exposed to “diverse learning experiences that would empower them to adapt cultural transformations that make them fit into the dynamic situations” (Ajani, 2019:113). While education encrypted from a sense of communitarian belonging is expected to improve students’ academic performance, it also increases an attachment to a place (Darron & Sharon, 2019; Korpershoek *et al.*, 2019). In this sense, education encrypted from a sense of communitarian belonging brings forth connection, participation and responsibilities to students and enhance the formation of harmonious relationships between the humans and non-humans, and students and their teachers. Education encrypted from a sense of communitarian belonging recognises students in relation to the community of which they are an integral part (cf. 3.5), hence schools are expected to involve the community in teaching and learning as they are conversant about their customs and values, and about everything that surrounds them.

Teaching for a sense of communitarian belonging implies that schools must offer the skills and dispositions that capacitate students to effectively interact with the biophysical world (cf. 4.2.1; 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.2). Such skills and dispositions would enhance students to promote the interrelatedness and interdependence of humans and non-humans. Schools must provide students with the opportunity to apply criticism and analyse inherent practices that seems to destroy the environment (cf. 4.2.1). It is by asking questions that students would be able to identify the social ills created by anthropocentric education and come up with solutions to address the problems inherent in their locale in order to promote social justice for all the entities in the ecological world. Arguably, teaching and learning from a sense of communitarian belonging means providing students with competencies that liberate and empower

them to reach their full potential as a means to engage and interact with the environment.

Since education couched from a sense of communitarian belonging is embedded in the local environment, it takes cognisance of the virtues that define the students' community in which they live (cf. 4.4.2). Arguably, it implies that schools must emphasise aspects of the school curriculum which restores moral education in schools. In such a space, teaching and learning must incorporate indigenous values and principles that advance an African way of living (cf. 3.4.1). Thus, schools are expected to promote and cultivate values that promote coexistence, relatedness, cohesion and interconnectedness of all entities in the biophysical world (cf. 4.2.1). In this manner, students must be taught how to respect and take care of humans and the more-than-human world. In this way, a sense of communitarian belonging subscribe to *ubuntu* where social justice is promoted because it regards all entities as equal across the space (cf. 3.4.1). As noted by Brennan and Widdop (2020:6), schools and communities must help students to “develop ethical relations with other species and with eco-system, not just humans”. In promoting moral values in the school environment, schools must give students an opportunity to air their views (cf. 4.3.2) about what defines the moral tone of the school. In this way, a school would have advanced democratic principles where students take part in the decision-making process of the school and thus promote collectivism.

I argue for education framed from a sense of communitarian belonging grounded from an African perspective. This type of education is a means to respond to the education crisis, meaning education disarticulated from the community spaces in which students live. I therefore propose that the adoption of such education is a transformative shift that decolonises the education system. It connects students to their natural and cultural surrounding (Butler & Sinclair, 2020; Gruenewald, 2003b). It also brings social justice to all the entities of the biophysical world and takes cognisance of the interrelatedness, interconnectedness and interdependency of humans and the more-than-human world. In such a context, education derived from a sense of

communitarian belonging requires a change of education policy, content and practice. Thus, it has implications for both policy and teaching and learning. If we consider education encrypted from a sense of communitarian belonging as a means to realise national aspirations, reactive policy should be adopted to reconnect students with their local place, including with the more-than-human world.

In the next chapter, I explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the development of a sense communitarian belonging. It is my contention that such education policies and education-related documents should promote education framed from the community spaces in which students live, and should be inclusive of both the human and the more-than-human world.

## **CHAPTER 5: EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF LESOTHO EDUCATION POLICIES TO PROMOTE A SENSE OF COMMUNITARIAN BELONGING**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The objective of this chapter is to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging (cf. 1. 3. 4). It is my contention that exploring the potential of Lesotho education policies could serve as a step towards determining if the said policies provide scope for a transformative education approach, which shifts from the anthropocentric positioning of human beings over non-humans to an assemblage of all entities across the space. This chapter will also assist me to determine if the current education reform connects students to their community spaces and the environment in which they live, and takes cognisance of the more-than-human world. It is my intention to ascertain if the education policies enshrine virtues such as humanness, relatedness, cohesion, harmony and reciprocity grounded from the African communitarian perspective, and promote the interrelatedness and interdependence of all entities across the space. This chapter will reveal if Lesotho education policies contribute towards the healing of social ills, and if they challenge the prevailing forms of human oppression and inequality. As such, this chapter is perceived as a necessity for commenting on and making suggestions regarding the potential of Lesotho education policies for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging in Chapter 6.

In this chapter, I conduct a document and policy analysis to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging. To achieve this objective, I first position the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP) (2009)* within the larger context of educational legislation, with specific reference to the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging. In this regard, I draw on several documents, starting with the *Constitution of the Kingdom of Lesotho (Constitution) 1993*, and other education related documents such as the *Lesotho Vision 2020* and *Lesotho Education Act 2010*, and lastly also the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy*

2009 (CAP 2009). Once I have positioned *CAP 2009* within the broader legislative context, I discuss the findings of both the document and policy analyses separately as presented in the mentioned policies and documents. Document analysis will be used to review printed official education-related documents to explore the views of policy-makers in Lesotho, while the content analysis of selected Lesotho education policies will specifically be done in reference to policy aims, objectives and the underlying values to determine the potential of the policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. The study will employ a qualitative data analysis to generate data to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging.

In this chapter I report on a qualitative data analysis that was conducted on documents and policies regarding education in Lesotho. Education policies and other education related documents were examined and interpreted to generate data. I developed a framework for analysis guided by a literature review and the conceptual framework derived from the education implications for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging. I will report on this in this chapter, after which I discuss finding generated from the document analysis, followed by findings from the policy analysis.

## **5.2 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: DOCUMENT AND POLICY ANALYSIS**

This section focuses on the research methods that were used to collect data, namely document and policy analysis. Qualitative data analysis entails the process of analysing data through the assessment, evaluation and interpretation of textual data to obtain information (Bowen, 2009; Nieuwenhuis, 2016b; Morgan, 2022) that could be used to respond to the research questions.

### **5.2.1 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

Document analysis as a qualitative research approach is a systematic procedure in which documents are examined, reviewed and interpreted to gain a deeper understanding in order to elicit meaning (Bowen, 2009; Nieuwenhuis, 2016b; Morgan,

2022). Thus, document analysis entails collecting contextual data through examining and evaluating pre-existing documents or texts. I used document analysis to analyse the *Constitution of the Kingdom of Lesotho (Constitution) 1993* and other education related documents such as the *Lesotho Vision 2020* to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. For the purpose of the study, I used the following approach as a guide to analyse the mentioned documents (Samuel, 2017):

- Policy focus: what is the focus of the policy?;
- Policy textual proposition: What is the scope of the policy?;
- Policy type: What type of policy is it?;
- Policy goals: What are the intentions behind the policy?;
- Policy borrowing: From where did the policy draw its inspiration (internally/externally)?;
- Policy discourse context: What is the policy responding to?;
- Policy consultation: Who are the major stakeholders involved in the policy-making process?;
- Policy beneficiaries: Who are the intended beneficiaries?;
- Policy implementation: How is the implementation to be achieved? and
- Policy currency: How does one develop ownership among potential users of the legislation?

Samuel (2017) asked these questions to gain a deeper understanding of the context against which policy documents were developed. As a result, Samuel's (2017) approach was used as a guide to unpack documents in order to establish the context in which they were established. Furthermore, Taylor *et al.*'s (1997) views (cf. 1.7.2; 5.2.1) regarding policy analysis were also used to augment Samuel's (2017) view. However, some of these aspects or questions would not be contemplated for the analysis of the Lesotho Constitution 1993 and the Lesotho Education Act 2010, as they are not applicable.

I chose document analysis as an approach because it gave me the opportunity to examine and interpret pre-existing policy documents to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging. Document analysis offers a means through which I would obtain answers pertaining to questions that I asked throughout the text (Chanda, 2021). A qualitative document analysis provides “stability of the data” (Morgan, 2022:66) because the researcher cannot alter existing data or exert an influence on it. Although document analysis examines and interprets pre-existing texts, it does not provide adequate data, and because of inherent biases it cannot be used as a stand-alone method. I therefore opted to use policy analysis to complement document analysis. I subsequently deemed a qualitative approach most applicable for the creation, analysis and interpretation of data.

From the above exposition, I embarked on the document analysis of two policy documents, namely the *Constitution of the Kingdom of Lesotho 1993* and *Lesotho Vision 2020*. Given the overarching aim of my study, to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging, it was of paramount importance to analyse these documents as they constitute a concrete foundation of education curriculum reform. It is imperative to read these policies in line with other policies that preceded them. As noted by Taylor *et al.* (1997:46), “intertextuality in a policy refers to the relationship of a policy with other policies and official documents that could have influenced or played a role in the gestation of the policy”. Similarly, Raselimo and Mahao (2015:5) aver that a “curriculum policy text should be analysed alongside other relevant policy texts to establish inter-textual links, and in the context of its history and particular site of production”. It is significant to consider reading other cognate policies that existed prior to the policies under investigation, as such prior policies may replicate or contradict new policies, as way of minimising the risk of failing or hampering their implementation. It is my contention that the analysis of these policy documents can provide insightful information pertaining to the potential of Lesotho education policies to provide education framed from the

community spaces in which students live, inculcate moral values framed from the African perspective, and provide skills and dispositions that students could apply in their daily experiences. The *Constitution of Lesotho 1993* as the supreme law serves as the foundation and the guiding principle with which other laws developed in the country must be consistent. The *Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009* is no exception, and it drew its mandate of providing education which is “accessible, relevant, efficient and of the best quality” from the Constitution. It is against this background that *CAP 2009* was enacted, and the policy framework had to be aligned to the Constitution in order to attain what the constitution aspires to. The *Lesotho Vision 2020* is a long-term development framework that aims to improve the country’s socio-economic, political and environmental spheres in the 20 years from the time of its inception. Since education is regarded as a vehicle towards realising these national aspirations, education was regarded as one of the development performance indicators. *Lesotho Vision 2020* served as the inspirational document against which *CAP 2009* was enacted. In the light of the foregoing exposition, it is imperative to position *CAP 2009* in the broader legislative context, as these legislative policy documents are fundamental in influencing education curriculum reform. In this case the policy framework (*CAP 2009*) is a consequence of policy that intends to implement what is envisaged by the *Constitution 1993* and *Lesotho Vision 2020*.

#### **5.2.1.1 THE CONSTITUTION OF LESOTHO**

As a democratic country, the Kingdom of Lesotho is governed by the *Constitution of Lesotho (1993)* (hereafter Constitution). The Constitution serves as “the supreme law of Lesotho and if any other law is inconsistent with the Constitution that other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void” (Constitution, 1993:Chapter 1:Section 2). It can be assumed that the constitution is the supreme law by which all citizens are ruled. It serves as the foundation and informs all laws that are developed and enacted in the country, and those that are inconsistent with the Constitution are null and void. The Constitution is mandated to oversee that “every person in Lesotho is entitled, whatever his [sic] race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status to fundamental human rights

and freedoms” (Chapter 11, Section 4 (1)). By implication the *Constitution of Lesotho (1993)* affirms to build a society characterised by the principles of equality and justice, as it aims to

promoting a society based on equality and justice for all its citizens regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. In particular, the State shall take appropriate measures in order to promote equality of opportunity for the disadvantaged groups in the society to enable them to participate fully in all spheres of public life (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993: Chapter III, Section 26(1)).

In the pursuit of building a democratic society, the Constitution envisions that “no person may be denied fundamental human rights and freedoms such as the right to life, the right to personal liberty; freedom of movement and residence; freedom from inhumane treatment; freedom from slavery and forced labour; freedom from arbitrary search or entry; the right to respect for private and family life, and the right to education” (Chapter 11 Section 4 1 (a-l)). In considering these rights, the Constitution aspires to build a democratic society in which people’s fundamental human rights are respected and protected by law. It could be argued that in this regard the Constitution undertakes social responsibility to build and promote a common good (cf. 3.2; 3.3.1) in which these fundamental human rights are universally shared by all community members for harmonious functioning of the individuals in their communities.

In explaining Lesotho’s intentions with regard to education, the Constitution (Chapter 28 (a)) indicates that “Lesotho shall endeavour to make education available to all and shall adopt policies aimed at ensuring that:

- (a) education is directed to the full development of the human personality and Sense of dignity and strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- (b) primary education is compulsory and available to all;

(c) secondary education, including technical and vocational education, is made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular, by the progressive introduction of free education;

(d) higher education is made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular, by the progressive introduction of free education; and

(e) fundamental education is encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed their primary education.

In an endeavour to ensure that all citizens have access to the right to education in all levels of schooling, the Constitution subsequently envisions to provide basic education that is aimed at developing an individual holistically, to benefit both their own and society's development. In this sense the flourishing of students would be beneficial to the community of which they are an integral part (cf. 3.2), hence communalism is promoted. It is in this picture that the Constitution anticipates free and compulsory primary education accessible to all citizens. In this regard the Constitution promotes equality, accessibility and social justice, in which every student is given the opportunity to enrol in school. The Constitution extends provision of education beyond primary school level to higher education, in which technical and vocational education is made accessible to all. The *Constitution* (1993:Section 28(a)), guarantees that

Lesotho shall endeavour to make education available to all and shall adopt policies aimed at securing that education is directed to the full development of the human personality and sense of dignity and strengthening the respect for human dignity and strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In alignment with the Constitution, Lesotho envisions to provide basic education at all levels. It is anticipated that the values embedded in democratic societies and fundamental human rights will inform teaching and learning at school. Thus, through the incorporation of human personality, the Constitution envisages to build a humane being embedded with African values and morals that would promote a well-rounded and respectable person.

It is imperative to include the section on protection of the environment derived from the Constitution as it relates to the research question of this study. The Constitution (1993:Section 36) states that

Lesotho shall adopt policies designed to protect and enhance the natural and cultural environment of Lesotho for the benefit of both present and future generations and shall endeavour to ensure to all citizens a sound and safe environment adequate for their health and well-being.

In the above quotation the Constitution aspires to design policies that would protect and enhance the natural and cultural environment. The implication here is that policies are expected to be formulated that would advance the protection of the natural and the cultural environment for future generations. By introducing the need to protect the environment inclusive of both the human and the non-human world. The constitution considers all the species found in the ecosystem which consists of the living and the non-living, and the inanimate (cf. Behrens, 2014). I argue that the Constitution provides a framework that would dismantle an anthropocentric positioning of humans over non-humans. Thus, the Constitution aims to foster interrelatedness and interconnectedness between humans and non-humans (cf. 2.2.1.1; 2.3.1). As such there is a need for education that promotes a sense of communitarian belonging which emphasises the reconnection of students to their immediate environment (cf. 4.2). This implies that when students are reconnected to their local environment, a sense of belonging would be advanced, and harmonious relationships would be formed. Thus, students would be living in relationality with non-humans, and *ukama* as a concept of African communitarianism is promoted (cf. 3.4.2). I argue for education derived from the immediate places in which students live, characterised by values framed from the African communitarian perspective, as it would enable students to form an attachment to and would eventually take responsibility in ensuring its survival. Thus, place-based education would promote the new materialist turn and an assemblage of all the animate and inanimate across the space that translates to social justice, in which all the entities across the space are included.

In order to maintain the cultural activities and practices of the Basotho people, the Constitution (1993:Section 35(1)) ensures that

Lesotho shall endeavour to ensure that every citizen has the opportunity to freely participate in the cultural life of the community and to share in the benefits of scientific advancement and its application

The Constitution gives Basotho people and minority groups in Lesotho the liberty to engage in the cultural activities and practices of their communities. Although it is imperative to ensure that people participate in cultural practices, the Constitution is silent on how education could be used to transmit such cultural practices to the present and the coming generations. It could be anticipated that the sectors responsible for the preservation of culture would adopt this directive from the Constitution and formulate policies that respond to this. As stated, the Lesotho education system is clouded by colonial values (cf. 1.1) which promote individualism. This mindset perpetuates anthropocentrism and does not take cognisance of the non-human world (cf. 2.2.1.1). It is imperative to reform education to focus on the values and the morals that describe the Basotho nation, and that would inform teaching and learning (cf. 4.4.2). In this regard, I argue for education couched from a sense of communitarian belonging (cf. 4.4). This type of education would frame values and ethics drawn from the African perspective, and incorporate non-humans in the teaching and learning process (cf. 4.4.2; 4.4.3). It would provide environmental and cultural ethics that will equip students with humane actions and provide an adequate knowledge and understanding of the entire cosmic life to ensure their relatedness and interdependence (cf. 4.2.1). To further entrench the cultural aspect, the Constitution considers that the “official languages of Lesotho shall be Sesotho and English” (1993:Section 3(1)). The Constitution considers two languages that are to be used as official languages. It could be argued that the Constitution relates to a sense of belonging in which Basotho children are allowed to use their own language in different arenas.

The next section centers on the analysis of the *Lesotho Vision 2020*, based on Samuel's (2017) and Taylor *et al.*'s (1997) approaches to reading a policy.

### **5.2.1.2 LESOTHO VISION 2020**

It has been stated that the Constitution serves as the fundamental tool from which laws and policies are drawn (cf. 5.2.1.1). The *Lesotho Vision 2020* is a long-term development framework that emanated from the Constitution. It is an official document that was developed and published by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MoFDP) in 2000. This development framework was initiated because of the inherent challenges faced by Lesotho and her people, such as environmental and land degradation, climate change, poor land use management, declining agricultural production HIV/AIDS, corruption and nepotism (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2000). In the context of these prevailing challenges, a clarion call was made to salvage the country, in which the Basotho nation was asked to dream about how their country could be changed for the better. It is in this context that *Lesotho Vision 2020* was developed. The focus of the framework was to map a long-term development plan for the country in order to improve its socio-economic, environmental and political spheres of development for a period of over 20 years. The specific objectives of the *Lesotho Vision 2020* are to

establish a long-term vision for Lesotho by looking beyond the short-term plans and adjustment programmes; explore the options for economic, political and human development to the year 2020; identify alternative development strategies suitable for the Lesotho situation; promote a process of open dialogue and consultation with socio-economic groups country wide; create an environment in which Basotho will actively participate in achieving the Vision; develop a focus along the horizon in the direction of which development plans can be rolled out (Government of Lesotho, 2004:1.1).

This framework alludes to a symbolic policy in which the Basotho nation intended to shape and take control of their country's development by identifying suitable strategies that could be applied to awaken and give direction in the political, socio-economic

development spheres. To ensure commitment from everyone, open discussions and consultations were held to solicit views from the Basotho nation (cf. 3.2) in different geographical locations, and their wishes and aspirations were captured. The Vision reports that “consultations were held with political party representatives, chiefs, interim local councils, youth groups, churches, the business community, professionals, marginalised groups, people with disabilities, ethnic groups, civil servants, security establishments, tertiary institutions, primary and secondary schools and children” (Government of Lesotho, 2004:1.2.2). A national steering committee comprised of various stakeholders was set up to oversee the Vision. Thus, the Vision followed a participatory approach in which instrumental stakeholders were involved to voice their wishes and aspirations to shape the Basotho destiny.

