CELLPHONES AND WHISTLES: EXPLORING THE COMMUNICATIVE ECOLOGY AND SOCIALITY OF THE ENKANINI INFORMAL SETTLEMENT IN MAKHANDA

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Abstract

This thesis explores the communicative ecology in the Enkanini informal settlement in Makhanda, and in particular their use of mobile phones and whistles to build a sense of community. It makes the case for word-of-mouth as an integral part of the communicative ecology despite not being a technological device. It then examines the sociality that arises from the use of these devices, and how coloniality impacts on the participants' everyday experiences. The research was conducted through telephonic in-depth interviews with participants. To corroborate some of the content drawn from interviews, I used *Grocott's Mail,* Makhanda's only independent newspaper as an archival source, as well as some of the participants' Facebook profiles.

This research argues that as a consequence of coloniality, Enkanini's residents suffer socio-economic challenges, and thus are unable to use digital technologies as much as they might like to, to communicate with their neighbours. As a consequence, word-of-mouth is their main form of communication with one another. Whistles are the 'low-tech' device used for community-wide communication to alert residents of an emergency, or about a meeting or protest.

My findings contest generalised claims of society moving towards a network sociality, where individuality and project-based communication is valued over more communal forms of living. They also demonstrate the ways in which coloniality shapes almost every aspect of marginalised people's lives, making word of mouth the most significant form of communication, notwithstanding the apparent availability of digital technology. It also shows how a marginalised group uses the resources it has to pressure local government officials to provide them with the basis infrastructure they need for survival.

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This thesis is dedicated to my late grandmother, Mantoa Jermina Motaung (1934-2020) who raised me, loved me and whom I miss dearly. Rest in peace nkgono, I love you.

Contents

Introduction

This research examines the communicative ecology and sociality of a relatively new informal settlement, Enkanini, on the outskirts of Makhanda. It was founded in 2017 when a group of women decided to erect shacks on the Mayfield Transit camp that had been earmarked in 2011for RDP housing development, but had not been developed (Donyeli & Mclennan 2018). According to some of the women interviewed, their children had outgrown living in their homes and needed their own space, but could not afford to purchase or rent property in a more formal area. Soon after they erected a few shacks, other people started asking them about how they could do the same. They quickly decided to call a mass meeting where a leadership committee was elected. They recorded people's names, phone numbers, ID numbers and plot numbers, and the elected leadership committee allowed people to erect shacks. The informal settlement now consists of shacks set out several metres apart, divided by gravel roads. Most streets have communal taps but there is no electricity provided to the settlement.

This research will explore how the people of Enkanini's use of various mediated and unmediated communicative devices promote a convivial sense of community and negotiate tensions between intimacy and distance between one another (Hay, 2014:5). Residents exist as intimate strangers, constantly struggling to balance privacy and community, and concerns for self and others (Luepnitz, 2002:53; Hay, 2014:6). Rooted in the southern theories of coloniality and decoloniality, this research will, through the literature consulted, methods used, and analysis of findings, critique the colonial matrix of power rooted in conquest and coloniality. It will highlight, through the experiences of some of Enkanini's residents, the subsequent long-lasting patterns of power that have emerged as a consequence of colonialism. The material conditions and experiences of Enkanini's residents are a result of this colonial matrix of power, and their means of communication, and social interactions highlight their agency within these harsh living conditions.

This research idea originated after reading Trevor Ngwane's (2017) PhD thesis which looked into governance in informal settlements by focusing on *amakomiti*, which is the name given to governance committees based in informal settlements which liaise with formal State institutions for basic services such as water and electricity (Ngwane, 2017). In exploring *amakomiti* and their identity, he asked if shack dwellers formed part of the oppressed black majority, or if they formed a separate underclass with interests that are separate from the rest of black people

(Ngwane, 2017: 44). His thesis argued that *amakomiti* are a legitimate form of self-governance that should be incorporated into the governing structures of the country to meet the collective agenda of informal settlement residents (Ngwane, 2017:44). Being a media studies student, I was curious about how communicative devices are utilised in order to carry out self-governance in informal settlements. Reading into cell phone use in informal settlements revealed an on-going conversation between scholars about the use of ICTs in marginalised communities. These conversations, according to Donner (2008), can be divided into three broad categories: "studies of the determinants of mobile adoption from those that assess the impacts of mobile use, and from those focused on the interrelationships between mobile technologies and users" (Donner, 2008:143). The latter is relevant to this research with its focuses on the everyday uses of ICTs, and given the social and material conditions of the users, the formation of the relationship between users and the ICTs that are unique to their social context (Donner, 2018:144). When studying the impact of ICTs, to avoid making technologically deterministic conclusions, one cannot separate the research site's sociality (Bosch, 2008). This research will add to a growing body of work that centres the experiences and interactions of research participants when looking into the impact of ICTs in a social space. It argues that the sociality of a community is constituted by the interplay of the adoption and use of ICTs. Preliminary interviews revealed that the people of Enkanini do not only use ICTs such as cell phones to communicate with one another. They also use whistles when they need community-wide communication to call meetings, or alert residents to danger. As a result, I chose to expand reading to include contexts where people make use of various devices in order to communicate with others, which led to the decision to use the communicative ecology framework as a tool to analyse how these communicative devices are used to create and sustain the community.

Based on the literature consulted and preliminary interviews, this research will answer the following questions: How is the cell phone used in Enkanini? How does the absence of electricity affect their use of cell phones? How do high costs of data affect the use of the cell phone? How do the use of the whistle and the cell phone shape the construction of sociality in the community? How do people living in Enkanini use the communicative ecology created by the cell phone and whistle to communicate with each other? How do the cell phone and whistle aid in the creation and maintenance of a community?

This is a qualitative study, using the experiences and perspectives of a small group of participants living in Enkanini. This research does not aim to make generalisable claims about the whole community. Rather it aims to use the participants' experiences to reflect on theory (Bryman, 1998:12).

The structure of this research will be laid out in the following way: the introductory chapter will set out a brief account of South Africa's history in relation to land dispossession, property rights and the introduction of ICTs in marginalised areas. This will clarify the choice of the theories chosen and explained in the second chapter of the thesis. The third chapter will describe the methods used to create data. Finally, the data will be analysed within the framework of the theories chosen to analyse the participants' experiences.

Chapter 1: Context and Background

This chapter will set out a historical and political context for the existence of informal settlements. It is important to place discussions about informal settlements in a clear context to prevent arguments that may be blame marginalised people for their challenges. This context will also form part of the justification for the use of a decolonial framework in this thesis.

This history of land dispossession and post-apartheid policies on informal settlements will highlight the reason for the existence of informal settlements; how the current government has chosen to handle the matter of informality, and how informal settlements can be viewed to protect the rights of those living in them. The final section of this chapter will chart a brief history of how the government introduced and handled digital technology in South Africa and how that affected people living in informal settlements.

The discovery of diamonds in Kimberly in 1867, and the discovery of gold deposits in Johannesburg in 1886 rapidly drove up the demand for labour in the mines (Ogura, 1996:409). Despite some South Africans moving to these mining towns, colonial authorities had to procure labour from neighbouring countries because they couldn't get enough labour from within South Africa. However, by 1906, the rates of labourers from neighbouring countries declined (Ogura, 1996:409). The colonial government then decided to meet the demand for labour through forced labour, taxation, and land expropriation (Ogura, 1996:410).

Dispossession of land from black people had already displaced many South Africans from land they had been living and working on for centuries due to the colonial practices of the 1800s such as attacks of dispossession (Shillington, 1987:58) and illegitimate 'agreements' of sale and post-war treaties between colonial authorities and local leaders (Shillington, 1987:58). What followed was the legislation of progressively violent restrictions on the freedom of black South Africans, which included the codification of racial groups. One of the first pieces of legislation passed by the Union government regarding property was the 1913 Natives Land Act which prohibited black people from purchasing property from white people, and vice versa (Mabin, 2003:18). In addition, it also allocated 13% of the country's total land mass, under the administration of State

appointed “tribal leaders” to black people and outlawed sharecropping, while the rest was allocated from White people (Mabin, 2003:18). Black South Africans living in these newly demarcated White areas were forced to move, and with sharecropping outlawed millions of black people were forced to move to industrialising white areas to seek employment (Ogura, 1996:408). Despite the separate development rhetoric that was pandered to the international community, policies such as the Native (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945 were created with the intention of denying permanent residency of black people in urban areas through restrictions to their movement into these areas (Ogura, 1996:409). These policies systemically carried out clear intentions to subjugate black people to eternal servitude to White-owned wealth and development. The system’s bedrock was land dispossession and continuously declining wages (Ogura, 1996:410).

With the formal adoption of the apartheid system in 1948, policies that had been created by the Union government failed to keep black people permanently outside urban areas for two main reasons: first, the development of the manufacturing industry mainly based in the then Transvaal increased the demand for (Ogura, 1996:415). Second, the socio-economic conditions in the rural areas had been in continuous decline for decades, leaving those residents with little choice but to seek employment and permanent residence in urban areas (Ogura, 1996:415). The apartheid government wasted no time implementing its main campaign objectives to keep all races separated in their places of residence, education, health care and even amenities through legislation such as the Group Areas Act of 1950, the Bantu Education Act of 1953, and the Separate Amenities Act of 1953. Policies such as the Group Areas Act ensured that only white people could permanently reside in the urban city centres, while black people could only live in townships outside the city centres, and miners lived in hostels (Ogura, 1996).

With the end of Apartheid in 1994 with the first democratic elections, the government promised to restore the property lost to the Apartheid system (Lahiff, 2007:3). Thirteen million black South Africans were concentrated in former homelands that had been created to isolate them in land that was difficult to cultivate (Lahiff, 2007:3). A majority of the rest of South Africans lived in townships that had been designed by the Apartheid government far from places of commerce and wealthier areas of South Africans. They were starved of resources and infrastructure, where its people, also starved of quality education and employment remained trapped in poverty

(Gibbs, Skweyiya & Jewks, 2015:2). On white-owned farms, approximately 13 million South Africans lived with no secure tenure and were unable to have stable, healthy homes they could own (Kepe & Cousins, 2002:2). In suburbs, millions of black people worked generally as domestic workers and gardeners with no job security and under harsh and sometimes violent conditions, where many of them seldom got to spend time with their families (Ally, 2011:1532).

Land redistribution and poverty eradication has been at the heart of South Africa's liberation struggle, with the 1955 Freedom Charter proclaiming that all the land belonged to those who live in it. It is no surprise then that with the advent of democracy in 1994, a number of policy directives have been announced that include land redistribution and the construction of state housing for the poor. Several policy directives have been created since 1994 to provide socio-economic relief to South Africans, including housing, the first being the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which was effectively the manifesto on which the ANC came to power in 1994 (Lahiff, 2008:9). This policy directive reiterated the ANC's commitment to addressing the wrongs of the Apartheid State by providing social relief for the poor through housing, state grants and improved quality in education (Lahiff, 2008:9).

The democratic government had to balance the needs of the disenfranchised, while adhering to the agreements negotiated during the transition into democracy that left almost all the wealth, including land, intact with white owners (Roy, 2005:150). As a result, legislation created by the government with regarding land restitution was based on a 'willing buyer, willing seller' model, which saw only 10% of commercial farmland restored to black South Africans between 1994 and 2017 (Hall & Kepe 2017:123). In 1999 however, the State took a more neoliberal direction and focused on the growth of the economy as a prerequisite for effective social relief (Lahiff, 2008:10), cementing its ability to escape accountability for not providing the rights enshrined in the constitution. In addition to these neo-liberal policies, corruption in the government has increased dramatically, with an estimated R700 billion lost to corruption since 1998 (Gumede, 2017). Several fits and starts later with regard to land restitution, along with rising inequality and rapid migration to urban areas, South Africa now has more than 4 million people living in informal settlements (Royston & Ebrahim, 2019), while millions of people living in rural areas have uncertain land tenure (Hall & Kepe 2017:123). The State continues to call for an end to

informal settlements through building State-funded housing, and job creation, both of which have slowed down and continue to stall (Huchzermeyer, 2003:594).

Enkanini is an example of the State's failure to radically reduce poverty, and therefore informal settlements. With over 1000 shacks, Enkanini was built on property belonging to the Eastern Cape provincial government that had been earmarked for RDP housing in 2011, but had never been developed (Donyeli & Mclennan, 2018). When asked to comment on the protests for basic services that had taken place in 2018, the government said it did not have the funds to develop the area for RDP housing.

Despite being named as one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, South Africa's constitution often leaves the most vulnerable without legal recourse when the State fails to meet its objectives. Although all socio-economic rights in the Bill of Rights are inalienable, the State cannot be held responsible for not providing them if they do not have the funds, allowing them to escape legal accountability (Pieterse, 2018:393).

While the State continues to provide housing and basic services at a much slower rate than promised, informal settlement dwellers continue to have their rights infringed. Perceived in mass media as volatile and crime-ridden spaces, South African townships are not that different from urban informal spaces in most parts of the Global South (Nuewirth, 2005:19). Writing on the largest township in Africa, Glaser highlighted the various ways in which Soweto residents handled crime and policing between 1960 and 1976, which according to mass media at the time, was fuelled by teenage boys' muggings, pick-pocketing, and violent assaults (Glaser, 2001:8). From the late 1940s elected Advisory Board members, working together with residents, formed civic guards and parent associations to protect themselves from criminals (Glaser, 2001:8). Despite constant appeals to the Johannesburg Non-European Affairs Department (JNEAD) for better policing and social services that would indirectly tackle crime, JNEAD did not do much to assist residents with crime complaints (Glaser, 2001:10). From the 1950s to the 1970s, the Apartheid government sought to deal with the issues of crime through influx control, by keeping black people living in specified areas unable to take residence in White only areas (Ogura, 1996:415). The government took little notice of Advisory Boards, residents' associations and other township bodies, opting to deal with crime unilaterally, and protecting white interests at the expense of the safety of other groups (Ogura, 1996:415). This gross neglect and vastly unequal

allocation of resources meant the government had more of a crime-containment approach instead of a crime prevention/eradication one: crime in the white suburbs could be restrained if black residential areas were segregated from white suburbs. The Group Areas legislation was designed not only for political control objectives but also to quarantine the various perceived social evils of the township, including crime (Glaser, 2001:16).

