ICTs and the Reconfiguration of 'Marginality' in Langa Township:

A Study of Migration and Belonging

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PWLCRY001

A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the (Anthropology Section) School of African & Gender Studies, Anthropology & Linguistics

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May 2014

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Crystal Powell,

Signature:_____**Date:**_____

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR	The African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights
ANC	African National Congress
APF	African Partnership Forum
B & B	Bed-and-Breakfast
BBM	BlackBerry Messaging
BIS	BlackBerry Internet Service
CBD	Central Business District
COLACOCO	The Coalition for Langa Community Concerns
CLPAP	The Colored Labor Preference Area Policy
DA	Democratic Alliance
FNB	First National Bank
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
ICTD *also ICT4D*	Information and Communication Technologies for Development
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MTN	Mobile Telephone Network
P.C.M.	Please Call Me
POD	Portable on-demand
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Program
SANPAD	South African Netherlands Research Program on Alternatives in Development
SAPO	South African Post Office
SASS	South African Suicide Squad
SIM	Subscriber Identity Module
SMS	Short Message Service
UCT	University of Cape Town

ABSTRACT

Powell, Crystal. **ICTs and the Reconfiguration of Marginality in Langa Township: A Study of Migration and Belonging**. 2014

Mobility and migration are survival tactics for long-term security and sustainability within Africa and South Africa is perceived as offering opportunities to those seeking greener pastures. South Africa's history of 'selective immigration' has made many local South Africans, particularly the disadvantaged black population, reluctant to welcome African immigrants or 'outsiders' seeking to integrate. This poses considerable difficulties for many migrants attempting to negotiate acceptance. African migrants often end up living on the margins of South Africa, ultimately disconnected from mainstream populations. Langa Township in Cape Town, South Africa, the site of this study, is located at the margins of the city. Its residents, local South Africans and African immigrants, are considered a marginalized population and therefore face multiple challenges of belonging within and outside the township. Such challenges are intertwined with and complicated by the complex realities of marginality.

In exploring the role of new Information and Communication Technologies in negotiating migration and belonging, this study focuses on the mobile population of Langa Township. As a settlement initially established by migrants from other South African provinces, Langa residents are able to historicize the significance of communication technologies in the lives of migrants. Ethnographic approaches were used to investigate the role of new communication technologies in Langa, exploring the ways that technology has provided opportunities for development, facilitated the negotiation of various marginalities, and offered new ways of belonging for residents. Fieldwork included extensive participant observation and informal interviews.

Concluding that Langa's marginality is not as obvious fixed as generally assumed, the study shows that new communication technologies have both mitigated and exacerbated some complexities of marginality for residents within and outside the township. It reveals that mobile phones (1) manipulate residents – to the extent the residents allow – as much as residents manipulate mobile phones; (2) provide new ways of belonging inside and outside the township; (3) mitigate distance for some residents while burdening others with meeting social obligations against their wishes; (4) provide opportunities for development; and (5) are not used to redefine socio-political relations among residents. These findings are significant for (a) assessing the impact of mobile phones for social, economic and political development, while (b) cautioning against undue euphoria associated with the presumed benefit of mobile phones for underprivileged populations, and (c) challenging stereotypical representations of townships and marginality.

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CHAPTER 1
ICTS, MIGRATION, MOBILITY, AND BELONGING: AN INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This dissertation explores the role of new Information and Communication Technologies (henceforth ICTs) in the making of flexible identities and ideas of belonging among different categories of migrants living and working in Langa Township in Cape Town, South Africa. The exploration into the lives of (im)migrants living in South Africa is of particular interest as South Africans continue to deal with increasing patterns of migration into their country from around the African continent. My interest in the experiences of both internal and external migrants living and working in Langa resulted in the constant navigation between both categories. In this dissertation, the term 'migrant' is used to refer to local South Africans who have moved between various places in the country. The term 'immigrant' refers to 'black' – as opposed to white – Africans from outside of the country who have settled (temporarily or permanently) in South Africa. I use '(im)migrants' to refer to both categories simultaneously. This chapter situates my study within the larger context of SANPAD[1]'s overall research objectives and provides background data to my specific research goals. I present the relevance of my fieldsite, Langa Township, as a space where a historical perspective of the use of technology in relation to mobility and notions of (flexible) identity, social space, belonging and marginality among residents are significant towards a broader understanding of the links between communication, mobility and marginality. The notion of marginality is a central theme of this dissertation. Throughout this dissertation I address and challenge perceptions of Langa's relative marginality to mainstream Cape Town.

Patterns of migration can be attributed to a myriad of global trends, most notably globalization. In an African context, globalization, the fluid movement of goods, technologies and development opportunities, has facilitated mobility and migration among Africans within and around the continent (Carmody, 2010; Castles, 2002; Akokpari, 2000). Indicated by the increasing flow of (mainly black) African immigrants into the country, South Africa has been and continues to be considered a country full of opportunities by many Africans across the continent seeking to better their lives in some way – though not always succeeding – to the visual, verbal and sometimes physical dissatisfaction of some of the local South African

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[1] South African Netherlands Research Program on Alternatives in Development (SANPAD) est. 1997

population, particularly those struggling with poverty (Jurgens & Donaldson, 2012; Landau, 2011; Matsinhe, 2011; Sichone, 2008; Western, 2001). However, the dissatisfaction of local South Africans is not limited towards African immigrants seeking relief in the country. Local South Africans have often frowned upon various types of mobility among their own, particularly when such mobility similarly results in increased competition for scarce opportunities and resources. One might recall Democratic Alliance (DA) leader, Helen Zille's 2012 tweet regarding Eastern Cape pupils in the Western Cape (see the *Conceptual Framework* section below) as evidence of the apparent inflexibility among spaces and boundaries, and the policing of mobility that occurs even among internal migrants in South Africa. The dominant pattern of internal migration is that of people from the Eastern Cape flocking to the Western Cape (Statistics South Africa 2013; Polzer, 2010; Western, 2001). The steady influx of internal migrants into the Western Cape for life-enhancing possibilities has proven this province to be one of the most desirable in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2013, 2011).

This study focuses on the increasing presence of African immigrants and internal South African migrants in Cape Town in general and Langa Township in particular. Internal South African migrants, have, since the late 1800s, oscillated between their homes – 'home' referring to where they were born and presumably where they live – and the Western Cape as was commonplace during the migrant labor system where internal migrants were sought for employment (Adepoju, 2008; Crush, Jeeves & Yudelam, 1991; Wilson, 1972). Farmers and mining companies in the Western Cape relieved labor shortages by recruiting male workers from within South Africa (Wilson, 1972). External black immigrants from around the continent have often been drawn to South Africa because of political incompetence and economic mismanagement in their home countries (Dodson, 2010; Neocosmos, 2006). Since the end of apartheid, " a system of legislated racial exclusivity" in 1994 (Bhorat & van der Westhuizen, 2013), South Africa has attracted African immigrants who have, since then, moved consistently in and out of the country (Landau, 2011; Peberdy, 2009; Crush & McDonald, 2001; Akokpari, 2000). They often come with "expectations of political freedom, stability and economic opportunities" (Reitzes, 2000:62). However, many end up living in poor and geographically marginal areas, relatively speaking, in relation to the rest of South Africa. In Cape Town, Langa Township, built in 1927 around the labor pools (Coetzer, 2009; Wilson, 1972; Wilson & Mafeje, 1963), is considered to be geographically marginalized.

The influx of external immigrants since 1994 has resulted in a rise of xenophobia – a form of exclusion keeping those who are considered "different" at a distance – (Banton 1996:8; Neocosmos 2006; Sharp 2008; Sichone 2008) across the country (Matsinhe, 2011; Landau,

2011; Neocosmos, 2006; Reitzes, 2000). The reluctance of (some) South Africans to tolerate African immigrants or 'foreigners' has at times manifested in violent attacks. Such hostile discrimination towards foreigners was often justified on the basis of the social and economic crises in South Africa where around half the population has consistently lived in poverty (Bhorat & van der Westhuizen, 2013; Pillay et al., 2013; Gradin, 2012; Neves & Du Toit, 2010).

Townships, like Langa, and other (so called) marginal areas that are populated by a mix of local Cape Tonians, internal South African migrants, and external immigrants have been recipients of such discriminatory treatment where the struggle for housing and other basic necessities increases the reluctance to accommodate such individuals. Practices of discrimination and social exclusion are acted out against (im)migrants to different degrees by South African nationals, citizens, and locals. The extent to which discriminatory and exclusionary practices are enforced is based on stereotypes and preconceptions around nationality, race, class, culture and gender (Nyamnjoh, 2006). Stereotypes, often negative, are exaggerated beliefs associated with different categories of people. They generally function to rationalize certain behaviors towards those categories (Jahoda, 2001). They also work to strengthen their perceived differences making it difficult to acknowledge their "equal humanity" (Adichie, 2009:11), also serving to justify unequal treatment. The notion of indigeneity, problematic because of constant fluctuations when defining the indigenous person (Geschiere, 2009; Mamdani, 2009; Pelican, 2009), also contributes toward the justification of exclusionary treatment towards some (im)migrants.

Indigeneity as an identity is ever fluid and is "determined not by some original state of purity but by relationships between people" (Venkateswar et al., 2011:1). De la Cadena and Starn (2007:11) define indigeneity as "a process; a series of encounters; a structure of power; a set of relationships; a matter of becoming, in short, and not a fixed stated of being". Understanding the indigenous person as a fluid being, composite of relationships and experiences, makes the concept of identity inconsistent in relation to persons who (feel they have a right to) claim privileges and basic rights based on their 'indigeneity'. This further exacerbates tensions around the practice of mobility and notions of citizenship and belonging as the local South African is not an obvious heir to such rights. The African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) define indigeneity from a rights-based perspective stating:

> Indigenous peoples have come to have connotation and meanings that are much wider than the question of who came first. It is today a term and global movement fight for rights and justice for those particular groups who have been left on the margins of development and who are perceived negatively by dominating mainstream development paradigms, whose cultures and ways of life

are subject to discrimination and contempt and whose very existence is under threat of extinction (ACHPR, 2005 in Venkatewar et al., 2011:2)

The exclusionary treatment of (im)migrants could indeed be categorized as an attempt to make their presence extinct, as (im)migrants are often perceived to have parasitic tendencies, leaching on to those who already struggle at the margins of existence in South Africa.

Local residents, such as those of Langa who face housing deficits and limitations to essential necessities, contribute to the phenomena of social tension including physical violence. Social tension and physical violence have manifested in myriad ways, including the xenophobic attacks of 2008. In May 2008, a series of xenophobic attacks against African immigrants living in South Africa occurred leaving dozens of people dead and thousands more homeless (Dodson 2010; Neocosmos, 2006; Banton, 1996:8). These attacks displayed the harsh anti-immigrant feelings embedded in some of the South African population, despite the fact the migrants were previously encouraged to come to South Africa for work. This xenophobic hostility and agitation around "foreigners", "strangers", "outsiders" or in local parlance "*amakwerekwere*[2]" (Itmann, Cordell & Maddox, 2010; Sichone, 2008), though widely covered, was not unique in 2008. Such incidents had previously erupted in 2004, for example (Landau, 2011).

The victims of such hostility are generally blamed for interfering with configurations of citizenship and belonging (Nyamnjoh, 2006; Ceuppens & Geschiere, 2005; Geschiere & Nyamnjoh, 2000). (Im)migrants are blamed for the shortage of basic human rights, such as adequate housing prepared through the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), decent public toilets, running water, electricity and decent sanitation (Nyamnjoh, 2013a:312). Questions arise as to who *should* have access to these rights among socially, economically and politically marginalized populations which they, as groups, inevitably (are perceived to) constitute.

Of particular interest to this study is the plight of (im)migrants whose efforts in creating a comfortable living in their host country or region contribute to mitigating poverty and achieving forms of decency that have cultural and social value (Ross, 2009:123). Though some immigrants are content to relinquish all ties with their home countries, others desire to achieve a certain level of belonging in their host communities while remaining firmly rooted in their home countries. This desire indicates the potential to create and maintain flexible identities. The term "flexible", in this dissertation, refers to an ability to change ones-self, in a post-modern sense, occasionally or temporarily to conform to various socially dominant and acceptable behaviors. Flexible identities can permit one to assume an "authentic" or "pure" identity on the one hand in a given context while potentially, simultaneously facing social rejection on the other. The reality that

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[2]*Kwerekwere* or *makwerekwere* is singular. *Amakwerekwere* is plural.

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idenities are not fixed and bounded means that identities are in a constant state of transit, ultimately resulting in their flexibility (see Nyamnjoh, 2007b). This flexibilty can be subconscious or not on the part of the individual. The dissertation aims to explore those flexible identities that are deliberately created and maintained for (social) survival purposes among different categories of migrants. One could also extend the term flexible to describe mobile phones (or technology in general) in the context of Langa residents (and users throughout the world). The intentions for and uses of mobile phones are not predetermined by the actual device. Their intentions and uses often emerge from the actual device in addition to the various ways that they are understood by their users (Burrell, 2012; see also Chapters 4 and 5 for the flexibility of the mobile phone among some Langa residents).

Some female Senegalese migrants who have settled in Brikama, Gambia, for example, have successfully achieved a sense of belonging in their host communities through the diverse resources they contribute. Their engagement in some central practices of Brikama society and the flexibility of their identities that allows them to accept or successfully engage in practices that may differ from their own, has led them to become accepted as local citizens (Kea, 2012) while remaining rooted in their Senegalese culture. Cameroonian migrants or "bushfallers" (Nyamnjoh, 2011) who have settled abroad rely on the maintenance of relationships with those left behind and relationships forged within the host community to gain and maintain some level of belonging in both spheres. Note again, the need for flexibile identities for Cameroonian migrants that allows the simultaneous maintenance of different relationships, catering to different types of (acceptable) social behavior between home and elsewhere. (Im)migrants can often be said to have flexible and fluctuating identities "as they have to negotiate their ways between complicated choices of return, assimilation and community formation" while "adapting and changing their social environments" (Castles, 2002:1158). The constant movement between countries or villages can potentially result in relationships that facilitate various types of belonging that are constantly negotiated between different places, each with their own reality (Castles, 2002), if such a desire exists.

It is this survival strategy, the making of flexible identities, which begs the question of *how* such identities and levels of belonging are created and maintained. As all aspects of human life are affected by technology (Yelpaala et al., 2012; Castells, Fernandez-Arderol, Qui & Araba, 2007), the role of new ICTs, particularly mobile phones and the Internet, in the lives of (im)migrants is noteworthy as potential facilitators of the identity and belonging processes. (Im)migrants often maintain multiple ties with their homes or "society of origin" (Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton-Blanc, 1994:3). Transnational migrants can be used to describe those who

live stretched across borders, often creating and maintaining "multi-stranded" social relationships between their home and host societies. These trans-migrants often develop multiple relationships that span across multiple borders (Basch et al., 1994; see also Vawda, 2009). Mobile phones, as this study, among others, will show, have grown to be key facilitators in the creation and maintenance of these multiple relationships that some individuals rely on for survival in any location. Social life (social inclusion) is facilitated by technology, indicating the significance of the Internet and mobile phones in society. In other words, virtual forms of belonging appear to be equally important and complementary to face-to-face and material forms of belonging.