The document *Lesotho Vision 2020* (Government of Lesotho, 2004:x) anticipates that

By the year 2020 Lesotho shall be a stable democracy, a united and prosperous nation at peace with itself and its neighbours. It shall have a healthy and well-developed human resource base. Its economy will be strong, its environment well managed and its technology well established.

From the above quotation it could be argued that *Lesotho Vision 2020* envisions to build a united nation characterised by peace and stability, in which a well-developed human resource would work towards improving the socio-economic development of the country. It could be anticipated that in a democratic world, fundamental human rights would be observed and the values that underpin democracy, such as equality and social justice, would be at the order of the day (cf. 3.4.1). In this regard it could be argued that Vision 2020 relates to *ubuntu*, where in a community no one is superior over another. People will be expected to have equal opportunities, and justice will be attributed to all (cf. 3.3; 3.4.1).

Regarding education, “[t]he education system is yet to fully respond to the needs of the country” (Government of Lesotho, 2004:Section 3.2.4 (c)). It could be argued that the *Lesotho Vision 2020* regards education as the panacea to the problems that are

affecting the Basotho nation. Therefore, the *Lesotho Vision 2020* (Government of Lesotho, 2004:Section 2.2.) envisages that

Basotho will have access to quality education fully responsive to the country's needs, accessible at all levels and limited only by intellectual ability not by income or wealth. Lesotho will have the system of education that is closely linked and well researched to enhance the student's talents and capabilities. Education will be free and compulsory up to senior secondary level. Lifelong learning, vocational, technical and entrepreneurial education will be the main focus in the education system. The education system will produce a competent, skilled and productive labour force.

*Lesotho Vision 2020* regards education as the most efficient strategy to facilitate a well-developed human resource body. Lesotho education institutions are expected to provide relevant education to all students at different levels of study so as to enable students to acquire skills and knowledge which they could apply in their locale, and which would assist them to contribute meaningfully to their communities (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3). Although the framework mapped where Lesotho's education system would be by the year 2020, it also identified key challenges, such as the improvement of education accessibility, the reformation of the curriculum in order to meet national priorities such as production, entrepreneurial and vocational skills, the improvement of the management of education at all levels, and addressing the effects of HIV and AIDS on education (Government of Lesotho, 2004:Section 3.2.4 (c)). It could be argued that from the aforementioned challenges, education must be framed from the context in which students find themselves, and that would equip them with the skills and dispositions to address the concerns around them.

From *Lesotho Vision 2020*, the country sees the need to build a united nation where culture is central to national unity in Lesotho. The widespread use of national symbols such as the national flag signifies a united nation sharing common goals based on a common cultural heritage.

In its attempt to build national unity, the *Lesotho Vision 2020* expects the nation to engage in shared cultural activities that would promote the cultural heritage and national unity in the country. Thus, *Lesotho Vision 2020* promotes communalism, in which the solidarity of the people with shared norms and values cohabit in shared living spaces (cf. 3.4.1; 4.4.1). Arguably, the Vision in this regard links to *ubuntu* as an African value that enhances building harmonious relationships for people to live in unity (cf. 3.4.1). The government also anticipated that the “Ministry of Education and Training encourages cultural appreciation in curricula development, and consciously promotes cultural practices through a mandatory cultural day in schools” (Government of Lesotho, 2004:Section 3.2.2). In this attempt, the government ensures the transmission of culture from one generation to the next. In this way an attachment to a community is promoted, which strongly alludes to a sense of belonging (cf. 2.6). As cultural heritage entails the history, the correct use of language and reference to the right customs and values, it is important to preserve and maintain critical aspects of the culture so that students and the community at large do not forget their heritage.

In its endeavour to map Lesotho’s future, *Lesotho Vision 2020* envisions to build a united nation in which

Basotho shall be a united nation with cherished norms and values that will enhance a sense of belonging, identity and pride in every Mosotho. In addition, the Basotho will share common goals based on common cultural heritage and will continue to observe with respect their national symbols such as the national flag. The Monarchy will continue to play the most important role of unifying the nation (Government of Lesotho, 2004:2.3.2).

A united nation alludes to a community in which its members owe allegiance to and people are expected to live in humanity with others (cf. 3.4.1). In this type of community there is unity and solidarity (cf. 3.4.1; 4.4.1). The community is defined by shared norms and values that promote a sense of belonging if the community members

subscribe to and take cognisance of elements that define their culture (cf. 2.5). It could be argued that building a united nation alludes to the humanness and relatedness of the community members in the society (cf. 3.4.1). When people live in humanness harmonious relationships are established (cf. 3.4.2; 3.4.3; 3.5).

In an attempt to manage the environment, the *Lesotho Vision 2020* regards education as the vehicle through which people across the country could be taught how to take care of the ecosystems of which they are integral part of. *The Lesotho Vision* (2020:Section 3.2.6) commits that “[t]he country’s diversity of life systems will be supported and protected by a nation which is environmentally conscious and whose people are in balanced existence with the natural environment... Environmental education will be integrated at all levels of learning”. Thus, the government acknowledges that it is through environmental education that students and the society could learn how to conserve and preserve the environment for the current and the coming generations. It could be argued that environmental education alludes to education that takes cognisance of the non-human world, and the community would therefore be sensitised into appreciating the non-human world (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3), and be encouraged to preserve and conserve it for coming generations. In this space, *ukama* as an African value provides an anchorage of unity and togetherness. As a result, there is a need for beliefs and practices that would promote respect, love and accountability for the sustenance of all entities (cf. 3.4.2). I argue that environmental education is subsequently framed within the coexistence and the interconnectedness of all elements of the cosmic life (cf. 2.2.1.1), thus it echoes an assemblage of entities across the space (cf. 2.3.3) where all the species live in relationality (cf. 3.4.2).

From the above exposition, it could be argued that the *Lesotho Vision 2020* is beneficial to the Basotho people, as it played a significant role in the development of *CAP 2009*. *CAP 2009* is anticipated to realise the aspirations and needs pertaining to the revival of the Lesotho education system. Thus, the *Lesotho Vision 2020* was analysed because it provides a contextual guide in which the *CAP 2009* was formulated and enacted. It was relevant to analyse the *Lesotho Vision 2020* in this

study, as it bears development performance indicators that relate to the overarching aim of this study.

### **5.2.2 POLICY ANALYSIS**

According to Hartshorne (1999:5), policy refers to “any activities, plans, thoughts and decisions undertaken by the government through regulations and legislations, with the aim of bringing about development at all levels and departments in order to offer better services to the community”. Thus, a policy sets out the intentions of the government to respond to the needs of the public. According to Hartshorne (1999:5), education policy is a “course of action adopted by government through legislation, ordinances, and regulations and pursued through administration and control, finance and inspection, with the general assumption that it should be beneficial to the country and its citizens”. Here the government sets out its intention through an education policy that is intended to address the societal needs. Following the enactment of the development of a policy, a policy analysis would be carried out. According to Patton, Sawicki and Clark (2016:21), policy analysis is the “process through which we identify and evaluate alternative policies or programs that are intended to lesson or resolve economic, social or physical problems”. Thus, policy analysis is a form of inquiry in which policies are examined to provide information that could be used to determine whether the intended objectives of the policy have been met. For the purpose of this study, the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 (CAP 2009)* and the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* were analysed to determine whether the government of Lesotho intends to bring a transformative change in education by promoting education couched from the community spaces in which students live. Policy analysis entails analysing the context in which the policy was developed (Samuel, 2017; Taylor *et al.*, 1997). Thus, policy analysis intends to establish the factors that led to the gestation of the policy. For the purpose of this study, context analysis enabled me to explore the reasons behind the production of *CAP (2009)*.

Policy analysis entails examining the content of the policy in relation to its aims, underlying values, and directives for implementation (Taylor *et al.*, 1997; Codd, 1988).

In this manner, a policy document has to explicitly articulate the intentions of the government from the onset about education framed from an African communitarian perspective. In this study, the content of the education policies was assessed to determine if it responds to the overarching aim of the study, which is to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging. Policy analysis entails a critical look at issues such as the values enshrined in the text (Taylor *et al.*, 1997). Policy analysis was thus helpful for this study because I was able to determine what values are embedded in the *CAP 2009* and *Lesotho Education Act 2010*, and if such values or are framed from an African perspective and are intended to bring social justice and heal the injustices of the past. In this study, the analysis of the policy texts looked at what Lesotho education policies have excluded or omitted, and any ambiguities with regard to education framed from the students' immediate place. In alignment with the study, policy analysis assisted me to determine such silences (Taylor *et al.*, 1997).

From the foregoing exposition, I embarked on a policy analysis of the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* and the *CAP 2009*. In response to the overarching aim of my study, to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging, the Act was analysed because it is mandated to legalise all matters relating to education.

As the Act intends to legalise all matters pertaining to education, *CAP 2009* is no exception. This implies that the Act legalises the implementation of the policy framework in Lesotho government schools. *CAP 2009* was analysed because it is a current curriculum reform that is intended to bring change in primary and secondary education curricula. It is my contention that the analysis of these policy documents would provide insightful information to determine whether the policy documents have the potential to promote education that takes cognisance of the students' local environment, is sensitive to the-more-than human world, promotes moral values framed from the African perspective, and promotes competencies that would prepare the students to function meaningfully in their immediate place. Samuel's (2017)

approach to reading policies and Taylor's *et al.*, (1997) framework (cf. 5.1) were employed to analyse the aforementioned policy documents.

In order to respond to the central question of this study, namely “what is the potential of Lesotho education policies for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging”, there was a need to engage in a content analysis of the Lesotho *Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009* as a policy document promulgated to review both primary and secondary education curricula. As an official policy text, the policy framework was developed with the aim of “making education at these levels accessible, relevant, efficient and of the best quality” (MoET, 2009:1). As identified by Codd (1988) there are two purposes of policy analysis - one **for** policy content and the other **of** policy content. In this study analysis of content was undertaken. According to Taylor *et al.*, (1997:49), a content analysis is about “answering the “how” and “what” questions of a policy”. The how of a policy looks at an assessment of its general aims and objectives, including the values and assumptions underlying the policy (Olssen, Codd & O’Neill, 2004). The what of the policy is about the policy directives, in other words what has to be done to implement the policy. For the purpose of this study, this refers to the policy directives for schools and the Lesotho education system to implement the *CAP 2009*. In the process of content analysis of the *CAP 2009* official policy text, the study will highlight the silences of the policy in order to determine what has been said and what has not been said (Taylor *et al.*, 1997). Apart from determining the silences of the policy, there is a need to analyse the current policy in relation to other policies that preceded it (cf. 5.2.1). For the purpose of this study, such policy documents are the *Lesotho Constitution (1993)*, the *Lesotho Education Act* and *Lesotho Vision 2020*. In addition to intertextuality, the analysis of the policy determines the type of language used in a policy text. According to Taylor *et al.* (1997: 49) “drawing more on discourse theory...one could focus on the linguistic strategies used by the text in order to address or position the reader”. By implication, policy analysis should give attention to the way in which language is used as it has to convey a specific message about the policy document. If the language is not clear and explicit, the reader would not be able to comprehend what the policy is about. The reason for

carrying out content analysis was to determine if there are elements that relate to education encrypted from a sense of communitarian belonging.

In alignment with the foregoing exposition, a content analysis (cf. 1.7.2.3) of the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009* and the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* was undertaken.

#### **5.2.2.1 LESOTHO EDUCATION ACT 2010**

The *Lesotho Education Act 2010* was enacted by parliament in 2010 with the sole purpose of providing legislation pertaining to education. It was enacted following the introduction of free primary education in Lesotho schools in 2000, and responded to the need to improve and realise quality education. The focus of the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* was to legalise the right to free and compulsory education. The purpose and objective of the Act is to make “provision for free and compulsory education at primary level; align the education laws with decentralisation of services; make provision for education for all in accordance with the provisions of section 28 of the Constitution; and clarify roles and responsibilities of persons tasked with the administration of education” (Section 3 (a-d)). This aspect could be linked to African communitarianism, where the elders of the community in African societies play a major role in overseeing that the common good that describes the society is upheld and respected (cf. 3.2). The act drew its inspiration from the Constitution and global declarations such as the *Millennium Development Goals* and *Education for All* (EFA). As a signatory of the United Nations (UN), Lesotho owes allegiances to the World Declaration on *Education for All*. The *Education for All* (EFA) declaration is a global commitment to “provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults” (UNESCO, 1990:1). As a way of achieving this commitment, all governments that have ratified this strategy are expected to provide comprehensive and an all-encompassing education for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. According to UNESCO (1990:1), “education for all ensures that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs, improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and

measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all". Arguably, *CAP 2009* is aligned to the UN declaration of EFA, as the framework intends to provide basic primary and secondary education which is relevant and accessible to all (MoET, 2009). The *Lesotho Education Act 2010* intends to achieve universal primary education by making education accessible to students in primary schools with the adoption of free and compulsory education (cf. 5.2.1.1). In pursuance of the vision of Lesotho education envisioned by the Constitution, the *Education Act 2010* intends to not only provide education to all, but also to legislate the attainment of this vision. This is evident, as the Act stipulates that all policy directives inherent in the act must be observed. Failure to do so, "a court may, where circumstances warrant, impose a penalty less than that stipulated by the Act" (Section 67). The *Lesotho Education Act 2010* is beneficial to all stakeholders involved in education, particularly the students, the community and the government, respectively. The students would benefit, because the Act guarantees their right to education as binding for parents. On the other hand, parents benefit because they are given the opportunity to send their children to school without any cost. The government of Lesotho, through the enactment of the act, also benefits, because it is able to provide accessible education to all students irrespective of their background. Arguably, as the procedural policy, the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* outlines the procedures to be followed to operationalise free and compulsory primary education. Although the Act was enacted to realise all the matters pertaining to education, it is silent when it comes to the content of the curriculum that would be to be provided to students in order to achieve relevant education. In this case I argue that the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* excludes education encrypted from the community spaces in which students find themselves in.

The Lesotho Constitution envisions education "directed to the full development of the human personality and sense of dignity and strengthening of the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Chapter 28 (a)). *The Education Act 2010*, Section 4(2) stipulates that

The Minister, Principal Secretary, Teaching Service Commission, proprietors of schools, teachers and school boards shall promote the education of the people of Lesotho and in particular (a) ensure that a learner is provided with opportunities and facilities to enable him or her to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy, normal manner and in the conditions of freedom and dignity.

From the above quotation, it could be argued that the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* followed a consultative approach in which the opinions of different stakeholders were brought together to develop a sense of ownership (cf. 5.2.1; 3.4.1). In this context, the Act aligns to *ubuntu* as it envisions a sense of community in which those who are vested with the responsibility to oversee the improvement of education were given an opportunity to do so. The *Lesotho Education Act 2010* considers its mandate to provide education that would be of the Basotho people, geared towards developing students holistically for self and social development. The *Lesotho Education Act 2010* anticipates education that would respond to the challenges in which students encounter and create the opportunities that would enable them to develop holistically.

## **5.2.2.2 CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY 2009**

### **5.2.2.2.1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS**

According to Taylor *et al.* (1997:45), context analysis refers to the “antecedents and pressures leading to the gestation of a specific policy. In other words, what are the circumstances and pressures leading to the development of a policy? In this way I undertook a context analysis with specific reference to a range of historical and socio-economic factors (Samuel, 2017) that led to the gestation of *CAP 2009*.

The current education system in Lesotho reflect the Western type of education that was introduced during colonialism (cf. Chere-Masopha, Tlali, Khalanyane and Sebatane, 2021; Muzvidziwa and Seotsanyana, 2002). Upon realising that the

education system does not respond to the needs of Basotho (cf. 1.2), “Lesotho set itself to reforming the content of education to address its developmental needs” (MoET, 2009:1). In this regard, *CAP 2009* intended to provide education that would connect students to their immediate place (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3) and be responsive to their needs, hence a sense of belonging would be attained. (cf. 2.5). Looking at the previous developments upon which a policy is built (Taylor *et al.*, 1997), *CAP 2009* was preceded by previous policy initiatives (cf. 5.2.1). The *Educational Dialogue* was undertaken in 1978 to solicit views from different stakeholders towards developing a curriculum that would be relevant to the needs of the Basotho nation (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015; Ministry of Education Culture and Sports, 1982). Arguably, there was a need to refocus education towards production and training for self-reliance that would provide the Basotho youth with the skills and knowledge to respond to their daily needs (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3). The *National Education Dialogue* was undertaken because the government realised that the colonial education system has limitations, and it disarticulated to the needs of the Basotho people (cf. 1.2; 1.6). However, the first National Education Dialogue failed because the churches, which are the major proprietors of schools in Lesotho due to the influence of missionaries, interpreted the framework as a threat that was meant by the government to take authority and control of the schools from them. As a result, they were unwilling to cooperate (De Waal, 2019; Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002; Raselimo & Mahao, 2015).

In 1982 the *Education Sector Task Force* was established following the *Education Reform of 1978*. The task force was established because the government realised that the education system continued to be disarticulated from the needs of the people, and what was taught in schools was not responding to the needs of the community (cf.1.2). According to Raselimo and Mahao (2015:2) the task force “document’s policy statements for secondary education emphasised the need for the inclusion of more practical subjects, with the purpose of enhancing the quality of education and preparing learners for a meaningful life in a changing society with uncertain employment prospects”. Thus, the task force saw the need to introduce a curriculum that has the potential to bridge the gap between what is taught in schools with what

the word outside the school needs in order to address the environmental and socio-economic challenges inherent in the communities (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3; Chere-Masopha, *et al.*, 2021; MoECS, 1982). Arguably, the task force report regarded education as the vehicle towards realising the national aspirations. From the foregoing exposition, it could be argued that the government of Lesotho made efforts to reform the Lesotho education system towards realising the needs of the nation. The government saw the need to restructure the curriculum and be directed towards education that promotes the integration of the human and the more-than-human worlds (cf. 2.2.1.1) and providing practical skills and competences that would enhance education with production and self-reliance (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3). In this way, students would be able to apply what they have learnt in schools to their real-life situations. However, it was evident that the latter did not succeed fully as the curriculum inherited from the colonial education was clouded with many theoretical subjects which did not provide students with an opportunity to acquire relevant skills (cf. 1.2).

As poverty and education are inextricably connected, the prevalence of poverty in both Lesotho rural and urban areas made it difficult for students to enroll in schools (cf. 5.2.2.2.2; UNICEF, 2021). This was due to the high cost of education that unemployed parents could not afford. Thus, it was impossible for students to enroll in schools in large numbers. In order to counteract this challenge, the Lesotho government, as a member of the UN, signed declarations to provide accessible education for all (cf. 5.2.1.1). The introduction of free primary education (FPE) led to an increase in primary school enrolments. Thus, the policy created educational opportunities by giving students access to education. However, creating access to education was not enough as there was need to provide quality and relevant education. To respond to this dire need, a curriculum reform was needed and *CAP 2009* was enacted.

