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Sacred Spaces as Living Archives: utilising sonic ecosystems and soundscapes as a link to remember heritage practices in Hamburg, Eastern Cape, South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to understand the close link between people and nature. Focusing on intangible heritage, living archives, and ritualised spaces through the lens of ecomusicology. The core of the research lies in investigating the role of music, soundscapes, Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs), storytelling, ritual and heritage products in constructing, transmitting, and preserving knowledge. By intertwining these elements, this research seeks to challenge traditional disciplinary boundaries and expand the understanding of cultural heritage beyond the static confines of written archives. The study emphasises the transformative power of sound and performance as mediums for community engagement, where ritual and performance act as living forms of knowledge. It explores how these performative expressions function not only as cultural markers but as dynamic vehicles for memory, history, and ecological understanding. This thesis proposes that spaces created through these rituals should be recognised as integral components of the (an)archive dynamic sites where culture, memory, and the environment converge, offering new insights into the ways in which heritage can be preserved, communicated, and mobilised in contemporary settings.

Furthermore, this research contributes to the rethinking of science education and archival practices, advocating for the inclusion of performance-based methods as tools for communicating scientific and ecological knowledge. By framing the arts within scientific discourse, it calls for a re-evaluation of how archives and knowledge systems are constructed, suggesting that these practices provide a more holistic, accessible approach to understanding environmental sustainability.

The research is embedded within the broader context of the IMIsEE (Indigenous Marine and Innovations for Sustainable Environments and Economies) project, a collaborative initiative involving the Rhodes University Department of Music and Musicology, the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB), the Keiskamma Trust (KKT), and strategic partnerships with the International Library of African Music (ILAM). The project focuses on addressing the environmental degradation of rocky shores along the Eastern Cape coastline of South Africa, particularly in the vicinity of Hamburg, near the mouth of the Keiskamma River. This interdisciplinary collaboration brings together scholars, environmental practitioners, and local communities to investigate the potential of heritage practices as solutions to pressing ecological challenges.

My role within this project is to position the research within an ecomusicological framework, examining the interconnectedness between sound, community, and the environment. By foregrounding the link between music and the environment, this thesis examines how heritage practices especially those rooted in community and ritual offer valuable insights into fostering sustainability and environmental resilience. Through this lens, the research challenges prevailing scientific paradigms, urging a more inclusive approach that integrates cultural knowledge and ecological care as complementary forces in the pursuit of sustainability.

KEYWORDS
Sacred Spaces, Living Archives, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, SoundScapes, Ecomusicology, Archives, Xhosa Communities, Music, Ethnomusicology

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ACRONYMS

IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
TCEs	Traditional Cultural Expressions
IMIsEE	Indigenous Marine Innovation for Sustainable Development
ILAM	International Library of African Music
IK	Indigenous Knowledge
SAIAB	South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity
KKT	Keiskamma Trust
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute

CHAPTER 1

Background/ Research Context

> There is no place without a history; there is no place that has not been imaginatively grasped through song, dance and design, no place where traditional owners cannot see the imprint of sacred creation (Rose 1996: 18).

In this thesis, I explore and centre intangible heritage, living archives, memories and ritualised spaces through the lens of ecomusicology. This research forms part of IMIsEE (Indigenous Marine Innovations for Sustainable Environments and Economies), an interdisciplinary project shared between the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB), the Keiskamma Trust (KKT), and the Rhodes University Department of Music and Musicology with strong partnerships with the International Library of African Music (ILAM), with support from South African colleagues at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and Nelson Mandela University (NMU), as well as the participation of privately and state-owned regional maritime enterprises. A common concern relating to ocean health and sustainability has brought this diverse group of scholars together in order to investigate the role of heritage practices as a solution to the degradation of the rocky shores along the coastline of the Eastern Cape, specifically near the village of Hamburg at the mouth of the Keiskamma River. My role was to locate the project within an ecomusicological framework and consider the implications of the link between sound, community and the environment.

The IMIsEE project emerged from a commitment to developing socially responsible reactions to ecological challenges. This initiative draws on the knowledge of Indigenous peoples and local communities along South Africa's Eastern Cape Coast, incorporating nature-inspired approaches to address habitat-related issues. These efforts led to a community-engaged, heritage-based, eco-creative research project. As McConnachie et al. explain, “Simply put, we are developing solutions to the coastal degradation of the Eastern Cape coast in South Africa by consulting with local communities to reimagine their heritage-based traditional skills to produce creative innovations” (2025: 477).

The project brings together a transdisciplinary, interconnected, multilingual team of community members and university-based researchers. Its primary objective has been to establish a collaborative partnership between scientists, academics, and members of a rural local community who co-designed and crafted biodegradable structures made from *imizi* sedge or grass (*Cyperus textilis*), a locally sourced

natural material. These woven structures were deployed in the built coastal environment, including small and large harbours, to evaluate their ecological efficacy in supporting the early life stages of marine species. At its core, the project aimed to develop straightforward but scientifically validated nature based innovations to enhance marine ecosystem surrogacy. Key outcomes included the design, production, and ecological testing of the environmentally friendly structures, the development of a community-based approach to knowledge sharing, and an arts-based collaborative exhibition presenting the core issues of the project. The co-creation process was based on a close partnership between researchers from SAIAB, women from the local KKT community, who are custodians of weaving and sewing traditions and a team of creatives from ILAM documenting the process. The KKT women, known for crafting tapestries, embroidered goods, and commissioned artworks, brought their expertise to innovate the creation of the plant mats turned ecological structures. Very importantly, integrating Indigenous knowledge into the development of these structures fostered biodiversity conservation along the coast and actively involved and valued local communities as co-creators in advancing scientific innovation. By blending traditional skills with modern ecological research, the IMIsEE project exemplifies a collaborative approach to addressing coastal degradation while advocating for sustainable, heritage driven solutions (McConnachie et al., 2025).

As part of the ILAM team documenting the collaboration, I joined the community to collect *imizi* grass (*cyperus textilis*), in the town of Hamburg, along the coastline of the Eastern Cape between Port Alfred and East London. While looking for plantations, we stumbled upon a rock outcrop surrounded by trees, ponds, and grass. Due to the lack of strong running water, the scientists present decided not to gather *imizi* because it was not environmentally sustainable. Very importantly for this project, the community researchers agreed but reasoned that due to its status as a sacred space it would not be appropriate for collection. This became a particular interest for my research because despite the fact that plant-based craft-making is an important component of the community livelihood and also makes a significant contribution to the fight against rural poverty (Makhado and Kepe 2006), the community researchers still actively chose not to tamper with the *imizi* growing in the sacred space as a sign of respect to the ancestors.

The dry riverbed, despite its changing water table, is breathtaking. Situated on an enormous rock within a valley, the space is tranquil and surrounded by dense vegetation indigenous to the area. This sacred space has seen many Xhosa rituals conducted there by the community (Interview with Mvubu 23/08/2024). During this initial IMIsEE fieldwork, the KKT research partners recalled many important instances from their lives which took place at the riverbed. Each researcher told a story, and the space

evoked these memories. This research on sacred spaces as living archives is based on this first interaction. Hamburg was the chosen research site because this was the location where the IMISEE project was being conducted. The following provides more information about the place.

Location of the study

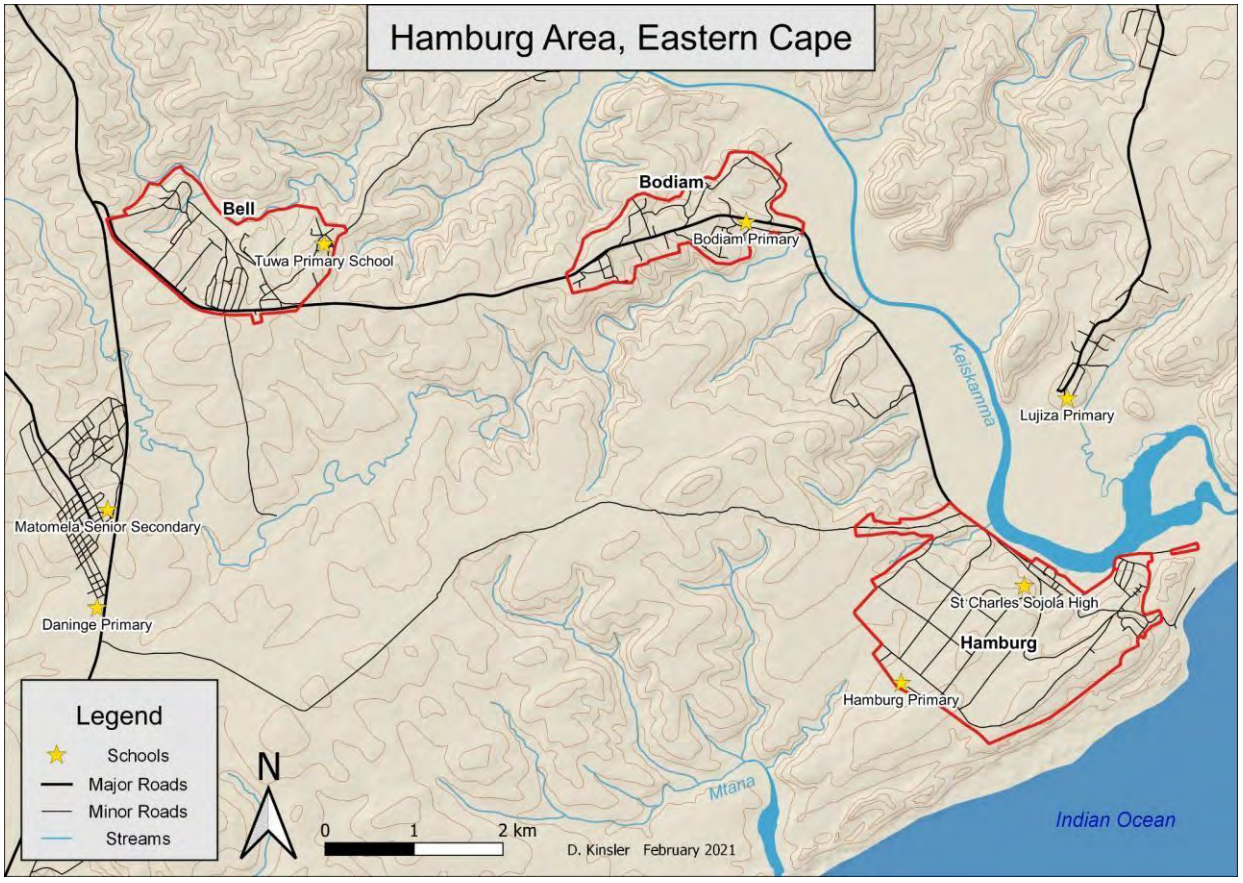

Figure 1: Hamburg map, Source: David Kinsler

Brief History of Hamburg

Hamburg is situated on South Africa's southeast coast, was formerly part of the Ciskei homeland (founded in 1972) before being reintegrated into the Eastern Cape Province following the scrapping of the homelands in 1994 (Martens 2015: 22). The region's establishment as a defence against the amaXhosa was prompted by Sir George Grey, the governor of the Cape Colony, hiring more than 2,000 German legionaries in 1857. Still, most legionaries fled within a few years, indicating a lack of taste for settlement life. Five families decided to settle in Hamburg during the second wave of German immigration in 1859, even though there were no widespread defections. According to Schmahmann (2011), Hamburg would become a settlement by the early 20th century, primarily composed of the Xhosa people.

The town is situated alongside the Keiskamma Estuary, where the Keiskamma River flows into the Indian Ocean. It is a mix of communal, state, and private land. Hamburg is connected to the R72 by a 14km long gravel road, while the nearest small urban area is that of Peddie, also the seat of the local municipality, which is 40km away. The closest large metropolitan area is the city of East London, which is 90km away. Hamburg falls under the Ngqushwa Local Municipality in Ward 11. According to Martens (2015), Hamburg has a population of over 1000 individuals and it is tourist centre, which has 30 holiday homes, a caravan park, a hardware store, a general dealer that doubles as the post office, a coffee shop, the Keiskamma Art Project which is managed by the KKT, and essential services, such as a police station, clinic and school. The holiday homes in the tourist centre are empty for most of the year except when used by holidaymakers who either rent or own the houses. Beyond this touristic suburban-like core remains Hamburg's truly rural periphery (ibid). This part of Hamburg comprises several areas and differs considerably from the tourist centre. There are no large houses in these areas; most are of traditional construction, and others are government RDP houses built for residents. Many households are typically found on half- or two-hectare plots of land, sizes entrenched by the colonial history of Hamburg.

Human activity in Hamburg dates back to around 1000 BC when the area was inhabited seasonally by Early Stone Age hunter-gatherers. Khoi pastoralists then entered the area around the Keiskamma River around 100 AD but were later pushed out or assimilated into the Bantu (ancestral people of the Xhosa) around 500 AD. The area was then occupied by the Bantu/Xhosa, who grew crops and kept Nguni cattle until the arrival of the European settlers in the 18th century (Derricourt 1977). Early European explorers and hunters identified the area as abundant in-game, from antelope to elephants and natural predators and began encroaching on the Xhosa territories (Geddes-Bain 1960; Bullock 1960).

In 1819, the governor of the British Cape Colony, Lord Somerset, reached an agreement with the Xhosa chiefs at Gwanga that the area between the Fish and Keiskamma rivers would be cleared of all European and Xhosa inhabitants to reduce hostilities between the two groups (Bullock 1960). However, in 1847, after the Seventh Frontier War, the British Cape Colony was extended to the Keiskamma River, and Sir Harry Smith established the new province of British Kaffraria. It was extended to the Great Kei River in 1857 after the Xhosa cattle killings and subsequent Xhosa famine in 1856/57 (Pape 1985). It was in 1856/57 that the British Cape Colony government established the settlements of Hamburg, Bodiam, and Bell on the frontier of then-British Kaffraria. German soldiers of the British German Legion, who had been en route to fight in the Crimean War, were diverted to British Kaffraria when the war ended to live in these new settlements. They would later be joined by their families and other German settlers and

establish the town's layouts that persist today (Pape 1985). Hamburg persisted as a rural coastal town throughout the remainder of the 19th century while British settlers joined the Germans and some Mfengu (Xhosa) who had fought on the side of the British in the Frontier Wars also moved into the town to work on the farms as labourers (Marten 2015). Through the 20th Century, Hamburg became a popular holiday destination due to its excellent fishing and sandy beaches. While Apartheid did not allow nonwhites to live inside the town, forcing the Mfengu out, the city still grew as hotels were established. In 1961, a separate administrative region called the Ciskei, which Hamburg fell into, was formed. This was part of the South African government's attempt to create independent homelands for blacks within South Africa. In 1972, the Ciskei was declared a self-governing region and finally an independent state in 1981, with all residents losing their South African citizenship. The result was that the white inhabitants of Hamburg sold their land to the South African government, then donated it to the new Ciskei government, which settled their non-white citizens. Hamburg ceased to be a popular holiday destination due to fear amongst whites of entering the new homelands. As a result, the town suffered economically (Hofmeyr 2012).

Following the scrapping of the homelands, Hamburg was reintegrated into the Eastern Cape Province in 1994. Some whites returned to Hamburg, bringing much-needed money into the town. Still, it remained a poor area as the fear of the former homeland areas persisted. Hamburg did not benefit from the economic growth experienced in South Africa in the Post-Apartheid era (Hofmeyr 2012). Reintegration into the Eastern Cape Province was also turbulent as Hamburg lost the support of the Ciskei government, and essential services suffered considerably. In the former Ciskei areas, the Eastern Cape government was slow to take over services, such as healthcare and education. A result of this was a proliferation of HIV/AIDS and TB, as a lack of education and inadequate health services left the community unable to deal with the outbreak (Hofmeyr 2012). Up to 2005, there were no HIV/AIDS treatment facilities in the Peddie district until the establishment of the Keiskamma Health Programme, an initiative by the Keiskamma Trust (Martens 2015). The Keiskamma Trust also established an arts project to boost local employment and an educational support program (Keiskamma Trust 2013). The Trust, with whom we partnered, now has a significant presence in Hamburg and is involved in the lives of many of its inhabitants.

Livelihoods in Hamburg consist predominantly of low-value activities based on their natural endowments, which supplement state grants. According to Martens (2015) the Hamburg economy is mainly based on cattle herding and small-scale agriculture. There is, however, a culture of males emigrating to nearby urban areas to seek employment. Natural resources are also used to gather food

and for sale to tourists; women are often seen harvesting muscles on the rocky shore, and local fishermen are a common sight. Tourists and locals alike often travel outside of Hamburg to purchase goods where prices are cheaper. The result is a very poorly developed retail sector in Hamburg consisting of only a few shops and hence very little local economic growth as much of the money that does come into Hamburg very quickly leaks out, Martens (2015: 25).

As mentioned above, Hamburg is situated along the banks of the Keiskamma River and the shore of the Indian Ocean. The two meet at the Keiskamma estuary, one of a relatively small number of permanently open estuaries in South Africa (Ridden et al., 2012). The river and sea combine to form a precious natural resource for fish and crustaceans, while the coastline, with its rocky features, provides breeding grounds for numerous shellfish (Ridden et al., 2012). The river and sea are thus sources of food for the local community to exploit through fishing. This makes them close to the ocean, and they practice their beliefs about their ancestors living underwater. Despite local knowledge about preserving bio-diversity of the coastline, during apartheid because of economic reasons the shoreline became degraded because of overpoaching (Porri et al., 2023). However as discussed later in Chapter 5, the community of Hamburg does not engage in overpoaching anymore due to the respect of their sacred spaces.

In the following section I write about Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). In examining sacred spaces as living archives through the lens of music, it is essential to foreground the significance of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). These concepts provide a foundational framework for understanding how heritage practices, knowledge transmission, and cultural memory are preserved and enacted within ritualised spaces. By engaging with ICH and IKS, this section seeks to highlight how music, oral traditions, ritual performances, and ecological knowledge intersect in shaping a community's sense of belonging, spirituality, and connection to their environment. This exploration is particularly relevant in the context of the amaXhosa people, whose cultural expressions are deeply embedded in their relationship with ancestral veneration, sacred landscapes, and soundscapes as a medium of remembrance and continuity.

Intangible Cultural Heritage

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), sacred spaces are intangible heritage. Intangible cultural heritage (ICH), made up of all immaterial manifestations of culture, represents the variety of living heritage of humanity and is the most important vehicle of cultural diversity (Lenzerini 2011: 101). Harrison (2010: 9) writes that heritage can be passed from generation to generation, conserved or inherited, and has historical or cultural value. There are

various practices of heritage, and some might be understood as physical objects and places of heritage. Invisible or intangible heritage practices, such as culture, song, dance, language, and other more practical activities, are as crucial in helping us understand who we are as the physical objects and buildings that we are more used to thinking of as heritage. Notably, Harrison (2020: 11) states, ''Where places are not officially recognised as heritage, how they are set apart and used in the production of collective memory serves to define them as heritage''.

In this research, I focus on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) related to cultural practices being passed down and practised in sacred spaces that remain important to a cultural group despite societal changes. Appadurai (1996, 2001, 2008) and Byrne (2008) state that how communities use heritage in their work maintains their connection to particular places and each other. Appadurai calls this work the production of locality and approaches to heritage, focusing on the local and establishing a sense of connection between people, which is central to this research of sacred spaces. Kelly (2016) describes a sacred space as transforming part of the environment into a sanctuary and creating a space related to emotional and spiritual healing and well-being. Grant (2012: 36) writes that ''not only is it desirable that we humans attend to the endangered state of much of the world's intangible cultural heritage, it is also our ethical obligation''. Within the Xhosa cultural landscape, music, dance, and oral traditions serve as critical modes of transmitting historical narratives, spiritual beliefs, and environmental knowledge. Songs performed in sacred spaces carry embedded meanings, encoding ancestral wisdom and ecological ethics that guide communal interactions with the sacred spaces. The soundscapes of these sacred spaces thus function as living archives, holding histories, memories, and cosmological understandings that resist colonial and hegemonic knowledge structures.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

Indigenous knowledge systems throughout Africa have long recognised the profound interconnectedness of everything, where plants, animals, humans, ancestors and all creation coexist (Steve, 2015). In many circumstances IKS in South Africa focuses on biodiversity and the role of indigenous communities in the protection and utilisation of natural resources (Impey, 2015). IKS, as manifested in music, dance, and ritual processes, seeks to recover meaning systems as its principal reference (Ibid). Odoro-Hoppers (1998: 3) states that the recovery of IKS is motivated by an attempt to open new moral and cognitive spaces within which constructive dialogue and engagement for sustainable development can begin, and essential to which is consideration of how knowledge can be recovered and re-appropriated in real time to advance the survival and growth of local communities.

Mapara (2009) states that IKS are a body of knowledge or bodies of knowledge of the indigenous people of particular geographical areas that they have survived on for a very long time, while Altieri (1995: 114) states that IKS are forms of knowledge that have originated locally and naturally. I share the same views as Mauwa (2020) who writes that Indigenous Knowledge Systems involve the indigenous people making use of local knowledge and skills in their lives for their sustenance, and it also includes music and dance as essential aspects of their lives. Different ethnic groups around the world have also used Indigenous Knowledge to reveal their identity and culture through music.

The Australia Council of Arts (www.wipo.www.docs) describe Indigenous Music Knowledge as an important means of expressing Indigenous heritage, past, present and future Indigenous heritage, enshrined in Indigenous cultural and intellectual rights through music. I concur because through Indigenous music, performers can reveal their customs and heritage, and this aspect is observed in different Indigenous music performed by different African ethnic groups (Mauwa 2020). For the amaXhosa, IKS is embedded in song, storytelling, and ritual performances that function as tools for knowledge transmission. The act of singing during rituals, is not merely a performative endeavor but a means of encoding and conveying sacred knowledge. These musical expressions reflect the community's view, encapsulating spiritual cosmologies, moral teachings, and ecological consciousness. Moreover, the connection between IKS and sacred spaces underscores the importance of understanding space not just as a physical location but as a repository of knowledge and memory, where performance and ritual serve as acts of reclamation and resistance.

In the next section, I will introduce the research problem, the significance of the study, research goals, approaches to this research and will be concluded by the thesis overview.

Research Problem

The central research problem of this research revolves around understanding the concept of sacred spaces as living archives, particularly in the context of Hamburg's spiritual and cultural practices. Sacred spaces, often embedded with cultural memory and ancestral significance, serve as active repositories that preserve, transmit, and revitalise heritage through a variety of ways including rituals and music. However, the implications of these spaces as living archives, particularly concerning memory and identity, remain under-explored. The research examines how sacred spaces in Hamburg, through their soundscapes and ritualistic practices, function as living archives, preserving ancestral knowledge while providing a framework for continuing spiritual and cultural traditions.

Thus, the research aims to investigate the role of ritual, music, soundscapes, and other performance practices in these sacred spaces as vehicles for memory preservation and their power to foster community connection and identity. In doing so, the hypothesis is that the space will act as a living archive, an important manifestation in current archival thinking.

Significance of Study

The significance of this study lies in its ability to bridge multiple disciplines, such as ecomusicology, ethnomusicology, anthropology, and Indigenous Knowledge Systems. To offer an understanding of how sacred spaces embody historical narratives and actively shape the lived experiences of those who interact with them. By focusing on Hamburg's sacred spaces, such as Nyulutsi and the surrounding ocean, this research highlights the dynamic relationship between the community and its environment, positioning these spaces as vital to understanding the continuity and transformation of cultural practices within African communities.

The research contributes to the scholarly understanding of sacred spaces as well as living archives,and particularly sacred spaces as living archives, thus expanding the definition and implications of what it means for cultural memory to be preserved through embodiment. By positioning sacred spaces as living archives, this research underscores the importance of these places in the ongoing negotiation of cultural identity and community continuity. It challenges traditional notions of archives as static, written records and highlights the fluid, performative, and spiritual nature of these spaces as they evolve.

Drawing on an ecomusicological approach, this research highlights the deep interconnection between the environment, spirituality, and sound within these sacred spaces. By highlighting the music and soundscapes of Hamburg's sacred spaces, the research explores how spiritual and cultural performance and ritual acts evoke memory, heal, and foster a sense of belonging among community members. The significance of this research is further emphasised by its contribution to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, particularly through ritual and performance in sacred spaces, ensuring that these practices are documented and accessible for future generations.

This research highlights the importance of ritual, music and sound in sustaining a cultural connection with the past. Soundscapes, which often emerge from the rituals performed in sacred spaces, do not merely document or preserve heritage but are imbued with the spiritual and ancestral presence that continues to shape the lives of community members. This research, therefore, emphasises the role of sound in the cultural memory and identity of African communities, particularly in the face of rapid sociocultural changes (Agawu 2003, Allen 2011, De Witte 2008). As a living force within these sacred

spaces, music can act as a conduit for intergenerational knowledge transfer and spiritual renewal, preserving the past while facilitating connections to the present.

In conclusion, this research offers new perspectives on the value and significance of sacred spaces as sites for ritual and spiritual practice and as living archives of collective memory, identity, and heritage. It also underscores the resilience of sacred spaces as dynamic, living repositories of culture and knowledge while advocating for the critical role that soundscapes play in maintaining these practices amidst contemporary challenges. Through research, I aim to contribute to the ongoing efforts to protect and revitalise cultural heritage practices and the environments where they take place, ensuring they thrive for future generations.

Research goals

1. To define, analyse and understand the intricacies and implications of living archives.

2. To define and document the concept of sacred spaces as related to memory and music.

3. To document sacred spaces and their soundscapes in Hamburg and their power to evoke memory as a living archive.

4. To detail the concept of the sacred space as a living archive, expanding on previous applications of the term archive.

5. To understand and examine the relationship and connection between the living archive and the sacred space.

6. To present an ecomusicological approach to the research, which draws on the value and significance of spiritual beliefs presented as a performance in sacred spaces.

These goals are represented by the following research questions

1. What are the defining features of a living archive, and how do they reshape our understanding of memory, knowledge, and cultural preservation?

2. How do music and memory interact to construct and maintain sacred spaces within Xhosa cultural and spiritual practices?
3. How do the soundscapes of sacred spaces in Hamburg evoke collective memory and function as living archives for the local community?

Approach to the research

This research is conducted through qualitative approaches to understand sacred spaces as a living archive from an ecomusicological perspective, all of which will be defined and clarified in detail in Chapter 2. It includes investigation through ethnography, the (an)archive, oral history, historiography, archival performance, decolonisation methodologies and archival ethnography lenses. These are relevant to this research because they will help understand vital disciplinary areas connected to it, such as history and Indigenous Knowledge Systems that encourage conservation and the value of the environment as a cultural asset (Allen 2012). A qualitative approach helps with practical data collection because it is contextual and calls for holistic, synthetic and interpretive data analysis (Mouton 1966: 169). Davies and Hughes (2014: 9) state that qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world; it consists of interpretive material practices that make the world visible. These practices turn the research space into conversations, interviews and recordings. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2012: 67), qualitative research studies use the natural setting to make sense of or interpret phenomena regarding the meanings people bring to them.

Chapter 2 discusses ecomusicology as a sub-genre of ethnomusicology and applied ethnomusicology. Rice writes that, “As we engage with the political, social, economic, and ecological problems affecting today’s world, our theories about the nature of music should contribute to research well beyond the boundaries of our discipline” (Rice 2017: 205). Ethnomusicology incorporates soundscape studies and acoustic ecology to broaden its understanding of human relationships with sound and how interactions between people and their environments shape soundscapes. This is very important to this study and especially where these interactions reveal insights about sustainability and cultural relationships with nature. This interdisciplinary thesis thus extends the understanding of ethnomusicology into understanding the link between music, sounds, culture and environment.

Thesis overview

Chapter 1, the introduction, introduces the foundations of the research, discussing Intangible Cultural Heritage, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), and memory. The chapter also provides a brief history of Hamburg, where the research on sacred spaces is conducted. In addition, the problem statement, research goals and its significance are presented.

Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical approach, methods, and procedures that inform and help frame this research. The chapter highlights critical lenses like ecomusicology, applied ethnomusicology, interdisciplinarity (border crossing), the an (archive) that this research draws different themes that guide this research. Methodological approaches are also presented, and the nature of this study is discussed. Qualitative approaches to this study are also discussed in detail, as well as the data procedure data, data analysis, and it concludes with a discussion of applications navigated for ethics approval.

Chapter 3 delves into the understanding of archives and sacred spaces from a broader perspective and then narrows down to the important catalyst of the research within the community of Hamburg. The chapter uses a variety of literature sources to account for different types of archives, such as the living archive and sacred space. This chapter also discusses the three approaches to understanding sacred spaces. It also presents case studies of sacred spaces as living archives in different contexts to understand how physical environments become repositories of cultural memory when observed through rituals, ceremonies, or spiritual activities (Derrida 1996, Nataka 2012, Featherstone 2006). Lastly, we also engage the idea of memory studies as a theoretical framework.

Chapter 4 seeks to weave all of the critical aspects of this research by analysing them in detail. This includes an historical overview of amaXhosa, and an introduction to their culture and beliefs. This chapter highlights the critical aspects of the people of Hamburg relating to their Indigenous knowledge systems, rituals, and spirituality, understanding and examining the relationship and connection between the Xhosa people of Hamburg, the living archive and the sacred space. Additionally, the chapter includes a section about the functions of traditional music within the context of Xhosa folklore songs, as well as ecological relationships of the people of Hamburg and their sacred spaces. The last section are different themes that speak to the relationship between music and the environment.

Chapter 5 presents the analysis and interpretation of the collected data. It also gives an account and description of how participants were chosen and the data used for coding. This chapter implements the

narrative approach by sharing the stories of participants who consented. Emerging themes and songs are also discussed.

Chapter 6 is a summary of findings and recommendations for further research. This chapter discusses findings and provides a summary. It discusses the fundamental findings and compares them with the literature, research impact, future work, and limitations.

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical approach, Methods, and Procedures.

Music and sound research is essential for understanding the people of Africa and their relationship with their environments, as it encapsulates Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs), historical narratives, and ecological interactions deeply rooted in African societies. Music serves as a vital medium for preserving and transmitting cultural identities, reflecting the values, beliefs, and histories of communities Gwerevende & Mthombeni (2023). It acts as a repository for collective memory, providing insight into social structures, rituals, and storytelling practices that define a community's identity. Agawu (2003) emphasises that African music is not merely entertainment but a means of communicating complex ideas and maintaining cultural coherence.

This connection to cultural identity is intertwined with a close relationship with the environment. Many African musical practices use instruments crafted from local materials and draw inspiration from natural phenomena, such as the sounds of birds, water, and wind (Agawu 2023). These elements reflect an intimate understanding of nature and its role in human life. Nzewi (1999) highlights that African musical arts are rooted in the interaction between people and their ecosystems, demonstrating a deep respect for the natural world. Music also functions as a form of historical documentation, preserving narratives of events, migrations, and community interactions that might not exist in written form (Manti 2021). Through oral traditions, music offers alternative perspectives on Africa's past, capturing the essence of communal experiences. As Nketia (1974) notes, oral traditions preserved through music provide a wealth of historical and cultural information that written records often omit.

Beyond its historical significance, music acts as a powerful medium for social and political commentary. It is used to address societal and environmental issues, often serving as a tool for resistance or advocacy. Protest songs, for example, have been central to movements against colonialism, apartheid, and environmental exploitation (Patrick et al 2023). McConnachie (2021) argues that music's ability to evoke emotional and collective responses makes it a transformative force within societies. This transformative potential extends to its spiritual dimensions, where music connects people to their cosmologies and the environment. In many African cultures, sound plays a central role in rituals that link humans, spirits, and nature Tirivangasi & Nyahunda (2024). This spiritual significance reflects a worldview that emphasises

the interconnectedness of all existence. Tirivangasi & Nyahunda (2024) and Agawu (2003) underscore how music's role in rituals highlights the holistic understanding of life in African societies.

Thus, music and sound research are important in Africa, and because of this, traditional fields like ethnomusicology have widened their scope to include not only the study of music and culture but sound studies too (Pinch & Bijsterveld 2012). To understand this importance, I highlight how ethnomusicology has/can contribute to a deeper understanding of cultural and environmental competencies. Later in the chapter, sub-fields of ethnomusicology will be introduced and explained in detail. Ethnomusicology is a historical construct that involves a process of change in appreciation of musical cultures with the passage of time and the process of re-encountering and recreating the forms and the legacy of the past from each moment up to the present Rice (1987). Merriam (1960: 109) defined ethnomusicology as "the study of music in culture and music as culture". Rice (2014) defines ethnomusicology as the study of why and how humans are musical, while Bakan (1999) defines it as the study of how music is present in the lives of people who make and experience it and how people live in the music they make. Stone (2014) writes that ethnomusicology is a field in which research is conducted on music performance, music experience, and music performers using concepts drawn from their experiences and performances. Thus, ethnomusicology considers music not in isolation but as embedded in social, historical, and environmental contexts, providing a comprehensive understanding of its cultural significance. Ethnomusicological research challenges colonial narratives and reclaims Indigenous knowledge systems by centring African perspectives, hence decolonising methodologies as explained in the first chapter.

Applied ethnomusicology

The field of ecomusicology, the focal approach used in this study, is a subfield of applied ethnomusicology which encompasses a wide range of methods. Applied ethnomusicology is guided by "principles of social responsibility, which extends the usual academic goal of broadening and deepening knowledge and understanding toward solving concrete problems and working both inside and beyond typical academic contexts'' (Harrison 2016: 507). Applied ethnomusicology therefore, goes beyond documentation, interpretation, and theory building and works towards the solution of practical problems in the world outside the academy (Harrison 2016: 6). Titon states that applied ethnomusicology is a music-centred intervention in a particular community, where the purpose is to benefit that community for social improvement, musical benefit, cultural good, economic advantage, or a combination of these and other benefits (2015: 4). The approach is music-centred, but above all, the intervention is people-centred, for

the understanding that drives it toward reciprocity based on the collaborative partnerships that arise from ethnomusicological fieldwork. Ethical principles of social responsibility, human rights, and cultural and musical equity guide applied ethnomusicology (Giri 2022). This research, embedded into the IMIsEE project and conducted closely with the community of the Keiskamma Trust in Hamburg, is a good example of an applied approach. Our goal is to highlight community knowledge as a solution to the real world problems of ocean degradation. As expanded upon below, ecomusicology fits into this as part of the current community concessions worldwide that relate to the effects of global warming and ecological crises (McConnachie et al., 2025).

Interdisciplinarity (Border crossing)

	Synthesise new disciplines and theory	Problem solving focus	Iterative research process	Involve multiple disciplines	Involve stakeholders in research process	Knowledge sharing between disciplines	Thematically based	Research coordinated	Research integrated	Cross epistemological boundaries	Follows pluralist methodology	Involves implementation of results as part of process
Multidisciplinarity		◪		■		■	■	◪			■	
Interdisciplinarity		■	■	■	◪	■	■	■	■	■	◪	
Transdisciplinarity	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	◪

Table 1: Defining characteristics of integrated research approaches.

Source: Stock & Burton (2011)

Living archives, the main foci of this research, are multifaceted platforms or events that require an inter or multidisciplinary lens to be properly understood, as a single disciplinary perspective cannot easily grasp their complexity (Sabiescu 2020: 507). In addition, Current social and ecological issues, such as climate change, sustainability, and social equality, require an overarching approach to knowledge collection in order to collate answers if we are to recognise the limits of human knowledge (Stock & Burton 2011, McConnachie et al., 2025). There is no correct approach, and as the table above shows (see Table 1) - several blended disciplinary approaches are available. According to McGregor and Volckmann (2013: 59), ‘’while interdisciplinarity is focused on blurring or dismantling the boundaries between disciplines, transdisciplinarity strives to remove the boundaries between higher education and society, to solve the problems of the world’’. These research approaches have had a considerable and

overwhelmingly positive impact (ibid). Border crossing is another approach that can be considered and was used in this research. McConnachie et al., (2025: 483) assert that border crossing provides alternative thinking about modes of disciplinarity by highlighting that instead of trying to eliminate boundaries between disciplines, experiences at the boundaries among disciplines are open spaces and opportunities for identification, coordination, reflection, and transformation. Boundary crossing allows experimentation, uncertainty, and transgressive approaches to research, learning, and teaching (Ibid). As with the IMIsEE project, we have found that the frameworks we are co-developing do not necessarily fit into any predetermined formats or approaches to research, thus an interdisciplinary perspective where boundaries are respected has helped (McConnachie et al., 2025). The research encompasses more than just an ethnomusicological perspective, making the knowledge that has been developed less discipline specific. In fact, the minimal focus on music and rather on ritual, performance and soundscapes is indicative of this transdisciplinary approach.

Therefore, to understand and explain the role of the environment as it relates to the community of Hamburg and beyond within the framework of sacred spaces as living archives, I breach traditional boundaries by using a border crossing approach to interdisciplinary research by working with scientists as well as cultural activists. This research addresses relevant issues like Indigenous Knowledge and the production of Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs). Early formulations of environmental sustainability studies involved interdisciplinary collaborations to develop an integrated perspective on urban environmental problems jointly and required the research community to cross traditional disciplinary boundaries (Petts et al., 2008: 594). According to Ramadier (2004: 425), interdisciplinarity helps articulate issues to be looked at by different branches of knowledge, which may lead to different perspectives and also facilitate learning. McConnachie et al., (2023: 3) share the same view and state that interdisciplinary boundaries work effectively to deliver outcomes that stem from equitable and inclusive processes. Petts et al., (2008: 597) note that ''a persistent selling point for interdisciplinary research is that it is vital to understand and tackle real-world problems, which are seen as resistant to conventional disciplinary approaches''. This approach was relevant to the IMIsEE context and informed much of my research. Learning together about different ways of creating and sharing knowledge is central to the themes that have emerged from the collaborations. McConnachie et al., (2023: 7) state that,

> The transformative forms of learning in progress necessitate active pedagogical approaches involving interactive dialogues among multiple participants. This approach has a strong emphasis on collaborative learning, cognitive justice, and the cultivation of both individual and systemic agency.

I find interdisciplinarity and border crossing relevant for this research because the research involves not only community members (who are the main knowledge bearers) but also input from an ethnomusicological perspective and from the scientist researchers who look at sacred spaces without contextualising the memories held there. Thus, the constant engagement with the space exposes data and views I would not have had access to if I had researched this alone. This research also seeks an impact that will result in sustainable interest in traditional knowledge and the spaces that retain cultural memories by the scientist researchers. It will thus establish the importance of local knowledge systems as a contemporary agent in societal reinvigoration rather than having negative environmental consequences. The environmental crisis is, at its root, a cultural crisis, and understanding its ethical, spiritual, and artistic dimensions can inform the important practical and applied work in the sciences (Allen et al., 2011; White 1967). The arts and humanities play an essential role in understanding the cultural dimension of the environment (Allen 2012). This thesis draws multi-, inter-, transdisciplinary expertise from ethnomusicology, ecomusicology, sound studies, memory studies, community members with embodied knowledge and scientists. By adopting this border crossing, a better understanding of living archives, memories, and soundscapes could be achieved.

Ecomusicology

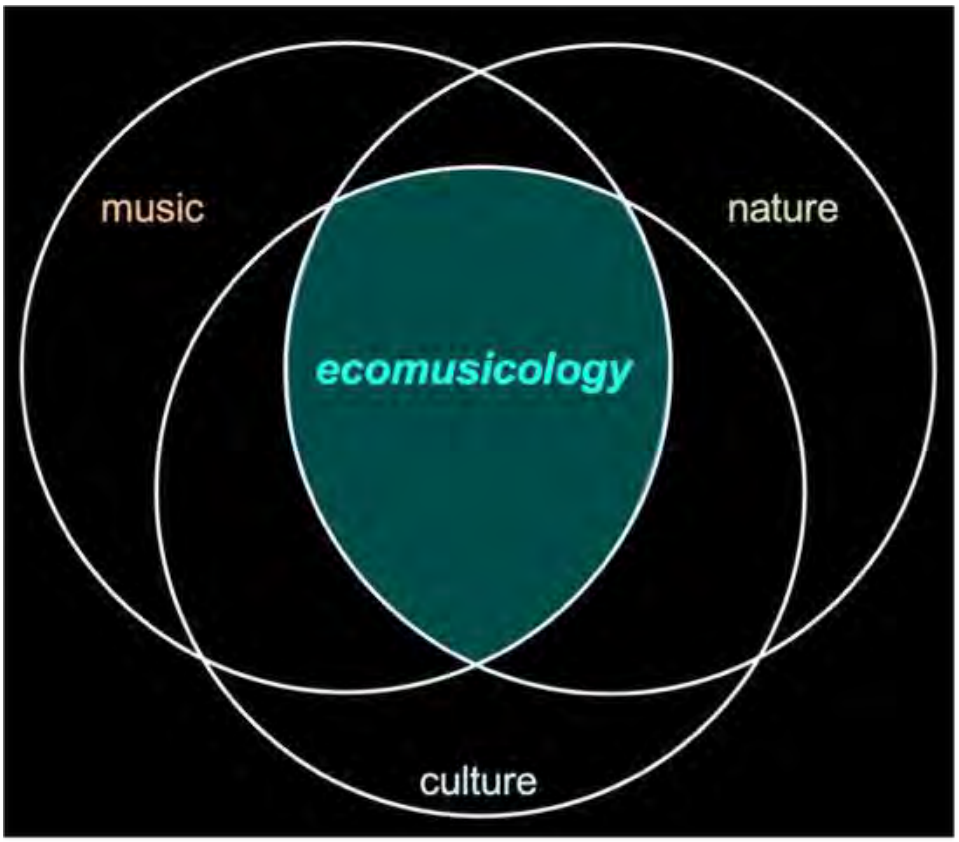

Figure 2: ecomusicology

Source: Aaron S. Allen, Jeff Todd Titon, and Denise Von Glahn (2014).

An ecomusicological approach to this research draws on the value and significance of spiritual beliefs presented as performances in sacred spaces. Ecomusicology is a field that considers the complex relationships between culture, nature, music/sound and humans. This link was established after the midtwentieth century when global environmental systems were in crisis due to the actions of humans (Allen 2016: 644). Ecomusicology is a critical study of music and the environment which considers the interconnections between sound, nature, and culture (Challe 2015, Feisst 2016). Titon (2013) writes that ecomusicology probes the relationship between music and sound, nature and culture and the environment when a crisis occurs. It encourages the consideration of sound and music as part of nature to inform cultural understanding of the environment and help us reflect on humanity's place in sustainable ecological practice. Doing so can improve environmental education and address the ecological crisis (Allen 2012). Rehding (2011) distinguishes between apocalyptic and nostalgic approaches when examining ecomusicology's route. While the literary arts have primarily focused on apocalyptic themes, he claims that ecomusicology should instead appeal to a reflective love movement (Rehding 2011: 410). He says that many in the narrative skills have used the attention-getting apocalyptic method to increase awareness of the environment by establishing a sense of extreme crisis in their viewers. This is not the intention of this study, but rather to use the “love moment” approach, looking for the good in humankind, where the research is approached via an applied ethnomusicological lens. Thus, the goal is to celebrate the cultural awareness that the community has of the environment by linking the living archive to the sacred space (McConnachie et al., 2023). An example of this is presented by Rees (2016), who looks at environmental songs written in China after industrialisation. Rees (2016) explores the emergence of environmental songs in China in response to rapid industrialisation and its ecological consequences. The study examines how these songs reflect societal awareness and critique environmental degradation, serving as a form of cultural resistance and advocacy for ecological sustainability. He underscores the importance of environmental songs in China as cultural artefacts and ecological advocacy tools. These songs articulate the tensions between industrialisation and environmental preservation, offering a unique lens to understand and address sustainable development challenges. Other examples closer to home include Jorritsma (2011), who writes about the sacred music of a South African coloured community. Jorritsma (2011) explores the sacred music traditions of three coloured church congregations in Graaff-Reinet, a rural town in the Karoo. The study examines choruses, hymns, and choir music as a "living archive," preserving cultural and religious identity in the face of historical challenges like slavery, colonialism, and apartheid. Jorritsma challenges stereotypes about coloured music and advocates for its recognition as a significant part of South Africa's cultural heritage.