Informal settlements have often been created on the outskirts of more formal townships, with shacks being built very close to the State-funded housing. As such, the experiences and challenges of harsh material conditions are shared by both formal townships and informal settlements, with the ever-present possibility of evictions from informal settlements by the State or private land owners on which the informal settlement has been created (Roy, 2005:148). The government's perspective of informal settlements hasn't changed much despite the change in the governing structures of the country (Wilkinson, 1998:220; Bank, 2007:206). Policymakers have, since the rapid increase of informal settlements in the 1940s, defined the problem of informality from a technical perspective, focusing on the illegality of the process of settlement, the use of the land on which the settlements are created, and the types of buildings created by dwellers (Huchzermeyer, 2003:334). For example, the Policy of Orderly Urbanisation made a distinction between "undesirable informal settlements", which took place "in a completely unordered way involving social and health risks" and "desirable informal settlement", which occurs on land that had been identified for urbanisation and serviced (Harrison, 1992:18). This definition has promoted a bureaucratic approach to informality, resulting in exploitative and violent methods of dealing with informal settlement dwellers (Huchzermeyer, 2003:336). People living in "undesirable" informal settlements have been violently relocated to areas far from urban centres of commerce (De Mistro & Hensher, 2009:337). Despite the national Department of Housing creating a mandate to address informality in 1994 (Huchzermeyer, 2003:336), there has been a continuity of a top-down and technically defined approach to informal settlement that is very similar to the approach taken by the apartheid government (Huchzermeyer, 2011:64). After the creation of the 1994 Housing White Paper, the government decided to collect data on the number of shacks and informal settlement types in the country with the aim of eradicating them by 2015 (Huchzermeyer, 2011:65). This method pointed to a top-down approach to informal settlement eradication, where thousands of people were forcefully evicted from some of the "focus areas" highlighted by the White Paper (Huchzermeyer, 2011:65). For instance, in 2001, the government

relocated people from Alexandra's Juskei River bank to an unserviced area in Roodepoort in the East Rand, about 30km from Alexandra (Huchzermeyer, 2003:338). This eviction resulted in some media critiquing this as an "apartheid-style" remedy (Huchzermeyer, 2003:338). With regards to the relocation site, people remained without basic services for months on end, the area had, as of 2011, a population of over 138000 with 4900 RDP houses, and some families still did not have basic services such as water and electricity (Makwela, Maiyana & Ratshikuni, 2020).

South Africa's informal settlement policy has not changed significantly since the advent of democracy (Wilson, 2014:281). Current methods were streamlined through the Policy of Orderly Urbanisation (POU) in the mid-1980s (Huchzermeyer, 2011:50) and practiced sporadically in earlier decades (Huchzermeyer, 2011:50). The relocation of informal settlement dwellers was mandated in the POU, which also advocated for "controlled squatting" on "designated land," and the "upgrading of invaded land" or the "orderly development" of uninhabited land (Huchzermeyer, 2011:50). The upgrading and development would be carried out by the private sector and in the meantime, selected informal settlements were given transit camp status until a sites and services project was implemented and the households could be relocated (Huchzermeyer, 2011:50). The Independent Development Trust (IDT) formed in 1990 continued the mandate set out by the POU identifying whether informal housing had been set up in formally sanctioned site-and-service areas (Harrison, 1992:19), and if not, relocations were to happen.

The State and the private sector alike have approached informality from a perspective where informal settlers are seen to be contravening laws, especially those that protect private property and those that address land-use rights (Huchzermeyer, 2003:341). As with the colonial and apartheid government informal settlers are seen as a threat to the rights, security and health of the privileged classes, which justifies an insensitive and often violent intervention through evictions (Pasquetti & Picker, 2017:533). The rights of South Africa's privileged classes have been underpinned by racially discriminative legislation, most oppressive to the black majority (Roy, 2005:149). Since the advent of democracy, the property rights of the privileged, which is still mostly White, have been upheld through market-oriented policies and discourse, which associate informal settlements with a threat to land value and use (Hall, 2010:218). More subtly, politically conservative discourse has associated informal settlements with high levels of crime, HIV/AIDS

rates and general lack of law and order (Huchzermeyer & Karam, 2006:18). This discourse, along with a Constitution and policies which centre the protection of private land rights and the possibility of housing on "economic viability" has according to Huchzermeyer (2003:340), "legitimised a socially insensitive intervention through relocation and the enforcement of law and order" This is seen through the State repeatedly applying brute force in order to relocate people who refuse to move (Rall, 2017; Pikoli, 2020; Cruywagen, 2020; Andrews, 2018:2). Where matters of relocation have been litigated, the court repeatedly emphasises its inability to outline a substantive account of the positive obligations that socio-economic rights place on the state due to the doctrine of separation of powers (Wilson & Duggard, 2011:664). It chooses instead to evaluate the state's reasons for refusing to grant these socio-economic rights against the provisions in the Constitution, therefore centring the state's 'needs' over poor people's lived experiences and human rights (Wilson & Duggard, 2011:665). Furthermore, the court's interpretation of legislation created with the enforcement of law and order as a main goal, instead of the alleviation of poverty means courts often assist the State to "manage" poverty as an expected feature of the social order (Wilson, 2006:541).

How does 'the right to the city' challenge the existing social order?

The concept of the right to the city has been brought up by scholars and grassroots organisations at various points where urbanisation was in focus (Marcuse, 2009; Pithouse, 2010). Scholars have argued for a change in perspective when aiming to understand or treat the matter of informality (Roy, 2005:150). This perspective critiques the view that informal settlements are an exception to how countries are supposed to modernise or develop. Lefebvre (1967), when conceptualising the right to the city, argued that the city should be seen as a co-created space, which people occupy and enjoy regardless of their class (Pithouse, 2010:2). This was against what he called the rapid commodification of the city, where the urban space and governance thereof were turned into exclusive goods, excluding those belonging to lower socio-economic classes (Pithouse, 2010:2; Huchzermeyer, 2014:68). Lefebvre focused on the individual as the co-creator of the urban space (Fernandez, 2011:13), where, for instance residents living in informal settlements choose to stay within urban centres and are not forcibly removed due to the "undesirable" environments they live in (Shoniwa & Thebe, 2020:3), and instead work with the

government to develop their communities according to their needs in the spaces they chose to live in (Shoniwa & Thebe, 2020:3).

Informal settlements are a representation of the right to the city in action, where people, even unwillingly, bypass the bureaucracy of property ownership and occupy land where they will be exercising their agency. The formation of committees and self-governing structures are an expression of the agency of working-class people (Ngwane, 2017). Neuwirth (2005), in exploring informality, shows another aspect of the agency exercised by informal settlement dwellers, where soon after occupying land they do not own, they start building more permanent structures and either steal or protest for basic services that need to be provided by the State. Instead of the often violent attempts at eradicating informal settlements through evictions, a better alternative may be to co-operate with informal settlement dwellers to develop their communities in ways that benefit the well-being of the communities, and as a result, protect their constitutional rights to dignity, freedom and security of the person, and the right to housing.

With the on-going discussions around restitution and land reform, the world has been rapidly digitising, with communication taking place over mobile phones. South Africa's earliest introduction of the mobile phone came in the early 1990s. They were 2G cell phones which rested on the global system for mobile telecommunications (Siapera, 2012:150). The contents of the phone and conversations held over the phone were digitally encrypted, providing more accuracy and efficiency in power usage and thereby allowing for smaller batteries (Siapera, 2012:150).

But electricity infrastructure was woefully inadequate in many townships and most informal settlements, so South Africa's digital migration was established with the Black majority already disadvantaged. The democratic government hailed ICTs as one of the main drivers of social development in the "new" South Africa in 1994. Adopting the techno-centric perspective which claimed that the mere access to ICTs by marginalised people would lead to general improvement in their quality of life, the South African government set out to get all people in the country connected to the world (Mutula, 2013:30). This approach, however, left its ICT policy disengaged from the socio-economic conditions of the majority of South Africans (Singh, 2010:210). The RDP was clear on its intentions regarding ICT adoption throughout the country, emphasising its intention to "provide universal affordable access for all as rapidly as possible

within a sustainable and viable telecommunications system that is capable of enhancing, cheapening and facilitating education, health care, business information, public administration and rural development, and to develop a Southern African co-operative programme for all telecommunications" (Singh, 2010:210). The Telecommunications Act of 1996 set specific goals to reach the vision set out by the RDP and the general political rhetoric of the Information Society by the then President Nelson Mandela and his deputy, Thabo Mbeki, both emphasised their commitment to getting all South Africans on an equal footing regarding to ICT infrastructure and access (Singh, 2010:210). Gillwald (2005:470) identified the market structure and not only the legislation as the root cause of the objectives set by the Telecommunications Act largely failing the most vulnerable. The government's liberalisation of the telecommunications industry saw Vodacom, MTN, and later CellC become the main service providers. But the expansion of the industry did not lead to prices being lowered by the companies themselves, or being regulated by the government (Gillwald, 2005:472). Furthermore, political interference created instability within the industry which impacted negatively on the investment climate in the country (Gillwald, 2005:475).

The Department of Communications tried to regain some control over the telecommunications direction by awarding Under-Serviced Area Licences to small businesses in an attempt to level the competition in the industry (Singh, 2010:214). The independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) delayed disbursing these licenses, leaving several companies unable to afford the subsequent operational costs (*Mail & Guardian,* 2015). Despite Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) policies that promised the participation of formerly disadvantaged people, policies aimed at liberalising the network services provider industry did not make provision for these small-scale businesses to compete with more established companies, leaving them unable to provide the infrastructure to rural areas and townships which needed this infrastructure most (Singh, 2010:215). The lack of regulatory frameworks aimed at protecting poor people, political interference and administerial failings by State left poor people unable to participate freely in the 'Information Society'.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined a brief account that has led to the existence of informal settlements in South Africa. It has also shown how the post-apartheid government handled informality of

settlement, and how that has led to the continued infringement of the rights of these communities. It used Lefebvre's concept of the right to the city to argue that the State and other powerful actors need to rethink how they perceive informal settlements in order to protect the human rights of those living in them. The chapter has also outlined how the government handled the digitisation of the country and how that has affected the poor living in informal settlements.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework that informs this study. It begins with a brief history and context of Enkanini, the research site. This history and context informed the choice of decoloniality as the overarching social theory approach to the study. Decoloniality shapes my understanding of the literature consulted; my understanding of and interaction with the research participants, and the knowledge they share during interviews. Next, it discusses theories of Communicative Ecology, and Sociality which are the foundation of this study which explores how young adults in Enkanini use their cell phones to create and maintain a sense of community and togetherness. This research foregrounds literature from the Global South (Hijazi-Omari & Ribak, 2008; Hahn & Kibora, 2008; Chiumbu, 2013; Horst & Miller, 2008) because it is the context of my study. This context tends to differ from Northern contexts, which although not homogenous, have contexts and cultures that are very different to the informal settlement of marginalised people that that is the focus of this study. The themes, challenges and opportunities presented to us by Global South literature is more likely to apply to a Global South research site.

A brief history of Enkanini

In the previous chapter I discussed the creation of townships and informal settlements in South Africa. In this section I will start by creating an image of the research site's specific history, location, and current challenges before discussing this research's theoretical lens.

In 2011, a veld north of the Mayfield and Transit Camp situated on the outer edge of Makhanda's township was earmarked by the National Department of Human Settlements for the construction of State-funded RDP houses. Despite many residents in Makhanda being registered for RDP housing that same year, years later, no construction had taken place due to, according to the department, a lack of resources (Donyali & Maclennan, 2018). In June 2017, a small group of women living in Joza's ext.9 decided to occupy the land and construct shacks on the veld for their children who had outgrown living at home and could not afford to rent property elsewhere. When people came to inquire about them building shacks, they quickly formed a committee led by Asanda Bobo that registered people using their names, ID numbers, and addresses that would

be used to demarcate where they could have plots (Maclennan, 2018). Word got around about this development and people flocked to Enkanini to be registered by the leadership committee and quickly started building shelters.

The municipality quickly caught wind of these developments on the Mayfield and Transit camp (Maclennan, 2018). Makana Municipality tried to get the settlers removed from the land through a court interdict in August 2018. *Grocotts Mail,* Makhanda's local newspaper, reported on 15 November that Makana Brick and Mayfield Clay, two local private businesses, who had applied for the interdict, decided to withdraw it after an amicable agreement had been reached with Makana Municipality and Enkanini's leadership committee.

In November 2019, *Grocotts Mail* reported on protests by Enkanini residents that had been taking place for several days. Shortly after the municipality had installed communal taps, residents demanded electrical infrastructure. In a statement made to *Grocotts Mail* by the Executive Mayor, Mzukisi Mpahlwa, the Municipality responded that it would need approval from Eskom, the state owned national supplier of electricity (Maclennan, 2019). At the time of writing, talks were still on-going between committee leaders, Eskom, and the local municipality. In January 2020, the local municipality asked the leadership committee to stop more people from moving into the community so that they could create a town plan and finalise plans with Eskom for electricity provision. The community members at the meeting agreed to this request for these reasons and for fear of overcrowding.

Enkanini currently has more than 1000 shacks placed a few metres apart. Gravel roads separate the 'blocks' of shacks and there are communal taps on most of the roads. There is no provision of either sanitation or electricity. The community comprises a mixture of mostly single young adults and families.

Socio-economic conditions: "I'm very hungry"

Enkanini's residents are poor. Many are unemployed and survive on state grants, informal trade, such as washing and ironing for people, harvesting and selling wattle sticks to people building shacks, and as street vendors in Makhanda's CBD (Donyeli & Maclennan, 2018). During the hard lockdown during the Covid-19 epidemic, many of the residents were hungry for days on end. Transport to and from the area is erratic under normal circumstances, and almost impossible

during the lockdown (Donyeli & Maclennan, 2020). This made it difficult for many residents to access their piece-meal jobs that supplemented the state grant. Without the supplemental income, many residents had to rely on food donations from people in and around Makhanda (Donyeli & Maclennan, 2020).

Residents of Enkanini, along with approximately 30 million adults in South Africa live below the poverty line, surviving on an average of R992 per month (Chutel, 2017). Conversely, the richest 1% of South Africans own 67% of the wealth in the country, making South Africa the most unequal country in the world (Webster, 2019).

This study uses coloniality/decoloniality as a theoretical lens or overarching social theory to make sense of Enkanini's socio-economic context, and justify the significance of the research question.

Southern epistemology: coloniality/decoloniality as the theoretical lens

Coloniality refers to the long-lasting patterns of power that emerge as a consequence of colonialism that shape culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge-production well beyond the limits of colonial administrations (Quijano, 2000:168). Although the formal colonial system ended with independence for South Africa in 1931 (Ogura, 1996), the unequal power relations that influence Enkanini's every day existence are deeply entrenched today.