*CAP 2009* was enacted to refocus learning to the social context in which students live. This implies that the policy framework was intended to bring change in educational content and practices that would contribute towards the development of all Basotho

children. In this type of education, students would be provided with the skills, attitudes and knowledge that would enable them to achieve economic independence (cf. 4.2.1; 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3). Similarly, the MoET (2009:14) envisaged a curriculum that would promote the “creation, acquisition and utilisation of knowledge and skills as well as development of attitudes and values necessary for participation in advancing personal and socio-economic development and participation in globalization”. Arguably, the policy framework intends to provide an educational content and practice that responds to socio-economic and technological challenges (cf. 4.2; MoET, 2009) and subsequently, a socio-economic stable environment would be created. It could be argued that education framed from the socio-economic context in which students live would help individuals to lead a complete life as individuals and as integral members of the community (cf. 3.4.1; MoET, 2009). It is worth noting that education and economic growth and development are related, and education is therefore regarded as an investment to human capital.

From the foregoing exposition, looking at the historical and socio-economic factors that contributed to the gestation of the policy framework, it could be argued that the policy framework was a long-awaited curriculum. It was developed and adopted when Lesotho and other countries were facing critical and disastrous socio-economic problems. The gestation of *CAP 2009* assisted me to explore its potential to promote a sense of belonging. The *CAP 2009* was envisioned to provide education framed from the community spaces in which students live in order to respond to society’s needs (cf. 4.2; 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3). Consistent with the idea, Raselimo and Mahao (2015:1) state that “[t]hese societal needs and problems provided an imperative for curriculum and assessment reforms in Lesotho to address issues of quality and relevance.” Consequently, the curriculum was anticipated to provide quality and relevant education that would equip students with the relevant skills for self-reliance and for tackling the inherent challenges that they face. It would do so based on principles framed from an African communitarianism.

#### 5.2.2.2.2 CONTENT ANALYSIS

In this section, content analysis of the *CAP 2009* was carried out in relation to Taylor *et al.*'s (1997) and Samuel's (2017) approaches to analysing texts (cf. 5.2.1). My analysis centres on policy aims, objectives, underlying values and directives for implementation to determine the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. The analysis of the values encrypted from African communitarianism helped me to establish if the integration between the human and the more-than-human worlds are embedded in *CAP 2009*.

*CAP 2009* is an official policy document that was developed by the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho with the purpose of reviewing the education curricula for both primary and secondary schools. In alignment with Samuel's (2017) approach to reading policies, the policy framework focuses on education reform which is intended to shift from "subject and examination-oriented curriculum to a new dispensation wherein curriculum is organised into learning areas reflecting practical life challenges" (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015:1). This implies that the MoET intended to develop curriculum from the community spaces in which students live. It was therefore aimed to provide students with the skills and dispositions that would enable them to face their real-life concerns.

The overarching aim of *CAP 2009* was "to ensure access, quality, equity and relevance in the educator sector" (MoET, 2009:1). This aim relates to the aim of the study, as it envisages values that characterise African communities, such as *ubuntu* which is a value drawn from an African communitarianism. Thus, the values enshrined in the *CAP 2009* promotes a sense of communitarian belonging (cf. 3.6). Although the aims of the policy framework articulate the values drawn from an African perspective, the *CAP 2009* aims and objectives are silent on the notion of the integration between the human and the more-than-human world. It could be argued that the policy framework aligns to Samuel's (2017) approach to analysis and Taylor *et al.*'s (1997) framework of analysis as it spells out the policy's intentions (Samuel, 2017). In alignment with the overarching aim of the *CAP 2009* (MoET, 2009:1) sets out to

- determine the nature and direction of the national curriculum and assessment system;
- address the emerging issues pertaining to new demands, practices and life challenges of the modern global world;
- monitor quality, relevance and efficiency of basic and secondary education; and
- coordinate and maintain consistency of what is taught, learned and assessed.

The above quotation outlines the aims of the policy framework which serves as a guide as to how the framework intends to develop education to grow individual for social development. That could be achieved when the basic education provided is of a high quality and relevant to the needs of students, centres on practical life challenges, and considers emerging issues from the local and the global context. It could be observed that the policy aims extend beyond addressing the immediate needs of the students, to empowering them with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and competencies that would enable them to tackle emerging issues and challenges from the global and ever-changing world (Doyle, Hofstetter, Kendig and Strick, 2014). Arguably, the policy framework is congruent with the Lesotho philosophy of education articulated in the Constitution (cf. 5.2.1.1), which envisions the provision of education “directed toward individual and social development. Education should help an individual to lead a full life as an individual and a member of the community” (MoET, 2009:5). In this context, I argue that students’ full development can only be achieved if students receive and have access to quality and relevant education framed from their local environment in which they could be able to identify critical challenges in their respective communities, and be able to solve them (cf. 4.3.3; 4.4.3). Relevant education refers to the

appropriateness of students' learning opportunities. Relevant education takes into account local traditions and institutions, positive cultural practices, belief systems, and the needs of the community. It prepares children for a positive future in society in the national and international context. Relevant education is an element of educational quality and refers to what is learned, how it is learned, and how

effective the learning is (The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, 2010:122).

I argue that the policy framework, in its endeavour to provide quality and relevant education, aims at drawing a curriculum from the local traditions and cultural practices that define the students' community (cf. 3.3.1). It could further be inferred that education could be relevant if it incorporates virtues from traditional and cultural beliefs that describe a society, as such policy framework links to *ubuntu*, while norms and values from the society are infused in the school curriculum (cf. 4.4.2). Consequently *CAP 2009* is perceived as a transformative education approach that would promote the full development of all Basotho children and youth to confront local and global challenges. It could be argued that *CAP 2009* is intended to translate the Lesotho vision of education into everyday life experiences, ideal and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the Basotho people. Thus, it could be argued that the curriculum is relevant only when it reconnects students to their local environment and prepares them to function meaningfully in their respective communities. This would enhance a sense of belonging (cf. 4.2; 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3).

In line with Samuel's (2017) approach to reading policies, the policy framework drew its inspiration internally and externally. In response to the latter, the policy is aligned with the Constitution, the *Lesotho Vision 2020* and the *Lesotho Education Act 2010*. In response to external influences, Lesotho as the member of United Nations conforms to a number of declarations and conventions, in order to improve her socio-economic status. It could be argued that the policy framework is aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to ensure

inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. This goal supports the reduction of disparities and inequities in education, both in terms of access and quality. It recognises the need to provide quality education for all, and most especially vulnerable populations, including poor children,

children living in rural areas, persons with disabilities, indigenous people and refugee children.

The context in which the *CAP 2009* was developed is based on the fact that Lesotho education is clouded by colonial education (cf. 1.2), which continues to disconnect students from their immediate environment and their way of life. The type of school examination system adopted in Lesotho favours cognitive development, and marginalises affective and psychomotor domain (cf. 1.2). As stated by the policy framework,

[c]urriculum content distortion by examinations does not seem to tally well with the goals of expanded access to vocational skills training, lifelong learning and increasing awareness on emerging global issues such as functional knowledge on crippling effects of HIV/AIDS, deteriorating climatic and environmental elements, and others.

In this space, the discourse context in which the policy framework was formulated and enacted responds to the need to provide quality education drawn from the students' locale, envisioned to enhance a sense of belonging (cf. 2.5). In such a space, students would acquire skills and dispositions (cf. 4.2.1; 4.2.2; 4.3.3) that would contribute towards the "full development of the human personality and sense of dignity and strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Constitution, 1993:Section 28 (a)). In response to countering critical challenges affecting the communities both locally and globally, the current curriculum approach intends "to ensure access, quality, equity and relevance in the educator sector" (MoET, 2009:1). In this context, it is envisioned that students would be provided with survival skills that would enable them to fit well in their communities and be able to tackle the challenges around them (cf. 3.4.1). Espoused in the policy framework, an integrated curriculum can help in acquiring 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, thus promoting "critical thinking, creativity, innovation, collaboration, problem solving and communication" (Doyle, *et al.*, 2014:4-5). An integrated curriculum draws content from different learning areas to build a pool of knowledge that would sufficiently furnish students with diverse information. It could be argued that this type of curriculum offers students the skills and dispositions that would enable them to contribute meaningfully in their communities. It is arguably

intended to produce well-rounded individuals who are likely to challenge the long-established cultural practices which are harmful to the environment. In addition, *CAP 2009* envisions education framed from the national goals of education in which “greater attention will be given to scientific thinking, problem-solving, entrepreneurial and technological skills; linking productive skills and learning; and the practical application of knowledge to the improvement of living conditions” (MoET, 2009:9). Thus, *CAP 2009* puts emphasis on the development of skills, dispositions and attitudes essential for tackling rapid social and economic changes (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015) emanating from local and global pressures. In so doing the policy framework provides students with skills for self and social development. *CAP 2009* is “oriented towards approaches placing primacy on survival of a learner, not only in his/her daily school routine but also as a member of a broad community life, today and tomorrow, locally and globally” (MoET, 2009:4). From the foregoing exposition, it could be argued that the *CAP 2009* is framed from the philosophy of Basotho education, which is to provide relevant education (cf. 5.2.2.2.1) that will promote students’ social and individual development. To realise this goal, education provided through this policy framework would provide students and Basotho children with the skills and disposition applicable to their contemporary world. Whereas *CAP 2009* was enacted to transform the curriculum for the benefit of students, it could be argued that the policy framework is beneficial to the Basotho nation and the whole education system. The aim is to shift the curriculum from a subject and examination-oriented curriculum to a learning context that positions students and build them into responsible students who can function meaningfully in their communities that could be translated to the benefit of the community. In this context, the policy framework not only benefits students, but the community and the world at large, as it fosters a sense of belonging.

Education is a state activity in which there are underlying principles and values embedded in its policies. Thus, the policy should, from the onset, clarify the values and principles in which it intends to attain, so as to guide the process of implementation. In this regard, *CAP 2009* was analysed to determine the values and principles that guide its implementation.

The *CAP 2009* aims to “cultivate desirable attitudes, ethical and moral values for personal and social development (MoET, 2009:16). According to Hazarika (2020), ethics refer to an individual’s and society’s morality. It describes the customs, character, values and virtues that an individual is socialised into (cf. 3.4.1). It could be argued that it describes the moral standards prescribed by society to explain what is good or bad and just and unjust. These prescriptions define human moral conduct. Arguably, ethics are evaluative and judgemental. They influence an individual’s decision-making in the day-to-day lived experiences. Ethical values therefore describe a set of principles that guide how an individual is expected to behave in a society, and include values such as inclusiveness, accountability, honesty, loyalty, respect, truthfulness and oneness (cf. 3.2; 3.4.1). It could be argued that *CAP 2009* anticipates values that would build an individual for self and social development.

MoET (2009) intends to review the primary and the post-primary education curricula to make it “accessible, relevant, efficient and of the best quality”, so that education would be able to contribute towards building students who would function and fit well into the communities in which they reside. *CAP 2009* aspires to make education accessible to all students, irrespective of their status. Thus, accessible education refers to the ways in which education policies ensure that students have equal and equitable learning opportunities. In this regard it means removing all the barriers that prevent students from enrolling and participating in learning programs. The policy framework has responded to the value of inclusiveness because it envisaged the use of mother tongue languages as medium of instruction from Grades 1 to 3. Thus, *CAP 2009* promotes social acceptance, as students with minority languages are valued and embraced. *CAP 2009* rearranged the education system into basic education and secondary education (MoET, 2009). Basic education gives students access to basic education for a period of ten years, and secondary education covers two years in which students are prepared for the world outside and to pursue their education in higher institutions of learning. Thus, *CAP 2009* aspires to ensure that students have access to basic education that would provide them with survival skills and dispositions that

they could use in their daily lives (cf. 5.2.1.1). *CAP 2009* anticipates advancing equitable education which denotes fair and just practices towards others and non-humans (cf. 3.4.1; 3.4.2). As *CAP 2009* envisions to provide relevant education, it means that students would acquire education rooted from their context, inclusive of the cultural and natural environment, hence it is expected to align with the needs of the Basotho people. In this context, education rooted in the students' context would entail cultural norms and values that would promote the ethical and moral values that define the Basotho people (cf. 3.3; 3.4.1; 3.4.2). *CAP 2009* anticipates including "sign language and its use in the teaching and learning processes shall form part of an integrated part of the new language policy" (MoET, 2009:8). By implication, deaf students who were excluded from mainstream education are now included. Although the policy framework has not stipulated the ethical values and the context from which these values would be drawn, I assume that such values would contribute towards students' social and personal development. It is imperative to explicate moral values as highlighted by *CAP 2009*.

Moral values denote those values that an individual acquires from the experiences or situations s/he has experienced. Thus, moral values are connected to the society of which an individual is an integral part. Moral values such as honesty, respect, responsibility and compassion (cf. 3.2; 3.4.1. 3.4.2) are therefore essential for an individual to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. The policy framework envisages to inculcate values such as social justice and equality, which are fundamental in advancing the national aspirations. Through the pedagogical approach adopted by *CAP 2009*, it advances democratic values such as student participation and collaboration. These values guide the teaching and learning process and as such students are expected to be actively involved in their learning (cf. 4.4.2). The evidence from *CAP 2009* states that "[l]earners are to become more responsible for their own learning processes and thus should be able to identify, formulate and solve problems by themselves and evaluate their work" (MoET, 2009:22). To provide how the policy frame relates to collaboration, *CAP 2009* states that the "*project work* should not be confined to schools but involve communities as well to *enhance action* competence

among the learners work". By implication, *CAP 2009* gives students the opportunity to interact with the community in order to perform the exercises that are related to their communities. In this instance, students could ask community members to provide them with the necessary information to assist them in completing such projects. When students interact with the community, a sense of community and therefore also a sense of communitarian belonging is developed (cf. 2.5).

Samuel (2017:15) argues that "policy is never a neutral terrain. It is likely to be interpreted and reinterpreted differently by different users". In a similar vein, Codd (1988:236) also indicates that "documents should be regarded as texts which are capable of being decoded in different ways depending on the context in which they are read". Policies therefore have a plurality of meanings because they are liable to be interpreted differently by different people in different contexts. In order to promote a sense of ownership, all stakeholders who have contributed to the formulation of the policy framework, and the anticipated policy implementers, must be sensitised about the contents of the policy and their role in the implementation of policy framework (cf. 5.2.1). The school community, which consists of teachers, students and parents, needs to be informed about the policy before its inception, as they are expected to be the main policy implementers (Wallner, 2008). Thus, a communicative culture must be enhanced (cf. 4.3.2). For any policy to be effectively developed and implemented, there is a need for a concerted effort from different role-players who have influence in policy production and implementation. (Taylor *et al.*,1997:46). Consistent with this idea, Wallner (2008:423) posits that "all stakeholders should be included and engaged through the process of policy development. Consequently, stakeholders should perceive the substance of a policy as reasonable and the process of policy development as appropriate if they are going to accept it and support the initiatives of the government". To ensure a sense of ownership and accountability of any policy, consultations and discussions with various key players should take place to ascertain a body of knowledge and opinions that would influence informed decision making (cf. 4.3.2). In this context, the *CAP 2009* task team involved stakeholders such as the MoET with all its varied departments, teacher formations and institutions of higher

learning (MoET, 2009). Although the policy framework accounted for inputs from instrumental stakeholders, some groups with interest in education such as pressure groups, non-governmental organisations and religious groups were excluded. It could be argued that failure to incorporate other stakeholders in the development of the policy might lead to lack of support and acceptance of the policy document.

To effectively implement the policy framework, a policy text has to articulate policy directives which are intended to explain what is expected to be done in order to put the policy intentions into practice (Samuel, 2017; Taylor *et al.*, 1997). All the responsibilities given to stakeholders must be clearly articulated so that it would be possible for them to engage and to comply. The policy directives for the *CAP 2009* are curriculum and assessment, integrated curriculum organisation, the curriculum aspects and learning areas.

It is imperative to analyse the use of language in a text, as this is instrumental in conveying policy messages (Taylor *et al.*, 1997). For the purpose of this study I focused on the words that explain the actions that the policy implementers are expected to take. For instance, words like 'should' directs what one should do. Words like 'may' are optional, such optional words suggest that one may or may not adhere to the directive given. *CAP 2009* uses words such as 'should' in order to indicate what the policy writers intended to achieve through the implementation of the policy framework. For instance, *CAP 2009* indicates that "learners should have the ability to communicate effectively in words, symbols, colours, signs, sound, media (print, electronic), and actions. Therefore, students should be helped to develop the following skills: listening, speaking, writing and reading". Thus, it is assumed that *CAP* clearly stipulates what it intends to achieve.

The MoET strives to position the students in real-life situations where there are inherent challenges. As, such curriculum aspects were envisaged as planning tools *CAP 2009* to "highlight the life challenges and contexts in which the learner is expected to function as an individual and a member of the society" (MoET, 2009:16). In this

context, there is a need to “develop learners holistically, whereupon the challenges should be addressed to improve the livelihoods of people. To achieve this, students should be helped to acquire competencies to deal with challenges and improve their lives in a sustainable manner” (MoET, 2009:16). To develop a student holistically, there is a need to take into consideration all the facets of life that surrounds him/her. In such a space, education should be tailored to meet the students’ individual and societal needs. It should further provide them with the skills and disposition to enable them to solve the inherent challenges in their respective communities. Consistent with the idea, the MoET (2009:16) perceives curriculum aspects as an

integral part of education for equipping learners with necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. These aspects would enable learners to face and cope with challenges they meet in their daily lives. Because the life challenges cut across all the aspects, each aspect will have a specific role to play in addressing the challenges.

An integrated curriculum, through curriculum aspects, anticipates education that provides students with skills, competences and disposition (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3) that would empower and capacitate them to face and solve the inherent challenges that characterise their communities.

The policy framework considers the following as skills and tools that could be used in the planning of the curriculum: *Effective Communication; Awareness of Self and Others; Environmental Adaptation and Sustainable Development; Health and Healthy Living; and Production and Work-related competencies* (MoET, 2009:16). These tools are linked to the text that will be analysed. There is a need to unpack what these tools imply in planning the curriculum, and how such skills would enable students to solve the challenges and problems inherent in their communities.