Olusegun (2023) speaks about Iregun songs serving as a tool for ecological sustainability. Olusegun (2023) explains Iregun songs as a cultural tool promoting ecological sustainability within Indigenous knowledge systems. Iregun songs, rooted in Yoruba traditions, are associated with rituals, ceremonies, and communal practices emphasising harmony with the environment. He demonstrates how Indigenous musical traditions can serve as effective tools for ecological sustainability, bridging the gap between traditional wisdom and modern environmental efforts. Impey (2018) writes about sound, memory and borderlands. Impey (2018) explores the intricate relationships between sound, memory, and the concept of borderlands, focusing on how sonic practices and experiences shape and reflect cultural identities in contested or transitional spaces. The study examines sound as a medium through which individuals and communities navigate the complexities of borders, whether physical, cultural, or metaphorical and highlights its role in memory-making and identity formation. She underscores the power of sound as a connective tissue in borderlands, shaping how communities remember, resist, and adapt to their liminal realities. The study highlights the potential of sound to transcend physical and metaphorical borders, serving as a vital tool for cultural expression and survival. Lastly, Makwa (2021) speaks on Imbalu ritual and performances as a knowledge production and dissemination mechanism. Makwa (2021) examines the Imbalu ritual, a significant cultural practice among the Bagisu people of Uganda, focusing on its role in producing and disseminating knowledge. The study highlights how the ritual, which marks the transition to manhood, employs music, dance, and performances as dynamic tools for cultural education and community cohesion. He positions the Imbalu ritual and its associated performances as vital mechanisms for sustaining and evolving the cultural knowledge of the Bagisu people. The study emphasises the importance of such rituals in preserving intangible heritage and fostering social cohesion in African communities.

These African researchers have guided the approach to this innovative research. Studies on music, nature, culture, and the environment are emerging quickly as an area of scholarly inquiry; however, very few have looked at the connection between sacred spaces and living archives, which is why this research effort is significant as a contribution to the field.

Ecomusicology is not a replacement for pre-existing disciplines but rather an interdisciplinary field of exchange that adds value to related conversations in environmental, music, and sound studies disciplines. Ecomusicology provides a true interdisciplinary framework that connects scientific and positivistic thinking with humanistic and artistic thinking (Allen 2012: 3). Allen et al. (2014: 7) write,

> Ecomusicology can bridge the arts and sciences and can teach creative, critical thinking, for we need to remember that the environmental crisis is not just a crisis of science (failed

> engineering) but also a crisis of culture (failed thinking), so we need to muster all possible humanistic and scientific resources in order to imagine, understand, and confront it.

This argument regarding human culture builds on work by Donald Worster (1993: 27), who acknowledges the accomplishments of science in understanding the environmental crisis. He notes that scientists have failed to understand those "why" questions rooted in culture. I believe that ecomusicology can be a part of such efforts to understand and activate the role of human culture in confronting sustainability challenges.

Ethnography

As explained in the introduction, this research relates to the memories of communities as evoked by sacred spaces. I look closely at living patterns and human experiences by interviewing community members within the research parameters of their lived experiences and their comfort in sharing these protected memories evoked by the soundscapes in sacred spaces, amongst other experiences. Thus, an ethnographic approach is appropriate. Fetterman (1989: 11) writes, "ethnography is the art and science used to describe a group or culture''. This research approach involves participation from the researcher who is studying a particular aspect of the lives of a cultural group closely (Angrosino 2007: 15). In the context of the IMIsEE project, this included researching various activities relating to the sacred space but also becoming involved in the scientific project to restore coastal biodiversity, the catalyst for this research. The data gathered related to the sacred spaces and the community's relationship with the natural environment in general. Ethnography suits this context because it has three main characteristics: Participant observation, interviewing, and archival research (Sangasubana 2011: 568). Participant observation is a particular method of collecting data. It requires the researcher to immerse themselves in the space of their subject for a specific period (Brancati 2018: 1). This was accomplished in the context of this research by travelling to Hamburg, conducting interviews and interacting with participants and interlocutors who proffered various viewpoints and experiences about sacred spaces within the IMIsEE project. I paid great attention to how the people of Hamburg interacted with their surroundings and valued heritage and culture. With the consent of the Keiskamma Trust and the IMIsEE project, the resulting data and traditional cultural expressions (TCEs) have been archived at the International Library of African Music (ILAM), where they will be made accessible to scholars and community members for additional research. We travelled to Hamburg on multiple occasions for the IMIsEE project over a period of three years. On each occasion, I immersed myself in its culture, engaged with the people and asked them questions. Despite viewing the sacred spaces which were part of this research, I was never afford the opportunity to witness a ritual or performance in any of the spaces. I had to rely on primary sources' memories as I am not Xhosa and my access was denied to the events.

The visitation period involved travels to a site where *imizi* grass was gathered, visiting the sacred spaces, the ocean, and some households, especially for the audio postcard. Under the direction of the principal investigator of the IMIsEE project, I often assisted with some tasks like recording sound, taking photographs, and compiling the collected data into our shared drive. I also had the opportunity to join the rest of the team when they were collecting the *imizi* grass and the KeisKamma Trust women with the weaving, where they taught us the process of drying the *imizi* grass, constructing the mat shapes and weaving, all the while observing the interactions amongst the people and the sacred space. I engaged in the daily activities and I followed up with interviews of key informants, whom I had identified through this IMIsEE fieldwork. These individuals are residents of Hamburg and are of different age groups, some of whom are traditional healers. These key co-researchers are listed later in this Chapter. By garnering the insights of individuals throughout the fieldwork, I interacted with how sacred spaces evoke memories, why they are important, the music that theory sings and how all of this contributes to environmental sustainability. In addition, also listed later, interviewed local Xhosa and traditional healers. These were particularly interesting interviews, as interviewees were learning and discovering more about themselves, their culture, and how sacred spaces contribute holistically to their beliefs and memories.

Decolonising Methodologies

Thambinathan & Kinsella (2021: 2) state that decolonising methodologies advocate for using Indigenous principles in research methodology so that research practices can help assert the legitimacy of Indigenous knowledge and acknowledge Indigenous people's rights and authority. Smith (2007) asserts that the history of research from many Indigenous perspectives is so profoundly embedded in colonisation that it has been regarded as a tool only for colonisation and not as a potential tool for self-determination and development. Chinn (2007: 1252) asserts that decolonising methods are critical communication strategies that engage participants in examining lives, society and institutions in ways that challenge dominant perspectives. Smith (1999) states that this approach is a critical communication strategy that explicitly engages participants in examining lives, society, and institutions through the lenses of marginalised (traditional, local, Indigenous, sustainable) and dominant cultures (capitalistic, consumer-oriented). The past principles behind Western academic methodologies have been about Indigenous peoples being primitive and still needing to be civilised (McConnachie 2016). Western social sciences, including archaeology and history, have been and continue to be an extension of a power system that seeks to impose its will and a socioeconomic and overall cultural system as the one valid worldwide system. Held (2019: 1) writes,

> Academia has almost exclusively been focusing on Western paradigms and approaches to research. This manifestation of ontological oppression is a result of Western science being exported around the globe from Europe alongside imperialistic and colonial attitudes.

Thambinathan & Kinsella (2021) state that unlearning and re-imagining how we construct, produce, and value knowledge is integral to decolonising research. To counter dominant narratives of the past through a decolonising approach, one must expand epistemological thinking to include theoretical explanations and methodological approaches that embrace other ways of knowing (Taha 2018). This is crucial to this research because this approach will assist with recognising other ways of knowing and utilising cultural insiders/indigenous knowledge bearers to promote understanding of alternative perspectives. Battiste (2000) states that decolonising research means centring the community's voices and epistemological perspectives throughout the research process rather than turning a blind eye to traditional knowledge from other cultures. Decolonising researchers aim to understand and integrate theory from other(ed) perspectives while critically examining the underlying assumptions that inform their Western research framework (Simonds & Christopher 2013; Battiste 2000; Datta 2018; Smith 2012). According to Snively & Williams (2016), "braiding Indigenous Science and Western Science'' is a powerful metaphor used to symbolise and acknowledge that different ways of knowing can coexist; in other words, each strand remains a separate entity; however, all strands come together to form a whole. This has been proven by the IMIsEE project, which has successfully integrated scientists, ecomusicologists and Indigenous knowledge bearers to come together with a common goal to an(archive), but more specifically to this research, to acknowledge sacred spaces as living archives.

Sinclair (2003) states that the connotation that research is merely an innocent pursuit of knowledge has allowed for predatory, exploitative behaviour toward Indigenous communities. Among the oppressive acts carried out in the name of research have been the perpetuation of inaccurate stereotypes of Indigenous peoples, and a focus on negative social issues (Bishop 1997, Sue & Sue 1998). Historically, bodies of scholarship have repeatedly dehumanised Indigenous peoples and their culture, perpetuating hatred and discrimination (Poupart et al., 2000). To this day, Indigenous communities have rejected engaging in supposedly neutral research due to past experiences of exploitation and harmful or inaccurate representation (Arvizu & Saravia-Shore 2017; Ball & Janyst 2008, Madiba 2024). Decolonisation is not a methodical checklist nor a defined endpoint; it is a lifelong process that actively works to dismantle and re-create within & outside of the academy (Zavala, 2013). Tuck and Yang (2012) assert that decolonisation is not a complementary perspective but an unsettling one; they point out that it is not merely a strategy of inclusion or an and but instead an elsewhere for knowledge production and

the imagination. Therefore, the decolonisation of research is essential in breaking hierarchical barriers between researchers and participants, which can be achieved by being critically reflexive and enabling reciprocity within relationships (Thambinathan and Kinsella 2021). Exercising critical reflexivity is a key approach to decolonising research and is powerful for examining the researcher's epistemological assumptions and situatedness to the research and is crucial in addressing power dynamics in research (ibid). Epistemological assumptions frame how one views the world, organises oneself in it, what questions one poses, and what answers one looks for. Engaging in critical reflexivity extends beyond confessions of privilege (Lockard 2016: 2). Oversimplified confessions can be loopholes absolving researchers from a duty to continuously ensure their research is supporting resistance to colonisation in tangible ways, as opposed to reinforcing or reproducing colonial legacies. Through conversations with elders from Indigenous communities, many decolonising academic researchers have reframed their positionality from discoverers of community knowledge to learners (Datta 2018). It helps with a shift in thinking that allows interview questions to be reframed so that they are appropriately directed toward an expert rather than a victim or witness (Taha 2018). Barreiros and Moreira (2020) believe that raising questions and prompting deep introspection are just as significant as finding answers due to their ability to break down colonised knowns into decolonised unknowns. This is important for this research because all the gathered data will be from a positing of learning and understanding the community as experts on their relationship with the sacred space, rather than me making assumptions or imposing my ideas or notions on them.

Importantly to this research as well, is the agency related to how the research is interpreted and shared. Thambinathan and Kinsella (2021) state that consent is a process of ongoing negotiation, where consent is continuously being asked for and granted at all stages of the research process. Conflicts around the publication and dissemination of findings are another source of divide between researchers and study participants, creating further complications among researcher-participant relationships (Hawkins 2015). Decolonising research methodology tackles the root issue of the conflicts mentioned above, utilising the principle of reciprocity to drive collaboration from the conception of a study to the end and to establish collective ownership over the entire research process, the data analysis, and its dissemination (Datta 2018).

Contextualising this within my research, I describe it as transformative, community-engaged research with reciprocity and action from everyone involved. In the embodiment of a transformative praxis, Freire (1996) proposes three main dimensions: theory, values, and practice. Theory requires engagement with questions that the community works with and seeks to explore; values entail determining what the

community values and the value of the research to the community, while practice refers to the capabilities and services researchers may offer particular communities. According to Wilson (2008: 83), “If research hasn’t changed you as a person, then you haven’t done it correctly”.

The An(Archive)

The an(archive) is a technique for research creation, according to Colmenares and Morvay (2019). It is a process-making engine that sparks new, creative events for the research and the researcher, unlike archives, which function more like a repository. In other words, while an archive often contains the tangible items of a repository, such as records, texts, images, locations, and emotions, amongst other things, the interaction with the material becomes the archive itself. According to Singh (2018) and Tamboukou (2016), the an(archive) is always evolving as a result of this dynamic and involved process, continually producing new occurrences and beyond rigid categorisation. Although archives remain valuable resources for scholarly and methodological purposes in several fields, there is a belief that the opportunities presented by archives warrant additional investigation and can offer pedagogical gifts (Britzman 2012). An(archive) is a conceptual framework that questions accepted archival techniques. Thus, it frequently takes a more adaptable and dynamic approach to knowledge preservation and distribution than traditional archives, which are characterised by their organised and methodical structure. According to Singh (2018), an an(archive) is "the future archive, the archive of alterity". Manning (2020) describes it as "that strange and stunning something that catches us in our becoming". According to McConnachie et al., (2025), an an(archive) is defined as one that "represents the unstructured, unfiltered, and often chaotic accumulation of traces and marks that escape the control of traditional archiving systems." Herceg (2022: 20) writes that the an(archive) is "orienting and activating, making it a collaborator in all forms" that creates an approach which prioritises decentralised, participatory, and non-hierarchical archiving methods, fostering diverse perspectives and interpretations. It seeks to capture information's living and evolving nature rather than adhering to static and fixed representations. Rooted in postmodern and poststructuralist theories questioning authoritative narratives and advocating for diverse voices, this concept aligns with the broader discourse on challenging traditional notions of knowledge preservation (McConnachie et al., 2025). Labelling the sacred space as an an(archive) suggests a departure from conventional archival norms, emphasising a dynamic engagement with the community of Hamburg and their living knowledge instead of a static, rigid preservation of materials. In this research, all the events that take place in the sacred space, the rituals, the music, the dancing and even the non-sacred events that occur are an(archives) as it is these real

events that feed into the archive. The an(archive) speaks directly to decolonising methodologies explained in the previous section.

Oral History

I used an oral history approach to understand sacred spaces as a living archive ''as it is a past appearing in the present, which can be related to present-day social and cultural significance'' (Huntsman 2013: 2). Matiure (2013: 17) asserts that the living archive is a natural system that borrows from the oral traditional approach of preservation of cultural legacies of music through aural and oral transmission. Oral history collects narratives from individuals with experiential knowledge to help the researcher learn what they think they know (Leavy 2011). Sommer and Quinlan (2018) state that oral history is inclusive as it brings many voices, not just the dominant or influential people, making history come alive again. Compared to written sources, oral history involves communication with living people (Okihiro 1981).

According to Tennent and Gillet (2023), the immediate result of an oral history interview is the creation of an historical source comparable to a traditional written record found in archives. This record can be kept for posterity and used multiple times, unlike social science interviews that cannot be used beyond the study for which they are collected (Decker et al., 2021: 1137). This makes oral history interviews very important because they are always an in-depth verbatim transcript that can be used in an(archival) collection for long-term use. Oral history also allows the interview questions to be structured to generate narrations of past events and record longitudinal-like life stories (Decker 2022). Like all other historical sources, oral histories are treated as objective accounts and fragmented recollections of the past (Fielding 2004; Durepos et al. 2021; Yates 2014). Oral history has been used to capture historical evidence and retrospective accounts of everyday experiences of individuals who seldom appeared in traditional archival sources and historical research (Perks and Thomson 2016, Tennent and Gillet 2023). Drawing from this method will help me understand and explore the concept of living archives by tracing community stories, relationships with the sacred space and songs as history, linking the past and its present. As mentioned earlier, I interviewed focus groups coded according to healers, non-healers and age to collect different views about the sacred space as Gill, Paul et al., (2008) recommended. I believe that this will assist me in understanding how different people relate to the sacred space as a living archive based on their lived experiences.

Historiography

In this research, I intend to achieve empirical originality. Historiography helps to ascertain (archival) sources not used previously, either missed or not considered by other researchers, or data that was not available to previous researchers. This method also helped me obtain available records, utilising them with a broader lens to look for additional valuable content to my research inquiry. Bost (1988) states that historiography is a direct literary work source. The same view is shared by Napier (2020), who explains historiography as the sense that relates to the body of literature about a particular period, location, or topic. According to O'Keeffe (2016), the development of landscape identity nexus can be followed historiographically because they possess natural and cultural layers. This means that the connection between landscapes and identity has evolved over time in ways that can be studied through historical records and interpretations (historiographically). Landscapes are not just physical spaces they carry both natural features (like mountains, rivers, vegetation) and cultural elements (such as historical events, traditions, and human activities). These layers shape how people identify with and assign meaning to specific places. By looking at both the natural and cultural aspects, we can understand how people's relationships with landscapes have changed throughout history.

Additionally, history which is narratological is always about memory**.** O'Keeffe (2016: 5) states that memory is larger or something more than history and that history can never claim to be any more than one line or clusters of lines bringing the past into the present. History contains something wished to be remembered or brought into current collective memories. Landscape is a touchstone of remembering both the visual factual and sensual emotion, in this case, sacred spaces. Many nations have used memory to preserve national identity and remembrance. This approach emphasises the importance of critically engaging with historical narratives and recognising the pluralistic nature of memory (Decker et al., 2020). By acknowledging the diverse perspectives and experiences that inform musical practices, scholars can enrich their understanding of how music serves as a living archive that reflects the complexities of cultural memory and environmental consciousness. Furthermore, the relationship between music and living archives is underscored by the notion that music can embody and transmit historical experiences. As Fadieiev (2021) notes, the emancipation of archives from state control has led to new memorial cultures that allow for a more inclusive representation of history. This shift is particularly relevant from an ecomusicology perspective, where music can counter dominant historical discourses, offering alternative perspectives on environmental issues and cultural identities.

According to Pohl (2019: 11) historiography, is the study of historical writing and historian's methods. This method has demonstrated selective representations of the past, by helping communities to establish

the significance of past and present events, and to envisage the future. Thus it makes it a critical methodology for exploring the intersections of ecomusicology, sacred spaces, and living archives as it reaffirms ways in which communities construct and reaffirm their shared past (Pohl 2019: 1). This approach allows researchers to analyse how historical narratives shape our understanding of music's role in environmental consciousness, cultural memory, and the significance of sacred spaces in various communities. In ecomusicology, historiography provides a framework for examining how musical practices reflect and influence ecological awareness over time. By investigating the historical contexts in which music is created and performed, scholars can uncover how music serves as a medium for expressing environmental values and concerns. For instance, entangled histories highlight the interconnectedness of cultural and ecological narratives, suggesting that music can be understood as a living archive of environmental memory (Low 2013). This perspective encourages a broader understanding of how music interacts with ecological issues, transcending traditional national and cultural historiography boundaries. As Pohl states,

> Histories, and other narratives of identity, do not simply reflect past and present identities; they help to create, reaffirm, modify, and legitimize them, and to project them into the future. It is more or less generally acknowledged nowadays that communities and identities did not simply exist out there, but that narratives helped to shape them (2019: 12)

Moreover, the study of sacred spaces through an historiographical lens allows for exploring how music contributes to constructing and preserving collective memory within these spaces. Sacred spaces often serve as repositories of cultural and spiritual significance, where music plays a vital role in rituals and communal gatherings. By analysing the historical narratives associated with these spaces, researchers can better understand how music functions to remember and honour the past and shape contemporary identities. The interplay between memory and history is crucial here, as it reveals how collective memories are constructed, contested, and transmitted through musical practices (Spiegel 2002).

In summary, historiography is a vital methodology for this thesis as it enabled me to analyse the historical contexts of musical practices. These are discussed in Chapter 4 where I explore the interplay between music and collective memory, and recognise the diverse narratives that shape our understanding of environmental and cultural histories. Employing this approach helped contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how music functions as a living archive of memory and ecological consciousness. Historiography played an important role in exploring how collective memories of environmental experiences are woven into music. Examining the historical contexts in which music is created and shared

revealed how it reflects societal values, environmental issues, and cultural identities. This approach also shed light on the power dynamics present in environmental narratives, prompting me to consider whose histories are highlighted and whose voices are left out. In this way, historiography provided a valuable framework for understanding and situating musical practices within their broader historical and cultural contexts.

Archival Performance

I also use archival performance as a method relevant to this research because it ''activates some kind of memory device during the reflective analysis process of describing, theorising and structuring'' (Borggreen and Gade 2013: 12). Performing archives is a process in which human beings create and handle the an(archive) and alludes to how these are formative in shaping history and, thus, through performance, structure, which gives form to our thoughts and ideas. This kind of focus allows for critical investigation of core issues and engagement with the rich repository of the living archive (Borggreen and Gade 2013: 10). Sabiescu (2020: 495) states that living archives perform a function of social transmission of memory, which supports building community and identity. Therefore, they can encompass diverse practices such as embodied rituals, curated performances in public spaces, participatory exhibitions and communal celebrations and commemorations. Living archives have always existed in forms as simple as storytelling and using objects to evoke or trace past events (Sabiescu 2020: 497).

Schechner (2013) describes archival performance as the direct connection between practice and research, thinking and action. Thus, everything studied is regarded as practices, events, and behaviours, not as objects or things, an (archival) moment. According to Madison & Hamera (2005), performance is a cultural practice or event with various forms ranging from theatre, dance and storytelling to music and play. As a cultural practice, performance subscribes to and embodies particular worldviews, ways of knowing values, and identities. Embodied knowledge and social involvement are significant benefits of a performance lens for studying living archives (Sabiescu 2020: 499).

As a methodology, archival performance is relevant to this research because it emphasises the archive's dynamic and performative aspects. This has allowed me to explore how archival materials can be engaged with, reinterpreted and transformed through performance. This methodology is particularly significant in understanding the interplay between music, memory, and sacred spaces and the role of living archives in preserving and transmitting cultural narratives (Kelley 2011; Roberts 2012). In ecomusicology, archival performance can illuminate how musical practices are embedded within

ecological contexts and historical narratives. Higgins (2017) asserts that by performing archival materials, researchers can bring to life the environmental histories and cultural memories associated with specific musical traditions. For instance, Pinto's work on theatrical archives demonstrates how historical narratives can be synthesised and transformed through performance, allowing for a deeper engagement with the past (Pinto 2015). This approach, applied to this research, helped examine how traditional music performances evoke ecological consciousness and reflect the relationship between the community of Hamburg and their environment, the sacred space and will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Moreover, the concept of living archives is enhanced through archival performance, emphasising the ongoing relevance of archival materials in contemporary cultural practices. Living archives are not static repositories but are dynamic spaces where history is actively engaged with and reinterpreted. This aligns with the idea that archives are inherently political and shaped by the contexts in which they are situated (Genovese 2016). By employing performance as a methodological tool, I explored how living archives facilitate the transmission of cultural memory and the negotiation of identities within sacred spaces. Ritual and storytelling as key components of these performances, encompass both semiotic and mimetic dimensions that deepen our understanding of how knowledge is encoded and transmitted within living archives. Through symbolic gestures, spatial arrangements, vocal inflections, and embodied actions, ritual and storytelling operate as rich sign systems that communicate cultural memory, spiritual belief, and social order (Dunleavy 2004). Semiotics allows us to interpret these signs and symbols as carriers of meaning, while mimesis reveals how these forms are re-enacted, embodied, and internalised across generations (Dondero et al., 2021). In this way, participants do not simply observe cultural knowledge they perform and inhabit it, making the archive a living, breathing process of becoming. Thus, the interplay of semiotics and mimesis within ritual and storytelling reinforces their role as dynamic modes of archival practice, where meaning is constantly made, negotiated, and remembered in and through performance (Allan 2015).

Sacred spaces in particular benefit from an archival performance methodology, as it allows for the exploration of how music and ritual practices are intertwined with collective memory and spiritual significance. Ross's examination of Hajj, for example, highlights how narratives of sacred spaces are shaped by individual and collective experiences (Ross 2021). Performing these narratives assisted with uncovering sacred spaces' emotional and spiritual dimensions, reveals how music serves as a conduit for memory and identity.

The performative aspect of archival research can challenge traditional notions of authorship and authority in historical narratives (Genovese 2016). Researchers can create collaborative and participatory experiences honouring diverse voices and perspectives by engaging with archival materials through performance. This is particularly relevant in ecomusicology and memory studies, where the histories of marginalised communities are often overlooked. The work of Genovese emphasises the need for a decolonised archival methodology that respects and incorporates Indigenous and local narratives (Genovese 2016). Archival performance can serve as a means of reclaiming these narratives and fostering a more inclusive understanding of history.

In conclusion, archival performance as a methodology is highly relevant for a thesis. It enabled me to engage with archival materials, explore the performative dimensions of music and memory, and challenge traditional historical narratives. Integrating this methodology led to a richer understanding of how music, memory, and sacred spaces intersect, ultimately fostering a more nuanced appreciation of cultural heritage and ecological consciousness. This method plays an important role in this research because the living archival memories that people share are remembered through embodiment, performances and rituals, and these participatory memories were shared with me. Lastly, it helped me understand the core issues between the people of Hamburg, the memories they evoke from the sacred space, and their relationship with it.

Archival ethnography

An additional lens I have used for this research is archival ethnography, as it expands the scope of the an(archival) investigation to include the sociocultural realm of record creation and management. Thus, the record is directly related to the communities of individuals who generate, accumulate, and preserve documentary evidence. Archival ethnography is a form of inquiry that positions the researcher within an archival environment to gain the historical-cultural perspective of the people responsible for creating, collecting, caring for, and using records (Gracy 2004: 337). Decker & McKinlay (2020) describe archival ethnography as a historical research methodology based on public, private, and organisational archives that consider the archive a site for fieldwork. Mills et al., (2013) state that archival ethnography requires researchers to conceive of the archive as a site for fieldwork but one that reflects and filters sources from historical sites that are no longer accessible to direct observations. Decker & McKinlay (2020) state that while the past is ontologically inaccessible, epistemologically, the archive offers a window into past events, which becomes the site of fieldwork from the past. Archival ethnography helps understand the type of archive one is dealing with, how far the collection structure is, and the location of sources one

permits to conclude (Decker 2013, Stoler 2009: 9-10, 20). Archival ethnography opens up a new research site for field work, offering a tentative and intriguing view of our past. This approach helps people understand past events and processes and their fears and expectations of the future. It also allows for understanding how processes unfold over time.

Drawing insights from archival ethnography gave me crucial clues to understanding sacred spaces as living archives and the perspectives of the Hamburg community. Archival ethnography helped to uncover layered narratives of memory, identity, and ecological connectivity within sacred spaces, enriching the broader understanding of cultural heritage and sustainability (Baron & Spitzer 2007; Stokes 1994). This approach bridges historical documentation and ethnographic fieldwork, enabling exploration of how music and cultural practices are transmitted, transformed, and embodied (Jackson 1998). Archival ethnography emphasises the embodied nature of archival materials. In this study of sacred spaces, they revealed how soundscapes and performances mediate human-nature interactions (Seeger 2004). Thus, it helped uncover how cultural heritage is negotiated and reimagined through music within ecological and spiritual environments (Allen 2011).

Ecomusicology's focus on the relationships between music, culture, and nature aligns naturally with archival ethnography. This methodology allowed for a nuanced examination of how music in sacred spaces reflects ecological knowledge or environmental stewardship, the role of soundscapes in shaping and being shaped by spiritual and ecological contexts, and ways in which archival materials inform contemporary ecological and cultural resilience (Guyette & Post 2017). Working within sacred spaces often requires a deep awareness of cultural sensitivities and ethical considerations, especially regarding handling and interpreting archival materials (Barz & Cooley 2008). Thus, collaborative practices are essential, ensuring community voices are integral to the research process (Smith 2012).

Narrative approach

The narrative approach is described by Crossley (2000) as an ideology of transformation and reflexivity, as well as the construction and reshaping of life encounters towards sense-making and identification of the self. Czarniawska (2004) defined a narrative as an account of events and actions in chronological order. On the other hand, grouping these chronological compositions from narratives becomes stories or individual life stories (Riessman 2008). Thus, narratives appear to serve the purpose of establishing meaning and order in the individual experience. Narratives also reflect people's accounts of their life events (Epston and White 1992; White and Epston 1990). This is to say there is a beginning, middle and end to these events (Bujold 2004). Using a narrative inquiry allows for a "practical, comprehensive and holistic approach" (Del Corso & Rehfuss, 2011: 338) to understand individual lives.

The claim for using narrative in research is that humans are story-telling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. Therefore, the narrative studies how humans experience the world (Connelly & Clandinin 1990: 2). The narrative approach is a knowledge construction and communication mode. This approach allows the participants to tell their stories, which reveal their lived experiences and memories evoked by the sacred space. The participants' narratives are used as phenomenological, epistemological and experiential tools to examine how sacred spaces are living archives and the relationship between the people and the environment. As participants narrated their relationship with the sacred space, it was easy to observe how new meaning was constructed as they reflected upon the evoked memories. Balcomb (2000: 49) states that,

> Narratives play major roles as epistemological categories. This is possible as people are able to tell or narrate their human experiences lifestyles as lived and perceived by them from their own perspectives and that of others as stories are shared or told from generation to generation in a particular community. Thus, meaning is not just shared at individual level only, but also at group level, family level and community level as stories.

According to Balcomb (2000), narratives are part of people's identity. People can tell who they are from their worldviews and life experiences; therefore, through stories, they can make sense of themselves and the quality of life they live and experience. Narratives provide a key scheme by which human beings make their experiences meaningful (e.g. Bruner 1986; Polkinghorne 1988). This can serve as a benefit in understanding the role of past experiences through individual stories and how they relate to the human experience (Abbot 2002; Polkinghorne 1988). Therefore, through narratives, the participants can narrate their experiences and feelings and reflect on the meaning, values, and significance of the sacred space, the rituals performed, and the music sung there. The narrative approach also holds that narratives can be perceived as a framework that provides experiences with a structured format in texts that provide a natural way of recounting existential and learned experiences (Moen 2006). Moen further reflects on narratives as natural, practical solutions to fundamental problems in life and a way to create reasonable order out of experience. This means that storytellers do not just produce narratives to order and structure their life experiences, as the social and structural theories would do, but also create descriptions of their experiences for themselves and others. They also develop narratives to make sense of the behaviour of others (Zellermayer 1997). According to Polkinhorne (1988), people without narratives do not exist. Life might thus be considered a narrative within which one finds several other stories (Moen 2006). Mlisa (2009) asserts that narratives can also be looked at within the framework of

socio-cultural theory as they interlink between the individual and their context. The individual is irrevocably connected to their social, cultural, and institutional setting (Wertsch 1991). Thus, settings in the background of memories evoked by space and ritual ceremonies conducted in the sacred space provide information on how connections are made possible. In that way, the narrative approach supports this research objective by allowing the people to narrate their understanding of the sacred space and their relationship with it. It lets their experiential learning provide first-hand information about their interaction with the sacred space, revealing their meaning to them and others through their narratives to open up a dialogue. Dialogue that engages with the interface between their memories and the sacred space, their stories make it easier for the reader to understand the ecological relationships between their cultural and social environments as one delves more into the scenario of sacred places, animals and environment.

Balcomb (2000) supports the value of storytelling in shaping human existence by linking it with how culture is shared. According to Balcomb, cultures depend on shared schemata, which determine intelligible actions by shared consensus, that is, by a person and others. It is not just one person's perceptions and views but others' views sharing common ideas. Narratives in the community help to transmit community values to future generations. Narratives, therefore, capture both the individual and the context (Heikkinen 2002). Since the narrative is situated within the qualitative or interpretive research method (Gudmundsdottir 2001), the researcher investigates a phenomenon in a natural setting, attempting to make sense of and interpret the phenomenon in terms of the meaning people bring to it. That is precisely what this research seeks to do. This research aims not to obtain truths about sacred spaces but to provide a detailed description of the phenomenon of the sacred space experience and how it is perceived, felt and lived. In other words, narratives not only offer personal meanings, but collective stories are also shaped by the addressees and the cultural, historical, and institutional settings in which they occur (Elbaz-Luwisch 2002 & 2005). Narratives also inform one of the methodologies used to collect data; hence, interviews, focus groups, life histories, and personal stories form part of the data collection methods in this research. The multiple voices ultimately render narrative research an ongoing hermeneutic or interpretive process. In that way, different theoretical perspectives, analyses and interpretations of the collective stories enable a person to gain further understanding and insight.

Balcomb (2000) advises that stories must be kept alive, updated, transformed and modernised to keep up with life dynamics so that they do not die and rot. This, therefore, shows the vital concept of stories, namely that they are part of life. Life is lived to tell a story, and a story tells one about oneself. I firmly believe that the stories and songs from the people of Hamburg collected in this research on sacred spaces

should be taken beyond the academic demands of this research. This agrees with Balcomb (2000: 56), who supports the value of listening to the stories by suggesting that the universality of the truth of stories is proven in the lives of the people who live and tell them. According to him, people with phenomenological experiences "do not live for a universal that cannot be demonstrated in the acts, lives, and beings of people" (Balcomb 2000: 56). Denis (2000) also supports the value of listening to people's stories as it also gives them time to share their memories and the opportunity to deal with unfinished business.

RESEARCH METHODS

As explained above, this research was enriched by employing a qualitative methodology that included qualitative, biographical, historiographic, and narrative approaches. The research used library sources, archived field recordings, and traditional ethnographic methods.

A qualitative approach enhances the effectiveness of data collection tools because it is contextual in nature (Mouton, 1966). Davies & Hughes (2014) state that qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world; it consists of a set of interpretive material practices that make the world visible, and these practices turn into a series of conversations, interviews, and recordings. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2012), qualitative research involves studying things in their natural settings to make sense of or interpret phenomena regarding the meanings people bring to them. The qualitative method I used for this research was interviews and focus groups (all the interviews were recorded). The recordings were transcribed verbatim. This included making notes on hesitations, pauses and irregularities of speech (memo writing), location-specific field trips, and post-field-work workshops and exhibitions.

Data Collection

The data collection involved two methods: document analysis and in-depth interviews. The two methods were chosen to gather comprehensive information to understand and examine the relationship and connection between the living archive and the sacred space. Data about the research question on sacred spaces was primarily collected by analysing relevant existing literature, supplemented by in-depth interviews with the community members of Hamburg. Below, I give the details of how the document analysis and in-depth interviews were conducted.

Document Analysis

I employed document analysis as a systematic procedure to scrutinise documented evidence and address key research questions (Bowen 2009; Gasa & Mafora 2015; Bowen 2016). This involved examining and interpreting texts from published articles and other relevant documents to elicit meaning, understand, and develop empirical knowledge (Bertram & Christiansen, 2020; O'Leary 2014). Documents were selected based on their relevance to sacred spaces, living archives, and cultural heritage themes. These were pivotal in contextualising the field research, offering insights into the nuanced interplay between these concepts and their practical manifestations (Hodder 2000; Ketelaar 2001).

As Bowen (2016) highlights, thorough planning is critical in document analysis, including identifying key objectives and selecting appropriate materials. To align with these principles, I focused on diverse archival forms to demonstrate their capacity as living archives, integrating theoretical perspectives with field data. This guided the analytical approach, ensuring the interpretation of documents revealed patterns that addressed the research questions (Flick 2018). Furthermore, this methodology enriched the understanding of how music, memory, and sacred spaces intersect within the framework of ecomusicology, supporting the exploration of archives as sites of cultural preservation and dynamic heritage (Post 2013; Titon 2009). Overall, document analysis enabled a synthesis of theoretical knowledge and empirical evidence, strengthening the research outcomes.

Interviews

I conducted in-depth interviews to gather as much data as possible within my research's timeframe. I selected open-ended questions that did not prompt a simple yes-no answer or a brief response. Schatzman and Strauss (1995) encourage the fieldworker to see the in-depth interview as a lengthy conversation, noting that the interviewer does not use a specific, ordered list of questions or topics because this amount of formality would destroy the conversational style. I had interview questions in hand, but I was flexible in ordering them in any way that seemed natural to the respondent and the interview situation (See Appendix 1).

Interviews had three functions in this research: they were used to obtain data, test hypotheses, and create new avenues for achieving the first two goals. Transcripts were produced using audiotape video cameras, which were used to capture all formal field interviews. I manually transcribed the data into Word documents to ensure I captured all the details. Even though I have a basic understanding of isiXhosa, I did not want to misinterpret or misrepresent what was said during the interviews. Thus, I had

help from a colleague, Sambesiwe Mavela, who is Xhosa-speaking and from Hamburg, to transcribe and translate isiXhosa interviews into English.

Selecting participants

For this thesis, I selected participants through a process of introductions, where initial participants referred me to others who subsequently also took part in the research. I aimed to choose a representative sample of individuals who contributed to the day-to-day life of the people of Hamburg and also work at KKT. After identifying those key areas, I used two methods for selecting individuals to identify possible interview subjects. Ultimately, my list of interview subjects narrowed to individuals willing to be interviewed for this research. A number of the participants were quite eager to assist me. These obliging individuals were active in the overarching IMIsEE project, especially in the Indigenous knowledge initiatives, so unsurprisingly they supported my research. However, I was unable to interview some individuals, particularly traditional healers due to their demanding work schedules at the time of my request. Nonetheless, I was able to conduct interviews with a few traditional healers who were available and willing to participate.

Description and Choice of Participants

A total of 30 participants were recruited to take part in this research. All participants are members of the Hamburg community. The rationale for choosing Hamburg community members was that I wanted to find out more information about the Sacred Spaces in Hamburg, which would make it easy to gather information. I specifically chose participants from different generations in an attempt to understand if the notion of the sacred space was legitimate not only in a particular group of people within the community of Hamburg but also in everyone. So I interviewed old and young people. I also interviewed people who are traditional healers, as they mostly conduct their work either healing or leading spiritual ceremonies in the space, and ordinary people (people who do not practice) to gain an understanding of their part in the sacred space and also their relationship with the space, if they have any.

Over the past three years, initial 30 interviews were conducted in Hamburg. 25 were used for the data analysis stage, and five were excluded. The reasons for excluding five participants from the research are that some of the participants had to leave before we finished the interview process, and they could not answer some of the questions as they often said they ‘’felt uncomfortable sharing some things because they are secrets only the Xhosa people have the privilege to know’’. So, upon analysing interviews, it

appeared there was some missing information from these five stories that only the participants could provide and finish. Thus, the interview data, though offering insights, was also incomplete. This interview data was not used in the analysis. Some of the interviews were deemed not well-formed stories because the participants disclosed that they were not the best person(s) to answer certain questions, and at times, it was tales (what they heard from others but never experienced). Drawing insights from Chinyamurindi (2013), these interviews had some important missing components that might have added richness to them. In some interviews, there was no recollection or relationship with the sacred space. These participants did not finish the interview or simply did not want to answer the question. Additionally, some interviews had missing components. The absence of these components made these stories incomplete. Using these interviews would have been speculative and offer an inaccurate portrayal of the participant's responses.

Participants are well aware of their rights, as indicated in the participant forms they signed. Of the 25 people I interviewed, I will code 17 as respondents because they chose to remain anonymous with their narrative stories not shared. Only 8 permitted me to use their names and narrate their stories about their relationship with the sacred space. I am sharing these stories because of my belief that transformative moments of group identity are studied through narratives of recollection and analysed for how, when and why some social events are more likely to form part of collective memory than others (Chinyamurindi 2013: 21, Snyman 2016).

Despite some of these challenges, I was able to conduct the following interviews with participants between the ages of 19 -75 years:

NAME	DESIGNATION	PLACE	DATE
Respondent 1	Weaver at KKT	Hamburg	15/07/2022
Respondent 2	Weaver at KKT	Hamburg	15/07/2022
Respondent 3	Weaver at KKT	Hamburg	16/07/2022
Respondent 4	Artist at KKT	Hamburg	16/07/2022
Respondent 5	Artist at KKT	Hamburg	16/07/2022

Respondent 6	Artist at KKT	Hamburg	13/04/2023
Respondent 7	Weaver at KKT	Hamburg	13/04/2023
Respondent 8	Artist at KKT	Hamburg	13/04/2023
Respondent 9	Artist at KKT	Hamburg	31/05/2023
Respondent 10	Artist at KKT	Hamburg	31/05/2023
Respondent 11	Weaver at KKT	Hamburg	31/05/2023
Respondent 12	Weaver at KKT	Hamburg	31/05/2023
Respondent 13	Weaver at KKT	Hamburg	16/02/2024
Respondent 14	Artist at KKT	Hamburg	16/02/2024
Respondent 15	Artist at KKT	Hamburg	16/02/2024
Respondent 16	Weaver at KKT	Hamburg	16/02/2024
Respondent 17	Weaver KKT	Hamburg	16/02/2024
Cebo Mvubu	Manager KKT	Nyulutsi sacred space	23/08/2024
Sambesiwe Mavela	Rhodes University Masters student	Nyulutsi Sacred space	28/09/2024
MaSango	Full-time healer igqirha based in Hamburg	Hamburg	23/08/2024
Ahlume ‘’Ntandoyamanyange” Mendu	Trainee healer igqirha based in Hamburg	In her consultation room in Hamburg	23/08/2024
Veronica Betani	Projects manager at KKT	KKT	23/08/2024
Nolusindiso Jakavula	Weaver at KKT	KKT	23/08/2024

Zolekile Mavela	Fisherman and Hunter	Ocean Sacred Space	23/08/2024
Nompucuko Mavela	Librarian at St Charles Sojola High in Hamburg	St Charles Sojala High School in Hamburg	23/08/2024

Table 2: Research Participants

Source: compiled by author (04/12/2024)

By including participants from different age groups, the study provided a well-rounded and holistic understanding of their relationship with the sacred space in Hamburg.

Designing the interview guide

Creating a guide was one of the ways I prepared for the interviews I completed in Hamburg and at the Nyulutsi Sacred Space. A summary of themes or questions for each area that collectively proposed lines of inquiry was included in the interview guide and a list of topics covered during the interview (Gracy 2004). These topics included the participant's background, daily obligations, relationships with the sacred space, perspectives on what the space represents to others, and if there are any soundscapes or musical sounds they relate to in these spaces. I tried to start the interview with an ice-breaker question to elicit biographical information about the participant's perspective of the sacred space. In some cases, I could not observe some participants *in situ* before the interviews. These questions sparked a conversation and helped establish rapport with the participant. It was only natural for them to lead to other questions covering the topics that made up the different sections of the interview guide (see Appendix 1).

Since every interview question was open-ended, the participants were free to explore topics that mainly concerned them. The interview process had only a basic structure, which helped reveal details I was unaware of beforehand. I might then ask the participant to expand on their thoughts and experiences based on hints and allusions I detected in their initial responses. See the interview guide in (Appendix 1).