One way to clarify how coloniality is deeply entrenched in our everyday lives is by explaining how modernity is an inextricable part of coloniality, and therefore perpetuates coloniality. The Renaissance, Reformation, and Scientific Revolution are often cited as central to modernity's origin, where 'objective' knowledge gave rise to our modern society (Bhambra, 2011:653). This origin story is told as though the development and path to modernity is endogenous to Europe, as though Europe's development took place in and of itself (Bhambra, 2011:653), and therefore nations in the Global South need to follow this blueprint in order to become modern. However, this story is incomplete. Decolonial scholars have called for a complete reconfiguration of this story to a 'different beginning', one where the development of Europe hinged on the conquest of the Americas and the slave trade, and not only on Europeans' independent, objective and scientific thought as is often told (Mignolo, 2011:47).

The conquest of the Americas and the slave trade enabled the growth European capitalism and modernity which gave rise to the 'darker side of modernity': that part world history which underpinned Europe's modern development (Mignolo, 2011:47). This means that Europe and the Global North in general could not have developed the way it has without colonial conquest. Their development was dependant on the destruction of the Global South. The appropriation of land and people as drivers of western 'civilization' was justified using what we now call western epistemology, which has been assumed to be universal (Mignolo, 2011:47). Coloniality is the darker side of modernity, which means that our modern systems are intertwined with coloniality. Mignolo presents modernity as a three-headed hydra: coloniality of being, knowledge, and power. These three 'heads' are inextricably linked to each other, but can be explained separately (Mignolo, 2011:48).

Enkanini is a poignant example of this three-headed hydra in action. First, coloniality of being is rooted in the codification of physical differences between Europeans and the colonised people in the Americas and later Africa and Asia in the concept of race (Maldonado-Torres, 2007:244). This codification of race had, and continues to have, real consequences for the people living in the Global South. For instance, Enkanini is mostly Black, as is most of the over five million South Africans living in informal settlements. Many of them have very little or no access to basic services such as water, health care and electricity, all basic socio-economic rights entrenched in the Constitution. The denial of their rights can be perceived as a denial of their humanity by the nation's administration.

Coloniality of power constitutes a matrix that operates through control or hegemony of authority (Quijano, 2007:171). It applies to the practical exertion of power over marginalised people through colonial structures of power.

Grosfoguel (2007:220) argues that the end of colonial administrations did not lead to the decolonization of the world: "This led to the myth of a 'postcolonial' world. The heterogeneous and multiple global structures put in place over a period of 450 years did not evaporate with the juridical-political decolonisation of the periphery over the past 50 years." Furthermore, modernity has been built on a system of civilization that has coloniality at its basis (Maldonado-Torres, 2019:1). Unless the governing party makes a concerted effort to centre the needs of the marginalised in its major policies and their implementation, they will continue to perpetuate

coloniality in all its forms (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014:202). Colobiality is perpetuated in different ways, for example, the application for an interdict against the people of Enkanini to have them evicted by the Makana Municipality in 2018 is an example of how coloniality of power is often perpetuated in a 'postcolonial' world. Another example is the creation and the use of eviction services provided by businesses such as the Red Ants whose sole purpose is to gain profit by evicting marginalised people from informal settlements (Seleka, 2020).

Finally, coloniality of knowledge, closely linked to coloniality of power and being, refers to the knowledge systems developed by colonial powers (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). By questioning or denying the humanity of the colonised, their epistemology, or what they deem to be valid knowledge, was questioned and sometimes denied (Taiwo, 1993:896). Understanding coloniality of knowledge is closely linked to the decision to approach this research using mainly a southern epistemology that highlights the knowledges and experiences of the people living in the Global South. To elaborate, we can think of Western Epistemology existing on one side of world perspectives, and a Southern Epistemology on the other (Grosfoguel, 2007). Western Epistemology, intertwined with modernity presents itself as a universal, neutral, and objective point of view (Grosfoguel, 2007). This point of view has resulted in the entrenchment of a hegemonic Eurocentric paradigm (Grosfoguel, 2007). The foundations of a Western epistemology lie in the formation of Western philosophy which is universally seen as the beginning of European modern times in 1492 (Grosfoguel, 2007). This 'modern era', along with the development of Western philosophy was preceded by the violence of Europe's imperial ambitions (Grosfoguel, 2007). The violence of Europe's imperial ambitions, therefore, created the social, political, economic and historical conditions for the entrenchment of Western epistemology as a universal, hegemonic epistemology whose remnants we understand as coloniality of knowledge (Grosfoguel, 2007). A Southern epistemolgy, on the other hand, which promotes decolonial thought and presents knowledge as pluriversal, and in opposition to the centring of Western epistemology as universal (Grosfoguel, 2007).

Despite Southern epistemology's critique of the 'universalisation' of Western epistemology, colonial conquest has entrenched Western epistemology as universal (Grosfoguel, 2007). This means that "nobody escapes the class, sexual, gender, spiritual, linguistic, geographical and

racial hierarchies of the modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchal world-system" we live in today (Grosfoguel, 2007:213). As such, it is important to clarify a researcher's epistemic location. We cannot assume that because a researcher is geographically based in the Global South, that her/his work is inherently decolonial (Grosfoguel, 2007; Akboka, 2014; Smith, 2013). A Southern epistemology, along with decolonial thinking demands that a researcher be self-critical in their approach to research, the literature they use as tools, and their methods of data collection/generation. For example, I am not a home language isiXhosa speaker, so I needed to have Makhanda natives who speak isiXhosa as a home language with me during interviews to prevent any misunderstandings that might have taken place during an interview. As much as this makes all discussions much longer, participants have the right to feel as comfortable as possible throughout the process.

I used a colonial/decolonial approach to the research question, working with the research participants, and the data I collected and analysed. A decolonial approach to research focuses on unearthing the unequal power relations that suppress marginalised voices (Chiumbu, 2016:418) with the purpose of centring these voices. The perspective recognises a colonial matrix of power, "a global system of asymmetric power relations and analysed in terms of who is speaking (body politics of knowledge) and from where (geo-politics of knowledge)" (Chiumbu, 2016:419). This means that decolonial research always focuses on voices not conventionally centred in Eurocentric knowledge and from places that are marginalised in various ways. Decoloniality theory has also informed the decision to make Enkanini a research site. Listening to the ways they understand the communicative ecology they live in, along with listening to the ways they use their cell phones when they can, and finally, understanding part of their social composition is an opportunity to participate in a growing body of knowledge that centres the perspectives and experiences of the marginalised.

From a pragmatic point of view, research conducted from a decolonial perspective identifies with people's concerns, needs, and daily experiences (Ndimande, 2012:222). The researcher needs to keep in mind the values that a community lives by (Ndimande, 2012:223). As Ndimande (2012:223) notes, a decolonial approach is about "recognising the community's notions of respect, demonstrating openness and willingness to work with the participants, rather than impose colonial attitudes on participants." This means that the research gives the researcher the

responsibility to recognise the ways in which a value such as respect is given and received within a community.

The specific ways I will apply this approach will be discussed in the Methodology chapter.

A decolonial approach also proposes de-linking. Delinking and border thinking occur wherever the conditions are appropriate and the awareness of coloniality comes into being (Mignolo, 2011:47). It entails centring other epistemologies and other principles of knowledge silenced by Eurocentric systems of knowledge. Mignolo writes: "De-linking then shall be understood as a decolonial, epistemic shift leading to other-universality, that is, to pluri-versality as a universal project" (2011:53 From this perspective, conducting research from a decolonial perspective means bringing to light and emphasising that the research participants live in a state of coloniality, in the periphery where their location and everyday lives are informed by their existence on the 'other side' of the abyssal line (De Sousa Santos, 2006:65). It applies theory that does not seek to impose normative standards of life that may considered a form of violence towards participants, and using methods that will make participants feel as respected as possible (Ndimande, 2012:221).

Southern epistemology and decoloniality call for a change in universal perspectives, and the perspective on informality is no different. There is a growing body of literature that calls for a change in perspective with regards to how informality is viewed and therefore addressed by the State and by society in general (Roy, 2005:147), with the claim that the urban future is based in the developing world (Massey, 2001; Roy, 2005). This means that instead of viewing developing world cities and informality as a state of "crisis" that needs to be addressed through developed world models, urban informality should be viewed as a place where scholars and policy makers can learn of the ways to improve the lives of people living in informal spaces without the need to apply the ownership model of property as a prerequisite to an improved life (Roy, 2005:148). Informality, through this perspective, is not seen as the opposite of formality, but as a mode or method urbanization (Roy, 2006:149), which may then lead to the creation of policies that will first aim to protect the rights of those living in informal spaces, therefore ending the continuous legal and political marginalisation of those living in informal spaces (Huchzermeyer, 2003).

To conclude, a southern epistemic approach presents the researcher with the opportunity to centre some of the marginalised voices of Enkanini. Their daily experiences within the research framework will be centred (Deacon, 1999:10). The aim is to work alongside the participants as they help me understand their daily lives through their use of communicative devices. I will now discuss the different concepts that will be applied in more specific ways when conducting interviews and generating data in order to answer the main question: how do young adults in Enkanini navigate a multi-layered communication environment through the use of their cell phones, and how does this shape the kinds of sociality that they forge?

Communicative ecology

This section outlines the concepts and literature that will be applied to the data collected.

In 1994, Altheide proposed a concept that would help researchers understand society's ever-growing media landscape in a context that would give them the freedom to apply it in several ways. He suggested the use of the term "ecology of communication," to help "grasp how social activities are joined with information technology and to offer a perspective for reconceptualising how communication frameworks can inform social participation" (Altheide, 1994: 666). The concept of a communicative ecology was first developed in order to understand the increasing culture of surveillance and control in the US (Altheide, 1994:667) and has been further developed to understand how communication processes take place and are used by members of different communities (Foth & Hearn, 2007).

Foth and Hearn (2007) further developed the concept and applied it to the everyday interactions people have with one another while living in the same area. They applied the concept in the context of three trends related to the design of web and mobile application services (Foth & Hearn, 2007:179). They looked into the use of ICT by members of a community living and working in a newly established urban village; on the opportunities afforded by web and mobile media enabling the building of bridges between people living in the same place, and how community activism and participating in joint struggles with other people through ICT use can benefit communities (Foth & Hearn, 2007:179).

A communicative ecology framework centres the environment within which all communication takes place (Chiumbu, 2013, Foth & Hearn, 2007, Altheide 1994). This concept moves away

from the technologically deterministic idea of focusing only on the devices that facilitate the communicative process, instead examining the "logic and principles of technologically informed communication" while addressing the significance of the cultural context within which this communication takes place (Altheide, 1994). This means that people's socio-political environments, plus the devices they use to communicate, in addition to the content of the communication all form part of a group's communicative ecology and inform the group's social order.

Altheide presented several reasons for the use of the word 'ecology', rather than 'communicative order.' First, ecology implies the existence of a relationship created through constant interactive processes. Second, "ecology implies a spatial and relational basis for a subject matter" (Altheide, 1994:667) which means that there needs to be some form of a social order in place for a communicative ecology to exist. Third, the elements discussed above are not arbitrary or random: their co-existence and interdependence are fundamental to the existence and use of the technology involved (Altheide, 1994:667). Finally, the interdependence of the elements suggests that if one part of the ecology changes, another is sure to be affected. Altheide notes that, "In a sense, then, ecology does not exist as a 'thing,' but is a fluid structure involving meaning" (1994:667) and is best treated as a kind of tool that helps us understand how technological devices influence the social activities that take place within a group of people. The fluidity of communication was echoed by Foth & Hearn (2007:179) who found that the residents in their site did not separate communication into silos of "cyberspace" VS "reality". Instead they used the mode of communication best suited to their preferences at any given point, thereby transitioning seamlessly between "place-to-place" communication, and online platforms.

There are three layers of a communicative ecology: the technological layer which consists of technological and connecting media that enable communication and interaction (Altheide, 1994); second, a discursive layer which is the content of communication available in the community (Altheide, 1994); finally, a social layer which consists of people and social modes of organising those people (Altheide, 1994). These layers are intertwined in daily life but will be explained in sections for ease of understanding.

This understanding of a communicative ecology is used "in a search for meaning, rather than causation or technological determinism" (Altheide, 1994: 669). Foth and Hearn (2007) add that

by understanding people's communicative ecology, the researcher prioritises communication and information flow of that locality. Understanding the communicative ecology of the research participants means understanding the ways in which communication takes place as well as with whom (Altheide, 32:1994).

The technological layer

The technological layer enables the communication to take place amongst a group of people (Altheide, 1994). The technology used shapes the message based on its specifications, while the meanings transferred within those messages between the people involved in the communication are based on a logic that involves assumptions the group of people can generally agree on (Altheide, 1994:667). Altheide defines information technology as "those external devices, procedures that are used in helping create, organize, transmit, store, and retrieve information" (1994:668). This definition is not limited to a conventional understanding of information technology, the definition is wide enough to include other 'devices' of communication such as newspapers, the radio and in our case, even a whistle.

Technological devices used within a communicative ecology are not uniformly accepted and used by a specific community. For instance, a small Lau community grappling with the speed at which ICT use seemed to be fast replacing more traditional modes of communication were divided by their communication preferences. Some villagers felt as though the use of non-digital media unique to the community such as slit gong drums, conch shells, messengers, and the more contemporary transceiver radios were still relevant to how the community functioned and sometimes preferable to ICT use (Hobbis, 2017:182). Other community members preferred ICT over non-digital modes of communication for their potential to help them reach loved ones further away, especially when some of them need support to get away from abusive relationships that left some of them feeling isolated in their villages (Hobbis, 2017:180).

Chiumbu also touches on the communicative ecology of a marginalised community working to prevent evictions from informal settlements (Chiumbu, 2013). She analyses the use of traditional mobile phone functions such as calling, texting and flashing by members of the Anti-Eviction Campaign to signal meetings, protests and other important developments that other members need to know about (Chiumbu, 2013). She also analyses the use of webpages and social media

sites such as Facebook alongside these traditional communication practices and concludes that the interaction of the traditional ICT use, alongside newer social media platforms enhance their communication practices (Chiumbu, 2013). Considering that informal settlement residents are lower-income earners and at times unemployed, the use of a combination of communication methods to send individual and collective messages keeps most members informed and involved on the work of the campaign.

The discursive layer

The second layer considers the themes and content of the communication taking place. Here, I focus on the topics that participants engage in with their social circles and how the discussions shape their perspectives.

For instance, young teenage Palestinian girls used phones bought by their boyfriends so that they could contact one another without the knowledge of their parents (Hijazi-Omari & Ribak, 2008). Focusing Burkina Faso's oral nature, Hahn & Kibora (2008) found that cell phones in this area were mainly used to strengthen family and community ties (Hahn & Kibora, 2008). Comparing local cell phone use with the use of the cell phone by teenagers in Palestine, the close and extended family members in Burkino Faso are normally involved from the point of appropriation because the wealthier family members living in cities give their old phones to, or buy phones for, poorer family members living in rural Burkina Faso (Hahn & Kibora, 2008). Where rural Burkinabé are able to strengthen family and community ties with people living in urban areas (Hahn & Kibora, 2008), many Latin American women working in New Zealand focus more on their children and use ICTs to enhance their mothering experiences (Hoffman, 2016).