#### **a) Effective communication**

Effective communication as espoused by the *CAP 2009* through an integrated curriculum refers to the ability to effectively and clearly convey messages in the form of ideas, thoughts and opinions. In planning for the curriculum, it implies that schools

are expected to assist students to “communicate effectively in words, symbols, colours, signs, sound, media (print, electronic), and actions” (MoET, 2009:16). The adoption of and the ability to use diverse communication modes implies that students have respect and appreciates others’ modes of communication. This alludes to *ubuntu* by acknowledging the humanity of other students’ mode of communication (cf. 3.4.1), and prepares students to respect other people’s modes of communication. Being able to communicate in various modes removes discrimination and opens students to diversity and participation. Students will be able to communicate effectively if they have been trained to develop effective listening, speaking, writing and reading skills. This can be done if students are given the opportunity to use their first language to learn how to communicate. In alignment with the Constitution, the policy framework acknowledges that

as the Lesotho Constitution states, that Sesotho and English are the two official languages, and in recognition of the fact that there are other languages besides Sesotho and English, mother tongue will be used as a medium of instruction up to class 3 while English will be taught as a subject at this and other levels (MoET, 2009:vii).

The Constitution implies that the MoET anticipates for the use of mother tongue language for teaching and learning in the lower grades, which would enable students to easily develop communication skills. In relation to the research question of the study, *CAP 2009*, through the adoption of an integrated curriculum, promotes a sense of belonging when students can use their own language to study. In such a space a sense of connectedness (cf. 2.2) would be established, as the use of their mother tongue would enable them to learn freely without any language barriers. As stated by the Constitution, there are two official languages to be used un schools, and minority groups with their own languages are taught in these two official languages (English and Sesotho) (cf. 5.2.1.1). In this situation students are disconnected from their home languages and cultures, but due to the adoption of integrated curriculum in the *CAPS 2009*, such languages are given the opportunity to be used in their respective places. The Constitution is mandated to oversee that “every person in Lesotho is entitled,

whatever his [sic] race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status to fundamental human rights and freedoms” (Chapter 11 Section 4 (1)). In alignment with the constitution, *CAP 2009* envisages the “pluralism of the Basotho nation and the existence of other languages besides the two official languages of Sesotho and English” (MoET, 2009:vii), by implication such communities with minority languages are protected by the *CAP 2009* to receive education in their own mother tongue. Arguably, teaching and learning through the use of mother tongue languages promote greater school connectedness, hence a sense of belonging is attained (cf. 2.5). In this manner, such communities are not discriminated against, and a sense of belonging is promoted.

### **b) Awareness of the self and of others**

In addition to effective communication, the policy document envisages education that promotes awareness of the self and of others. Regarding this skill, an individual is fully developed and nurtured where s/he is prepared to live in a community with others (cf. 3.4.1). The policy framework prepares

learners to understand and appreciate themselves and others. They should understand their developmental processes, physiologically and psychologically, and how they affect their relationships being able to realise, understand and appreciate self and others (MoET, 2009:16).

In the process of nurturing students, the policy framework anticipates for a curriculum that recognises the development of an individual in relation to others. This is because an individual lives in a community with other people (cf. 3.4.1; 3.5). As a result, it is imperative to conscientise students about the importance of forming harmonious relationships that would enable them to share space with others. Self-awareness entails how we understand ourselves in relation to others (cf.3.4.1) in different aspects of life. To fully help students understand themselves in relation to others, the policy document envisions a curriculum that helps students to:

- [u]nderstand and appreciate the physiological and psychological developmental processes;
- [u]nderstand and appreciate oneself and others in terms of abilities, culture and beliefs;
- [d]evelop culture of human rights and democracy;
- [d]evelop intrapersonal and interpersonal skills in promoting peace and harmony; and
- [p]romote values that pertain to dignity, equity, gender sensitivity, tolerance and conflict resolution.

*CAP 2009* envisages a curriculum dispensation which is intended to help students to shape their abilities, develop their talents (cf. 5.2.1.2) and be conscientised about their fundamental human rights and responsibilities and the need to respect other people's rights (cf. 5.2.1.1). The policy framework recognises the need to consider the other. Others' feelings and emotions need to be taken into consideration as a way of respecting others and establishing an environment where harmonious relationships are formed (cf. 3.4.1). This curriculum aspect encapsulates the realisation of the common good. In this regard, students are made aware of their rights and the rights of others, and they are expected to respect these rights (cf. 3.3). It could be argued that *Awareness of the Self and others* takes cognisance of the moral supremacy of the community (cf. 3.3; 3.3.1.1). African communities give individuals the social responsibility to respect and promote the common good (cf. 3.2; 3.3.1.1; 3.3.1.2; 3.3.1.3). Arguably, through this curriculum aspect, the policy framework nurtures students who would be responsible for upholding the moral status of the Basotho nation (cf. 4.2). From the foregoing exposition, it could be deduced that *CAP 2009*, through an integrated curriculum, promotes an African way of living, where an individual is described as living in the midst of others (cf. Letseka, 2013; 3.4.1). *Awareness of the self and of others* alludes to *ubuntu* and *ukama*, which are enshrined in African communitarianism. *Ubuntu* relates to interconnectedness between people themselves and it could be extended to the biophysical world of which a human being is an integral part of (cf. 3.4.1). Living in harmony with others requires humanness where values such as respect, equality, justice, reciprocity, cohesion and harmony are

entrenched for the concern of others (cf. Letseka, 2000; 3.4.1). Similarly, Nieuwenhuis (2007:63) regards *ubuntu* as “a culturally based value rooted in a specific conception of what it means to be human. For this reason, it is intricately linked to human values such as love, respect, peace, honesty and integrity”. *Ubuntu* encapsulates these varied values to recognise the humanity of an individual in a society. In this curriculum aspect, an individual is espoused as complementing the society. On the other hand, *ukama* refers to the relatedness of all entities across the space, inclusive of non-humans (cf. Le Grange, 2012; 3.4.2). Relatedness is the fundamental ingredient required in the process of developing an awareness of the self and of others. *Ukama* advances interdependency between humans and non-humans, and as a result, interwoven relationships are established. (cf. 3.4.2). The policy framework intends to “develop culture of human rights and democracy” (MoET, 2009:17). According to the United Nations (2012:1), human rights education is a lifelong process that builds knowledge and skills, as well as attitudes and behaviours to uphold human rights. Schools are regarded as the institutions through which human rights education could be provided (Robinson, Phillips & Quennerstedt, 2020). The MoET envisages to integrate human rights and democracy in the curriculum to be imparted to students. In this regard, this type of education would expose students to cultural beliefs and traditions (cf. 4.4.2), the protection and promotion of human rights (cf. 5.2.2.1), and the local and international protocols that promote democratic principles. It could be argued that the realisation of these human rights and democratic principles are intended to develop a functional student who would be able to effectively participate in his/her community.

### **c) Environmental adaptation and sustainable development**

In addition to awareness of the self and of others, *CAP 2009* incorporates the environment and adaptation and sustainable development as an aspect intended to address the survival of the students in their own environment. It could be argued that the policy framework was developed in response to critical challenges faced by students in their context (cf. MoET, 2009). The MoET (2009:15) recognises that there is “high unemployment rate and slow economic growth, high poverty, rampant

HIV/AIDS and other contentious diseases, environmental degradation, gender equality and equity, human rights and democracy and many more”. Amongst these critical challenges is environmental degradation, which poses a threat to economic growth, climate and the health of the people occupying the land. As a result, a curriculum was needed which was aimed at equipping students with the skills that would enable them to

- [u]nderstand and appreciate the biophysical, political, social and economic parts of the environment and their interrelationships; and
- [d]evelop appropriate skills and positive attitudes to interact sustainably with the environment for socio-economic development (MoET, 2009:17).

The policy framework takes cognisance of place as the backdrop in which life occurs and the physical space in which humans coexist with non-humans. In this way, when students interact with place (Gruenewald, 2003a; Masterson, *et al.*, 2017:3; Adams, 2013) meanings and attachments to a place are developed, and a sense of place is advanced (Semken & Freeman, 2008). It could be argued that the policy document fosters place-based education (cf. 4.4.2) in which students develop personal intimacy (cf. 2.5) with the environment around them, inclusive of non-human world. Not only does the policy framework advance a sense of place (cf. 2.4), but it also fosters the value of accountability. Thus, upon realisation that the environment is depleted, students are made aware of the status quo and are also made aware of their responsibilities to reclaim the environment. As a democratic value, accountability in this regard denotes a collective responsibility (cf. 3.4.2) through which individuals, schools and communities are expected to use the environment sustainably, and to maintain and conserve it for future generations (cf. 2.2.1.1).

In this context, the school curriculum should be blended with the environment in which students live. In this way, students would be expected to interact with their environment (biophysical, political and socio-economic) (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3) and in response appreciate and take care of their environment and develop a deeper understanding of it, created from different spheres of life. By implication, *CAP 2009* fosters a curriculum which provides students with the skills and dispositions to take

good care of the environment in order to promote its conservation and preservation for the coming generation. It would also allow them to take cognisance of the interrelationships between the various aspects that constitute the environment (MoET, 2009). It could be argued that students' acquired skills would enable them to establish the types of relationships that are inherent in their environment. They would be able to use such skills to tackle challenges around them. With regard to the aspect of the environment, the Constitution states that

Lesotho shall adopt policies designed to protect and enhance the natural and cultural environment of Lesotho for the benefit of both present and future generations and shall endeavour to ensure to all citizens a sound and safe environment adequate for their health and well-being (1993:Section 36).

Whereas the government of Lesotho commits to the protection and sustainable use of the environment for the present and coming generations, the MoET anticipates a curriculum which provides students with skills and knowledge, and encourages students to

utilising and maintaining available resources in such a way that the future generations can also enjoy them. Learners should therefore develop knowledge and skills towards sustainable use of the environment for individual and societal development

Environmental adaptation and sustainable development envisaged in the *CAP 2009* is a curriculum aspect which is intended to reconnect students with their environment. In this way, students are expected to interact with the environment but are also expected to acquire the knowledge and skills that would enable them to preserve and use the environment sustainably. In the process of interacting with the environment cf. 4.4.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3), students are expected to employ ethics drawn from an African environmental ethos to sustain the environment (cf. 3.2; 3.4.1; 4.4.2). Thus, students are expected to display humane practices towards the ecosystem. Schools are therefore expected to engage students with their environment, and provide content that teaches students about environmental adaptation and sustainable development.

It could be argued that when students are given the opportunity to interact and learn from their environment (cf. 4.4.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3), they would most probably develop positive attitudes towards their environment, which will add to their personal growth and development. In this context, a sense of belonging would be enhanced, as students would develop a love for their environment, and a willingness to respect and take care of it (cf. 2.5; 2.5.3). It could be argued that this aspect anticipates the formation of interrelationships between humans the non-humans (cf. 2.2.1.1). As a result, it could be deduced that environmental adaptation and sustainable development alludes to *ubuntu* (cf. 3.4.1). In contrast, the policy framework perpetuates anthropocentrism, in which humans take domination over the non-humans. Where the concern is on preserving the non-humans for the benefit of the humans (cf. 2.2.1.1), the benefit is not mutual because there is no interdependence, as the policy framework only insinuates the flourishing of humans only, whereas the more-than-human world is neglected.

It could be argued that the policy framework (*CAP 2009*) has adopted a transformative pedagogical approach in which the curriculum is connected to students' lived experiences. The students are jointly responsible for their own learning, which is a contemporary approach. In the next section, I explain how I constructed a tool that was used to guide my policy analysis.

### **5.3 FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS**

In this section I employ the framework for analysis (Appendix B) that was conceptualised from Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of the study to achieve the research question of the study - to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. Whereas document analysis involved the analysis of policy documents such as the *Lesotho Constitution 1993* and the *Lesotho Vision 2020*, policy analysis was used to analyse the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* and the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009*. These policy documents were selected because they bear relevance and provide insight of how Lesotho envisions to provide relevant and quality education accessible to all. I considered the concepts sense of belonging and African communitarianism, in which the concepts of *ubuntu* and *ukama*

are encapsulated. In addition, the notion of humans and the more-than-human world were also captured under the conceptualisation of the *CAP 2009* policy framework. In working with the selected policies and documents, I firstly described the context in which reasons and forces behind the gestation of the policy documents were established. Secondly, I considered content analysis with specific reference to the aims of the policy, values underpinning the policy and the directives for implementation. This was done to explore the potential of policy documents in advancing education framed from the community spaces in which students live. It also included the expression of values framed from the African perspective, and the provision of skills and dispositions to consider the connectedness between humans and the more-than-human world. In this regard, context and content analysis were used in combination with the conceptual framework derived from the literature review to analyse the *Lesotho Constitution 1993*, *Lesotho Vision 2020*, *Lesotho Education Act* and the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009*.

Based on the conceptual framework that I constructed for the development of a sense of communitarian from Chapters 2, 3 and 4 (cf. table on framework for analysis), I analysed *CAP 2009*, *Lesotho Education Act 2010*, *Lesotho Constitution of 1993* and *Lesotho Vision 2020* to explore the government's intention to provide education derived from the students' locale. The developed document is attached as Appendix B the derived questions guided me in exploring the potential of Lesotho education policies to provide education framed from the community spaces in which students live. From the list of questions, I grouped the questions and then developed a number of central themes. These included framing education from the community spaces in which students live, moral values framed from an African perspective, and providing students with certain skills and dispositions. For document analysis, Samuel's (2017) and Taylor *et al.*'s (1997) approaches to reading a policy were adopted. Thereafter, Lesotho education policies were examined and interpreted based on the identified themes. The conceptual framework helped me to gain an in-depth understanding of the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote education encrypted from a sense of communitarian belonging. I subsequently adopted a qualitative approach as

the most appropriate to generate, analyse and interpret data for this explorative study through the use of document and policy analysis. In conducting the analysis of legislation and policies, I was guided by the conceptual framework that was based on the literature study as the tool for analysis. I deemed it essential to elucidate the themes identified for the framework for analysis as they would act as a guide for presenting the findings, and because these themes also contribute towards education for a sense of communitarian belonging:

- *Teaching from the community spaces in which students live* could be inferred to refer to place-based education. In this type of education, education is framed from the students' lived experiences and rests upon using the immediate environment, the local culture and the community to educate students about a phenomenon (cf. 2.1; 3.5; 4.2; 4.2.2). Place-based education reconnects students with their immediate environment, including the non-human world (cf. 2.2.1.1). In this instance, the local environment is used as the primary resource for learning, students are expected to engage in outdoor learning in the immediate environment. As teaching and learning involve students' community spaces, there is a need to liaise with community members who are conversant with indigenous moral values (cf. 2.1; 2.2.1.1; 3.5; 4.2; 4.2.2; 4.3.3;4.4.3).
- *Moral values framed from the African perspective* entails cultivating morals and values that describe an African way of living. Such values include honesty, respect, interconnectivity, relatedness, coexistence, justice, integrity (cf. 3.4.1; 3.3) and responsibility. These values are intended to build an individual and prepare him/her for individual and social development to live in harmony with others, including non-humans. These virtues, derived from social and cultural norms and rules, develop students into responsible and respectable citizens who abide by and respect the moral values upheld by society (cf.4.4.2). Teaching and learning in terms of these cultural norms bears the potential to promote, preserve and restore indigenous knowledge. Understanding the self and others involves building the self for individual and social development (cf. 3.4.1). Education should thus contribute towards the full development of an individual, who forms an integral part of the community. This could be achieved

through providing knowledge and understanding of the self, and the skills and dispositions needed to build an individual for personal growth and development. There is a need to cultivate desirable ethics that would prepare and nurture an individual to live in community and harmoniously with others (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3; 5.2.2.2).

- *Provision of skills and dispositions* entails the provision of life skills and competencies that would shape students' abilities and capabilities that they can apply in their life encounters. Therefore, there is a need for skills such as critical thinking (cf. 5.2.2.2.2) and problem solving that will enable students to challenge long-established cultural practices that are harmful to the environment and the more-than-human-world. It will also furnish them with lifelong skills (cf. 5.2.1.2) that would enable them to function in their immediate places. The inculcation of skills is embedded with the knowledge and disposition that students would need. These will influence the students to change their behaviour and develop desirable attitudes that would enable them to interact well with others and the non-human. Such dispositions include collaboration, perseverance, caring and understanding. Students need these crucial skills, knowledge and dispositions to survive and function meaningfully in their communities (4.4.2; 4.3; 4.4.3; 4.5).

#### **5.4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

In this section, I present the findings from the analysis of the data generated through document analysis. As has been stated, the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009* takes its mandate from the laws and policies that preceded it (cf. 5.2.1.1; 5.2.1.2). It is important at this juncture to analyse the Lesotho *Constitution of 1993* and the *Lesotho Vision 2020* with the sole purpose of exploring their potential in promoting a sense of communitarian belonging. The analysis of the documents was done separately, based on the identified themes. These are teaching from the community spaces in which students live, moral values framed from the African perspective, and the provision of skills and dispositions (cf. 5.3). The presentation of the findings is imbued with a discussion thereof.

#### **5.4.1 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE *LESOTHO CONSTITUTION 1993***

The Constitution of Lesotho, adopted in 1993, is the supreme law to which all laws and policies need to adhere. This implies that the constitution serves as the foundation which guides the development of other policies. All laws and policies must be consistent with the Constitution. It is imperative to analyse the Constitution in order to establish how it is related to a sense of communitarian belonging.

##### **5.4.1.1 TEACHING FROM THE COMMUNITY SPACES IN WHICH STUDENTS LIVE**

Teaching from the communities in which students find themselves entails incorporating the natural environment or the immediate place around the students. Thus, content and practice must be foregrounded from the students' locale (cf. 5.3).

The Constitution makes provision for education that is “directed to the full development of the human personality” (Section 28 (a)) in an endeavour to build an individual for self and social development. Such an inference lays the foundation against which education that is meant to produce a well-rounded person is casted. Arguably, the constitution serves as the legal document in which the type of education should be inferred, conceptualised and articulated in education specific policies and documents. The findings from the *Lesotho Constitution 1993* indicates that the *Constitution* anticipates to protect and enhance the natural and cultural environment (cf. 5.2.1.1). From the finding articulated above, it could however be argued that the Constitution serves as the foundation from which other policies could be adopted (cf. 5.2.1.1). For instance, the Constitution recommends that policies must be created to protect the natural and the cultural environment (cf. 5.2.1.1). It is therefore the responsibility of the MoET to develop policies which would reconnect students to their community spaces. For example, *CAP 2009* drew its inspiration from the Constitution, and envisions to provide environmental education (cf. 5.2.2.2) which is expected to reconnect students to their immediate environment. This would foster the integration between humans and non-humans (4.2.1). Furthermore, *Lesotho Vision 2020* as a long-term

development plan, drew its mandate from the Constitution, and regards education as a pillar to realise Lesotho's aspirations and needs, and so it advocates for environmental education (cf. 5.2.1.2). *CAP 2009* also alludes to the Constitution, since it anticipates education which takes cognisance of the environment, including the biophysical world (cf. 5.2.2.2.2).