Healers	**Non-Healers**
MaSango	Cebo
Ahlume	Veronica
Respondent 17	Respondent 12

Respondent 2	Respondent 8
Respondent 10	Zolekile

Table 3: Focus group participants

Source: compiled by Author (04/12/2024)

Focus group interviewing

Group discussions provide direct evidence about similarities and differences in the participants' opinions and experiences instead of reaching such conclusions from post hoc analyses of separate statements from each interviewee (Krueger & Casey 2015). Including focus group interviews as part of my data gave me a more macro-level perspective on many of the issues already arising in interviews. Macro-level perspectives in qualitative research refer to approaches that examine broad and systemic factors influencing participants' views and behaviours, such as cultural, historical, social, and institutional contexts (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Weiss 1994). These perspectives go beyond individual-level (micro) insights to explore how larger patterns, shared experiences, and structural forces shape collective narratives. For example, in the context of sacred spaces, macro-level perspectives consider how historical preservation practices, community dynamics, or broader sociocultural trends influence participant's engagement with and perceptions of these spaces. By adopting a macro-level perspective, researchers can better contextualise individual narratives within the societal or cultural frameworks that inform them. In designing the structure for focus group interviewing, I was guided by two primary criteria. First, I felt it essential to keep healers and non-healer participants in separate groups because I was particularly interested in uncovering their unique interests and engagements with sacred spaces. Having both groups together might have stifled genuine opinions and feelings about sensitive issues, such as the validity of preservation practices in specific environments (Morgan 1997). One challenge I encountered was the potential bias introduced by participants being acquainted with one another before the interviews. This bias was difficult to avoid due to the small size of the Hamburg community. Recognising this, I remained mindful of potential assumptions or shared understandings among participants when designing and conducting the focus group interviews. I ensured the interview guide prompted open and individual responses while fostering inclusive group discussions (Kitzinger 1995).

Designing the interview guide (focus group)

As described above, I prepared an interview guide to provide some nominal structure for the discussion see (Appendix 2). Areas covered in the guide included the importance of the sacred space and its preservation, how it is used, and prioritisation. I deliberately avoided imposing too much structure to minimise the bias of a researcher-imposed agenda (Krueger & Casey, 2015; Kitzinger 1995). Focus groups that do not adhere strictly to a standardised guide are a valuable tool for exploratory research because a group of engaged participants can spark a lively discussion among themselves without requiring much intervention from the researcher (Morgan 1997). Consequently, I employed minimal moderation, and the participants often took charge of the conversation. They spontaneously addressed many of the issues in my guide with minimal prompting from me.

However, the primary drawback of using an unstandardised interview guide is that it limits the researcher's ability to make direct comparisons across different groups, which can introduce variability in the findings (Stewart & Shamdasani 2015). To address this, I ensured that each group (healers and non-healers) engaged with the overarching themes outlined in the guide, even if the depth of their responses varied. The focus group discussions happened in Hamburg on the 28th of September, 2024. This approach preserved the flexibility of focus group discussions while allowing consistency in addressing the key research objectives. Notably, the open-ended nature of the focus groups uncovered numerous issues and concerns not part of my initial agenda, enriching the data collected and enhancing the overall findings (Bryman 2016).

Data analysis

The data was systematically organised, classified, and analysed, ultimately constructing a new narrative from the stories gathered from the participants using ATLAS ti and my own analysis. Labov's data analysis technique used narratives to understand the human experience (McCormack 2000; Rhodes 2000). This followed three levels of meaning-making. Firstly, the content of each interview was written as a brief vignette (which will be presented in Chapter 5) and then into a longer narrative about each participant and the collective narratives of all the stories. The purpose was to help develop a good understanding of the data. This was done by re-reading each interview and listening to audio recordings. McCormack (2000: 221) advised that each narrative needed to be scanned for markers of the stories. The markers/themes that emerged from Atlas and my own markers were:

1. Sacred Spaces as Living Archives

2. Spiritual and Healing Practices
3. Ancestral Connection
4. Ecological and Cultural Interdependence
5. Rituals, Music, and Sound
6. Respect for Sacred Spaces
7. Generational Disconnect

The basic goal of this stage was to enter into the emotion and details as defined by the storyteller. This type of interrogation was viewed as allowing for a key question to be answered about each interview, '… what kind of story is this?' (Thornhill, Clare and May, 2004: 188). Figure 3 gives a summative explanation and evaluation of the means of structural analysis used in this research.

Element	Explanation
Abstract	How does the participants story begin?
Orientation	Who/What does it involve? And when and where?
Complicating Action	Then what happened?
Resolution	What finally happed?
Evaluation	So what?
Coda	What does it all mean?

Figure 3: Summative Explanation of Labov's Structural Analysis (1972)

Source: W. Chinyamurindi (2013: 73)

In this research, data was analysed using qualitative data analysis, and the research findings are presented in thematic frames following the coding procedure described in this chapter. This type of analysis hinges on the understanding that data analysis involves discovering patterns among the collected data to identify trends that point to theoretical understanding (Babbie 2004: 284). Therefore, all data from the interviews were video and voice and then transcribed verbatim and coded. The coding involves interlacing the answers acquired from the participants through interviews and observations to develop a narrative of how and why the community of Hamburg uses the sacred space in their ritual contexts. The method involved classifying the pieces of data by linking perceptions, after which data was analysed and interpreted descriptively.

This research also gives an account of rituals at the Sacred Space through a thick description through grounded ethnography. Denzin (1989a) asserts that a thick description is a presentation highlighting perceptions of any feature. In the case of this research, my data explores and exposes the use of Sacred Spaces. Therefore, to offer a thick description of the sacred space, I employed an ongoing and interactive process and applied continuous data analysis from time to time (Nieuwenhuis 2007b: 99). Smit (2001: 124) commends continuous data analysis. This type of analysis was employed in this research because I was analysing raw data from interviews in the form of all audio, videos, and observations. Content analysis was also employed because data analysis involves collecting ethnographic data from interviews, observations, and focus group discussions. According to Cohen et al. (2007: 475), content analysis is suitable for communicative material. Therefore, I employed this analysis method to communicate with the readers by clearly informing them of the realities of the sacred space to the Hamburg community.

I organised the sub-divided codes into a hierarchical scheme, ensuring they captured all the themes to answer the research question and conceptual alignment. This analysis of the interview data, using inductive and abductive coding to draw out themes, gave me common emerging themes, including memory, spiritual and healing practices, ecological and cultural interdependence, rituals, music, and sound.

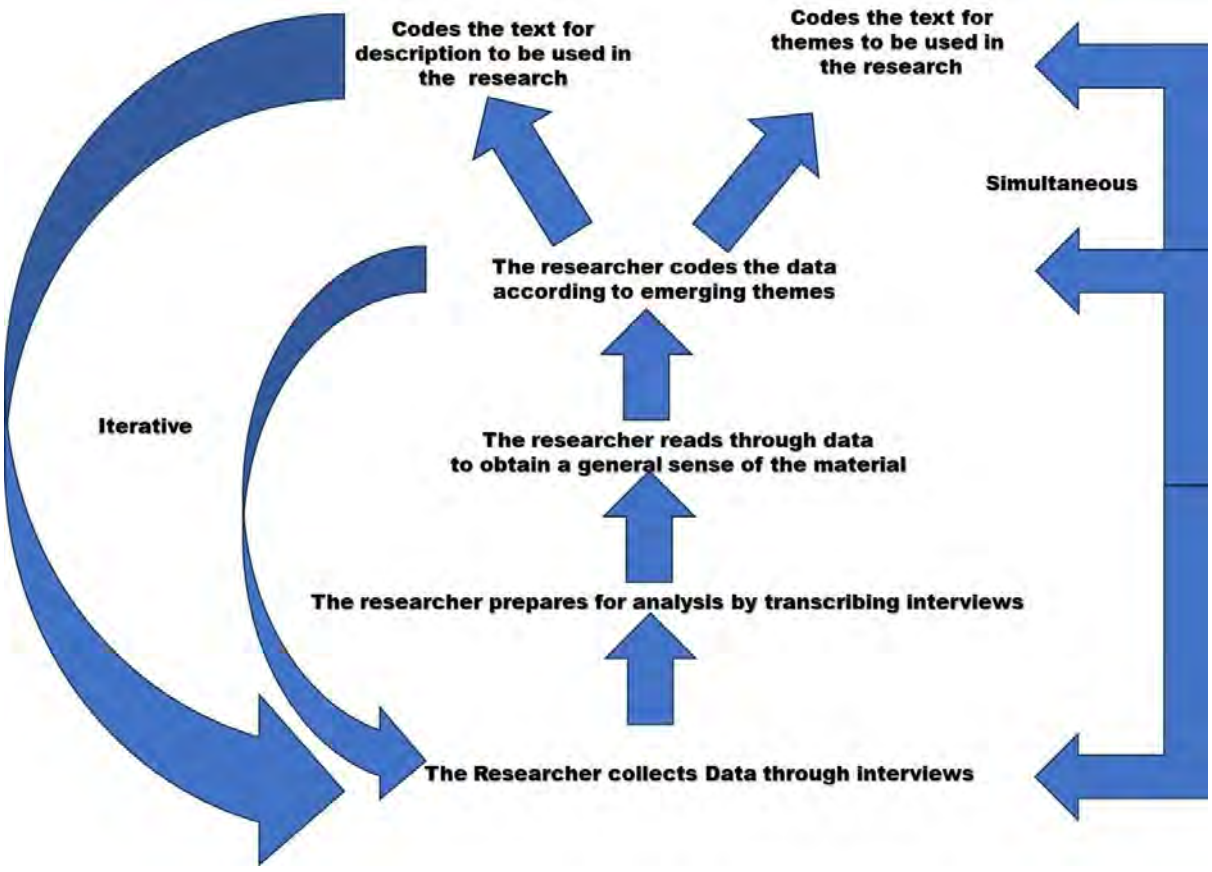

Figure 4: The steps of qualitative data analysis

Source: Adapted from Creswell and Poth (2012: 237)

Tracy (2019) describes data analysis as a repetitive process alternating between the emergent reading of the data and the use of existing models and theories. I employed an iterative analysis process, as Tracy (2019) highlighted, oscillating between the collected data and existing theories employed in this research. I used inductive and abductive coding to draw out themes, constantly refining them. The inductive approach to data analysis plays a vital role in research, as Rosenberg (2020b) highlighted. This approach allows researchers to derive universally applicable conclusions from specific instances. By closely observing and analysing data, researchers can identify patterns and similarities integral to constructing a broader understanding of the researched subject. Rosenberg (2020b) emphasises the strength of inductive analysis in guiding empirical generalisations, enabling researchers to extrapolate findings from the data and formulate generalised conclusions that extend beyond the immediate scope of the observed phenomena. Abductive analysis, on the other hand, offers a complementary perspective.

This analytical approach is essential for situating research phenomena within a theoretical or conceptual framework. Abductive analysis is crucial for understanding and interpreting data within the context of broader theoretical constructs (Rosenberg 2020b). It aids researchers in ascribing meaning to their findings, not just in the immediate context of the research but also in broader theoretical and conceptual contexts. Abductive analysis, therefore, serves as a bridge between empirical observations and theoretical interpretation, facilitating a deeper comprehension of the data and its implications. This analysis allowed me to weave together observed themes and theoretical principles, enriching the research's interpretative depth and contextual relevance. This dynamic and reflective approach employs inductive and abductive analyses for Chapters 5 and 6. Together, this allowed for a nuanced synthesis of data deepened the interpretation of emergent patterns and helped develop a cohesive research narrative and interpretation of findings.

Data presentation

I utilised Creswell and Poth's (2018: 183) data analysis process to organise, format, and present the data in Chapter 5. While examining the data, I systematically organised, classified, and analysed it. Ultimately, a new narrative was constructed from the stories gathered from the participants (Moen 2006: 62). The analysis was also guided by grounded theory. Charmaz and Thornberg (2020: 305) define grounded theory as a systematic research method that shapes collecting data and provides explicit analysis

strategies. They further state that using this theory now means there is more than openness to learning about the participant's lives, and it offers useful strategies to develop the researcher's theoretical analyses and generate new concepts in the discipline and the larger research literature (ibid: 306). Charmaz (2006) emphasises that the grounded theory method prioritises the processes of discovery and theory development over logical deductive reasoning, which depends on existing theoretical frameworks. The methods of grounded theory research necessitate that researchers balance the dual responsibilities of data collection and data analysis, as each task informs and influences the development of theories to elucidate the social context in which they operate. Grounded theorists refine their data collection based on their analytical interpretations and findings, enhancing their observations. Furthermore, they evaluate and expand upon emerging ideas by collecting additional data. The two main techniques employed for analysing fieldwork data are coding and memo-writing. Researchers employ coding at the outset to categorise and sort data and, subsequently, label, separate, compile, and organise data in the research process. According to Charmaz and Thornberg (2020: 307)

> Initial coding means labelling snippets of data to take them apart while being attentive to the meanings and actions suggested by these data. We advocate line-by-line coding as a first step because it forces the researcher to take a fresh look at the data, compare fragments of these data, and ask analytic questions about them. The grounded theory method not only helps researchers to synthesise data but, moreover, to move beyond descrip-tion through constructing new concepts that explicate what is happening.

In this research, applying this type of coding will help to understand my research participant's experiences and perspectives. Gaining this understanding can lead to rethinking or relinquishing cherished disciplinary concepts that researchers might have believed would fit their data (Charmaz and Thornberg (2020).

Memo-writing functions as a method for researchers to initiate the exploration of concepts. While grounded theorists are coding, they write memos about their codes and the questions they have about them. Memo writing is the intermediate step between coding and writing the first draft of the paper, including the provisional analysis. (Charmaz and Thornberg 2020). Also known as reflexivity, to make notes that support the collected data. During the interview session, I was taking notes on the side.

After the research site selection, I conducted contextual profiling and a literature review to understand the history of the Xhosa people and other relevant statistics, as seen in Chapter 4. I identified the research participants central to this research. Furthermore, I exercised emotional reflexivity as the research

participants told their stories, narrating their experiences with sacred space and how it impacted their lives and livelihoods. To ensure data integrity, interviews were recorded with a secure audio device.

Coding procedure

Tracy (2019) states that coding is vital in qualitative research. It serves as the mechanism for organising and categorising data into pertinent categories. Upon preparing the interview transcripts, I employed Atlas.ti. This is data analysis software that streamlines the coding process. This software offers a methodical approach, particularly suited for the inductive analysis of data, historical analysis of literature and documents, and abductive categorisation and analysis of findings of the approaches employed. I selected significant segments of text in context. I related those quotations to the research questions, the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, and the theoretical framework discussed (Archer, Jansen van Vuuren & van der Walt, 2017: 25). This process, called open coding, was applied to all the collected data (Saldaña, 2016: 294). During the primary-cycle coding, I analysed transcripts to identify themes that aligned directly with my research objectives. Data is transformed into basic codes in this stage, capturing its essence (Goertz & Mahoney 2012). For instance, I developed codes when reading the data per the research objectives. I also developed broader themes in line with the theoretical frameworks into codes. This broad categorisation of themes was followed by the secondary-cycle coding, a more in-depth analysis phase. Here, initial codes were synthesised and grouped into more specific interpretative categories, occasionally drawing insights from diverse theoretical frameworks for enriched understanding, as Hallier and Forbes (2004) suggested. The broader themes were broken into specific sub-codes. Transcripts were then analysed, and data identified to align with the created codes was copied and pasted under suitable codes for further analysis. A similar approach was employed in this research historical and document analysis. This methodical coding approach paved the way for the findings presented in Chapter 5 and interpreted in Chapter 6. During the data analysis, I always tried to observe reflexivity to ensure that in interpreting the findings, my personal opinions or prior knowledge of the subject and contexts did not influence this process. The data analysis software assisted me in interpreting the empirical research. It enhanced my perspective on the collected data (Creswell & Poth 2018: 18). Coding has been criticised for data fragmentation, disrupting the flow of what participants say (Bryman 2016: 453). However, I did not lose sight of the context of what was being said. This is why I used the different coding systems mentioned, including my own analysis.

Strategies to ensure integrity

To ensure integrity, I critically engaged with other literature to gain external knowledge and an understanding of qualitative research. This helped avoid potential sources of bias in this research design and data collection processes. This was done through an extensive literature review and consulting with experts in the field. It also helped develop a more comprehensive methodology for the research. Triangulation was used to ensure the data collected was credible, trustworthy, and reliable. The interviews and document analysis were used interactively to answer the research questions (Flick 2018; Bertram & Christiansen 2020; Source & Maslakçi 2020). Doing so helped overcome bias issues and balanced the data collected. Triangulation was also applicable when generating themes informed by the research's theory and goals. To ensure that the required in-depth data was collected and trustworthy to the participants after it was collected, transcribed, and interpreted, it was referred to the participants for reflection and correction. This was done throughout the research.

Ethics

The research permission for this project was finalised and falls under the IMIsEE project (4951), see (Appendix 3) for the ethics clearance. A Memorandum of Agreement has been signed between RU, SAIAB and the Keiskamma Trust in Hamburg. Smith (2012) notes that ethical research in Indigenous and other marginalised communities must be grounded in respect. Ethical research is about establishing, maintaining and nurturing reciprocal and respectful relationships, not just among people as individuals but also with people as individuals, as collectives and as members of communities (Smith 2012: 97). As noted in the guidelines, primary responsibility is to the research participants, and to ensure that research participants have consented to the research. The research participants can refuse to take part in the research and withdraw their participation. If consent had previously been granted for the research, participants can withdraw that consent at any time, too. My conduct throughout the research process was also guided by the Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee, which says that no harm should be done to the research participants. I did not encounter any resistance from most of the participants.

In cases where they were not comfortable to answer or share certain information, I respected that. The participants also gave consent before the interviews were conducted.

Conclusion

This chapter outlines the methodologies and procedures employed in this research, which examines sacred spaces as living archives through the lens of music and heritage practices. The chapter foregrounds the significance of music and sound research in understanding African cultural identities, Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs), and the relationship between communities and their environments. It highlights how music functions as a repository for collective memory, encapsulating historical narratives, social structures, rituals, and ecological interactions within African societies.

The research adopts an ecomusicological approach, which explores the interplay between sound, nature, and culture, positioning sacred spaces as sites of memory and intangible heritage. Ecomusicology, emerging from applied ethnomusicology, extends beyond academic inquiry to engage communities in socially responsible and problem-solving interventions (Harrison 2016). This perspective is crucial in bridging the gap between scientific research and indigenous knowledge systems, fostering a holistic understanding of the role of sound in cultural sustainability. A key methodological consideration in this research is interdisciplinarity, which involves collaboration between ethnomusicologists, scientists, and local knowledge holders. The research challenges conventional academic boundaries by integrating Indigenous epistemologies with environmental and heritage studies. By actively engaging with Hamburg community members, the research acknowledges and validates local perspectives on sacred spaces and their significance in preserving cultural memory.

A variety of qualitative approaches, incorporating biographical, historiographic, and narrative methodologies, were employed to capture the complexity of sacred spaces as living archives. Data collection involved document analysis, which examines published articles, archival materials, and historical records to contextualise the field research. In-depth Interviews with community members in Hamburg, including traditional healers, elders, and younger generations, to explore their relationship with sacred spaces. Ethnographic fieldwork engages in participant observation and cultural immersion to document ritual performances, music, and oral histories.

The collected data were systematically analysed using qualitative techniques, with thematic coding conducted using ATLAS. Ti. The narratives were examined inductively and abductively to identify recurring themes, including:

1. Sacred Spaces as Living Archives

2. Spiritual and Healing Practices
3. Ancestral Connection
4. Ecological and Cultural Interdependence
5. Rituals, Music, and Sound
6. Respect for Sacred Spaces
7. Generational Disconnect

Creswell and Poth's (2018) framework guided the organisation and presentation of findings, ensuring a rigorous and ethical approach to Indigenous research methodologies. Ethical considerations also received attention, as these are essential tenets when conducting research. The research permission for this project was finalised and falls under the IMIsEE project, with a Memorandum of Agreement signed between Rhodes University (RU), SAIAB, and the Keiskamma Trust. Smith (2012) notes that ethical research in Indigenous and other marginalised communities must be grounded in respect.

This chapter is integral to the thesis, providing the methodological foundation for investigating sacred spaces as living archives. By incorporating an ecomusicological approach, the research underscores the significance of sound in shaping cultural memory and ecological consciousness. The interdisciplinary engagement fosters a decolonial perspective, validating indigenous knowledge systems while contributing to sustainable heritage practices. Through qualitative inquiry and community-centred research, this research aims to bridge the gap between academic discourse and lived experiences, reinforcing the role of sacred spaces in preserving intangible heritage through music, ritual, and storytelling.

In conclusion, this chapter has paved the way for the subsequent chapter, providing a broader understanding of archives before presenting the results informed by the justified research philosophy, approach, and strategy.

CHAPTER 3

Understanding the Archive and Sacred Spaces

> What keeps a place alive is not the preservation of its past per se but the continual weaving of that past into the present (Marks 1991: 9).

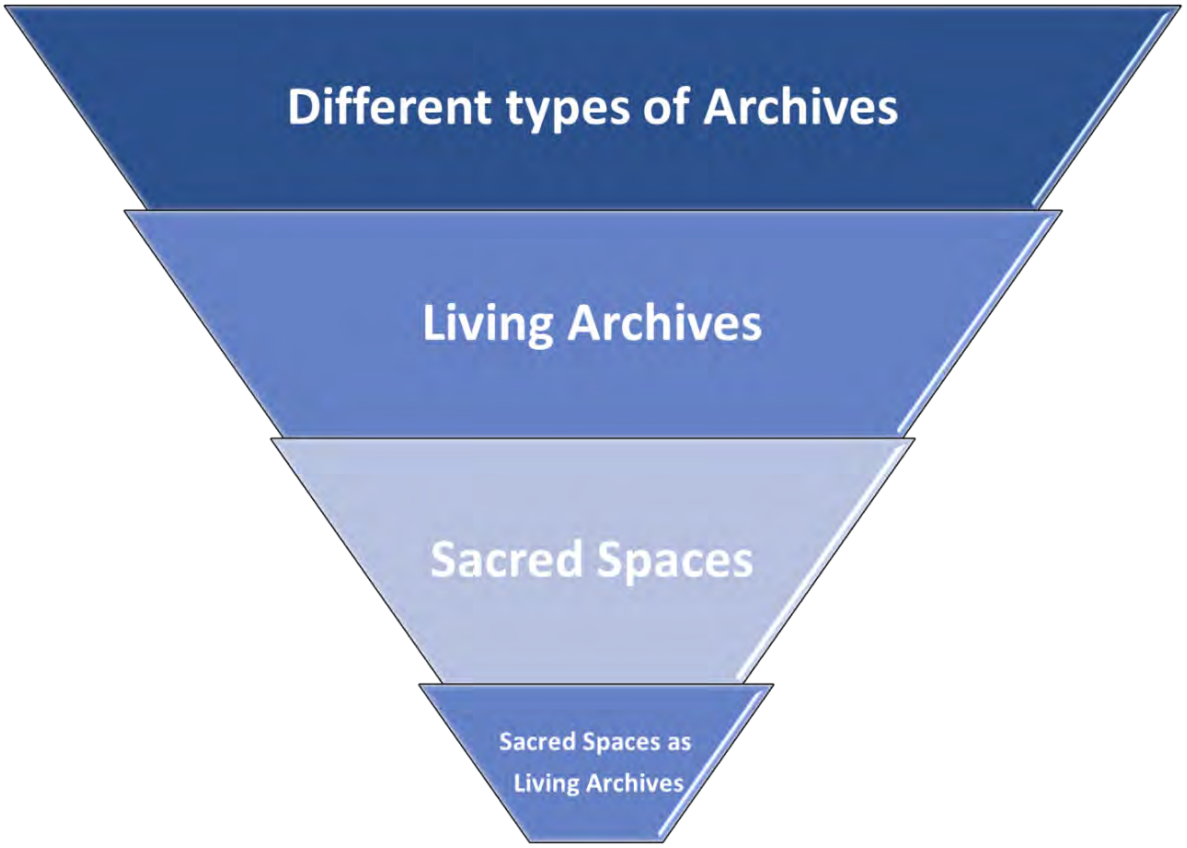

Figure 5: Inverted pyramid

Source: Author (2025)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter employed the inverted pyramid structure to give an understanding of archives. Starting with an attempt to define what archives are. A broader explanation of different archives that exist is presented (colonial archives, electronic archives, archives of feelings, archives of memory, politics of the archive,

the relationship between the state and the archive) then narrowed down to living archives and how they are connected to sacred spaces and then how Sacred spaces as Living Archives. This understanding is also complemented by the theoretical frameworks that guide this study; these include memory studies, religious ecology, bio-cultural diversity, and historical/ cultural geography.

Linking the idea of living archives, memories, and ritualised or sacred spaces requires knowledge of what archives are, how they have evolved, and the functions they have served. Many cited sources (Nataka 2012; Mbembe 2002; Featherstone 2006; Hall 2001; Foucault 1982; Darrida 1996) have completed in-depth research on archives. Every one of them has a unique approach to what archives are. Archival material that speaks of memory, the relationship of memory to history and historical practice, what archives are, and why they are important will be discussed and highlighted. As McConnachie (2008: 11) writes,

> Although many people are more familiar with paper archives, audiovisual archives have become invaluable organisations following the advancement of audio and visual media. Documentation has changed from the subjective, written medium to the more objective capturing of events in real-time, allowing subjects the chance to report on situations in their authentic voice.

I will explore key theories around sacred spaces, memory, music and identity, highlighting memory studies as a relevant theoretical approach. The literature I consulted was diverse and extensive which helped to uncover a wide range of early and topical theories and ideas that integrated the disciplines of ecomusicology, ethnomusicology, science, anthropology and history. Much of the writing discussed here inspired and guided my thinking philosophy and gave me the confidence to continue entertaining theories, ideas and concepts rarely articulated or addressed in any other conventional ecomusicological thesis. The importance of theory is stressed by McGee & Warms (2004), who state that data as an end is not enough, and theories are necessary to give meaning to the data. With the close connection between memory, sacred spaces and humans as the main focus, specific theories like ecological and ecomusicological theories, decolonial studies, memory studies, sacred spaces and religious studies, concepts, and ideas were particularly relevant and valuable. They all adopt a very similar philosophy, but none individually integrated the disciplines and encompassed the full scope of the thesis. The fact that space can evoke memories is implicitly an impossible-to-separate factor in any research into the environment (Casey 2000; Halbwachs 1992). Archives with a close, deep-time relationship between sacred spaces and humans have not generally been studied in detail at a continental or global level (Assmann 2011; Derrida 1996).

Music and Identity

Music plays a significant role in constructing, expressing, and symbolising identity, a theme that has gained prominence in ethnomusicology since the early 1980s (Rice 2009, 2017). The relationship between music and identity encompasses various subthemes, including individual versus social identity, the control of identity construction, and music's unique contribution to identity formation (Rice 2017). Research has shown that culture-specific music preferences are linked to national identity, with musical ethnocentrism mediating this relationship across diverse cultures (Boer et al., 2013). Music's capacity to materialise identities is attributed to its plural socialities, which operate across four planes of social mediation, forming a complex assemblage (Born 2011). Additionally, analysing musical genres can illuminate how social identity formations are refracted in music and how genres become entangled with evolving social formations (Born 2011).

Music transforms those who take possession of it, resulting in the co-formation of music and those who make it and listen to it (Hennion 2001: 3). Music is a human universal, but its meaning is not (Titon 2009b). Lidskog (2017: 25) states that music occurs in many settings and includes many different kinds of action and ways of organising sound into meanings. Music is a constitutive part of culture and hence is important for individual and social identity formation. It can serve as a space and practice that binds group members together so that they understand themselves as belonging to each other and maybe even have a specific task or mission to accomplish (Ibid). According to Rice (2013: 72), an important part of all identity formation is the making of boundaries; music can draw boundaries between groups, thereby shaping and strengthening social identities. Music can be used as a symbolic identifier of a social group, both by its members and the surroundings (its non-members). Music not only functions to express and maintain pre-existing identities, it also provides resources for contesting and negotiating identities and constructing new ones (Jung 2014; Kyker 2013; Stokes 2004). ‘’Music provides an opportunity for the expression of identity, and it can facilitate the reproduction and transformation of established social identities and provide resources for a group to construct and renegotiate its identity’’ (Lidskog 2017: 25). These studies collectively highlight the multifaceted nature of music's role in identity construction and expression across various cultural contexts. Sacred spaces assist communities in building a common culture, relating to each other emotionally, and constructing collective identity and memory. This view is supported by Sun (2021: ii), who writes about the Indie music in Taiwan, states that

> Through the rituals performed during the sacred time and in the sacred space, music fans reach collective effervescence and feel liberated, which strengthen their belief in indie music's spirit of freedom and further their identification with other participants who share a common culture. These rituals provide not only a momentary collective effervescence. The community members participating in these events also build their social networks afterwards, thus consolidating their collective identity.

What is an archive?

It is not easy to simply define an archive; this view is supported by Hall (2001), who argues that a complete description of an archive is impossible. My definition of an archive goes beyond paper and buildings. I understand an archive as a living collection made up of totems, proverbs, songs, and dance forms that carry memory, knowledge, and cultural meaning. These are passed down from one generation to the next, not just as traditions, but as ways of remembering, teaching, and preserving who we are. Archives have existed for centuries and have had different meanings for different people. Griffin (2021) defines archives as the documentary by-product of human activity retained for their long-term value, records created to provide a route to interpret past events. Archives are the product of a process that converts a certain number of documents into items worthy of preservation, keeping them in a public place where they can be consulted according to well-established procedures and regulations (Mbembe 2002: 20; Roussillon 2021). Featherstone (2006) notes that an archive is a place for storing documents and records, a storehouse of materials where national memories are constructed. As a result, they become part of a particular system, well-illustrated by the withdrawal into secrecy or closing those marks in the first years of their lives (Stevens-Larré 2010). For several years, these fragments of lives and pieces of time are concealed in the half-light, set back from the visible world. A ban of principle is imposed upon them, rendering the content of these documents even more mysterious and making the archive an apparatus of social rule and regulation (Featherstone 2006: 591). This, therefore, made the archive a crucial site for national memory, as they became instruments for forging the nation of the people into an imagined community (Featherstone 2006: 592), and Osborne (1999) suggests that the archive is a storehouse of everyday experience.

According to Nataka (2012), archives keep records that assist current and future generations in retrieving, reconstructing and making sense of the past. They reflect the human interest in remembering and our propensity to forget, and it is essential to talk about the value of archives for Indigenous people. The archive is a site of safekeeping in oral and literate cultures because it integrates memory and archiving as dual sites and practices of the human mind. There is an ongoing relationship between the realness of

human memory and the archival moment in which particular events and bodies of data are fixed as archived records. Despite a current reliance on audio-visual record keeping, the stress upon human memory and archiving in a single space enables us to consider oral tradition as an archival practice (Derrida 1996). But even more than that, the ability of a particular place to remind people of shared experience places that space as an archive too.

Foucault (1982: 129) writes, ‘’An archive must be closed off since heterogeneity is inevitable. It does not just entail throwing open the doors to any creation form in any setting without any structure or internal regularity of principle’’. Foucault (1982: 129) describes the archive as a system of discursivity. De Jong and Harney (2015). Thus, for him, the archive consists of unspoken rules that determine what we can say and how we can say it. Abstract, as this idea may be, defines the archive as an object of analysis both within and outside ourselves: "It is that which, outside ourselves, delimits us" (Foucault 1972: 147; Bloch 2016). Nevertheless, he makes the case that an archive cannot be entirely defined by its rules. Derrida (1996) describes the archive as an archive fever central to the politics of individuals and collective memory, desire and interpretation. Barbra (2021) and Winand (2023) define them as the documentary by-products of human activity retained for their long-term value. They are repositories where documents are stored and an umbrella term for the documentary traces that historical actors leave behind (Tennent & Gillett 2023: 104). Putting the collection together is informed by practitioners who actively define the archive (Roussillon 2021). They may have contributed, collected some of it, and appreciated and helped interpret it. They have learned from the work in their practice, and this new work will, in turn, become candidates for inclusion, which makes an archive of this kind a continuous production (ibid).

Electronic archive

The electronic archive has many compartments in the academy, from fixed electronic ‘texts’ to instantly self-expanding current databases (Poster 1997; Derrida 1996). The term electronic archive is also intended for those private recollections we all invent and install (Ronell 1992) on our memory banks and screens. In our minds (Myerson 1998: 86). Electronic archives have become increasingly necessary due to the explosion of digital information and technological advancements (Laarfi 2020). These systems offer advantages such as faster access, enhanced security, and improved data accessibility (Laarfi 2020). According to Yaruta and Aseyev (2020), electronic archives are information systems designed to store and use archival material in an electronic format. The four phases of managing electronic archives are creation and storage, dissemination and usage, maintenance and disposal (Rifauddin 2016). Implementing electronic archives has several obstacles, such as maintaining organised document presentation, attaining superior quality input of material, and choosing suitable scanning and optical

recognition systems (Yaruta & Aseyev 2020). Libraries have always been important for material preservation, but setting up an electronic archive takes a lot of money, technological know-how, and dedication to long-term archiving (Keyhani 1998). Various stakeholders, such as cooperatives, publishers, and libraries, may manage future electronic archives (Keyhani 1998).

Archive of feelings

This type of archive not only accounts for past trauma but also repression, ephemerality and often spectral traces of people's experiences, according to Migraine-George and Currier (2016: 190). Mbembe (2002: 22-23) states that up to now, we have treated archives based on their power as a relic and their capacity to function as an instituting imaginary. We have deliberately left aside two aspects: the subjective experience of the archive by individuals and the relationship between the archive and the state. Hosfeld (2018) asserts that as far as the first is concerned, it is enough to state that however we define archives, they have no meaning outside the subjective experience of those individuals who come to use them at a given moment. This subjective experience limits the supposed power of the archives, revealing their uselessness and their residual and superfluous nature. Several factors are involved in this subjective experience of the archives: who owns them, on whose authority they depend; the political context in which they are visited; the conditions under which they are accessed; the distance between what is sought and what is found; how they are decoded and how what is found there is presented and made public.

Colonial archive

According to De Jong and Harney (2015: 3), the colonial archive has now become a recurring subject of inquiry, offering possibilities for self-examination and reflection on how texts, photographs, posters, festivals, magazines, art, and other cultural forms held therein have come to define modern Africa. Namhila (2016) defines colonial archives as archival records and institutions created and maintained under colonial rule. That is in the political context of a territory that is not sovereign but ruled by another country in a colonial situation. He further states that this assumes a social context where people are treated in a discriminatory manner according to their ethnicity, race or origin (UNESCO 1990: 143). The timeframe of this definition extends beyond the formal independence of a country because the colonial archival heritage remains as such, and its character is not automatically changed by a country's new legal status, given that the legacy of previous recordkeeping practices persists in the context of colonial archives, if not in the new country's governmental offices. Archives are often both documents of exclusion and monuments to particular configurations of power (Hamilton et al.: 9). The mundane issue

of how these exclusions and configurations of power have shaped simple but vitally important issues, such as the availability of vital documents to ordinary citizens, is not explored. Harris (2002) provides an overview of the Apartheid State's destruction and exclusion of documents. Still, the leads about this history would warrant a volume alone, but the issue of simple unpolitical person-related records is not mentioned. Harris (2002: 139) remarks that "from the 1980s, the State Archive Service of apartheid South Africa began shaping its user services around the needs of its largest clientele grouping genealogical almost exclusively white researchers", without further reflecting on the implications of this subject for black archives users, then and 20 years later". This literature does not cover the issues of person-related records and their availability and use.

Mwiyeriwa (1985) offers a comprehensive introduction to African archival challenges but overlooks the gaps in colonial archival collections and their implications. Similarly, Mazikana (1997) identifies emerging issues, such as the loss of records from privatised state functions, yet does not address the inherited colonial content beyond suggesting supplementation through oral histories and repatriated records. The absence of critical engagement with the subject coverage of archival collections in existing literature leaves this issue to contemporary researchers. Many scholars treat archives as primary sources without questioning their completeness, often relying on secondary sources that repeat established observations. Bastian (2006) critically examines post-colonial scholars' engagement with archives, noting that colonial records predominantly reflect the perspectives of the dominant powers, while the voices of the oppressed are largely absent. She argues that "history is written by the winners," a notion that extends to the creation of archival records (Bastian 2006: 268). Although much of the literature addresses how colonial archives silence marginalised voices, less attention is given to the complete erasure of evidence of the oppressed's existence. This erasure persists, impacting present-day citizens who continue to experience these archival silences (Bastian 2006).

Josias (2011) refers to several emerging projects in South Africa that have been used to recover and record memories. She cites Lalu concerning the District Six Museum in Cape Town: "unlike the archives of the state, which produces pre-packaged communities with labels and postal addresses, the Museum inaugurates the concept of the archive that envisages the meaning of a post-apartheid community through the remnants of one that apartheid destroyed" (Josias 2011: 98). The archive of the state, in all its "prepackaged" apartheid conception, is not the monolithic unchangeable block that its apartheid creators may have wished to shape. It is up to the receivers of that legacy to look through the cracks and earn the legacy by discovering and using the hidden information to reconstruct what has been destroyed. Even the efforts to destroy a community will leave evidence of its existence (Josias 2011: 99).

Politics of archives

Almeida and Hoyer (2020) argue that archives were historically dominated by the discipline of history, shaping perceptions of what is knowable and authentic about the past. However, as Flinn (2007: 152) notes, early archival practices prioritised the papers of prominent individuals and institutions, systematically excluding economically marginalised groups. This exclusionary approach to appraisal and classification fostered conditions of oppression, failing to represent communities with less social power (Almeida and Hoyer 2020: 13). Archives have long been complicit in processes of erasure linked to racism, colonialism, abuses of authority, and economic corruption, even as archivists were viewed as "neutral, invisible, silent handmaidens of historical research" (Almeida and Hoyer 2020: 13). In response, public libraries, non-profits, and community members began creating collections outside official archives, while still drawing on traditional archival models and professional expertise (Ham 1981: 207).

Roe (2016: 10) emphasises that archives play a critical role in amplifying voices historically silenced, safeguarding rights, holding governments accountable, and supporting transparency. Archives serve as raw materials for research, fostering critical thinking, discovery, and engagement with authentic voices from the past (Roe 2016). Community archives, in particular, are driven by the desire to document histories absent from mainstream institutions, ensuring that communities retain control over their heritage (Almeida and Hoyer 2020: 16).

This literature highlights the complex and contested nature of archives, pointing to the need for further research, particularly through in-depth case studies of sacred spaces and archives. The political dynamics of archives reveal how they have evolved, especially in excluding the histories of oppressed populations. To address these gaps, the next section will explore the concept of living archives, which incorporate diverse histories in multiple formats, challenging dominant historical narratives.

The relationship between the state and the archive

This section will focus on the relationship between the archive and the state. Mbembe (2002) contends that the nexus between the state and the archive is complex**.** On the one hand, there is no state without its archives. On the other hand, the very existence of the archive constitutes a constant threat to the state and some states believed that they could continue without archives. They have, therefore, attempted either to reduce them to silence or, in an even more radical manner, to destroy them. By doing this, Mbembe contends that those in power thought they could defer the archive's ability to serve

as proof of a moment in time (2002: 23). Steedman (1988: 67) states that in the archive, you cannot be shocked by its omissions, its voids, what is not listed, what was destroyed by enemy action, nor that it tells of the aristocracy and not the unfortunate stockinger. Its physical status deflects criticism because it best illustrates how state power has operated through ledgers, lists, and indictments and what is lacking from them.

Derrida (1996) suggests that the original archive was at the same time a home: the city's documents were stored in the archive, the magistrate's house. Thus, the institution of the archive from its initiation bridges the gap between public and private: public records in a private space. As the archive developed and adopted the familiar institutional forms of modernity (the courthouse, the guildhall, the parish registry, the library, the museum, the governmental department, the local record office), the original relationship was inverted: details about private lives are found in what have become public spaces. Yet, the archive remained a home in some broader sense. In other senses, too, the archive induces in its user a sense of belonging as they are able to patch together information from both public and private accounts that may have an effect on how they perceive the world (Bradley 1999). According to Steedman (1998: 73), looking for an identity through the processes of historical identification, the past is searched for something that confirms the searcher in their sense of self, confirms that searcher as they want to be.

Bradley (1999: 111) states that extracting narratives of struggle from governmental documents highlights a great paradox of the archive. Gonzalez Echevarria provides a helpful speculative etymology of the term, as well as its link to the magistracy and, thus, the legal functions of the polis, and he suggests connotations with command and secrecy. A symbolic meaning of the term in Spanish (Archivo) is a person entrusted with a secret or very private knowledge and knows how to guard it. Thus, power, secrecy and law stand at the origin of the archive (Bradley 1999: 31). Subsequently, as modern states develop, official archives remain part of the rule and social regulation apparatus. Yet, at the same time, counter-meanings are inscribed within them so that “the archive questions authority by holding warring discourses in a promiscuous and mutually contaminating contiguity” Bradley (1999: 153). So, the parliamentary records of 19th-century commissions, set up to explore and provide solutions to the condition of England to curb the prevailing anxiety over the threat of social unrest, hold within them the narratives and programmes of those who contested the status quo.

Archive of memory

Looking at the archive of memory is very important to the shift towards valuing the living archive, explained in the next paragraph. An emerging perspective challenges the conventional understanding of

memory as a storage mechanism and views memory as an archive (Brockmeier 2010). This change towards more social and fluid remembering and forgetting practices is visible in different fields. Since the 1960s, artists have embraced the archive as a creative approach to investigating personal and collective memory (Guasch 2005). Previous 20th-century initiatives like Walter Benjamin's "The Arcades Project" and Aby Warburg's "Atlas Mnemosyne" are connected to this creative shift towards archives (Guasch 2012). According to Bowker (2010), the archive is a multifaceted entity that includes both potential memory and actual recollection, with societal variables determining what is recalled and lost. Our perception of archives is constantly changing due to new technologies erasing old memory recall and preservation ideas, making it more difficult to distinguish between the past, present, and future (Guasch 2012; Bowker 2010). Ciaran Carson (1997: 80) proposes in his book that the city (Belfast) is in itself an archive of memory, from which the storyteller can pluck endless objects, symbols and traces to develop a narrative, utilising "the teeming archive of his inward eye". Bradley (1999: 108) states the archive is a "slippery concept", but the archive is the repository of memories: individual and collective, official and unofficial, licit and illicit, legitimating and subversive. Based on such memories, however ineffectively and partially, we strive to reconstruct, restore, and recover the past, present and re-present stories of the past within our narratives. Osborne (1999) suggests that the bureaucratic state-sponsored archive is a predominant mechanism that modern liberal societies have developed to handle the past and its physical relics and memory. In Indigenous societies, the storyteller continues to serve the same function, becoming a living and walking archive of the community memories. For individuals and societies, memory is the key to unlocking the past: that which is lost. Through the archive, we strive to recover what we (and the thousands of Is that constitute that we) have lost and to relive the lost past by retelling its stories.

The living archive

> The term "living archive" is not new, and we build on descriptions of it as an inclusive site that is never complete and in which the archivist is an "active participant" in constructing the history that is archived (Almeida and Hoyer 2020: 18).