Increased uses of mobile phones to establish a sense of belonging, among other necessities, implies that in many regards the mobile phone has become a 'normalized' object in the everyday lives of Africans; a device expected to be used by any and all individuals who desire to remain included in social, economic and even political activities (Chandler, 2012) in both their host communities and communities of origin (Tazanu, 2012). This is not, however, to suggest that indigenous forms of communication have been forgotten. The marriage of colonial influences to African values has produced a 'melting pot' of media cultures. Both modern and indigenous forms of media are being used simultaneously in Africa, where it is common to find people creatively appropriating them towards their negotiation of communication hurdles and hierarchies of the continent (Nyamnjoh, 2005: 39-40). Mobile phones, the latest technology to be domesticated on the African continent (Nyamnjoh, 2005), has rapidly become the "most pervasive technology" (Castells et al., 2007: 7). Mobile phone use in Africa has grown faster than anywhere else in the world (Yonazi, Kelly, Halewood & Blackman, 2012:22; Folk, 2012; Hosman & Fife, 2012; Essoungou, 2011; Carmody, 2010, See also Figure 1).

In fact, Africa has over 650 million mobile phone subscribers. Tim Kelly, lead ICT policy specialist at the World Bank stated in a report resulting from a collaboration of the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the African Union entitled *The Transformational Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Africa*: *eTransform Africa* (Yonazi et al., 2012:14)

> Africa is rapidly becoming an ICT leader. Innovations that began in Africa – like dual SIM card mobile phones or using media for remittance payments – are now spreading across the continent and beyond.

Studies have shown that Africa, as a continent, is now an ICT leader. In such areas as mobile broadband and PC penetration, Africans are steadily closing the gap that existed between them

and the rest of the world. In mobile financial services Africa is actually leading, having set the pace (Yonazi et al., 2012:33). The leadership of ICTs within the continent testifies to how ICTs have facilitated the reconfiguration of marginality of the African continent. The appropriation of ICTs in Africa show increased levels of agency and autonomy among various populations which represent a direct contradiction to their assumed marginality to the rest of the world. A beneficial factor of ICTs in Africa is the level of accessibility. Formerly associated with and available only to a privileged few, these communication devices have become increasingly accessible to even the poorest, often known as marginalized, populations (de Bruijn, Brinkman & Nyamnjoh 2013; Nyamnjoh, H.M., 2013; Yonazi et al., 2012; de Bruijn, Nyamnjoh & Brinkman 2009; Castells et al., 2007) across all countries. In some African countries it is more likely for people to have access to mobile phones than clean water, electricity or a bank account (Yonazi et al., 2012:13) such is the level of accessibility.

The integration of mobile phones within socially, economically and politically marginalized populations demonstrates these users to be particularly innovative with their uses of this technology, as they are sometimes used to help negotiate marginalities. My use of the term 'marginal' "refers to the kaleidoscope of perceived and real circumstances that cause people to feel disadvantaged and may include a lack of or limited access to communication technologies and means of transport", defined by de Bruijn et al. (2009:12). However, I acknowledge that one can be disadvantaged but not necessarily *feel* that way. A general acceptance among scholars is that the adoption and use of mobile technology in developing countries, (as opposed to developed countries, an acceptance that is problematic in its own right), with disadvantaged and marginalized populations, will almost always be, in all aspects, positive, particularly economically (Hosman & Fife, 2012). I too was almost persuaded of this notion by the euphoria around mobile technology, particularly in the context of my study where empirical data on the possibilities offered by the mobile phone has surfaced only recently. Initially, I was compelled to operate with the understanding that mobile phones were absolutely and infinitely beneficial to Langa residents, specifically based on my flawed perceptions of the township and my own unquestioned success of mobile technology.

Figure 1: Africa's mobile revolution
Mobile phone and fixed line subscriptions in Africa, 2000–2011 (top) and average mobile growth rates by region (bottom).
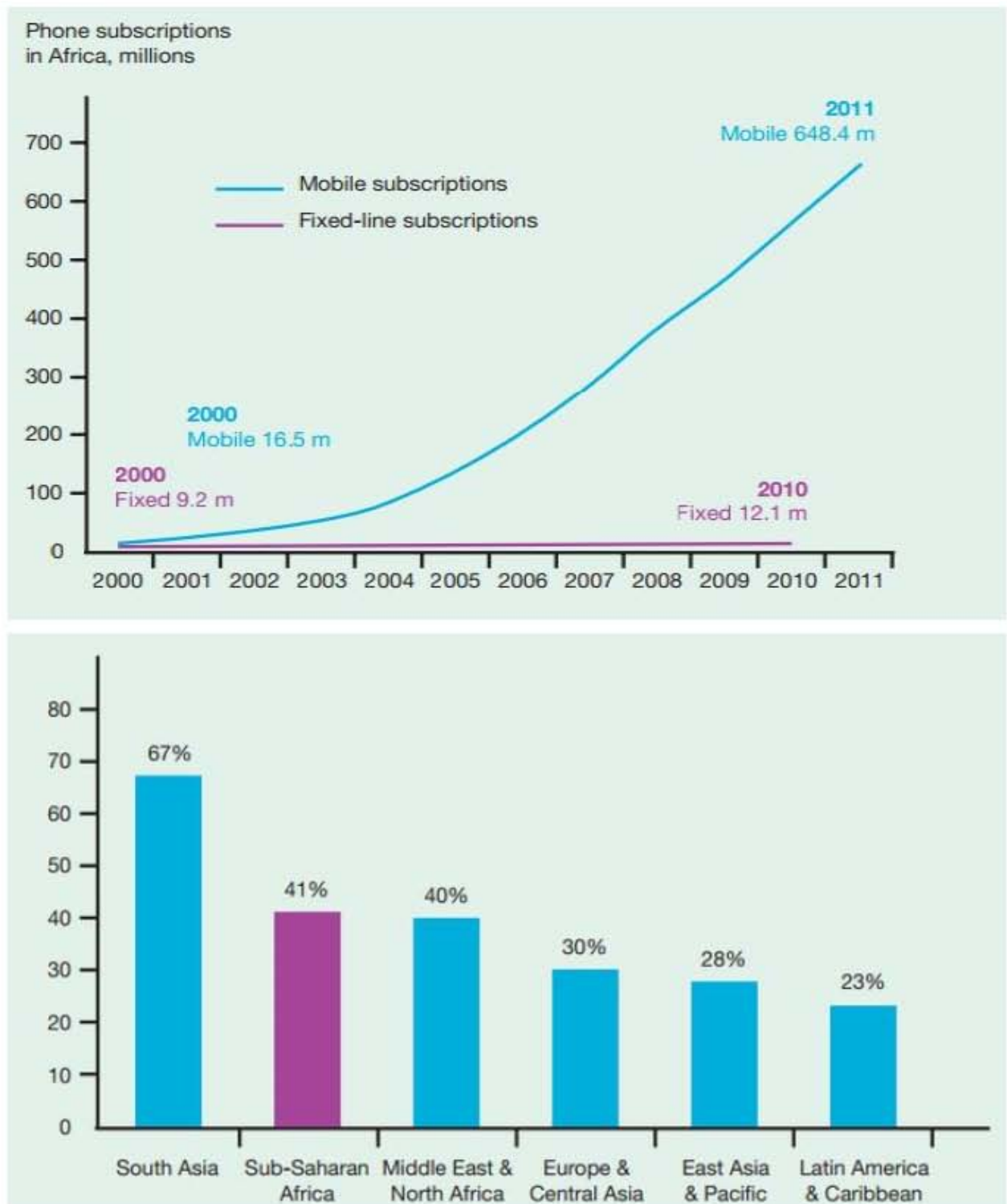
Africa trailed only South Asia as the region with the largest average mobile growth rate from 2000-2011.

Source: World Bank, Wireless Intelligence and ITU

In our current (mobile) technological generation, techno-social relationships are crucial to how we, as users, accommodate and integrate technology into our everyday lives. Latour (2005:71, his emphasis) states that "… *any thing* that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor…" Mobile phones are indeed actors, as even mundane uses of the device have the potential to affect users' state of affairs as much as users allow them to. Techno-social relationships, then, are mutual relationships where human interactions are combined with technological material objects used toward a desired (or sometimes not) outcome of the user.

Excitement around new technologies like the cell phone has resulted in a tendency for people to assume a position of "technological determinism", regarding relationships between technology and society. Technological determinism, a theory that I discuss in greater detail under the *Mobile Communication in an African Context* section below, loosely refers to a belief that technology causes social changes that are blindly accepted by the users. This belief suggests that technology pre-determines use, ultimately indicating that (only the) users are adopted and used by technologies (and not the other way around) which studies have shown is not the case, particularly in an African context. The theory emphasizes technology's control over society. Though technologies are, to use Latour's (2005) term 'non-human' Keen (2012) suggests that mobile phones are becoming more and more human-like with their functions, thereby playing a critical role in humans' social lives. While technologies on their own are inanimate objects, when used in cooperation with human interaction and social contexts they can change the course of actions made by human agents, therefore implicating their agency (Latour 2005), though not suggesting their control or dominance over humans. For example, a person can use a mobile phone to contact another to change a pre-arranged meeting time. This then changes the course of the day; the meeting has been changed by contact through the mobile phone. It is not that the mobile phone literally changed the meeting time rather the phone has allowed an individual to assert the new meeting time via this technology. This example emphasizes the mutual relationship between society and technology where one does not necessarily over power the other.

Like scholars before me, I maintain that technology is not out of our control (Powell, 2012). The belief that mobile technology is always good, coupled with a false notion that technology pre-determines use, has unjustly led to a conclusion that the integration of new ICTs will inevitably and positively benefit its users all the time. ICTs in general are "often presented as unambiguous positive flows of globalization (Carmody, 2010:112). Had I not acknowledged my own intimate history with my cell phone, I too may have subconsciously sided with this notion, asking limited and limiting questions around techno-social relationships. Admitting that I

even had a "relationship" with my cell phone forced me to evaluate a part of my life that I had, until then, taken for granted. In my relationship, my phone was both cherished and despised. On the one hand I was in love with it, cooing over its every feature and dazzled by its many functions (despite never maximizing its full capabilities). I was impressed by its ability to transform my seemingly un-cool and unimportant social standing to none other than cool and important, at least in my eyes. While away at school, I was grateful for its ability to keep my family and friends close whenever necessary. At the same time, however, and more importantly, I was relieved and comforted by its ability to offer freedom from those same people; helping to deliver me from conversations and social obligations which I might otherwise have had to commit. I loved the fact that I could hide behind my cell phone. I was grateful and impressed by its ability to both eliminate *and* maintain distance (Powell, 2012: Chapter 2).

On the other hand I had (subconsciously) given this mobile technology too much power, allowing myself to be imprisoned by it too often. It had a life of its own – a life of its own made possible by me, the owner. I was bounded by its functions, always ready, ever-waiting for a ring or a beep to confirm my existence. It had become a part of my life that began to shape my views of myself, either confirming or threatening my new "cool" social status. I had been lured into an unhealthy dependency and emotional imprisonment to my phone. My cell phone drew me in demanding complete (sometimes involuntary) emotional involvement towards its existence beyond its function as a communication device. My relationship was one built on trust in the performance and abilities of the cell phone and my complete reliance on it as (one of) my primary source(s) of communication, in addition to my perception of its ability to be a trustworthy companion. While a meaningful relationship with a cell phone might be necessary for smooth integration into one's life, too many uncertainties attributed to the cell phone may result in a variety of emotions rarely talked about or admitted by the user. It was through my interpretation of my own account, how I controlled my cell phone and how my cell phone controlled me, that I felt capable of embarking on this study. I used my experiences to (attempt to) learn similar taken-for-granted relationships with this technology among Langa residents. This data was useful for understanding the various uses of the cell phone in Langa Township.

Background to the Study

The introduction and integration of ICTs, particularly the mobile phone, into the African continent have been remarkable in terms of the speed at which they have become a normal part of everyday life. The consumption of mobile phones across the continent has greatly accelerated since the late 1990s (Yonazi et al., 2012; de Bruijn et al., 2009). The mobile phone has become

such an essential attribute of human existence that those who do not own one can "find themselves relegated to an uncomfortable, almost inexcusable, minority" (Powell, 2012:1). In South Africa where mobility and migration among local South Africans within the country and African immigrants from around the continent have long been the norm, the mobile phone has grown to play a crucial role in the everyday lives of mobile bodies. Mobile phones, among other communication technologies, such as the Internet, have been credited with providing new opportunities for mobility, resulting in the re-negotiation of social relations and spaces in innovative ways (Horst & Miller, 2005; Miller & Slater, 2000). This is achieved through (perceptions of) their unique ability to compress time and space in ways that reduce the barriers of distance and location in the creation and maintenance of old and new relationships (Lamoureaux, 2013; Tazanu, 2012; Ling & Campbell, 2011; Nyamnjoh, 2009; de Bruijn et al., 2009; de Bruijn, 2009; Gurstein, 2003).

The introduction and integration of ICTs in Africa has sparked much interest in scholarly circles, yet this interest remains to be equally matched by empirical data on social transformations resulting from these technologies. Until recently, empirical research around such developments has failed to match the euphoria around these issues. Several scholars, for which I am grateful to be included (see Powell, 2012 particularly Chapter 2 for taken for granted aspects of techno-social relationships), have embraced the euphoria around new ICTs, engaging in empirical research towards understanding the social transformations wrought from their existence, particularly among marginalized populations throughout the African continent. Though not in an African context, I consider Miller and Slater's (2000) ethnographic study of the Internet in Trinidad, Horst and Miller's (2006) anthropological approach to understanding the cell phone in a Jamaican context, and Miller's (2011) study of Facebook among Trinidadians to be pioneer studies in exploring the (local) social transformations wrought by ICTs within marginalized populations.

With mutual desires to ethnographically explore material cultures, particularly relations between people, new media and social networking, anthropologist Daniel Miller joins sociologist Don Slater, and anthropologist Heather Horst on a quest to understand the Internet and cell phones within particular populations. Miller and Slater (2000:1) sought to learn what "Trinidadians find in the Internet, what they make of it and how they relate its possibilities to themselves and their futures". Horst and Miller (2006:1-2, 181) assess the relationships between ICTs and poverty alleviation in different parts of the world. Their study focuses on low-income Jamaicans to investigate the simultaneous impact of cell phones on Jamaicans and the impact of Jamaicans on cell phone potential. Miller's (2011) study of Facebook in a Trinidadian context

challenges the inaccurate assumption that ideas and uses of Facebook are universal. Miller looks to Trinidad to symbolize inconsistent uses of Facebook outside of the Western or European context. He investigates the consequences of social networking for ordinary Trinidadians, exploring how their lives have been changed by Facebook.

Empirical contributions from scholars closer to home, several of which feature in this dissertation, include: Skuse and Cousins' (2008) study of how ICTs influence poor people (residents of Khayelitsha Township in Cape Town, South Africa), and how they shape and redefine these technologies; Hahn and Kibora's (2008) study of the domestication and cultural appropriation of mobile phones in Burkina Faso; De Bruijn et al's (2009, 2013) edited books detailing various innovative appropriations among several populations across the African continent; Lamoureaux's (2011) study of SMSing as a way of bridging physical barriers and facilitating absent-presence among University students in Khartoum, Sudan; Nkwi's (2011) study which interrogates the 'newness' of ICTs with regards to the communication and (dis)connection of mobile bodies in Cameroon; Tazanu's (2012) study explores the use of new media among Cameroonian migrants in Germany and Cameroonian non-migrants, investigating the role of media in facilitating transnational relationships. Similarly, Frei (2013) explores the role of new media among Cameroonian migrants in Switzerland and their non-migrant kin in the negotiation of sociality and transnational migration. Nyamnjoh, H.M. (2013) discusses how ICTs bridge mobilities among Cameroonian migrants in South Africa and the Netherlands and their non-migrant kin to encourage or destroy relationships. Hay's (2013) thesis explores the role of ICTs in the making of convivial relationships among migrant church members in Cape Town. These studies contribute to understanding the implementation, domestication and cultural appropriation of ICTs within the local, social contexts of the populations studied.