The social layer

The final layer consists of the people and social mode of organising them, and involves the concept of sociality and its effects on sociability through the use of various modes of communication.

The social layer refers to people and the various social structures with which they identify, ranging from informal personal networks to formal institutions (Altheide, 1994). For example, this may include groups of friends, formal community organisations, and companies. In order to

understand sociality and how it shapes Enkanini's communicative ecology, we will look into the ways in which sociality can be understood.

According to Amirou (1989:3), "the capacity for human sociality can take many forms that is probably why it can be confusing or difficult to nail down to one definition." One conceptualisation of sociality is the "dynamic and relational matrixes, within which subjects are constantly interacting in ways that are co-productive, and continually plastic and malleable" (Amirou, 1989:4). Fiske adds to this discussion by outlining the "four elementary forms of sociality" (Fiske, 1992:689). In his view, different forms of sociality can be understood as being one or a combination of "communal sharing, authority ranking, equality matching, and market pricing" (Fiske, 1992:690). These categories challenge the Western psychological understanding that humans are, at their most natural, asocial. They challenge the assumption that people come together to reach extrinsic, non-social ends or are willing to limit their individual desires for a specific collective goal (Fiske, 1992:689). Communal sharing is present when all members of a group share material possessions with one another (Fiske, 1992:691). Conversely, authority ranking exists where powerful actors in a group ensure that material possessions remain with those with the most power (Fiske, 1992:693). Equality matching focuses on reciprocity, where if one person does something that benefits the other; the benefactor needs to reciprocate soon (Fiske, 1992:693). Finally, market pricing is based on proportionality, where all exchanges have an exchange rate that all members of a group abide by (Fiske, 1992:696).

A different conceptualisation of sociality is based on the idea of disjuncture. This conceptualisation argues that we cannot think of sociality in a way that is uniform, leading to the assumption that all people want to be sociable (Amit, 2015). Amit (2015) argues that we need to keep in mind that simply because members of a groups express a specific kind of sociality, it does not mean that they want to and will act in a way that is 'acceptable' to the rest of the group. Considering how some people may not act in ways that are acceptable to the communities they live in will allow us to form a more nuanced discussion of the sociality that exists in that community. The idea of disjuncture can be further understood to apply to network sociality. Castells (1996) conceived the notion of a network sociality as the social relations that take place within groups are based on information the information transferred between people, and not the ties formed by the duration of time spent together (Wittel, 2001). Network sociality, based on the

use of ICTs, is associated with short-lived, intense yet fleeting bonds that are created on a project-by-project basis (Wittel, 2001). The conception of a network sociality "is comprised of subjects and technologies and on the other of the links in between" (Wittel, 2001:52). Wittel outlines four features of network sociality. First is individualisation (Wittel, 2001), which involves "the removal of people's behaviour from historically prescribed social forms and commitments, a loss of traditional security with respect to rituals, guiding norms and practical knowledge" (Beck, 1999; Wittel; 2001:65). Second are ephemeral relations which involve quick, intense and at times overloaded social ties all with the aim of completing a specific goal (Wittel, 2001). Third is the move from long-term social ties to information exchange taking place over shorter time due to the immediacy of the task at hand (Wittel, 2001). The fourth element is technology (Wittel, 2001): network sociality is a technological sociality insofar as it is embedded in communication technology, transport technology and technologies to maintain relationships (Wittel, 2001). Testing the elements of networked sociality, Foth & Hearn (2007) found that the social circles of the research participants had grown far beyond their immediate surroundings, through the use of ICT (Foth & Hearn, 2007). The short, informational relationships they formed with their neighbours still formed a valuable part of their sense of place in the world, although they continued to feel the need for immediate, face-to-face communication and connection with friends and family in their physical spaces

These elements of a network sociality make it clear that it arises from the capitalist, globalisation-aligned world-system. It is clearly orientated towards the Global North and its conception of modernity. This does not mean, however, that it should simply be ignored. There may be elements of network sociality in a context that is not post-industrial and globalised. When the concept of a network sociality is applied to a marginalised community, the results are not as clearly defined. Duncan (2013) explored the concept of a network society through the quantitative analysis of mobile phone usage in Grahamstown East, a part of the town that is very poor. Through surveys, she explored the possibility of the existence of a network society in light of the cost of mobile tariffs in South Africa being the third highest in the world after Turkey and Mexico (Ndlovu, 2018; Duncan, 2013:37). She found that fixed line penetration was virtually non-existent in Grahamstown East due to the high costs, and that despite a high level of mobile phone penetration, the continuous use of a handset was too expensive for participants. Data prices are also very expensive, with South Africa's data costs being the second highest in the

continent (Duncan, 2013:37). In an attempt to remedy these high costs, the Independent Communications Authority (ICA) of South Africa ordered all major network providers to lower their prices by up to 50% in 2019, which saw Vodacom and MTN now charging an average of R100 per 1G of data. Through focus groups, she found a disturbing trend in which some residents use money they needed for paraffin, bread and even seeking work opportunities, to buy airtime and data. She found that the concept of a network sociality cannot fully take place if affordability is not equal and easy for most people.

Conviviality offers an alternative perspective on the sociality of Africans living in marginalised communities. Conviviality is a continuous process of balancing intimacy with distance and personal with collective interests (Hay, 2014:7). These seemingly contradictory modes of being and relations are often seen as needing to be fixed in order to create 'complete' modes of being and relationships. Nyamnjoh, posits that this incompleteness; where relations and identities are multi-faceted, complex and even contradictory; is and should be the normal order of things. Following a decolonial perspective, Nyamnjoh argues that "a dominant Eurocentric logic of conquest drives many an interaction with Africa into zero sum games" (Nyamnjoh, 2015:1), which means that in the perception of Africa in comparison with the Global North leads to the creation of a Global North modernity as a complete state of being, a normative standard for Africa to 'work towards.' This perspective ignores the violence of the Global North's development through colonial conquest and through contemporary policies of coercion and control (Nyamnjoh, 2015:2) that create and support the Global North's wealth through the exploitation of the Global South.

Based on this understanding of reality and being, Nyamnjoh argues for the exploration of "frontier modes of existence" (Nyamnjoh, 2015:8), which centre interrelationships, collaboration, co-production, and compassion. This is because when living in a state of incompleteness, "the freedom to pursue individual or group goals exists within a socially predetermined frame that emphasises collective interests at the same time that it allows for individual creativity and self-activation" (Nyanmjoh, 2016:9). This is the definition of conviviality: an ongoing process of negation between collective interests, a collective state of being, and individual desires. A convivial state of being depends on the agency of the individuals involved and on ways in which their subjectivity is governed, such as through self-elected

leadership committees. Thus, according to Nyamnjoh (2015:10), "not only does conviviality encourage us to recognise our own incompleteness, it challenges us to be open-minded and open-ended in our claims and articulations of identities, being and belonging." A convivial sociality, therefore, emphasises unrestrained interactions that make place for conflict and difference with the aim of bridging divides and facilitating collective objectives that empower both the collective and the individual alike (Nyamnjoh, 2015:12).

Hay (2014) used the concept of conviviality to explore how migrant members of a community church in Cape Town used ICTs to relate to, and interact with, one another and with those outside the church. She perceived ICTs to be an extension of a person's senses used to communicate with those not in the same space: "the body reacts and responds to the technology by undertaking certain physical and emotional adjustments" (Hay, 2014:74). This means that the ways in which a person chooses to use ICTs in their daily life, along with how they react to how other people use ICTs in their lives is an important part of understanding how people relate to one another.

Conviviality provides the opportunity to explore the intricacies of everyday life in a Global South context. It allows us to consider many different ways of connecting. It also provides the opportunity to explore the ways in which the community of Enkanini interacts with one another in moments of closeness and in moments of conflict.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter discusses the ways in which the data generation process took place and the key considerations that informed these methods. As explained earlier, I took a decolonial approach to this chapter and that will be discussed as well.

Decolonizing approach

As explained in the literature review, this research takes a decolonial approach, which also applies to the research methodology. While it is easier to be aware of how research can further marginalise vulnerable people if their voices are not promoted, the awareness of these challenges does not make finding solutions to them easy (Akboka, 2014:301). There are two essential principles that underpin decolonial approaches. First, decolonial research is conducted with constant recognition of the existence colonising tendencies in research "both in the methods of inquiry and the application of these methods" (Akboka, 2012:304). This means that the researcher cannot blindly conduct research without first recognising how the methods they apply can contribute to coloniality. They need to understand that blindly applying Eurocentric theory to marginalised spaces can distort how these spaces are represented and understood (Cloete & Auriacombe, 2019:6). Secondly, decolonial approaches engage these issues through the use of decolonial and social justice epistemologies and critical interpretative practices (Akboka, 2014:304). This means that the researcher needs to apply knowledge that is created with social justice in mind (Cloete & Auriacombe, 2019:6). The researcher also needs to critique the theories they apply, critique themselves, and their conduct throughout the research to ensure that research participants are not negatively affected by their work (Akboka, 2014:306).

A decolonial approach is one that identifies with the concerns, needs, and daily experiences of the participants (Ndimande, 2012:222). The researcher needs to keep in mind the values that a community lives by (Ndimande, 2012:223). One way to do that is to understand one's place as an outsider/insider, and at the same time respect the boundaries that people choose to put in place (Ndimande, 2012:223). For instance, my upbringing in the townships of Katlehong in the south of Gauteng, along with my race and gender can help me identify as an insider because I can identify with some research participants and the challenges they face. However, I am also an outsider to the community of Enkanini because I don't live there, don't have the same

experiences as they do, and am not a native isiXhosa speaker As Ndimande (2012: 223) notes, "recognizing the community's notions of respect, demonstrating openness and willingness to work with the participants rather than imposing colonial attitudes on participants," is important when a decolonising approach is central to your research. Colonial attitudes can include viewing oneself as superior to the research participants due to education, class, and racial differences (Day, 2017:205). These attitudes can come across as asking questions that suggest that their socio-economic conditions are their fault and that they can change their lives by aspiring to be like people who have more resources and power than they do. They can also include a lack of transparency on the researcher's part. I had to make sure that did not see myself, and act as if I weresuperior to the participants. I made sure that I referred to all the older participants in ways that denoted respect, such as sis' Amanda, or Mam' Tolo. This was a way of showing respect and it was easy for me because it is how I was raised to refer to people. While in high school I always thought of myself as a "baby revolutionary" because of the political literature I consumed. Admittedly I had no idea what that really meant, but that literature taught me to identify with people's daily struggles on a personal level. I have always believed in the "unless we are all free, no one is free" line of thinking, and it has always helped me remain emotionally connected to people's struggles. This means that I did not see myself as superior to the research participants. It was also important for me to ensure that the participants knew as much about my research as possible. This involved lengthy conversations explaining and re-explaining my research question, my approach, and what I hoped to achieve through the research. There were several moments of frustration when I felt misunderstood by some of the potential participants, but I had to be vulnerable if I were to earn their trust.

One of the practical ways to apply a decolonial approach in research is through the use of indigenous languages in research (Ndimande, 2012:225). Using indigenous languages is not only about the research participants understanding what the researcher says, or about the participants feeling comfortable enough to use their indigenous language. Using indigenous languages during research means being aware of and using language that denotes respect for the participants based on their status in society, something that the English language does not always make space for (Sikes, 2006:355). Researchers cannot afford to offend research participants by not doing and saying things that show respect to the research participants. IsiXhosa is not my primary language; my primary languages are Sesotho and English. As such, I understood that I couldn't

approach people living in Enkanini in any of these languages and expect them to adapt to me. I always went to Enkanini with a good isiXhosa speaker friend, Vuyolwethu. He introduced me and we both explained the nature of the research I was conducting. I had to make it a point to remind them that they could use IsiXhosa if they wanted to because I understood it very well; just speaking was a little difficult.

Another important aspect of a decolonising approach includes understanding that power relations between researchers and the research participants will never be completely equal (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009:280). But it is important for the researcher to make a concerted effort in becoming a solid part of the community and giving people who live in their research field the respect they deserve. Qualitative research helps facilitate this effort in its perspective on research participants and research as a whole.

Before conducting interviews, Vuyolwethu and I visited Enkanini from July to November 2019 while trying to formulate my research question. Each Sunday, we approached a few people to converse with to try and understand the community as much as possible. We attended a few community meetings in November and formally introduced ourselves to the community at the end of the first meeting we attended, having been given permission to do so by one of the leadership committee I decided to do this in recognition of the leadership of the community, as they were seen by the some of the people we spoke to as the elders of the community.

Qualitative methodology

There are different approaches to research. One is a positivist approach which asserts that research in the social sciences should reflect the natural sciences through collecting data that will lead to generalisable "facts" and show causal relationships between phenomena and the people affected (Bryman, 1988:15). Another approach leans more towards an interpretative and critical realist position which both focus more on understanding the research participant and how they make sense of the world around them (Deacon, 1999:11). A critical realist approach is more applicable to this research because as much as people have the ability to make sense of the world around them, larger systems, such as coloniality are influential in how they make sense of the world (Deacon, 1999:11).

Qualitative methodology aims to understand people, not explain them (Babbie & Mouton, 2005:28). The argument is that people are constantly in the process of trying to make sense of their lives: "we continuously interpret, create, and give meaning to, define, justify, and rationalise our actions" (Babbie & Mouton, 2005:28). The researcher's main role is to centre the research participant while trying to understand this process of making sense of their lives. Qualitative research methodologies emphasise the minimising of power relations between the researcher and research participants, as Cannella explains:

> Qualitative research has been developed, used, and expanded, by those who would support diverse knowledges and ways of being, those who would stand for equity, and those who would be transformative, using differing perspectives and definitions to increase justice—whether social, economic, environmental, or otherwise. (2015:594)

Qualitative research adopts an emic perspective which makes the researcher's point of departure the opinion, belief, or experience of the participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2005:271). This is also known as the "insider" perspective where put themselves in the participants' shoes to understand their actions, decisions, and so on (Babbie & Mouton, 2005:271).But, there will always be limitations to the emic perspective: one can never completely claim to understand people's behaviour and decisions. Factors such as gender, class and race need to be acknowledged as always playing a role in limiting our understanding of people's lives (Byrne, 2016:184). This process is known as reflexivity, where researchers need to examine their roles critically during the research process (Byrne, 2016:184), and the similarities and differences between the researcher and participant help the researcher approach topics discussed with sensitivity.