Derrida (1996) states that the Living Archive emerges as an activist strategy that reconstructs reality through a cross-section of information, community organising, and radical history. The Living Archive is the "archive of feelings" that recognises bodies and memories of activist individuals and organisations as repositories for the stories of marginalised communities (Almeida and Hoyer 2020: 18). The Living Archive is both a method for interrogating the past and a fundamental experience of the future and refers to

repositories or collections of living, dynamic information that capture and preserve the ongoing life and activities of individuals, communities, or organisations (Sabiescu 2020). These archives are not limited to static records but rather reflect the continuous evolution of their subjects over time. They provide an active and participatory space for individuals and communities to contribute to and shape their narratives, ensuring diverse perspectives are represented. The purpose and importance of Living Archives lie in their ability to document and make accessible a wide range of experiences, histories, and cultural expressions. By actively creating and curating these archives, individuals and communities can contribute to a deeper understanding of their identities, histories, and cultural heritage. The historical background of Living Archives reveals their roots in oral traditions and storytelling practices, highlighting their significance as tools for the transmission of knowledge across generations. This introduction provides a foundation for exploring the characteristics of Living Archives and their various applications.

Community Engagement through Living Archives entails the active participation of the community in the construction, maintenance, and usage of living archives (Bishop 2013; Tallman & Hays 2014). These archives serve as collective memory and knowledge dissemination venues, enabling individuals to share their experiences, narratives, and cultural heritage (Halbwachs 1992; Assmann 2011). Through community interaction, living archives transform into dynamic locations that embody the varied viewpoints and narratives of the community (Latham 2016; Della Dora 2010). This involvement cultivates a sense of ownership and empowerment among persons actively archiving and preserving their history (Ginsburg, Abu-Lughod & Larkin 2002). Furthermore, community participation guarantees the accessibility of live archives to a broader audience, allowing the community to investigate and gain knowledge from its collective legacy (Cohen 2004). Living archives enhance community cohesion and foster chances for debate, comprehension, and social transformation by promoting collaboration and involvement (Holloway 2003; Maddrell 2009). They serve as valuable resources for research and documentation purposes (Cunliffe 2011). They also provide a wealth of information that can be analysed and studied in various fields (Sabiescu 2020). Researchers can delve into Living Archives to uncover hidden patterns, trends, and insights over time. These archives facilitate comprehensive documentation and analysis of historical events, cultural phenomena, and socio-political developments (Ketelaar 2006b). By examining Living Archives, researchers gain a deeper understanding of the past and present, informing their work and influencing future directions. Using Living Archives, researchers are empowered to conduct rigorous investigations and contribute to the collective knowledge in their respective fields.

McKemmish et al., (2019) describe a living archive as an evolving form of archival practice that connects contemporary and ancient Indigenous Knowledge in real-time. Its purpose is to reconnect tangible and

intangible records with the people and communities to whom they belong. Power (2002) suggests that a living archive plays a crucial role in establishing truth and documenting historical events, contributing to the healing of individual and collective traumas. By engaging with history and fostering the practice of memory, living archives support processes of reconciliation. Similarly, Ketelaar (2006b) argues that, like memory, a living archive functions not merely as a repository but as an active, dynamic process. This mediated social and cultural practice facilitates discourse about past events and the actions that should follow.

In the context of this research, the large rock outcrop under study embodies the memory of rituals, spiritual interactions, childhood games, mischievous swimming trips, and rites of passage that have taken place there. Its ability to evoke these memories and their significance to the Hamburg community lies at the core of this project.

Sacred Spaces

> Sacred space is no easy concept to define. We read about sacred spaces. We talk about sacred spaces. We encounter, interact with or simply pass by sacred spaces in our daily life. We generally have no problem in identifying sacred spaces. When it comes to define the concept— 'sacred space'—however, things change (Della Dora 2010: 166).

The search for the sacred has been a universal phenomenon across cultures since antiquity. But what defines a place as sacred? One perspective suggests that a sacred space is a natural or constructed environment where spiritual experiences are intensified, and ritual acts of worship are performed (Hale 2013: xiii). The concept of sacred space is multifaceted and has been examined across disciplines, including anthropology, religious studies, and cultural geography. This research draws on these diverse perspectives to develop a comprehensive understanding of sacred spaces, recognising that identifying such spaces is a complex process.

Eliade (1959, 1987) offers a theological framework for understanding sacred spaces. He defines the sacred as fundamentally opposed to the profane, describing it as a hierophany, an event in which the sacred manifests itself, transforming an ordinary object into "something else" while it remains physically unchanged (Eliade 1959: 13-14). He further asserts that the sacred is synonymous with power, reality, endurance, and essence: "Man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests as something wholly different from the profane… Sacred power means reality and at the same time enduringness and

ethnicity" (Eliade 1987: 11-12). The sacred, therefore, represents a radical otherness, appearing in our world as a unique phenomenon or establishing channels of communication between different cosmic realms.

Building on Eliade, Loan (2003: 86) emphasises the role of human agency in defining sacred spaces, arguing that such spaces are sacred only once they have been discovered and consecrated. He states, "A place is sacred only to the extent to which and after which it has been declared/confirmed as a sacred place. It is man's action upon it in two movements, discovery and consecration, that changes its status and isolates it from the uncircumscribed, indifferent space" (Loan 2003: 196). This human intervention, through ritual and myth, constructs and reinforces particular interpretations of the surrounding reality (Lawson 2004: 852).

From a cultural geography perspective, Yi-Fu Tuan (1981, 2008) and Basso have explored sacred spaces as social and cultural constructs. Rao (2018) argues that sacred spaces function as spiritual centres that disrupt the neutrality of geographic space, serving as focal points for the construction of cultural universes. These spaces are inherently ambivalent, existing in the present while simultaneously acting as thresholds to alternate realms gateways to the divine, the cosmos, or broader universes. This duality reflects the complex conceptualisation of religious sites as both tangible places and abstract spaces.

In the field of social geography, the concepts of place and space are frequently framed as opposites. Places are specific, tangible locations imbued with cultural, historical, and personal significance, shaped by human activities and interactions. In contrast, space is perceived as abstract, boundless, and undefined, lacking inherent meaning until it is contextualised by human experience. Although religious spaces are often anchored in physical sites, their significance extends beyond the material realm, encompassing spiritual and metaphysical dimensions (Hughes & Swan 1986: 247). Sacred spaces, therefore, are not solely defined by their physical attributes but by the experiences of divine presence and profound connection to the cosmos that they facilitate. The sacred is understood as an intrinsic quality perceived within these spaces, established through cultural practices rather than inherent physical properties.

Ritual practices are fundamental to the process of sanctifying spaces, whether through fleeting ceremonial acts or ongoing, repeated engagements. These rituals serve to affirm and maintain the sacred character of a place, embedding it within the cultural and spiritual fabric of the community over time. However, the significance of sacred spaces is dynamic rather than fixed; they are continually shaped and reshaped by political, social, and historical forces. Conflicting narratives and power structures often determine how sacred spaces are identified, who has access to them, and how they are used (Farouk-All

2002). Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of sacred spaces requires an exploration of not only their spiritual and religious aspects but also the complex cultural and societal dynamics that influence their meaning, usage, and interpretation.

Sacred spaces refer to specific sites imbued with holiness, reverence, and spiritual significance for individuals or communities (Alt 2017; Pogačnik & Črnič 2014). These spaces are often understood as social constructs, where certain places, objects, or people are deemed sacred by a community and set apart from the profane, everyday world (Pogačnik & Črnič 2014). This distinction between the sacred and the profane is central to religious understanding, fostering a sense of uniqueness and reverence around these spaces. Sacred spaces can incorporate architectural elements like lighting, acoustics, and spatial design to evoke feelings of awe, reflection, and spiritual connection.

The concept of sacred space transcends physical boundaries, encompassing both tangible and intangible dimensions. Sacred spaces can arise from natural environments or be shaped by human interactions and rituals (Adelstein 2018). They often evoke a sense of transcendence, connecting individuals to a higher power or spiritual reality (Adelstein 2018; Vosko 2016). For example, birth is described as a sacred space due to its transformative potential (Crowther 2013), while Wiccan rituals create sacred spaces by symbolically linking the physical and spiritual realms (Hume 1998). Whether through natural phenomena or human-made structures, sacred spaces inspire awe and facilitate spiritual experiences, often associated with healing and personal growth (Vosko 2016; Adelstein 2018).

Cultural contexts influence how sacred spaces are defined. They can be natural or constructed environments marked by religious significance and connection to the divine (Thiessen & McAlpine 2013). Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) suggest that sacred spaces, such as religious sites, help individuals relieve stress, reflect on life, and set future goals. These spaces foster contemplation and are particularly important during religious festivals and rites of passage. Sacred spaces also serve as places where the divine intersects with the human, offering opportunities for worship, prayer, dance, and connection with the sacred (Hassner 2003; Eliade 1959). They provide hope for spiritual fulfilment and symbolically represent the structure of the cosmos, imparting meaning to the faithful (Hassner 2003).

Wang and Ho (2011) assert that sacred spaces profoundly influence individuals' inner lives beyond conventional living environments. A contemporary individual residing in an industrial and information saturated environment grapples with bodily and spiritual disparities (Wang & Ho 2011: 31). He periodically must escape "profane" circumstances that induce stress to attain a "sacred space" conducive to enhancing spirituality and promoting bodily and mental well-being (Ibid). The sacred has been

overlooked in contemporary settings due to the exclusion of the holy from modern lifestyles and the overemphasis on superficial purposes in modern architecture, which undermines deeper spiritual needs. While traditional sacred space is intimately associated with religious belief, spirituality has progressively transitioned from organised religion to personal spirituality as society has diversified. Spiritual experiences serve as conduits to the divine, and spiritual existence is highlighted in the contemporary urban aspirations of the twenty-first century. Establishing sacred space in daily life was such an essential and crucial subject.

Della Dora (2010: 166) suggests three approaches to understanding sacred spaces: the structural paradigm, the postmodern perspective, and the More-than-Representational Paradigm. These approaches shed light on different aspects of sacred space and obscure others.

The Structuralist Paradigm

The discourse on faith and sacred space has historically been influenced by the contributions of Romanian philosopher and historian of religions Mircea Eliade (1907–1986). Eliade posits that religious cognition fundamentally relies on a clear and significant distinction between the sacred and the profane: Man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests itself as something wholly different from the profane (Carnelli 2024, Eliade 1959: 11). This pronounced structural opposition is manifested in space, which subsequently articulates it. Eliade contends that in the religious context, "space is not homogeneous; interruptions and discontinuities mark; certain areas of space possess qualitative distinctions from others" (ibid: 20). Certain portions of space are deemed holy, signifying they are potent, meaningful, rich in significance, and imbued with force. In contrast, others are non-sacred or profane, meaning they lack structural consistency and are amorphous (ibid.: 13, 20). Sacred places are, thus, ‘’interruptions within the secular realm of daily life, which are not inherently sacred but become such through an encounter with the divine’’ (Hamma 1999: 43). Sacred spaces contrast with their environment since they provide "windows on the heavens" (Eliade 1959: 25) and serve as conduits for connection with the transcendent. Paradoxically, they achieve this by being anchored to this world. American theologian Lane recently observed that geography captivates the human psyche due to its localisation of truth and ability to facilitate the comprehension of the abstract through the concrete. Biblical historians have demonstrated that specific locations frequently functioned as significant tradition anchors in the ancient world” (Lane 1998: 128). From a structuralist perspective, sacred space is perceived as a clearly defined ontological entity, systematically anchored around an 'axis mundi' and expressed through a transcultural geometry of boundaries, pathways, and thresholds; in essence, it is regarded as a static territorial container (Eade & Sallnow, 1991: 6). Wright (1966) introduced the term geopiety to denote specific

geometries or the acknowledgement of particular regions as sacred, in contrast to their secular environments.

The Postmodern Perspective

Della Dora (2010) states that the distinctions between holy and secular spaces have become more contested in the last two decades. Despite its universalising assertions, Eliade's approach has faced criticism for excessively isolating the sacred, disregarding everyday mundane forces as formless or meaningless, and consequently deeming them incapable of influencing sacred space except through their denial (Holloway 2003: 1963). Contemporary cultural geographers have examined the dialectics and interactions between these forces and the sacred, emphasising the reinvention of sacred space amid modernity and secularisation. This includes the prohibition of burning joss paper in family apartments to honour ancestors in Singapore (Tong & Kong 2000), Turkish women's veiling practices (Gokariksel 2009), discussions regarding the ban on religious symbols in public spaces (Howe 2009), and the reconfiguration of sacred space in secular contexts, such as art exhibitions (Della Dora 2009) or media environments (Kong 2006; Wilford 2009). Anthropologists have posited that the distinctions between holy and profane are becoming flexible, with the sacred including acts and locations that are not exclusively religious (e.g., tourism, war memorials, and sites of tragic death). Reader (1993: 1) commences introducing the edited collection Pilgrimage In Popular Culture by citing the example of Presley's follower's pilgrimage to Graceland and the impromptu memorials that ensued after the Hillsborough stadium disaster in 1989. In both instances, death sanctifies space. Badone and Roseman (2004) have expanded the concept of the sacred to include contemporary secular activities such as the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela and North American Star Trek gatherings. The editors contend that rigid distinctions between pilgrimage and tourism are no longer sustainable in the evolving landscape of postmodern travel (Badone and Roseman 2004: 2). Postmodern anthropologists have shifted from Eliade's substantial interpretation of sacred space as an ontological given to a situational or poststructuralist conceptualisation, viewing it as a social construction that serves as a crossroads for various, often conflicting, narratives, meanings, and social practices. According to Levi-Strauss cited in (Chidester & Linenthal 1995: 6), the sacred is "a value of indeterminate signification, inherently devoid of meaning and thus open to the interpretation of any meaning whatsoever". Eade and Sallnow (1991: 6) define pilgrimage shrines not merely as symbolic locations "marked off the profane, where heaven and earth meet" but rather as vacant vessels "into which pilgrims devoutly pour their hopes, prayers and aspirations" (Eade and Sallnow 1991: 15). These activities, expectations, and meanings animate sacred space. Sacred space is now perceived not as an external entity but as a confluence of discourses.

The More-than-Representational Paradigm

According to Della Dora (2010), while the postmodern approach successfully challenges Eliade's rigid binaries and broadens the conceptualisation of sacred space, it simultaneously risks undermining one of its fundamental qualities: wonder. By reducing the sacred to a mere social construct or a product of societal dynamics, and by treating sacred spaces as forms of religious capital, the postmodern perspective diminishes the ineffable, transcendent qualities traditionally associated with spiritual experiences. This reduction can be viewed as symptomatic of a broader, more complex issue (Ibid). Although religion and spirituality are experienced and articulated within the material world, they are often not confined to it; for many practitioners, sacred spaces serve as portals to the hereafter rather than mere reflections of earthly existence. Consequently, as Yorgason and Della Dora (2009: 631) argue, religious and spiritual practices frequently transcend societal norms rather than conforming to them, countering the assertions of many postmodern scholars.

A new wave of phenomenological research in cultural geography has specifically engaged with dimensions of the religious and sacred that resist sociological determinism and structuralist interpretations. These approaches defy traditional categorisation, representing a de-ontologised revival of insider perspectives and the poetics of the sacred. Key among these dimensions is the numinous and the emotive, which often exceed conventional frameworks of meaning and representation. Della Dora (2010) describes these as 'more-than-representational', highlighting their resistance to being fully captured within symbolic or discursive systems. Spatially, in contrast to Eliade's structuralist narrative, such elements are not fixed ontological entities nor confined to discrete, self-contained sacred spaces isolated from the profane. Instead, they can be expressed and sustained within the fabric of everyday, secular life.

Building on Bennett (2001), Holloway (2003: 1961) challenges the assumed link between the quotidian and the mundane by exploring "practices that aim to (re)enchant the routine spaces and times of modernity through which we derive meaning in our lives." In his analyses of contemporary New Age practices (Ibid.) and nineteenth-century dance sessions (2006), Holloway conceptualises sacred space as an emotive environment produced and experienced through embodied, corporeal performance. Central to these discussions are the tensions between absence and presence, materiality and immateriality, and the transcendent and immanent. Hetherington (2003: 1940) encapsulates these tensions through the concept of praesentia, which highlights how the sacred manifests in the interplay between what is seen and unseen.

Authors such as Maddrell (2009a, 2009b), Clark (2006), and Richardson (2001) have further theorised liminal sacred spaces including memorial benches, Witness Cairns, and roadside memorials as sites that facilitate encounters between the bereaved and the deceased. These spaces, imbued with emotional resonance, mediate the transition between absence and presence (Maddrell 2009a). A similar focus on visibilities and invisibilities can be applied to formal religious sacred sites, such as the diverse churches and cathedrals encountered by students during this exercise in Barcelona, revealing how sacredness is negotiated and experienced in both traditional and everyday contexts.

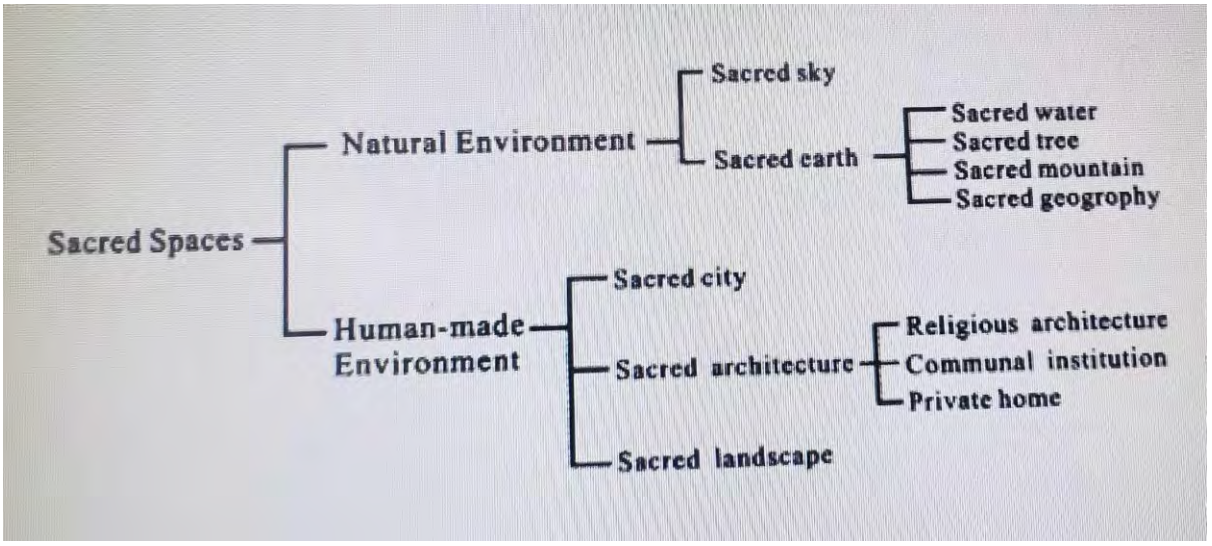

Figure 6: Sacred Spaces categories
Source: Wang, P. F., & Ho, M. C. (2011: 34)

The Natural Environment

The universe embodies a divine creation by the gods; existence is sacred (Wang & Ho 2011). Individuals inhabit the two principal realms of existence, the celestial and the terrestrial and can perceive the unity of the divine sky and the variety of the sacred earth. The sacred places of numerous ancient civilisations were profoundly linked to the heavens. The sky comprises aspects of a spiritual landscape. Eliade (1987: 118-120) asserted, "The sky reveals itself as boundless and transcendent.... most high instinctively transforms into an attribute of deity. Dieus, the supreme deity of the Indo-European pantheon, signifies both the celestial manifestation and the sacred." The sacred sky represents the pinnacle of elevation and embodies the sacredness and symbolism of being a unique entity. Holy types of spaces on earth encompass consecrated forests, sacred mountains, sacred rivers, consecrated lakes, sacred springs, and sacred waters. Indigenous peoples frequently engage in symbolic ceremonies within forests (Turner 1969). Natural sacred settings, such as mountains, serve as sites for approaching deities, especially at summits near the heavens (Eliade 1987; Tuan 1977). Water is the origin and essence of all life,

symbolising the whole of the cosmos and cleanliness. It is a repository for everyone and is frequently associated with the sacred (Tambiah 1985). Ando (2002) asserted that "the Ganges River, also known as Ganga in India, is regarded as the sacred river of nature, epitomises all that is sacred; all sacred rituals from birth to death are connected to this hallowed ground, where the authentic essence of reincarnation can be experienced." The Ganges River represents the celestial realm; the altars in Indian homes frequently contain sacred water from the Ganges (Sharma 2001).

The Human-made Environments

Wang and Ho (2011:34) assert that man-made sacred spaces encompass sacred cities, religious architecture, sacred landscapes, and "sacred spaces" within communal and individual houses. Historically, sacred cities are founded on shared beliefs and norms. For instance, the capital of the ancient Incan empire was designed with consideration for sacred landscapes, integrating a comprehensive worldview into sacred space. Jerusalem serves as a sacred focus for Jews, Christians, and Muslims, revered for its perceived proximity to God. For Muslims, Mecca is regarded as the city of utmost sanctity. Religious edifices and chapels represent sacred spaces and symbolise conventional focal points of faith within religious spheres. Monasteries, often isolated from society, embody this sacredness through their seclusion. Ando (2002) describes the illumination at Senanque Abbey as a dignified force capable of purifying the spirit, referring to it as the field of God. Similarly, Buddhists regard lotuses as sacred emblems and the outdoor lotus pond at Honpuku-Ji epitomises profound sanctity. Art also exemplifies this concept, with sacred lotuses serving as divine emblems and representations of deities.

Three predominant approaches illustrate different ways to engage with and reconsider sacred space. The structuralist perspective, represented by Eliade's (1959) work, posits sacred space as an ontological given inherent to human existence. The postmodern viewpoint, initiated by anthropologists in the 1990s, emphasises sacred space as a socially constructed phenomenon (Eade & Sallnow, 1991; Badone & Roseman, 2004). The more-than-representational approach, developed by cultural geographers, focuses on sacred space's emotional, experiential, and numinous dimensions (Holloway 2003, 2006; Dewsbury & Cloke 2009; Maddrell 2009a, 2009b). Della Dora's (2010: 165) work has been instrumental in mapping these three approaches and their implications for understanding sacred spaces.

Paradigms of sacred spaces align closely with my research on Nyulutsi and the ocean as living archives within an ecomusicological framework. The structuralist paradigm, which views sacred spaces as fixed with symbolic meanings, reflects how these sites hold ancestral significance in amaXhosa cosmology. Ahlume explains (Interview 23/08/2024), "The ocean is where we call to our ancestors", affirming their

role in ritual and spiritual practice. The postmodern perspective, which frames sacredness as socially and historically constructed, highlights how environmental changes shape these spaces. MaSango (Interview 23/08/2024), ‘’The ocean is a space where ancestral spirits dwell. Although unseen, their presence is tangible, manifesting in how the environment responds to the rituals and work performed there’’ (Interview 23/08/2024). The more-than-representational paradigm, focusing on sensory and embodied experiences, resonates with my exploration of soundscapes and performance. As Veronica (Interview 23/08/2024) describes, "In the rhythm of the drum and the crash of the waves, we hear the voices of our ancestors", demonstrating how rituals and natural sounds become part of the living archive. Together, these paradigms illuminate Nyulutsi and the ocean as sacred spaces, both symbolic and lived, reinforcing my exploration of ecomusicology and the performative nature of intangible heritage.

Sacred Spaces as Living Archives

> By collecting diverse narratives that can be deconstructed and reconstructed, archives can re-activate social and political agency formerly stripped away by capitalism and can provoke critical reflection on tools used in emancipatory struggles to reclaim individual and collective memory and create opportunities for performative action that enables new socio-economic possibilities (Almeida and Hoyer 2020: 14)

Exploring sacred spaces as living archives is critical for understanding how physical environments become repositories of cultural memory, especially when observed through rituals, ceremonies, or spiritual activities. Several major case studies demonstrate this concept in diverse contexts, frequently focusing on Indigenous ceremonies, pilgrimages, and the interaction between religion and natural landscapes.

Almeida and Hoyer (2020) explain that the idea of a living archive shows how social behaviour and culture are part of the Anthropocene, a period when human activities heavily impact the Earth. By rethinking human culture to include diverse voices, including those of the environment, the archive becomes a space where new, creative ideas take shape. This reimagined space can help drive social, political, and environmental change. Almeida and Hoyer (2020) further develop the concept of a living archive as a responsive space that interacts with ecological realities, challenging traditional views of archives.

Several examples from around the world demonstrate this approach. Soto et al. (2009) describe the Xicana Sacred Space as a tool for decolonisation, offering knowledge and self-reflection. Rose (1992) discusses Aboriginal Australians' relationship with their landscape, describing it as deeply spiritual, where

certain landscapes act as living archives for their stories, known as Dreamtime. These stories are passed down through oral traditions, ceremonies, and songs, making the land a repository of memory and cultural practices. The concept of songlines musical pathways that narrate the creation of the world establishes a connection between physical places and mythic time, preserving heritage practices through an embodied musical and ritual relationship with the landscape.

Silva (2004) examines Hawaiian sacred spaces, particularly their temples, which function as repositories of spiritual practice and ecological management. The hula dance, frequently performed in these spaces, serves as a medium for recounting history, genealogy, and environmental relationships. Research on this and their related practices demonstrates how these spaces preserve oral traditions and ecological knowledge through ritual and song (Ibid).

Maclean (2008) explores the Hindu pilgrimage known as the *Kumbh Mela*, which takes place at three sacred rivers in India: the Ganges, the Yamuna, and the mythical Sarasvati. Maclean asserts that these sites transform into a living archive of spiritual practice through the periodic gathering of millions of people. The rivers are regarded as living deities, embodying centuries of religious reverence. Research on the *Kumbh Mela* investigates how the site functions as a temporal archive, facilitating rituals, spiritual purification, and the creation of collective memory throughout the event.
Frey (1998) also investigates the significance of pilgrimages as living archives, with specific research on the Camino de Santiago in Spain. Frey contends that pilgrims interact with historical and religious narratives ingrained in the landscape. Thus, the Camino serves as a dynamic archive, with each pilgrim's journey contributing to a multifaceted history of religious devotion, cultural exchange, and personal transformation. The path is perceived as a space where spiritual and cultural legacies are actively enacted and commemorated through walking.

Kirsch (2006) studies sacred groves in Ghana, natural environments ritually safeguarded as residences of ancestral spirits. These groves function as living archives of both ecological and cultural heritage. Research shows that religious rituals conducted in these locations help preserve Indigenous ecological knowledge, transmitted through generations via song, dance, and oral tradition. Sacred groves are thus both spiritual sites and repositories of biodiversity conservation practices. Breen and Teeuwen (2000) examine Shinto practices in Japan that centre on sacred natural sites, such as forests, rivers, and mountains. These environments function as living archives of the link between spiritual beliefs and the natural world. Research on sacred groves and shrines demonstrates that the memory of ecological practices and community identity is preserved through rituals, seasonal festivals, and ceremonial music.

These natural sanctuaries integrate religious and environmental heritage, preserving the relationship between humans and the land.

Allen (1988) provides a case study in Peru, focusing on the Andean region's mountains, known as apus. The Andean mountains are seen as living beings with spiritual and ecological significance. Rituals and offerings to the mountains are conducted to maintain the balance between humanity and the natural environment. These traditions frequently incorporate song and dance, making the mountains vibrant repositories of Indigenous knowledge and cosmology. Research on these activities highlights the role of music in fostering the connection between individuals and their sacred landscapes.

Shiner (1972) critiques the division between sacred and ordinary spaces, suggesting instead a "lived space" that combines both. This aligns with the evolving understanding of archives as spaces not just for storing the past but actively shaping the present and future. This perspective is essential for imagining how an archive, discussed in Chapter 2, can affect not only the past but also where and how those memories are used. Finally, Sardjono and Harani (2017) focus on sacred spaces in Indonesian communities, highlighting their role in religious activities and architectural features, such as elevated floors and central locations.

These case studies show that sacred spaces are active living archives that reflect cultural traditions, challenge mainstream ideas, and create opportunities for knowledge and community building around the globe. They also demonstrate the various methods by which sacred spaces serve as living archives which are essential for preserving cultural memory because they encompass a variety of interactions between humans, music, rituals, and the environment.

I include these examples in my research to illustrate the diversity of sacred spaces as heritage repositories, particularly when viewed through music and ecomusicological practices. As we explore the relationship between the archive and the community of Hamburg and consider how a conceptual reframing of archival and anthropogenic narratives might enable new possibilities for cultural, economic, socio-political, and ecological futures, we can see how the idea of a living archive, as introduced by Almeida and Hoyer (2020), can provide a responsive space that reflects and engages with the community's ecological realities. This reframing, like the Xicana Sacred Space described by Soto et al. (2009), offers opportunities for decolonisation, self-reflection, and knowledge creation. Furthermore, as Shiner (1972) suggests with the concept of "lived space," blurring the boundaries between sacred and ordinary spaces could allow the archive to become a central hub for community engagement and transformative action, fostering new, sustainable futures for Hamburg.

Memory studies

Memory studies is a crucial theoretical framework for comprehending collective memory and its influence on identity and societal structures. It examines the convergence of memory with performance, politics, and global issues (Gluhovic & Solga 2020). Cultural memory studies also investigate the transmission and representation of memory across various contexts (Tamm 2013). The interplay between history and memory has proven contentious, with emerging approaches that provide alternative conceptual frameworks (Tamm 2013).

Memory is the scaffolding upon which all mental life is constructed (Fischbald and Coyle 1995: ix). Every social act is permeated with memory (Olick et al. 2011: 37). Memory is an active cultural process of remembering and forgetting fundamental to our ability to conceive the world (Misztal 2003: 1). Memories of significant life events evoke reflections on decisions, aspirations, and ambitions. Thiessen (2011) asserts that particular settings catalyse individuals to contemplate substantial events, such as ceremonies, baptisms or weddings, and the relevance of those moments to their self-identity. Burton Christie (1995) characterises places of memory as locations into which I have invested my essence and aspirations, which subsequently mirrored the contours and nuances of my existence therein. Memories strengthen identity by recalling enduring rituals and ideals. Besides the connection between memory and personal identity, memory also situates the individual's narrative within a broader continuum of recollection. Misztal (2003) states that memory is a cultural process essential to construct meaning, reflect, and make sense of the world. The cultural qualifier reinforces the social grounding of memory; memory does not exist without a social framework. We remember as members of social collectives, hence Halbwachs's (1995) manuscript on collective memory. According to Kuzmich (2014: 6), collective, social and cultural memory are often used interchangeably. When they differ, cultural memory is usually associated with tradition and longer-term memories. Social memory may reference the subject of social sciences and generally more immediate memories. Collective memory is thought of as the all-encompassing umbrella term, which also addresses more immediate collective memories not yet institutionalised into tradition, such as oral histories or communicative memory, “memory of people who have first-hand knowledge of the events” (Misztal 2003: 130) and generational memories, which involves the collective memories from the formative years of a living generation. Generally, they may be defined as a representation or expression of a past commonly shared by a group, is collectively commemorated or culturally embodied, and substantiates past, present and future group identity (ibid.: 6, 13, 133).

The term collective memory is sourced to Halbwachs' 1925 Social Frameworks of Memory (1992; 1925). The established premise of collective, social, and cultural memory studies disfavours the psychological interpretation of individual memory since all memory, individual or collective, is socially constructed. "Memory is a matter of how minds work together in society" and is "structured by social arrangements" (Olick & Robins 1998: 109). This thus delineates the quintessential post-modern, post-structuralist view that meaning is socially constituted even though memory is individually retained (Hall 2003: 15). The body of scholarship on social, collective and cultural memory today is quite varied and comprehensive but essentially involves the study of the variety of "forms through which the past shapes us, conscious and unconscious, public and private, material and communicative, consensual and challenged" (ibid.: 112). There is, however, some heuristic value in momentarily exploring the possible differences between these terminologies, as identified by some scholars. For example, Assmann & Czaplicka (1995) understand cultural memory as a move away from the immediacy of generational and communicative memory, from lived memory to their institutionalisation into rituals, memorials, museums, canons, archives, and other expressive cultural forms. Heller (2001: 1031) describes cultural memory as "embodied in objectivations that store meaning to be shared in a concentrated manner. Keying into the political or ideological functionalisation of the past," Erll's (2011: 32-3) description of cultural memory ties it to a distant horizon not always measured by historical-chronological time. Instead, it reflects the way of remembering the past as the past transforms into foundational history by being an event tied to a distant past and/or a vision of a distant future. However, a rather vital differentiation reflects how the qualifier collective may be understood as a metonymy or a metaphor and identifies the difference between an individualist and a collectivist approach to memory. While these two approaches are presented independently of each other below and in some research, they are inseparable processes, and effective research on collective memory must recognise this.

According to Halbwachs (1980: 48), collective memory can be seen as the schemata that frame how individuals remember. Each group a person belongs to has its framework and schemata, which shape individual memory in this way. The present defines the past: remembrance is largely a reconstruction of the past achieved with data borrowed from the present (Halbwachs 1980: 69). Halbwachs' theorising provides the foundation for the massive subject that collective memory studies have become. For instance, he accounted not only for more immediate collective memories, like those of a generation, but also the more long-term ones associated with traditions, commemorations and rituals, which contribute to more radically collectivist approaches to the subject (Olick 1999: 336; Olick et al., 2011: 20-1).

Nora (1996) proposed sites of memory where accurate memory exists in traditional societies. Sites of memory are any significant entity that becomes a symbolic memorial for a specific community (Nora

1996: xvii). They can be understood as places, concepts, practices, or objects artificially fabricated to recall the past and set order and meaning to the modern world (Holtrof 2000-2008). Any cultural phenomenon can become a site of memory. The intentional symbolic significance first makes a cultural object a site of memory (Erll 2011: 24-5). Kaiser (2011) considers whether a previous generation's memory can survive through sites of memory. Her interest concerns contemporary Argentinian youth and how they identify with the dictatorship of the last generation. She examined rock concerts as a centre for the younger generations' collective participation, and she analysed band names, lyrics and titles of festive popular songs. The sonic nature of the music is not addressed, except that the musical performances and recordings of the songs merge groups of youth together, thereby identifying them as a mnemonic community that produces sites of memory. Readings of memory are hence derived from these textual references, which embody the terrors of the past dictatorship and articulate a spirit of resistance. Kaiser thus sees the younger generation adopting the previous generations' memories as their own. Identifying these as post-memories, she remarks on their poignancy: although more mediated and less connected to the past, post-memory is a powerful and highly significant form of memory (Kaiser 2011: 115). The power of Argentinian Rock and its ability to keep the memories alive is attributed to its ability to link the past with the present; in particular, the recall of past dictatorship brutality is contextualised in contemporary Argentinian police brutality (ibid.: 125). Thus, these sites of memory, which involve singing and dancing to musicians singing about the dictatorship, are a way of writing memory and reconstructing this past, even if that past was not something personally experienced (ibid.: 116).

Connerton (1989) speaks of the role of commemorative performance and its incorporation of memory into the body. He identifies a qualitative difference in the knowledge of the past attained through inscribed practices (practices that use devices to store and retrieve information, such as the written record) versus the performative practices of incorporation. However, he also recognises that inscribing can be argued as a form of incorporation (Kuzmich 2014: 15) In comparison to myths or even written history, the commemorative act reinforces bodily relationships with past narratives, which he believes allows less room for the interpretation of oral or written histories (Connerton 1989: 77). Connerton suggests that by repeating commemorations one can preserve the experience of a quality of time what he identifies as ritual time, identical to that which existed hundreds of years ago (ibid.: 66), an observation worth exploring.

Cultural memory is not only encoded in the minds of individuals but also lived and experienced through the body in musical practices (Tamm 2013). Music can be an embodied practice that carries cultural memory through physical performance. As an embodied practice that carries memory through physical

performance, music explores the intersection of music, movement, and cultural heritage. This approach emphasises the importance of physicality, whether through dance, vocal technique, instrumental performance, or even the body's involvement in ritual as a medium for carrying, preserving, and transmitting cultural memory (ibid). Kaiser (2011: 115) asserts that memories can be modelled after discourse theory since memories are located in various cultural artefacts. This treats music as a sonic experience and the discourse surrounding the musical product. Music in performance, practice and recording is cross-referenced with the collection of stories, liner notes, videos, compositions, scholarly studies, interviews, and rhetoric surrounding music practice. These may further be correlated to social, cultural, and political positionings of the musicians, audience, cultural officials, and others involved in the practice of the music. While it is not always possible to cover all these dynamics, knowing how musical text is conceptualised offers an analytical viewpoint that recognises the possibility of a complex interplay between musical practice and the social, economic and rhetorical conditions surrounding it. Seeger (1979: 272) and Shelemay (1998: 149) agree that music cannot be analysed separately from other parts of a people's artistic, philosophical, and social life.

The concern is moving away from evaluating music as a product to exploring music as a process that is part of constructing and interpreting social and conceptual relationships and processes (Seeger 2004: xiv). Such approaches inherently concern themselves with examining music as a dynamic transmedia complex. Thus, Shelemay (1989) not only analyse the sonic aspects or the lyrical content of pizmonim (traditional Jewish songs) but also ethnographically reports details of a single *pizmon* performance. But also contextualises these within the larger Sephardic Jewish and Arabic musical practices, religious traditions, and life celebrations and the transnational experience and identity of immigrant Syrian Jews, in NewYork City, Cairo, Jerusalem, Damascus and Mexico all of which shed light on the musical memories experienced. Shelemay, however, points out another essential relationship between ethnomusicology and memory: even though memory concepts like commemoration or memorialisation are explicit in ethnomusicological studies, these basic themes have remained in the background (Shelemay 1989: 6). Indeed, the relationship between past and present that is so significant to the study of living traditions cannot help but engage memory work. Harris (2004: 199) notes that her survey of musical change in the Sibe minority in northeast China studies the older people of Cabcal villages, their memories, and their maintenance of a living musical tradition that is fast disappearing. Ethnomusicologists collect memories during interviews and are instrumental in elaborating memories in and about musical performance into narratives about the past (Shelemay 2006: 18, 21). Thus, memory work is not only inherent within ethnomusicological fieldwork; ethnomusicology recognition of the dynamic and process orientation of culture and cultural products is well equipped with evaluating music as part of a transmedia phenomenon (Kuzmich 2014: 26)

Collective memory needs to be teased out of the musical artefact through detailed analysis of the sonic form of the music in question and further contextualised in historical knowledge of the culture in question (Kuzmich 2014: 28). Blum (1991) gives one of the earliest texts to address issues relevant to memory and music and identifies how long-standing some of these ideas have been in ethnomusicology. However, they have yet to be typically framed around the study of memory. The book also introduces the concept of intrinsic music history, as the history that is embodied in or is told by music. Moreover, a key theme is how music can resolve opposing modes of life (Blum 1991: 1, 5). Blum (1991: 5) recognises songs as an indispensable medium for these histories, which sometimes exist in opposition to official or other histories. Coplan (1991: 46-7) points to the importance of songs and other oral genres to uncover untold histories, especially within colonial and postcolonial contexts; moreover, for distant pasts, oral genres are probably the only available source. He further calls on ethnographic methods to help translate expressions of collective memory into historical products.

According to Tamm (2013) collective memory needs to be teased out of the musical artefact through detailed analysis of the sonic form of the music in question and further contextualised in historical knowledge of the culture in question. Hence, what seems to be a South Indian minority's adoption of a Hindu musical genre is not read by Babiracki as an indication of assimilation into the majority Hindu caste system. Instead, her ethnographic, historical approach suggests it to be a long-standing survival technique (1991). This reading of collective memory from the musical form is revealed sonically through the distinct Mundas style of its performance, which is further contextualised into the historical practice of the Mundas to incorporate outside threats (Babiracki 1991: 226). The idea is that collective memory is embodied in music. A complex traditional use of music for social survival is also demonstrated in Seegers's article about the Suya Indians in Brazil (1991).

Romero (2001) suggests that the collective memory embodied within a single musical expression can account for hundreds or even thousands of individual memories. At its most profound and fundamental levels of transference, cultural memory has some intangible nature of unifying cultural knowledge. This becomes more tangible and conscious through instinctual and intuitive acts that produce cultural expressions like music, poetry, or art (Floyd 1995.: 229-30). Erll (2011: 106-7) states a relation between collective memory and identity construction through terms like archived, stored and semantic collective memory, which is more identity-neutral and collective autobiographical memory, which is more identity-building. Recognising the possibility for debate concerning these different types of memory, she states that these types of memories are in constant negotiation with each other; thereby, archived memories can be revived to become functional autobiographical if the social will exist.

Drawing literature from various scholars (Halbwachs (1877-1945, Thiessen 2011, Nechaeva 2020, Gluhovic & Solga 2020, Tamm 2013, Hirsch & Spitzer 2009, Misztal 2003, Hobsbawm 1980, 1992, Connerton and Nora 1996, Ranger 1983, Rees 2000, Harris 2004, I look at memory studies to comprehend the collective memory of the people of Hamburg and adapting to them to focus on how music helps to remember heritage practices. In Hamburg, memory is intricately tied to sacred spaces, where ancestral connections and spiritual practices sustain cultural continuity. The methodological engagement with oral history and ethnographic inquiry ensures that lived experiences and indigenous epistemologies inform the understanding of these mnemonic landscapes. The research, therefore, contributes to broader discussions in memory studies by situating music as a fundamental medium through which histories, identities, and spiritual ecologies are preserved and regenerated.

Historical or cultural geography

Marsh (1865) published "Man and Nature" (1865) and "The Earth as Modified by Human Action" (1874; reissue 1885) this made him one of the first to recognise the impact that prehistoric ancient man had on his environment. With his broad ideas, Sauer (1925-reprint 1969, 1941-reprint 1947, and 1956) connected archaeology and geography with the distant past and human civilisation, both past and present. According to Harrish (2002), Sauer's literature has prescient insights into our ancestor's remote past and their relationship to the environments they occupied and modified. Van Wijk (2019) states that Butzer (1964, 1971) was a pioneer of environmental archaeology who, like Sauer, also performed research and wrote extensively on the Pleistocene epoch in Africa south of the Sahara. In the 1960s and 1970s, Butzer established courses on "geoarchaeology." Unfortunately, there was never or barely any mention of the vegetation in his work. He does not discuss the humans who inhabited the area or their interactions with the vegetation/environment, despite his laments about the environmental awareness of anthropologists and archaeologists being two-dimensional; he does not discuss the ecological implications of vegetation and climate changes at these two sites, nor the implications for humans living there (Ibid).

Historical and cultural geography provide critical tools for examining the spatial dimensions of cultural practices and heritage. This research explores how human-environment interactions construct, negotiate, and maintain sacred spaces. Sacred landscapes are not merely passive locations; they are dynamic sites where cultural and spiritual identities are inscribed and contested. Drawing from cultural geography, this research considers the role of place-making in Hamburg’s sacred spaces and how these

sites function as repositories of intangible heritage. Understanding the spatial dimensions of memory and music within these landscapes allows for a nuanced interpretation of how soundscapes contribute to the cultural geography of sacredness. This approach also bridges the gap between Western spatial theories and indigenous conceptions of space, which often emphasise relational and spiritual dimensions rather than Cartesian notions of geography.