These studies have proven useful for opening up new theoretical and methodological spaces for interdisciplinary research, in addition to offering potential contributions to policy-making. In Africa, where occurrences of migration and mobility are strategic practices for preserving 'respectable' lifestyles, the ways in which mobility shapes and is shaped by ICTs has become increasingly significant. The practices of migration and mobility allow for the creation of social networks from a variety of spaces and places leading to the emergence of 'mobile populations' and 'mobile cultures'. Mobile populations generally consist of people in and from geographically marginal areas, who also struggle with various types of marginality resulting in their social exclusion from mainstream society (Pearlman, 1976).

Statement of the Problem

South Africa is an attractive destination for African immigrants, though many who flock into the country struggle to successfully obtain the opportunities that brought them there. They, like the majority of (black) South Africans, end up living in poverty and social dislocation (Zegeye & Maxted, 2002) usually in townships and other informal settlements (Skuse & Cousin, 2007). Despite its high rate of poverty (Pillay et al., 2013; Jurgens & Donaldson, 2012; Landau, 2011; Matsinhe, 2011), South Africa is considered better than most African countries by many immigrants (McClendon, 2010) and therefore remains to be perceived – at least from afar – as a place of opportunity and hope, of greener pastures. Opportunity-seeking immigrants from around the continent, however, sometimes find themselves struggling in unexpected ways. Their struggling often coincides with the struggles of displaced locals and is at times compounded by their need to support friends and family left behind – possibly the very reason they came to South Africa. The disillusioned immigrant receives little sympathy, once settled, as their presence is perceived as a major contribution to the struggles of the locals, as immigrants are often blamed for locals' social ills (Landau, 2011; Matsinhe, 2011; Neocosmos, 2006).

Langa Township's history of social life, work and resistance to the apartheid has contributed to it being a contemporary image of place and community for many Cape Tonians and South Africans, in general (Ralphs, 2009:259). Described in further detail in *Chapter 3*, Langa Township is generally known as Cape Town's oldest township (Ralphs, 2009; Wilson & Mafeje, 1963) which housed thousands of internal black, working migrants during the 1920s (Wilson, 1972). Townships, usually built on the margins of South African cities, are home to former (and current) disadvantaged groups (Jurgens & Donaldson, 2012) both from within the country and around the continent. Originally inspired by colonial town planning, townships are found in many African cities though they are often thought to be uniquely South African. During the apartheid era, these colonial plans were intended to separate the white colonial state, the colonial middle class which consisted of Indians and some Africans, and finally the urban majority of Africans (Township Renewal Sourcebook, 2009:4). Townships were previously regarded as cheap housing solutions for non-whites in the context of the white-dominated apartheid city (Jurgens & Donaldson, 2012). Townships formed (and currently are) an integral part of Cape Town where hundreds of thousands of black Africans stay (Johannes 2000).

Townships and shantytowns, found in most African cities and towns, are the most visible markers of profound crises in African cities and towns. Currently, 62% of African urbanites live in informal settlements and make-shift shelters (Pieterse, 2013:21). As Africa is said to have the fastest rate of urbanism compared to other regions, the informal areas, predominantly occupied

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by African urbanites, is said to be the real Africa. "… The real African city does not correspond to modernist biases about the physical fabric of cities". The informal city *is* the African city (Pieterse, 2013:20-3). Spaces like Langa, then, considered marginal in part because of its geographical location in Cape Town and the presence of informal houses or shacks in the area, can be considered representative of the *real* Africa. Accepting Langa (and other townships) as 'normal', not as "failed modernization in Africa" (Pieterse, 2013:26) could even implicate parts of mainstream Cape Town, as populations living in more 'formal' areas as being the real marginal spaces in Cape Town (and perhaps Africa in general).

Since opening in 1927, Langa has become a space where both internal South African migrants and black African immigrants find shelter while, for some, escaping the troubles of their home villages and countries. Langa is a constitution of mobility. It is the epitome of a settlement contingent upon mobility and migration. In Langa, some foreigners strive to live (temporarily, occasionally or permanently) comfortably among the locals while still existing wholeheartedly in their home villages and/or countries. Some will attempt to establish some form of belonging in their host communities. Belonging is often about emotional attachment and feeling at 'home' (Yuval-Davis, 2006) in a given place. Belonging is also politically based where the granting of 'belonging' in the host community to 'the Other' is often policed. 'Others' or people who are members of other ethnic, racial and national collectivities are "not considered 'to belong' to the nation-state community, even if they are formally entitled to (Yuval-Davis, 2007:564; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Therefore, belonging in the host community, for (im)migrants is far from inevitable.

For (im)migrants, absorption into one or more social groups that exist in Langa, then, is not always easy (Wilson & Mafeje, 1963:21, 24-7). Physically living together does not necessarily mean that individuals will enter into amiable relationships (Mayers, 1971:14) – especially in an apartheid context – as tolerance does not equate integration. While living in Langa, some (im)migrants will have tried to be more like their local counterparts as an ultimate means of social survival. Some will have attempted to conform to the social groups that they live among out of fear of being socially excluded (Yuval-Davis, 2006); their identities, then, become 'flexible' (as identities are not bounded), as integration into Langa does not necessarily entail severing links with people and places left behind, even when that is demanded or expected.

Although flexible (or shifting) identities may not emerge in response to, or as the result of integrating into and adapting to the ways of the host environment, the prospect of this shifting among (im)migrants in Langa leads to questions around the maintenance of culture, identity and a sense of belonging with home villages or countries while living in Langa. One begins to

wonder how one relates to other (im)migrants in relation to themselves, how older (im)migrants relate to younger and recent settlers, for example. Attempting to understand the various relationships among and between (im)migrants within the township leads to questions of social inclusion and exclusion and how these constructs are enforced, mitigated or contested, and with what consequences. The crucial role of communication necessary for ensuring comfortable existence in both worlds deserves careful attention, particularly now when new mobile technologies, complementary to indigenous means of communication, have entered into mainstream communication, challenging bounded expectations of identities and belonging.

Flexible Identities and Marginality

As the concept of marginality is an essential aspect of this dissertation, I aim to address the link between marginality and flexible identities in this study. Robert Park (1928) describes the marginal person as a "cultural hybrid" as he intimately shares the cultural life and traditions of two (or more) distinct peoples without severing links with his past and traditions. Assuming that this person is not quite accepted in his new 'home' makes a "[person] on the margins of two cultures and two societies that never completely interpenetrated and fused" (in Pearlman 1976:99). The presence and possible rejection of (im)migrants in Langa can potentially lead to the creation of marginal peoples within the township. Flexible identities, then, by virtue of this uncomfortable straddling of two cultures would be ever present, as (im)migrants' existence and participation in various cultures and societies (may) "never completely" fuse. This study will show that flexible identities among individuals and groups of residents has the potential to present residents as marginal on the one hand, while, simultaneously, being firmly rooted and connected to society on the other.

Being marginal is not necessarily about being disconnected (Neves & Du Toit, 2010) from others, yet the tendency to equate marginalism to disconnection is subtly present. Furthermore, marginalized persons or groups exist in relation to dominant persons or groups, but one's dominance or marginality is never fixed. Ideologies and beliefs notwithstanding, no group is inherently superior to other groups (Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008; Orbe, 1998). Individuals belonging to either marginal or dominant groups wear social identities that are heavily marked by membership in one group or the other. These identities impose social images that situate themselves in relation to the opposite group (Bourdieu, 1984) yet social identities and images are fluid and can easily change with new encounters, experiences and creative innovation. Social hierarchies that determine dominance and marginality are subject to change because of their

socially constructed and contested nature, and because of the dynamics of social actions. Notions of marginality should reflect its unbounded flexibility.

Incidentally, the notion of marginality is also ever fluctuating as there are various types of marginalities that can affect groups and individuals in different degrees (Fonchingong, 2013; Mizruchi, 1983; Pearlman, 1976, see also Chapter 4 of this dissertation). The most common marginalities are social, economic and political. One group can be socially marginalized but adequately positioned in relation to other groups, in economic and political spheres, for example. Furthermore, where a group of people may be generally marginalized, exploring the margins within the margins will show that some are less or more marginal than their counterparts. Earlier I stated that African immigrants in South Africa often create jobs, offering job opportunities to local residents who are unemployed, usually black (Tadesse & White, 2013; Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010). In this sense, then, while both local black South Africans and black African immigrants may be considered marginal, one might claim that on the one hand, local black South Africans are more marginal in that they are less likely to create jobs or find employment than black immigrants. On the other hand, African immigrants in South Africa, by virtue of living in a new country, may face linguistic barriers, for example, that could hamper their success in various aspects of their host communities. One might then suggest that they are *more* marginal than their local South African counterparts.

This reality leads to the creation of flexible identities, as one's social status within a city or country, for example, may group them (sometimes unjustly) under a particular inferior or otherwise, marginal category in one sense, though they may excel in another. Langa's geographical location, a township built in the margins of the City of Cape Town (Wilson & Mafeje, 1963) and the history of (past) residents is such that their presumed disconnection and blatant marginality is currently accepted as a given. However, residents have, through the years, coped with a variety of disadvantages that have governed their lives in a way that should elevate their social status making them more equal – if not less marginal – to those in mainstream Cape Town. (Real or imagined) flexible identities, then, can result from the way (township) residents are perceived to live and the reality, which is often unobserved and therefore unexpected by those outside the township. Perceived identities are often reinforced by residents' behavior, sometimes deliberately so, one might understand the marginal identity as a strategic survival strategy to solicit aid from (well-meaning) others (see *Chapter 3* of this dissertation).

Empirical research on the everyday lives of a variety of (im)migrants living and working in Langa Township provides useful data towards understanding the reasons for migration into and within South Africa in general (Cape Town, in particular), as well as an understanding of

these particular mobile populations and their social positions in South Africa. Furthermore, since mobile phones have become essential devices in both everyday life and as facilitators in the constitution of trans-local connections (Pfaff, 2010:343), such research is expected to reveal what role, if any, mobile phones play in (im)migrants' lives, particularly in their real or imagined social positions within the country.

Purpose and Rationale of the Study

This study of migration and belonging in Langa is part of a larger project funded by SANPAD entitled: *Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), mobility and the reconfiguration of marginality in South Africa.* The objectives of the larger project are to study the diverse transformations wrought by new Information and Communication Technologies, the mobile phone in particular, in socially marginal populations within South Africa and to reveal if, how and why ICTs generate new configurations of marginality. Other contributions to SANPAD's project include Myrna van Pinxteren's (2012) enlightening study on cell phone use among a Deaf community in Cape Town. Establishing the Deaf as a linguistic and sensory minority and therefore marginalized, van Pinxteren argues that they negotiate their marginalized positions using cell phones which allow them to navigate between Deaf and hearing communities in spite of their hearing impairments. She emphasizes the role of cell phones in the making of flexible identities through the negotiation of social relationships. The Deaf, she explains, effectively embrace the cell phone to extend their social relationships, ultimately increasing their mobility that may at one time have remained stagnant when the Deaf could move only among their own.

Similarly, Paula Hay (2013:8, 55) explores the use of ICTs in negotiating conviviality among migrant members of the Bay Community Church in Cape Town. Hay presents the use of mobile phones and social networking sites for constructing and establishing members' Christian identity, through prayer-seeking SMSes and status updates on Facebook, for example. The mobile phone, Hay states, is also "a medium for accessing the Holy Spirit" as it can be used as a tool for conversion and the mobilization of prayer. Delicately explaining the notion of conviviality – the balance of intimacy and distance in relationships between people from various socio-economic and national backgrounds – and convivial relationships for members of the Bay Community Church, she emphasizes the role of ICTs in facilitating communion with God and others. These communions help members to bond with various others within in the church, creating and negotiating convivial relationships among members.

Ingrid Brudvig (2013) looks at experiences of mobility and migration among a mobile population, consisting of South Africans and African immigrants from around the continent, that frequent the Bellville central business district (CBD) in Cape Town. Brudvig examines how conviviality emerges amongst a mobile population, and explores why Bellville is more accommodating to foreigners than other areas, namely townships, in Cape Town. She notes that conviviality, among this population, is built on a shared sense of mutual belonging. Bellville, as a shared space for this mobile population, provides opportunities for mobile networks to engage in convivial relationships that often facilitate a collective sense of belonging for migrants.

While the general project emphasizes new information and communication technologies, my study stresses that new technologies are best understood within a historical perspective, especially in the case of Langa where communication technologies of the day must have played a major role in the lives of migrants. Mobile phones and the Internet were non-existent when Langa was first established. In the past, most residents relied on manual letter writing delivered via taxi drivers. Others sent messages through travelling persons and family members, which was often faster than the postal service. Though telegrams and telephones reduced communication lapses significantly, mobile phones have been perceived to profoundly ameliorate communication particularly among mobile populations in Africa (de Bruijn et al., 2013, 2009; Nyamnjoh, 2013b, 2005). Effective communication between friends and family members left behind would have been crucial among (im)migrants seeking to ease their nostalgia for home, particularly for those whose arrival was met with notable reluctance by locals.

Previously, Langa temporarily housed "outsiders" who were reluctantly accommodated by the "insiders" of apartheid Cape Town. Currently, in post-apartheid Cape Town, Langa comprises formal internal migrant "outsiders" now turned "insiders" and "citizens", in addition to new "outsiders" who are immigrants from other parts of Africa. This complex reality suggests that belonging, even amongst those who claim to come from the same country is rarely homogenous or equally opened to everyone. This study, therefore, explores the attractions and tensions of unequal encounters in Cape Town, in general, and Langa, in particular. The study also seeks to explore if and how migrants in Langa, old and new, have used and are using communication technologies, indigenous and modern, to maintain relationships and memories with people and places left behind. Conversely, the study explores how these same technologies are used by (im)migrants to create and maintain relationships in their new "home", however temporarily. The study is a contribution towards correcting the idea of technological determinism and recognizing the agency of Africans as social actors conscious and purposeful in

their use of technology, often leading to technological innovations. The study is both historical and ethnographic in its focus on the making of flexible identities and ideas of belonging among different categories of migrants in Langa.

Significance of the Study

There is a general need to expand research on the use of ICTs in African countries (Thompson & Walsham, 2010). There is significant interest in mobile ICT use in developing countries and much interest has been focused on the use of ICTs for development in an African context (Pfaff, 2010; Thompson & Walsham, 2010). The significance of this study lies in its potential to offer new insights for scholarship and policy, as the empirical data will reflect changes to profiles produced by ICTs. The data is intended to inform policy stakeholders, providing insight to their understanding of the relation between ICTs, marginality and development. In keeping with the research objectives of SANPAD's larger project there are three significant reasons for carrying out this study. It is expected, firstly, that the end result will contribute to discussions by scholars and policy makers on migrants and their social position in South Africa. Secondly, the data presented in the following chapters is intended to interrogate and inform stakeholders' and users' views regarding ICTs, providing a basis for comparison of South Africa and other parts of Africa regarding the use of ICTs. The research will provide insight into the relation between ICTs and society. Finally, the research should contribute to existing knowledge on the notion of marginality.

Conceptual Framework
Insiders and Outsiders

In a post-colonial and post-apartheid South African context, one would understand Langa as a marginal settlement. Spaces like Langa and other townships in Cape Town have a tendency to be Otherized and considered disconnected from the rest of Cape Town. On the contrary, however, Skuse & Cousins (2007:991) argue that townships are very much connected to mainstream Cape Town, as they were meant to be through their labor in colonial and apartheid times (Wilson, 1972; Mayer, 1971). Furthermore, as made evident during fieldwork, many township residents have customer service jobs including petrol attendants, security guards, waitresses and domestic workers and car guards, for example, that provide for those living in mainstream Cape Town. These jobs which some people would look down on are in fact crucial in the bigger scheme of things. It is these otherwise taken-for-granted or behind-the-scene jobs that connect Langa and other townships to the rest of Cape Town.