Ethical considerations

At the beginning of this research, I had planned to conduct semi-structured in-depth and focus group interviews, and non-participant observation. But on the 23rd of March 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced a three week long national lockdown in light of the spread of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) within South Africa. The lockdown effectively lasted for the rest of the year, at different levels of restrictions as the Covid-19 cases steadily increased., There was no ethical justification for meeting with the participants personally due to the easily transmissible nature of Covid-19. All interviews were telephonic, and the focus groups and non-participant

observation of meetings that had been planned were cancelled. Although a large part of the research took place during level 1, when people were free to travel across provinces and could have public gatherings, it did not erase the fact that Covid-19 is a highly transmissible and dangerous diseases, especially for people who already face socio-economic challenges that may prevent them from receiving good quality healthcare when they fall ill. It would be highly unethical to put the research participants in danger of infection with Covid-19 knowing that they live in a precarious socio-economic situation.

Explaining myself and my research became a little more difficult to do, but I had to keep in mind the importance of clarifying myself in the best way possible. Tacchi, Slater and Hearn (2003: 28-29) provide a guideline I used and sometimes had to repeat during a telephone conversation:

- Explaining yourself is important because the research participants need to clearly understand what they are getting into and the purpose and process of the research. For example, do they know that this is an in-depth interview? Do they know what will be discussed?

- Respecting confidence matters because the research participants need to know that what will be discussed will be kept confidential and that any details that point to their identity will also be kept private.

- Treating people sensitively is important because some research questions can illicit strong emotions in a participant.

- Exploring sensitive topics is important to prepare for even when you do not plan to discuss sensitive topics. Some participants may feel comfortable enough to share sensitive details about their lives, and a researcher needs to be prepared to handle it with care.

- Not putting people's wellbeing at risk is important because reporting on people's actions can have consequences on them and potentially on the project. All research needs to come after people's wellbeing.

In addition, participants had to be older than 18 years of age so they could have the full capacity to consent to the research. They were all aware that their confidentiality would be preserved in the thesis and understood that the findings would be available online.

I constantly clarified the importance of a professional relationship with some participants, especially some males who wanted to converse with me outside the bounds of the research. Poor ethical practices may cause harm to the research participants and "muddies the waters for future efforts to undertake research in those populations" (Seale, 2004:118). Being in the same age group as many of the research participants, I had to turn down offers to "have drinks" more than I thought I would have to. I also found myself in situations where I had to explain why I could not buy airtime or data for participants who probably thought I had money because I studied at Rhodes University. These unequal power relations and expectations often left me feeling uncomfortable but were mostly sorted out after a lengthy explanation of my position as a student and researcher.

Data collection methods

This section will go into more detail about the specific research methods I used in gathering data for this research. My aim was to look specifically at how a few adults navigate their community using their cell phone, along with the whistle; and what kinds of sociality they experience. My aim was not to show a causal relationship between the behaviour of the participants and social phenomena, it was to understand their process of making sense of their everyday lives (Babbie & Mouton, 2005:28). Babbie and Mouton (2005:28) explain that "people continuously interpret, create, and give meaning to, define, justify and rationalize [their] actions." It was my responsibility to understand these processes to generate data that comes as close as possible to an accurate representation of their world. Babbie and Mouton (2005:33) add that, "the methods used are directed towards understanding individuals in terms of their own interpretations of reality and understanding of society in terms of the meanings which people ascribe to the social practices within the society." This means that my job was to understand the participants by learning about what they valued and how they saw the world and their lives.

My aim was to examine how people navigated their everyday experiences in this community (Deacon, 1999:43). I used purposive snowball sampling, which "like a snowball rolling down a

hill, a snowball sample grows through momentum: initial contacts suggest further people for the researcher to approach, who in turn may provide further contacts" (Deacon, 1999:53). I got in touch with the friend of a friend who lives across the street from where Enkanini begins, in the hope that her physical closeness to the community meant she knew at least one person living there. Thankfully, she had two good friends who live in Enkanini and they agreed to speak to me. At the end of meeting them for the first time, and after they agreed to be research participants, I asked if they would help me find other participants and they were happy to help. The only requirements of the potential participants were that they needed to be adults who had access to a mobile phone and lived in Enkanini.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews

Also known as "conversations with a purpose" (Byrne, 2016:181), semi-structured interviews were used to get to know the research participants on a personal level with the aim of understanding their everyday experiences living in Enkanini. In-depth interviews helped me understand the values that inform the lives of the research participants (Byrne, 2016:182). The interviews were all one-on-one and took place over the phone. I explained my desire to have personal interviews in Enkanini along with the importance of keeping distance due to Covid-19. This explanation was met with understanding, especially from participants I had not met personally before the lockdown restrictions took place.

I also got to know two participants from Facebook through other participants. I explained the research question and sent the consent form over Facebook messenger. I also sent 10 initial questions to them which asked about who they were and the things they did in a typical day as an indication of the kinds of questions they could expect from me. If they agreed to carry on with the interview, they then sent me their phone numbers and I called at a time of their convenience. While on the phone call, I explained my research question and asked for permission once again to carry out the interview and use their information.

I approached the interview process as a form of data generation and not necessarily data collection (Byrne, 2016:181). This is because data collection assumes that there are 'facts' that need to be collected through the interviews that would link the answers from participants with the 'facts' that exist in the social world, which is a more positivist position (Byrne, 2016:181). In

line with the understanding that qualitative methods focus on the process of making sense of their everyday lives, the data generation approach begins with no preconceived ideas of what the participants may say, a 'clean slate.' This approach helped me to keep my mind open to the topics that could come up during conversations. In addition, this approach helped me remember that the participants were co-creators in this research and not subjects. It must be noted though, that researchers cannot take the participants' views as the whole truth. Answers from interviews are treated as a resource, as one of several tools the researcher needs to use when collecting data (Byrne, 2016:181). Although the conversations with participants was my primary data in trying to understand which tools of communication facilitated which kinds of communication and connections between people, the articles in the *Grocott's Mail* helped me understand if what the participants told me, matched with the official news in circulation, and to create a broader picture of the communicative ecology of some of the residents in Enkanini.

Non-participant observation

I introduced myself to some of the people in Enkanini in November 2019 at a community meeting to inform them of the research I wanted to do. I chose not to do 'simple observation' because I believe that people deserve the right to know that they're being observed, especially if this knowledge will not negatively affect their wellbeing or the research itself.

Deacon (1999:256), explains that one of the advantages of observational research is that it allows us "to assess what the people observed understand by what they are doing." For instance, in observing a community meeting, one can conclude the presence of activism among some residents who believe that they need to "fight" for electricity to be installed in their community instead of "waiting" for the municipality to install electrical infrastructure. This "subjective understanding" of reality is an important aspect of qualitative interviewing (Deacon, 1999:256). Deacon also adds that observation allows the "subject to speak, rather than the researcher speaking on their behalf" (Deacon, 1999:256).

On the other hand, placing the research participant's voice at the centre of data generation would reduce the researcher's analytical capacity and forces the researcher to describe, rather than explain the data (Deacon, 1999:256).

The community meetings were mostly attended by middle-aged and older people in the community. As we walked towards the meeting we could hear some parents telling the younger people in their homes to finish off the cooking they had started before the whistle was blown. Others were told to find their younger siblings and bring them back home. All the meetings had the same agenda: electricity, crime, and new tenants who had moved in.

I was planning to attend more community meetings in 2020, but since the lockdown restrictions, I decided to complete a different kind of non-participant observation. I looked at the participants' Facebook use to try and understand if and how they used it to engage with other people th in Enkanini. By observing the meetings I was trying to understand what the community members valued and what they were most concerned about by discussing it with other members of the community.

Observing the participants' Facebook use

The increasing use of social media has seen a corresponding increase in the use of social media content as a data source for researchers (Kapoor et al, 2018:540). Social media research can be longitudinal, a snapshot in time, or can cover a particular time period (Kapoor et al, 2018:540). I decided to send friend requests to research participants after getting their consent. I focused on their posts from when they said they moved to Enkanini to their latest posts. The aim was to understand if they used their profiles to communicate their thoughts or feelings about living in Enkanini, and if they used Facebook to communicate with other people living in Enkanini.

Analysing *Grocotts Mail* articles

Grocott's Mail is South Africa's oldest independent newspaper and the only newspaper based in Makhanda. The first article was written in August 2018. It focused on Makhanda's informal housing crisis and reported that the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Housing could not build Enkanini's residents' houses due to a lack of resources.

Grocott's Mail has reported on Enkanini in four times since the first protest in 2018. I examined these news articles in addition to the interviews and the Facebook observation to understand the participants' struggles for housing and basic services, and to understand what sources from the Makhanda's leadership had to say in response to these struggles.

Conclusion

This chapter explained the theoretical approach of the research. It considered the ethical considerations and subsequent changes to the research methods in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and discussed the specific methods I used to gather information for the coming chapters.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter examines the findings of the data collected and analyses them within the theory discussed throughout the research. I begin by discussing how coloniality can be seen in the lives of Enkanini's residents, I then discuss Enkanini's communicative ecology, and explore how this communicative ecology affects the sociality of the participants. This chapter addresses the following questions raised before and during the research process. How does coloniality shape the life worlds of people in Enkanini? How does their use of communicative devices promote and sustain a community? How do the mobile phone, the whistle, and other communicative forms in Enkanini's communicative ecology promote sociality in this social space? How is activism encouraged and promoted through the sociality constructed in Enkanini?

How does coloniality shape the daily interactions in Enkanini's communicative ecology?

Coloniality is an integral part of this research for a few reasons: first, I wanted to carry out this entire research journey in a way that would not perpetuate epistemic violence, as explained in Chapter 2. Secondly, I wanted to try and understand the specific ways in which coloniality affects the participants. This approach enabled me to ask questions that would create enough freedom to make this process a collaborative one. My aim was not to impose understandings on the participants that would create normative ways of being that they would have to aim towards. My aim was to understand, through the main topic of communication and social interaction, how the participants made sense of their reality.

My role in this research was to approach the research questions, the research participants, and the data I collected and analysed using a decolonial approach. This approach focuses on unearthing the unequal power relations that suppress marginalised voices (Chiumbu, 2016:418), with the purpose of centring these voices. The perspective is from understanding the colonial matrix of power, that is "a global system of asymmetric power relations and analysed in terms of who is speaking (body politics of knowledge) and from where (geo-politics of knowledge)" (Chiumbu, 2016:419).

This colonial matrix of power is visible in almost every aspect of the participants' lives. Their daily experiences are often marked by asymmetric power relations between those whom

coloniality protects such as State officials, and the participants who are negatively affected by coloniality. The first aspect of these asymmetrical power relations is seen in Enkanini's residents' landlessness. They needed to occupy land originally owned by the Eastern Cape Provincial Government who refused to build houses for them. After occupying that space, they were threatened with eviction using the very law that would not protect them and provide land for them to begin with. This means that although their marginality rendered them unable to utilise the law to protect them, their marginality also meant that they were subject to the regulation of the law in order to keep them off the land they occupied.

With regards to social interactions, coloniality is often visible in the ways in which marginalised people are affected by technological developments that are often hailed as transformative for all consumers (de Sousa e Silva, Sutko, Sais & de Sousa e Silva, 2011:414). For instance, Castells (1996) argues that with the invention of faster, cheaper ICT, the world was fast moving into a network society where people would interact through ICT, and subsequently structure their lives in more individualistic ways. He argues that networks were "appropriate instruments for a capitalist economy based on innovation, globalisation, and decentralised concentration" (Castells, 1996:470).

Whereas life in a middle-class society is characterised by the anonymity that comes with using modern technology such as cars and mobile phones, township social community is experienced as a contiguous space where the neighbourhood is integrated into everyday life (Bray et al 2010: 101). This physical closeness is more intense because of the economic hardships faced by marginalised people, making communal ties with neighbours even more important. Another example is the ways in which Enkanini's residents interact with formal state officials such as the police and municipal officials. State officials are usually a lot more visible in marginalised places because as 'savage zones', existing on the other side of the abyssal line, they are subject to regulation and violence.

Throughout this chapter I will highlight examples of how coloniality manifests in the lives of Enkanini's residents.

Enkanini's communicative ecology

As noted in Chapter 3, a communicative ecology is defined as communication within a context (Altheide, 1994). It explores how people use different kinds of technologies to socialise with one another, and how their social circumstances shape their communication processes (Altheide, 1994). As noted in Chapter 3, there are three layers in a communicative ecology: the technological layer focuses on the devices used by people in a common environment (Foth & Hearn, 2007:180); The discursive layer looks into the themes and content of the communication (Foth & Hearn, 2007:180), and finally the social layer looks into the social relations that are created and maintained by the communication (Foth & Hearn, 2007:180). The communicative ecology and sociality discussed in this chapter focus on the communication that takes place among people living within the community.

Enkanini's communicative ecology is affected by coloniality in different ways. Coloniality of being shapes their reliance on word-of-mouth communication due to the unavailability of electricity. Coloniality of power leaves them unable to use the courts to compel the municipality to grant them basic services because of clauses in the Bill of Rights that allow the State to not grant basic services.

One of the main requirements for participants in the research was to own, or have access to, a cell phone so that I could contact them to explore how they used their cell phones to get in touch with other people. The research participants used two main kinds of technology for communication: mobile phones and the whistle.

The technology layer: mobile phones and whistles

All participants owned their mobile phones. Contrary to some research conducted in the Global South that found that phone sharing was common among marginalised people (Sey, 2017; Batson-Savage, 2007; Hobbis, 2017; Schoon, 2011), Xoliswa, Cumbilr and Khayalethu bought their phones from retailers and did not share them with anyone else. Khayalethu bought his phone several months into starting work as a security officer. Simphiwe bought his phone while working at Makana Brick in 2019. Thembi's father bought her the phone just after she had been accepted to study at college. Qiniso also got his phone from his mother a year before starting

college. Zenande explained that she bought her phone after saving up money that her boyfriend gave her over four months.

Despite owning their own phones all the participants said that they seldom used them because of the absence of electricity and their cost. As Enkanini has no electricity, all the participants charge their phones elsewhere. Xoliswa explained that before her phone stopped working, she charged it at her boyfriend's home in ext.10, which is approximately 2km away from Enkanini:

> I charge it overnight and I collect it in the morning after leaving my children at the crèche nearby.

This was the easiest way for her to ensure that her phone was constantly charged, but it also meant that she did not have access to it in the evenings. On days she used her phone a lot more, she would walk back to her boyfriend's house and charge it during the day. She described her phone activity as "basic" explaining that she would use her phone to play music that she downloaded onto her phone. She also used her phone to communicate with her friends and family on WhatsApp if she had data. She also charged her brother's phone in the same home and would give it to him on her way back to her house. This routine was the most convenient for her and was the safest until her brother's phone, which was two months old at the time, disappeared from the house in August:

> I opened a case of theft with the police, but I don't think anything will happen. It makes me angry because when I charged the phone, there were a few others right there and his was the only one that just vanished. And everyone there said that they didn't see anything, it makes me angry.