The Constitution makes provision for the use of English and Sesotho in Lesotho. It could therefore be argued that the Constitution relates indirectly to education framed from community spaces (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3) in which students live. Language as cultural aspect (cf. 3.2) can be used as the medium of instruction that could be used in schools (cf. 5.2.1.1). I argue that when students are taught using the language that they familiar with, they would be able to understand better, which would establish a sense of connectedness (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3). In addition, I argue that teaching and learning conducted in Sesotho would make it possible for students to understand the curriculum content. Thus, the Constitution brought social change in which it gives voice to the oppressed Sesotho language. Although the supreme law takes cognisance of two languages, it could be argued that the Constitution favours the languages spoken by the majority, while minority languages are marginalised. This implies that students whose languages are marginalised would feel disconnected from their learning, which in turn would compromise their sense of belonging (cf. 2.5), and a sense of communitarian belonging would not be attained.

#### **5.4.1.2. MORAL VALUES FRAMED FROM THE AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE**

Moral values describe a set of principles framed from the society in which an individual is an integral part, and such values guide how an individual is expected to conduct him/herself (cf. 5.3). Moral education as derived from moral values, entails a learning situation in which students learn about the core values that characterise the society of which they form part. This type of education develops students who are ethically and morally responsible citizens in their communities. *Lesotho Constitution 2010* aims at “promoting a society based on equality and justice for all its citizens regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin,

property, birth or other status” (Chapter III, Section 26(1)). It was revealed that the Constitution regards the promotion of virtues that are fundamental in African societies (cf. 5.2.1.1). Living in harmony with others requires humanness where values such as respect, equality, justice, reciprocity, cohesion and harmony are entrenched for the concern of others (cf. 3.4.1). For an individual to be fully human, s/he must possess these virtues as they would enable him/her to form harmonious relationships that would make it possible for them to live in humanness with others. It could be argued that these virtues (interdependence, honesty, reciprocity, cohesion and integrity) (cf. 3.4.1; 3.3) could be extended to non-humans, where they would be regarded as an integral part of the ecosystem, where they are respected and enjoy equal moral standing (cf. 3.2; 3.3.1). Thus, the *Lesotho Constitution 1993* envisages *ubuntu* principles, which are intended to promote unity and oneness amongst community members (cf. 3.4.1; 4.4.2). In this case, it could be argued that a society characterised by unity, could be translated to a sense of communitarian belonging. In this respect, the *Lesotho Constitution 1993* promotes values that yield emancipation, allowing the Basotho people to practice their traditional way of living. Furthermore, it could be argued that if these *ubuntu* virtues or principles (cf. 3.4.1) characterise the community and are shared within the community, they could play a vital role in maintaining such communities. These principles should be transmitted to future generations (cf. 3.4.1). I argue that in this aspect the *Constitution* relates to a sense of communitarian belonging. This implies that when students are sensitised about fundamental values and principles (cf. 5.2.2.1) that define their communities, they would be able to promote unity and togetherness in their school community, allowing them to bring about social change. In an endeavour to build a morally developed society, the Constitution considers the respect for fundamental human rights: “no person may be denied fundamental human rights and freedoms such as the right to life, the right to personal liberty; freedom of movement and residence; freedom from inhuman treatment; freedom from slavery and forced labour; freedom from arbitrary search or entry; the right to respect for private and family life, and the right to education” (Chapter 11 Section 4 1 (a-l)). It could be argued that the *Constitution* aspires to build a democratic society characterised by humane actions (cf.5.2.1.1). Members of a

community would be able to build positive relations, form harmonious relationships and live in humanness, which is a principle attributed to *ubuntu*. This will lead to unity and respect of the values that drive society (cf. 3.4.1). Arguably, the *Lesotho Constitution 1993* promotes a sense of community and a sense of belonging, which alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging. In this respect, it could be argued that education that entails the values and principles framed from an African perspective to inform teaching and learning, will produce students who are able to develop practices that would interact well with the more-than-human world. This can be regarded as a transformative education approach (cf. 1.5; 1.6). Although the *Lesotho Constitution 1993* affords people the liberty to participate in the cultural life of the community, it is silent on how education could contribute to the realisation of its motive. There is no text or content that relates to cultural practices, the history of the Basotho nation, or their cultural identity. In this scenario, it could be argued that Basotho children might continue to learn foreign cultural practices (cf. 1.2), which will continue to disconnect them from their immediate place. In this context, the Basotho culture is likely to be assimilated by other cultures if it is not preserved and maintained for coming generations. In this respect, the *Lesotho Constitution 1993* does not align to African communitarianism, so the inequalities of the past continue to prevail. Although the Constitution is silent on the cultural practices which need to be promoted, the Constitution serves only as the legislative framework from which policies can be developed to promote cultural life of the community. While the Constitution recommends what has to be done, it is the responsibility of the MoET to create policies that would reconnect and promote Basotho cultural practices. In this aspect, *CAP 2009* aspires to promote desirable values and attitudes, although it does not explain the context from which such values and attitudes would be drawn (cf. 5.5.2.2).

#### **5.4.1.3 PROVISION OF SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS**

With increasing technological demands in the global world, there is a need for life skills and desirable attitudes and dispositions that would enable students to develop their abilities so that they are able to face the challenges such as emergence of diseases, unemployment, poverty and environmental degradation (cf. 5.2.2.2.2) around their

environment. The Constitution further makes provision for education that is “directed to the full development of the human personality” (Section 28 (a)). It could be deduced that human personality refers to a humane being characterised by certain dispositions such as caring, reciprocity and understanding (cf. 5. 3; 3. 4. 1). Arguably, the Constitution promotes *ubuntu* as it advocates for education policies that would promote humanly dispositions and values for a well-rounded person who relates in community with others. The Constitution further refer to technical and vocational education (cf. 5.2.1.1). Arguably, the Constitution envisages and paves way for education policies and documents that would make explicit skills and values that should be developed. An example would be *CAP 2009* as the current curricular reform. As *CAP 2009* is enacted to put in place what the Constitution envisions it anticipates to provide students with the skills and dispositions that would enable them to function meaningfully in their community spaces (cf. 5.2.2.2.2).

#### **5.4.2 LESOTHO VISION 2020**

*Lesotho Vision 2020* is a long-term development framework that envisages to improve Lesotho in terms of her socio-economic and political spheres of development (cf. 5.2.1.2).

##### **5.4.2.1 TEACHING FROM THE COMMUNITY SPACES IN WHICH STUDENTS LIVE**

It is imperative to reconnect students to their local, regional and global spaces in which they live so that the environment around them can serve as their primary source for learning (cf. 5.3). Although Vision 2020 partially refers to education framed from the immediate environment in which students live (cf. 5.4.1.1), it aspires to have a well-managed environment in which “[t]he country’s diversity of life systems will be supported and protected by a nation which is environmentally conscious and whose people are in balanced existence with the natural environment” (Government of Lesotho, 2004:Section 3.2.6). It was revealed that the Vision alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging, as it refers to the diversity of life systems and biodiversity, which consists of a web of life inclusive of the humans and the non-humans in the environment (cf. 2.2.1.1; 5.2.1.2). Thus, it could be argued that Vision 2020 is post-

humanistic (cf. 2.3.1) in nature, as it promotes social justice by enhancing a network of life across the lived space (cf. 2.2.1.1; 2.3.3; 2.3.4). This aspect aligns with *ubuntu*, which advances the interconnectedness of all species across the space (cf. 3.4.1), and expresses *ukama* which is the relatedness of all the entities in cosmic life (cf. 3.4.2). Thus, the Vision advocates for an inseparable bond between humans and non-humans (cf. 2.2.1.1), which translates into interdependency and interwoven relationships between humans and non-humans (cf. 4.2.1; 3.4.2). In this respect, I argue that students would be aware of the interconnectedness and interrelatedness of species across the space, consequently, harmonious relationships are formed. As espoused by the Vision, environmental education would be integrated at all levels to sensitise students about caring and protecting the environment for the coming generation (cf.5.2.1.2). Environmental education as a transformative education would therefore provide students with opportunity to explore the environment inclusive of humans and non-humans, identify challenges, and take action to alleviate such challenges. As a result, students would gain a deeper understanding of the environment, and develop greater environmental connectedness (cf. 2.5) and willingness to engage in activities that respect and care for the environment.

#### **5.4.2.2 MORAL VALUES FRAMED FROM THE AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE**

Moral values denote the set of principles to which individuals in a community are expected to conform as they explicate what is considered to be right or wrong. Due to globalisation, Lesotho is faced with cultural change which may be attributed to an assimilation of a dominant culture which has contributed to a loss of moral values. In this space there is a need to develop a curriculum that takes cognisance of the moral values that underpin our African indigenous society. It was found that *Lesotho Vision 2020* aspires to manage and preserve cultural heritage which comprises of the shared values and norms of the Basotho nation (cf. 5.2.1.2). As culture is crucial in national unity and the preservation of national identity, it connects to a sense of communitarian belonging. Within the context of a sense of communitarian belonging, cultural heritage describes the norms and values through which students are socialised into developed and well-rounded individuals who are prepared to live in community with others (cf.

3.4.1). In this regard, Vision 2020 wishes for the transmission of cultural heritage from one generation to the next. In this context, education couched from a sense of communitarian belonging would be ideal for imparting the acceptable values and norms that define Basotho people. I argue that in this aspect students would be aware of the morals that underpin their society, and work towards upholding them. It was found that the Lesotho Vision 2020 envisions to have a “united nation with cherished norms and values that will enhance a sense of belonging, identity and pride in every Mosotho. In addition, the Basotho nation will share common goals based on common cultural heritage and will continue to observe with respect their national symbols such as the national flag” (Lesotho Vision 2020, 2020:2.3.2). In this regard the Vision directly relates to a sense of communitarian belonging, as it aspires to unity and strives for embeddedness and connectedness of individuals to other people in the community (cf. 5.2.1.2). This in itself alludes to communalism, which is described as an African way of living (cf. 3.3). In this context, people in the community are socialised into the unity and togetherness of community members, with shared norms and values that would enable them to live communally. It was revealed that Vision 2020 promotes the unity, solidarity and togetherness of community members (cf. 5.2.1.2). This alludes to a sense of community belonging in which an individual finds him/herself, which is the promotion of an African way of living. Thus, Vision 2020 relates to *ukama* and makes provision for a sense of communitarian belonging, as it provides for an anchorage of unity and togetherness of human beings in the community (cf. 3.4.1). Based on the foregoing exposition, students would be sensitised about the cultural aspects and symbols that define the Basotho nation, and students would be able to transmit this knowledge to the next generation. In addition, students would be equipped with principles that promote living in humanness with others, as they would be sensitised about an African way of living. Thus, in drawing values from the African perspective, Vision 2020 promotes ethics (cf. 3.2; 3.4.1; 3.5; 4.4.2) that would emancipate students to be able to challenge the inequalities of the past.

#### **5.4.2.3 PROVISION OF SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS**

Upon realising that Lesotho education does not sufficiently respond to the needs of the Basotho people (cf. 1.2), Lesotho *Vision 2020* envisioned to establish a healthy and well-developed human resource base. This can only be achieved if *Vision 2020* provides skills and dispositions that would enable students to participate meaningfully in their communities (cf. 5.3; 5.4.1.3). With reference to education, the findings reveal that the Lesotho *Vision 2020* anticipates that “Basotho will have access to quality education fully responsive to the country’s needs, accessible at all levels and limited only by intellectual ability not by income or wealth”. *Vision 2020* intends to provide relevant education that would enable students to contribute meaningfully to the improvement of the socio-economic status of the country (cf. 5.2.2.2.2). This can be achieved by the education system in which “students’ talents and capabilities” (*Vision 2010:2.3.4*) are developed. In this regard, the *Vision* is aligned to education framed from a sense of communitarian belonging, as students would be provided with the skills and competences that would enable them to unleash their potential (cf. 5.3; 5.2.1.2; 5.2.2.2.2). It was revealed that the vision alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging, as it intends to provide lifelong learning, and vocational, technical and entrepreneurial education to produce a competent skilled and productive labour force (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3; 5.2.2.2). I argue that this type of education idealises students who are equipped with the skills and knowledge that would develop them into useful and productive community members who would function meaningfully for the betterment of their community. I further argue that in this context, *CAP 2009* drew its inspiration from *Vision 2020*. *CAP 2009* therefore intends to provide students with the skills and dispositions (cf. 5.2.2.2.2) that would enable them to function meaningfully in their immediate, local and global environment.

#### **5.5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS: POLICY ANALYSIS**

The focus of this section is to present the findings from the data obtained from the analysis of the policy documents. Findings and discussions are presented from the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* and the Lesotho *CAP 2009*. Themes that were derived from the literature of the study and the policy documents (cf. 5.3) were employed to

explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging. These themes included teaching from the community spaces in which students live, moral values framed from the African perspective, and provision of skills and disposition.

### **5.5.1 LESOTHO EDUCATION ACT 2010**

The *Education Act 2010* is an act intended to make provision for compulsory education and matters related to education.

#### **5.5.1.1 TEACHING FROM THE COMMUNITY SPACES IN WHICH STUDENTS LIVE**

Teaching from the community spaces in which students live entails incorporating the natural and the cultural environment in the teaching and learning process. The act does not refer to place-based education which frames education from the community spaces in which students live (cf. 5.3; 5.4.1.1). As a result, it could be argued that the act is not intended to dismantle colonial education, which clouds the education system of Lesotho (cf. 5.2.2.1). As such it is evident that the act does not challenge the anthropocentric positioning of an individual over non-humans (cf. 2.2.1.1). I argue that failure to frame education from the immediate place, will result in students continuing to learn content that is disconnected from the context in which they live. Thus, as students are denied the opportunity to learn from their immediate place, they would not have a holistic understanding of the local areas. They are therefore likely to perceive critical challenges around them as part of their lives, and as a result would not attempt to alleviate them. There is a need for a curriculum to infuse community spaces in which students live. As such content and context would provide students with an opportunity to fully understand their locale (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3), be able to identify the challenges affecting their immediate environment, and work towards solving such challenges to bring justice to all entities across the space (cf. 2.3.4).

#### **5.5.1.2 MORAL VALUES FRAMED FROM AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE**

One of the identified themes is the inculcation of moral values framed from African communitarians. These values describe how community members within a society are

expected to conduct themselves in relation to others, such as showing humanness, solidarity, unity, honesty and reciprocity (cf. 3.4.1; 4.4.2). The analysis found out that *the Lesotho Education Act 2010* is silent about the values and virtues that are expected to be emphasised and strengthened in schools to build a complete Mosotho child (cf. 5.2.2.1). There is no reference to the teaching and learning of moral values encrypted from African communitarianism. It could be argued that the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* is not aimed at challenging colonial education values that have disconnected and displaced students from their community spaces. As a result, it could be argued that students continue to learn content that perpetuate individualism and competition (cf. 1.7.2; 2.2.1.1) amongst students, and this does not benefit the common good (cf. 3.3) of African communities.

#### **5.5.1.3 PROVISION OF SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS**

As education is regarded as a strategy to improve any country's socio-economic and political facets of life, it is expected that the type of education offered in schools should provide students with the skills and dispositions that would equip them with competencies that they could use to solve or tackle inherent challenges around their areas (cf. 5.3; 4.2.1; 4.4.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3). Although the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* is concerned with matters relating to education, it was found that the act does not make provision for skills and knowledge that students could acquire in order to prepare them to function meaningfully in their communities (cf. 5.2.2.1). This implies that students would continue to acquire the skills and dispositions that are not beneficial to their communities. As such, education continues to be non-responsive to the needs of the Basotho, the injustices of the past would remain unchallenged.

From the analysis of the *Lesotho Education Act 2010*, it was revealed that the act is only concerned with the provision of compulsory primary education and to legalise matters relating to education. It is not concerned with the content of the curriculum offered in schools that would challenge the colonial education which Lesotho education still mimics (cf. 1.2). Thus, the act is silent in relation to the aim of the study because no reference is made to education couched from a sense of communitarian

belonging, and therefore does not advance for the incorporation of humans and the more-than-human world.

## **5.5.2 CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY 2009**

### **5.5.2.1 TEACHING FROM THE COMMUNITY SPACES IN WHICH STUDENTS LIVE**

The MoET acknowledges that there are inherent challenges that affect the Basotho nation, such as the prevalence of “HIV/AIDS, deteriorating climatic and environmental elements” (MoET, 2009). In order to address these challenges, there was a need for a curriculum that would frame education from the context in which students live, and provide students with survival skills and dispositions that would enable them to counter such challenges (cf. 5.3). The findings of the analysis of *CAP 2009* revealed that the policy framework intends to “root teaching/learning content and processes in the philosophical environment of a child” (MoET, 2009:4). The findings of the study revealed that *CAP 2009* relates to a sense of communitarian belonging, as teaching and learning is rooted around the students’ environment. Thus, the content is connected to the students’ lived experiences (cf. 2.5; 3.5; 4.2.1; 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3). In this process, students would develop a sense of belonging (cf. 2.5) as students learn best in an environment that is familiar to them. Such an environment allows them to interact with it. They are then actively involved and are able to construct their own knowledge. Students also learn best in a participatory and collaborative environment (cf. 5.2.2.2.2), and these approaches to teaching and learning translates to a sense of community. From the foregoing exposition, it is clear that *CAP 2009* directly aligns to the aspects of place. It envisions education grounded from the place in which interaction with the environment is promoted (cf. 2.2; 4.2.1; 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3). In this way students have the opportunity to interact and relate with their immediate place. *CAP 2009* allows students to identify with the place in which they live. In this context, *CAP 2009* is a transformative education tool that is intended to dismantle the anthropocentric positioning of human beings over non-humans to an equal moral

standing of both the humans and non-humans. Thus, *CAP 2009* challenges prevailing inequalities and injustices that have been instilled by Eurocentric education.

MoET (2009:15) acknowledges that the “learner is part of a community and that learning should take into account everyday experiences of learners. School life should thus be integrated with community life and that of the individual learner”. Arguably, the findings of the study reveal that the Lesotho Integrated Curriculum (LIC) translates to place-based education, which gives students the opportunity to interact with their immediate environment, including the more-than-human world (cf. 4.2). By implication, *CAP 2009* has the potential to promote education for a sense of communitarian belonging by providing education couched from the place in which students live. This enables students to interact with their environment and solve their inherent challenges (cf. 2.2; 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3). Thus, I argue that what students have learnt at school could be applied in real-life situations to challenge and solve the problems of society (cf. 5.2.2.2.2). Similarly, LIC is perceived to be a transformative education approach which can reconnect students to their immediate environment. It is meant to dismantle colonial education practices which disconnect students from their community spaces (cf.1.2). From the above, LIC can assist to heal past colonial injustices and bring social justice to the Lesotho education system by considering an assemblage of all entities across the space, while acknowledging the integration of humans and non-humans (cf. 2.3.3; 2.3.4). Thus, *CAP 2009* aligns to a sense of communitarian belonging as students are reconnected to their immediate place. Students would learn context-based content derived from the community spaces in which they live, inclusive of both humans and non-humans. I argue that place-based education alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging (cf. 3.6; 4.3.3; 4.4.3).