Environmental and Historical Ecology and Historical Archaeology

The fields of evolutionary development and environmental and historical ecology first appeared in the 1990s. Sauer's interest in how humans have altered the environment and pre-modern cultures was retained by historical ecology, which also saw humans as an essential part of ecosystems and working in harmony with them. Historical ecology defines history as being much older than the written word and includes both the history of the Earth and the social and physical past of our species. Historical ecology appeals to me because it is a place-based, holistic concept that makes it possible to create narratives about the evolution and transformation of spaces that are supported by evidence and based on records of interactions between people and their environment (Crumley & Marquardt 1987; Crumley 1994, 2016; Balée 2006, Zent 2007).

Environmental and historical ecology offer an essential framework for analysing the interconnections between ecological systems and cultural practices. This research recognises that sacred spaces are spiritual sites and ecologically significant areas where environmental knowledge and traditional ecological practices are embedded. The concept of ecological memory (Balée 2006) is central to this research, as it considers how landscapes retain traces of past human-environment interactions and how these histories are mediated through music, ritual, and oral traditions.

By incorporating an ecomusicological perspective, this study underscores how soundscapes and environmental acoustics contribute to the lived experience of sacred spaces. The intersection of music and ecology provides insight into how communities sustain environmental stewardship practices through ritualised engagement with the land. Thus, historical and environmental ecology deepens the understanding of sacred spaces as cultural and ecological archives, preserving knowledge systems vital for sustainable heritage practices.

Historical archaeology informs this research by offering a material and spatial dimension to studying sacred spaces as living archives. While much of the research focuses on intangible heritage music, oral narratives, and rituals, the materiality of sacred spaces, including their physical landscapes, artefacts, and spatial arrangements, is equally significant. The research acknowledges that sacred spaces are layered with historical narratives embedded in tangible and intangible forms. Historical archaeology enables an analysis of how these sites have evolved over time, how material culture interacts with intangible practices, and how social, spiritual, and environmental factors continually reshape ritual landscapes. This approach is particularly relevant when considering the long-term continuity of Hamburg's sacred spaces and their role in sustaining cultural memory.

Biocultural diversity

Plants, humans, and the environment are not separate areas of study but are so closely entwined that they form one (van der Veen 2014). Van Wijk (2019) contends that the study of modern Indigenous and traditional groups is no less valid just because they are modern and urban; they remain authentic recipients of their knowledge and culture, which evolved through time, "bio-cultural and practices are subject to various dynamics to socio-economic change, some lose their importance as a result of modernisation, but others endure even in urban conditions." (Cocks & Wiersum, 2014). Environmental biodiversity has been shown to mirror cultural and linguistic diversity globally, and both are declining (Posey 1991; Overal 1990; Harmon & Maffi 2002; Maffi 2005a; Maffi & Woodley 2012). With the Anthropogenic 6th Great Extinction imminent (Braje & Erlandson 2013; Hofman et al., 2015), we must study and understand the deep inter-relatedness of early humans to their environment through time that actively sustained and built biocultural health before the advent of mono-cultural farming and the industrialised global expansion of technology (Posey 1999; Jacques & Jacques 2012, Van Wijk 2019).

The study of Biocultural Diversity (Posey 1999; Maffi 2005b; Maffi & Woodley 2012) and the concept of culture as multidimensional (Cocks 2006; Wiersum 2014) illustrate the ability of culture and knowledge (including plant knowledge) to move and surf the waves of change through time and space, informing both cultural history and environmental pattern. Cultural habits, knowledge, memes, and rituals that constantly evolve with the humans that hold them are always closely accompanied by the plants that supply all living things with the essentials of life and existence. Plants, humans, and the environment are not separate areas of study but are so closely entwined that they form one (van der Veen 2014). The study of modern Indigenous and traditional groups is no less valid just because they are modern and urban; they remain authentic recipients of their knowledge and culture, which evolved through time.

“Bio-cultural values and practices are subject to various dynamics about socio-economic change, some lose their importance as a result of modernisation, but others endure even in urban conditions” (Cocks & Wiersum 2014).

Carl O Sauer was remarkably prescient in that biocultural diversity studies, which explore the close links between biological diversity richness and cultural diversity, confirmed Sauer’s earlier insights (Jacques & Jacques 2012). It is defined by Luisa Maffi (2007) as "the diversity of life in all its manifestations: biological, cultural, and linguistic-which are interrelated (and possibly coevolved) within a complex socioecological adaptive system”. Biocultural diversity explores complex adaptive systems. Still, it is more focussed and has shown that ecological niches most affluent in language and ethnicities correlate and coevolve with areas of highest flora and fauna diversity, indicating a strong link between plants, animals, and Indigenous knowledge systems (Posey 1998a, 1998b; Posey Overall, eds 1990; Harmony Maffi 2002; Maffi 2005b; Maffi Woodley 2012; Cocks 2006; Barthel, Crumley, N Svedin 2013). Biological diversity refers to the number of individual species regardless of frequency (Jacques & Jacques 2012). This supports the method I used during my research when recording plants (*Imizi* grass) at sites and plants used by local and traditional people of Hamburg.

Biocultural diversity is an integrative framework that recognises the interconnectedness of cultural and biological diversity. This research aligns with the perspective that traditional knowledge systems, including musical traditions, rituals, and ecological practices, are inextricably linked to biodiversity conservation (Maffi 2005). Sacred spaces serve as ecological refuges where biocultural diversity is maintained through ritualistic interactions with nature.

By exploring the role of music and rituals in sacred spaces, this research highlights how Indigenous Knowledge Systems contribute to cultural sustainability and environmental conservation. The emphasis on biocultural diversity ensures that this study documents cultural expressions and advocates for recognising indigenous practices as integral to ecological resilience and cultural survival.

Integrating these theoretical frameworks has guided this research in several critical ways. Firstly, memory studies and historical/cultural geography have shaped the understanding of sacred spaces as sites of cultural inscription, where sound and space coalesce to form living archives. Secondly, environmental and historical ecology have provided insights into the reciprocal relationship between cultural practices and ecological systems, reinforcing the role of music in environmental consciousness. Thirdly, historical archaeology has contextualised sacred spaces within long-term historical trajectories, acknowledging their dynamic evolution. Lastly, the focus on biocultural diversity has framed this research within a

broader discourse on sustainability, reinforcing the need for holistic approaches that value indigenous knowledge systems. Ultimately, these frameworks allow this research to move beyond disciplinary boundaries, engaging with sacred spaces as complex sites where cultural heritage, environmental stewardship, and memory converge. This interdisciplinary approach ensures a comprehensive exploration of sacred spaces as living archives, revealing the profound role of music in sustaining heritage practices across generations.

Conclusion

This chapter employs an inverted pyramid structure to provide a comprehensive understanding of archives, starting with broad definitions before narrowing the discussion to Living Archives within sacred spaces. The chapter begins by defining an archive, traditionally understood as a repository of knowledge, records, and historical documentation. However, it expands this definition by introducing various forms of archives that exist beyond institutionalised collections. These include electronic archives, which store digital knowledge and challenge traditional limitations of accessibility; archives of feelings, which emphasise the role of emotions and embodied experiences in shaping memory; colonial archives, which reflect histories of power, erasure, and exclusion; and archives of memory, which foreground oral traditions, storytelling, and cultural practices as legitimate forms of archival preservation. In addition, the politics of archives and the relationship between the state and the archive, demonstrating how power structures influence what is remembered and forgotten, are also discussed. Within this discussion, the concept of the Living Archive emerges as a critical intervention, shifting archival thought away from static, material repositories to dynamic, evolving sites of memory and knowledge transmission.

The chapter then discusses sacred spaces as living archives, exploring how such spaces function as sites where cultural memory is preserved and performed. Several theoretical approaches to understanding sacred spaces were introduced, each offering a different lens through which to examine their role. The structuralist paradigm views sacred spaces as fixed locations with clearly defined symbolic meanings, often grounded in religious or mythological significance. The postmodern perspective challenges this rigidity, suggesting that sacredness is fluid and constructed through social, historical, and political contexts. The more-than-representational paradigm emphasises sacred spaces' embodied, sensory, and emotional experiences, seeing them as symbols and active, lived environments. Within this framework, sacred spaces are categorised into natural environments, such as forests, rivers, and oceans and humanmade environments, including temples, shrines, and ritual sites. These categories acknowledge that sacredness can be inherent or constructed through cultural and historical practices.

The insights from this chapter are essential for this research, as they provide a theoretical foundation for understanding sacred spaces such as living archives. Exploring memory studies reinforces that archives exist beyond institutional repositories and written records. Instead, they are embodied in oral traditions, soundscapes, and ritualised interactions with the environment. This argument is particularly relevant to the role of music and identity in shaping archival practices. Music is an archival medium and a cultural marker, preserving knowledge through rhythm, song, and performance. Within the context of this research, music is not only a form of artistic expression but also a vehicle for remembering heritage, transmitting ecological knowledge, and maintaining cultural identity.

The concept of sacred spaces as living archives directly applies to Nyulutsi and the ocean as it is for the Hamburg community. According to the more-than-representational paradigm, sacredness is not merely about fixed symbols but is actively experienced through sound, ritual, and communal engagement. Nyulutsi intersects memory, spirituality, and ecological knowledge, forming a living repository of indigenous wisdom. It is a space where storytelling, ritual, and music sustain cultural heritage, reinforcing that archives exist within lived experience rather than solely within institutional frameworks. Similarly, the ocean is deeply embedded in Xhosa spiritual and ecological knowledge systems, serving as a site of ancestral connection and ritual communication. Its rhythms, waves, and soundscapes function as an auditory archive, carrying memories and histories that are not recorded in written texts but are deeply felt and remembered by the communities who engage with it. Within this understanding, the ocean becomes a living archive that holds stories, spiritual practices, and environmental knowledge that continue to shape the community's cultural identity.

Thus, Nyulutsi and the ocean are sacred spaces because they embody the very essence of a Living Archive. They exist beyond colonial and institutional archival systems, preserving history, spirituality, and cultural practices through embodied experiences, oral traditions, and sound. These spaces challenge dominant archival frameworks by demonstrating that memory and heritage are not confined to documents but are performed, sensed, and lived. The sacredness of these spaces lies in their ability to hold and transmit knowledge across generations, ensuring that cultural identity remains intact through music, ritual, and ecological relationships.

CHAPTER 4

Understanding the Xhosa people and their culture

In this chapter, I write about the intricate relationships between the amaXhosa people, their spirituality, and their environment, focusing on how these elements shape their cultural identity and practices. I examine the role of ancestral relationships, traditional healers, and ecological knowledge as essential components of the Xhosa worldview. By exploring religious ecology, acoustic ecology, and the interplay between music and the environment, I highlight the dynamic connections that sustain the cultural heritage of the amaXhosa and therefore, aim to comprehend the living archives embodied by the Xhosa people and their sacred spaces in Hamburg, the village at the centre of this research.

A brief history of the Xhosa people

The Xhosa people are one of South Africa's largest ethnic groups with a rich and complex history that stretches back over centuries. The term "Xhosa" refers to a group of Nguni-speaking communities traditionally residing in the country's southeastern region, the Eastern Cape, and other surrounding areas. This region, characterised by its coastal plains, river valleys, and forests, is important to the Xhosa's cultural identity and heritage. They have a rich and vibrant cultural heritage passed down through generations. Historically, the amaXhosa people were cattle herders and farmers, living in beehive-shaped huts in scattered homelands ruled by chiefs (Pinnock 1994). The people known today as Xhosa consist of several distinct societies: the Mpondo, Bomvana, Bhaca, Thembu, Mpondomise, Xesibe, Mfengu, and Hlubi (Pinnock 1994: 1). Common to all these societies was the language and cultural similarities; it became a common practice to apply the name ''Xhosa'' not only to the Xhosas themselves but to all Africans Indigenous to the Eastern Cape province.

Their histories are deeply intertwined with the land they inhabit, a connection manifested in the sacred spaces they have created and maintained over time. Social organisation is based on lineage, ritual, and land ownership, with a deep reverence for ancestral spirits and traditional healers. Central to Xhosa life was the concept of ubuntu, a philosophy rooted in community and mutual support, which remains a guiding principle in their interactions. The Xhosa oral tradition is a testament to the enduring strength of their cultural heritage. According to Scheub (2012), one Xhosa storyteller remarked, "When those of us in my generation awakened to earliest consciousness, we were born into a tradition that was already flourishing''. This oral tradition has been a vital means of transmitting the Xhosa's collective memory, with music playing a central role in preserving and transmitting their heritage (Sinamai 2017). The Xhosa people have long recognised the importance of their sacred spaces as repositories of cultural knowledge

and identity. These spaces, which range from ancestral burial grounds to ritual gathering sites, serve as physical and spiritual loci where the Xhosa people can connect with their past, present, and future (Scheub 2012). Music is an integral part of these sacred spaces, used in various ceremonies and rituals to invoke the presence of ancestral spirits, celebrate important events, and foster a sense of community and belonging.

In addition to the colonial and political history, the Xhosa people's relationship with their environment has been a critical aspect of their identity. Their spiritual beliefs and practices are deeply intertwined with their surroundings, reflecting a profound understanding of the land, animals, and natural elements as living entities imbued with ancestral significance. As such, the Xhosa worldview is rooted in an ecological philosophy that sees humans not as separate from nature but as interconnected. The history of the Xhosa people is a testament to resilience and adaptability, underscoring the importance of their traditions, spirituality, and sense of community, all of which continue to shape their cultural identity and practices in the present day.

AmaXhosa Indigenous knowledge systems, rituals, and spirituality

According to Moyo (2013), African traditional societies are rich in Indigenous knowledge systems that can contribute to communal social constructive values and practices, enhancing the reconstruction of a healthy society and environmental conservation. In this section, I write about the Xhosa people, who they are, their Indigenous knowledge systems, their spiritual beliefs and the rituals they engage in. This will help us understand and examine the relationship and connection between the Xhosa people of Hamburg, the living archive and the sacred space.

Ancestral Relationship and isiXhosa traditional healer (igqirha)

The beliefs of amaXhosa focus on the protection and guidance of ancestors, especially those who believe in the traditional religion (Mlisa 2009: 37). As amaXhosa were originally pastoralists and hunters, their clothes were made from skins of animals. Important attributes of their daily lives were practising cleanliness, exercise, using decorative clays on their bodies, singing, dancing and walking long distances on foot. AmaXhosa were very connected to nature, and sleeping on the floor was normal, which is still practiced today. Known variously as *igqirha* amaXhosa diviners are the most important religious functionaries in the community (Afolayan 2004: 69).

Amagqirha (plural) trainees (traditional healer trainees) must sleep on grass mats and be in contact with the floor to encourage the clear dreaming process. The floor is believed to ensure more accessible contact with ancestors than the comfort of a mattress. To them, contact with the floor is contact with Mother Earth, the source of life, intuition and abundance of health resources (Mlisa 2009: 38). The ancestors have a role greater than that of humans but a lower position than that of the Creator, according to amaXhosa. The amaXhosa regard their deceased as ancestors or living human beings. They ascribe to them human qualities, including the need to be reburied somewhere else and the ability to experience hunger, thirst, or cold. In other words, they are perceived as living among the people rather than dead. The ancestors serve as intermediaries between the Creator/God and humanity; they are inferior to God and have no position in common with Him (Mlisa 2009: 62).

Edwards (2015: 274) asserts that ancestors are addressed in many ways, and different terms are used. The theme of respect is central, and ancestors are given special respectful names. Various special sacrificial ceremonies are also typically performed, for example, for thanksgiving, misfortunes, appeasement and reintroducing the spirit of a relative to the local ancestral body corporate. Emphasis is on recently departed ancestors and the unbroken line linking all ancestors directly to the Ultimate Being, the Creator or God. Family and communal spirituality are interconnected through communal rituals and sacrifices in ancestral remembrance of ancestors. This fundamental spirituality has infinite energy, revealed through dreams and the extended African and family unconsciously (Ngubane 1977; Bynum 1984; 1999). Being alive and healthy implies healthy relationships with the source of being, ancestors, other people and the natural environment. There is thus a collective responsibility to harmonise such relationships by finding the right tune or path towards the ideal of beneficial, humane relationships filled with dignity and respect. The Xhosa people's Indigenous views on survival, life, and health are inextricably related to ensuring proper relationships with the body of ancestors and the environment. People work in this relationship through ceremonial and ritual gatherings to prevent illness, promote health and preserve the sacred environment.

Mlisa (2009) asserts that ceremonial concepts provide definitive descriptions of the continuity of life for amaXhosa. Ancestral visitations or communications may be as threatening or reassuring as these personages perceived to have been in their former physical existences. Such consciousness may be amplified and corroborated by familial and sociocultural belief systems and, after the death of such elders, may assume gigantic proportions. This may manifest as ancestors have turned away, requiring appropriate appeasement rituals. In any case, appropriate ceremonies are believed to ensure continued health, protection, and prosperity have been performed. Ancestors are typically regarded as custodians

of future generation's lives and environment (MaSango interview 23/08/2024). They usually occupy a position of dignity among their descendants. As living-dead, they are perceived as omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. Spiritual relationships with ancestors provide a sense of security, anchoring and confirming their descendant's identity, sense of belonging and purpose (ibid). Bynum's (1984; 1999) views on the family unconscious and collective unconscious explicate different levels and dimensions of this ancestral connectedness. The ancestral relationship reinforces community cohesion and ensures that traditions and values are passed down through generations.

Ecological Relationships

The ecological knowledge of the amaXhosa reflects a profound understanding of their natural environment. Their traditional practices emphasise sustainability and the harmonious coexistence of humans and nature. The amaXhosa recognises the significance of rivers, forests, and mountains as sacred spaces and vital ecosystems that sustain life (Sambesiwe, interview 28/09/2024). Medicinal plants used by traditional healers are often sourced from specific areas of ecological and spiritual importance. In the case of Hamburg, they get medical plants at their sacred space, Nyulutsi (Masango and Mvubu interview 23/08/2024). These plants are harvested responsibly, ensuring their continued availability for future generations. The amaXhosa also incorporate ecological knowledge into rituals, which reflect their reliance on and reverence for natural forces. Through these practices, the community reinforces the importance of environmental stewardship as an integral aspect of cultural identity (ibid).

Ngubane (1977) and Gumede (1990) extensively describe how traditional cosmology is permeated with beliefs and practices related to ecological influences on community life. Families and communities must strengthen themselves in ceremonies against ecological hazards such as lightning, floods, social conflict, and sorcery. Indigenous traditional healers are extensively consulted to balance and order the environment. Ordering and harmonising ecological relationships are critical for preventing illness and promoting harmony and health. Specific examples of disordered environmental relationships include a dangerous track or hazard like lightning, as mentioned above. Various practices, such as covering water and mirrors during a thunderstorm and planting lighting conducting rods rather than trees near the home, are followed to prevent being struck. Traditionally, ceremonies were performed to protect the home and promote health (Berglund 1977; Gumede 1990). The power of communal life and cultural practices is evident in the belief that people who do not respect such taboos stand a much greater chance of illness, trauma and crises flouting cultural norms.

According to Sambesiwe (interview 28/09/2024) slaughtering a cow/goat in a ritual ceremony is important in linking the deceased with ancestors. In the case of a person who has died away from home, a traditional practice involves carrying out the removal and cleansing process from the precise spot where the death occurred to allow the spirit to be released and/or prevent the deceased from becoming a wandering ghost who may cause danger to family and community. In such a case, symbolic use may be made from *the umphafa* [1]tree twig (buffalo thorn), a communicative link between the living and the deceased. A family elder will take the twig to the place of death to collect the spirit of the deceased, then, while in dialogue with the deceased, drag the twig back home on a small cotton-like thread. Knowledgeable fellow travellers and observers will recognise the custom as respect for completing a process that links the living and the living dead. In Addition, to signifies respect for the deceased and their recognition of existence. After death as an ancestor through bringing home and ceremonially integrating the spirit of the deceased with the body of ancestral spirits. This ritual bringing home ceremony also has the additional symbolic purpose of clearing and cleansing the environment so that it becomes accident-free for other users (Gumede 1990). Elderly people will tell stories about places where such accidents happened, where the deceased was not correctly removed and brought home to rest and become good spirits. There is a special purification ritual a month after the burial of the deceased. A particular herb is used for cleansing, and a goat is slaughtered. Traditionally, only the immediate family members were expected to attend. Nowadays, church members may sing throughout the night to acknowledge the transition from ordinary life to the life of the living dead. Ecological relationships include various treatments, including massage, steam baths, poultices, and herbal medicines used in ritual and symbolic contexts. The interconnectedness of people's beliefs and the environment is recognised and honoured (MaSango interview 23/08/2024).

Xhosa folklore songs / Functional role of traditional music

Music is integral to Xhosa traditional healing practices, as a musical performance led by the healer and supported by participating attendees is necessary for the success of a healing ritual (Hansen 1981; Hunter 1964; Stinson 1998). The repertoire of traditional ceremonial songs varies between healers. Still, its mainstay comprises well-known ritual standards and songs borrowed from recreational musical genres with lyrics and rhythm adapted to the ritual context (Faxi-Lewis 203: 180).

[1] The tree is used in burial rituals and is said to be able to carry the spirits of the dead from one place to another. If a person dies away from home, a ritual can be performed where a branch of the tree can be carried from the place where the person died to their homestead, bringing their spirit with them (Hamber, 2009).

Music in the divination ritual is a communication mechanism with ancestors; hence, the traditional healer must be both a competent song leader and a musical performer to link the participants and the ancestors in a ritual (Stinson 1998). According to Dowling & Stinson (2011), Xhosa traditional songs largely conform to the musical style of other traditional Xhosa music genres. They are cyclical forms of fixed length based on a distinct rhythmic pattern comprising a regular iambic beat (ibid). A particular attribute of Xhosa divination music is the obligatory use of a drum to articulate this beat. The drum pattern is supplemented with bystander participant clapping, which, along with the diviners movement patterns, defines the song's metrical framework (Hansen 1981).

The internal structure of the songs typically comprises complementary solo and chorus phrases, constituting a call-and-response structure that is either consecutive or overlapping (Rycroft 1967). Characteristically, a song leader will lead a song and then wait for the response (Hansen 1981; Dargie 1988). Divination song, like other Southern African Indigenous music, incorporates a range of tonalities, varying following the cultural affiliation of the traditional healer. Hence, modalities range from traditional Xhosa hexa-based pentatonic modes (Hansen 1981). Furthermore, improvisation is a fundamental aspect of divination music: polyrhythmic harmony is created through additional interpolations by the diviner, these additional vocal phrases being based upon either the call or response phrases (Hansen 1981). Musical performance is strongly aligned with social context. Particular melodic patterns, rhythms, and lyrics identify a social situation and can be used to announce it (Blacking 1995). The performer and audience are sensitive to music and respond physically and psychologically. Receptiveness is crucial to the success of any traditional healer because both the ritual setting and the musical content, including song and dance, provide the context, allowing communication with the ancestors. For initiates, music provides the therapeutic benefit of healing: the collective performance of diviners, initiates, and bystander participants at a ritual invokes an elevated state of mental and physical elation among initiates, allowing them to alleviate the symptoms of *ukuthwasa*[2] (Faxi-Lewis 2003).
Importantly to this research, Dold and Cocks state,

[2] A traditional African spiritual practice associated with the calling of individuals to be initiated into becoming a traditional healers (Bakow & Low 2018)

> While the South African Landscape has for centuries been moulded and manipulated by humans. The country and its plants and animals have in turn influenced our cultural and spiritual development. These influences are woven into languages and place names describing our environment as well as the religion, folklore supporting spiritual and cultural life (2012: 7).

Analysing folklore, religious belief systems, local proverbs, artistic performance, and symbolism regarding the ecological context of ecomusicology discourse will contribute to the grounded theory of sacred spaces as living archives (Titon 2009). Historically, religious ecology sustained individuals and cultures in the face of internal and external ecological threats (Berkes 2012). Religious ecology is the interconnected relationship between religious beliefs, practices, and the natural environment. It examines how religious worldviews and rituals influence how communities perceive, interact with, and sustain their ecological surroundings (Grim & Tucker 2014). This concept is rooted in the idea that many religious traditions integrate ecological stewardship into their spiritual teachings, viewing nature as sacred, interdependent, or a divine creation requiring protection and reverence (White 1967). In African societies like the Hamburg community, religious ecology manifests as taboos, rituals, and sacred spaces designed to preserve ecosystems. For example, sacred groves, rivers, or mountains are spiritual sites and ecological reserves where biodiversity thrives due to restrictions imposed by spiritual or cultural beliefs (Sheridan & Nyamweru 2008). These practices serve as traditional eco-ethical tools, ensuring that natural resources are used sustainably while maintaining their spiritual significance (Rappaport 1999).

In the context of this research, this has helped reveal how music, oral traditions, and rituals associated with sacred spaces contribute to the cultural memory of ecological preservation and ethical interaction with the environment (Titon 2009). Historically, in African primal culture and spirituality, ecosystems have been sustained by environmental taboos and rituals that are primary eco-ethical tools (Wilson 1988; Negi 2010). However, eco-preservation by employing religious ecological ethics, good as they are, may pose challenges for contemporary generations. They need to be more adequate for replenishment required in modern resource management, which is demanded by population and land-use pressures (Garcia & Junod 2017). For some traditionalists, economic survival needs significantly undermine traditional religious eco-preservation practices (Wagner 2021).

There is an environmental crisis, such as climate change, biodiversity, unsustainable patterns, and quantities of consumption that deplete natural resources (IPCC 2021; Rockström et al., 2009). However, looking at the Hamburg communities' attitude to nature, the data reveals that their traditional practices

are environmentally friendly and encourage responsible ecological practices. As relayed by key participants, the strong beliefs in ancestral spirits, sacred spaces and taboos bear testimony to this as they prescribe behaviour that conserves nature. They do not want to anger their ancestors, so they do not defile the sacred spaces. It involves a mindful awareness and living and a middle path, a moderate, restrained lifestyle, providing stability and balance (Grim & Tucker 2014; Kimmerer 2013).

In their beliefs about well-being, the Xhosa people hold that there is a causal connection between the moral condition of the community and its physical environment. Among their societies, the actual owner of the land and all on it is the tutelary spirit, l ancestor spirits. So, the environment belongs to the spirits, and it is sacred. Land is sanctified by its possession by the ancestor spirits whose remains are buried in it. So, it is the spirits who look after their property. Ranger (1967: 18) confirms this view. He states that,

> The system of the spirit mediums expressed the common African idea of the increased power of the dead, of their ability to communicate more freely with the divine, and of their role as protector of the land and the people. The dead were thought of as forming . . . 'The tender bridge' between the living and the divine.

As Cebo Mvubu stated in his story (see Chapter 5), the sacred space has wild, edible fruits and medical herbs. However, even though they do all of this for their use, they follow certain protocols. Cutting down trees and grass is prohibited for everything that grows in the sacred space. However, some plants are needed, so they must first talk to the ancestors who reside there before they can go ahead and cut. In most cases, the healers harvest these plants and herbs only when needed. An example of one of the plants they use is called *Silene undulata,* also known as the dream root or *ubulawu.* Whenever there will be a ceremony held. According to the South African National Biodiversity Institute (Sanbi 2023), which lists endangered plants, this particular plant and most plants used by the Xhosa people are given the status of least concern, showing that they are used sustainably. It also grows quickly and does not need a lot of attention https://pza.sanbi.org/silene-undulata. Sanbi also states that plants have been used worldwide for thousands of years by diviners and shamans to induce states of lucid dreaming to receive divinatory messages. Dold and Cocks (2012) state that many traditional cultural practices make regular use of wild plants, making nature inseparable from cultural identity.

Here, we see a good relationship between the Xhosa people and the environment. African religious ideas were about relationships, whether with other living people, spirits of the dead, animals, cleared land, or bush (Ranger 1988: 687). According to Danee (2001), like everything else in Xhosa society, traditional African ecology is inseparably linked with traditional religion. The ancestors of the land sanction environmental protection.

Sound and the Environment

Sound, encompassing musical and non-musical elements, plays an essential role in ritual spaces where Xhosa traditional healers and diviner's practice. It serves as both a symbolic and sensory influence. In rituals, sound connects individuals to collective cultural values and shared identities (Sasin 2022). For instance, national anthems evoke patriotism, while religious songs honour spiritual figures, aligning participants with the community's objectives, such as ancestral worship, which embodies deeper, often symbolic, meanings shared by the group. The soundscape of a ritual space significantly shapes its atmosphere by influencing participants on emotional, symbolic, and physiological levels (ibid). Key elements of a soundscape include sound marks, distinct, attention-grabbing sounds like bells or sirens that signal specific actions and keynote sounds, such as ambient bird songs or droning traffic, which subtly define the space's character (Bernat 2008). These auditory elements create a sonic environment that is not merely heard but deeply felt, affecting physical states, such as heart rate and hormone secretion, while inducing feelings of security or unease (Sasin 2022).

Scholars like Sasin (2022) have argued that a well-balanced soundscape or audiosphere is crucial for maintaining the integrity of ritual spaces. While excessive noise can disrupt the ritual experience, sound marks play essential cultural and functional roles. The interaction of music, sound, and ritual space thus forms a dynamic framework where auditory experiences mediate between the cultural, symbolic, and physical dimensions of communal practices. Ritual spaces connect participants to their collective cultural heritage and shared values by integrating sound marks and keynote sounds into a balanced soundscape. Ritual spaces are deeply intertwined with their soundscapes, which play a critical role in shaping these environments' physical and metaphysical dimensions. The soundscape of ritual space, composed of voices, musical instruments, ambient and environmental sounds, and silences, acts as a sonic framework that mediates between participants, their cultural heritage, and the transcendent elements of the ritual (De Witte 2008). The soundscapes of ritual spaces often focus attention and create a collective experience, synchronising participant's movements, thoughts, and emotions. Turner (1979) notes that ritual acts bring communities together, and the accompanying soundscape reinforces this communal sense by establishing a shared temporal rhythm and emotional resonance.

Additionally, the acoustic properties of the space, whether a homestead rock outcrop interacts with these sounds, amplifying or muting certain frequencies and shaping the auditory experience of the ritual. This dynamic interplay between sound and space creates a sonic architecture integral to participants' experience of the sacred. Treating the audiosphere as an indicator of a community opens us to a new

dimension of reflecting on the meaning of the sound landscape (Sasin 2022: 181). This is so because soundscapes in ritual spaces carry profound symbolic meanings. Agawu (2003) explores how African musical traditions encode spiritual and communal values, demonstrating how sound layers cultural meaning within ritual spaces. This synthesis of sound and meaning transforms the ritual space into more than a site of cultural practice. It becomes a living archive of collective identity and spiritual continuity.

However, sacred space is an inherently contested space. Chidester and Linenthal (1995) observe that the sacredness of specific spaces is often claimed by some and disputed by others, as boundaries of sacred spaces are continuously negotiated. De Witte (2008: 691) further elaborates on how these boundaries are made permeable or sealed off, reflecting the fluid and dynamic nature of sacred spaces and their soundscapes. The audible dimension lies between the visible and the invisible ritual space (ibid). Sound is central to the lived experience of ritual spaces, mediating between the physical and the metaphysical, as “aural space is both tactile and ephemeral” (Arkette 2004: 167). Sound waves easily transgress spatial boundaries, linking public and private, presence and absence, and the sacred with the profane. At the same time, sound can have a profound physical and emotional impact, shaping the embodied experience of rituals, where specific auditory cues like chants, drums, or bells signal transitions and evoke collective engagement (De Witte 2008).

Sound is more than an identity marker or symbolic signal in ritual spaces; It embodies tactile and affective dimensions (De Witte 2008). As Oosterbaan (2006: 87) argues in the context of Brazilian Pentecostalism, sound can touch us and evoke a sense of social boundaries that are not merely symbolic but also physical, asserting that sound not only reflects (symbolises) power. It also constitutes power (ibid.: 105). This is relevant to understanding where sound, whether through music, spoken word, or ambient noise, plays a pivotal role in mediating spiritual encounters, sustaining community identity, and shaping sacred spaces. Music ecosystems provide an apt framework for understanding the interconnectedness of sound, ritual spaces, and cultural environments. Borrowing from the idea of "cultural ecology" in anthropology, ethnomusicologists have explored how musical practices thrive or decline within specific social, cultural, and physical conditions, often referred to as "music sustainability" (Titon 2009; Schippers & Bendrups 2015; Gwerevende 2022). These ecosystems incorporate musical and non-musical elements, such as language, ancestral spirits, and community dynamics, highlighting their integral role in sustaining ritual practices and cultural heritage. Titon’s ecological perspective likens musical traditions to natural ecosystems, where sustainability depends on interrelated factors like sound, instruments, media, and performance spaces. This framework is particularly significant for Indigenous musical traditions, which often blend music, dance, drama and location. However, such traditions face challenges from

imperialism, colonialism, globalisation, and even climate change, all of which threaten their survival. The ritual soundscape, therefore, becomes a site of resistance and adaptation, embodying the negotiation of power, identity, and sacredness in an ever-changing world.

Sabiescu (2020: 498) asserts that the role of performance in “the transmission of social knowledge and memory” and “consolidating identities” through ritualised social and cultural practices (Taylo, 2003: 18) mirrors the role that the archive fills as a pool of evidentiary texts that trace represent and mediate the past. Performance embodies and expresses cultural understandings, worldviews, and ways of knowing that are pivotal for a community's sense of identity and cultural transmission (Ibid).

Ecomusicology can connect people or a culture and the natural world they inhabit. It is not just about preserving these musical cultures but also about the environment inspired by the music; they are interconnected in deep and meaningful ways (Challe 2015: 25). The environment and its sounds are critical to sustaining a given culture (Ibid). Ecomusicology highlights the dependence of a particular community's musical life on their auditory environments or soundscapes. This can be more readily discernible in cultures with low levels of technological development, where people spend most of their time outdoors in nature per se. These cultures display a strong connectedness between music and nature and hold on to the belief that music exists in nature. The Kaluli people of the endangered rainforest in Papua New Guinea are a prime example of a people using the surrounding natural soundscape for cultural expression. The Inuit of Canada and Greenland engage in vocal games called kattajjait, in which they sing patterns representing geese and other birds. Kattajjait is a form of improvisation where two women stand face to face, trading off rhythmic, guttural sounds through vocal manipulation and breathing manipulation, creating rhythms of close to 240 bpm (beats per minute). Other animal impersonation songs are used as medicine songs sung by shamans to conjure the spirit of animals that can spiritually heal people (Keeling 2012). Another case study is that of the nomadic Sami people of Lapland, a region that spans Norway, Sweden, and Finland around the Arctic Circle, who developed a song called the Yoyk or joik, sung while they tend herds of reindeer. The bird “joiks” melody is derived directly from the birdsong. They sing with a tight larynx, closed throat, and mouths barely open. However, after social changes ended their nomadic lifestyle, Sami’s unique vocal technique disappeared altogether (Harley 1996).

Humans are not only cut off from nature in today's fast, technologically advanced world, but they also actively contribute to its degradation by using up resources like soil, wood, and animals without providing adequate means of replenishment (Challe 2015). These unsustainable habits create a carbon footprint

that permanently alters traditional peoples and their surroundings. Most Westerners have never visited the destroyed areas in the name of comfort, business, and the economy and never plan to. The narrow-minded perspective of the West actively undermines the things that ultimately ensure our survival. The issue is that not only does this break with nature and the environment lead to dangerous ignorance and avoidant behaviour, but it also causes us to feel alienated from the planet we are a part of. Music can play a pivotal role in achieving a more harmonious balance in our relationship with nature, an understanding we have increasingly lost (Challe 2015). Lyrics, instrumentation, or both can be used by songs to eloquently convey the essence of a bioregion and its surrounding landscape (Challe 2015: 2). People can reconnect with nature as they develop a greater understanding and respect for it through the use of the auditory senses, especially music, which can convey a sense of place. The topic of how sound and music might inspire environmental activism in the broader public can be further explored through ecomusicology (Challe 2015: 12).

Challe (2015) asserts that by translating a location's distinctiveness into sound, music may imbue a location with significance and help preserve it in both individual and collective memories. We refer to this type of music as "place-making." Environmentally conscious musicians of all stripes might use their lyrics to address environmental issues. In contrast, others might use their instrumentation to portray a specific location by using or mimicking the sounds of that location. Listeners can connect themselves and their local ecologies through place-making music. An individual's imagination can be stimulated and inspired by a piece, prompting them to take notice of their surroundings. Environmental consciousness and action stem from a critical understanding of place-connection.

Music causes physiological arousal and is relevant to sentient life because it restores the link between mind and body, intellect and emotions (Challe 2015). When we say that a certain piece ‘moves’ us, we say so because it arouses us and affects us on a physiological level; it can also drive us toward physical motion, increasing our muscle tone and making us want to sway in movement with the rhythm of the music. According to Stocker (2013), there are undeniable archetypal sounds to which humans across all cultures respond, such as the sound of the elements of nature: water, fire, and wind, and the first sound that provides comfort in our prenatal lives, the heartbeat. Sounds heard while in the womb invoke emotional responses throughout our lives. Typically, the sounds that trigger fear responses in people contain deep, low frequencies, such as thunder, earthquakes, and explosions. We fear these sounds because they appear larger than life and beyond our control. Conversely, we are comforted by sounds, such as the song of birds, the trickle of water, and the whisper of a breeze. These are “universal sound cues” in our landscape of emotional safety. In addition to these cues, there are also sound marks unique

to regional experiences of a place that cement a bond between people of a community they thus become "acoustic communities'' (Storr 1992).

Our imprinted sounds give and shape meaning in our lives, trigger emotional responses, and have profound motivational potential, which is necessary for environmental engagement (Challe 2015: 10). There are sound prints of our civilisation embedded in our emotional mythology. We drift into the mythical landscapes of our imagination when we hear them. There are also sounds deeply ingrained in our collective psyche that most of us will have a deeply emotional reaction to, such as the sounds of the various elements: fires, waterfalls, rain, streams, wind, storms, thunder, and bird calls. There is a connectedness between music and nature in most cultures. Some cultures believe that music exists in nature: "Music strives toward nature that is to emulate nature" (Bohlman 2001: 13). Bird songs can be perceived as naturally melodic and, thus, presented by a composer as a melody. David Rothenberg, philosopher, professor and jazz musician, believes animals can make organised sounds and learn through them, particularly birds and whales. He argues that they have a complex system of melodies and patterns with a beginning, middle, and end, which is not a characteristic all animals share. When music strives towards nature, there is an admission of the boundary between music and the natural world. The various procedures of composition and performance are employed to stylise the natural sounds and adapt them to musical standards. According to Levi-Strauss, the naturalness of music becomes cooked from its raw state, for its substance is altered to situate it in human society. However, considering the different cultures worldwide, one might argue that there is no real boundary between nature and its musical representation. The Inuit of Canada and Greenland engage in vocal games called *kattajjait*, in which they sing patterns representing geese and other birds. Other animal impersonation songs were used as medicine songs, sung by shamans to conjure the spirit of animals that could spiritually heal people. These are examples of how a particular culture relates to the environment through songs. I will write about how the people of Hamburg relate to their sacred spaces through songs in chapter 5.

Rehding (2011: 412) states that ecomusicology presents exciting avenues for furthering the environmental agenda by appealing to the romantic sense of nostalgia. One way to do so is to appeal to the power of memory, an area in which music is known to be efficacious. It entails looking back at the more straightforward, holistic past of a pastoralist tradition, a communication tool used by the environmental movement. In philosophy and art, romanticism and nostalgia have represented a particular aversion to technological advances spurred on by modernism. Pedelty also blames technology for distancing us from local ecologies. In his book Landscape and Memory, Schama (1995) delves into the cultural significance of landscapes through myths of the past and present. In his view, landscapes are an

integral part of our cultural identities and are present and imprinted in our shared cultural memory and our memory. He does not separate nature from culture but views them as building on one another. The real landscapes and the landscapes of the mind have given us our sense of homeland. He states that;

> For if.... our entire landscape tradition is the product of shared culture, it is by the same token a tradition built from a rich deposit of myths, memories, and obsessions. The cults which we are told to seek in other native cultures— of the primitive forest, of the river of life, of the sacred mountain— are in fact alive and well and all about us if only we know where to look for them" (Schama 1995: 14)

Myths and legends are a part of culture. They are entrenched in a collective intergenerational memory, reflecting how humans relate to geography and bioregion. They can be transmitted orally, including through music. A prime example would be North American Indians, who relate to landscapes to explain their creation and evolution. Tales transmitted orally for many generations help keep their beliefs and traditions alive, and each generation is connected through the power of stories. Music is an artistic way to reinforce cultural memory and can draw upon the powers of nostalgia to encourage environmental stewardship and protection of the places it gives meaning to; it is thus a cogent vehicle for community building. Rehding believes nostalgia is the most effective approach in obtaining the desired result in ecomusicology, namely a call for environmental awareness and ensuing action or activism. He states, "the most productive way forward for ecomusicology may be to follow the alternative route". While I agree with his assertion, ecomusicology must also be cautious not to revert or regress to the past as a way of displacing ourselves completely from the problems in the present, but rather it must keep it present and future-oriented; in other words, Rehding (2011: 413-14) also points out we must take the "greatness of the past" and apply it to today's "urgent imperative to preserve and perpetuate it for future generations", which is the very definition of sustainability. Therefore, any type of music dealing with the environment can help shape our perception of the landscape, leading to a deeper understanding of how much we stand to lose if we do not take action to protect it from decimation and climate change.

Acoustic ecology within the Xhosa communities

According to Sinamai (2017), sacred landscapes require a holistic approach to conservation. He further states that they are intimate spaces, susceptible to cultural erosion if the focus is on material culture only. Mainstream conservation theories and processes, developed from Western heritage traditions, emphasise monumentality. However, there are unquantifiable connections between people and place, which, if eroded, can result in memory erasure and, ultimately, the un-inheriting of the heritage place. Soundscape, the relationship between people and the sounds around them, is an innovative way to

understand these intimate connections (Sinamai 2017: 17). A Cultural landscape without its preferred sounds is empty of the experiences and emotions of the people who value it. This relationship of the landscape and the sounds that are associated with it is what is known as soundscape (Pijanowski et al. 2011: 203). Allen et al. (2023: 146) concur and state that a soundscape is a term for sounds heard in the landscape. This became a key concept in the twentieth century in developing acoustic ecology, a field in the related but more inclusive field of soundscape ecology. Extending the reach of acoustic ecology to include the ecological relationships of all sounds in a landscape upon all beings that inhabit it. Soundscape ecology considers bioacoustics (the study of animal communication) as well as geophony (wind, rain, thunder, etc.) and anthrophony (human-made sounds) along with their interactions and impacts. Acoustic ecology is complementary to traditional ecological concepts (ibid).