It is also not uncommon for external migrants to create jobs, offering employment to local South Africans. Approximately four of the Spaza shops in Langa are owned by Somali males. At the time of fieldwork, one shop owner employed a local Xhosa female resident as a cashier. Another Angolan former resident of Langa sold his paintings in Langa at the time of fieldwork. He too employed a local South African male resident to assist him and paid him a small fee. Kalitanyi and Visser (2010), note that a significant number of external immigrants use their entrepreneurial skills to establish small businesses. By establishing businesses they create employment for themselves and at times unemployed South Africans as the two examples from Langa above validate. They can also facilitate social inclusion through their services to the local community. Henry, a Nigerian native, owns one of two cell phone repair shops in Langa. Having been there for six years, he is widely known and respected as many residents have benefited from his services at one time or another. His line of work has afforded him a form of social inclusion in the township. The owner of the second largest Internet café in Langa, also Nigerian, appears to be comfortable among residents who come to his café often. While heated debates around whether African immigrants in South Africa are "job takers or job creators", it can at least be deduced that their roles often contribute to the social and economic development of their host countries in their services and employment opportunities (Kalitnayi & Visser, 2010). They are, therefore, very much connected to mainstream Cape Town. Migration entails the movement between two places: the origin and destination. The reality is that migration is a necessity for both countries of origin and their destinations (Statistics South Africa, 2011) as both (can potentially) stand to benefit in various ways.

Pearlman (1976) critically examines the widely used term "marginality" to suggest that characterizing populations similar to Langa's on the basis of residence alone neglects their positive contributions to the greater population. The migrant labor system in South Africa shaped both its political and economic history (Crush et al., 1991:2). The political economy of labor, livelihoods and migration is such that township "residents do form an integral part of the economy and social life of greater Cape Town, albeit on very unequal terms and strictly delimited in a number of ways through constructions of space, urban geography, language, class, and race" (Skuse & Cousins, 2007:991). Nevertheless, with the general identification of (im)migrants living in Cape Town as unwanted strangers whose homes are elsewhere (Nyamnjoh, 2006), one might conclude that Langa and the majority of its residents would be treated as "outsiders" in varying degrees. When considered historically, even current insiders were once regarded as "outsiders within" (Harrison, 2008) in Langa and other informal settlements in South Africa.

"Outsiders" are generally awarded a status of "non-citizens", "strangers" or "aliens" within their host communities. In South Africa, as well as Botswana, a common name for such persons is the *makwerekwere*; a popular term used to identify African foreigners (Matsinhe, 2011; Itmann et al., 2010; Nyamnjoh, 2010, 2006; Sichone, 2008). In South Africa, public discourse relegates any (black) African from outside of South Africa's borders as a *makwerekwere* or the "bogeyman" (Matsinhe, 2011:295). The term is often used to refer to African foreigners, particularly – but not limited to – those who are undocumented; otherwise known as illegal immigrants. The term is said to have emerged based on what foreigners' speech patterns sound like to South Africans (McClendon, 2010). One Langa resident and South African local identified with this theory when explaining the emergence of the term to the best of his knowledge

> …the word 'amakwerekwere' came from … [these] people that [came to South Africa and] were fixing um power lines… I don't know whether they [were] Tswana or Sotho. [In] their language, [it sounded like] they're always saying "giri, giri" so that's where the name comes from (Thando, Interview February 2012).

Adesanmi (2008) defines the *makwerekwere* as "the derogatory term used by South Africans to describe non-South African blacks […] [M]akwerkwere refers to Black immigrants from the rest of Africa." Francis Nyamnjoh's novel *Intimate Strangers* (2010), based on ethnographic data collected in Botswana initially used towards his more academic book *Insiders and Outsiders: Citizenship and Xenophobia in Contemporary Southern Africa* (2006), provides ethnographic insight into the term *makwerekwere*. The story presents the life of Immaculate, a newly arrived foreigner from a fictitious African country, to Botswana, confronted head on with the term *Makwerekwere* as she is referred to as such. She learns that *makwerekwere* is used in Botswana to "refer to a particular type of foreigner from distant parts of Africa" (Nyamnjoh, 2010:9). This negative perception of her was based not on who she was as a person but where she came from and the differences she embodied as a foreigner. These views of the *makwerekwere* demonstrate the social exclusion and marginalization of populations fitting into this category, particularly those who are readily singled out from specific countries.

Not surprisingly, non-citizens, strangers, aliens, *amakwerekwere* (all used to describe the general category of the Other) are considered people who do not belong and are often denied even the most basic human rights while being subjected to social exclusion. This exclusion is deemed necessary for the well-being of "insiders" (citizens, nationals, locals), again treated as homogenous or bounded. Citizenship, therefore, is reduced to indigeneity, however politicized,

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circumscribed or contrived (de la Cadena & Starn, 2007; Nyamnjoh, 2007a, 2007b; Mamdani, 1996). In this form, citizenship is given by territory and birth, not by political agency, and is underlined by state power (Neocosmos, 2006:15). For many Africans problematic colonial categories of indigeneity remain the test for rights and the basis for entitlements and citizenship (Mamdani, 2009:134-39). Though many African governments would claim that all Africans are indigenous peoples and should have equal rights to land and natural resources, the concept of indigeneity has been highly problematic, politicized and subjected to local and national particularities that have ambivalent and sometimes paradoxical outcomes, not least in South Africa (Green, 2011). Furthermore, the long and ongoing history of migration within the continent has made defining indigenous groups controversial (Pelican, 2009:52). Migrant laborers living in the Congo, for example, were not considered indigenous because they moved to the Congo during the colonial period. Colonial conquest thus differentiated the indigenous from those considered immigrants (Mamdani, 2009:133-34); a situation further compounded by the postcolonial state and its fixation with cultural and ethnic identities (Mamdani, 1996).

The colonial state's division of "natives" from other races in South Africa and the further division of "natives" into ethnic groups led to tensions between those ethnicities that were considered indigenous and those that were not. The dual legacy of colonialism sought to privilege indigenous over non-indigenous citizens. Only the indigenous could benefit from customary rights which gave them greater claim to rights and land. The fact that many (im)migrants or "outsiders" are considered non-indigenous or less authentic autochthons ultimately renders them powerless to claim basic rights (Mamdani, 2009:127-34). Furthermore, when legal rights are extended to migrants they cannot always claim them because "they are denied the social membership in local and national communities for which claiming such rights are contingent" (Nyamnjoh, 2007b:74). In 2012, a tweet made by Helen Zille on Twitter pertaining to South Africans from the Eastern Cape currently residing in the Western Cape caused major controversy in South Africa. She referred to Eastern Cape pupils who came to the Western Cape for a better education as "refugees". Her comment *"refugees are ppl who have to escape because their rights are VIOLATED. That describes E Cape pupils EXACTLY[3]"* led many to claim that she, a white South African, was racist and unfairly categorized South Africans from the Eastern Cape. On the following day, Songezo Mjongile, a provincial secretary of the African National Congress (ANC) demanded an apology from Zille

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[3] Helen Zille tweet: @helenzillechiefntshingila, 9:56am – 20 Mar 2012

The ANC demands of her a retraction for calling such people "refugees" in their own country that in effect diminish them to a group not really *belonging* here […] These racially loaded sneers alienate and demean blacks. [To be called 'refugees'] is a breach of their general human rights as South African citizens and especially the right to choose where to stay and of association. They are no longer second class citizens of the former apartheid era in any part of the country and especially not in the Western Cape […] The DA uses code like this to shift blame on the 'foreigners' as isiXhosa speaking Africans from the Eastern Cape specifically are portrayed as *intruders* taking services and jobs from locals (Mjongile, 22 Mar 2012, my emphasis).

Comments like these alert us to the reality that South African citizens are also policed in their mobility (see also Crush & Frayne, 2007). Internal migration, even after apartheid, is monitored by black and white South Africans (particularly black). Despite physical and invisible boundaries erected to maintain differences between South African locals, 'citizens', and *amakwerekwere*, I have learned that ICTs can blur these distinctions as their compression of time and space offer more ways for people to occupy the same spaces, regardless of legally or socially enforced rules to maintain their separation. The rural and urban, the national and international are all connected by a series of people and relationships, both real and virtual, especially since the advent of new communication technologies (de Bruijn et al., 2010:270-71).

Mobile Communication in an African Context

For many Africans, communication relies on a messenger, which ultimately determines if and how (credible) messages are received. The value of social networks in an African contexts implies that the messenger is often more important than the message. In Africa local practices of communication were influenced by traditional or indigenous forms of communicating (Obijiofor, 1998). Nyamnjoh (2013b: 2) reminds us that the fact that Africans "so nimbly" integrated new mobile technology into their lives "speaks more of cultures, practices, and relationships already at play … than of a purported attempt to … cope with the material culture of other worlds". In this regard, then, Africans should (indeed must) be seen not as passive users of technology but as active and autonomous individuals shaping (as they too are shaped by the) technology, (Chandler, 2012; de Bruijn et al., 2009). The use of mobile technology provided alternative and complementary ways to communicate that have always been present across the continent.

In my own fieldwork and various readings that I have read around the topic of the use of new ICTs both within and outside of Africa (de Bruijn et al., 2013, 2009; Ekine; 2011; Orgeret, 2009; Tlabela et al., 2007; Hanson, 2007; Horst & Miller, 2006; Leaning, 2005; Ito et al., 2005; Castells, 1996/2000), I learned that mobile phones have become a crucial, yet normal part of our everyday lives. Technology has "become a way – some might say *the* way – of life" (Powell,

2012:85). Owning a mobile phone has been associated with the enhancement of autonomy (Castells et al., 2007) and the "mobile emancipation" (Gumpert & Drucker, 2007:11) of individuals. These associations are due, in part, because of the range of (established and potential) opportunities afforded by the mobile phone which are discussed throughout this dissertation. So mundane is the use of these technologies today that their presence in most societies is almost taken for granted (see Ling 2012). One might expect, then, that mobile phones are used frequently among outsiders struggling to belong and attempting to secure social inclusion among insiders. Mobile phones might be deemed 'normal' in this regard.

The "normalization" of the use of technology encourages its acceptance as a necessity in everyday life. The normalization of the mobile phone has created a pattern that generally makes use of the device non-optional. This occurs when social norms, in addition to opposing disadvantages on individuals refusing to use technologies that have been deemed reasonable and normal, render a device reasonable and necessary (Chandler, 2012:256- 57). The unprecedented speed at which mobile phones have been integrated into daily living and surviving among a variety of African populations demonstrates the rapid normalization of the device on the continent. Though increasingly referred to as the "continent of hope" (Nyamnjoh, 2013c:129), the image of Africa as a 'dark continent' still persists. It is often considered a "place to be pitied, a continent of failure which needs to be helped by wiser, richer and more stable societies" (Nicolson, 2008:2).

Economically, the world generally views Africa as backward and unproductive. Unlike the developed world, Africans are thought to be inefficient and lacking resourcefulness (Nicolson, 2008). Recently, however, *The Economist*, in contrast to their former labeling of Africa as "the hopeless continent", revealed that Africa's economies are growing faster than any other region in the world. Labor production has increased and trade between Africa and the rest of the world is on the rise[4]. Furthermore, regarding ICTs, Africa has, over the past decade, been placed at the forefront of "revolution in the cell phone industry" (Nyamnjoh, 2013c:128), indicative of the social transformation wrought by ICTs on the continent. The high rate of mobile phone use in Africa demonstrates how resourceful and efficient Africans are despite resilient dominantly Western perceptions to the contrary. Furthermore, documentation on the innovative ways that mobile phones have been used in a variety of countries in Africa (cf. Powell, 2012: Chapter 7; de Bruijn et al., 2009; Nyamnjoh, 2009, 2004; Ekine, 2010; Orgeret &

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[4] www.economist.com/node/215141008 (accessed Nov. 12 2013)

Ronning, 2009) paint a different picture from what many would expect, given the perception of Africa's (homogenous) technological marginality.

Aside from the normality of the device or the accelerated consumption of mobile phones, the existence of mobile phones in Africa has been of significant interest because of its local uses. It has been widely documented that mobile phones, among other communication technologies, have been and continue to be used for purposes that differ from what had initially been intended by the manufactures (Miller, 2011; Castells et al., 2007; Horst & Miller, 2006), whatever those were. The notion of technological determinism, a theory suggesting that "technology… determines the rest of society and culture" or that "technological changes force social adaptations" (Chandler, 2012:257), contributes to technology's presumed omnipotence, ultimately stripping autonomy from its users. Heilbroner (1967) suggests that while technology does have some bearing on human behavior, users of technology are not out of control. Silverstone (1999) suggests that technology does not act without human intervention. Technologies are social things that are vulnerable to the external uses that they are subjected to by their users. While technological changes do result in consequences for the societies in which they are employed, these changes are not determined or inevitable based on technology alone. Often times, technology (or the idea of technology) has more power in our imagination most likely because of the developers and what they intend or assume the technology will be used for (see also Burrell, 2009). However, the ultimate and various uses of technology emerge when users engage them in their everyday lives. 'Technological Determinism' has been widely contested, and should not be confused with inevitability (Hubrec & Brabec, 2011). Users of ICTs are manipulated by technology as much as they themselves manipulate technology for individual or collective needs. However, uses and impacts of ICTs on society are not inevitable. That technology is often used in unintended ways is a testament to objections against 'technological determinism'.

The reality is that people shape and use technologies in different contexts. People embody technologies and technologies embody people. For users, technology becomes almost like a second-skin. Mobile phones, as my data will show, have become part and parcel of Langa residents' physical being. Residents, use their mobile phones to negotiate physical and social boundaries of their external world in addition to extending their bodies past their physical limits (Warnier, 2006). They create and maintain relationships across localities, (attempt to) establish their identities, negotiate aspects of social inclusion and exclusion and promote themselves through their mobile phones. A praxeological approach of material culture in relation to techniques of the body, as discussed by Warnier (2001), suggests that techniques of the body are

largely intertwined with a given materiality involving sensori-motor subjectivation. This is to say that residents understand and use technology – as an extension of their body – in various ways depending on the setting and manner in which they were first introduced and their personal desires and gains of using technology.

Where technological determinism may be a justifiable notion regarding techno-social relations when a specific technology is first introduced, users of technology are quite capable of asserting control over their technologies (Chandler, 2012) once full assimilation is acquired. Van Pinxteren's study (2012) reveals how the Deaf's lack of control of the mobile phone is due to their inability to fully assimilate a technology originally created for the hearing. The adoption of a given technology is often "influenced by the possibilities and limitations associated with it" (Castells et al., 2007:39). As possibilities and limitations vary within different societies and cultures, so too does the control over technology and the innovative uses associated with them. Never has this been more evident than the use of mobile phones in an African context where many, if not most, users adapt unusual or unexpected ways of using mobile phones to meet their needs. Hahn and Kibora's (2008) study of mobile phone use in Burkina Faso emphasizes the 'domestication' and 'cultural appropriation' of technology, where specific uses and meanings differ within different socio-cultural contexts. Their study shows that cultural appropriation of the mobile phone transforms this otherwise inanimate object and its functions in accordance with the local conditions of everyday life. The phone's technological features, then, are "exploited precisely to the level that it is useful in local context" (Hahn & Kibora, 2008:91, 105).

The "Please Call Me" function of mobile phones (referred to by some in Langa as a 'P.C.M'), is a free service that allows mobile phone users to send an SMS (a Short Message Service) requesting the recipient to call them back. The message delivered will read 'Please call me' and will feature the cell phone number of the person requesting the callback. "Please Call Me" requests are free with a maximum of two free "Please Call Me" messages allowed daily.[5] During fieldwork, I learned that this function is heavily used among residents to both request that the receiver call them if they do not have airtime on their phone or to let someone know that they are thinking of them. For most residents, then, communicating with family, friends and lovers in this way can comfortably serve as valuable communication despite whether one's financial situation – having enough money to buy airtime to make a call – allows for a full conversation, or not. One may speculate that the makers of this technology did not intend for such a function to be the most dominant and certainly not a satisfactory one regarding acceptable

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[5] (http://www.mtn.co.sz/callPleaseCallMe.html).

communication patterns, not least because this function is free of charge, yet I refer to this example to show how some residents use their phones in ways that may contradict 'ordinary' uses.