The theft incident highlights another aspect of coloniality: Enkanini's residents live in poor socio-economic conditions and theft is one result of these conditions. People who are stolen from are left even more financially vulnerable than before the theft occurs. Some of those who steal are vulnerable to the wrath of the community, which can either leave them badly injured due to mob justice, or ostracised from the community. This affects how people relate to one another and often raises suspicions amongst people sharing the same socio-economic struggles (Lorenc, et al. 2012).), This shapes the complex relationships within the community, which will be discussed further in the sociality section.

For cell phones to be a primary means of communication, residents would have to have unlimited access to electricity. Participants believed that they would get electricity soon after moving into Enkanini after the leadership committee told them that they would go to Port Elizabeth to persuade the provincial government to install electricity infrastructure. This was after the leadership told residents that the municipality had promised to install electricity infrastructure by the end of 2019. According to *Grocott's Mail* (8 November 2019), however, Makana Mayor Mzukisi Mpahlwa said that the municipality was still in the process of formalising Enkanini as a township which was necessary for the residents to have the legal right to access basic services. He added that the municipality had no control over when Eskom would install electricity infrastructure, and that they had no power to expedite that process. These opposing narratives affected the way some participants viewed, and interacted with, other residents including the leadership.

The Mayor's refusal to intervene and assist residents even before Enkanini was established, and his later apathy towards the residents' needs is an example of how coloniality shapes people's lives. State officials such as the mayor refused to acknowledge Enkanini's existence as a settlement of citizens with rights even after hundreds of people had moved in. They attempted to have people evicted from the Mayfield transit camp based on the illegality of their presence (Malcennan, 2018 & Dyongman, 2021). This perspective meant that the Municipality would not acknowledge their citizenship and subsequent need to settle on the land illegally due to a lack of financial resources. Because of the legal and financial power afforded to State officials, Enkanini's residents could not hold the municipality and the provincial department of housing accountable for their refusal to build houses and install basic services such as electricity. Furthermore, the clauses in the Bill of Rights that allow the State to halt and cancel the delivery of basic services by claiming to have inadequate resources.[1]

[1] Socio-economic rights in the Bill of Rights all have a clause which says "The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights." In the case of *Soobramoney v Minister of Health, KwaZulu-Natal (CCT32/97) [1997] ZACC 17* The Constitutional Court said that it could not force the government to realise socio-economic rights if they did not have the financial means to do so.

The cost of using mobile phones

Mobile phones have become ubiquitous in South Africa, with a penetration rate of over 100%, and a smart phone penetration rate of 80% (Gilbert, 2019). Despite this, about 8 million South Africans still live without electricity, and according to the latest Stats SA research over three million live on only R28 a day (Stats SA, 2018). Data costs in South Africa are among the highest on the continent, despite a directive from the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) to mobile network providers to lower data costs significantly (Ramphele, 2017). These figures indicate the difficulties of people living under these circumstances: they cannot consistently use mobile phones to contact others, access services such as cell phone and online banking, or online job applications and some medical services. Moses et al. (2013) note that although South Africa's ICT infrastructure was good compared to other African countries, many rural and peri-urban areas still do not have the infrastructure for continuous access to ICT. More recently, *IOL* reported that South Africa is still lagging behind access to ICT infrastructure compared to more developed regions, and the poorest would be worst affected despite the global move to 5G technology (15 March 2019). The participants expressed how important their phones still were to them despite how expensive they were to use, and regardless of the lack of electricity. Qiniso explained:

> Sometimes I go for weeks without airtime or data. But that doesn't mean that I leave my phone behind because if I have it with me, my friends can call or text me whenever they can. Also, my mom can decide to get my airtime if she has money. So I keep it with me even if I can't text or call people.

The cost of using a cell phone frequently for communication was a problem for most of the participants. Thembi, a 25-year-old college student in Makhanda explained:

> I can't afford to always buy airtime to call people, so I call people only when they really need my grandmother.

She added that people hardly eve rcalled her, so she didn't need airtime to call her friends. This sentiment was shared by her friend, Xoliswa, who explained that there was no need for them to call each other because they often knew where the other one was:

> If I want to find Thembi, I just go to her place because it's very close to where I live. If she isn't there, I can always ask people nearby if they saw her and they will tell me where she is.

Being in close proximity to one another means that participants do not feel forced to use their phones in order to get in touch with one another. They simply walk to one another's homes to check on their availability. With regards to people who live outside the community, Thembi explained that she didn't call her mother who lives in Fort Beaufort, she would send a please-call-me[2] and her mother would call her back. Xoliswa also explained that she sent her boyfriend please-call-mes if she needed to talk to him. Participants choosing to request calls from people living further away, who are more economically stable than they are, is in line with research conducted by Sey (2011), who showed that people living in rural areas in Ghana would "flash[3]" relatives and friends living in urban areas. It also correlates with Batson-Savage's (2007) discussion of the use of mobile phones between men and women in Jamaica. She explained that women expected men to call and text them because they deemed them more financially capable of doing so.

Flashing was widely used by people during the uptake of 1G and 2G mobile phones. With 3G and 4G mobile phones being widely available, it has become more important to have data in order to text loved ones when airtime is unavailable. This is because a person can contact several people at once through platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, instead of having to buy airtime and only call one person at a time. The design and marketing of mobile phones promote the possibility of mobility and easy access to multiple people at once (Lesitakoana, 2014:35). Qiniso and Zenande who both emphasised the importance of having access to friends through their phones, explained that they bought data for this purpose. With the subsequent creation of 3G phones and beyond, easy access to as many people as possible through social media has become even more important for many cell phone users (Lesitakoana, 2014:34).

A lack of easy and continuous access to mobile phone and services such as data and airtime is another example of how coloniality affects the daily lives of marginalised people.

[2] A Please-call-me is a free text message a person can send requesting a call back from the receiver of the please-call-me text message.

[3] Flashing is defined as calling a person and quickly hanging up before they can answer the call. This signals that the flasher needs to be called back by the person being flashed.

Marginalisation is the consequence of colonial economies which used indigenous people as slaves or forced labour (Ogura, 1996). This meant that they could not access the same opportunities as settlers. Apartheid did not change this economic system much, leaving millions of black people unemployed or underemployed (Ogura, 1996). Despite a democratic South Africa, 53.7% of black youth are unemployed for several reasons such as poor public education systems, a lack of resources to access higher education and rampant corruption by the government that stifles employment growth even further (Webster, 2019).

The mobility, or lack thereof, granted by mobile phones

Mobile phone users globally have pointed to the mobility that mobile phones provide as a necessity and a reason to have and use a mobile phone as much as possible (Kriem, 2009). Although calls and texts all take place on mobile phones, texts provide more autonomy with regards to how many people can be texted, and how soon they can be responded to (Kriem, 2009). For instance, Khayalethu, a security officer working at a nearby game reserve, explained that he rarely bought airtime:

> I buy WhatsApp data which costs R29 and lasts the whole month. Then I buy Facebook data which costs R30 every month. This means I can be on Facebook and WhatsApp as much as I want to. I use it to talk to my girlfriend and my friends mostly, especially when I'm at work.

Kriem (2009) adds that texts do not carry with them the burden of traditional expectations that come with verbal communication such as titles that denote respect. This gives senders and receivers more freedom to communicate in more casual and creative ways. For example, most of the participants felt that they did not need to "greet" any of the receivers of their WhatsApp messages, especially their friends. Khayalethu explained:

> If I've been talking to you for days on end, why must I greet you? I just get on with the text I'm sending.

He further explained that he barely texted his parents and other older relatives over WhatsApp and preferred to visit them personally to speak to them:

> My parents are old, they don't understand or enjoy the idea of WhatsApp, so I would much rather just go see them when I can.

Most of the participants shared the same sentiment, with Xoliswa and Thembi both explaining that they did not feel the same obligation to refer to their parents and elders with the titles they normally would when speaking to them personally. Thembi added:

> I don't think it's necessary to speak to my elders on WhatsApp the way I would to them in person because WhatsApp is like a game, people post videos and photos they want to, they are free to express opinions they wouldn't if they were around older people like their parents.

Contrary to what some of the participants expressed, Lister et al. (2003:236) argue that "the consumption of media technologies is both shaped by and shapes existing family dynamics." This means that despite the distance that usually calls for over the phone communication, elders and parents keep their positions of authority over the children through the rules they enforce and the instructions they give. Zenande expressed a similar sentiment, expressing the need for respect despite communicating over a mobile phone:

> Even if I'm on WhatsApp with my mother, I still respect her in the same way I would when I speak to her personally by always adding 'mama' at the beginning or end of most of the messages I send her. I cannot forget that the person reading these messages raised me.

This sentiment of a mother's position within the family never changing despite communication taking place over the phone correlates with research conducted with mothers from the Phillipines working in the United States of America:

> …Donna was halfway across the world, had not seen her teenage son for almost two years, and yet wielded the power to give or withhold permission for the use of the family car. Mundane, daily family interactions such as this were being conducted via text message, allowing her to maintain her position as mother in the family. (Uyi-Tioco, 2007:260)

The cost of data and airtime is a communal worry

Participants felt that they couldn't just think of having data for themselves if they could not use it get in touch with others in the community because those people also could not afford to have data constantly. This means that for the participants, the mobile phone is not the individualising technology that it is normally perceived to be. Moreover, while it can be argued that having a mobile phone empowers people to be mobile and to create their own terms of communication outside the bounds of cultural expectations (Batson-Savage, 2007), those unable to afford phones and the costs that come with consistently communicating through the cell phones have an additional burden that many other cell phones users do not have to think about. The participants need to think of whether others have the airtime or data to use their mobile phones, along with their own use, and they also need to keep in mind the socio-economic and infrastructural conditions facing the whole community, and not only their loved ones. When discussing her friendship with Xoliswa, Thembi explained that it wasn't as helpful to their communication if she was the only one who had data:

> I prefer going to her place to see if she's there because if she doesn't have data, she won't see the texts I send her… I wouldn't buy airtime just to call her because it's expensive.

The burden of having to think of other people having data to communicate with them is contrary to Castell's conception of a network sociality. Instead of people being more concerned about their individual access and use of ICT, Enkanini's residents were equally concerned about other people's access and use of ICT, along with their own.

Participants all spoke about the expense of data and airtime as difficult considering their socio-economic circumstances. Contrary to Duncan's (2013) research on competing expenses for marginalised people living in the Makhanda East, none of the participants chose to purchase airtime or data instead of essentials such as paraffin, gas and bread for their families. The participants explained that when it came to choosing between purchasing airtime and data, and purchasing essentials, they focused on essentials to take care of themselves and their families. They explained that they would go for weeks without airtime and data if the cost of essentials such as paraffin were more expensive than expected. Most of the participants agreed that living

close to one another made face-to-face communication easier, and therefore preferred, especially if they didn't have airtime or data. Zenande said:

> My neighbours nearest to me are unemployed and are at home most of the day so if I need to speak to them, it's easy for me to find them…sometimes I really do want to get data and get on Facebook and WhatsApp to enjoy people's posts and view statuses. But I can't choose that over food or gas that my family needs to get by.

Xoliswa echoed a similar view:

> Being on my phone, especially on Facebook is fun because I can keep up with people's lives. I can post pictures of my children and I can enjoy my time especially when I'm alone, but if I have to get bread, I can't choose the airtime, I need to get the bread.

Just as the participants cannot use phone calls often to get in touch with other residents, they also minimally use social media due to the cost. All participants used cheaper data options such as WhatsApp data that lasts a week or two, which is comparatively cheaper than buying data that allows one to access the internet in general. Many people in precarious socio-economic situations have to find cheaper ways to access technologies and services that are more easily accessed by more privileged people. Simphiwe explained:

> Sometimes when I'm really broke, I try to find R5 that I can use to buy WhatsApp data that lasts for 24 hours. During that time, I can check up on some people back the farm where I used to live. I can also enjoy looking through the statuses that people post, especially those of pretty girls, it helps pass the time.

He also explained that having cheaper data options such as WhatsApp data that costs R5 and lasts for 24 hours, and R12 WhatsApp data that lasts a week is better than having to buy data that can cost R50 for 500MB. Zenande said that she never bought data that provides general access to the internet because it was too expensive, and impractical for what she normally uses her phone for:

> I only use Facebook and WhatsApp for social media. I don't use things like Instagram and YouTube because I have been told by many people like friends that they use too

> much data. So I won't spend R100 for 1G that will last a week when I can spend R29 for WhatsApp that will last for four week.

This finding correlates with research that shows that, for instance, domestic workers from Brazil working in New Zealand bought call cards for their children because they were cheaper than having their children purchase them in Brazil (Hoffman & Papoutsaki, 2019:232). As soon as cheaper technologies were introduced, they quickly adopted them in order to keep in touch with their children as regularly as possible (Hoffman & Papoutsaki, 2019:232). The same can be said for some residents in Enkanini who use Facebook in "free mode" to keep in touch with close friends around them, and who use WhatsApp data to get access to WhatsApp. Facebook "free mode" is enjoyed by most of the participants because one does not have to have data at all to access texts on Facebook, although images and videos cannot be viewed. Simphiwe jokingly explained that he did not use Facebook in free mode because he could not look through photos of his crushes. As Quiniso said:

> I don't mind using Facebook on free mode because I enjoy reading posts from my favourite Black Consciousness Page. I don't really care about the pictures because they don't really add much to the posts and to the comments that are shared on the page.

WhatsApp may not have a free option, but some mobile networks do offer data packages that provide access to WhatsApp only, at a lower cost than data packages that provide general access to the internet (Labuschagne, 2020). These cheaper options provide more access to these platforms and the participants use them as much as possible. Qiniso, who is a student, added that he used data to get tips and assistance from classmates through WhatsApp, but did not always have data that lasts the whole month:

> I normally buy data that lasts a week, when I'm lucky my mother tops me up when it runs out, but when we're all broke, I just have to deal with the fact that I can't use it every day.

Schoon (2011) argues that contrary to an individualised society enhanced by the wide use of ICT, marginalised people can experience a more collective sociality. One reason for this is that marginalised youth are still financially reliant on their parents. They need to ask their parents for data and airtime to be able to use their mobile phones. A high unemployment rate among young

people leaves them financially reliant on their parents for a long longer than people form more affluent homes (Schoon, 2011:85).

In addition to people being unable to afford data and airtime for consistent phone usage, participants also worried about whether their loved ones could also afford data and airtime. Twenty-five year old Qiniso Mtywaru moved from Port Elizabeth in July 2020 to live with his mother in Enkanini. Being unemployed, he relies on his mother for all his financial needs, including data:

> I will normally spend R12 for WhatsApp data that lasts a week, when I'm lucky enough to get more from my mother, I will then just get WhatsApp data that will last me a month…When I have data for a month I know I don't have to worry about getting in touch with some of my neighbours and friends, except if they don't have data.