The analysis of *CAP 2009* indicated that environmental adaptation and sustainable development as a curriculum element envisions to develop students who “understand and appreciate the biophysical, political, social and economic parts of the environment and their interrelationships” (MoET, 2009:16). This aspect relates to a sense of communitarian belonging as it aspires to context-specific education (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3.3;

4.4.3). It could be argued that this aspect has the potential of promoting education for a sense of communitarian belonging, as students would be interacting and learning from their immediate environment and would be equipped with ways of taking care of it and promoting the effective use of resources (cf. 5.2.2.2.2). The policy document appears to support a transformative education approach that foregrounds place-based education in which education content and practices are derived from the context of the students. It calls for the blending of skills which will prepare students to interact productively with their immediate environment, both locally and globally (cf. 2.2; 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3). Thus, the implication is that *CAP 2009* directly alludes to a sense of belonging, as students would learn from their immediate place, which is inclusive the humans and non-humans. This would help them to develop an attachment to a place, supporting the formation of harmonious relationships (cf. 2.5). This curriculum aspect explains how students are expected to relate with the environment around them in order to ensure its sustainability (cf. 5.2.2.2.2). It could be argued that the environment is inclusive of the non-human, and as a result, it envisages *ubuntu* and *ukama* in which students' humane actions are critical in ensuring the sustainability of the environment (cf. 3.4.1). *Ukama* explains the relatedness of all entities in the ecosystem (cf. 3.4.2). It could be argued that in this aspect *CAP 2009* relates to an African environmental ethic. As a result, *CAP 2009* has the potential to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. I argue that the policy framework would instil appropriate moral values that would enable students to live in community with non-humans. With the addition of the curriculum element of environment, adaptation and sustainable development, the *CAP 2009* aligns with the *Lesotho Constitution 1993* and the *Lesotho Vision 2020* respectively. Whereas Constitution 1993 intends to protect and ensure the sustainable use of the environment for the present and future generation (cf. 5.2.1.1), Vision 2020 aspires for environmental education on all levels, so that people are sensitised about the need to conserve and protect the environment for coming generations (cf. 5.2.1.2). In response to these aspirations, the policy framework envisions to provide environmental education in schools, and to produce students who would be able to protect their environment, both locally and globally. I argue that the *CAP 2009* gives students an opportunity to interact with and learn from their environment. The *CAP*

2009 therefore contributes to the interconnectedness of humans and non-humans. It could further be argued that *CAP 2009* alludes to African communitarianism, which advocates for a collective agency of both humans and non-humans (cf. 3.2; 3.3). It subsequently promotes the coexistence and interdependence of the animate and the inanimate. Although the policy framework refers to environmental education, it does not explicitly refer to non-humans. This is evident as there is no definition of the biophysical world and the environment. Based on this, it could be argued that *CAP 2009* only partially refers to the more-than-human world. It relates to an ecological dimension of place, and the failure to define the concepts make the document open to different interpretations. In this aspect I argue that failure to thoroughly conceptualise the environment would contribute to a limited understanding of what the environment entails and how it should be cared for.

#### **5.5.2.2 MORAL VALUES FRAMED FROM AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE**

Curriculum reforms should describe how the moral values that define a society can be incorporated to inform teaching and learning (cf. 5.3). It was revealed that the policy framework alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging as it incorporates awareness of the self and of others as one of the curriculum aspects of an integrated curriculum (cf. 5.2.2.2.2). Awareness of the self and of others is imperative for personal growth and development in African communities, as an individual is perceived in relation to others (cf. 3.4.1; 3.4.3). In this context, the policy framework prepares “learners to understand and appreciate themselves and others. They should understand their developmental processes, physiologically and psychologically, and how they affect their relationships being able to realise, understand and appreciate self and others” (MoET, 2009:16). The implication is that the policy framework directly relates to *ubuntu* as it aspires to nurture students who appreciate and value themselves and other students, respect other people’s rights, are tolerant and gender sensitive, and adopt intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. It could be argued that when students have acquired such skills, they would be able to live harmoniously with others in their communities (cf. 5.2.2.2.2). Arguably, the new curriculum dispensation subsequently has the potential to promote a sense of communitarian belonging,

framed from an African perspective, as this promotes humanness and interconnectivity amongst and between people, and non-humans (cf. 3.4.1). It regards life as an interconnected web, with no one aspect superior to another (cf. 2.2.1.1; 3.4.3; 4.2.1). Thus, the content entailed under this curriculum aspect envisages the values of interdependence, coexistence, cohesion, *ubuntu* and *ukama* that are required to reconnect students to their indigenous morals. In this way, social justice is promoted.

Through personal, social and spiritual learning areas, *CAP 2009* aspires to nurture students who understand themselves, and provide them with skills and attitudes that would enable them to form harmonious relationships and live in community with others (cf. 3.4.1). It was further revealed that *CAP 2009* wishes to promote character education in which the morals and values underpinning the community are restored (cf. 4.4.2). This is a way of providing students with desirable values that would inform them on how to conduct themselves in relation to others, and this should be extended to include non-humans. It could be argued that *CAP 2009*, through this learning area, is directly linked to *ubuntu*, which describes an African way of living in which people are expected to live according to the norms and values prescribed by society. As such, people would live in humaneness and harmoniously with others (cf. 3.4.1; 3.4.3; 3.5; 4.2.1; 5.2.2.2.3). Thus, *CAP 2009* encourages students to live in harmony with others and the more-than-human world. This learning area intends to nurture students into good citizens, furnished with social skills that would prepare them to live in harmony with others. Arguably, it could be assumed that *CAP 2009* aligns to a sense of communitarian belonging as a transformative education approach that promotes ethics and moral values encrypted from the African perspective. Personal, social and spiritual learning areas envision to

- [d]evelop knowledge and understanding of the self;
- [d]evelop appropriate skills and attitudes towards development and nurturing of positive relationships with others regardless of cultural, social, religious or political differences and special needs;
- [c]ultivate desirable attitudes, ethical and moral values for personal and social development (MoET, 2009:19).

The MoET wishes to “cultivate desirable attitudes, ethical and moral values for personal and social development” (MoET, 2009:18). Although, *CAP 2009* aspires to instil moral values in students, the policy text is silent about the context from which the moral values would be drawn. This is evident, as the policy text does not seem to promote and refer to Basotho history and the cultural practices which define the Basotho people. In this way, it could be argued that the policy document does not advocate for reconnecting students to their indigenous moral values. From the foregoing exposition, it implies that students are likely to continue learning the colonial inherited values (cf. 1.2) which are not ideal to them. As a result, the growth and development of the self would be compromised, and students would still engage in practices which are harmful to the environment. It was further revealed that the *CAP 2009* text is silent on the common good that serves the interests of the community (cf. 3.2; 3.3.1; 3.6; 5.2.1.1; 5.2.2.1) of which students are an integral part. There is no reference in the text to the interests of the community or to the integration of an individual and the community.

#### **5.5.2.3 PROVISION OF SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS**

The adopted curriculum is expected to bring change in people’s lives, as it anticipates for skills and disposition that would enable students to fit meaningfully into their communities (cf. 5.3). The analysis of *CAP 2009* revealed that the MoET (2009) has identified socio-economic, political and environmental challenges that are inherent in Lesotho. The *CAP 2009* subsequently intends to provide education that would enable students to acquire the skills, competences, knowledge and attitudes they need to deal with their “life challenges and contexts in which the learner is expected to function as an individual and a member of the society” (MoET, 2009:15). Thus, students would acquire skills and knowledge that would prepare them to respond to emerging demands. The policy framework has highlighted prominent skills in curriculum aspects and learning areas that have to be imparted to students (cf. 5.2.2.2), “placing primacy on the survival of a learner, not only in his/her daily school routine but also as a member of a broad community life, today and tomorrow, locally and globally” (MoET,

2009:4). Consistent with the idea, the MoET (2009:16) perceives curriculum aspects as an

integral part of education for equipping learners with necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. These aspects would enable learners to face and cope with challenges they meet in their daily lives. Because the life challenges cut across all the aspects, each aspect will have a specific role to play in addressing the challenges.

It could be argued that LIC alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging, where education framed from the community spaces in which students live promotes the skills and dispositions needed to rejuvenate and sustain communities (cf. 4.2.1; 4.2.2; 4.3.3). Such skills include critical thinking, inquiry and problem-solving. When students have acquired these skills, they would be in a position to challenge long-established cultural practices which destroy the environment (cf. 2.2.1.6; 3.4.1; 3.4.2; 4.2.1). As such it could be argued that *CAP 2009*, through the adoption of an integrated curriculum, has the potential to promote education framed from a sense of communitarian belonging. To foreground a transformative education that would enable students to tackle challenges in their communities, both locally and globally, the “curriculum should develop knowledge, skills and attitudes, including moral and spiritual values which are socially acceptable and that will in turn promote responsible citizenry” (MoET, 2009:14). It was revealed that through the pedagogical approach adopted by the policy framework, active participation of the students and collaboration of students in their learning alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging (cf. 4.5). The skills, knowledge and competencies anticipated by the policy framework would enable students to extend them to their respective communities to solve the challenges around them. Arguably, the policy framework contributes to constructive development of the students. Whereas students are given an opportunity to take a leading role in their learning, a sense of belonging is enhanced (cf. 2.5). Thus, *CAP 2009* directly relates to a sense of belonging where students are actively involved, and a sense of school connectedness is promoted (cf. 2.5; 4.2.2; 4.3.3). This implies that students would be prepared to become responsible citizens, who would be eager to participate actively in the matters affecting their communities. Through *CAP 2009*,

social change would be attained, and through the skills and dispositions that students have acquired they would be able to heal the injustices of the past.

## **5.6 SUMMARY**

In this chapter I explored the potential of Lesotho education policies for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging (cf. 5.2; 5.4; 5.5). To achieve this objective, I embarked on a document and policy analysis (cf. 5.2.1; 5.2.2) of the education-related policies that inform policy and curriculum change in Lesotho. The analysis of the documents, the *Lesotho Constitution 1993*, *Lesotho Vision 2020*, *Lesotho Education Act 2010* and *Lesotho Curriculum Assessment Policy 2009*, was guided by Taylor *et al.*'s (1997) and Samuel's (2017) approaches to analysing policy texts. The content analysis of the policies was guided by a framework for analysis which I derived from the key points related to a sense of communitarian belonging obtained from literature of the study and the policy documents (cf. 5.3). The themes were employed as the analytic tool to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging. These themes include couching education from the community spaces in which students live, the promotion of moral education where values encrypted from the African perspective are inculcated, and also the provision of skills and dispositions.

The findings from the *Lesotho Constitution 1993* revealed that the Constitution provides a legislative framework in which policies from different spheres could be developed to realise what the Constitution aspires to. For the purpose of this study, the Constitution recommends what the MoET should do in order to put place the aspects related to education. It was revealed that the Constitution does not anticipate for education framed from the community spaces in which students live (cf. 5.4.1.1). Its silence on education couched from an immediate place has a negative effect, as it does not aspire to reconnect students to their immediate place, and in that sense, it does not refer to a sense of communitarian belonging. With regard to the inculcation of moral values, the Constitution makes provision for the desirable values (equality and justice) that characterise an African society (cf. 5.4.1.2). In this regard the

Constitution alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging as it espouses *ubuntu* principles which enables the nation to live in humanness, as this facilitates the forming of harmonious relationships. As a result, unity, oneness and solidarity are entrenched, and characterise the community. As the Constitution refers to fundamental human rights, it could be argued that this relates to a sense of communitarian belonging, since human rights are respected. As such it is anticipated that harmonious relationships would be formed (cf. 5.4.1.2). Although the Lesotho Constitution 1993 refers to Sesotho and English as the languages to be used in the country, it does not refer to other languages such as Isithembu and Isixhosa that are spoken by minority groups. Thus, in this regard, it could be argued that the constitution does not relate to a sense of communitarian belonging, since minority languages are marginalised and English is given superiority over other languages (cf. 5.4.1.2). It was further revealed that the Constitution only refers to technical and vocational education. It could be argued that the Constitution intends to prepare students to function meaningfully in their communities. As such, it could be deducted that the Constitution intends to dismantle the injustices of the past where Lesotho education system focused more on cognitive domain (cf. 1.2).

*Lesotho Vision 2020* is a developmental plan that was intended to realise socio-economic development in the country (cf. 5.2.1.2). The Vision relates to a sense of communitarian belonging as it intends to build a united nation. In building a united nation there needs to be solidarity, togetherness and oneness, so that the nation could be founded on African communitarianism (cf. 5.4.2.2; 3.3). A united nation is further characterised by shared norms and values that bind people together. Vision 2020 therefore aspires to the preservation of cultural heritage. It was further found that Vision 2020 anticipates for the type of education that would be responsive to the needs of the people, and that would provide students with the skills and competencies that would assist them to unleash their potential (cf. 5.4.2.2). In this regard it could be argued that *Lesotho Vision 2020* alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging, which will facilitate the initiation of transformative education. It was revealed that through the provision of appropriate skills and dispositions, students would be able to tackle

challenging demands around their environment (cf. 5.4.2.3). It was also revealed that through the incorporation of a well-managed environment, the Vision directly relates to a sense of communitarian belonging, as environmental education is inclusive of humans and non-humans (cf. 5.4.2.1). Thus, the Vision envisions *ubuntu* and *ukama* as these promotes an interconnected web of life where it considers the diversity of life systems in the ecosystem and its relationality (cf. 3.4.1; 3.4.2). It could be concluded that *Lesotho Vision 2020* relates to a sense of communitarian in all the key aspects or themes that were identified in the framework for analysis. Thus, Vision 2020 was developed to create a development framework that intended to bring social justice by healing the injustices of the past.

The *Lesotho Education Act 2010* was promulgated in order to make provision for free and compulsory education in primary schools. It was revealed that the act is silent on place-based education, and it does not refer to education encrypted from the community spaces in which students live (cf. 5.5.1.1). It was further revealed that the act is silent on the moral values that need to be incorporated in the education offered in schools (cf. 5.5.1.2). The act makes no reference to the skills and dispositions needed to provide students with survival skills that would enable them to tackle the challenges around them (cf. 5.5.1.3). From the findings it was revealed that the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* does not relate to a sense of communitarian belonging in all key areas that were elucidated in the framework for analysis.

The analysis of *CAP 2009* revealed that the policy framework considers students as part of the wider community. As a result, there was a need to frame education from the context in which they live (cf. 5.5.2.1). In this regard, students' learning experiences would be incorporated in their learning. Through the curriculum aspects that the policy framework envisages, a sense of communitarian belonging is promoted, as the content that students acquire could be used for the benefit of their places locally and globally. Thus, what has been learnt in school would be integrated in the community (cf. 4.2.2). Arguably, *CAP 2009* alludes to a transformative approach in which students are reconnected to their immediate environment. In relation to instilling

moral values, the policy framework aspires to build students with the desirable attitudes, ethical and morals values (cf. 5.5.2.2). Although the policy framework wishes to promote desirable attitudes, ethics and moral values, it does not specify the context from which these values would be drawn (cf. 5.5.2.2). It could be argued that in this space, the policy framework is not transformative, as does not intending to dismantle values inherited from the colonial education system. The policy framework acknowledges that there are inherent challenges in the immediate environment in which students live, such as environmental degradation, diseases and unemployment (cf. 5.2.2.2.2). It was revealed that the *CAP 2009*, through curriculum aspects and learning areas, envision to provide students with the skills and dispositions to tackle challenges around them (cf. 5.5.2.3). It was revealed that these skills would assist students to function meaningfully in their communities. Thus, change would be obtained, as students would have been emancipated.

In the next chapter, I comment on my research findings and make suggestions regarding the potential of Lesotho education policies for the development of a sense communitarian belonging.

## **CHAPTER 6: COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of the study was to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. The policy documents analysed were the *Lesotho Constitution 1993*, *Lesotho Vision 2020*, the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* and the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009*. The aforementioned policies were analysed because they provide the background against which education policies and curriculum reforms are foregrounded. In this chapter, I synthesise the previous chapters to comment on my research findings with the intention of making suggestions regarding the potential of Lesotho education policies for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging. I conclude the chapter by highlighting the strengths of the study, reflecting on the challenges I encountered while conducting my study, articulating how the study has contributed to scholarly and personal growth and development, and highlighting the limitations of the study, which give rise to prospects for further research.

### **6.2 PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH**

I contend that this research has achieved its purpose. The research has contributed significantly to my personal empowerment, as I gained a deeper understanding of how a sense of belonging influences students' connectedness to a school. I provided an informative literature review on place-based education and its contribution to students' sense of belonging, and their increased school attendance and performance. Secondly, I gained new knowledge about communitarianism and African communitarianism, which I contend will enlighten the reader. Third, through the literature review that was conducted, I managed to construct a conceptual framework as the lens through which the Lesotho education policies were analysed. Fourth, I analysed Lesotho education policies via document analysis, utilising Samuel's (2017) and Taylor *et al.*'s (1997) reading of policy. A framework for analysis was developed,

and the themes were developed from the conceptual framework and the examination of specified Lesotho education policies. In pursuance of my study, various objectives were developed that helped me to respond to the main question of the study. To further illustrate how the study achieved its purpose, I provided an overview of Chapters 2, 3, and 4 which enabled me to develop the conceptual framework against which Lesotho education policies were analysed. To explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging, in Chapter 5 of the study I focus on the findings and discussion of both the document and policy analysis.

### **6.3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

I constructed a conceptual framework from a conceptual understanding of African communitarianism, from which the notion of a sense of communitarian belonging emerged (cf. 1.5). This conceptual framework was developed in order to understand and explore the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. This section was achieved through the specified research questions and the objectives of the study. The conceptual framework included Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of the study. The overview of these chapters would be presented in this version.