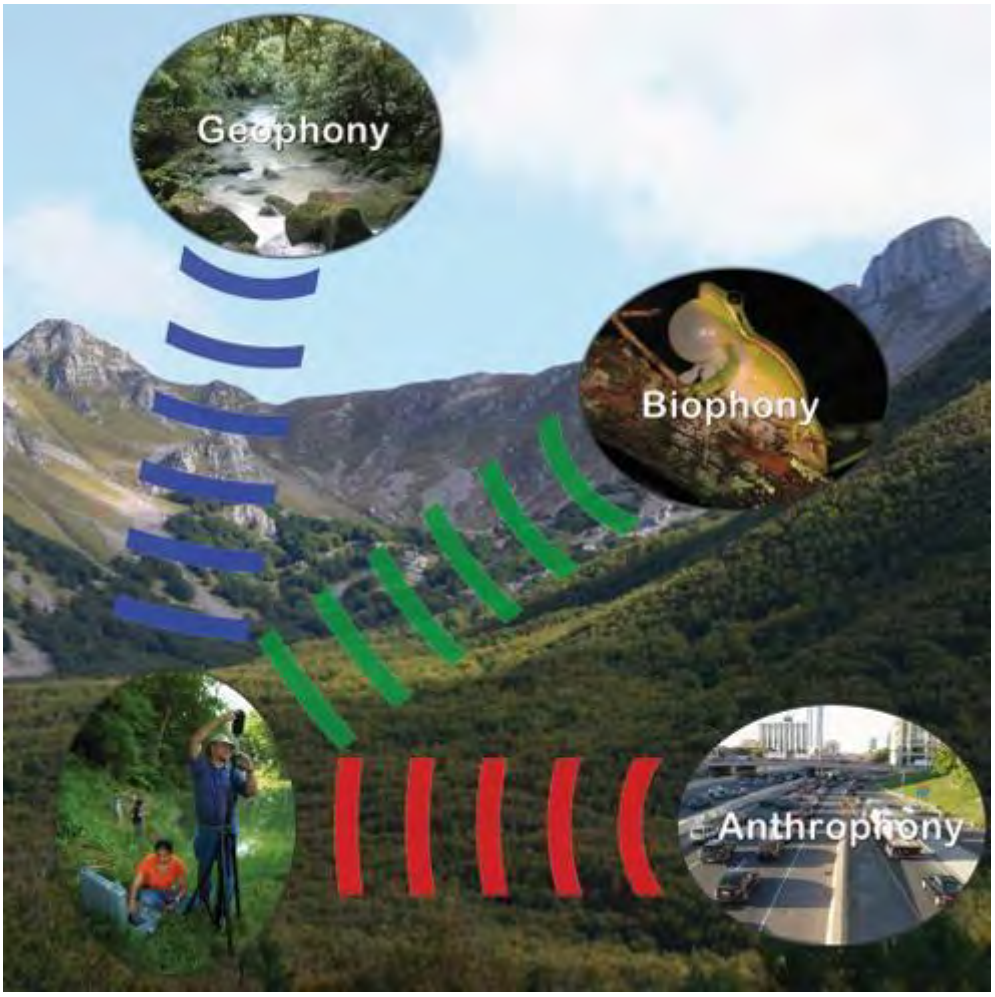

Figure 7: Multiple sources of sound

Source: Pijanowski et al., (2011: 206)

For the Xhosa people, soundscapes are integral to their cultural and spiritual practices, serving as a vital bridge between the people and their environment. Natural sounds, such as bird calls, flowing rivers, and the sounds of the ocean, are deeply embedded in Xhosa music, song, and ritual. These sounds help create

a sensory connection to the environment, enhancing the spiritual experience during important rituals and ceremonies. In traditional Xhosa cosmology, the landscape is not merely a backdrop for human activity. Still, it is inhabited by ancestral spirits whose presence is often perceived through sound, which the community of Hamburg reported as true and will be discussed in the next chapter. The sounds of the environment, whether the calls of animals or the sounds of the ocean, are believed to carry messages from the ancestors, linking the living with the spiritual realm (Pinnock 1994).

The role of sound in Xhosa culture is also reflected in the use of traditional instruments such as the *uhadi* (musical bow) and the *umrhubhe* (mouth bow). These instruments, crafted from natural materials such as wood and animal sinew, are designed to mimic the sounds of nature. The *uhadi*, in particular, is played in a way that imitates bird calls and other natural sounds, reinforcing the connection between the performer, the instruments, and the surrounding environment (Peires 1989). Similarly, the *umrhubhe's* tones are thought to communicate with the natural world, bridging the human and spiritual realms.

Rituals such as initiation ceremonies and rainmaking rituals feature specific soundscapes designed to evoke spiritual energies and strengthen the connection between participants and the environment. In Xhosa initiation ceremonies, for example, drumming, chanting, and the sounds of nature all work together to create a sacred space where participants transform. These soundscapes are not merely auditory phenomena but are considered to profoundly affect the participants' spiritual and psychological well-being (Pinnock 1994). Similarly, during rainmaking rituals, specific songs and rhythms invoke the ancestors and call for rain, with the sounds of nature and the human voice blending in a harmonious call to the forces that govern the natural world (Horton 1987).

The importance of soundscapes in Xhosa culture is not limited to ceremonial contexts. It is also embedded in daily life, where the rhythms of nature and human activity are intertwined. The sounds of cattle herding, communal gatherings, and farming are part of the broader acoustic environment that shapes the Xhosa worldview. These sounds reinforce the idea that the human community is part of a larger ecological and spiritual system, where each being, whether human, animal, or natural element, contributes to the overall harmony of the landscape (Innes 1967).

By preserving these acoustic traditions, the amaXhosa maintain an intimate relationship with their environment, reinforcing their cultural identity and ecological awareness. The Xhosa worldview posits that humans are interconnected with nature, not as separate entities, but as part of an integrated whole. This ecological perspective is crucial for understanding the role of sound in Xhosa culture, as it reflects a deep spiritual and environmental consciousness passed down through generations. As the amaXhosa continue to engage with their natural surroundings through sound, they keep alive an important aspect

of their cultural heritage that emphasises the landscape's sacredness and the profound connection between sound, environment, and spirituality.

In ecomusicology, the Xhosa approach to soundscapes offers valuable insights into how music and sound can be understood as living archives. These soundscapes are not just auditory experiences but repositories of cultural memory, linking past generations with present practices and providing a framework for understanding the human-environment relationship. Preserving these soundscapes through ritual and everyday practices ensures that the Xhosa people's cultural heritage remains vibrant and relevant in the face of modern challenges.

By integrating soundscape ecology into the broader understanding of Xhosa cultural practices, we can see how these acoustic traditions serve as a form of ecological knowledge. Just as the Xhosa people maintain their deep connection with their sacred space through their songs and rituals, they also contribute to the ongoing discourse on environmental sustainability, drawing on ancient wisdom to address contemporary concerns about the impact of human activity on the natural world (Sampson, 1999). The study of Xhosa soundscapes offers an understanding of their cultural and spiritual life and a means of preserving vital ecological knowledge for future generations (Peires 1989).

Conclusion

This chapter explores the intricate relationships between the amaXhosa people, their spirituality, and their environment, emphasising how these elements collectively shape their cultural identity and practices. Central to this discussion is the role of ancestral relationships, traditional healers, and ecological knowledge as essential components of the Xhosa worldview. Through an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates religious ecology, acoustic ecology, and an examination of music's functional role within Xhosa communities, this chapter presents a holistic understanding of how the amaXhosa people conceptualise and engage with their sacred spaces.

This chapter established the richness of African Indigenous knowledge systems, highlighting their ability to foster social cohesion and environmental sustainability. The chapter outlines the spiritual beliefs and ritual practices of the Xhosa people, detailing how these traditions inform their interactions with sacred spaces. The "living archive" concept emerges as a framework through which the Xhosa people encode and transmit their heritage, reinforcing their enduring connection to the land and its spiritual dimensions. Ancestral veneration is a cornerstone of Xhosa spirituality, with traditional healers (igqirha) serving as intermediaries between the physical and spiritual worlds. As Mlisa (2009) outlined, ancestors are

perceived as protectors and guides, and their influence is central to Xhosa cosmology. This section provides historical and ethnographic insights into the spiritual and material practices that define Xhosa identity, including clothing traditions, decorative clay use, and the significance of physical endurance. These elements are cultural artefacts and living expressions of a worldview deeply rooted in reciprocity between the human and spiritual realms.

The amaXhosa possess profound ecological knowledge that governs their interaction with the natural world. This chapter details how their traditional practices emphasise sustainability, particularly in their respectful engagement with sacred landscapes such as rivers, forests, and mountains. The sacred space of Nyulutsi, central to the Hamburg community, is a primary site for sourcing medicinal plants used in healing rituals. By practising sustainable harvesting and incorporating ecological awareness into ritualistic frameworks, the amaXhosa exemplify environmental stewardship as a cultural imperative.

Music plays an indispensable role in Xhosa's spiritual and healing traditions. As documented by Hansen (1981) and Hunter (1964), ritual healing is facilitated through musical performance, where traditional healers lead ceremonies in which song, dance, and rhythm are integral to the efficacy of the ritual. This chapter examines how musical expressions function within Xhosa ceremonial contexts, emphasising oral transmission, participatory engagement, and the adaptive nature of ritual music. The discussion extends to the broader implications of acoustic ecology, demonstrating how soundscapes shape and reflect cultural memory within Xhosa communities.

In conclusion, this chapter has demonstrated that the amaXhosa people exemplify a holistic integration of spirituality, ecology, and cultural expression. Their ancestral relationships, traditional healing practices, and ecological knowledge reflect a deep respect for the interconnectedness of life. Religious ecology, acoustic ecology, and the role of music further illustrate how the environment is both a spiritual and cultural resource. Xhosa folklore songs and the functional role of traditional music demonstrate how music serves as a vessel for cultural preservation, education, and environmental awareness. Understanding these relationships is crucial for this research, as it underscores the relevance of the amaXhosa living archives and sacred spaces in the broader context of cultural heritage and ecomusicology. By examining how spirituality, ecology, and music intersect, this study highlights the unique cultural identity of the amaXhosa. It contributes to global discussions on sustainability, cultural preservation, and the role of Indigenous knowledge systems in addressing contemporary challenges. The insights gained from this exploration reaffirm the importance of preserving and learning from Indigenous practices as living archives that continue to shape and sustain communities and their environments.

CHAPTER 5

From Data to Meaning: Analytical Reflections on Interviews

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the process of analysing the interview transcripts using an inductive and abductive approach to qualitative data analysis. This method follows Creswell and Poth's framework for data analysis (see Figure 4). This allows for systematic and rigorous data organisation, ensuring that the findings reflect the richness and complexity of participant's experiences. The analysis was conducted in several stages, starting with generating codes, then identifying themes, and culminating in interpreting the data. In addition, I used a narrative approach where the responses from the interviews with community members' stories are presented and analysed using Labov's structural analysis (1972). Labov's framework helped me dissect the narratives into core components, including orientation (who is involved and when), complication (what happened?), resolution (and then what came of that?), and evaluation (and so what?), and the coda (what does it all mean?), ensuring structural and thematic clarity (Chinyamurindi 2013). This structure is implemented within the narratives and analysis and is not explicitly expressed. Creswell and Poth's process further structured the data for coherence and clarity (Creswell & Poth 2018). Coding the data, broader themes were developed that represent key findings discussed here and reiterated in Chapter 6. Each narrative was scanned for markers within the stories. These themes illuminate the relationship between the narratives and the broader theoretical frameworks underpinning this research. Analysis and interpretation of these conversations often involve reducing long stretches of text to codes and recombining the codes into themes that move across stories, people and contexts. I found excerpts from the texts to help analyse the data, leading to codes and themes. Excerpts deducted from the data are shown in the figure below.

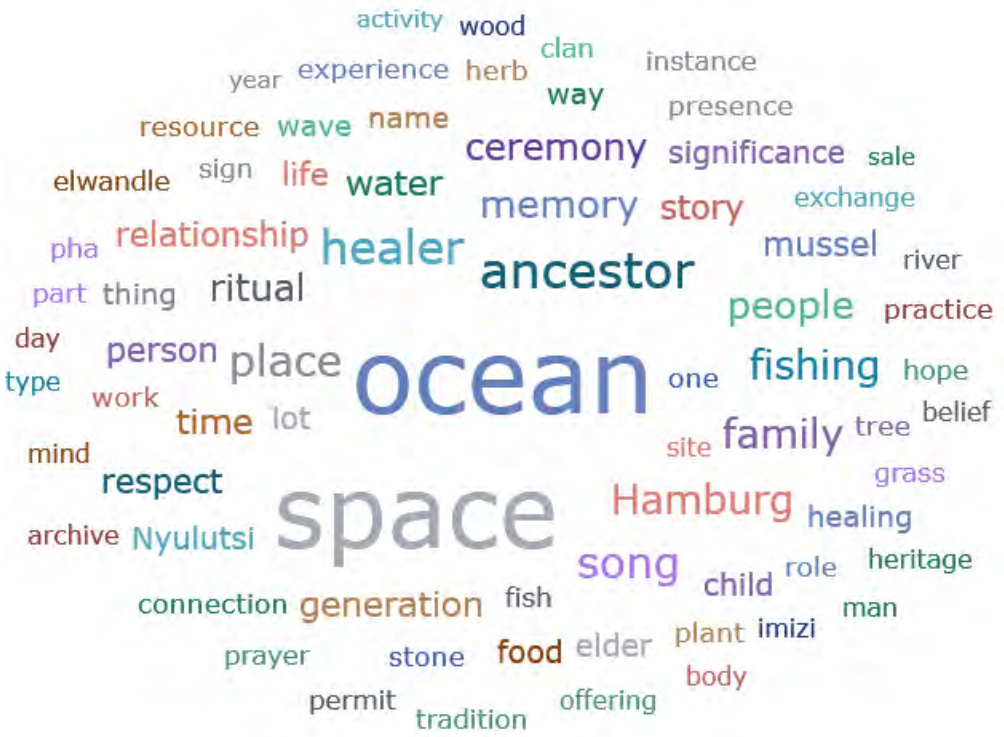

Figure 8: Excerpts from the data highlighted in a word cloud (Atlas.ti)

Source: Author and Atlas. ti (2025)

As described in Chapter 2, the first step of the analysis process involved transcribing the interview recordings verbatim. The transcripts were then carefully reviewed to ensure accuracy. Afterwards, the data was organised into manageable sections, allowing for systematic analysis. Given that the interviews were conducted in the context of participants' deep connections with sacred spaces, particularly the ocean, rivers, and other ritual sites, I paid particular attention to the cultural, spiritual, and ecological significance conveyed in the narratives. The second step involved an initial reading of the entire dataset. This helped me become familiar with the content and context of the interviews. During this reading, I noticed recurring phrases and concepts (see Figure 8). These preliminary observations served as the foundation for further coding and theme identification.

In the next phase, I began the inductive coding process by assigning codes to data segments. Inductive coding allowed for the generation of codes directly from the data without the imposition of preexisting categories. This was crucial in ensuring the participants' voices were central to the analysis. I conducted open coding, where each transcript segment was closely examined for key concepts or ideas that appeared significant to the research questions.

These initial codes were descriptive and straightforward, reflecting the content of the participant's narratives. The codes and themes that emerged from Atlas (the qualitative data software that was explained (in Chapter 2) and my own analysis, as shown in the table below, demonstrate how

interrelated the environment is to communal memory and knowledge making as well as how ritual, soundscapes and music making were important emerging themes.

Codes	**Themes**	**Descriptions**
Sacred Spaces	Sacred Spaces as Living Archives	The sacred spaces (ocean, rivers, Nyulutsi, etc.) serve as living archives, preserving cultural memory, traditions, and ancestral connections.
Spiritual Practices	Spiritual and Healing Practices	The spaces are used for healing, rituals, and spiritual connections, often involving communication with ancestors and environmental elements.
Ancestral Connection	Spiritual and Healing Practices	People use rituals to connect with ancestors, seeking guidance and healing through offerings, songs, and ceremonies.
Generational Disconnect	Generational Relationships and Challenges	Concern over younger generations' lack of interest or respect for traditional practices, influenced by Westernisation and modernity.
Sustainability	Ecological and Cultural Interdependence	The relationship between people and the environment is deeply ecological, emphasising sustainable practices for preserving sacred spaces.
Traditional Healing	Ecological and Cultural Interdependence	Healers utilise sacred spaces to gather herbs, perform ceremonies, and engage in ecological knowledge to sustain spiritual and physical health.
Cultural Memory	Sacred Spaces as Living Archives	Personal and communal memories are tied to sacred spaces, reinforcing cultural identity and connection to the past.
Respect for Sacred Spaces	Spiritual and Healing Practices	The importance of showing reverence for sacred spaces to avoid negative consequences reinforces the active role of these spaces in spiritual work.
Songs and Music	Rituals, Music, and Sound	The role of music, songs, drumming, and sound in rituals, where songs evoke connection with ancestors and facilitate spiritual communication.
Ritualistic Practices	Rituals, Music, and Sound	Specific songs and drumming, such as *Nonkala* and *Sinyangwa*, are part of rituals, helping facilitate the connection with the spiritual world.

Personal Transformation	Personal Narratives and Ancestral Connection	Personal experiences are tied to sacred spaces, where individuals find healing, renewal, and spiritual connection, often linked to ancestral stories.
Cleansing and Healing	Spiritual and Healing Practices	The sacred spaces, particularly the ocean, are used for physical and spiritual cleansing in rituals to heal individuals.
Community and Collective Memory	Sacred Spaces as Living Archives	The shared communal experiences and rituals in sacred spaces contribute to collective identity and continuity of traditions.
Respecting Nature	Ecological and Cultural Interdependence	Sacred spaces are respected and protected, with practices emphasising conservation and sustainable use of natural resources like the ocean.

Table 4: Overview of the codes and themes extrapolated from the transcribed data.

Developed by the author.

After the initial coding round, I began refining the codes and looking for patterns within the data. I employed abductive coding in this phase by integrating relevant theoretical concepts and literature on sacred spaces, ancestral connection, and ecomusicology. This allowed me to link participant's experiences with broader cultural memory, spirituality, and ideas of environmental sustainability. For example, the idea of sacred spaces as living archives was not explicitly mentioned by participants in the data. Still, it emerged as a pattern when I examined the relationship between sacred spaces and cultural memory. The notion that sacred spaces are active repositories of ancestral knowledge and cultural practices became apparent as participants spoke about connecting them to their ancestors, carrying collective memories, and serving as sites for healing and transformation (shown later in this chapter in the narrative stories). Similarly, I noticed that participants frequently referred to respect for sacred spaces as a fundamental aspect of their practices. Masango (interview 23/08/2024) stated ''You don't always sing all the time. At times, you go there and listen to the ocean as what you are supposed to do.'' Cebo (interview 23/08/2024) said that when you are going to pass or cross by the sacred space, ''you must ask for permission to cross or be close by, and cutting of trees and grass is prohibited in the sacred space. However, some plants are needed, so they must first talk to the ancestors who reside there before they can go ahead and cut''. This respect not only pertained to the physical environment but also encompassed the rituals and protocols that govern how one interacts with these spaces. The idea of sacred spaces as sentient, powerful, and active agents emerged strongly in the data.

Once the codes were refined and patterns identified, I grouped related ideas into categories and organised them into overarching themes. These themes emerged from both the inductive data-driven

approach and the abductive process of applying theoretical lenses. The main themes identified, as presented in Chapter 2, were:

1. Sacred Spaces as Living Archives: This theme encapsulated the participant's belief that sacred spaces are repositories of ancestral memory and knowledge. The Nyulultsi, ocean, rivers, and other sacred spaces were described as sites that carry the community's collective history, where rituals and ceremonies are conducted to honour ancestors and preserve cultural traditions. MaSango stated: "The ocean, in particular, is a space where ancestral spirits dwell. Although unseen, their presence is tangible, manifesting in how the environment responds to the rituals and work performed there'' (Interview 23/08/2024).

2. Spiritual and Healing Practices: This theme was centred on the idea that sacred spaces serve as sites for healing. Participants spoke of using these spaces for personal and communal reasons. Cebo commented, ''When I am at the sacred space, I have a lot of memories about the swimming we used to do growing up, where rituals and ceremonies are performed to restore balance and health'' while MaSango said, ''I also take people there even for personal reasons to cleanse myself" (Interview 23/08/2024). Ahlume stated, "I got very sick, and this sickness was caused by my calling to be a healer. During this period, the ocean threatened to take me when I was just walking alongside it" (Interview 23/08/2024).

3. Ancestral Connection: This theme highlighted the importance of ancestral connection in sacred spaces. Participants described how their interactions with these spaces allowed them to communicate with their ancestors, receive guidance, and feel their presence. Veronica said, ''I can feel their presence, our ancestors'' (Interview 23/08/2024)' and Zolekike shared that, ''The ancestors show me that they are there, listening to me and everything I ask for, I get'' (Interview 23/08/2024). Sambesiwe commented, "I breathe in the fresh air and feel like I was reborn and that my baggage had been taken away after being taken to my ancestors in the sacred space'' (Interview 28/09/2024).

4. Generational Disconnect: A recurring concern among participants was the disconnect between younger generations and traditional spiritual practices. Participants worried that younger people, influenced by Westernisation, were moving away from traditional values and practices associated with sacred spaces. MaSango said, "I worry about the younger generation because they don't care about traditions'' while Sambesiwe stated that ''Even though these spaces exist, if you are not a spiritual young person, then that space just exists'' (Interview 23/08/2024).

5. Ecological and Cultural Interdependence: This theme emphasised the relationship between environmental knowledge and cultural practices. Sacred spaces, like Nyulusti, and the ocean and rivers, were viewed not only as spiritual sites but also as places where participants learned about sustainable practices and ecological responsibility. Nolusindiso demonstrated this when she stated that, ''We practiced sustainable fishing, limiting our harvest to avoid overfishing, and used tools that would not harm baby mussels or fish.'' Ahlume stated that ''When I started my training, my trainer took me to the Nyulutsi sacred space to get herbs to help'' (Interview 23/08/2024). MaSango and Ahlume committed together that, ''The Nyulutsi sacred space has good traditional medicine'' (Interview 23/08/2024).

6. Rituals, Music, and Sound: This theme focused on the role of music, song, and sound in rituals conducted in sacred spaces. Participants described the significance of drumming, whistling, and singing specific songs, such as *nonkala*, as integral parts of the healing and communication processes. Nolusindiso stated that, ''The way amagqirha play the drums, the whistle and songs like *nonkala* is also memories that are evoked when I am in these spaces'' (Interview 23/08/2024) while Ahlume said, "The songs they sing depend on the kind of work they will be doing. You have to introduce yourself using your clan names" (Interview 23/08/2024).

7. Respect for Sacred Spaces: This theme explored the reverence and care that participants emphasised in their interactions with sacred spaces. Disrespecting these spaces or failing to adhere to ritual protocols was considered dangerous and harmful. Nolusindiso confirmed this when stating that, "We don't just take things from the ocean. We practice sustainable fishing... and we ensure that we don't overfish or harm the environment''.

The community voices

This research speaks to the people of Hamburg and their relationship with the sacred space, and as such, their voices must be heard in this research. The participants, whose voices are heard below, agreed to their stories being shared in full as well as using their names and designations. Later opinions and answers to questions come from all the participants, including those who preferred to stay anonymous. As explained before, in this section, I utilised a narrative approach guided by Labov's structural analysis (see Figure 3). I share the narrative stories of my research participants and use Labov's framework to dissect the narratives into core components, ensuring structural and thematic clarity that is shown as analysis below each story.

The analysis, therefore, is arranged by the themes presented above. Please note that the transcriptions are true to the language utilised in the individual's dialects and as such, contain unique word use and

grammar. Where isiXhosa was exclusively used, I have provided English translations. Also note that due to the fact that some surnames of the research partners are the same, I have chosen to use their first names in the analysis, as this is how we greet and know each other. The Xhosa songs mentioned by the participants and the English translations are in Appendix 5.

Cebo Mvubu's Story (interview at Nyulutsi sacred space, 23/08/2024)

My name is Cebo Mvubu. Born and bred, worked and got married in Hamburg. I know about many Sacred Spaces here in Hamburg, but the one I specifically relate to is Nyulutsi. I used to go there, but before, we were told that we needed to throw some small stones communicating and talking to the ancestors, saying that the day is for us and the evening is for you. When throwing the stones, they would say these words, *Sikhwelelini into zomlambo*[3] and then throw the first stone*;* when they throw the second stone, they say *ubusuko ngobenu*[4] and the third stone, they say *imini ngeyethu*[5]. The sound of the stone hitting the water and the rocks is important as it wakes up the spirits. The place is filled with a lot of wild edible fruits. So every time they go to space, people are sorted with food because it is far from their homesteads. Some of the herbs are medical herbs. The specific herb is also used for traditional ceremonies, *umnquma* (olive tree) and *umthathi* (ptaeroxylon/sneeze wood) are used for meat during ritual ceremonies. The tree is used traditionally both for medicine and ritual purposes. The bark is used as a snuff to relieve headaches. Pieces of wood can be placed in cupboards to repel moths. The resin from the heated wood has been applied to warts, and powdered bark has been added to a wash to kill cattle ticks. There are different types of *imithi* (trees) that grow in the sacred space, including *imizi* grass. Cutting of trees and grass is prohibited in the sacred space. However, some plants are needed, so they must first talk out loud to the ancestors who reside there before they can go ahead and cut. Whenever there will be a ceremony held, they don't just use any water or plants. They

use the water in the still pond and plant known as Silene undulata for *isilawu*[6] in the sacred space. They also use *isilawu* to cleanse themselves because they believe that doing so brings you luck. Sangomas come with drinks/ tobacco to drop into the water to appease the ancestors. By just looking at the space, you can tell by its untouched beauty that it is a respected area.

[3] Acknowledging river spirits

[4] The night is yours

[5] The afternoon is ours

[6] *Silene undulata* also known as *Silene capensis*, and African dream root is a plant native to the Eastern Cape of South Africa

A vivid memory about a snake comes to me when I am there. Whenever we went to play there at times, a snake would appear. As young men coming to this space, it helped them because it created a safe space for them to engage with each other on different topics related to manhood. Mischievous games of playing with plants that are itchy. They would rub the itchy plant where they know people like to lay down and rest after swimming. They would then hide and watch them getting itchy and laugh. Those memories of the sounds of happiness bring me joy. I also have a different feeling when I am here. To be here, I connect to nature because it's been such a long time since I was here. I feel refreshed and different. All the memories of everything I used to do here as a young man come true, and I find myself smiling. Another important memory for me is the music that always plays in my ear when I come to this sacred space because when we have ceremonies and perform rituals here, and music is always an important part. This space echoes the sounds of the singing and drums and the ancestors appreciate that.

Analysis Sacred Spaces as Living Archives

Nyulutsi emerges as a repository of cultural memory and ecological wisdom, embodying the concept of sacred spaces as living archives. Cebo Mvubu's narrative illustrates how the site functions beyond a static historical record, actively preserving and transmitting cultural practices, rituals, and personal memories. The interaction with natural elements, ancestral spirits, and communal activities reinforces Nyulutsi's role as a space where the past and present converge.

Spiritual and Healing Practices

Cebo's account highlights various spiritual and healing practices embedded within Nyulutsi. Rituals such as throwing stones while invoking ancestors, offering drinks or tobacco to the pond, and the use of medicinal plants like *umnquma* (wild olive) and *umthathi* (sneeze-wood) for healing, reflect the

deep integration of spiritual activities in everyday life. The sonic dimensions of these rituals, the rustling of leaves, the pouring of offerings, and murmured prayers create an immersive auditory experience that enhances spiritual connection. As noted by Sinamai (2017: 17) the relationship between people and the sounds around them, is an innovative way to understand these intimate connections.

Ancestral Connection

The narrative underscores the profound connection to ancestors facilitated through rituals and natural elements. Phrases like "S*ikhwelelini into zomlambo*" (acknowledging river spirits), "*Ubusuko ngobenu*" (designating the night to the ancestors), and "*Imini ngeyethu*" (claiming the day for the living) articulate the continuity of ancestral presence in daily practices. The recurring appearance of a snake is very

symbolic as well and a positive omen in Hamburg. Although Cebo does not elaborate on this legend, Wilson et al (1952: 190) write that the people of KeiskammaHoek contend that *ichanti*[7] is one of the River People (Wilson et al., 1952: I90).

Generational Disconnect

Cebo's reflections reveal a generational disconnect juxtaposed against the enduring cultural significance of Nyulutsi. While youthful activities, such as playful games and laughter, contrast with the solemnity of rituals, they also represent a fading familiarity with traditional practices among younger generations. This disconnect highlights the need for active cultural transmission to bridge gaps in heritage knowledge.

Ecological and Cultural Interdependence

Nyulutsi exemplifies the interdependence of ecological stewardship and cultural practices. As discussed in chapter 4, Danee (2001) asserts that everything in Xhosa society, traditional African ecology is inseparably linked with traditional religion. They believe that the ancestors of the land sanction environmental protection. Thus, in Cebo's story we note that the sacredness of the space is maintained through sustainable practices, such as seeking ancestral permission before harvesting plants or cutting trees. The flora, including *Silene undulata* (African dream root), serves both medicinal and ritualistic purposes, illustrating how ecological knowledge is intertwined with spiritual and cultural traditions.

7 *chant*i is a snake which lives in rivers and which has powers of metamorphosis, appearing in any form (Hammond-Tooke, 1974)

Rituals, Music, and Sound

Sound and music are integral to the rituals at Nyulutsi, shaping the spiritual atmosphere and reinforcing communal bonds. Ritualistic utterances, ceremonial music, natural soundscapes, and even the contrasting sounds of laughter and solemn prayers create a rich auditory tapestry. These sonic elements not only facilitate ancestral communication but also anchor personal and collective identities within the sacred space. As discussed in Chapter 4, these soundscapes are not just auditory experiences but repositories of cultural memory, linking past generations with present practices and providing a framework for understanding the human-environment relationship.

Respect for Sacred Spaces

Cebo's narrative emphasises the deep respect assigned to Nyulutsi. The restriction against disturbing the natural environment without ancestral consultation reflects a cultural ethic of reverence and preservation. This respect extends to the acknowledgment of the space's role in personal transformation, communal identity, and spiritual grounding. As mention the previous chapter, Ranger

(1988) notes that there is a good relationship between the Xhosa people and the environment and this relationship is clearly articulated in Cebo's story.

Nolusindoso Jakavula's Story (interview at KKT, 23/08/2024) *IsiXhosa response:*

Into zamasiko esizenzayo ikakhulu, ikhona into enobana ubenayo ingxaki apha ngokwase siXhoseni. Umzekelo umunto omdala omchamayo and awazi ukuba wenze ntoni. Abanye abantu bayaxulela ukuba ikhona into yesiXhosa ofuneka uyenzile. Lento yokuba mawuvalelwe, ungeniswe endlini eyenziwe ngemizi, kuyiwe naselwandle apho kuzayothethwa singamaXhosa nabantu bethu abakudala abaselwandle njengenkolo yabantu besiXhosa. Then after *ukuvalelwa kuleyo ndawo, ubuya iyehlile lanto, ungasayenzi lanto yokuchama.*

Ikhona into endiyenzayo ngokwami pha elwandle. Ndiyaloba elwandle i mussels, isquid. Ndikuproject yokuloba sithengise kwi company and ezinye siyazitya. Siyathengisa sifumane imali that is what we get from the sacred space *ulwandle* and in return siyalulondoloza u*lwandle and sibagade nabantu abapoacheyao* (we guard against poachers), we respect it back by not doing anything to make it dirty. It is a relationship.

English translation:
We do a lot of ceremonies/rituals related to sickness in these places. For example, when an adult wets the bed and doesn't know what to do, others find out that they have to do a ritual because the ancestors are not happy. Some are left alone in these places in temporary houses made of *imizi* grasses and sometimes in the ocean because we believe that is where our ancestors are. They are alone with the ancestors and the sounds of the waves, crashing in anger and lapping the sand when calm. After the person has been left in that place for a certain period, they come back better and do not wet the bed anymore. I also do a lot of things in the ocean, including farming mussels and squid. I am part of a project that fishes and sells to companies, and we make meals from some. We sell some and get money, and this is what we get from the sacred space, the ocean. In return, we conserve the ocean, guard against poachers, and respect it by not doing anything to make it dirty. It is a symbiotic relationship. We sometimes sit down with our kids and explain the relationship we have with the ocean and how it can affect their lives.

Water used to be scarce. So we would take our buckets, dig for fresh water, and wash there. Women would gather and do their chores there. So that's a memory that always comes to mind.

Siyake sihlale nabo abantwana, sibacacisele ukuba ibakhona into enje and izokwenza ubomi bakho buhambe kakhuhle otherwise ubomi bakho abuzo hambe kakhuhle ma ungakwazi ukwenza lento

I do not have any specific songs that come to mind, but it is always the sound of the waves from the ocean and birds flying that makes me feel the power that it holds. However, *Unonkala uyayadidiyela* is a popular song for the people who go and do ceremonies in the ocean. *Ononkala bayathanda ukuphuma* (crabs love coming out of the ocean) is sung when a Xhosa ceremony is about to be done in the ocean. The crabs coming out is a sign that you are welcome.

Analysis Spiritual and Healing Practices

Nolusindiso's narrative illustrates how sacred spaces, particularly the ocean, function as sites for spiritual healing. The practice of leaving an individual at the ocean to address ailments such as bedwetting reflects the belief that physical health is interconnected with spiritual well-being. This ritual signifies the community's reliance on ancestral intervention to restore balance, positioning sacred spaces as mediators between the physical and spiritual realms. The ocean's natural elements, such as the powerful sound of waves creates a sensory connection that fosters introspection and spiritual renewal.As mention above in Chapter 4 and according to White (1967) this concept is rooted in the idea that many religious traditions integrate ecological stewardship into their spiritual teachings, viewing nature as sacred, interdependent, or a divine creation requiring protection and reverence.

Ancestral Connection

The ocean emerges as a conduit for ancestral communication, where rituals and songs, such as *Unonkala uyayadidiyela*, are performed to invoke the presence and favour of ancestral spirits. These rituals serve as a bridge between the living and the ancestral realm, ensuring that cultural practices remain anchored in spiritual traditions. The act of singing during rituals is not merely ceremonial; it reinforces the community's spiritual lineage and affirms their connection to the ancestors, solidifying the ocean's role as a sacred site for ancestral dialogue (Hansen 1981).

Generational Disconnect

While the narrative highlights the transmission of cultural knowledge through communal rituals, it also, as with Cebo's interview, hints at generational gaps. The decline in traditional practices due to modernisation and environmental degradation may contribute to a weakening of these spiritual ties. Memories of past rituals and communal activities, such as women gathering water, contrast with present-day disconnections, emphasising the need to revitalise and preserve these cultural practices for younger generations.

Ecological and Cultural Interdependence

The ocean is depicted not only as a sacred site but also as an ecological resource integral to the community's survival. Nolusindiso's involvement in mussel and squid farming depicts a harmonious relationship between spiritual reverence and ecological stewardship. This sustainable use of ocean resources reflects an ecological ethic where conservation practices are informed by cultural values. The emphasis on protecting the ocean from pollution and overexploitation underscores the community's recognition of the ocean's dual role as both a spiritual and ecological entity. This is particularly fascinating as it contributes towards the IMIsEE project's understanding of the relationship that the amaXhosa people have with the ocean.

Rituals, Music, and Sound

Rituals conducted at the ocean are rich in sonic elements that reinforce their sacredness. The song *Unonkala uyayadidiyela* functions as an auditory marker that signals ancestral presence and ritual readiness. Additionally, Nolusindiso states that the natural acoustic environment with waves crashing, birds calling, and the rustle of sea breezes form a powerful soundscape that enhances the ritualistic experience. As she explained, these auditory elements are not incidental but are integral to the spiritual atmosphere, embedding sacred practices within a vibrant soundscape that links the natural and the supernatural. As noted in Chapter 4, environmental sounds act as a sonic framework that mediates between participants, their cultural heritage, and the transcendent elements of the ritual (De Witte 2008).

Respect for Sacred Spaces

Nolusindiso's narrative emphasises a deep respect for the ocean as a sacred space. This respect is demonstrated through practices that seek ancestral permission before engaging with natural resources and rituals that honour the environment. The community's cultural protocols, such as rules against polluting sacred waters, reflect an ethical framework that views the ocean as a living archive deserving of both reverence and protection. This respect ensures the continuity of sacred traditions while fostering environmental sustainability. As noted in Chapter 4, the community of Hamburg do not want to anger their ancestors, so they engage in traditional practices that are environmentally friendly and emphasise sustainability and the harmonious coexistence of humans and nature, which provides a good and sustainable balance.

Veronica Betani's Story (interview at KKT, 23/08/2024)

I was born and bred in Hamburg. I work for Keiskamma Trust, overseeing and teaching weaving and tapestry. *Ikhona indawo kuthwa kusemthana* (there is a place we call *mthana*), we can call that a sacred space. There is also another place where they normally do rituals, it's called Kei Point. In that space, you will often hear the drums played by *amagqirha* (Xhosa diviners/healers).

The space that relates to me is the ocean. My clan name is *Magaba, Nozibe, Cihoshe. Ndingumuntu womlambo*[7] (I am a person from the river). When we were growing up, the elders used to tell us that the Ocean was not a place to play with because there were elders there, our ancestors. So we grew up knowing that. I didn't grow up near the ocean; our place was on dry land. But every time when we

visited the ocean, the elders would warn us to respect the ocean and not play there. The sounds of the waves even warn us! The space is used when there are rituals, where *amagqirha* go and talk there and everything else that needs to be done. The songs are there; you don't just sing them. The songs are usually sung by *amagqirha*, and the songs they sing depend on the kind of work they will be doing. You have to introduce yourself using your clan names. You have to throw a stone to wake them up and tell them what you want from there or why you are there.

This one time, when I was still growing up, we went to the ocean and ended up playing in the water despite being warned by the elders not to play there. Watching other children play looked fun, and I felt like I was missing out. So I ended up getting into the water to play, too. Something really strange then happened. I saw someone at a distance in the ocean, and they were calling me by my name. Following the voice, I started walking deep into the ocean, and I started to sink in. At the time, no one really noticed that I was sinking; they just saw me walking. A lifeguard was called to rescue me. The scariest part about this experience is that I was wet all over my body, but my left leg was dry, and it had a white clay mark. The elders said that it was a call that was interrupted by lifeguards and that I couldn't reach the person who was calling me. So, this is always a memory that comes to me. I recall when I was in Cape Town with a friend, and we went to the ocean. When we got there, I was walking behind because that memory always comes to mind, and I do not get into the ocean anymore because I might not return. So now I just watch from a distance, and for this reason, I really respect the ocean.

When I went to St Francis, I got into a boat. I still have that memory, but on this particular day, I was brave, and I was talking to them, telling them that I was here to work for my children, not to play and also had some loose coins to throw into the ocean. It's the Science people who take us on these ocean trips. Another thing my aunt was taken, and she became a healer. When it happened, we were warned not to cry, and she disappeared for a while, and when she came back, she was a healer. She didn't have to undergo any other training; she became a healer, and my grandmother was a sangoma. So, they would go to the ocean for rituals. But I was young at the time. Before, children were not allowed because it was *indawo yabantu abadala* (a place of the ancestors). But now we include the children

[7] Clan names are family names that are considered more important than surnames among Xhosa people. Many Xhosa persons can trace their family history back to their ancestors. Mentioning the clan name of someone is the highest form of respect (Hansen 1981).

because they must know what happens. We no longer hide things from them because they are supposed to know. Children now just do what they want. But if children have a calling, they will respect it, and their blood will guide them.

My favourite song that is usually sung when rituals are being conducted at the ocean goes like this:
Oh lwandlokudla oo ooh

Oh lwandle lwami Lwandlokudlu lwandle ooh

Oh lwandlokodla

Translation: (See Appendix 5)

Analysis Sacred Spaces as Living Archives

In Veronica Betani's story, the ocean embodies layers of cultural memory, ancestral belief systems, and personal experiences. It is not only a physical entity but an important repository of spiritual, ecological, and cultural knowledge. The intergenerational transmission of respect for the ocean, reflected in the cautionary teachings of elders, emphasises its role in shaping cultural identity and continuity. As mention in chapter 4 the Xhosa people are deeply intertwined with the land they inhabit, they have a connection manifested in the sacred spaces they have created and maintained. For them the worldview is rooted in an ecological philosophy that sees humans not as separate from nature but as interconnected.

Spiritual and Healing Practices

The ocean serves as a site for ritual and healing, deeply embedded in the practices of *amagqirha* (traditional healers). Veronica's experience of nearly drowning, marked by the mysterious appearance of a dry left leg with a white clay mark, symbolises the ocean's spiritual potency. This event, as is written about by Hansen (1981), is interpreted as an ancestral intervention, illustrating how sacred spaces mediate between the physical and spiritual realms. Rituals such as introducing oneself through clan names and performing specific acts like throwing a stone to awaken spirits highlight the ocean's role in spiritual healing and guidance.

Ancestral Connection

Veronica's narrative reveals the ocean as an integral part of ancestral communication. The belief that ancestors inhabit the ocean and the personal experience of being "called" by a mysterious figure reinforce the sacredness of this space. This event as written by Ngcobo (2020: 2) a ritual is an act that unifies more than just the people who live in the same world; it serves as a channel for communication between people who live in the physical and spiritual worlds and communication is understood not only through verbal conversation but also through involvement in ritual activities. The elder's interpretation of Veronica's encounter as a spiritual calling underscores the belief that the ocean

facilitates this direct ancestral connection. The lasting impact of this experience on Veronica's spirituality illustrates how sacred spaces anchor personal identity within a broader ancestral lineage.

Generational Disconnect

The narrative also reflects shifts in generational relationships with sacred spaces. Veronica notes that while previous generations were strictly prohibited from engaging with the ocean, contemporary practices increasingly involve children in rituals. She believes that this inclusion aims to foster respect and understanding of sacred traditions alongside modern cultural influences. However, Veronica acknowledges that not all younger individuals maintain this reverence, highlighting tensions between traditional values and contemporary life. Despite these shifts, the belief persists that those with a spiritual calling will naturally reconnect with these sacred spaces.

Ecological and Cultural Interdependence

The ocean's sacredness is intertwined with its ecological significance. As discussed in Chapter 4, Schama (1995) asserts that landscapes are an integral part of our cultural identities and are present and imprinted in our shared cultural memory and our memory. Veronica's respect for the ocean extends beyond spiritual reverence to an awareness of its power and the need for sustainable interaction. The ocean is both a site of spiritual authority and a natural resource, reflecting a worldview where ecological stewardship and cultural practices are interdependent. The sacredness of the ocean fosters an ethic of care, promoting conservation and respect for the environment as integral to cultural identity and survival.

Rituals, Music, and Sound

According to Veronica, music and sound play a crucial role in the rituals associated with the ocean. The song *Oh lwandlokudla*, shared in Veronica's narrative, is a spiritual invocation that reinforces the connection between people, sacred spaces, and cultural memory. The song's lyrics and performance evoke the ocean's presence, creating an auditory link to ancestral spirits. Additionally, the natural sounds of the ocean, such as waves and bird calls, are integral to the ritual landscape, enhancing the sensory experience of sacred practices. Just as Sinamai (2017: 17) notes the relationship between people and the sounds around them, is an innovative way to understand these intimate connections.

Zolekile Mavela's Story (interview at the Ocean, 23/08/2024)

I know different sacred spaces in Hamburg, including *iilwandle* (the Ocean), *Lichweba* (Mthana and Keiskamma Rivers), and Nyulutsi River and area. My connection to these spaces is deeply rooted in cultural, spiritual, and personal experiences. Each of these spaces holds a unique significance and has played an important role in shaping my identity and preserving our heritage.