Populations considered marginal have provided great insight into the ever-growing dimensions of the uses of mobile phones. Without purporting the all too generous perception of mobile phones as omnipotent devices, such populations have, through their agency, shown both allegiance with and mastery over the device, using it and being used by it in ways beneficial to their individual and collective needs. Horst and Miller (2006:6-7), in their exploration of mobile phone use among low-income Jamaicans in Jamaica, acknowledge the assumption that the adoption of new technologies creates opportunities and possibilities to successfully complete "unprecedented tasks". However, the authors suggest that new technologies are used to successfully achieve previous desires that had not been fulfilled due to the limitations of previous technologies. Miller and Slater (2000:85) express this as 'expansive realization', which suggests that mobile phones have not specifically created new desires and possibilities among low-income Jamaicans. They have, however, provided opportunities for desires that were already always present. De Bruijn et al., (2009) make similar claims about different groups of Africans and their use of the technology. Mobile phones have simply created opportunities for the potential and creativity that have already always been part of individual means of communicating and survival.

With communication being the center of human activity in all aspects of life it is not surprising that, since taking off in the mid-1990s, wireless communication networks have spread around the world faster than any other communication technology. A key factor in the desirability of mobile communication is its perceived potential to enhance the autonomy of individuals, allowing them to set up their own connections (Castells et al., 2007: 1, 7). The mobile phone, among other things, has been associated with forced migration (Carmody, 2010). Occurrences of migration forced or otherwise, often result in the need to secure relationships with family members and friends left behind. The perceived potential to create their own connections, then, is crucial in the lives of migrants. Mobile phones have become essential devices in "maintaining, managing and expanding already existing social networks" (Carmody, 2010:118) but they have also proved necessary for the creation and maintenance of new social networks. The strength of networks lies "in their flexibility, adaptability, and self-reconfiguring capacity" (Castells, 2004:5), the very basis of the survival of the mobile person.

Research Questions

Based on the premise that patterns of mobility and contact today are intertwined with the presence, absence and social appropriation of ICTs, this study of both internal South African migrants and African immigrants from around the continent currently living and working in Langa Township proposes to address the following questions:

To what extent and in what ways do ICTs

- relate to development of the marginal (mobile) populations in South Africa;
- mitigate distance for mobile communities;
- lead to new socio-economic relations;
- redefine socio-political relations?

In addressing the above questions, the dissertation will generally answer how marginality is produced through space, migration, communication networks and mobile phones among other ICTs.

Delimitations

The data collected in this study centered on Langa residents (locals and foreigners) who could contribute to my research of migration and belonging *and* who currently owned a mobile phone. My neglect of residents who did not have access to a mobile phone may have deprived me of experiences that would have been particularly informative. However, with the exception of several pre-teenage children, I did not meet anyone that did not own a mobile phone. The fact that most residents, including some pre-teens, owned mobile phones is telling and contributed to my understanding of the significance of the mobile phone among Langa residents. Nevertheless, while I did not deliberately turn anyone away for lack of a mobile phone, I admit that I would have excluded a resident from my research had they not owned one.

Assumptions

This study included the following basic assumptions: (a) that Langa as a space and its residents were indeed marginal in every sense of the word; (b) that there would be an abundance of black African immigrants living in Langa; (c) that tension between foreign African residents and workers and local residents would be both physically and verbally exaggerated; (d) that Langa was a dangerous place, where continued vigilance was necessary for my safety; (e) that my physical appearance as a black woman would render me 'invisible' in the township and thus facilitate easy penetration and acceptance in the field; (f) that all participants understood my reason for living and socializing in the township and were comfortable and honest with me; (g)

that my representation of the residents and Langa Township in general would be accurate. Inaccuracies found or moderations made to any of the assumptions are addressed in Chapter 2.

Outline of the Remainder of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 is the methodology. It explains methods used during fieldwork in attempt to answer the research questions. The chapter addresses some of the challenges faced during the implementation of these methods, particularly in regards to my attempt to maintain ethics in a study with human subjects. I also acknowledge the difficulties in situating myself as an outsider and insider in the field.

Chapter 3 reveals different aspects of everyday life in Langa as was observed during fieldwork. Using ethnographic data, I present various descriptions and activities among residents to introduce a range of routines, common notions and actions among residents. The chapter thoroughly interrogates Langa's perceived marginality while revealing (extra) ordinary activities among residents to present them as a population with morals and practices that may work to contradict (particularly negative) notions of their obvious marginality in Cape Town. It begins to demonstrate complex notions and varying degrees of marginality among residents.

Chapter 4 addresses the first of my four research questions. The chapter interrogates if and how ICTs relate to the development of Langa as a community. The chapter begins to draw on the relevance of mobile phones among residents. It reveals some of the various uses and symbolic significances of the device in the local context of the township. The chapter discusses the uses of the Internet and mobile phones in Langa's development as a mobile community to demonstrate the role of technology in helping to enforce marginality for some residents, while at the same time helping to stimulate oneness with(in) mainstream Cape Town, for others.

Chapter 5 addresses if and how ICTs mitigate distance for mobile communities. I situate new ICTs in an historical perspective to present the change in communication patterns among residents before and after the advent of mobile phones. While highlighting the joys and perils of mobile phone usage in the township, I reveal its use in the mitigation and exacerbation of distance in order to maintain – or eliminate – social relationships across locations and discuss their roles in the making of flexible identities.

Chapter 6 addresses the impact of ICTs on new socio-economic relations in the township, presenting the various ways that ICTs have been used towards social and economic benefits in general and for Langa residents in particular. It reveals the uses of the mobile phone (and the Internet) as both a material and experiential purchase to secure higher statuses in the township, as the style of phone can allude to financial wealth in a material sense. Experientially,

mobile phones have been used to gain experience using the Internet and social networking where computers are a less flexible option. Furthermore, the chapter reveals the uses of mobile phones among residents to promote safety, increase employment opportunities and a general promotion of development. The mobile phone provides opportunities to network and secure the same educational or employment opportunities as those living the urban areas of Cape Town.

Chapter 7 explores if and how ICTs redefine socio-political relations for residents. I address the role of ICTs in political situations both within and outside of Africa. I take an historical approach to the ways that political problems were formerly addressed around the continent and by Langa residents in general, and determine whether new communication technologies have benefited Langa residents in this regard.

Chapter 8 concludes this dissertation where I draw on previous chapter findings to succinctly answer the research questions. While acknowledging the various marginalities that do affect residents, I begin the conclusion by challenging Langa's perceived (obvious) marginality, restating data that I believe contradicts this notion. Subsequently, I outline the role of mobile phones in Langa's development to address the powerful global discourse that ICTs are linked to positive developmental outcomes (Diga, Nwaiwu & Plantinga, 2013),. I revisit my findings on residents' use of mobile phones to negotiate their various marginalities and the extent to which mobile phones mitigate distance for Langa residents as a mobile community. I further address if and how mobile phones impact socio-economic and socio-political relations within the township, through purposeful use by residents. Through a final analysis of the answers, I address the role of ICTs among residents in relation to technological determinism, and as a challenge to their perceived technological marginality. I then close the chapter with recommendations for further research.

Conclusion

This is a study of migration and belonging in South Africa, with an ethnographic focus on Langa Township. Migration entails breaking physical links with familiar people and places. It also entails seeking to create new links in the host community while exploring old and new ways of staying in touch with migrants' home village or home country. Though this study takes a special interest in mobile phones as potential facilitators in the maintenance and preservation of relationships with home in addition to the creation and maintenance of new relationships in Langa, it is not my intention to glorify mobile phones as the great, all-purpose, all-positive communication devices that they are often credited as being. Furthermore, I aim to show that techno-social relationships, as with most relationships, are not always harmonious. Seeking to

understand migration and the making of flexible identities for migrants in addition to the ever changing notions of autochthony and belonging, I refer to communication technologies –in a historical perspective –as they must have played a significant role in the lives of migrants and their quests to simultaneously occupy and belong to several worlds.

As this is a study of migration and belonging, I also refer to the link between belonging and marginality. Persons or groups considered marginalized may find themselves lacking the social incentives required by others to be awarded the chance to belong to certain communities or spaces. This study looks at both general and complex definitions and characteristics of marginality, particularly in the context of Langa. Langa residents, already perceived to be marginalized, have their own recognized characteristics of marginality used to regulate social inclusion and exclusion both within and outside the township. This study acknowledges these unique characteristics in regards to flexible identities and issues of belonging in Langa.

CHAPTER 2

DIGGING IN AND BEING DUG INTO BY LANGA: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH

Introduction

This chapter describes the methods used to answer the proposed research questions stated in *Chapter 1*. In this study I used a qualitative research method, relying heavily on participant observation and both formal and informal interviews towards the collection of rich ethnographic data. The study was to be both ethnographic and historical in its focus on the making of flexible identities and ideas of belonging among different categories of migrants in Langa, as well as the communication devices used in the past and present making of these identities. While the majority of the study focuses on the ethnographic present, the study is historical in its discussions of migration within and around South Africa, Langa Township, and (the use of) technology in South Africa and among residents before the introduction of mobile phones. The study does not make use of archival data or present particular life stories of participating residents, yet it seeks to present historical changes of technology and its effects on residents. The chapter addresses the challenges I faced during the implementation of the methods used during fieldwork.

One of the challenges I faced, a challenge undoubtedly faced by many researchers, was successfully penetrating the fieldsite towards being an acceptable and tolerated (temporary) resident for the purpose of collecting data. I also struggled with my various positions in the field, amongst which include being: a black American, female, (Doctoral) student and researcher. Some of these positions gave me authority in the field while others made me feel vulnerable. Other challenges included how to negotiate my own morals with those of residents, particularly where maintaining ethical considerations were concerned. Maintaining objectivity during data collection in effort to minimize my own understandings and interpretations was crucial and needed conscious effort. This was particularly necessary until I addressed activities or queries with residents. I also grappled with how to show material appreciation towards residents, without giving in to their common misperception that I was wealthy because I was American and could therefore afford to provide all material items asked of me. I struggled to show my appreciation without being exploited. These are some of the challenges faced during fieldwork and I describe them all in greater detail below.

Methods

Writing my book (Powell, 2012) was the first step I took towards conducting this research. As the cell phone was to be the ICT of focus in my study, I wrote a reflexive essay detailing my own relationship and experiences with my cell phone (Powell, 2012: Chapter 2; see *Appendices* #1 for an excerpt). Writing the essay encouraged me to write more essays on mobile phones in an African context. The essays were then compiled into a book. Familiarizing myself with various literatures that helped me write my book also helped form part of the conceptual framework in which the study takes place.

Qualitative research as a method often includes the terms *ethnography*, a detailed engagement of the researcher in the lives of those being studied (Davies, 1998); *fieldwork*, a term used in data collection where the researcher leave's their desk and goes out "into the field"; and *participant observation*, a method researchers use to "understand how the cultures they are studying 'work', that is to grasp what the world looks like to the people one is studying" (Delamont, 2004:18) in their own 'natural' setting and daily context. Stocking (1992:282) suggests that ethnographic fieldwork is at the core of "anthropology's fundamental methodological values" – "the taken for granted, pre-theoretical notions of what it is to do anthropology (and be an anthropologist)". Gupta and Ferguson (1997:4) problematize the notion of fieldwork and ethnography in addressing the, then, widely expressed doubts about the adequacy of ethnographic methods. They acknowledged that anthropology as a discipline created discomfort around the ambiguity of its purpose suggesting

> On the one hand, anthropology appears determined to give up its old ideas of territorially fixed communities and stable, localized cultures, and to apprehend an interconnected world in which people, objects, and ideas are rapidly shifting and refuse to stay in place. At the same time, though, in a defensive response to challenges to its "turf" from other disciplines, anthropology has come to lean more heavily than ever on a methodological commitment to spend long periods in one localized setting.

In addition to the fact that ethnographic data is essentially collected by the researcher and is therefore "grounded" in the experience of the researcher, the idea of 'the field', what it means to be in the field and accepting the methods and concepts behind ethnography, has troubled other disciplines and effected their reliance on anthropological research (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997:15). Nonetheless, ethnography defined as "the art and science of describing a human group" (Flick, 2007: 14) is the method used in this study and the type of data presented in Chapters 3 – 7 of this dissertation where I reveal my observations on and interpretations of what residents did and what

they had to say about what they did. I spent ten months from August 2011 to May 2012 engaged in ethnographic and qualitative research, such as participant observation, where I hung out with different groups of residents, engaged in interviews, spent time on my own observing different aspects of township life while taking notes, and participated in a variety of activities as opportunities arose. My research was not limited to interviews. Using what Fiona Ross (2009: Chapter 3) calls 'sense-scapes', I put all my senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and tasting, to work, attempting to understand a variety of aspects of life in Langa (see *Data Collection* below). Davies (1998: 77) states that participant observation

> …consists of a single researcher spending an extended period of time living among the people he or she is studying, participating in their daily lives in order to gain as complete an understanding as possible of the cultural meanings and social structures… and how they are interrelated.

Moving into Langa for the period of research was imperative to understanding how Langa residents actually lived, particularly because my own perceptions (admittedly negative) had been formed by what others and popular media told me about Langa and townships in general, namely that they were criminal, violent and dangerous places. It was important for me to live there, using all of my senses, to experience Langa for myself towards understanding that particular social and cultural context before attempting to address the research questions. While living and researching in Langa I was met with a host of challenges which I detail under the *Limitations and Challenges* section below.

A major criticism of ethnography that has been argued since the early 20th century has been that there is little point in doing it: "after all, ethnographies present snapshots of cultures that are context-specific and subject to social changes; indeed by the time ethnography is 'written up' the social world it seeks to represent inevitably will have changed" (Jones, 2010: 26). My experience of changing ethnographic snapshots in the field taught me to embrace this change as evidence of the fluidity of the social world that I inhabited. Referring once more to Gupta and Ferguson (1997:3) who suggests that the problem with ethnography is in the reality that "the world being described by ethnographers has changed dramatically…" I acknowledge that some of my ethnographic snapshots (see *Chapter 3*) will have changed by the time this dissertation is complete, but that did not encourage the belief that ethnography is *not* worth doing. Ethnographic snapshots, however relevant or outdated, are significant to how we perceive the data we collect. When trying to understand things in a historical perspective, as this study does, the changes in snapshots can be increasingly significant in showing the gradual or hasty

changes within a particular area of interest. This may be beneficial towards interpreting and theorizing certain phenomena.

Entering the Field

Zamile[6]

Though I officially began fieldwork in August 2011, I began visiting Langa in May 2011 and continued these visits until the presentation of my research proposal in July 2011. My visits were to ensure the feasibility of my proposed research. I met Zamile, commonly referred to as 'Zmo' by his closest friends, in May. As a resident and local tour guide employed at Guga S'thebe, Langa's Visitor's Center, he played a significant role in my gaining access to the fieldsite. He is a middle-aged man who was born and raised in Langa. At the time of fieldwork, Zamile lived in the same house that he grew up in with his father and sister. As with many houses in Langa, his childhood house now includes a backyard shack that was attached some years ago to give Zamile the privacy that he, as an adult, would desire while still living 'at home'. Working as a tour guide, Zamile spends most of his days awaiting visitors who might be interested in an official tour for which he would be paid money, starting at R150 per person. During fieldwork, working as a tour guide was his only source of income and he was not likely to miss an opportunity, making himself available whenever possible. When not working he could be seen hanging around the center or near his home, speaking loudly with friends and co-workers often with a cigarette in his mouth, wearing his trusty blue baseball cap which he seldom took off. Having grown up in Langa he knew the majority of residents personally which worked to my benefit.