#### **Chapter 2**

This chapter centred on conceptualisation of place in relation to a sense of belonging (cf. 1.3.1). This objective assisted me to understand the relationship between place and a sense of belonging. Its subsequent conceptualisation helped me to construct the conceptual framework that informed my study. In order to respond to this objective, I consulted the work of several scholars on place and a sense of belonging. Place was conceptualised through different meanings and definitions obtained from different scholars. Place was conceptualised as a multidimensional concept that straddles different fields such as anthropology, environmental education and geography. Due to its slippery nature, the meaning of place ranges from being a location, to place attachment, place identity and a sense of place (cf. 2.2). Place was further explored

through the different dimensions in which it manifests itself, namely ecological, ecofeministic, perceptual, sociological, ideological and political (cf. 2.2.1). The different dimensions of place are argued to be helpful in understanding how place manifests itself in terms of socio-political relations, and the connection between humans and non-humans. Arguably, an understanding of the different dimension could assist in articulating the type of education that takes cognisance of the interrelatedness and interconnection of humans and the-more-than human world. To further enhance my understanding of place, theories of place were explored as diverse lenses through which place was explained and analysed (cf. 2.3). From the exploration of the theories of place, I noted that all theories of place are post humanistic. They intend to dismantle the positioning of humans over non-humans by advocating for post-anthropocentrism, in which humans and non-humans are fused together. The implication here is that the theories of place advocate for an assemblage of all the entities across the space (cf. 2.3.3), with no one superior over another. This will advocate for education which takes cognisance of human and non-humans. To further gain a deeper understanding of place, there was a need to establish what happens when people interact with place. A sense of place is established when meaning and an attachment to a place are developed (cf. 2.4). A sense of place can be commonly defined as a feeling of being at home. Such a feeling is developed when a place is able to satisfy an individual's needs, which will then lead to the development of the meanings and attachments to a place (cf. 2.4). The implication here is that a bond to a place could be developed if the place satisfies people's needs. Linked to place and a sense of place is a sense of belonging. This relates to an individual's or group's connectedness and rootedness to a specific place (cf. 2.5). A feeling of belonging is realised when one feels loved, cared for and respected in the physical and social setting s/he finds himself in. It could be argued that a sense of belonging develops when individuals share a social position in a socially and politically constructed and structured community. To further understand place, Yuval-Davis (2006) explains the analytical level on which belonging is constructed (cf. 2.5.1). Social locations position people in different categories imbued with power. Identities are stories that are told, and such stories have an influence on

a sense of belonging, Ethical and political values systems focus on the judgement of social locations and the constructions of individuals and collective identities. By implication, this judgement is brought by unequal power relations that influence a sense of belonging (cf. 2.5.2). The best avenue to understand a sense of belonging is through engaging in the politics of belonging (cf. 2.5.2). The politics of belonging focus on the socio-political demarcation which separate people into 'us' and 'them'. This binary division dictates who belongs and who does not belong. Arguably, politics of belonging are characterised by contestations, struggles and negotiations, which are likely to influence the type of education adopted (cf. 2.5.2). As the focus of the chapter was to conceptualise place as a sense of belonging, I established that there is a connection between place and a sense of belonging. Place as a sense of belonging refers to an attachment that individuals or groups of people form towards the place they live. From the foregoing exposition, it could be argued that place is in the process of becoming, as it intends to work towards an assemblage of all the entities across the space to bring social justice.

### Chapter 3

In Chapter 3 of the study, place as sense of belonging was recontextualised from an African perspective (cf. 1.3.2) in which *ubuntu* and *ukama* as concepts associated with African communitarianism were explored comprehensively. This assisted me to construct the conceptual framework that informed my study. To engage with this objective, a literature review was conducted to obtain data on communitarianism and specifically African communitarianism. My understanding of the recontextualisation of place as a sense of belonging from an African perspective was foregrounded on my understanding of place. As a term that originates from the word community, communitarianism was conceptualised as a philosophical stance that advocates for collective agency of all community members, bound by common features. In this perspective, I have learnt that an individual has communitarian belonging if s/he is considered as inherently embedded in the community. Thus, I have learnt that communitarianism advocates for the connection between the community and the

individual. Of importance is to note that in this relationship none is superior to the other, or can exist without the other (cf. 3.2). In this regard, an individual cannot be regarded as an isolated entity but rather as part of a broader whole. I have also learnt that communitarianism can be viewed from authoritarian and responsive perspectives. Authoritarian communitarianism advances the common good of the community over an individual. In this perspective, the common good are the goods that serve all community members, and as such no individual is privileged to enjoy the benefits alone, but they are distributed evenly for the benefit of all. From this notion I concluded that the common good upholds the interests of the community (cf. 3.2). In this respect, an individual is expected to act towards the benefit of the community's interest. The common good can be realised if the community is characterised by harmony, cohesion, interdependence, protection and consensus (cf. 3.2). Responsive communitarianism emerged to counteract authoritarian communitarianism. It acknowledges that there is a close connection between an individual and the community, and advances the creation of the individual's and community's rights and autonomy. In this context, responsive communitarianism advocates for the flourishing of both an individual and the community. Communitarianism goes beyond the connection of humans to the animate and inanimate, and advances the coexistence and the interdependence of humans and non-humans (cf. 3.2).

To fully understand communitarianism, I explored how it finds expression within an African perspective so as to determine the potential contribution in foregrounding education framed in a sense of communitarian belonging (cf. 1.3). African communitarianism was conceptualised as an African philosophy followed in many sub-Saharan African countries (cf. 3.3). The African world view is to uphold historical and African traditions. The idea also emerged with the purpose of decolonising the Western values and practices that have marginalised African communities' values and practices. I have learnt that African communitarianism describes an African way of living that defines their ethos. From an African perspective, an individual is a communal being embedded in the community (cf. 3.3). Thus, communitarianism finds

expression as a way of living in African communities, as it promotes an inseparable bond between an individual and the community (cf. 3.3). To further enhance my understanding, I explored different approaches of African communitarianism, namely radical, moderate and qualified communitarianism (cf. 3.3.1). Radical communitarianism foregrounds the primacy of the community over the individual. In this instance the implication is that the common good is given priority, while individual rights are considered to be less important (cf. 3.3.1.1). However, I noted that an individual is vested with the responsibility to work towards realising the common good. From the radical point of view an individual is embedded in the community. The community is therefore given the responsibility to shape an individual according to the values of the community (cf. 3.3.1.1). Moderate communitarianism emerged in contrast to radical communitarianism, which advocates for the primacy of community. The proponents of moderate communitarianism subscribe to the equal moral standing of individual and community rights (cf. 3.3.1.2). In this context, I have learnt that the rights of an individual are recognised, along with the community's rights. Common good is recognised as universal, so an individual is given the opportunity to better the self for the flourishing of the community (cf. 3.3.1.2). Qualified or limited African communitarianism rejects the distinction between the community and the individual, hence it proposes the infusion of both the individual and the community in a communitarian set up, as both complement each other (cf. 3.3.1.3). By implication, limited communitarianism is neutral to both the individual's and the community's rights and obligations, and these are shared by all mankind.

To advance my understanding of communitarianism, I explored *ubuntu* and *ukama* as concepts associated with African communitarianism (cf. 3.4). *Ubuntu* is an African philosophy espoused throughout sub-Saharan Africa. *Ubuntu* is defined as humaneness, and expresses the humanity of an individual in relation to others. As an African way of life, it defines the self as living in community with others (cf. 3.4.1). As such I have observed that *ubuntu* advances interdependence and interconnection amongst humans. Thus, it is imperative to note that *ubuntu* is characterised by a close

interaction between humans and non-humans. It sees the community as comprising of the animate and the inanimate. To establish an interconnected community there is a need to establish virtues that define the indigenous population, such as compassion, honesty, reciprocity, respect and dignity, and must be extended to the more-than-human world to enhance humility (cf. 3.4.1; 3.2). To advance interconnectedness, *ubuntu* advances group solidarity which is needed for the flourishing of the community (cf. 3.4.1). *Ukama* is a concept derived from the Shona language, and common in most Africa countries. It suggests closeness and affection, and foregrounds the relatedness between humans (cf. 3.4.2). Relatedness is expressed not only through blood but also through marriage. *Ukama* does not only advance relatedness between humans, but it extends to other entities that are found across the space (cf. 3.4.2). In this context, *ukama* envisages the interdependency and interwoven relationships between humans, as well as between humans and the wider ecological community. To indicate that *ukama* advances the relatedness of all cosmic life, the societies identify with animal species, plants and other elements (cf. 3.4.1). I believe that this practice can be translated into the preservation and maintenance of their immediate environment. In the process, society consequently feels a sense of belonging as they are connected to the environment, the past and the present. Arguably, *ukama* as an African value, provides an anchorage for unity and togetherness of all humans and non-humans (cf. 3.4.2). *Ubuntu* and *ukama* expresses interconnectedness between people and the biophysical world. In this context, humanness as relationality articulate a communal way of living.

Place as sense of belonging was reconsidered from an African communitarian perspective (cf. 1.3.2; 3.5) as informed by *ubuntu* and *ukama*. Place as sense of belonging could be reimagined from an African perspective where the self is considered as part of the community (cf. 3.4.1). As people cohabit the place, connections and relationships are formed. I have also noted that place as sense of belonging alludes to the relatedness and interdependence of humans and non-humans that exists across the space (cf. 2.3.3). Arguably, place as sense of belonging

could be construed from an African perspective as it enhances the relatedness of humans to the wider ecological community. I contend that a sense of belonging couched from an African perspective could be construed as a sense of communitarian belonging, which aspires for a nexus between humans and non-humans (cf. 2.2.1.2). From this perspective it could be noted that a sense of communitarian belonging is grounded on geographical, cultural and relational experiences that are inherent in a place. From the ongoing exposition, I have noted that the morals informed by *ubuntu* and *ukama* denote interrelatedness and the interconnectivity of all species in the cosmic life (cf. 3.5).

Chapter 4 of the study considered the implications of education for the development of a sense communitarian belonging (cf. 1.3.3). These implications were derived and foregrounded from place and a sense of belonging. In order to realise this objective, I consulted the work of several scholars on place as a sense of belonging, and this was achieved through the conceptualisation of African communitarianism to derive educational implications from communitarian belonging. The chapter unfolded through implications for place-based education (cf. 4.2), educational implications for the promotion of a sense of belonging (cf. 4.3), and educational implications for communitarian belonging (cf. 4.4).

Place-based education was conceptualised as the education foregrounded from the students' immediate place. It is therefore rooted from the local culture and the community (cf. 4.2). From the definition, I understood it as the transformative education approach that connects students to their local settings and that serves as the primary source of learning (cf. 4.2.2). Thus, teachers are expected to merge the curriculum content with outdoor learning. In this context, students will interact with their community and their natural environment. They will develop a sense of place which is likely to influence their performance, love and caring for the environment (cf. 2.4). I have also learnt that outdoor learning contributes to collaborative and participatory learning, in which students would be engaged in learning as a group. Arguably, place-

based education produces students who work collaboratively to tackle challenges in their immediate place (cf. 4.2.2).

Place-based education was further understood to foster interrelated and independent relationships, as it regards life as a web that considers the network of humans and non-humans (cf. 4.2.1). This implies that students are given an opportunity to interact with their immediate environment, and experience being human in relation to others and their environment (cf. 4.2.1; 3.4.1). In this context, teachers are expected to assist students to develop humane actions that would help them to conserve and restore the environment for their use and for the next generation. Thus, place-based education foregrounds humanness and interconnectivity of all entities across the space (cf. 2.3.3; 4.2.1). I have also learnt that to strengthen the relationship between humans and the more-than-human world, place-based education provides students with the skills and dispositions that they need to restore and sustain their immediate environment. This implies that teachers are vested with the responsibility to provide students with skills like critical inquiry and problem-solving skills, which could be used to service the community.

Educational implications for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging were established as they are expected to feed into the development of a sense of communitarian belonging (cf. 4.3.1). Schools as institutions that provide teaching and learning to students must create a sense of belonging in which members of the school community would feel loved, cared for, respected and supported (cf. 4.3.1). I have learnt that when the school community is involved and a sense of belonging has been created, positive social relations between the teachers, students and the community are developed (cf. 4.3.1). When students experience higher levels of school connectedness, their performance is likely to improve.

In Chapter 5, I undertook a document and policy analysis of Lesotho education policies to explore their potential in promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging. These documents are the *Lesotho Constitution 1993*, *Lesotho Vision 2020*, the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* and *CAP 2009*. For each policy document a contextual background was given that explained the reasons behind their gestation. Document analysis was conducted through Samuel's (2017) and Taylor *et al.*'s (1997) approaches to reading or analysing policies (cf. 5.2.1; 5.2.2). In the process, the analysis was done with the main research question in mind, where its relation with the topic was explored and examined. The chapter also presented findings from document analysis (cf. 5.4) and policy analysis (cf. 5.5) imbued with discussions. Policy analysis of the aforementioned policy documents was conducted using themes that were developed from the conceptual framework developed from literature of the study and the policy documents themselves (cf. 5.4; 5.5). The aim was to establish if these policies promote education that frame student education from the community spaces in which they live, provide students with skills and dispositions that would enable them to tackle the challenges in their immediate environment, and inculcate moral values encrypted from an African communitarianism. In this section, I present a summary of my findings from the document and policy analysis. The findings from each section are be presented individually.

## **6.4 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

This section provides a summary of my findings based on the research questions of the study. Research questions of the study were used to present the findings of the study.

### **6.4.1 How can place be conceptualised in relation to a sense of belonging?**

From the conceptual framework constructed in chapter 2 of the study (cf. 2.6; 6.3) it was established that there is connection between place and a sense of belonging. The theme that aligns to place as sense of belonging is teaching from the community spaces in which students live. The findings from the policy documents would be presented below.

The findings of the study revealed that, *Lesotho Constitution 1993* is the supreme law of the country, which provides the background against which other legislation and policies should be developed. This implies that the Lesotho Constitution 1993 only recommends what has to be done. In relation to the study, it was revealed that the *Lesotho Constitution 1993* advocates for the promotion and protection of the natural environment and the local culture. In this instance it is the responsibility of the MoET to put in place what the Constitution aspires to promote education rooted from students' lived experiences (cf. 5.4.1.1). Thus, as the Constitution consider students to learn from their community spaces a place as sense of belonging is promoted. The constitution refers to Sesotho and English as the official languages (cf. 5.4.1; 5.4.1.1) that could inform teaching and learning. Thus, the Constitution promotes place as sense of belonging as it considers language as a cultural aspect for the teaching and learning situation. It was found out that the *Lesotho Vision 2020* aligns to the community spaces in which students live, as it refers to a well-managed environment which considers the diversity of life, which is inclusive of both humans and non-humans (cf. 5.4.2.1). Thus, the Vision alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging as it promotes the connection of all the entities across the space (cf. 2.2.1.1; 2.3.3). It was found out that *Vision 2020* advocates for environmental education at all levels (cf. 5.4.1). In this context, students would be sensitised about eco-friendly means of using and caring for the environment sustainably.

The analysis of the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* reveals that the Act is concerned with matters pertaining to education, and specifically with the enactment of free and compulsory education. It was noted that the Act does not refer to education framed from the community spaces in which students live, and as such the Act does not intend to reconnect students to their biophysical world.

*CAP 2009* is a transformative policy aimed at reviewing the curriculum for both primary and secondary education. On this note, *CAP 2009* brings a change in the Lesotho

education system landscape, as it roots teaching and learning from the students' immediate environment. This policy framework alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging as it reconnects students to their lived experiences and the immediate place (cf. 5.5.2.1). Arguably, *CAP 2009* foregrounds place-based education in which teaching and learning content and practices are framed from the students' biophysical world, which is inclusive of the human and the more-than human world (cf. 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.3). *CAP 2009* alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging which foregrounds the geographical, cultural and relational experiences that are inherent in a place. Although *CAP 2009* foregrounds education framed from the students' natural environment, the policy framework does not emphasise environmental education in which the more-than-human world is considered (cf. 5.5.2). The findings from *CAP 2009* revealed that there is no specific learning area which refers to environmental education, but rather is included within the scientific and technological learning area (cf. MoET, 2009). In this context, it could be argued that environmental education is not necessarily considered to bring environmental change, hence it is not given an equal position with other learning areas. Failure to give environmental education the attention it needs, leads to a situation in which students are not sensitised about their environment, and education framed from the students' immediate place is compromised. Arguably, environmental ills such as land degradation that are inherent in our local, regional and global environments (cf. MoET, 2009) are not challenged, but rather persist and continue to destruct the environment. It could be argued that *CAP 2009* in this aspect does not intend to dismantle inhumane practices which are harmful to the environment. In this context it was revealed that *CAP 2009* does not promote a sense of communitarian belonging, as students are disconnected from their environment.

#### **6.4.2 In what way can place and a sense of belonging be recontextualised from an African perspective?**

To address this question a theme acquisition of moral values framed from an African perspective was derived and the policy documents were analysed against it

The findings from the document analysis indicated that the *Lesotho Constitution 1993* alludes to place as sense of belonging recontextualised from an African society. It was established that the Constitution envisions to inculcate moral values such as equality and social justice (cf. 5.4.1.1) that prepare an individual to live in a community with others, and fit well in the community s/he forms part of (cf. 3.4.1). Thus, the Constitution promotes fundamental values that define African societies. It was further revealed that the Constitution alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging as it envisions to promote respect of fundamental human rights (cf. 5.2.1.1; 5.4.1.1). Consequently, the Constitution promotes respect for all members of the Basotho nation, irrespective of their status. In this context the Constitution promotes a sense of community as the nation would be able to live in community with others (cf. .3.4.1). Arguably, the Constitution envisions to build a democratic society in which fundamental human rights are promoted (cf. 5.2.1.1; 5.4.1.1).

The findings from the *Lesotho Vision 2020* indicate that the Vision aspires for the promotion of cultural heritage (cf. 5.2.1.2; 5.4.2.1). This implies that the moral values that define the community would be inculcated to students, and as such, these values would contribute towards building a united nation characterised by solidarity and togetherness (cf. 3.4.1). Arguably, the Vision alludes to a sense of communitarian belonging as it strives for the embeddedness and interconnectedness of individuals in the community. In order to promote a cultural heritage (cf. 5.2.1.2; 5.4.2.1), the Vision intends to promote the maintenance and preservation of the Basotho culture, so that the moral values underpinning the Basotho nation will not perish.

The findings from the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* revealed that it is silent on the issues that relate to the moral values that underpin the Basotho nation (cf. 5.5.1). The implication is that, the Act is not related to a sense of communitarian belonging, as it excludes reference to the moral values (cf. 4.4.2) that need to be inculcated to students so that they are prepared to live in a community with others and maintain and preserve their cultural heritage.

The findings from *CAP 2009* revealed that the policy framework intends to instil in students the moral values that would enable them fit well and function in their society (cf. 5.5.2). The policy framework aspires to promote access, quality, equity and democratic values which would make it possible for students to live in relation to others in their communities. By implication, students would find a sense of belonging in schools, and consequently their performance is likely to improve (cf. 2.5). Although the policy framework wishes to instil desirable moral values (cf. 5.5.2.2), *CAP 2009* does not specify the context from which these values would be drawn (cf. 5.5.2.2). It could be argued that these values anticipated by the policy framework are not framed from the African perspective. Lesotho education would subsequently continue to promote values from Western colonial education, which disconnects students from their immediate place (cf. 1.2). It was revealed that the *CAP 2009* is silent on how the common good that describes the interests of the community is to be obtained (cf. 5.2.2.2). It could be argued that the policy framework continues to promote individualism, as there is no content that relates to the embeddedness of individuals to the community of which they are part. It could be argued that in this context the policy framework does not allude to a transformative paradigm in which change is needed to sensitise students about the ethical and moral values that could help them to reconnect to their moral values.