Qiniso explained that although relying on his mother financially did not negatively affect their relationship, he did not enjoy having to ask her for airtime and data constantly. He wanted to be as independent as possible, but his financial struggles impeded that independence.

Mobile phones as a form of security

Research has shown that mobile phones provide a sense of security for people who feel more vulnerable when away from home (Foley, 2007). Mobile phones are often used by young people as precautionary measures that can protect them from crime and victimization (Foley, 2007:182).

Xoliswa explained that after she leaves her phone at her boyfriend's house, he walks her back home and regardless of what happens, she does not leave her house in the evenings:

> It gets so dark around here that it's difficult to see anything outside. I do often hear some guys walk around in that darkness but they feel safe. I could never leave because it's so dark outside and even if something happened to me or my kids, I wouldn't be able to use my phone to contact anyone (because she charges her phone at her boyfriend's house, she spends her evenings without her phone).

The competing needs of phones for safety and for contacting other people, against the need for necessities are constantly balanced by the participants, and not always perfectly. Participants

sometimes find themselves needing to choose what matters most to them at a particular time and these competing needs sometimes leave them feeling frustrated and needing to use other means of communication such as word-of-month, along with needing to borrow money from neighbours and loved ones to get basic needs. Thembi explained how important their phones were to her, especially for security:

> It gets so dark around here, I try not to be outside in the dark, but if I have to, I cannot just walk around by myself without my phone in the dark…I would need to call my grandmother or someone if something happened to me.

Zenande expressed how she sometimes chooses not to go to church if she doesn't have data on her phone:

> Church is really important to me and sometimes we have services that run late. When I know that I don't have airtime or data on my phone, I need to leave church early to make sure I can get home before it gets dark. Because if something happens to me on my way back, I won't be able to contact family for help.

She continued to explain other priorities she tried to balance:

> If there's no gas at home, I can't tell my daughter that I need to get data to try and get to church or to try and visit to friends and family who live in other section. We need to take care of the things we need, then we can think of being free to speak to and visit people.

How does the minimal use of mobile phones affect communication?

Other than word-of-mouth, whistles are an integral part of the communication process that takes place in Enkanini. Every participant explained that the whistle is blown only on two occasions: when there is a community meeting, and when there is an emergency. Emergencies were regarded as events that took place that needed many people to be involved as quickly as possible, for example, fires, robberies, and conflicts. The difference in the two kinds of events lay in when the whistle is blown and whether any conversations about a meeting had taken place before the whistle is blown. All the participants explain that community meetings normally take place on Sunday afternoons and people would tell others about the meeting throughout the week whenever as they saw them. Thembi explained that if is a meeting about to take place, a few

neighbours come to her home to let her grandmother know. So, when a whistle is blown, normally at night and without any rumours of a future meeting, it is normally clear that it is an emergency . All the participants had experienced whistles as a community-wide communication from past experiences before moving to Enkanini. They all pointed out that using a whistle in a place where there is no electricity and no other means of community-wide communication was "obvious." Simphiwe who lived on a nearby farm before moving to Enkanini explained that he knew that whistles had been used even while his parents were still alive many decades ago. Xoliswa explained the importance of whistles for the community:

> Because it gets so dark here, people don't usually spend a lot of time outside in the evenings. So when I hear the whistle at night I know something is wrong. When I can here that it's nearby, I usually wait until I hear voices outside, then I also go outside to see what's happening.

She further explained that seeing and hearing a lot of people outside meant that people in the community where often willing to help:

> We take crime very seriously here, especially because we don't have much. So if people realise that someone is being hurt or they have someone else trying to steal from them, I think it all makes us feel angry for the people being stolen from. So that's why people rush outside so quickly.

Whistles function as a unifier in Enkanini. People know what message is being o sent when the whistle is blown, and many of them act in unison to assist when they can. The whistle is an inexpensive communicative medium that can be used by anyone and that reaches many people at once. People in Enkanini use the whistle as a way to watch out for each one another by listening and responding accordingly.

Whistles have formed part of communication in townships for decades (Glaser, 2005). People have consistently used them to alert others about people to emergencies. Whistles are able to reach further than shouting might and since residents know that the sound of a whistle signals an emergency, they are able to react quickly. When one whistle is blown, other nearby residents also blow theirs to reach as many people as possible.

But the whistle being blown does not mean that everyone in the community immediately springs to action. Simphiwe said that as soon as he hears the whistle, he quickly walks outside, but does not leave his gate:

> I'm a tall guy, so I'm able to see quite far from my gate. I just stand there and watch to see what's happening. People will usually start shouting if someone is being beaten for stealing something. So even if I don't go the scene of the chaos, I will know what has happened.

He continued that due to his aversion to violence, he chooses not to go to crime scenes.

The significance of word of mouth in Enkanini

Although the definition of a technological layer of a communicative ecology does not include word-of-mouth as a technological device, it is important for it to be included in Enkanini's communicative ecology. This is because word-of-mouth is used in conjunction with mobile phones and the whistles. Enkanini's residents use mobile phones minimally and use whistles for very specific reasons. As such, they make use of personal verbal communication most frequently.

The financial circumstances that the residents live in means they're unable to access the full use of technological devices such as mobile phones. They are therefore reliant on oral communication to give and receive information.

The discursive layer

The second layer of a communicative ecology describes the content of the communication that takes place through the technological devices. The themes and content that are discussed on these devices highlights what people within the group value, and what they choose to ignore. The second layer will also highlight what kinds of conversations the research participants choose to have using specific devices.

The minimal use of mobile phones in Enkanini means that word-of-mouth is used significantly by the participants. Most of them had different ways of getting people's attention to begin different kinds of conversations. For example, Qiniso, a young man with several friends of

different age groups, described himself as a social person who spoke to many people. He did explain though that he only discusses certain topics with specific people:

> I know they like saying women gossip, but guys gossip just as much…we talk about girls, money and a bit of politics as well. I know that I can talk to my friends about anything.

He explained that he would never talk about these topics with people such as his mother and neighbours in the same age-group as his mother:

> Honestly when it comes to older people, I know to be very careful with what I say, even if we are talking about something that affect all of us…like with the leadership, I know that I can tell my friends that I know they won't do anything for this community because they don't have the power to, but I can't tell that to an old person, they're the most hopeful ones who really want to see this place get better.

The data shows that gossip is one of the most prominent themes of discussion among participants. Peters & Kashima (2007) define gossip as a communication act that involves a social triad: a gossiper, a social target, and an audience. These roles change easily within a group and sometimes within a single conversation. For example, one gossiper may bring new information about a target, and this information can be added onto by one of the audience members, making them the new gossiper. The above definition of gossip does not limit the content of the gossip, but based on the data collected, the kinds of gossip most engaged in by the participants can be separated into the dimension of morality and the other of competence. All the participants felt that they had the freedom to talk about whomever they wanted to without guilt. Participants also felt that they received quite a lot of information about protests, the leadership, and other residents through gossip. Xoliswa explained that it was important to be kept up to date, and to keep others up to date regarding all that happened in the community because of how important some information could be:

> I heard from a neighbour about the money that was being requested by the committee for a third time late last year. That's when I started worrying about where this money was going because the previous times, we paid and nothing happened, and no update was given from the committee.

Word-of-mouth from other residents shaped how some participants viewed the leadership committee, and therefore, how they interacted with them. These interactions have an impact on the kinds of sociality that are present within the community.

Gossip has often been perceived as a negative and detrimental habit conducted by people who have a low moral standard and have malicious intent (Haugen & Brandth, 2014:229). In contrast to these social perceptions, some researchers have theorized that gossip can do a lot of good within a community: "In particular, it has been suggested that the information that is conveyed through gossip may contribute to people's understanding of trustworthiness and untrustworthiness of other individuals within their social context" (Peters & Kashima, 2013:784). This way, people regulate their relationships. They also regulate the more casual social interactions they have within the community (Haugen & Brandth, 2014:229). Xoliswa relayed an incident where she decided to become more suspicious of the leadership committee and how they used money donated by residents after a neighbour told her they asked residents for money for a third time with no explanation of how they used the money collected on previous occasions. Qiniso also expressed his distrust of the committee after his mother relayed gossip about infighting that seemed to be taking place within the committee:

> To me it just seems like the leadership is using residents to get into official ANC ranks. My mother already feels suspicious of them but other residents have placed all their faith in the committee.

Another significant content of communication among residents was giving and receiving help. Some people in Enkanini are able to reach out to strangers for help, and most of the participants relayed some experiences regarding giving and receiving help from strangers. Qiniso reflected on the times he has been asked to help a new resident build their house:

> My mother expects me to help as much as I can when people arrive. Her reasoning is that people helped her when she arrived here by herself while I was in PE. I don't mind, I help where I can, and I try not to complain. It's not fun not being paid to work so hard but I get where she's coming from, we need to help each other.

His choice to help a stranger, which is an experience shared by most of the participants, reflects how the themes of their communication influence the kind sociality that exists within Enkanini.

People here do not have the freedom to isolate themselves and choose who to interact with, a characteristic more aligned with middle-class societies (Schoon, 2011). Their socio-economic conditions and the often-adversarial relationship they have with state officials due to threats of evictions and a lack of service delivery often means that they rely on each other for help.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS CONTINUED

This chapter continues with the findings of the research, focusing on the socialites that exist in Enkanini.

How do the communication practices shape the socialities in Enkanini?

The third layer of a communicative ecology is the social layer which examines the social interactions and cultures that arise from the communication within a group of people (Foth & Hearn, 2007). Enkanini's residents use a combination of word-of-mouth, the whistle and minimally, the cell phone to get in touch with one another and to maintain relationships with one another. Residents converse with one another personally to discuss a range of issues, from checking on one another's lives, to asking for money and resources when they need help. Human sociality can take many forms: it is dynamic and can change depending on the ways in which they relate to one another (Amirou, 1989:3). The means of communication that the residents use to connect with each other, along with the reasons for the communication can help illuminate the kinds of sociality that exist in Enkanini.

When I first started this research, I was almost certain that the most prominent kind of sociality in Enkanini would be a networked sociality. I had met people who said they had phones and used them as much as they could, despite the lack of electricity. Based on Castell's conception of a network society (Stalder, 2006), I thought that Enkanini's sociality would have most of the elements of a network sociality. Castell defines a network sociality as a society that bases a large part of their communication through ICT. People come together on a project-by-project basis, during which there is intense communication and cooperation but thereafter, people focus on their own projects. I thought that since the meetings took place regularly, people would come together to discuss the issues facing the community and go back to their own projects such as building and repairing their own houses. I also thought that they would come together during protests to demand basic services and go back to their projects thereafter. But my data shows that Enkanini does not have the elements of a network sociality even though many of them have access to, and use, mobile phones. The lack of electricity and the cost of data and airtime make it difficult for the elements of a network sociality to exist. In line with Duncan's (2013) conclusion, it is difficult at best to argue that all places where mobile phones are common will show signs of

a network sociality (Duncan, 2013). It is very important to understand the nature of the environment within which the cellphones are used, including the cost and challenges related to the constant use of the cellphones. Chiumbu (2013) makes a similar point, arguing that marginalised people cannot make use of mobile phones to the extent they are manufactured and marketed for due to the harsh economic environments they live in.

Although all the participants owned phones and tried to use them as frequently as they could, their environment could not be understood as having a form of network sociality because they did not consistently interact with one another through their mobile phones. Their interactions were less structured and many of them appreciated not needing a clear reason to get in touch with neighbours personally. Lihle explained:

> I feel connected to the residents because my job is not only as a leader here, I can meet with people while walking down the road and we can talk about anything. We can talk about our lives and just check up on one another is doing. It makes working with them for electricity and such things much easier because we know each other well.

Qiniso also expressed the value of living in community of people constantly interacting personally:

> I don't think I could be happy living in a place where people don't care for one another and show that care through checking in on one another, visiting one another and even helping out where they can.

There wasn't a clear move towards individualisation, where people choose to conduct their lives by and for themselves and their own benefit. People valued constant access to the others around them. They also appreciated knowing that they could ask for help when they needed it and were all willing to give it depending on different factors. As Simphiwe explained:

> There's an old lady who lives near me here and she knows that she can ask me for money for paraffin if she needs it. I also don't have a problem with asking her for some help when I need it and she helps me when she can and when she can't, she just tells me and I understand.

Finally, they did not view their mobile phones as a primary means of communication, regardless of their age, most of the participants wanted to physically see and have conversations with the people around them in order to give and receive information faster and to show a level of care for one another. Thembi explained:

> People of different ages talk to one another with ease here. There is no need for anyone to feel scared about talking someone older or younger than them because it happens so many times. People are just free to communicate with people, even new residents, so they can also understand that they are free to talk to who they want.

Fiske's (1992:689) conception of different kinds of sociality became more significant to me while I was collecting the data. Discussions with the participants showed that there were different forms of sociality in Enkanini depending on the relationships we were discussing.

The most relevant kind of sociality amongst residents as described by Fiske is communal sharing. Communal sharing describes a way of being together in which all members of the group are equal (Fiske, 1992:690). In a communal sharing setting hierarchy isn't significant and people focus on the reciprocal relationships they can form and sustain (Fiske 1992:691). The friendships we discussed with participants most resembled this kind of sociality. Residents who are emotionally closer to one another are more likely to assist one another, and ask for assistance without hesitation. They help one another when they can, with the knowledge that they will receive help when they ask for it.

Communal sharing is reflected in Qiniso's relationships with his friends. He explained that there was no judgment amongst them based on who needed more financial help. He said that without continuous access to data it is difficult to access to all the information about assignments, tests and exams his classmates give on WhatsApp. When he doesn't have data, he waits until he gets to campus the next morning to ask them if he has any questions. Their closeness of their friendship means he can look through their phones while on campus to catch up with the online assistance he missed out on. With Covid-19, he has had to walk to some of his friends close by or he catches a taxi to friends who are further away but available when those living closer to him are not:

> The fact that I have childhood friends I study with makes the whole thing (seeking help for college) easy for me. We all understand each other's financial situations so there's no judgment from them and I don't feel bad about asking for help.

Qiniso also explained that he was comfortable with sharing things like food with his friends because they had done the same for him when he didn't have any:

> I don't think I could turn my back on my friends when they need me because I know that when I need them, they will help with no judgement.