Establishing a friendship during my early visits, I considered asking Zamile to be my research assistant as I thought he could be useful. Before writing a contract and offering him the position, I took him grocery shopping to say thank you for his initial guidance. At this time we had been friends for three months. Our relationship immediately changed after that. He began sending me SMSes requesting food or airtime (he had never asked me for anything before). It became apparent that my gesture of gratitude could quickly spiral out of control. I limited what I gave him and explained that his requests would not always be met. I decided against employing him as an assistant as I was unsure of how our relationship might change further. Furthermore, since I initially spent most of my time with Zamile, rumors began to spread that we were dating (a rumor that did not seem to bother him). Quickly hoping to dismiss the rumor I gradually spent

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[6] This is his real name as he, nor any of the residents, requested that I use a pseudonym. See also the *Ethical Considerations* section below.

less and less time with him until I was comfortable enough to explore, observe and converse on my own which fortunately coincided with the official start of my fieldwork in August. However, we remained friends during my time in the field.

Gaining Access to the Fieldsite

Penetrating the fieldsite, thanks to Zamile, was a smooth enough process. Ideally, in participant observation, the people of the study "agree to the presence of the researcher among them as a neighbor and friend who also happens to be a researcher" (Flick, 2007: 17). Indeed, my desire to collect data from Langa residents depended on their granting me access to the fieldsite – their home – and further permission to collect the data that I needed to pursue my research (Saunders, 2012). In some ways it appeared that residents were more eager to accept me as a friend and neighbor as opposed to a researcher. Nevertheless, their acceptance of me, however marginal, helped me to collect the necessary data. My presence as a researcher in the field seemed to be generally accepted by most residents at some point. On my very first visit to the township, I had the fortunate opportunity of bumping into Zamile. He gave me a free private tour of the township while at the same time introducing me to dozens of residents who were his friends. After being in the field for some time, I noted a desire for some residents to comfortably categorize me as one of their own. I perceived their constant grappling with my identity, their apparent dissatisfaction that I would or should be labeled a *kwerekwere* with finality, and their constant suggestions on how to be "more Xhosa" as a desire to comfortably categorize me as one of their own.

The term *makwerekwere*, at least among some residents, is ever-changing and I heard several definitions and characteristics of the "*kwerekwere*", the dominant being anyone who "cannot speak isiXhosa regardless of culture". I constantly grappled with this concept in Langa as there were differing views on whether the person had to be (a foreign) African to be considered a *kwerekwere* or if this definition included foreigners from America (like myself) or Europe. I remember one occasion where a male resident originally from KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa who spoke isiZulu was referred to as a *makwerekwere* despite his admittance that his fluency in isiZulu meant that he could speak and understand isiXhosa just as well. Similarly, I witnessed immigrants from Nigeria, Angola, Zimbabwe, Congo, Rwanda and Malawi also being referred to as such with seeming finality, despite the mastery, by some of them, of isiXhosa. I was sometimes referred to as a *kwerekwere* by those who originally said I was not, and equally, my status sometimes changed to that of a non-*kwerekwere* by those who originally considered

me to be one. These opinions changed continuously throughout my time in the field leaving me confused about my own status.

I was often told that I "look Xhosa". I am reminded of the Tanzanian migrant discussed in Owen Sichone's (2008:14) paper on xenophobia and xenophilia. After migrating to South Africa he eventually became a citizen and learned to speak isiXhosa. Upon his queries about the meaning of the *kwerekwere*, his South African friend said "Your appearance is not like a *kwerekwere* […] because you are not so black". I have also been told that my complexion is Xhosa-like (as opposed to that of a *kwerekwere*) as I am also not very dark in complexion. South African exceptionalism ideology suggests that "South Africans have lighter skin complexions than Africans from around the continent" (Matsinhe, 2011:301). Our 'Otherness', then, was less visible. We did not radiate with (some of the) "corporeal markers of undesirability and non-belonging" (Burdsey, 2013:95) as prescribed by definitions of the *kwerekwere* discussed in the previous chapter. I am aware that this attribute may have also contributed to my easy entry into the field.

Being told that I "look Xhosa" was enough for some residents to encourage me to speak their language (*Thetha isiXhosa*: Speak isiXhosa). One male resident who eagerly befriended me and was active in helping me learn the language explained that he had six Ethiopian friends that he was also teaching isiXhosa. He explained

> In… every friendship that I make with a foreign person… I want them to understand my language 'cause some of our people take advantage of [them]… making sure that they can say anything they want about that person [without them understanding]. I am trying to make them understand each and every word from my language (Thando Interview February 2012)

I found this gesture unique, not to mention caring, as Thando dedicated time to teach his Ethiopian friends and myself isiXhosa, specifically so that we would not fall victim to gossip and rumors being spread about us that we could not understand. (He admitted, however, that he was too impatient to learn their language and I realized that his seemingly noble intentions could simply be masking a desire to communicate with them on his terms in the comfort of his home language).Though his noble intentions ultimately depend on the recipient's willingness to learn isiXhosa, I wondered if he realized that he was inadvertently transforming myself and his Ethiopian friends, as non-isiXhosa speakers, to 'insiders' by attempting to teach us the language. It was noteworthy to me that learning to speak isiXhosa was apparently enough for my transition into a (temporary/pseudo) insider; to deliver me from the realm of outsider-ness. Many residents were committed to helping me learn isiXhosa. "You must learn" is what they said (my isiXhosa

is still basic). With the exception of Thando who, at the time of fieldwork, was willingly and eagerly teaching his Ethiopian friends isiXhosa, residents seemed to single me out, at least compared to their reluctance to teach others, to learn their language as a way of negotiating my wavering identity. I often felt that I was sometimes considered an honorary 'insider' because I am, as some residents suggested "an African who only grew up in America" – who is attempting to learn isiXhosa, I would add. Their reluctance to teach some African immigrants isiXhosa, in comparison to the enthusiasm with which I was encouraged to learn led to me to believe that ultimately some 'insiders' would prefer to keep some 'outsiders' confined to their *makwerekwere-ness* while allowing other 'outsiders', like myself, to learn the language to become (more of) an 'insider'.

During my primary visits to Langa, I was initially perceived as a stranger. I say 'stranger' as opposed to an 'outsider' because before my American accent betrayed my so-called Xhosa features, I was believed to be just another Xhosa woman so on some level I 'belonged'. Nevertheless, I was a stranger to the township. I was not from there and had no family or friends that could vouch for me as an individual. Before bumping in to Zamile, I was met with eyes that questioned who I was, and why I was there. As one of the smaller townships in Cape Town, Langa is small enough that most residents are intimately aware of each other even if they are not friends. I assumed that my physical appearance as a black woman would render me 'invisible' in the township thus providing easy penetration and acceptance in the field. At this time I cannot decide whether I *preferred* to be invisible. This assumption proved false as strangers (black, and in my case Xhosa-looking, or otherwise) are easily spotted.

As a black American, I was able to monitor how I was treated as opposed to white Americans and other foreigners, particularly those who came for tours or took advantage of the homestay experience for a period of time. It was an exciting and sometimes funny experience seeing how (some) residents responded to me as an outsider. Though I am American, I grew aware of my ability to pass as a South African (this awareness was based on a wide variety of comments made from many people since I first arrived in Cape Town) both inside and outside of Langa. The surprised reactions caused by my American accent were fun to watch. In the beginning residents would speak to me in isiXhosa completely unaware that I was American and did not speak the language. It was only when I spoke that my accent betrayed my physical appearance. Residents would look confused and said "but you look like a Xhosa girl." It was explained that my complexion, my dread locks, and the fact that I do not wear makeup all contribute to my looking Xhosa.

When white Americans and other Caucasian groups, such as tourists, came to the township I saw people staring and children marveling at them, most likely because of their skin color, indicating their difference. Their whiteness condemned them to a social marginality in the township. With me, however, there was no clear distinction between us (me and the residents) that was immediately visible to the eye. Residents saw me and expected me to be like them. I do not pretend that my experience as a black American penetrating a black, (South) African township is unique. Indeed, I am sure that researchers in similar contexts too have grappled extensively with various issues in this regard. My experience revealed, to me, how easily social barriers and acceptances could be disturbed and sometimes altogether useless. My visual appearance had left me type casted and I was automatically allocated to a certain 'role'. When reality proved otherwise residents were taken aback. "She's *mlungu* but she looks like me" (Ncebakhazi – pseudonym – Pers. Comm. October 2011). This statement is one of the reactions that I received while living in Langa. This comment was made by a four year old girl after I introduced myself to her and her mother in English, revealing my American accent. It was immediately apparent, even to this four-year old that I was not 'one of them' And while Langa attracts a wide range of black and white tourists that visit the township at all times of the year, my initial presence outside the company of a tour guide meant that I was unaccounted for. I was a stranger who was soon to enter the presence of Zamile, a local tour guide.

Being seen with a tour guide padded my initial, aimless wandering around the township as my identity could quickly be explained as a 'tourist' walking the township. Suddenly I was accounted for. The questioning eyes seemed to adjust in their new understanding of my presence in the township (though some may have wondered why a 'local' woman was interested in a township tour). As I began to frequent the township more often, sometimes on my own but usually to accompany Zamile on tours with other tourists or to chat and walk casually through the township together, before moving into a home in Langa, my identity was no longer so obvious as perceptive residents openly concluded that I attended too many tours to be an 'ordinary tourist'. Residents did not know what to make of me. My identity as a stranger was evident through stares and measured conversations but it seemed to take on a different form when I was thought to be a tourist. After a while I was back to where I started and residents seemed even more curious about me. Zamile answered residents' questions about me in my absence and sometimes in my presence.

My identity gradually transformed from that of an otherwise unusual tourist to Zamile's 'friend'. This proved useful as he is popular and well liked in the township by many residents. My association with him awarded me the status of someone that was trustworthy, to some

residents. Though I shared my research interests with Zamile during our first encounter, it was not until I had frequented the township several days a week for just under a month that during our walks he would recommend residents that might prove useful in that regard. Sometimes he would take it upon himself to introduce my research interests to residents as we passed them. My identity then graduated to that of an American student at The University of Cape Town (UCT) doing research in Langa. Most initial reactions were curious, if not suspicious, as to why I wanted to 'learn' about Langa, but since I was already a 'friend' of Zamile's my acceptance was met with little resistance, at least visibly. When I moved into Langa residents that I saw regularly were excited about and verbally appreciated my staying in the township. One female resident and soon to be participant said "others just come and go but you are staying". This, as did many other comments, contributed to my feeling of ease and being 'accepted' by residents.

There was, however, one particular experience that tainted my feelings of bliss in regard to being so easily accepted into the fieldsite. One day after I had been in the field for several months, a local barber and Langa resident, originally from the Eastern Cape, came to the conclusion, as had been concluded earlier by others, that I could not be a tourist because I was *always* in Langa. He asked what I was "doing in Langa". I explained that I was a Doctoral student doing research in Langa Township. He was visibly upset, "Why [do] you come here to learn about us? Why do you ask us questions? We are the same!" he said angrily. I was uncomfortable. More importantly, I wondered how many other residents were harboring similar views to the barber. In hindsight, I regret not investigating what bothered him about my doing research in Langa and exactly what he meant by his claim that "We are the same". At this time, I was well into fieldwork. I felt the need to apologize to the barber and perhaps other residents who may have felt like I was unjustly or unfairly intruding. My confidence was shaken and I felt insecure. I continued, however, to conduct fieldwork without offering any apologies, though this experience played over and over again in the back of my mind.

Selection of Participants

Having a clear focus on my research goals facilitated my search for participants. The process of selecting participants should be determined by the researcher's objectives for their study. This would then enable the researcher to answer their research questions (Saunders, 2012). My sampling style was opportunistic and purposive (Saunders, 2012) as I used available opportunities to learn about residents and sought out those whom I thought would contribute to my research while at the same time accepting those who willingly offered themselves to me for research. It was imperative that I secured a sample size that would provide enough data for me to

attempt to draw collective ideas around residents in Langa while at the same time being able to note comparisons and contrasts among them. After securing residents that could contribute to my research, I conducted further in-depth interviews asking (open-ended) questions around experiences of moving and settling into Langa and their use of communication technologies. I asked questions around their general use of technology before and after the introduction of mobile phones. Additionally, I asked questions that would help me understand if and how mobile phones were used toward gaining social inclusion in their new "homes" while maintaining old relationships "elsewhere". I was interested in both male and female residents. The study required that all participants be South African migrants or African immigrants currently living in Langa. However, after the commencement of fieldwork and learning that most of the immigrants identified worked in Langa but lived elsewhere, I expanded the scope to allow immigrants who lived and/or worked in the township. In this chapter, particularly to avoid convolution, I often use the term 'residents' to identify all residents and workers that were active in my study. However, throughout the dissertation, when the need to distinguish a Langa resident from someone who worked there but lived elsewhere is warranted, I refer to them accordingly. I was particularly interested in an older generation of (im)migrants (who were likely to be settled in the township) for a comparison of their experiences of mobility and communication before and after mobile phone integration. I assumed that older participants would present opportunities to discuss memories of migrating, oscillating and communicating between Cape Town and their homes. I also assumed that the transition of communication before and after mobile phone integration for residents would offer a useful time frame that could then be used to help me contextualize and understand their past experiences in relation to their current use of mobile phones. In the end, a variety of age ranges were included. A demographic list of the key[7] residents in my study can be found in the *Appendices*: #2.

The size of Langa and my length of time in the field made it physically possible for me to cover most of the township during fieldwork. With an area of 3.09 km² (or 1.19 square miles) (Census 2011 – Main Place "Langa"), an average tour of the township takes about two hours to complete. Participating in many tours and walking around during my stay, I was able to visit many areas of the township including the library, the police station, some of their schools, two churches, the Love Life Center, the hospital, the hostels, the informal sections up to and including Joe Slovo, an informal settlement in Langa, the Zones, Settler's, also known as the '*Beverly Hills*' of Langa for its beautiful houses, manicured lawns and fenced protection against

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[7] Key residents consist of those whom I spent the most time with in the field and whom I interviewed at length on one or more occasions.

intruders, a variety of Spaza and container shops and the Internet café's. During these visits, I conversed with residents as I saw fit and was invited into many homes. The population census in 2011 listed the number of residents of Langa at 52,401(Census 2011 - Main Place "Langa").

While I did not speak to all or even most residents or workers (not even close), I would consider the study sample to be a wide range as I cannot say that I focused on a particular area. Though I visited most areas of Langa and spoke to many residents I do not suggest that I completely covered the fieldsite. As with any ethnographer, I was able to conduct fieldwork only where access was granted by residents. I worked hard to understand and visit all areas that were available. I spoke with dozens of people and interviewed those who allowed me to. Of the dozens of residents that I met with, there are a total of 29 "key" resident interviewees who were engaged with in either formally recorded interviews (recorded with my digital voice recorder) ranging from 34 minutes to an hour, as well as interviews recorded manually in my fieldnote diary with no recording devices present. The lack of my digital recorder was never at the request of the resident. Sometimes a friendly conversation would turn into an interview for which taking notes seemed more convenient than using my recorder.

Ethical Considerations

During the presentation of my research proposal in the department of Social Anthropology at UCT, I was subjected to a series of questions around ethics, particularly as I would be working with 'human subjects'. The attending lecturers asked me a variety of questions specifically focusing on how I would maintain privacy and confidentiality for residents, how I would ensure that any personal text messages shared with me by residents would remain hidden from others, and how I would attempt to avoid harming residents (particularly socially and emotionally), and also ensuring that I was personally protected from harm. These questions were among the last of the questions I received and my answers were generally accepted by the department. I was then cleared to enter the field.