### **6.4.3 What are the implications of education for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging?**

In order to achieve this research question three themes were referred to namely: teaching from the community spaces in which students live, moral values framed from an African perspective and provision of skills and dispositions. It was revealed that *Vision 2020* and the *Lesotho Constitution 1993* intend to provide students with lifelong skills and competencies obtained from technical and vocational education that would enable them to develop and promote their abilities (cf. 5.4). In this instance, both documents envision to produce students who would be functional, productive and responsible members that would contribute positively in their communities. It was further revealed that the Constitution of Lesotho holds implications of education for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging as it aspires for education framed the student's lived experiences (cf. 5.4.1.1; 6.4.1). Thus, in response to the Constitution's aspiration policies are expected to be formulated to introduce education that would be couched from the students' community spaces. It was further established that Lesotho Vision 2020 holds implications of education for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging as it envisions to provide environmental education at all levels such that students are reconnected to their immediate environment (cf. 5.4.2.1). As the immediate environment is regarded as a resource of learning, students would establish a sense of belonging because they would be able to relate what they have learnt in school to the real-life situations (cf. 5.4.2.1). From the analysis of Vision 2020, it was revealed that schools are expected to celebrate cultural days as a way of promoting cultural heritage and promoting Basotho's culture where values and morals are entrenched (cf. 5.4.2.2). In this instance, student's sense of attachment to their school would be promoted as students are given an opportunity to exhibit their way of life.

The analysis of the *Lesotho Education Act 2010* revealed that the Act is concerned with the introduction of free primary and compulsory education. As a consequence, there is no reference to the provision of skills and dispositions which are intended to

equip students with the competencies to tackle the issues around them. In this aspect, it could be argued that the Constitution is silent on the skills and dispositions to be instilled in students that foster a sense of communitarian belonging.

The analysis of *CAP 2009* revealed that the policy framework is concerned with providing students with the skills and dispositions which would provide them with the competencies (cf. 5.2.2.2.2; 5.5.2.3) that they can use to solve inherent challenges in the communities of which they are an integral part. In this context, it could be argued that *CAP 2009* holds implications of education for the sense of communitarian belonging, as it places primacy on providing students with survival skills that would enable them to fit and function constructively in the community spaces in which they find themselves in (cf. 5.5.2.3). For instance, *CAP 2009* provides students with critical thinking and problem-solving skills which they can use to challenge long-established cultural practices which are harmful to the environment. Furthermore, the policy framework connects to the aim of the study, as it provides students with the skills and knowledge that would enable them to live in humanness with others and the biophysical world - locally, regionally and globally. In this context, it could be contended that *CAP 2009* relates to a transformative paradigm in which it fosters the skills and dispositions that students can use to challenge long-established cultural practices which are harmful to the environment. It was further established that *CAP 2009* holds implications of education for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging as it fosters education encrypted from the community spaces in which students live (cf. 5.5.1.1). Arguably, the policy framework anticipates to reconnect students to immediate place whereby the skills and dispositions they have acquired could be applied to the real-life situations. From the discussion above, it could be disputed that, Lesotho education policies hold implications of education for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging.

#### **6.4.4 What is the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging?**

To respond to the primary research question of the study – what is the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging? The sub-questions discussed above (6.4.1; 6.4.2; 6.4.3) indicated that Lesotho education policies have the potential to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. It was established that Lesotho education policies relates to place as sense of belonging (cf. 6.4.1). It was revealed Lesotho education policies consider the environment which is made of the humans and the non- humans (cf. 5.4.1.1; 5.4.2.1; 5.5.1.1). In this space, Lesotho education policies aspire for place-based education which advocates for a web of life that promote a new materialist turn and an assemblage of all entities. Thus, when the community spaces in which students live are considered a sense of an attachment to a place is entrenched. It was further established that Lesotho education policies aspire to promote the interconnectedness and interdependence of the humans and the non-humans as a result, humanness and relationality of all the species across the space is established. Arguably, Lesotho education policies promote values from an African perspective. Moreover, it was established that, Lesotho education policies have the potential to promote a sense of communitarian belonging whereas moral values from an African perspective are entrenched (cf. 5.4.1.2; 5.4.2.2; 5.4.1.2; 6.4.2). It could be argued that Lesotho education policies aspire to build a well-rounded person through the inculcation of moral values drawn from the student's immediate place. In this instance, an individual would be able to live in community with other people. In this space, Lesotho education policies recontextualise place as sense of belonging from an African perspective. From the foregoing exposition, it could be deduced that, Lesotho education policies hold implications of education to promote a sense of communitarian belonging as the policies envisage to promote skills and dispositions that would provide students with lifelong competencies that would give students an opportunity to function meaningfully in their respective societies.

## **6.5 SUGGESTIONS**

In drawing from the conceptual understanding of a sense of communitarian belonging contributed by Chapters 2 and 3 of the study, and the educational implications that inform a sense of communitarian belonging developed in Chapter 4, I was able to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies for the development of a sense of communitarian belonging in Chapter 5. From the findings derived from the analysis of the policy documents, I propose two suggestions that would enable Lesotho education curriculum reforms to promote education encrypted from a sense of communitarian belonging in order to realise the needs of the society. These are emphasising education that takes cognisance of the more-than-human world, and the introduction of moral values framed from the Basotho culture.

### **6.5.1 RECONCEPTUALISE ENVIRONMENTAL ADAPTATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TO EMPHASISE THE MORE-THAN-HUMAN WORLD**

As the Constitution aspires to protect and enhance the natural and cultural environment, *Lesotho Vision 2020* refers to environmental education in which diversity of life in the ecosystem includes all the entities across the space. In this context, the Vision and the Constitution envision to produce an eco-friendly nation which would make concerted efforts to engage in the sustainable use of the environment for the coming generation. As a result, there was a need for curricular reforms to foreground their intentions from the country's legislative framework. The analysis of *CAP 2009* revealed that environmental education, envisaged by an environmental adaptation and sustainable curriculum aspect, is not adequately captured as it is integrated within the science and technology learning area. The analysis of the policy documents (cf. 5.4; 5.5) revealed that the more-than-human world is not specifically mentioned, and the relationship and the entanglement between humans and non-humans is not highlighted. I suggest that *CAP 2009* should reconceptualise environmental adaptation and sustainable development as a policy directive to infuse and emphasise

the more-than-human, by focusing on what it entails and how it should be cared for. As it was found out that environmental education is located within the science and technology learning area, I suggest that it should be allocated its own learning area so that it does not have to compete for curricular space. It could be argued that when environmental education is not regarded as a stand-alone learning area (cf. 5.2.2.1), teachers would subsequently not derive content and practices from the students' immediate place. In cases where they do, they would not be in a position to determine the concepts that need to be integrated if the policy framework does not explicitly spell out its intentions with regard to environmental adaptation and sustainable development from the outset. It could be argued that if environmental education is integrated within another learning area, it would be open to different interpretations, as no clear directives are put forth to inform policy implementers about what is expected of them. Though I proposed that environmental education should be positioned on its own learning area, it is imperative for *CAP 2009* to integrate the entanglement of the human and the more-than-human world as a contemporary issue within other curriculum aspects and the learning areas, so that it could be well conceptualised and related to other learning areas. From the foregoing exposition, it could be argued that the reconceptualisation of environmental education, which places more emphasis on the more-than-human world and its relationship to humans, is a transformative approach that heals the inequalities of the past to bring social justice to assemble all entities across the space.

### **6.5.2 MORAL VALUES FROM AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE**

Based on the analysis of the policy documents, the *Lesotho Constitution 1993* aspires to foreground moral values that are framed from the African perspective, and respect fundamental human rights (cf. 5.4.1.2). Through the values and virtues promoted by the Constitution, it creates a landscape in which people could live in humanness with other people. It could be argued that the Constitution promotes a sense of belonging and a sense of community, which could be translated to a sense of communitarian belonging (cf. 2.5; 3.5; 4.3.3). The analysis of the *Lesotho Vision 2020* revealed that

the Vision envisages to manage and preserve the cultural heritage of the Basotho nation, which comprises of shared moral values. In this way, the norms and values that characterise the Basotho nation are expected to inform teaching and learning. The findings from the analysis of *CAP 2009* indicated that there are moral values and democratic principles enshrined in the policy framework, such as access, equality and relevance. These values are expected to inform teaching and learning. Although the *CAP 2009* aspires to cultivate desirable attitudes, as well as ethical and moral values for personal and social development (cf. MoET, 2009; 5.2.2.2.2), the policy framework does not define the context in which these values should be drawn from. I suggest that the moral values such as reciprocity, cohesion, respect and humanness (cf. 3.4.1; 3.4.3; 3.5; 4.4.2) that are expected to inform teaching and learning must be foregrounded from African communitarianism. Such values must be spelled out and elucidated from the outset, so that policy implementers would understand what is expected of them. Framing moral values from the African perspective would bring a transformative education endeavour that could be used as the environmental ethic which would be useful in promoting the entanglement of humans and the more-than world. Students would be provided with humane practices that they could use to care for and preserve the environment around them. From the two recommendations made I advocate for education framed from a sense of communitarian belonging, as it would provide the foundation of Lesotho curricular reforms to reconnect students to their immediate place.

## **6.6 IN REFLECTION**

In this section, I provide my overall experience in undertaking this study. First, I present the strengths of the study, but it is also imperative to reflect on the challenges that I faced during my three years of study. The challenges did not bar me from continuing with my endeavour, but rather assisted me to grow and determine questions for further research. The strengths I have acquired, together with my challenges, assisted me to reflect on my scholarly and personal growth.

### **6.6.1 STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY**

In reflection, I consider the coining of my topic, namely exploring the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging, as a strength. The topic is unique, as I could not find any previous studies undertaken on African communitarianism coupled with a sense of belonging, nor could I find any reference to studies undertaken on the role of education policies in advancing a sense of communitarian belonging in the African school context. This study by its very nature would be valuable to the Lesotho education context and practice to influence curriculum reform relevant to the needs of the Basotho. Through engaging in extensive reading and by consulting different scholars, I managed to construct a conceptual framework that is new and bears my signature (a sense of communitarian belonging). Not only did this serve as the tool to analyse the policy documents, but it also assisted me to respond to the research aim of the study. Through this study I learnt how to develop a framework for analysis from a literature review and analysed policy documents. I also learnt how to use the themes developed from the framework for analysis to analyse the documents. Another strength of the study is the suggestions presented from the findings of the study. It is imperative to frame education from the community spaces in which students live, as all the entities that are found across the space must be considered to enhance a deeper understanding of the students' environment. The study therefore suggests that *CAP 2009* should place more emphasis on the conceptualisation of the environment, to consider the entanglement of the both humans and the more-than human world. Another suggestion is based on the values that *CAP 2009* envisages, where refence is made to values and principles. *CAP 2009* should refer to the values and principles encrypted from an African perspective. My ability to come up with these suggestions shows that I was able to develop a conceptual framework that enabled me to engage in a thorough analysis of the policy documents.

### **6.6.2 CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY**

To complete the last chapter of the study was not an easy journey, I experienced challenges that led me to consider abandoning the study. These challenges were three-fold. Firstly, my conceptualisation of the topic was not adequate because it was framed from a philosophical point of view. Although I did policy studies and governance in education at Honours and Master's level, I obtained little knowledge in reading and writing from the philosophical perspective, I had to engage in extensive reading to position my writing within the philosophical point of view. Secondly, although I engaged in a desktop study, I found it difficult to write and read regularly. I am permanently employed, and had limited time to work on my study, shuttling between my workplace and my home. This, coupled with doing house chores, made it difficult for me to work timeously, Although I was challenged to allocate sufficient time for my studies, I had to commit at least an hour per day to work on my study.

### **6.7 LIMITATIONS AND AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

There are some possible limitations in this study. The first limitation is that as this was a desktop study, so the research is limited to document and policy analysis of documents. Due to the nature of this study I had to depend on data generated from the analysis of policy documents only. Although the analysis of the documents provided rich data, other qualitative methods of collecting data such as interviews could have been adopted to furnish me with adequate information that could be used to respond to the research question of the study. Due to the nature of the study and time constraints, data generation was confined to the sections of the policy documents which relate to education and links with the aim of the study.

The aforementioned limitations present avenues for further research. I suggest that the framework for analysis and the themes derived from it to analyse policy documents, could be used to undertake a study on the potential of teachers to promote education for a sense of communitarian belonging. A second possible avenue of study

could be to investigate whether teacher training institutions aim to provide education that envisions and or promotes a sense of communitarian belonging.

## **6.8 SCHOLARLY AND PERSONAL GROWTH**

This study contributed immensely to my scholarly growth. It helped me to awaken and develop my research skills. The study required me to engage in extensive reading in order to develop an appropriate research design, and to build a relevant conceptual framework for the study. For me, this was not an easy journey. The study assisted me to gain a deeper understanding of how the research process works. As I have positioned my study on place and African communitarianism, I gained a lot of understanding that helped me to construct a conceptual framework (a sense of communitarian belonging) that is new and bears my signature. In pursuance of my main research question, the conceptual framework assisted me to choose appropriate research methods that assisted me to generate the data required for my analysis.

On a more personal level, this study enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of communitarianism and of course African communitarianism, and how education framed in terms of this could be beneficial to students. The study made me realise that the Lesotho education system is still clouded by remnants of colonial education. As a teacher utilising the existing curriculum I also impart content and skills to students which are disconnected from the community spaces in which they live. Based on the foregoing, I realised the need to merge the school curriculum with the students' immediate environment. This would use outdoor learning as reference for teaching and learning so as to promote students' extensive interaction with the environment. The study made me realise that there is a need to provide students with the skills and dispositions that would enable them to tackle the social and environmental ills in their environment. I also realised the need to inculcate moral values that describe the Basotho nation, thus, I had to incorporate the Basotho saying "motho ke motho ka batho"/ *ubuntu* and *ukama*. By implication these values informed my teaching. The study allowed me to think differently about my own teaching practices. I saw the need

to create a conducive teaching and learning environment in which students would feel free to learn and interact with others. I now see the need to create a sense of belonging in my class. In a nutshell, the study made me think differently about how I can present content to students. The confidence that I have gained made me realise the need to employ pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning, where learner-centred approaches would be used to enhance constructivism teaching and learning. Thus, students would be given a platform to engage critically in their teaching and learning process.

## **6.9 CONCLUSION**

I undertook this study with the intention to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging. My interest was sparked by the need to establish if Lesotho education policies are framed from the immediate place in which students find themselves in. To develop a conceptual framework for my study, in chapter 2 place was conceptualised in relation to a sense of belonging, the conceptualisation assisted me to comprehend the relationship between place and a sense of belonging. In chapter 3 place as sense of belonging was recontextualised from an African perspective in which *ubuntu* and *ukama* as concepts associated with African communitarianism were explored comprehensively. My understanding of the recontextualisation of place as a sense of belonging from an African perspective was foregrounded on my understanding of place. From the preceding chapters, educational implications for a sense of communitarian belonging were derived in chapter 4 of the study. Chapter 5 of the study enabled me to answer the primary objective of the study. In this chapter documents and policies were examined to explore the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote education for a sense of communitarian belonging.

Driven by the findings of the study generated from document and policy analysis, I made two suggestions that hold implications that can be infused to fully complement

*CAP 2009* to promote education couched from a sense of communitarian belonging. I argue that *CAP 2009* should place more emphasis on the more-than-human world to infuse what it entails and how it should be cared for. The policy framework would only realise education framed from a sense of communitarian belonging for the present-day Lesotho if it regards the entanglement of all entities across the space, and for its value in students' education. On the other hand, I suggested that *CAP 2009* should aim at inculcating moral values that are drawn from the African perspective. In this way, the policy framework has to spell out the ethical and moral values that are intended to be instilled in students. It is of paramount importance to position students within the moral and ethical values that define their society. Arguably, in this context a sense of communitarian belonging could be attained, and consequently students would be emancipated with the ethical values that are required to build responsible citizens who can contribute meaningfully to their societies.

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## APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE – UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE



### GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

19-Feb-2021

Dear Mrs Maqenehelo Manka

#### Application Approved

Research Project Title:

**Exploring the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging**

Ethical Clearance number:

**UFS-HSD2020/2202/172**

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research

project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Adri Du Plessis**

**Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee**

Adri du Plessis

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by Adri du Plessis  
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## APPENDIX B: FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

### The potential of Lesotho education policies for the promotion of a sense of communitarian belonging

THEMES	QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS
Teaching from the community spaces	Does the policy text promote place-based education?
	How is context-based education represented?
	Does it promote interaction with the environment, does it promote the entanglement between humans and non-humans? Does the text refer to environmental ethics framed from the African perspective?
	Does it refer to outdoor learning?
	Is constructivism advanced, does it allow students to actively participate in their learning?
	Does it allow students to identify with the place?
	Does the text promote a sense of belonging?
	Are there skills and dispositions that would enable the students to tackle local and global challenges?
	Is the text transformative, does it enable students to dismantle anthropocentrism? Does it promote decolonisation
	What type of student is envisaged by the policy text?
Moral values framed from the African perspective	Does the text promote moral and ethical values grounded from the African perspective? Which values are most dominant, does it reflect any signs of oppression
	Does the text promote Basotho cultural identity? Does it bear reference to Basotho history?
	Which language is promoted, is the use of mother tongue advocated?
	What cultural practices are enshrined in the text? Does it refer to other cultures?
	Are democratic principles advocated?
	Is the common good promoted? Does the text refer to a sense of community?
	Does it enhance consensus?
	Does the text contribute to student's personal development in relation to others?

<b>Provision of skills and dispositions</b>	Are there socio-economic challenges identified?
	What kind of skills are enshrined in the text? Do they place primacy on the survival of the students?
	Are skills and dispositions intended enable students to contribute in their immediate places? Do the skills and dispositions enable students to interact with the more-than-human world?
	What are the prominent skills and dispositions advocated?

## APPENDIX C: LANGUAGE EDITING CONFIRMATION

To whom it may concern

This is to state that the PhD study titled *Exploring the potential of Lesotho education policies to promote a sense of communitarian belonging* by 'Maqenehelo Manka has been language edited by me, according to the tenets of academic discourse. The final responsibility for applying any proposed corrections lies with the author.



B.Bibl.; B.A. Hons. (English)

12-11-2022

## APPENDIX D: TURNITIN REPORT

# Maqenehelo Manka- Lestseka 25 November 2022.docx

*by* Maqenehelo Manka

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**Submission date:** 25-Nov-2022 12:16AM (UTC+0200)

**Submission ID:** 1887817006

**File name:** Maqenehelo\_Manka-\_Lestseka\_25\_November\_2022.docx (682.64K)

**Word count:** 76317

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## Maqenehelo Manka- Lestseka 25 November 2022.docx

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<b>2</b>	<b>Submitted to Curtin University of Technology</b> Student Paper	<b>&lt;1</b> %
<b>3</b>	<b>open.library.ubc.ca</b> Internet Source	<b>&lt;1</b> %
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<b>6</b>	<b>hdl.handle.net</b> Internet Source	<b>&lt;1</b> %
<b>7</b>	<b>www.refworld.org</b> Internet Source	<b>&lt;1</b> %
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<b>9</b>	<b>www.iier.org.au</b> Internet Source	<b>&lt;1</b> %