Over the years, my relationship with these spaces has evolved. The Keiskamma River, for instance, is where I fish. It provides sustenance for my family, and fishing is a skill I learned from the elders. At the ocean, we also fish, but the types of fish we catch are different. Nyulutsi, however, is not a place for fishing, it is a sacred space reserved for cultural and spiritual activities. It is where healers like myself conduct ceremonies and rituals. We bring our offerings, work there, and communicate with our ancestors. These rituals involve speaking our clan names and singing family songs like *Ingoma yayokwenu*[8]. We call upon our ancestors through these songs, asking them to hear us and welcome us. When the water bubbles in response, it is a powerful sign that our prayers have been heard and our presence has been accepted.

My connection to sacred spaces began in my youth. I grew up in a poor family. My mother was unemployed, and my father worked far away in Johannesburg. I started fishing mussels at the ocean when I was in Standard 6 to help support my family. At that time, we sold mussels to a white person who paid us with food rather than money. Later, we obtained fishing permits and began selling our catch but always with care and respect for the ocean. We practiced sustainable fishing, limiting our harvest to avoid overfishing, and used tools that would not harm baby mussels or fish. This respect for the ocean ensured that future generations would also benefit from its resources.

The ocean has been transformative in my life. It provided not only food for my family but also opportunities that changed our circumstances. Fishing and selling mussels allowed me to pay for my education, build a home, and support my sister through school. She is now a security guard. The municipality even provided jobs to clean waste around the ocean, further highlighting its importance in our community. I share these stories with younger generations to teach them about the ocean's role in our lives and the importance of conservation. By doing so, I hope to instill respect for the ocean and its resources.

Traditional healers from various places also use the ocean for their ceremonies, making it a space of shared cultural and spiritual significance. Songs like *Sikhalo somntwana sihoye*[9] reflect the hope and prayers we carry to the ocean. These songs are our way of crying out for support, whether it is for fishing permits, successful sales, or simply sustenance for our families. I remember times when we sang, and white visitors would take photos and ask about the meaning of our songs. Although some days we didn't sell anything, they would offer us food in exchange.

[8] Clan songs; a family/clan has their own song they sing when trying to communicate to their ancestors or when doing a big ceremony

[9] Heed the cries of a child.

The sacred spaces in Hamburg are more than just physical locations; they are living archives of memory, culture, and spiritual practice. They have shaped who I am and provided for my family in ways I could never have imagined. The ocean, in particular, has been a source of life, survival, and transformation. It is my hope that younger generations will continue to honour these spaces, learn from them, and preserve the traditions that connect us to our ancestors and to each other.

Analysis

Zolekile's understanding of sacred spaces is rooted in spiritual and healing practices that transcend mere physical interactions, just as discussed in chapter 3 according to Eliade (1959: 11) Man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests itself. Nyulutsi stands as a sacred site, untouched, she claims, by fishing or extractive activities, reserved exclusively for cultural and spiritual practices. Here, healers conduct ceremonies and collect traditional herbs, reinforcing the site's role as a spiritual sanctuary. Rituals such as calling out clan names and singing family songs like *Ingoma yayokwenu* are integral to these practices, with the bubbling of water in response symbolising the ancestors' acceptance of offerings. This phenomenon affirms the spiritual vitality and sacredness of the space, positioning it as a conduit for ancestral communication and healing.

Ancestral Connection

Ancestral connection is a recurring theme in Zolekile's narrative. Sacred spaces serve as living archives where ancestral memories and practices are preserved and enacted. The ocean is not just a source of sustenance but also a site where rituals are performed, and ancestors are invoked for guidance and support. Songs like *Ingoma yayokwenu* are more than cultural expressions; they are spiritual links that strengthen familial ties and ancestral bonds. The act of calling out clan names during rituals signifies a direct dialogue with the ancestors, embedding ancestral presence within the sacred landscape.

Generational Disconnect While sacred spaces are repositories of cultural and spiritual knowledge, Zolekile's account highlights a growing generational disconnect. The erosion of traditional practices among younger generations threatens the continuity of these sacred traditions. Modern influences and a departure from ancestral ways challenge the transmission of knowledge and respect for sacred spaces. Zolekile underscores the urgent need for elders to actively engage with youth, imparting these spaces' cultural, spiritual, and ecological significance to ensure their vibrancy as living archives.

Ecological and Cultural Interdependence

Zolekile's narrative illustrates the ecological and cultural interdependence inherent in sacred spaces. The Keiskamma River and the ocean are portrayed as dual entities, both sources of material sustenance and spiritual nourishment. As discussed in Chapter 2 water is the origin and essence of all

life, symbolising the whole of the cosmos and cleanliness. It is a repository for everyone and is frequently associated with the sacred (Tambiah 1985). Sustainable fishing practices, such as limiting harvests and using tools that do not harm juvenile mussels or fish, reflect an embedded conservation ethos within cultural traditions. This sustainable interaction underscores sacred spaces as spiritual sanctuaries and ecological reservoirs, ensuring their longevity for future generations.

Rituals, Music, and Sound

Music and sound are central to the rituals performed in sacred spaces. Songs like *Sikhalo somntwana sihoye* (Head the cries of a child) function as mediums of prayer and hope, embodying the community's aspirations for sustenance and well-being. These songs are not merely artistic expressions but are deeply embedded in the sacred soundscapes, acting as catalysts for memory and the expression of cultural and spiritual identity. The transformative power of these rituals, facilitated through music and sound, reinforces the sacredness of these spaces.

Ahlume ''Ntandoyamanyange'' Mendu's Story (interview in her consultation room in Hamburg, 23/08/2024)

Born and bred in Hamburg. I am a *thwasa*[10], a trainee. I know sacred spaces. The one that I related to the most is the ocean. I use the ocean to heal the people. We believe that if you take a person with problems or a sick person to the ocean, their troubles will disappear or their sickness will be healed. I am comfortable with the ocean because when I am there, I connect with my ancestors. I can feel their presence. Then they show me that they are there, listening to me and everything I ask for, I get. As

healers, we do alot of ceremonies at the ocean and the other sacred spaces here in Hamburg like Nyulusti. Different people and healers use different natural sites, rivers, the ocean and the bush. However, I am not able to give a full account of what happens because some of the things are our secrets. What I can mention is that we take people there to introduce them to their ancestors. The places are powerful and the sounds and music make them stronger. Singing, drumming and nature change the place into a sacred space. When I started my training, my trainer took me to the Nyulutsi sacred space to get herbs to help. When you first start the initiation process they use the *imizi* to form bracelets. The Nyulutsi sacred space has good traditional medicine.

The sacred space invokes many memories, but I can only tell you one. I got very sick, and this sickness was caused by my calling to be a healer. During this period the ocean threatened to take me when I was just walking alongside it. You don't always sing all the time. At times you go there and listen to the

[10] Xhosa Healer/Diviner trainer

ocean as to what you are supposed to do. You only sing *kuntlombe*[11]. Some of the songs include: *sinyangwa ngama wele* and *unonkal*a. *Nonkala* is part of the ocean.

Analysis

Sacred Spaces as Living Archives

Ahlume's narrative reveals how the ocean and Nyulutsi function as dynamic living archives that sustain cultural heritage. These sacred spaces encapsulate Indigenous knowledge, memories, and practices passed through generations. The ocean emerges as both a physical environment and a spiritual archive where healing rituals, ancestral connections, and initiation ceremonies occur. Similarly, Nyulutsi preserves traditional medicinal knowledge, symbolising a repository for cultural and ecological wisdom. This manifests what was discussed in Chapter 3 on the structuralist paradigm framework, which views sacred spaces as fixed with symbolic meanings and reflects how these sites hold ancestral significance in amaXhosa cosmology.

Spiritual and Healing Practices

The ocean is depicted as a site of transformative healing, where individuals seek spiritual and physical cleansing. Ahlume's experience as a *thwasa* (trainee healer) highlights the therapeutic powers of

sacred spaces. Healing rituals performed at the ocean are deeply intertwined with spiritual beliefs, underscoring the ocean's role of restoring balance. Additionally, Nyulutsi serves as a site for gathering traditional medicines, reinforcing the link between ecological resources and spiritual practices.

Ancestral Connection

Sacred spaces are pivotal for fostering connections with ancestors. Ahlume's account details how the ocean acts as a transitional space, bridging the physical and spiritual realms. The presence of ancestors is not abstract but actively felt, providing guidance and affirmation. This ancestral connection is deeply embedded in ritual practices, such as calling out clan names and performing songs during ceremonies. These practices reinforce the belief that sacred spaces are living portals to ancestral wisdom.

Generational Disconnect

While sacred spaces serve as reservoirs of cultural knowledge, Ahlume's narrative does not actively discuss this. In fact, as a trainee she was mentored by her elders, who played a crucial role in

[11] Gathering of healers/diviners to celebrate, sing and dance.

revitalising connections to sacred spaces and music and sounds, ensuring that they remain vibrant for future generations.

Ecological and Cultural Interdependence

The narrative, like the others, shows the symbiotic relationship between ecology and culture. Sacred spaces like the ocean and Nyulutsi are not only spiritual sanctuaries but also ecological sources. The gathering of traditional medicines from Nyulutsi illustrates sustainable practices rooted in Indigenous ecological knowledge and the respect for these environments reflects an ethos of conservation embedded within cultural traditions, ensuring their longevity and ecological balance.

Rituals, Music, and Sound

Ritual songs such as *sinyangwa ngama wele* and *unonkala* are more than auditory expressions; they are mediums of prayer, identity, and spiritual invocation, only performed during rituals. Ahlume describes the ocean's natural sounds as an alternative form of spiritual communication, highlighting the importance of soundscapes in ritual contexts. This aligns with the ecomusicological framework of this research, illustrating how natural and human-made sounds converge to create meaningful spiritual experiences.

Respect for Sacred Spaces

Respect for sacred spaces is a recurring theme. Ahlume's narrative emphasises the need to honour these environments, not only for their spiritual significance but also for their cultural and ecological value. Practices such as sustainable harvesting and ritual ceremonies demonstrate a deep reverence for sacred spaces. This respect ensures the preservation of both tangible and intangible heritage, reinforcing the role of these spaces as living archives that continue to shape identities and communities.

MaSango's story (interview in her home in Hamburg, 23/08/2024)

I am a healer. People call me to work for them as a healer. *Phan xa usendele pha ukhona umehluko phaya nxa uzakusebenza phaya.Uzaphaya ludlokova ulwande nxa usondele uthetha namanyanyi, uzosebenza no msebenzi owawenza. Umsebenzi esiwenzayo elwandle, ufukamisa elwandle uphinde wenze inhlwayelelo mhaumbe for insuku ezintathu or ezimbini. Uvuke kusasa uhambise lezamfuyo ezifuneka uzifake pha. Okunye uyakwazi ukuthatha umuntu engakhange evalelwe pha xa kufuneka umhlambulule umsepha elwandle, umhahle, ubuye nayo. Kukwezo nqxaki ezisemzimbeni nxa uzibonile nawe ziyohlanjwa. Ulwandle luyakunceda ngoba inabantu abadala, uyahamba uyethetha ingqxaki zakho. Ulwandle luyakunceda ngoba inabantu abadala, uyahamba uyethetha ingqxaki zakho.*

Translation: I am a healer. People ask me to work for them as a healer. When you go there, the atmosphere is so different from everything else you know. When you first get to the ocean, you can see that the ocean level has risen but you talk to the ancestors there and you will see it being calm, allowing you to do the work you have to do. When you are done working, you can tell by the waves and animals associated with the ocean that they have accepted you. This is a belief we have that when you are there working, the ocean should be busy with big waves as if the waves will take you away. The relationship we have with the space is the work we do there as a healer, including creating temporary houses for people for approximately 2-3 days. Then, when you are done, you do a thanksgiving ritual with the things the ancestors want and will sometimes show you. Another thing is that you can cleanse someone in the ocean and wash away all bad energies and everything else you saw during the consultation.

As healers in Hamburg the ocean helps us if you have a problem. We believe that our ancestors are in the ocean, we don't see them but we can feel them. There are a lot of memories because I have been going there for a long time. Everytime I get there, something always happens. I have used the sacred space Nyulutsi. I have used it when I went to cleanse myself and declare my late fathers belongings and ask for his guidance as he has joined the ancestors. I also go there to help other people. We use some of the herbs to treat people. We use *imiz*i to tie someone who is not feeling well in their joints. *makakwane*[12]*, Imfincamfincane*[14]*,* these are important herbs/ trees. Everything there is important and we use it.

The ocean must be respected because if you don't, you will be taken away. Even in the river you can drown if you don't respect the place. Our ancestors should be respected. As for this generation, it is difficult because they do not listen. When you pass down this information to them, they never pay attention. There are a lot of stories about what happens in the sacred spaces. If you are sick and lie to a healer, there are usually problems. Before you go, you must talk first to the ancestors. Then sing. It is forbidden to sing before you ask first. The song I recall for when I work at the sacred space is called *Mantango*.

[12] *Cannabis sativa* - To heal whooping coughs and asthma; the fresh leaves are mixed with brandy and taken orally. To treat mental illness, the leaves are crushed and used as fumitory to reduce anxiety. The decoction prepared from the leaves is also consumed to get relief from chronic pain (Bhat 2013).

[14] *Leonotis leonurus* - The leaves are boiled in water and then allowed to cool. The mixture is filtered using a clean cloth and the decoction is taken orally to cure headache diabetes (Bhat 2013).

Analysis Sacred Spaces as Living Archives

The narrative illustrates how the ocean and Nyulutsi in Hamburg function as living archives, preserving ancestral knowledge, spiritual practices, and cultural memories. These sacred spaces are dynamic, embodying histories and experiences through rituals, personal transformations, and ecological interconnections. The ocean serves as both a spiritual and personal site for the healer, reflecting their ancestral ties and life journey.

Spiritual and Healing Practices

The healer's engagement with the ocean and Nyulutsi involves rituals such as ancestral dialogues, thanksgiving ceremonies, and cleansing rites. The use of medicinal herbs like *imizi, matakwane*, and *Imfincamfincane* reflects an integrated approach to healing, where ecological wisdom and spirituality

converge. The narrative emphasises the necessity of ancestral communication before conducting rituals, reinforcing the sacredness of these practices.

Generational Disconnect

MaSango states that the younger generation does not listen or retain the information that is passed down. She presents this information in an almost dismissive manner, intimating that the important rituals and respect protocols may not remain important to the youth and thus may distance communities from traditional practices.

Ecological and Cultural Interdependence

MaSango states that the healer's rituals are intertwined with natural elements the ocean, rivers, and medicinal plants, demonstrating how spiritual well-being is dependent on environmental health. This link is reiterated and the sacredness attributed to natural spaces fosters ecological stewardship. The ocean is treated with the utmost respect because of the power it has. MaSango maintains that these environments are essential for cultural and spiritual sustainability.

Rituals

Rituals in the narrative are portrayed as structured and deeply respectful engagements with sacred spaces. From seeking ancestral permission before approaching the ocean to conducting thanksgiving ceremonies, each ritual embodies cultural protocols that affirm the healers' connection to their ancestors. The declaration of a loved one's belongings at Nyulutsi symbolises transitions and the perpetuation of ancestral guidance.

Music and Sound

Ritual songs like *Mantango* are presented as not merely artistic expressions but regulated, sacred acts that require ancestral permission. Natural soundscapes, such as the ocean's waves, interact with ritual sounds, creating an auditory dialogue between the healer, the environment, and the ancestors. This interplay reinforces cultural identity and facilitates healing.

Respect for Sacred Spaces

Respect is a recurring theme throughout this story. MaSango states that sacred spaces demand reverence, and failure to follow traditional protocols can lead to spiritual or physical consequences, such as the risk of being "taken away" by the ocean. This respect is evident in practices like seeking ancestral permission, conducting rituals with care, and maintaining environmental integrity.

Sambesiwe Mavela's Story

I was born and bred in Hamburg. There are a lot of places we consider sacred in Hamburg, for example, the ocean. We consider the ocean a sacred space because there are a lot of things we get there and also things we do there. In some spaces, we get the *imizi* grass; there is where we fish and, most importantly, where we conduct our rituals. Some of the places are not for ordinary people to go to, but only healers can access them. If you are ordinary, you must ask for permission to cross or be close by. When I am at the sacred space, I have a lot of memories about the swimming we used to do growing up, especially on the days we were supposed to be cattle herding; we would go swimming without our ancestors knowing. One of the times, one of the children drowned, but a few weeks later, his body was found, and his body was covered with white clay. To us, the Xhosa people, this meant that he was taken by the water people and was supposed to be initiated into a healer, but it was an unfortunate event that he died. To me, sacred spaces have a lot of significance because I am a very spiritual person; I also pray for people. I take people there even for personal reasons to cleanse myself. I worry about the younger generation because they don't care about traditions; they are more Westernised. Even though these spaces are sacred, if you are not a spiritual young person, then that space just exists without it being special. I breathe in the fresh air and feel like I was reborn and that my baggage had been taken away after being taken to my ancestors in the sacred space. The way *amagqirha* play the drums, the whistle and songs like *nonkala* are also memories that are evoked when I am in these spaces. As a young man myself, I grew up witnessing the power of these spaces and I will forever respect them.

Analysis Spiritual and Healing Practices

Sambesiwe's experience illustrates the transformative power of the sacred spaces he reveres, where physical interaction with the environment such as breathing fresh air and performing rituals facilitates

emotional and spiritual cleansing. The ocean serves as a therapeutic space, offering both material sustenance and spiritual relief. It is a place where the sick and troubled are brought to cleanse their spirits, reinforcing its role in personal and communal healing. This double purpose highlights sacred spaces as restorative environments for well-being.

Ancestral Connection

Sambesiwe's narrative reveals how these spaces facilitate communication with ancestors, providing spiritual guidance, affirmation, and support. The presence of ancestors is deeply felt, as evidenced by the rituals performed and the spiritual experiences described. The recollection of the drowning child found with white clay, which signifies a spiritual calling, is believed in Xhosa culture to be an initiation into the healing tradition by the water people (Hansen, 1981). This underscores the ocean's role not just as a geographical entity but as a sacred, ancestral archive.

Generational Disconnect

While sacred spaces hold immense cultural and spiritual significance, Sambesiwe's narrative also highlights concerns about generational disconnect. Memories tied to these spaces, such as childhood swimming and participation in rituals, carry emotional and cultural weight. However, the observed disinterest among younger generations in traditional practices threatens the continuity of cultural knowledge. Sacred spaces are dynamic archives where personal and communal memories converge, but their role in intergenerational learning is fragile, especially amidst the pressures of modernity. This tension underscores the need for intentional efforts to sustain cultural transmission.

Ecological and Cultural Interdependence

The narrative vividly illustrates the ecological dimensions of sacred spaces. Activities such as fishing and gathering *imizi* grass reflect ecological knowledge and the close understanding of the symbiotic relationship between the community and environment. Sacred spaces like the ocean and Nyulutsi are not only spiritual sanctuaries but also ecological reservoirs that support cultural practices. The collection of traditional medicines and the use of natural elements like white clay for rituals exemplify an Indigenous worldview where nature is both a provider and a spiritual entity. This interdependence reinforces the interconnectedness of cultural heritage and environmental stewardship.

Rituals, Music, and Sound

According to Sambesiwe, music and sound are integral to the sacred experience, creating auditory landscapes that enhance spiritual practices. He recalls the use of musical elements such as drumming, whistles, and songs like *Nonkala*, which reinforce the importance of sound in the establishment of sacred spaces. Like several of the other narratives, the blending of natural sounds like the rhythmic ebb and flow of ocean waves with human-made music, forms a sonic tapestry that anchors cultural

memory and spiritual rituals. This resonates with ecomusicological perspectives, where the interplay between music, nature, and culture is central to understanding sacred practices.

Respect for Sacred Spaces

Respect for sacred spaces is a recurring theme in Sambesiwe's narrative. The ocean and other sacred sites are not accessible to everyone; they are reserved for those who understand their significance, such as healers. This delineation between the sacred and the profane, where permission must be sought to enter certain areas, reflects the cultural protocols that govern interactions with these environments. Such practices underscore the reverence for sacred spaces as living archives, where cultural norms, spiritual beliefs, and ecological ethics are upheld. This respect ensures the sustainability of both the natural environment and the cultural practices it supports.

Collective analysis

In this section I will share the collective analysis drawn from the data. I explore the participant's lived experiences with the sacred spaces and their connection with it. I also look at the rituals, religious ecology and soundscapes offering a grounded perspective on the relationship between sound, space, and cultural identity.

Relationship with the Sacred Spaces

During the interviews, the first question I asked all of the participants was, "Do you know any sacred spaces in Hamburg?". Overwhelmingly, everyone knew of a sacred space and responded positively. This is evidence that traditional practices are essential in the lives of the Hamburg community; and despite the narratives above overwhelmingly agreeing that the youth are not interested in heritage practices, these have obviously been passed down from generation to generation.

The chart below depicts which themes came up the most in the narratives presented (see Figure 6). It shows that sacred spaces were mentioned the most, followed by memories and then equal mention of both sound and music and environment.

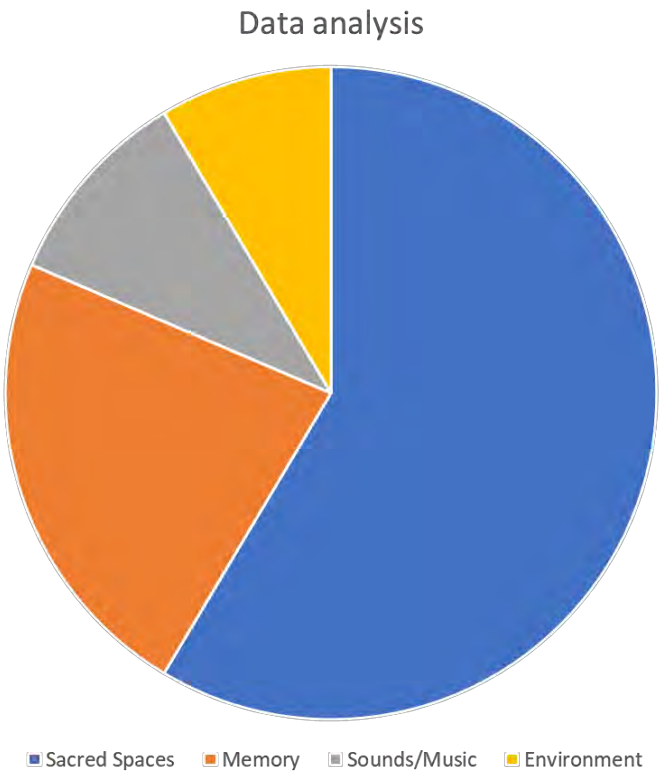

Figure 9: Representation of how these appeared as a common theme in all stories

Source: Author (2024)

When reviewing the data, it's clear that everyone is familiar with sacred spaces and has some form of direct or indirect connection to them. All interviewees agreed that these spaces are respected and evoke strong memories which may relate to a variety of circumstances. It is obvious that being in the sacred spaces acted as a catalyst for remembering. These memories were of songs, sounds, games, rituals, and traditions. While not everyone had a specific song linked to a sacred space, many associated them with other soundscapes, such as the ocean's waves, birdsong, the sound of cutting *imizi* grass, or the splash of water when swimming in the river.

The data presents that the people of Hamburg highly value these sacred spaces, recognising their importance to the community because of the symbolism of the cultural events and values. Schama (1995) supports this view, stating that cultural significance is an integral part of our identities, shaped by both shared and individual memories. The events held in these sacred spaces are central to social interactions, knowledge systems, belief structures, social behaviour, and aesthetic values. They also reflect the IKS of the Xhosa people, particularly in Hamburg.

It was also evident that the community members are dedicated custodians of their sacred spaces, protecting them and passing down their belief systems to future generations. Key participants in the Hamburg community shared their views on the history and future of the space, offering perspectives that, while varied, agreed on the importance placed on its role in their IKS. As I interacted with

community members, many were able to describe, in detail, the sacred space's significance in their culture and personal lives, as reflected in their stories. Some participants, feeling comfortable, sang, clapped, and chanted to demonstrate how they engage with these spaces through music, revealing how sacred spaces influence their daily lives and evoke memories. This deepened my understanding of its cultural importance.

MaSango, an elderly woman and traditional healer, shared her knowledge of the community's beliefs and IKS. She plays a vital role in passing down this knowledge through both oral and practical methods, especially in the sacred space, which is central to cultural rituals. In an interview, MaSango described how she participates in these traditions and how she is responsible for maintaining the cultural rites. She commented with specific references to the soundscapes,

> I am a renowned healer in Hamburg. I help people by healing them in sacred spaces and using medicinal herbs from there. I also teach and initiate people into being healers. I enjoy teaching about my culture because of its symbolic values and beliefs, Indigenous knowledge systems, cultural values and norms. The Sacred Space symbolises all these aspects through the messages in songs, using storytelling, chantings and even the silence of the space or the songs of the birds (23 August 2024).

This response is an example of how the Hamburg community values their culture and exudes it through their respect, rituals, and performances in the Sacred Space. As Challe (2015) asserts, by translating a location's distinctiveness into sound, music may imbue a location with significance and help preserve it in both individual and collective memories. In doing so, their culture and the environment are preserved. The interviews revealed that community members are accustomed to their way of life and value a sacred space because of its ability to radiate their customs and IKS through song, chantings, clapping and storytelling. I realised that respecting their sacred space facilitates social cohesion and empowers the community, regardless of the demographic imperatives and differences in personal backgrounds. All of the interviews demonstrated that when it comes to sacred spaces and rituals, community members come together in harmony, which they learned and adopted into practice by respecting their sacred space and practising practices safeguarding the environment.

In the narratives shared by members of the Hamburg community, the relationship with sacred spaces emerges as a deep, multifaceted connection that goes beyond mere physical locations. Sacred spaces such as the ocean and Nyulutsi are not only important for their spiritual significance but also play a critical role in the community's cultural, social, and ecological practices. These spaces are living entities that actively engage with the community, guiding, sustaining, and preserving cultural heritage through rituals, ceremonies, and daily practices. One of the key aspects of this relationship is the strong spiritual

and ancestral connection the community maintains with sacred spaces. For instance, the ocean is considered a place where ancestral spirits reside, and many of the rituals performed there involve direct communication with these spirits. The act of throwing stones and invoking ancestral names is a ritual that bridges the past and the present, allowing the community to communicate with their ancestors and seek guidance. This connection underscores the belief that sacred spaces are not static but are actively inhabited by the ancestors, ensuring that the community's spiritual practices remain rooted in a living tradition.

Additionally, the sacred spaces serve as places of ecological and environmental stewardship. The community has a deep respect for the land, water, and resources that sacred spaces provide, and there is a reciprocal relationship between the community and these spaces. For example, the ocean not only provides food but also requires protection and conservation. The community actively guards against poachers and ensures that the ocean remains untouched by pollution. This symbiotic relationship speaks to the community's understanding of the sacredness of the land and water and its responsibility to protect these resources for future generations.

The rituals and practices performed in these sacred spaces also play a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage. Ceremonies related to healing, rites of passage, and offerings to the ancestors are essential for maintaining cultural identity. The music and sounds associated with these rituals are central to the experience of these spaces. The rhythms of the drums, the sounds of the waves, and the songs sung during rituals are not just auditory experiences; they are vital elements of cultural transmission. Through music, the community re-enacts and remembers its heritage, reinforcing its collective identity.

These sacred spaces are not only places where the community remembers its heritage but also places where it actively engages with it. However, it is clear that for the community of Hamburg, the space itself becomes a repository of cultural memory, where rituals, music, and teachings are passed down through generations, ensuring that the heritage is both preserved and actively lived. Despite many of the story-tellers expressing their worry about the future generations, through these narratives, it becomes clear that sacred spaces in Hamburg are not mere relics of the past; they are living, breathing entities that shape the community's spiritual and cultural practices. These spaces are both a reflection of the community’s heritage and a means through which that heritage is kept alive and continuously reinterpreted. **As such, and importantly to this research, these sacred spaces act as living archives, where the cultural and spiritual memory of the community is preserved, enacted through rituals, soundscapes and music, and passed down to future generations.**

In conclusion, the sacred spaces of Hamburg, as explored through these narratives, demonstrate the powerful role that these spaces play in preserving cultural heritage. The dynamic relationship between the community and these spaces speaks to the living nature of cultural memory, where heritage is not

just remembered but actively experienced. These spaces are integral to the community's identity, serving as repositories of ancestral wisdom, ecological knowledge, and cultural practices. The role of sound and music in these spaces further reinforces their status as living archives, where memory is not only preserved visually but also sonically. The importance of these sacred spaces cannot be overstated, as they continue to be vital in maintaining the spiritual and cultural continuity of the Hamburg community.

Drawing from Religious Ecology

The narratives shared by the Hamburg community offer a compelling lens through which to explore the concept of religious ecology. Where the sacred and the natural world are inextricably linked through religious belief and practice. In these narratives, the relationship between the community and their sacred spaces, such as the ocean, Nyulutsi, and other places of spiritual significance, embodies a deep, reciprocal understanding of nature, spirituality, and ecology. This relationship is not merely one of respect for nature but a profound, integrated worldview where the natural world is seen as a living, spiritual entity that must be revered and cared for following religious teachings and practices.

Central to the concept of religious ecology in these narratives is the belief that the ancestors and spiritual beings inhabit sacred spaces.
MaSango stated that "Our ancestors are in the Ocean that is why we respect it so much" (Interview 23/08/2024).

Respondent 2 mentioned a similar thing stating that ''I respect the Ocean and our rivers because that is where our ancestor's dwell'' (Interview 15/07/2022).

Respondent 15 and 17 mentioned that "we respect Nyulutsi and the Ocean because they are sacred to us because that is where we come from, our ancestors are there and when we die, that is where we are also going'' (Interview 16/02/2024).

For the community, the ocean is more than just a physical space; it is a sacred, living entity intimately connected to their ancestors and holds spiritual significance for both individual and collective wellbeing. This belief in the presence of ancestors within natural elements water, trees, plants, and the land places nature at the heart of religious practice. It is not merely a backdrop to spiritual life but an active participant in the community's religious and ecological practices. In these sacred spaces, the boundaries between the spiritual and natural worlds blur, and the sacredness of these spaces is reflected in their ecological importance.

Using natural resources, such as mussels, herbs, and specific trees like the *umnquma* (olive tree) and *umthathi* (sneeze wood), is a vivid example of how ecological knowledge is intertwined with spiritual practice. These natural elements are not only used for their practical benefits but also for their spiritual

significance. The belief that certain herbs and plants are sacred and must be used in specific ways during rituals demonstrates a deep understanding of religious ecology where the community's use of nature is not just for sustenance or healing but is bound by a spiritual framework that honours the inherent spirituality of the natural world. The careful harvesting of these plants and the prohibition on cutting trees without prior consultation with the ancestors highlights an ecological ethic deeply embedded in the community's spiritual practice (MaSango 23/08/2024).

Moreover, the ocean serves as a site of spiritual reciprocity, where the community acknowledges the interdependence between human beings and the environment (Cebo 23/08/2024, Sambesiwe 28/09/2024, Respondent 6, 13/04/2023, Respondent 3, 16/07/2022). The sacredness of the ocean is not just about its ability to provide sustenance but also about maintaining a harmonious relationship with it. The rituals performed at the ocean, such as offerings of tobacco or drinks to appease the ancestors, reflect a religious understanding of the need to give back to the land and water in order to maintain balance and respect. This notion of reciprocity within religious ecology is seen in the community's commitment to conserve the ocean and protect it from pollution and overuse. The community's efforts to prevent poaching and their emphasis on sustainable practices, such as limiting the amount of mussels they collect, reflect a religious responsibility to safeguard the natural world for future generations.

Respondent 12 mentioned that ''We respect the Ocean so much so that we never throw anything dirty there'' (Interview 31/05/2023).

Respondent 3 "Our sacred spaces like Nyulutsi, rivers and the ocean are a source of our well- being so we are always careful not to make them dirty, we make sure that is clean. When these spaces are clean, we are also clean" (Interview 16/07/2022).

Zolekike ''We practised sustainable fishing, limiting our harvest to avoid overfishing, and used tools that would not harm baby mussels or fish. This respect for the ocean ensured that future generations would also benefit from its resources'' (Interview 23/08/2024).

Nolusindiso ''I am part of a project that fishes and sells to companies, and we make meals from some. We sell some and get money, and this is what we get from the sacred space, the ocean. In return, we conserve the ocean, guard against poachers, and respect it by not doing anything to make it dirty'' (Interview 23/08/2024).

This is an essential aspect of religious ecology: the idea that human actions should be guided by spiritual principles that prioritise respect for the earth and its resources. The narratives also reveal that the community's relationship with sacred spaces involves a deep sense of responsibility toward the environment. The practice of cleansing, using plants and water for spiritual purification, and the role

of the sacred space in healing individuals and the community show how the natural world is not only a resource but a partner in the spiritual and ecological well-being of the community. This is evident in the role of the ocean, where individuals go for rituals and personal cleansing and where the water is believed to have the power to wash away bad energies and bring healing. The ecological aspects of the ocean, such as the plants and creatures within it, are thus seen as integral to the healing process, illustrating the interconnectedness of spirituality and ecology.

In conclusion, the narratives from the Hamburg community provide a rich illustration of religious ecology, where the sacred and the natural world are interwoven in ways that shape both spiritual practices and ecological responsibility. The sacred spaces, whether the ocean, Nyulutsi, or other spaces, are understood not just as physical places but as living, spiritual environments that require respect, care, and reciprocity. Through their religious practices, the community demonstrates a profound ecological consciousness grounded in believing the natural world is imbued with spiritual significance. These sacred spaces function as both spiritual sites and ecological sanctuaries, where religious beliefs guide the community's relationship with nature, ensuring that the natural world is preserved and respected for future generations. This framework of religious ecology offers valuable insights into how religious practices can shape and sustain ecological ethics and how sacred spaces function as living archives that preserve both cultural heritage and ecological wisdom.

Young people lack identity and connection with the sacred space

I gathered through interviews that some community members claim they do not benefit from the sacred space and are not interested in what happens there. In my analysis, I distinguished that this indicates that some young couples, young adults, and the youth lack identity and connection with the sacred space. This young generation is very pessimistic about the sacred space and cultural rites because they believe they reflect the community's backwardness. I also recognised that the young lack confidence in understanding and feeling a sense of belonging to their IKS. Nevertheless, the community elders continue encouraging the young to appreciate their traditions and rituals by inviting them to ceremonies to witness how rituals are done. Through this way, some will, and have, developed an interest in the enactment of these traditions.

Some participants pointed out an age disparity between those who know about the sacred space and rituals in the community. They mention that young adults are not really interested in working with very old people.

Respondent 1 stated that "The youth here is not interested in working with us old people" (Interview 15/07/2022).

Respondent 3, in agreement also mentioned that, “Children nowadays are more interested in social activities with their agemates and they do not want to do things that involve old people’’ (Interview 15/07/2022).

Ironically, some old people do enjoy working with young adults. The respondent 5 states that, ’’In my traditional work I always involve the young ones. I enjoy working with them because they are curious and at times they ask me to teach them what I know’’ (Interview 16/07/2022).

The young adults claim that the old should now give them space, while the old say they are the original custodians of the sacred space, and as such, they do not want to work with the young adults. Thus, through analysis, this challenge creates and causes unnecessary friction and issues between the different age groups. Interestingly, the local traditional healers and the village elders are doing their best to find a lasting solution to create harmony between the different age groups to work together to honour and preserve their sacred space and everything that happens there.

The narratives shared by members of the Hamburg community, as mentioned above, illustrate a concern for the younger generation’s disconnect from sacred spaces, traditional practices, and their ancestral heritage. This disconnection, as revealed in the stories, highlights a broader issue of identity loss among young people, particularly in the face of rapid globalisation and Westernisation. The youth's lack of engagement with sacred spaces such as the ocean, Nyulutsi, and other sacred sites reveals a disconnect not only from nature but also from the spiritual and cultural practices that have been integral to the community's identity for generations.

One of the recurring themes in these narratives is the worry that young people no longer understand or respect the significance of sacred spaces. As described by several participants, children today are less inclined to engage with the rituals and practices that once defined their relationship with the land, water, and ancestors. Instead, there is a growing trend of Westernisation, where younger generations prioritise modernity and materialism over spiritual traditions and ecological respect. This shift is particularly evident in the diminished understanding and respect for the ocean and other sacred spaces, which were once revered as places of spiritual power and connection.

The stories shared in these narratives provide a stark contrast between the relationship of the older generations to sacred spaces and that of the younger generation. Elders speak with reverence and nostalgia about the times when they would visit the sacred spaces to perform rituals, seek healing, or connect with their ancestors. These spaces were not just physical locations; they were living, breathing archives of cultural memory and spiritual practice. However, the younger generation’s lack of

engagement with these spaces suggests a failure to internalise the deeper meanings associated with them. The stories convey that young people no longer feel the spiritual pull of these spaces, nor do they understand the significance of the rituals performed there. For example, some of the participants reflect on the fact that young people no longer listen to the teachings of the elders, and as a result, they are losing touch with their heritage.

This disconnection is also evident in the younger generation's perceived indifference to traditional healing practices and the spiritual importance of nature. Elders express concern that young people no longer seek guidance from their ancestors or visit sacred sites for cleansing, healing, or spiritual nourishment. Participants lament how the younger generation no longer feels the need to connect with sacred spaces or seek the wisdom of the elders, as they are more focused on the immediate pleasures and material rewards offered by contemporary society. This growing detachment from the sacred spaces and the rituals associated with them signifies a deeper crisis of identity, as young people no longer view these spaces as integral to their sense of self or spiritual well-being.

The generational gap also manifests in the way sacred spaces are perceived. For example, the ocean, which was once seen as a powerful, living entity imbued with ancestral energy, is now regarded by younger people as merely a recreational space. The elders in the stories speak of the ocean with a sense of reverence and caution, warning the younger generation not to disrespect it or play in its waters recklessly. In contrast, younger people often disregard these warnings, seeing the ocean primarily as a place for fun and leisure rather than as a sacred site for spiritual rituals and communion with ancestors.

This generational shift is further compounded by the failure to transmit knowledge and cultural practices to younger people. The narratives suggest that, while rituals and ceremonies continue to be performed by a few dedicated individuals, the younger generation is not adequately taught about the significance of these practices or the connection between sacred spaces and cultural identity. There is a sense of loss when it comes to transmitting this knowledge, as younger people are not exposed to the rituals, songs, and practices that once defined their relationship with the sacred. The spiritual practices once used to connect with ancestors, such as throwing stones in sacred spaces, offering prayers, and using specific plants in rituals, are now considered outdated or irrelevant by many young people. The idea of communicating with the ancestors, once a central part of the community's spiritual life, is now often dismissed by the younger generation, who may view such practices as superstitions or relics of a bygone era.

The concern voiced in these narratives is that without a connection to sacred spaces, young people risk losing their cultural and spiritual identity and their sense of belonging within the community. The sacred spaces are seen as grounding individuals in their heritage, providing a sense of continuity and

stability. Without this connection, there is a danger that young people will lose touch with their roots and fail to understand the importance of preserving both cultural practices and ecological integrity.

These narratives from the Hamburg community clearly highlight the deepening divide between the older and younger generations when it comes to the relationship with sacred spaces. Although this disconnection is symptomatic of a broader identity crisis among young people, who, in the face of globalisation, are increasingly detached from the spiritual and ecological practices that once defined their culture, it must be reiterated that not all young people are disinterested. As sacred spaces continue to lose their significance for the younger generation, there are still some young people who address this disconnection, and continue to foster a renewed understanding of the importance of sacred spaces, while ensuring that the wisdom of the ancestors is passed down to future generations. Only by reconnecting with these spaces can the younger generation reclaim their cultural and spiritual identity, ensuring that these living archives of heritage continue to thrive for generations to come.

Conducting cleansing healing rituals

> Cultures are most fully expressed in and made conscious of themselves in their ritual and theatrical performances. (...) A performance is a dialectic of 'flow', that is, spontaneous movement in which action and awareness are one, and 'reflexivity', in which the central meanings, values and goals of a culture are seen 'in action', as they shape and explain behaviour. A performance is declarative of our shared humanity, yet it utters the uniqueness of particular cultures. We will know one another better by entering one another's performances and learning their grammars and vocabularies (Turner 1990: 1).

The above quote from Turner (1990) speaks of the notions of identity-making through performative practice and social participation. According to Butler (1996), identities are created, constantly shaped, and redefined through discursive performances, including regular verbal and non-verbal communication. The community of Hamburg uses its sacred spaces for cleansing and healing rituals. The community members emphasised that these rites could not be performed without music, drumming, dance, chants, clapping, and sometimes talking. The community's traditional healers, *amagqirha,* also play a pivotal role in conducting these rituals. The traditional authorities shared that they work as spiritualists when they execute the cleansing rituals, where music, dance plays a central role in the ritual process by facilitating and connecting them with the ancestral spirits who are key in these processes. In an interview with traditional healers, they stressed that the talking *camagu,* which

is a form of acknowledging the ancestors, clapping, music, and dance, is used to invoke and invite the community's spiritual beings to be present during the cleansing and healing process (23 August 2024). This information was attested to by almost everyone I interviewed.

For the Xhosa people, dreams are regarded as a means of understanding natural heritage. The connections between natural and biological diversity, direct communication with ancestors, and dreams are deeply integrated into traditional healing practices. Various methods are used to facilitate communication with ancestors (Ahlume, interview 23/08/2024), the most common being the use of ubulawu plants, particularly the dream root (Silene undulata).

According to MaSango (interview 23/08/2024), the root of this plant acts as a dream inducer. It is crushed, mixed with water, and whisked until a white foam forms. This foam, known as isilawu, can be ingested or used to cleanse the body.

Traditional healing herbs are sourced from trees in sacred sites, which also provide wild fruits. For example, *imizi* grass is woven into bracelets for those in the early training phase of becoming traditional healers before they transition to wearing beads. When preparing for ceremonies, practitioners gather specific herbs especially the Xhosa dream root (Silene undulata) along with water from sacred sites, which plays a crucial role in preparing isilawu.

According to the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) Red List of South African Plants, Silene undulata has been classified as Least Concern (LC), meaning it has not been identified as a species at risk of endangerment. Despite its widespread use, people recognise the need to respect these plants to ensure their availability for future generations (MaSango, interview 23/08/2024).

The narratives shared by the community in Hamburg provide insightful perspectives on the process and significance of conducting cleansing and healing rituals, particularly in sacred spaces such as the ocean, Nyulutsi, and other culturally significant spaces. The rituals described in these stories are deeply embedded in the community's spiritual worldview and serve as vital practices for maintaining physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. These cleansing and healing rituals are not merely performative acts but are believed to foster a direct connection with the ancestors, restore balance, and purify individuals or the community from negative energies.

A recurring theme in these narratives is using natural elements such as water, herbs, plants, and even the ocean as tools for cleansing and healing. These elements are not just seen as physical substances but as carriers of spiritual power that can facilitate healing by connecting individuals with their ancestors and the divine forces they believe reside in these sacred spaces. For instance, the ritualistic

use of the ocean, particularly in cleansing individuals, reflects an understanding that the water is a living entity capable of purging spiritual and physical impurities. The stories describe how healers use the ocean to cleanse people of bad energies, illnesses, or misfortunes, thus illustrating the sacred space's role in the healing process.