Bernard (2006:25-6) states that the biggest problem faced while engaging in research on human behavior is being ethical so that you can live with the consequences of your actions, a matter that Lambek (2010) suggests is more innate than learned. Lambek (2010:12) states that, "Ethics is not a matter of smoothly following the rules but of the exhilaration of self-transcendence, as well as the struggle with ambivalence and conflict". Lambek (2010:1, 25) suggests that human beings are already always subject to ethics, because ethical considerations are intrinsic to the human condition. Observing, interpreting and ultimately judging the actions and practices of select residents during fieldwork reflected both my own values as a person and

my obligations as a student and anthropologist: to attempt to pursue my research goals causing as little harm as humanly possible.

The unconscious part of my thoughts and actions, my *habitus* or embodied history, may have had adverse reactions to social patterns, activities, or verbal responses that I did not recognize as "reasonable or common-sense behaviors" (Bourdieu, 1990:55-6). Realizing that residents living in Langa come from a variety of backgrounds whose values and morals may significantly contrast my own, it was necessary for me to contain my prejudices – to the extent that they were containable – for the sake of truly engaging with participants in an attempt to understand the social actions that made up their community. I do not pretend that pushing my own values and morals aside was an easy feat. Indeed, as Nyamnjoh (2012:2) argues in regards to seeing and knowing when in the field and interpreting our findings, we, as researchers, are blinded by our sight; blinded by our own "preconceptions, prejudices and assumptions about what constitutes reality" for us, making it difficult to represent realities that differ from ours. It was a conscious effort on my part to, as much as possible, give a nuanced account, informed both my subjectivities and the subjectivities of Langa residents.

During fieldwork I complied with the American Anthropological Association (AAA 1998) code of ethics: respecting the well-being of residents and ensuring that my research did not "harm the safety, dignity or privacy of any of the residents". I am unaware of any damage that I caused with the exception of an altercation that I had with one female resident after interviewing a male resident whom she was fond of. She accused me of "trying to steal her man". Furthermore, as mentioned above, there were rumors that Zamile and I were dating. Tension (physical and verbal) began to grow between Zamile and another male resident, also employed at Guga S'thebe, as the other man also took a liking to me. Eventually the second man was fired (for reasons unknown to me). Otherwise, I felt that my attempt to do right by residents was successful. However, particularly now that I am out of the field, I may never know how my presence truly affected residents and I can only *hope* that I was successful at not harming residents.

During preliminary visits, I met and chatted casually with residents hoping to become a familiar presence before eventually moving into the township. Before data collection commenced I obtained consent from residents. Despite the fact that all residents would not become 'key' participants in my fieldwork, it was important for them to know that by virtue of their living in Langa and my general interest in the township, I would be observing, engaging with, and taking notes about them and their activities during my stay. Obtaining informed consent was something I did at the beginning of and throughout my time in the field so that

residents were consistently aware of my research intentions and their rights to refuse participation at any time. Consent was obtained verbally and was recorded at the end of our session during formally recorded interviews, though I generally asked for consent before recording began. Consent during informal interviews and participant observation was based on the initial (verbal) consent given to me during the start of fieldwork and was occasionally acknowledged (at my request) during fieldwork. As my purpose in the field quickly became known as a student researcher and my research interests were passed around (sometimes inaccurately so), I did not feel the need to ask for consent on a daily or weekly basis as I felt that my presence, activities and questions for the purpose of writing a dissertation were generally accepted. Thus, while re-obtaining informed consent was taken seriously it was done infrequently by verbal means.

While in Langa I lived with two families: one at the beginning of my stay and another towards the end. I changed homes because of financial reasons. During my stay I did my best to abide by the rules of my host families so that my presence would create minimal disturbance, if any, to their daily lives. This was not an easy task as the novelty of my presence brought a lot of attention to my host families as visitors came frequently to meet "the American student". This, however, did not seem to upset or disrupt my host families and indeed, they seemed to be the ones inviting residents to come and meet me. Becoming more and more familiar with residents and my willingness to sit and talk to/with them and listen to them for hours meant that some trusted me with deeply personal stories and others often gossiped to me about other residents. I was careful not to betray anyone's confidence by revealing their stories to other residents. I did write up their personal stories and gossiping chatter in detail in my field note diary which I carried with me at all times, writing openly among residents, but kept locked in a drawer in my room when it was not in use. During informed consent I asked if participants would prefer that I used pseudonyms if/when they featured in my dissertation. All of them refused and encouraged me to use their real names, for some, their widely used nick-names. I got the impression that being an active part of my study with the potential to feature in my dissertation, for some, was exciting. I respected their requests to use their real names in my eventual dissertation.

I used pseudonyms in my fieldnote diary as my writings were detailed and contained personal information that I wanted to protect in case my diary was lost or stolen. In my fieldnote diary, I was honest with my opinions and interpretations, particularly those in direct conflict with my values and morals. I was afraid to use real names lest my diary be found by an unsuspecting resident and reveal my innermost thoughts. How does one write-up with (sometimes brutal) honesty while attempting to maintain dignity and privacy among residents? Is that even

possible? I did not know how as I do not write in code or short hand. The safest thing, for me, was to use pseudonyms in my diary and real names in my dissertation as my writings would be polished and censored. There are, however, two occasions in my dissertation where I use pseudonyms as the residents that I refer to are minors – aged fifteen and four years respectively. Particularly in the case of the four year old, I knew that it would be impossible for her to give informed consent. I did not feel compelled to use pseudonyms in my cell phone even though losing my phone or having it stolen was also a risk.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through interviews and participant observation. Spradley (1980: 54) states that participant observers usually enter into a social situation with two purposes: "to engage in activities appropriate to the situation and to observe the activities, people and physical aspects of the situation". Living in Langa gave me the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities at all hours of the day, including waiting for the school bus with my host sister at 6:00 in the morning, going to church with my host family, braaing with residents, accompanying them to the Internet café, shopping, doing laundry, cooking, washing dishes and cleaning with residents, selling goods with employees of Langa's tourist center, selling spinach with my host mother and sister in front of our home, watching the process of cell phone repair shop interactions between workers and clients, sitting in on soccer games, dance competitions and dance practices, and assisting Zamile on tours as an unofficial tour guide, for example. All these activities were useful for collecting data. For integrating into Langa, it was useful for me to participate in such activities, doing what other people did and how they did it so that I could experience being both an insider and an outsider simultaneously. Incessantly talking to residents and taking notes during these activities meant that I could not always give 100% participation. It was necessary to ensure that my level of participation sufficed enough to gain experience while still being able to observe residents in the process. It was important for me to ask questions during these activities as they shed light on different aspects of Langa that I had not planned or expected to learn about as they were not specifically related to the initial research questions. However, understanding different aspects of township life proved useful for understanding and interpreting things that *did* relate to the research questions.

I conducted both formal and informal interviews during fieldwork. I attempted to ensure that both categories of interviews were in-depth, asking questions that I hoped would produce "thick descriptions" (Rapley, 2004; Geertz, 1973) from residents. Formal interviews were planned in advance and digitally recorded while informal interviews occurred spontaneously

during my rounds in the township. I used a digital voice recorder (with permission) in addition to manual note-taking during formal interviews that occurred between myself and twelve of the residents. Interviews were conducted in the privacy of the home, office or workspace of residents in the case of a formal (planned) interview, or in groups that I became a part of during participant observation which involved hanging out with residents and taking part in different aspects of their everyday lives. Both types of interviews proved useful. Formally recorded interviews provided an abundance of data as participants knew they were being recorded for the purpose of my research and acted accordingly, answering my questions as they were asked as there was no questionnaire. I simply let residents' answers create questions for me and followed up as I saw fit. Informal interviews, when participants were not influenced by my digital voice recorder (and my presence became more and more mundane) and were more relaxed and natural as a result, provided data that both confirmed and contradicted some views and experiences expressed to me in their formal interviews. Such comparisons proved useful for learning the dissonances between some of what was said deliberately and consciously (under formal recording) versus what was said, thought aloud, and done physically, sometimes subconsciously, in my presence. My fieldnote diary did not seem to influence the actions of residents even when it was clear that I was taking notes. Occasionally, however, I was asked *"ubhala ntoni"?* (What are you writing?)

Instruments used during my study consisted of pens and fieldnote diaries where I took notes during interviews and participant observation. My cell phone was used for easy communication between myself and residents. I initially thought my phone would also be useful for taking photos as it would eliminate carrying a camera. Apart from the fact that taking pictures during fieldwork was an idea that I did not cater to in my ethical considerations, I had come to the conclusion, early on, that photos would not be a crucial element in my dissertation. This rationalization was enough for me to limit photos taken in the field as I did not plan to use them in my dissertation. My phone was also used to collect data as I stored pertinent SMSes sent to me by residents with their knowledge – having obtained consent in the beginning of and throughout my fieldwork (see *Ethical Considerations* above). I also used my cell phone to document how often residents contacted me and in what ways (call, SMS, Please Call Me) during fieldwork. I occasionally had the privilege of viewing residents' phone diaries or stored text messages.

Fortunately, I did not need a translator as most residents' conversational English was clear and we could understand each other (although I was often told to speak slower). Where SMSes were in isiXhosa, residents would translate. I also bought a book/CD combination

(Kirsch & Skorge 2010) that taught isiXhosa which helped me with basic greetings and conversations. Living in an isiXhosa-speaking township also helped me to pick up useful phrases and questions. If I did not understand something, I could count on anyone of the residents to clarify. My laptop was also a key instrument as interviews and fieldnotes were transcribed (by myself) and stored electronically onto my laptop, flash drives, an external hard-drive, and sent to myself via email. Finally, of all my senses, my eyes, ears and nose were used most frequently to learn the rhythm of the township.

It was necessary not to let my "eyes" deceive me during fieldwork. Observations noted during fieldwork demonstrated the surprises that I encountered in the field, which were related to contradictions between my own premature preconceptions (or misconceptions) and my actual experiences. I struggled to overcome these preconceptions, and made a conscious effort to learn as I grew in the field; to avoid letting my expectations intercept what reality was showing me. Nyamnjoh (2012:2) matter-of-factly explains how anthropologists – but more importantly humans – are all victims of blindness. Not physical blindness but "that which comes from preconceptions, prejudices and assumptions about what constitutes reality…" when representing a people, place or concept that we have never encountered before. I admit to having been 'blinded by my sight' (Nyamnjoh, 2012) on several occasions during fieldwork. Furthermore, as the foundation of this study was the premise that patterns of mobility and communication today are intertwined with the presence, absence and social appropriation of the mobile phone, I was almost "blind-sighted" by the euphoria around mobile technology, particularly in the context of my study where empirical data on the possibilities offered by the mobile phone is scarce. Initially I was compelled to operate with the understanding that mobile phones were absolutely and infinitely beneficial to such a population.

Smells, sounds and observing certain activities helped me to get a general understanding of everyday life in Langa, helping me familiarize myself with certain routines of the days and week, some of which I discuss in the ethnographic snapshots of *Chapter 3*, as well as the significances of mobile technologies in the context of Langa.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was done in three phases. The first phase dealt with data from individual interviews, the second phase with data collected during participant observation in the field, and the third phase was an integration of themes collected from both data sets with existing literature. As part of a qualitative research method it was necessary for me to start analyzing data as early as possible. Using what Creswell (2007: 64) terms a "zigzag" process: out to the field to

gather information, into the office to analyze data, back to the field to gather more information, into the office, and so forth", it was necessary to review observational fieldnotes, while in the field, frequently and with discipline. Reviewing my fieldnotes frequently, as well as submitting written reflections to my supervisor, afforded me the opportunity to reveal mini-themes for which I would then write reflexive essays that helped me think through my notes and compile amateur interpretations. This I did on a bi-weekly basis. I transcribed most of my interviews at the end of my fieldwork period. Transcribing my own interviews was an added benefit as it allowed me to re-live the experiences of meeting with residents and to re-engage with information sometimes gathered months earlier.

After transferring all fieldnotes from my personal diary to my laptop and transcribing all interviews, I took several weeks to re-read my notes and transcriptions. Looking for issues, experiences and phrases that were repeated frequently in my notes and interviews as well as anything particularly unique allowed me to take time to pull out pertinent themes. Jones and Watt (2010:162) refer to this process as "thematic analysis" where the researcher draws out key themes from their data and theoretically frames them. As some themes that emerged were not expected (or not expected to occur so frequently) it was necessary to familiarize myself with various supplementary readings towards understanding and interpreting my data.

Limitations and Challenges

A notable limitation in this study regards selecting participants. My methodological approach was intended to be snowball sampling but gradually turned into random sampling, as residents were not always reliable with promises to meet me for an interview or introduce me to another resident whom they suggested would be helpful to my study. It was easier for me to meet residents at random and invite them to become active participants in my research. I consider the findings of this study to be based on a large population of Langa residents as I spent ten months visiting all areas of the township during my stay (see also the *Selection of Participants* section above). However, despite the relatively small size of Langa in comparison to other local townships, my findings cannot and should not be generalized to the entire population of Langa.

Finding accommodation in the township was also hard because, as you will read below, the prices requested for housing were exorbitant and I have terrible negotiation skills. My reluctance to settle for such high prices meant daily commuting before eventually moving into Langa. Commuting to and from Langa was an enormously challenging experience. From the Mowbray taxi rank, where I caught the taxi to Langa (and similarly on the ride home from Langa

back to the Mowbray taxi rank), the distance by car could be as short as eight minutes, fifteen to twenty at the most depending on the traffic. However, as Langa is not a destination that is sought frequently (a fact that could influence the perception of Langa as a geographically marginal space in Cape Town), taxi passengers had to wait for a full taxi before leaving so as not to waste trips or petrol. I have sat and waited (with forced patience) for two hours on several occasions (usually the wait was just over an hour) for the taxi to fill only to find that once I finally arrived in Langa, I was bored and restless and had little motivation to engage in fieldwork and was often less productive than I had hoped. Many passengers entertain themselves with music from their mobile phones. Some enter the taxi and enjoy a meal that they have purchased. Others, like me, stare blindly ahead, alone with their thoughts waiting for the taxi to leave.

Another limitation regards my time in the field. I initially proposed to spend twelve months doing fieldwork but pulled out after ten because of the challenges I faced living in the township and engaging in participant observation. One challenge was moving in with my host family. Living with them made me feel secure, as they demonstrated that my well-being was important to them. At the same time, however, being part of this family was difficult. I was often reminded of my differences from them, the most obvious being my accent and the constant requests by all of them to repeat what I said. It was also difficult for me to live my life as an open book. I acknowledge that my presence in the field may have penetrated the privacy of my host family but their disregard for my privacy (common among many residents) meant that I could not be alone in my room (even my bedtime was interrupted) when I so desired. I also had to get used to doing things as a family. I was nervous during normal activities like washing dishes (a chore that had become solely my responsibility), doing laundry/picking my laundry from outside or setting the table, for example, because I did not do them alone. One or more members of my host family were always present even if they were not helping. As a 10-year old, my host sister felt the need to correct most of my actions as someone too young to understand that there is more than one way of doing things.

I also felt that my presence was exploited. I was charged R5000 rent for my first month (R4000 for the next. This was one of the reasons that I moved to another family where I ran into similar financial obstacles). This price was double what I paid for my own flat in Rosebank, a suburb near the University of Cape Town. I felt that my being American and the consequent assumption that I had money was a license for them to charge exorbitant prices that were not justifiable. Furthermore, not only did washing dishes become my chore, I found myself babysitting my host sister more often than I was prepared to and often without my approval. There were several occasions where children were left in my care for hours at a time (more so

with my second host family) while their guardians, some of whom barely knew me, went away without any regards to any plans I may have had. I found it hard to sit quietly to write-up and reflect on my fieldnotes. Sometimes it was impossible to work. Another negative experience was being the victim of 'theft' in my host family. Though it was petty, it still bothered me. A pack of biscuits had been taken from my room and eaten. My groceries had also been eaten from the refrigerator and R40 was taken from my room. I felt like I could not trust my host family.