Xoliswa said: "I rely on my aunt to help mw financially when I can't afford to buy necessities such as paraffin or food. She helps when she can because I also help her when I can." These kinds of relationships indicate people did not appear to have a hierarchy amongst themselves, but saw themselves as equally in need and equally able to help when possible. Since most participants chose to build their houses closest to family or old friends, communal sharing was easier because they were sharing with people they were related to, or with whom they were close friends. Residents who shared socio-economic challenges did not automatically draw people closer together, but communal sharing is more visible among people who also have emotional ties to one another—in addition to the shared socio-economic challenges.

In addition to communal sharing, these experiences are also indicative of the presence of *Ubuntu* amongst Enkanini's residents. *Ubuntu* is often defined as an African philosophy representing togetherness, mutual respect, and harmony (Taringa, 2007:188). Based on the notion that *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu,*[4] *Ubuntu* reflects the idea that people find the belonging and purpose within community (Taringa, 2007:188). The participants' willingness to help one another, and their freedom to ask for help when they need it, reflects this value.

The leadership committee and their sociality in relation to the residents

Fiske's conception of four kinds of socialities includes the concept of authority ranking (Fiske, 1992:710). Here, people are linearly ordered along some hierarchical structure. Subordinates are entitled to guidance and protection. The relationship between the leadership committee and the residents may reflect this kind of sociality. Since participants use their cell phones minimally to

[4] IsiZulu for "a person is a person through other people."

communicate matters that are urgent, some of them rely on using please-call-mes to communicate urgency to the leadership committee. Lihle, one of the leadership committee members described some of the incidents when residents would either call her in distress or send a "please-call-me" when they needed her help from her:

> I had a mother near me send me many "please-call-me" messages when her daughter was fighting with her one night. I had to call her back to find out what was going on and then I had my daughter call other committee leaders to help me so we could go over there and help them.

She explained that the mother she helped had asked for help regarding her daughter on more than one occasion, and so she could guess that something was wrong when she sent the "please call me" texts once again. Lihle said she always felt obligated to call residents when they sent the "please call me" texts because as a leader, she felt responsible for the wellbeing of the residents:

> These people rely on us to help them because sometimes they don't know who to turn to, so we have to help. By helping them we know they will trust us and we can work better together with other things as well like getting services.

During emergencies, committee leaders prefer calling residents to get in touch with them or help them. During one incident while we were having a discussion with one committee member, a child came running to the leader to ask them to call an ambulance because their relative was having a miscarriage. The committee leader called the ambulance and asked one of her children to look out for the ambulance to direct it to the house. The process from calling the ambulance to directing it to the affected woman's house took a total of approximately 30 minutes. While waiting she explained that occurrences when the leadership committee had to call other leaders or call emergency services were common, as people relied on them to help them through emergencies if they did not have airtime.

Conviviality as another aspect of Enkanini's sociality

Another prominent kind of sociality present in Enkanini is conviviality (Hay, 2014). Hay (2014) describes conviviality as existing on the edge of conflict, where the ways in which people navigate intense moments of coming together and moving apart, define the exact nature of the

sociality that exists within the group. Unlike communal sharing, there is no definite set of reciprocal activities that people do for one another. Conviviality offers an alternative perspective on the sociality of Africans living in marginalised communities. According to Nyamnjoh (2017:262), conviviality makes a case for incompleteness; the merging of different and at times contradictory modes of being and relating, as the normal order of things. He (2002:111) demonstrates that conviviality encourages the empowerment of individuals and groups which involves a negotiation of influential people within a community such as leaders or elders. Conviviality allows us to look at social interactions for what they are, incomplete, and at times involving non-human agents (such as ancestors), and not for what they can or should be. Enkanini's residents live lives of 'incompleteness'. They have water but they need to share taps with neighbours, something that middle-class people don't have to deal with. They need either to create illegal electricity connections, or to keep fighting with state officials to get clear information on when electrical infrastructure will be built. They constantly need to negotiate the possibility of the leadership committee advocating for them, or possibly stealing the little money they have. They have mobile phones, but they cannot use them fully due to a lack of electricity. All these factors mean that they live their lives with constant precarity, unsure of what the future may bring. Despite this, or perhaps because of this, they form and maintain relationships with one another. This means that residents need to protect one another while trying to sustain their own lives. Understanding that they all face common challenges, they will at times put the needs and objectives of the community before their own. Any neighbour could easily report those who have created illegal electrical connections, but this would mean, for instance, that several people would not be able to charge their phone and the phones of neighbours.

The participants I spoke to all agreed that Enkanini is basically a good place to live because the residents are generally good people. Xoliswa and Thembi explained that when they first arrived, there were frequent robberies in the area and many people were afraid for their safety. But after several incidents of mob justice involving residents beating the alleged criminals, they said that robberies lessened, and they started feeling safer. Zenande recalled:

> I used to be very afraid of living here during the first six months. I was even thinking of moving back home but I needed my independence and I would constantly hear from

> neighbours that it would get better after the first few robbers were caught. They believed it would set an example, and that's true because it did.

Thembi added:

> Safety is very important to me. If I could afford to live in places with official security guards I would, but I also know that most of the people here just want to be safe. Most of us want to know that our children can play outside with no fear. So we try to make this place safe by catching thieves and keeping an eye out for each other, and that makes me feel better about living here.

Simphiwe also spoke about feeling comfortable with living in Enkanini:

> I feel safe here because people know to protect one another, even during personal conflicts. People feel comfortable to call for help because they know that neighbours will show up as soon as they can. I am even comfortable with letting my nephew, who's quite young (he's 23) live on his own next door to me because I know that we all look out for each other here.

Conviviality highlights a collective approach to social interactions and social cohesion (Vigneswaran, 2013). The purpose is not necessarily to aim for complete unity, but it is to embrace the imperfect and incomplete ways of living together. People in Enkanini know that the police and other state officials will rarely show up to help them if they need it urgently. They therefore use communication tools, such as the whistle, that are easy to access and send a clear message to many people at once. However, there are elements of Enkanini's residents they don't feel very happy with. Xoliswa believed that there is a level of social discrimination:

> Yes, people don't have a lot of money here, but others have more money than others. So those who have better houses and more money tend to stick together. For example, when those with more money host events, they will invite those with money as well and the rest of us are left out. It's an attitude I don't like but I can't do anything about it.

Despite some residents disagreeing with the actions of others, it is still crucial for everyone to come together for one another during emergencies, and during protests for basic services. This

constant need to balance often contradictory social interactions for the sake of the community is a form of conviviality.

Participants frequently move between different kinds of technologies to communicate different kinds of information. Residents in Enkanini understand what different communicative devices are used for. This collective understanding that the whistle blown on Sunday afternoon means there is a meeting, and the same whistle blown at any other time means an emergency, reflects a collective sociality where people understand the common circumstances they live in and the challenges they face together.

Word-of-mouth also promotes a collective sense of being. Participants feel that they can converse with those closest to them about their lives, about other people's personal lives, and about the events that would take place in the community. People are free to start conversations with whomever they want. But the discussions with participants showed that those who are more outgoing gossiped more about those who chose to be more reserved, faulting them for their silence when gossiping with others, but not treating them any differently when communicating with them. Xoliswa spoke about one of her quieter neighbours:

> I just feel like she thinks she's better than everyone else. She greets only when she feels like it, sometimes she just walks past all of us sitting here. She doesn't spend time with us and is always by herself. I just don't like people like that.

These opinions did not change how they interacted with them, but they did make the more reserved neighbours the source of gossip. With regards to gossip acting as a regulator of relationships, it seems that the gossip about people who choose to participate less in personal conversation regulated the relationships between the gossiper and the audience, and not necessarily the relationship between the gossiper and the target. The gossip also creates a form of intimacy between gossipers who form bonds between one another and boundaries for the 'outsiders' (White 1994:76 cited in Schoon 2011:84). These suspicions of less sociable people also reflect the tacit distrust that is often present within a collective sociality. It is often used as a 'disciplinary mechanism' (Foucault 1989 cited in Schoon 2011:89) which punishes people who act outside the bounds of what the group deems acceptable.

Conviviality is also seen through the ways in which the residents independently decided to form a governing structure without the permission or the assistance of state officials. One way this is visible is through the trust that participants have in their self-elected leadership committee. Electing their own representatives reflects what Nyamnjoh (2017:258) calls "frontier beings". This means that without seeking approval from others (in our case, the state), people manifest themselves differently according to context and necessity. Without the approval of the state, Enkanini's residents held their own elections and chose their own representatives whom they trust to negotiate their rights and fight for basic services. Other than their lack of official political power, the leadership committee has worked with the residents to demand basic services, and so far, they have received communal taps.

Conviviality is often reflected in the ways in which people negotiate moments of difference and tension (Leupnitz, 2002:53). People struggle daily to balance individual needs with collective ones, often moving to the edge of conflict. An example of this is the apparent in-fighting and alleged corruption that have slowly moved the community to the edge of conflict on multiple occasions, with some residents, during meetings, feeling that the committee had not done enough to get the basic services they needed. Despite this, they continued to trust that the committee would work towards getting electricity for the community, therefore leaving aside their individual desires or grievances for the benefit of the community. Residents are also aware of the relationship they have with state officials and therefore feel that they have to rely on the leadership committee to advocate for basic services. Lihle explained that the municipality was not interested in helping them get basic services:

> They wanted to remove people who don't have houses. They wouldn't want to help us if someone was hurt here so we need to help one another. We don't have a choice.

This tension between the residents and state officials contrasted with the tensions that residents have with one another and their leadership, reflects what Nyanmjoh calls inter-subjective agency, where people choose the interests of the collective not to dismiss their individual interests, but to empower individuals through protecting the collective's interest (2002:11 cited in Bay 2014:7). Qiniso explained:

> I would gladly like to see the leadership committee done away with. So people could do what they wanted, but at the same time, if the ANC government won't help the people living here, at least the leadership committee is trying to take care of some of the things we need.

Simphiwe echoed a similar sentiment:

> I don't care for community meetings and for what the leadership wants to tell us, or wants us to believe about what they are doing. I care for what the people in this place need, they need electricity, and they need water in their homes. And if the leadership can find ways to make that happen, then they can carry on being the leadership.

Theft is another factor that affects the moments of unity/disunity within a community. Simphiwe, Xoliswa, and Qiniso had all witnessed how theft had affected how residents interacted with one another. They all reflected on how frequent theft occurred in Enkanini in 2019 and early 2020. Xoliswa explained that rumours had been circulating about who was behind the burglaries:

> People here decided to fix this problem themselves and agreed to beat whoever they caught breaking into people's houses. The beatings were really bad and eventually the break-ins stopped.

Crime has a serious effect on how people choose to interact with one another. Distrust that comes from rumours about who the criminals are, and who helps them commit the crimes, cause distrust that can lead communities to the edge of conflict. As Lihle explained:

> We don't want to see people fight because they're stealing from each other. Everyone needs to understand that everyone here is need of something they can't afford or don't know how to get. But stealing from each other is only going to make everyone worse. We are all facing financial challenges together, we cannot be hurting and stealing from each other on top of all that. It's going to cause so much violence and we don't need that.

Nyamnjoh (2017:270) also argues that conviviality promotes the achievement of collective goals over more individual ones (which is an element of a network sociality). Residents in Enkanini have the collective need for basic services and most of the participants explained that they were willing to fight for these services. The participants all felt that as the municipality was not

willing to provide them with the services they needed, hence the necessity to fight for these services through protests. From interviews and community meetings, residents were adamant about the importance of being united so that everyone could get electricity at the same time. This became more of a problem after the municipality told the leadership committee in January 2020 that they could provide electricity for only 300 residents, and others would have to wait longer. During the community meeting, residents agreed that this was probably an attempt by the municipality to divide them and put a stop to the protests. They all agreed that they would refuse this offer from the municipality.

THESIS CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to examine how a group of people living in the Enkanini informal settlement in Makhanda utilise communication technologies to interact with one another, while facing the challenges that come with a lack of basic services. It examined the kinds of bonds they created while living here, and how their shared challenges helped them maintain or strained these bonds.

In the process, it became clear that coloniality is a key aspect of their lives and shapes every aspect of their daily interactions. Despite the strides that South Africa has made politically, the lives of the residents of Enkanjni are a clear example of how far this country has yet to go, and just how little the governing bodies in this country are doing to ensure that the lives of these residents improve drastically.

This thesis also confirmed the difficulty of a network sociality unfolding in an area such as Enkanini due to the socio-economic challenges that the residents face. These challenges, such as a lack if electricity, difficult financial circumstances, and a lack of government assistance means that they cannot utilise their mobile phones in ways that lead to a network sociality. Their use of whistles breaches the gap left by inconsistent mobile phone communication and the need to protect one another while living in the same place.

Finally, this thesis also confirmed that conviviality is an integral aspect of the socialites in Enkanini. The attempts made by residents to govern themselves and work together to fight for basic services is a large part of their lives.

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APPENDIX A: PHOTOGRAPHS AND IMAGES

The images below were taken on two occasions while we were collecting preliminary data to finalise the research questions. They show parts of Enkanini and a few of the people we approached before choosing participants.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Section 1: Biography

- Name, Age, Gender, Address, family members, friends, neighbours
- Details about when they first moved to Enkanini
- Who did they meet with to get a piece of land selected? How was that experience/process like?
- How did they procure building material?
- If they have attended community meetings before, how was the first one? What was discussed? What were their feelings/thoughts about these meetings?
- Who do they feel they relate with best within the community? Why? How did they meet these people?
- What kinds of neighbours do they have? How do they communicate/get in touch with their neighbours?
- Walk me through your typical day, what you do? Where you normally go?
- What is the most difficult aspect of living in Enkanini? Is there a way they mitigate these challenges?
- Do they know any of Enkanini's leadership committee members? If so, we can discuss their opinions on them and some of the interactions they have had with them
- What do you feel you need most from the leadership committee? The local municipality?
- Have you ever witnessed or heard of an emergency taking place in Enkanini? Robbery? Fire? Protest? How was that experience for you?
- Have you ever needed support from anyone within the community in any way? From the most basic/'unimportant' things like borrowing something to needing transport or any other kind of help. How was that experience? How do you relate to this person now?

- Has anyone ever asked you for help within the community?

Section 2: Social media and contacts

- What social media sites do you use, how often?
- What do you enjoy about them?
- Why don't you use other sites?
- How do you access data to use these sites?
- Which people do you follow/are friends with on these sites?
- How often do you get data airtime? What kind? At what cost?
- Who do you communicate with via social media within this community?
- Who do you communicate with via other means within this community?

Section 3: Personal feelings about one's place in the community

- When you first arrived to the community, who did you speak to first?
- How do you feel about your neighbours? How many people do you know who live within the community?
- Do you think the people of this place are united? Why or why not?
- How do you feel about your leadership committee? How do you feel about Makhanda's leaders in general?
- Do you read Grocotts or any other newspaper?
- What kinds of news do you consume? Radio/TV/social media?