Cleansing is portrayed as an essential component of spiritual and physical health, with significant focus placed on the ceremonial use of specific plants and waters. The space at Nyulutsi, for example, is described as abundant with medicinal herbs like *umnquma* (Olive tree) and *umthathi* (Ptaeroxylon/sneeze wood), used in rituals to cleanse individuals and remove ailments. Trees and herbs are seen as more than just natural resources; they are believed to carry ancestral wisdom and healing properties that can transform a person's health. The cleansing rituals, therefore, serve as a means to reconnect the individual with their cultural heritage and spiritual identity, reinforcing the deep interrelationship between the natural and spiritual worlds in these sacred spaces.

One significant aspect of the cleansing process involves the participation of the person being cleansed, who must actively engage in the ritual. For example, in some narratives, individuals are instructed to throw stones in sacred spaces (Cebo interview 23/08/2024), uttering specific words to invoke the ancestor’s blessings and protection (Sambesiwe 28/09/2024). This communication with the spiritual realm demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between the living and the ancestral spirits. The rituals are not passive experiences; they require personal involvement, demonstrating a spiritual process of renewal that is both individual and communal. As these cleansing rituals take place, they not only focus on physical healing but also the restoration of the individual's spiritual alignment with their ancestors and the natural world.

Another aspect of these cleansing rituals is their role in correcting moral or spiritual imbalances. Nolusindiso’s narrative (Interview 23/08/2024) about adults who experience bedwetting and are subsequently subjected to rituals in sacred spaces underscores the belief that certain physical ailments or behaviours are linked to ancestral displeasure or spiritual disruption. In these cases, the cleansing ritual restores harmony with the ancestors and corrects the misalignment between the individual and their spiritual or moral duties. The space becomes a conduit for resolving these imbalances and restoring the individual to a state of grace, free from negative influences.

The stories also reveal the significance of the community in these rituals. While the cleansing and healing processes are often personal, they are communal acts of care and respect. The sacred spaces are places where the community gathers to support one another in need. This communal aspect is evident in how these healing rituals often involve collective participation, with the community coming together to support the individual undergoing the cleansing process. The use of soundscapes such as songs and drums during these rituals further highlights the collective nature of the process. These

sounds act as markers of spiritual presence, signalling the initiation of the ritual and the connection to the ancestral realm.

The process of conducting these healing rituals also highlights the careful balance between respecting the sacred space and addressing immediate human needs. The restriction on cutting trees or harvesting plants without prior permission from the ancestors underscores the idea that healing and cleansing must be done harmoniously with the environment. The rituals emphasise ecological respect and the understanding that the sacred space is not a resource to be exploited but rather a living entity that must be honoured. These cleansing rituals remind the community of the importance of spiritual health, moral alignment, and ecological balance. These practices ensure that individuals remain spiritually connected to their ancestors, the land, and the wider community, fostering a sense of belonging and responsibility. The importance of these rituals cannot be overstated, as they represent a profound and ongoing dialogue with the ancestral spirits, the natural world, and the community itself.

These rituals restore health, reinforce cultural identity, and maintain harmony between the individual, their ancestors, and the environment. The sacred spaces where these rituals occur serve as living archives, preserving and transmitting cultural knowledge, spiritual practices, and ecological wisdom to future generations. Through these rituals, the community ensures that their connection to the sacred spaces and ancestral heritage remains strong, even in modern challenges.

Soundscapes

Drawing from MacDonald (2017), during the interviews I asked for examples of sounds that spoke to, or evoked memories, for community members when they were in the sacred space. The respondents identified sounds that I, at first, did not notice and was surprised by, because I initially thought they would respond with songs sung at the sacred space. However, I have come to learn more about the relationships people have with the environmental systems that sustain them. When the participants were asked if any musical/sound memory came up when they thought of a specific site or landscape related to their practice, they gave diverse answers.

Respondent 4 states that “Whenever I go to the ocean to cleanse myself, it is always the sounds of the waves that make me feel like my ancestors have heard me’’ (Interview 16/07/2022).

Respondent 1 states that ‘’ When I am at the sacred space the wind rustling through trees, and water stillness of the pond water is what usually makes me feel welcome and at home’’ (Interview 15/07/2022).

Respondent 11 states ‘’What speaks to me when I am at Nyulutsi is the stillness and silence’’ (Interview 31/05/2023).

Nolusindiso states that ‘’I do not have any specific songs that come to mind, but it is always the sound of the waves from the ocean and birds flying’’ (Interview 23/08/2024).

Sonic landscapes, often called soundscapes, are the acoustic environments surrounding us (Cove 2024). Nicolas (2013) describes the soundscape as the totality of the sound environment with emphasis on how it is perceived and understood by the individual, or by a society. In other words, if a soundscape is to be properly analysed, its subjective meaning to individuals who experience it needs to be understood. Judgments of a soundscape can depend upon the specific location and its visual appearance, the type of activity or activities that occur there, the observer’s personal history and expectations, emotional content and culture and age (Adams et al., 2006; Dubois, Guastavino, & Raimbault 2006; Nicolas 2013; Truax & Schafer 1978; Yang & Kang 2005; Yu & Kang 2008).

They comprise a synergy of sounds emanating from living entities and inanimate objects within a given space. These soundscapes are inherently dynamic, changing with the rhythms of natural and human activities (Ibid). The interaction between sound and place is pervasive. Every locale boasts a unique sonic environment that captures its distinctive vibrations. From the bustling cityscape to the tranquil murmurs of a rural setting, sound shapes and is shaped by the space it occupies. Sonic environments carry with them a significant cultural weight. They resonate with the collective memory and identity of a community. According to Cove (2024), these auditory experiences are markers of tradition and innovation, subtly influencing the cultural narrative of our environments. Stocker (2013) suggests that there are undeniable archetypal sounds to which humans across all cultures respond, such as the sound of the elements of nature: water, fire, and wind, and the first sound that provides comfort in our prenatal lives, the heartbeat. Storr (1992) states that these sounds are universal sound cues in our landscape of emotional safety. In addition to these cues, there are also sound marks unique to regional experiences of a place that cement a bond between people of a community, thus becoming acoustic communities. Thus, soundscapes are more than just an auditory experience; they embody the essence of cultural identity through the rhythms, harmonies, and melodies that resonate within a community (Cover 2024). When we think about how sound influences our sense of belonging, it is evident that sonic environments play a pivotal role in defining cultural narratives. Our collective identity is shaped not only by the tangible elements of culture but also by the sounds that underscore our daily lives, from the vibrant beats that pulse through city streets to the tranquil whispers of rural dawn (Ibid).

The interviews revealed that there is indeed an Interplay of sound and Cultural Heritage in their community. Cultural heritage is deeply interwoven with sonic identity, as the sounds that resonate

within a community often reflect its history and traditions. Soundscapes have played an integral role in defining their cultural narrative. The role of soundscapes in the narratives provided is pivotal in understanding how sacred spaces are experienced and remembered by the community. As a form of cultural expression, sound is integral to the rituals, healing practices, and communication between the living and the spiritual realms. These narratives highlight that the auditory experiences within sacred spaces, such as the ocean, Nyulutsi, and other sacred spaces, are not simply environmental noises but are loaded with cultural and spiritual significance. Sound acts as a vehicle for remembering heritage practices and maintaining the continuity of cultural knowledge across generations.

A central feature in these narratives is the sound of nature itself. The waves crashing against the shore, the rustling of trees, the bird's calls, and the water's sound in the still pond. These natural sounds are intertwined with the sacredness of the space. They are not just background noise but are experienced as living, active participants in the rituals and ceremonies taking place. For instance, the sound of the ocean's waves is described as an indicator of acceptance during cleansing rituals. The waves' movement, sometimes turbulent and other times calm, reflects the interaction between the individual and the spiritual forces in the space. The ocean's sounds serve as auditory feedback, signalling whether the ritual has been properly conducted or if the ancestral spirits have accepted the offerings.

Soundscapes also emerge through music, chants, and songs in ritual and healing. The repetition of specific songs or chants, such as "*lwandlokudla* " and the popular "*Unonkala uyayadidiyela,"* serves a dual purpose. First, it connects the participants to their cultural heritage, evoking memories of past rituals and reinforcing cultural identity. Second, it is a tool to invite spiritual entities into the space. The rhythmic drumming and the whistle sound, often played by *amagqirha* (traditional healers), are not just musical expressions but sacred acts that communicate with the ancestors and the spirit world. These sounds signal the beginning of a ritual, call upon the ancestors for guidance, and reinforce the sacredness of the space. Sound in these contexts demonstrates how auditory practices preserve and transmit heritage, offering a sonic lens through which to remember and honour the past.

The space is not only visually significant but also deeply auditory. The sounds, whether it is the rustling of the leaves, the sounds of water, or the laughter of youth playing mischievous games, are integral to the spiritual atmosphere of the space. These sounds connect with the ancestors and the natural world, signalling the deep interconnectedness between sound, space, and memory. When the community youth engage in play, their laughter and the playful noises of the sacred space evoke memories of tradition, manhood, and spiritual connection. The community's engagement with the soundscapes of these spaces serves to preserve and communicate cultural practices and, in doing so, helps ensure that these practices are carried forward to future generations.

Moreover, the practice of using specific sounds, such as the blowing of a whistle or the rhythmic beating of drums, can be seen as marking transitions in the ritualistic space. The physical action of producing sound, whether through music or speech, is directly linked to the performance of spiritual work. The blowing of the whistle by *amagqirha* or the chanting of prayers before throwing stones into the ocean signals the start of a ritual and serves as a form of invocation, reaching out to the ancestors for acknowledgement and blessings. The intentionality behind these sounds is significant. They are not arbitrary noises but culturally significant expressions that facilitate communication with the spiritual realm and ensure that the rituals are carried out properly.

These sonic elements also create an embodied experience of the sacred space. The community members do not simply observe rituals from a distance; they actively shape the soundscape through their actions. For example, communal singing and drumming create an immersive experience where both the individual and the community become part of the ritual through their auditory contributions. **This collective participation in the soundscape reinforces that sacred spaces are not passive environments but living archives where sound plays a vital role in maintaining cultural continuity. This therefore answers what this research seeks to understand, which is how music contributes to constructing and preserving collective memory within sacred spaces.**

These narratives underscore that soundscapes within sacred spaces are not just environmental or incidental but are deeply interwoven with the community's cultural, spiritual, and healing practices. Sound, through natural noises, music, chants, and ritualistic actions, serves as a conduit for ancestral communication and a medium for remembering and transmitting cultural heritage. Through carefully constructing soundscapes, the community honours its traditions, connects with its ancestors, and ensures that its cultural practices remain vibrant and relevant for future generations. These narratives thus reveal sound's profound role in shaping the experience of sacred spaces, positioning sound as a vital tool for preserving and communicating cultural heritage in these living, spiritual environments.

Conclusion

This chapter explores the interconnectedness of sacred spaces, soundscapes, and music as vital components in preserving and transmitting cultural heritage practices. Focusing on the sacred spaces within Hamburg, particularly Nyulutsi and the surrounding ocean, I analyse how these spaces function as living archives, preserving memories and rituals and facilitating an ongoing relationship with the past through music and sound.

The sacred spaces discussed in these narratives serve as physical, spiritual, and cultural touchstones for the community. They are places where individuals, often guided by ancestral wisdom, engage in

healing, rituals, and cleansing practices. These spaces are repositories of memory, history, and cultural identity, where the soundscapes, whether the rhythmic beating of drums, the chants of songs, or the natural sounds of the environment, evoke a powerful connection to the ancestral world. In these soundscapes, the community finds a sonic link to its heritage, reimagining the past in the present through music and sound.

The role of music in these sacred spaces cannot be understated. Music acts as both a mnemonic device and a spiritual tool. The specific songs, rhythms, and chants sung in these spaces invoke the ancestors, mark transitions, and reinforce cultural practices. The narratives highlight how certain songs, such as *lwandlokudla* and *unonkala* are integral to the spiritual work performed in these sacred spaces. These songs passed down through generations, carry with them the ancestor's stories, memories, and wisdom, allowing the community to remember and engage with its heritage. The sounds of drums and songs are also essential to completing rituals, as they create an atmosphere in which the spiritual and human worlds are interconnected.

Furthermore, these sacred spaces are physical locations and symbolic of the living relationship between the community, the land, and the ancestors. The sacred space of the ocean, for example, represents a place of reverence and sustenance where individuals seek healing, purification, and guidance. Like other sacred spaces, the ocean is respected as a spiritual power repository. Sound in these spaces, whether through drumming or chanting, signals a deep connection between the people and the forces of nature, helping to maintain balance, healing, and spiritual well-being.

The sacred spaces also serve as a space for communal memory-making. Music plays a significant role in how these spaces are remembered and how the practices performed within them are passed down. The stories shared in the narratives reveal how music and sound evoke memories of childhood, familial relationships, and community rituals. The sound of the waves, the rhythm of the drums, and the songs sung by *amagqirha* are deeply embedded in the community's memories, marking important moments of personal and collective identity. These soundscapes are not static; they evolve as the community adapts to changing times, yet they remain anchored in the past, ensuring that cultural practices and ancestral knowledge are not lost.

The narratives also speak to the challenges younger generations face in connecting to these sacred spaces. The decline in respect for tradition, particularly among younger people who have become more Westernised, is a concern raised throughout these stories. There is a marked disconnection between younger individuals and the practices that have long defined the community's relationship with its sacred spaces. However, there is hope that the younger generation can reconnect with these

spaces and the music that has long defined their cultural identity through education, awareness, and engagement.

Importantly, this chapter underscores the importance of sacred spaces, soundscapes, and music in preserving and remembering cultural heritage practices. I highlight how these narratives reveal the ongoing negotiation between the past and present by situating these elements within the broader context of religious ecology, identity, and spiritual practice. Sacred spaces, like Nyulutsi, are not mere sites of memory but living archives that continue to shape the community's identities, practices, and spiritual beliefs. The community remembers its heritage through music and actively reaffirms its connection to the ancestors, the land, and the broader spiritual world. This chapter contributes to the growing discourse in ecomusicology, demonstrating the importance of sound, music, and sacred spaces in understanding how cultural heritage is sustained, reimagined, and transmitted across generations.

CHAPTER 6

Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This research forms part of IMIsEE (Indigenous Marine Innovations for Sustainable Environments and Economies), an interdisciplinary project shared between the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB), the Keiskamma Trust (KKT), and the Rhodes University Department of Music and Musicology with strong partnerships with the International Library of African Music (ILAM), with support from South African colleagues at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and Nelson Mandela University (NMU), as well as the participation of privately and state-owned regional maritime enterprises. This final chapter brings together the key insights from this research. Reflecting on the intricate relationship between sacred spaces, ancestral connections, and ecological knowledge within the broader framework of ecomusicology. By exploring sacred spaces as living archives, this research has highlighted how music, soundscapes, rituals, and storytelling are carriers of intangible cultural heritage and memory. The findings offer a nuanced understanding of how the amaXhosa people in Hamburg, on the Eastern Cape coast, engage with their environment spiritually, culturally, and ecologically, demonstrating how these practices shape identity and sustain knowledge systems. This research has attempted to understand the relationship between people, their culture and their environment. Issues have been addressed through interviews with the members of the Hamburg community, including members of KKT, healers and non-healers. These investigations are accompanied by reviewed literature and used descriptively and comparatively to enhance the analysis.

The chapter is structured as follows: summary of the key findings from the data analysis of narrative stories, highlighting the major emerging themes. This is followed by a discussion of these findings, drawing comparisons with existing literature and outlining the main contributions of this research. The chapter then explores the research's broader implications, particularly regarding cultural preservation, sustainability, and interdisciplinary research. Finally, I outline the research's limitations and propose potential areas for future research.

Summary of findings

Summary analysis of all the stories

Participant's narratives revealed a coherent sense of their relationship with the sacred space and also shared views of the community. The interviewed individuals narrated their relationships and

interconnections between the sacred space, soundscapes/music and people, and the repercussions and consequences of nature and culture. These stories are instrumental in pointing out how the community of Hamburg respects their sacred space and also give us a sense of this relationship. The collected narratives provide a rich tapestry of lived experiences that directly illuminate the role of sacred spaces as living archives, where cultural heritage, spiritual beliefs, and traditional knowledge are preserved and actively reinterpreted. These stories are powerful testaments to how sacred spaces, be it the ocean, the rivers, or Nyulutsi, serve as dynamic repositories of history and tradition, constantly evolving while maintaining a deep connection to ancestral legacies. These spaces are not static monuments or artefacts but are vibrant, living entities in which continuous practices of remembering, healing, and spiritual renewal occur. The spaces themselves, through their physical presence, the rituals they host, and the relationships they foster, act as living archives that preserve the community's collective memory.

A critical emerging theme across all the stories is the symbiotic relationship between the community and the sacred spaces they inhabit. The space is not merely a backdrop to cultural practices but an active participant in transmitting and preserving knowledge. Whether it is the ocean's role in the healing rituals or using specific plants from Nyulutsi for medicinal and ceremonial purposes, these spaces are central to maintaining a connection to the ancestors and the wider cosmology. The frequent reference to rituals, ceremonies, and ancestral communication through practices like throwing stones, making offerings, and performing sacred songs shows how these spaces encapsulate, protect, and sustain the practices that define the community’s cultural identity. These rituals are acts of remembrance and renewal, where individuals are spiritually and physically transformed through their engagement with the sacred space.

The concept of soundscapes plays a pivotal role in these sacred spaces as a lens through which heritage practices are remembered and re-enacted. In these environments, music, song, and the sounds of nature are integral to remembering cultural and spiritual knowledge. For example, the recurring mention of songs like *nonkala* or the use of drums during rituals is not decorative; these sounds act as conduits for communication with the ancestors and the spiritual cleansing of participants. The relationship between sound and space is profound, as sound is both a marker of the sacred and a medium for engaging with the divine. The songs, often passed down through generations, carry with them the wisdom of elders, the collective memories of the community, and the resonance of the sacred. These sounds and songs are archives of cultural memory embodied in the community's physical and spiritual presence. The natural sounds accompanying these rituals, such as the waves crashing at the ocean or the calls of birds, become embedded in the community’s spiritual consciousness. These elements of the natural world are not merely environmental; they are deeply intertwined with the spiritual practices of the community. The sound of the ocean’s waves or the cries of the birds signal the presence of the ancestors and the acceptance of the rituals being performed. These sounds

function as sonic markers of sacred time and space, underscoring the community's relationship with the environment as a physical and spiritual repository.

The importance of these stories lies in how they illustrate sacred spaces as living archives in a way that transcends the conventional understanding of archives as static, fixed sites. The sacred spaces discussed here are dynamic, ever-changing, and, as such, continuously record, transmit, and reinterpret cultural knowledge, an (an)archival approach. The interactions between the sacred and the every day, the spiritual and the material, provide invaluable insights into how heritage is actively lived, enacted, and transmitted through ritual, song, and spiritual engagement. By focusing on the role of soundscapes, these narratives provide a unique framework for understanding how cultural heritage is maintained, transformed, and re-imagined through the embodied practices within these sacred spaces.

The various narratives portray the relationship between the Hamburg community, particularly the elderly, and its sacred spaces as one of reverence, reciprocity, and continuity. These sacred spaces are passive locations with active participants in the community's cultural, spiritual, and ecological life. Through embodied rituals, ceremonies, and everyday practices, the community engages with these spaces as living archives that preserve, transmit, and reinterpret cultural heritage. The sacred spaces hold not only the memory of the ancestors but also the living practices of the community, making them integral to both the preservation and evolution of the community's identity.

The sacred spaces also act as sites of healing, renewal, and cultural transmission, where the community embodies its connection to the land, water, and ancestors. The use of sound, song, and music further underscores the living nature of these spaces, highlighting the role of auditory experiences in preserving and enacting cultural memory. This relationship demonstrates that sacred spaces are not simply relics of the past but are ongoing, living entities that shape and are shaped by the community's actions, beliefs, and practices. As such, these narratives contribute to my thesis by showing how sacred spaces function as living archives, where the past is not merely remembered but actively re-enacted and reinterpreted in the present.

This concept points to how the features of the archive and performance are integrated into living archives, making them particularly effective vehicles for knowledge and memory transmission. In these processes, archives and performance fulfil similar roles as memory texts; whether through record, body or ritual, the passage from personal to social requires mediation and cultural tools (Sabiescu 2020: 506). Ketelaar (2005: 44) asserts that Individual memory becomes social memory by sharing experiences and emotions. Cultural tools mediate social sharing. These tools are texts in any form, written, oral, or physical. The landscape, a building or a monument may serve as a memory text, while bodily texts are presented in commemorations, rituals and performances.

Sabiescu (2020: 507) writes that performance endows the living archive with embodied knowledge, liveness and social qualities. It supports the staging of participatory experiences of memory, through which identity is performed and shaped, collective understandings are forged, and social bonds are created and strengthened. The (an)archive contains tacit narratives (Ketelaar 2001) that create rich layers of knowledge and memory through every act of manipulation and use and through this creates a deeper access to past knowledge, nuanced and individual. Through acts of social participation in memory sharing, we witness the shaping of collective identity, as is the case in communities celebrating their shared past and culture through rituals and commemorations (Sabiescu 2020: 507).

Music as a lens to remember heritage practices

Heritage preservation through music examines both the tangible and intangible aspects of cultural preservation, highlighting the role of music in fostering community identity and navigating the political, social, and technological forces that shape these processes (Howard 2016; Shelemay 2006). This perspective underscores the power of music to safeguard cultural heritage, demonstrating how it evolves and adapts to modern contexts to ensure continuity across generations (Li 2013; Small 1998). Research findings reveal that soundscapes play a vital role in sacred spaces, further evidencing the significant contribution of music. Music consistently emerged as part of the narratives surrounding sacred spaces and their ceremonies, serving as an element in cultural and spiritual practices (Feld 1982; Truax & Schafer 1978). Music performance serves as a repository of cultural memory and heritage. Through the act of performing, individuals and communities keep alive oral traditions, rituals, and histories that might otherwise be lost (Agawu 2003). Ceremonial songs encode historical and cultural narratives shared intergenerationally through performance (Shelemay 2006). Music performance is central to rituals and sacred practices, carrying spiritual meanings and preserving cultural cosmologies and ethical values (Becker 2004). As such, music can evoke and sustain collective memory, linking past and present while connecting listeners and performers emotionally to their heritage (Connerton 1989). It is a dynamic and embodied practice that bridges the past and present, ensuring cultural heritage continuity and adaptation (Feld 1982). By transforming abstract cultural values and histories into tangible, shared experiences, music performance reinforces the sense of belonging and identity within and across communities (Small 1998; Bhabha 1994).

In sacred rituals, music is often inseparable from the physical and symbolic actions performed. The rhythm and structure of songs guide movements, from processions to dances, aligning the body with the ritual's intent. In African traditional religions, drumming and chants often dictate the tempo of dances and rituals, physically manifesting spiritual energy (Mauwa 2020). According to Faxi-Lewis (2003), Xhosa divination songs have been analysed ethnomusicological by several researchers, the

emphasis being on the investigation into the musicological aspects of the songs and associated processes of composition, and the social contexts in which the songs are commonly performed, and the impact of western religious institutional music on these songs and performance. While these analyses are extensive and have explored the process of creation in composition, they have not explored, in any depth, their meaning and function in rituals or the notions and experiences of the individuals who created the song (ibid).

In these narratives, music is a profound lens through which heritage practices are remembered, preserved, and transmitted across generations. Music, in the form of songs, chants, and drumming, is a crucial marker of cultural identity and a means of connecting with the past, particularly in sacred spaces. The role of music in these sacred spaces is not only as a form of artistic expression but as a ritualistic tool used to invoke the ancestors, facilitate spiritual work, and maintain the community's connection to its cultural roots. Singing or chanting in these sacred spaces is deeply embedded in tradition. Specific songs are sung as part of the rituals, only after permission has been granted by the ancestors, with lyrics and melodies passed down through generations. These songs carry the memories of past generations, evoking emotions, histories, and connections that transcend time. Singing these songs during rituals maintains a living memory of the community's practices, reinforcing a link to the ancestral world and the cultural practices that define the community's identity.

Music is a form of cultural remembrance and a vital communication tool in the context of the ocean as a sacred space. As was seen in this research, the sounds of drums, whistles, and chants call upon the ancestors and facilitate the completion of healing and cleansing rituals. For example, the sound of the drums serves as a sonic beacon that signals the beginning of the ritual and invites spiritual forces to participate. These sounds carry an inherent power linked to the sacred, the ancestors, and the land itself. In this context, music is a vehicle through which the community reaffirms its bond with the ancestors, both as a form of remembering and as a means of ensuring that the sacred rituals are performed correctly.

Music also serves as a vehicle for personal and collective memory. The narrative about the sacred space of Nyulutsi, where music evokes a sense of connection to the past, illustrates how music can recall specific memories and experiences. The sound of music, whether the rhythm of drums or the voices of the community, helps individuals relive their experiences in the sacred space, re-embodying the rituals and practices passed down. The music ties the present to the past, ensuring that the community's heritage is not lost but is actively experienced and remembered through musical participation.

Another key aspect of music's role in these narratives is its ability to forge connections between individuals and the broader community. Music is a communal activity where everyone's voice is part

of a collective memory-making process. When the community sings together, they are participating in an artistic expression and a ritual of cultural continuity. Through music, individuals become part of something larger than themselves, tapping into the collective memory of their ancestors and reenacting practices that have been integral to their identity as a people.

These narratives demonstrate that music is much more than just an aesthetic practice. It is a lens through which heritage practices are remembered, sustained, and transmitted. Whether through ritual songs, the sounds of drums, or the collective singing of the community, music acts as a conduit for ancestral communication, spiritual engagement, and cultural preservation. By integrating music into sacred rituals and spaces, the community reaffirms its cultural identity, honours its ancestors, and ensures that its heritage practices are kept alive for future generations. Therefore, music serves as a reminder of the past and a living, evolving tool that keeps cultural heritage vibrant and relevant.

Personal Memories and Shared Histories

As discussed, personal memories are often intertwined with the sounds of our heritage (Cove 2024). Cove (2024) asserts that the power of soundscapes lies in their ability to trigger memory. Just as the resonating warmth of a familiar melody can transport us back to a moment shared with loved ones, the ambient sounds of a bustling market might evoke the communal spirit of cultural exchange. Sound acts as an auditory gateway in these moments, opening up reservoirs of forgotten experiences. Sonic landscapes are also pivotal in our collective experience, binding us to our community and heritage. As we engage with culturally significant sounds, such as the rhythmic beating of a traditional drum during a festival, we aren't just listening; we are participating in remembrance and identity affirmation that resonates through our collective consciousness. In exploring the intricate bond between sonic landscapes and cultural identity, we recognise sound's profound influence on our perception of community and heritage.

Key findings

Drawing from the data and the discussion above, these have been the key findings:

1. Sacred spaces function as living archives, interweaving cultural practices, ecological wisdom, and spiritual connection.
2. Music and soundscapes are integral to rituals as conduits for ancestral dialogue and community cohesion.

3. Ritualised conservation practices demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between people and the environment.
4. Generational shifts in knowledge transmission reflect adaptations that ensure cultural continuity in modern contexts.

My findings align with the literature on ecomusicology and cultural heritage, which positions sacred spaces as repositories of cultural and environmental knowledge. Scholars like Titon (2009) emphasise the role of soundscapes in creating a sense of place and memory, which resonates with my findings on the use of rituals and songs in Nyulutsi and the ocean. This research deepens the discussion by situating these practices within the specific cultural context of Hamburg in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, where music, ritual, and ecology are intertwined.

The role of music in rituals is a recurring theme in studies of Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs), which recognise music, dance, oral traditions, and ceremonies as vital forms of cultural identity. My findings contribute to this discourse by demonstrating how songs are not only performed during rituals but are also tailored to specific spiritual needs, serving as a bridge between the human and ancestral realms. These songs carry embedded knowledge, oral histories, and moral teachings, reinforcing community identity and continuity. By framing these musical practices within the broader discourse on TCEs, this research highlights how music functions as both a spiritual conduit and an ecological tool, shaping the ways communities interact with and sustain their sacred environments.

The research also establishes a tangible link between cultural practices and environmental conservation. This aligns with theories of biocultural diversity, which emphasise the interdependence of cultural and ecological systems. My findings illustrate how rituals such as throwing stones in Nyulutsi, offering coins to the ocean, and practising sustainable fishing methods reinforce a balance between resource use and conservation. This echoes global discussions on cultural heritage preservation, where communities increasingly involve younger generations to prevent the loss of traditional knowledge. In Hamburg, specific strategies, such as including the youth in rituals and educating them about the spiritual and ecological significance of sacred spaces, ensure the continuity of these practices. By situating these findings within the discourse on TCEs, this research underscores how intangible cultural heritage plays a crucial role in sustaining both cultural identity and ecological responsibility.

This research challenges conventional notions of archives as static repositories, presenting sacred spaces as dynamic, living archives where rituals, music, and ecological interactions sustain cultural heritage and environmental awareness. Through this research, I highlight how my findings contribute to broader academic discourses while offering localised insights into the role of sacred spaces. These

spaces embody a unique intersection of cultural heritage and ecological knowledge, emphasising the need for their continued protection and reverence.

Conclusion

This research reveals that sacred spaces are dynamic and multifunctional, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage while promoting sustainable environmental practices. They serve as critical sites for cultural continuity, ecological awareness, and spiritual connection. By linking cultural practices, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), and environmental sustainability, this study highlights how music and acoustic ecologies transform sacred spaces into living archives, performative repositories that preserve, enact, and continuously renew cultural and spiritual memories. These spaces come to life through music, ensuring that the past is remembered, re-lived, and embodied in each performance. Whether through chanting, singing, ritual dances, or instrumental expressions, music in sacred spaces plays a vital role in the ongoing creation, transmission, and performance of cultural and spiritual memory.

This research contributes to the broader discourse on sacred spaces, music, and memory by offering an expanded understanding of how these spaces function as dynamic, living archives rather than static preservations of the past. They facilitate an ongoing process of remembering, healing, and spiritual connection. By centering the role of sound, song, and ritual, this study underscores the importance of sensory experiences in transmitting cultural memory, providing a richer, more nuanced lens for understanding how cultural heritage is remembered and re-created in the present. This perspective is crucial for ecomusicology, as it deepens our appreciation of the intersection between the environment, music, and cultural heritage. It also reinforces the need to respect and protect sacred spaces as vital (an)archives of both ecological and cultural knowledge.

Research Impact

This research has significant implications for ecomusicology, heritage studies, and cultural conservation, as well as for local and global communities engaging with sacred spaces and sustainable practices. By positioning sacred spaces as living archives, this research contributes to the growing field of ecomusicology, demonstrating how soundscapes and music are integral to cultural heritage and environmental stewardship. It highlights the importance of intangible heritage and TCEs, offering new insights into the relationship between humans, nature, and spirituality. The findings provide practical frameworks for safeguarding intangible cultural practices, emphasising their ecological and spiritual significance. These insights are particularly valuable in guiding conservation policies and community led heritage initiatives. This research shows how traditional practices can inform contemporary

approaches to sustainability, particularly in coastal and rural communities. It also highlights the importance of involving younger generations in preserving cultural heritage, ensuring its longevity. Lastly, the research empowers communities by validating their traditional ecological knowledge and cultural practices as essential for sustainable development and cultural identity.

Recommendations

Communities have a role to play in realising environmental sustainability, preserving their heritage and passing it down from generation to generation. Protecting and Preserving Sonic Heritage should be prioritised. The aural elements of our past are as vital as the tangible artefacts we safeguard with great care. The relentless march of urbanisation and modernity threatens our sonic heritage. We are responsible for identifying and documenting these sounds to preserve them for future generations. In doing so, we pay homage to the immeasurable value they add to our cultural identity.

Future research could compare sacred spaces in Hamburg and other regions with similar ecological and cultural contexts to identify shared patterns and unique practices. Expanding collaborations with fields such as anthropology, marine science, and environmental ethics could deepen understanding of the interconnectedness of cultural heritage and ecological sustainability. Investigating digital tools for capturing and archiving sacred spaces' sounds, stories, and rituals could provide new methods for preserving these dynamic traditions for future generations. Future studies could explore how the findings can influence cultural and environmental policies, specifically in South Africa where the importance of TCEs and IKS cannot be overstated. Developing educational programmes based on this research could also promote greater awareness of sacred spaces among local and global audiences.

In addition, investigating how climate change impacts sacred spaces, particularly coastal ones like the ocean, could provide crucial insights into how communities adapt their cultural practices to environmental changes.

Limitations

The research focuses primarily on sacred spaces in Hamburg in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, limiting the generalisability of findings to other cultural and ecological contexts. The research relies on present-day practices and memories, which might not capture historical changes or anticipate future transformations in sacred spaces and rituals. Certain sacred practices may remain inaccessible due to cultural sensitivity or restrictions, potentially limiting the depth of understanding in some areas.

While this research incorporates ecomusicology, cultural heritage, and ecology, deeper integration with disciplines like marine biology or environmental science could provide additional perspectives. Although efforts were made to include diverse voices, the narratives may not fully represent all members of the community, particularly marginalised or less vocal groups. By acknowledging these limitations and proposing future avenues for research, this research lays the groundwork for continued exploration of sacred spaces, their cultural significance, and their role in promoting sustainability and community resilience.

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INTERVIEWS

Interview with respondent 1 on the 15th of July 2022
Interview with respondent 2 on the 15th of July 2022
Interview with respondent 3 on the 16th of July 2022
Interview with respondent 4 on the 16th of July 2022
Interview with respondent 5 on the 16th of July 2022
Interview with respondent 6 on the 13th of April 2023
Interview with respondent 7 on the 13th of April 2023
Interview with respondent 8 on the 13th of April 2023
Interview with respondent 9 on the 31st of May 2023
Interview with respondent 10 on the 31st of May 2023
Interview with respondent 11 on the 31st of May 2023
Interview with respondent 12 on the 31st of May 2023
Interview with respondent 13 on the 16th of February 2024
Interview with respondent 14 on the 16th of February 2024
Interview with respondent 15 on the 16th of February 2024
Interview with respondent 16 on the 16th of February 2024
Interview with respondent 17 on the 16th of February 2024
Interview with Cebo Mvubu on the 23rd of August 2024
Interview with Sambesiwe Mavela on the 28th of September 2024
Interview with MaSango on the 23rd of August 2024
Interview with Ahlume ‘’Ntandoyamanyange” Mendu on the 23rd of August 2024
Interview with Veronica Betani on the 23rd of August 2024
Interview with Nolusindiso Jakavula on the 23rd of August 2024
Interview with Zolekile Mavela on the 23rd of August 2024
Interview with Nompucuko Mavela on the 23rd of August 2024

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

Interview Questions (English)

1. Do you know any Sacred Spaces in Hamburg?

2. What events take place? Can you describe those, is that in the past or present?

3. How does this space relate to your life?

4. When you are here, what memories come to mind?

5. How do you see the future of this space?

6. What happened in the past and now the present here?

7. Does any musical/sound memory come up when you think of a specific site or landscape related to your practice?

Imibuzo Yodliwano-Ndlebe (Xhosa)

1. Ngaba uyazazi iiNndawo ezingcwele eHamburg?

2. Zeziphi iziganeko ezenzekayo kwezindawo zingcwele? Ungazichaza ezo ziganeko, zenzeka kwixesha elidlulileyo okanye elangoku?

3. Le ndawo inxulumana njani nobomini bakho?

4. Xa usele upha, zeziphi izinto ozikhumbulayo?

5. Ulibona njani ikamva yezindawo?

6. Kwenzeke ntoni kwixesha elidlulileyo nakwixesha langoku kwezindawo?

7. Ingaba kukho umculo owukhumbulayo/iimvakalelo ezivela engqondweni xa ucinga ngendawo ethile okanye ubume obunxulumene nomsebenzi wakho?

Appendix 2: Focus group guide

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

FOCUS GROUPS GUIDE

HEALERS GROUP (ENGLISH VERSION)

1. ARE THERE SPECIFIC SPACES THAT YOU PRACTISE IN?
2. HOW AND HOW LONG HAVE THEY BEEN USED IN THIS WAY?
3. WHAT DO THESE SPACES MEAN TO YOU?
4. WHAT DO THEY MEAN TO OTHERS, DO YOU THINK?
5. DO THEY EVOKE MEMORIES FOR YOU?
6. DOES ANY MUSICAL/SOUND MEMORY COME UP WHEN YOU THINK OF A SPECIFIC SITE OR LANDSCAPE
RELATED TO YOUR PRACTICE?

NON-HEALERS

1. DO YOU KNOW ANY SACRED SPACES?
2. HOW DOES IT RELATE TO YOUR LIFE?
3.DOES ANY MUSICAL/SOUND MEMORY COME UP WHEN YOU ARE AT THE SACRED SPACE?
4. HOW DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE OF THIS SPACE?
5. HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS SPACE?

AMAGQIRHA (XHOSA VERSION)

1. INGABA ZIKHO IINDAWO EZITHILE APHO NENZA KHONA UMSEBENZI WENU?
2. ZISETYENZISWA NJANI KWAYE ILIXESHA ELINGAKANANI ZISETYENZISWA NGALOO NDLELA?
3. IINDAWO EZI ZITHETHA NTONI KUWE?
4. UCINGA UKUBA ZITHETHA NTONI KWABANYE ABANTU?
5. NGABA ZIKUVUSELA IZIKHUMBUZO?
6. INGABA KUKHO UMCULO OWUKHUMBULAYO/IIMVAKALELO EZIVELA ENGQONDWENI XA UCINGA NGENDAWO ETHILE OKANYE UBUME OBUNXULUMENE NOMSEBENZI WAKHO?

ABANTU ABANGENGAWO AMAGQIRHA

1. INGABA ZIKHONA IINDAWO EZINGCWELE OZAZIYO?
2. EZINDAWO ZINXULUMANA NJANI NOBOMI BAKHO?
3. INGABA KUKHO UMCULO OWUKHUMBULAYO/IIMVAKALELO EZIVELA ENGQONDWENI XA UCINGA NGENDAWO ETHILE OKANYE UBUME OBUNXULUMENE NOMSEBENZI WAKHO?
4. ULIBONA LINJANI IKAMVA LALE NDAWO UYIKHANKANYILEYO?
5. IBALULEKE KANGAKANANI LE NDAWO?

Appendix 3: Ethics clearance

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee
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https://www.ru.ac.za/researchgateway/ethics/

19 October 2022

Dr Francesca Porri

Email: F.Porri@ru.ac.za f.porri@saiab.nrf.ac.za b.mcconnachie@ru.ac.za

Review Reference: 2022-4951-7185

Dear Dr Francesca Porri

Title: IMIsEE: Indigenous Marine Innovations for Sustainable Environments and Economies

Researcher: Dr Francesca Porri

Collaborator(s): Dr Boudina McConnachie

This letter confirms that the above research proposal has been reviewed and **APPROVED** by the Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee (RU-HREC). Your Approval number is: 2022-4951-7185

Approval has been granted for 1 year. An annual progress report will be required in order to renew approval for an additional period. You will receive an email notifying you when the annual report is due.

Please ensure that the ethical standards committee is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators. Please also ensure that a brief report is submitted to the ethics committee on the completion of the research. The purpose of this report is to indicate whether the research was conducted successfully, if any aspects could not be completed, or if any problems arose that the ethical standards committee should be aware of. If a thesis or dissertation arising from this research is submitted to the library's electronic theses and dissertations (ETD) repository, please notify the committee of the date of submission and/or any reference or cataloguing number allocated.

Sincerely,

Dr Janet Hayward

Chair: Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee, RU-HREC

cc: Ethics Coordinator

Appendix 4: Images and tables

Figure 1 - David Kinsler

Figure 2- Aaron S. Allen, Jeff Todd Titon, and Denise Von Glahn (2014).

Figure 3- W. Chinyamurindi (2013: 73)

Figure 4 - Adapted from Creswell and Poth (2012: 237)

Figure 5 - Vuyelwa. O Moyo (2025)

Figure 6 - Wang, P. F., & Ho, M. C. (2011: 34)

Figure 7 - Pijanowski et al (2011: 206)

Figure 8 - Vuyelwa. O Moyo and Atlas. ti (2025)

Figure 9 – Vuyelwa. O Moyo (2024)

Table 1- Stock & Burton (2011)

Table 2- Author (2024)

Table 3- Author (2024)

Table 4 - Author (2025)

Appendix 5: Traditional Xhosa music of the Hamburg community

Nonkala ('The crab') (listen to CD1 track no. 4)

L:***O! Wenza ngabom***	Oh! It did intentionally
F:***Oho!***	***Oho!***
L:***Wenza ngabom unonkala nga***	It did intentionally, the crab by..
F:***Iyoho! Ngasemlanjen'***	***Yoho!*** By the riverside
L:***O! Wenza ngabom***	Oh! It did intentionally
F:***Yoho!***	***Yoho!***
L:***Wenza ngabom unonkala nga***	It did intentionally, the crab by..
F:***Unonkala ngasemlanjen'***	The crab by the riverside
L:***O! Wadidiyel'***	Oh! It prepared the mixture
F:***Yoho!***	***Yoho!***
L:***Wadidiyel'unonkala nga***	Nonkala prepared the mixture by
F:***Yoho! Ngasemlanjen'***	***Yoho!*** by the riverside

Xhosa Song	English translation
Bes'celukungena weeh Ngonyama enamabala wee Ngonyama Thina sicel'ukungene Dlozi. Weeh ngomnya enamabala, wee Ngonyama	We ask the ancestors to allow us in the great Spirit of the leopard the Spirit of the leopard We are asking you, the ancestors, to come the great Spirit of the leopard the Spirit of the leopard
Ohhhh ndiyabizwa engetheni 'bantwana bokugula balala ngengub'ebhokhwe Ohhhh ndiyabizwa emlanjeni mna 'bantwana bokugual balala ngengub'ebhokwe	Ohhh I am called in the forest Traditional initiates, sleep in a goat's skin Ohhh I am called in the river
Dabuka lwandle	Open dear ocean

Ohhhhh dabuka lwandle	Ohhh open dear ocean
Thula mntanami, Wen'ukhalelani Thula mntanami Wen'ukhalenai	Be quiet my child Why are you crying Be quiet my child
Xhosa	English translation
Buyani Mathongo, nihlelen'entabeni? Ndasokola nikhona nje, nihlelen'entabeni, Buyani Mathongo.	My great ancestors, please come back from the mountains, how is it that I'm suffering with you being my guide, why are you sitting in those mountains? Please come back to me.
Xhosa	English translation
Zamaqhirha Ndizolale maweni kulezontaba , ithongo malizole Ndiyazigulela mna , hayi ibuhlungu lengulo Ndicela abantu abadala bahlangane ngentloko Whe thongo lam ndilamlele, andizenzanga ndenziwe ngabalele ukuthula.	I will lie down on the rocks in those mountains. The spirit must calm down because it is driving me sick. This calling is painful. I ask my ancestors to gather and mediate for me. I did not do this to myself; you, my ancestors, have called me.
Siyangwa ngamawele Ngamawele	We are healed by the twins By the twins
Ulwandle Ohh lwandle lwam Lwandl'olukhulu oohh Oooh lwandlokom'ulwandle	Ocean Ohh my ocean Ohh great ocean Oooh roaring ocean

Mantango	We ask for a clear path, Mantango
Ahooo Mantango Mantango Sicel'indlela, Mantango Ahoo Mantango Mantango	