After acknowledging the concept of *Ubuntu* among my host family, I realized that most residents respect or at least acknowledge, to some extent – sometimes only when it suits them – the notion of *Ubuntu*. This notion is not just a cultural tradition of South Africa. Ubuntu-Botho is an indigenous world view of "intense humanness". In South Africa the value of *Ubuntu* embraces peaceful approaches to life. The Xhosa proverb states: "*Ubuntu ungamuntu ngabanye abantu* (People are people through other people)" (Broodryk, 2002:15, 26-7) or more colloquially "I am because you are". In South Africa, as well as other countries across the continent, the pursuit of happiness, obtained via *Ubuntu*, is warm and inclusive meaning that *all* are welcome to enjoy happiness in an integrated manner (Broodryk, 2002:31, my emphasis). I soon realized that residents' practice of the notion suggested that everything belonged to everyone in the township, ultimately sustaining a welcoming and happy environment. Though I was not used to this kind of social etiquette and I felt violated at my items being taken without permission, their actions may simply have been part of a reciprocal bond established by the concept of *Ubuntu* where we all need each other to survive so what was mine was rightfully theirs and vice-versa.

Life outside of my host family also proved difficult as far as friendships were concerned. Some residents were possessive about my relationship with them and did not take kindly to my hanging out with others. Some complained if they felt I was spending too much time with others. This jealousy also manifested with regards to interviews. Occasionally a resident would question why I interviewed another resident and I would explain that my research was open to anyone willing to speak with me, not just my 'friends'. Additionally, I found out, three months into fieldwork, that I was part of the "Who Can Sleep with the American First?" bet among some male residents. I was disgusted and felt insecure. Fortunately, I had already won the reputation of being 'hard' or as some residents said "she doesn't want to try" (trying a male resident as I would *try* a new meal). These experiences challenged my experience of fieldwork emotionally and I often considered giving up.

Reflexivity

During fieldwork, I was constantly reflexive, and always tried to acknowledge my position as the researcher and the effects, if any, I had on the residents. I knew that there was a possibility of influencing residents' responses to me in the way that I interacted with them. I also knew that my presumed 'authority' as a researcher could affect how they responded; they may tell me or show me things that they thought I wanted to hear or be shown and I wanted to avoid this. Furthermore, I was popular as a black American living in this township, as most residents said white Americans are seen more frequently than black Americans. My popularity, though great for establishing myself in the township, was also a concern as I was not sure if popularity was the best way to accrue participants. I also often reflected on myself in relation to the data that I was collecting, how I felt about and reacted to different aspects of life in the field or the experiences of participants as told to me during interviews. My fieldnote diary was useful for these reflections.

I was always conscious of my multiple identities and positionalities in the field. These included: a UCT student (an identity worthy of acknowledgement particularly in Langa because of UCT's reputation as a prestigious university and the minimal amount of university students in the township), a researcher, a black American, a (temporary) resident and family member, and a general 'friend' to many residents. Though my primary reason for being there was to conduct research for my Doctoral studies, my primary identity as most utilized by residents was that of an "American". Stereotypical views of Americans, as one would expect, were ever present in Langa. Living in a place where being American means, to some residents, that I am rich, that I inevitably know Oprah Winfrey and President Barack Obama personally, that I somehow hold the key that would reveal that Michael Jackson and Tu Pac Shakur are not really dead, that I rap like Nicki Minaj and that I have met every famous person there is in Hollywood, I found it hard to be myself, as someone who did not fit the mold. Of these stereotypes the most unfavorable one was that I was rich. The more time I spent in the field, the more I became a means-to-an-end for many residents. It was not uncommon for residents both younger and older than me to ask for money, food, clothing, airtime and other, more extravagant, material items. It was a struggle because without the willingness of residents to participate I would not have been able to conduct my research. They allowed me into their lives and I felt indebted to them. I felt that I owed them dearly and longed to show my appreciation but this was not a healthy way to do so. And I did not want to set a practice of always providing what they asked for as it was not financially possible and I also did not want to influence the relationships that I was building by being accessible in this way.

I had not planned on providing monetary compensation for residents during fieldwork but it seemed that it was somehow expected that I was an available source during my stay. Perhaps researchers before me had been particularly generous to residents justifying such an expectation. The residents did not approach me in an aggressive manner. They asked for money and items as naturally as they would ask the time of day. However, I noticed that there seemed to be a collective sense of entitlement among many residents as if they were owed whatever they requested of me and I was somehow obligated to provide. They were not shy or uncomfortable to ask me for things and seemed unaware of my discomfort from being asked. I found it hard, at times, to say no to some of the requests. I did not always decline because I genuinely wanted to provide. I had to learn to build callouses around my emotions. Sometimes I felt deeply distressed and taken advantage of, and said "no" willingly, but the feeling that I was letting residents down was hard to overcome. I felt emotionally overwhelmed during fieldwork (because of the financial requests, among other stresses in the field) and began to spend most of my time indoors as I did not want to meet anyone, lest I be put in an uncomfortable situation. Staying indoors obviously began to affect my fieldwork. The emotional strain began affecting me on a personal level and attributed to one of the reasons I left the field earlier than planned. I felt as if a heavy burden was lifted when I left the field and returned to my home, though the act of leaving brought its own set of emotional challenges.

Leaving the field was emotional because it had been my home for almost a year. I had grown as a person and a researcher during that time. I became different person, someone who appeared comfortable and confident in the role of a researcher and temporary resident, someone who defied the odds proving to others that living in Langa did not mean inevitable physical harm, someone whose American-ness awarded them a status not much lower than a celebrity, someone who belonged (being accepted by some of the residents) and had a purpose. I grew with the residents. They embraced me and shared personal stories with me. Some trusted me to an extent. I had power and I used it to get to know residents, not only in regards to my research interests but as people. We had a connection – however dysfunctional and emotionally damaging it was for me. I felt that my leaving the field was a sign of rejection. I had been with them for so long and just like that, I was gone (though my departure was eager for the reasons mentioned above). I felt that I had used them or rather I felt that they would *think* that I used them. I lost them as people and I lost a part of myself. I was out of the field still working very much with Langa through my fieldnotes and interviews, but I had left the township behind. Leaving the township behind also symbolized my entry into the next phase of my journey as a Doctoral student: writing up. Like removing the training wheels from a bike, it was scary.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed the methods used in this study during fieldwork. Grappling with different aspects of methods used, I discussed the benefits and challenges faced while in the field and how I responded to the challenges. Most challenges reflect my position in the field among Langa residents and how I was perceived or felt I was perceived by them. Residents' perceptions and subsequent treatment of me begin to attest to the different levels of marginality that one can expect, or may experience within the township. My identity as an 'outsider', though ever fluctuating, negotiated by my attempt to speak isiXhosa and my ownership of a 'quality' phone, reveals some of the complexities of marginality in Langa (more on this in *Chapter 4*). Other challenges occurred in meeting ethical requirements. My experience of fieldwork differed from what I had read about fieldwork and the ethical requirements that I set out to maintain. As Flick (2007) suggests, my presence in Langa for the purpose of doing field work should have been one in which residents allowed me, referring to me a neighbor and friend. Or as Divya Tolia-Kelly (2010:40 cited in Burdsey, 2013:105) suggests, the researcher should be "equal to [the] participants". However, as stated above, I considered myself more powerful than residents. I felt that I had authority over them simply because of my status as a researcher. Simultaneously, however, I felt vulnerable under the gaze and expectations of residents so there was some ambiguity around my position in the field.

Though opinions frequently shifted as to my *makwerekwere*-ness or insider-ness, I felt like an outsider – because technically I *was*. This made me feel that while I could be considered a neighbor and friend, I was not an equal despite residents' attempts to help me feel equal. Furthermore, the buck stops with me as I became the voice of residents through my analyses and interpretations presented in this dissertation. My reflections gathered during fieldwork, despite my quest to learn from and with residents, may be contaminated by my own background and morals, which could inadvertently render me an enemy as my subconscious feelings, lurking in the background, could find their way into the dissertation and how I represent residents.

The chapter detailed the process of selecting participants by simple random sampling, of data collection via interviews and participant observation, and of data analysis. Reflections on limitations and challenges concluded the chapter. The next chapter reveals different aspects of township life for Langa residents. It presents ethnographic snapshots of Langa as I experienced during participant observation and discussions with residents. These snapshots will provide the reader with a mental image of the township while also presenting a glimpse of some of the day-to-day activities that make up residents lives. The chapter is meant to foreground my

presentation of Langa's population as non-marginalized people, at least not as obviously expected.

CHAPTER 3
EVERYDAY LIFE IN LANGA: ETHNOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOTS

Introduction

This dissertation, among other things, aims to provide reliable knowledge on the role of ICTs among Langa residents and the realities of their perceived marginalities within Cape Town. Ethnographic snapshots and their interpretations were significant in my entry into the fieldsite as they describe my first experiences in Langa and day-to-day life for residents. Ethnographic snapshots document tangible stories, in contrast to stories I had only heard about Langa. I focus on them, not only to reveal various aspects of life in Langa but I share them in effort to present some (extra) ordinary activities among Langa residents. While this chapter does not immediately answer any of the four research questions, I use these various snapshots to address one of the main objectives of this dissertation: to challenge the categorical perception of Langa's marginality. The aim of this chapter is to emphasize some of the nuances and complexities of being marginal in Langa through ethnographic snapshots. The snapshots also demonstrate the significance of ethnography in the study of human behavior in order to achieve a better understanding of what actually occurs on the ground (Flick, 2007; Delamont, 2004; Davies, 1998; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997).

The snapshots are intended to show the messiness or intricacies of everyday life for residents that defy some of the general characteristics attributed to marginal populations, namely that their geographically marginal location in Cape Town inevitably renders them a marginal population (Jahoda, 2001; Pearlman, 1976). Acknowledging that Langa residents are in some ways marginal, I aim to show that their marginality is not as obvious or extreme as is often presented. I emphasize the balancing, manipulation and negotiation of marginality in Langa to show that it should not be taken for granted.

The chapter begins by formally presenting and situating Langa Township in this study. It describes the residents as a mobile population, inhabiting a geographically and economically marginal space in Cape Town. I then describe some of my experiences in Langa, some of which are based on first impressions while others are interpretations based on detailed questioning of residents in addition to my first impressions towards understanding some of the (reasons behind the) activities. The interpretations of some experiences are informed by my subjectivities and those of the residents which they depict. I address routine occurrences, like doing laundry and other mundane activities.

Additionally, in effort to address an aspect of the social atmosphere, I discuss one notion of the *makwerekwere* in the unique context of Langa. I focus on the social relationships between dogs and residents to present an image of the insider/outsider relationships observed during fieldwork. This is a study of migration and belonging and as such it was imperative that I looked at different angles of relationships between local, or not so local, South Africans and African immigrants living in Langa. In a South African context where immigrants are considered unwanted strangers belonging elsewhere (Nyamnjoh, 2006), I approached the field expecting African immigrants (or *amakwerekwere*) living in Langa to be clearly defined and treated as 'outsiders' who did not belong. More importantly, I observed residents' daily behaviors in effort to compare and contrast them to some of the 'expected' behaviors of those living in marginal places.

Observations revealed that as residents maneuver through their day-to-day lives, they (sub)-consciously work towards maintaining various positions within and outside the township both as a population and as individuals. The embodied histories, or *habitus*, of residents makes their behaviors second nature, giving their various practices autonomy. What is socially acceptable within Langa is generally not up for discussion. Behaviors and practices that are considered reasonable and common-sensical stem from past experiences that then produce current socially acceptable or 'correct' behaviors and practices (Bourdieu, 1990). While residents' *habitus* makes behaviors second nature and generally not up for discussion, residents can and do, on a more conscious level, negotiate and navigate behaviors considered 'correct' in order to fulfil certain desires. For example, they engage in practices that seek to negotiate their social positions within in the township, making sure to purchase socially acceptable products like televisions and mobile phones (see below under *Visiting the Shacks* and *Chapter 4*) in order to bypass a more subtle type of marginality experienced within the township. Or, some residents will deliberately act in ways that coincide with stereotypical views of the township so as to entice unsuspecting others to provide for them (see *Tours in Langa* below). In this way they are both balancing their (assumed) marginalities with their social (and sometimes incongruent) realities manipulating their assumed marginal status to get what they want.

Do Marginal Spaces Produce Marginal People?

The imbalance between people and available resources, and the real or imagined consequences of these imbalances, usually manifests in the designation of marginal populations who are denied equal, if any access, to scarce resources. Such is the case in South Africa, as the increasing presence of African migrants has caused mainstream society to turn their backs on

those considered most marginal. Populations struggling with various types of marginality, considered undesirable and unacceptable, have often been objects of scorn and anxiety for those on the opposite side of the spectrum. This reality is particularly consistent because of society's tendency to "label, conceptualize and stigmatize" (Mizruchi, 1983:8-10), those that are considered 'Other' (Neocosmos, 2006), thus, in a way justifying scorn and anxiety towards marginal populations. It is this demarcation of the marginal that allows the dichotomization of 'insiders' and 'outsiders'.

Marginal populations are usually associated with groups defined as outsiders (Nyamnjoh, 2006), non-citizens, foreigners or strangers (Stolcke, 1995), aliens and *amakwerekwere* (Itmann et al., 2010; Nyamnjoh, 2009; Sichone, 2008) within their host communities. These groups can include those who have migrated within South Africa and those from other African countries to South Africa. The categorization of such groups as marginal is often sustained by those who claim citizenship for myriad of reasons. Neocosmos (2006:15) suggests that the 'Other' must be excluded for the 'We' to be. In other words, it is necessary for some to be considered marginal in order to maintain the (social, economic and political) status differences between the 'marginal' and the mainstream.

Marginalized populations in Cape Town have been maintained through the city's history of social inclusion and exclusion related to poverty and crises. Though "marginalized" populations are part of the mainstream because of their role in building and maintaining the city (Skuse & Cousins, 2007; Wilson, 1972; Mayer, 1971:991) and in their potential to create job opportunities (Tadesse & White, 2013; Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010), those outside of or unfamiliar with "marginalized" residents do not consider them participants in mainstream economic, political and social life (Skuse & Cousins, 2007) in Cape Town. Marginalized populations, in this case black locals and immigrants situated in townships, are often denied social membership in greater Cape Town. Ideally, individuals become members of society as they form ties and attachments within it and come to identify a significant range of their interests with membership of that society (Owen, 2013:329). Many Langa residents (internal and external migrants) have lived in Cape Town for years and have indeed formed ties, through employment and attachments through various relationships: friendships, intimate relationships, and children. These ties and attachments, along with the significance of their presence in the development of the Cape Town (and South Africa in general), should award them social membership which would work to challenge their presumed marginality.

Black Xhosa townships are described as emerging third-world environments having poor infrastructure and limited access to specific services, namely electronics, rudimentary retailing

and banking services (Klemz et al., 2006). Similar to the years of apartheid, the majority of blacks in South Africa continue to live in poverty in townships (though currently, townships have developed into complex communities where it is common to see rich (or more appropriately, less poor) and poor residents living side-by-side (Evans, 2010). Historically, townships, for black South Africans, were areas of exclusion, control and containment that affected every aspect of residents' lives (Township Renewal Sourcebook, 2009:4). Currently, as a result of the geographically marginal spaces in which some townships were erected, they remain areas of exclusion and containment, if only in theory. As both physical and virtual mobility have increased in part due to the introduction of ICTs, I suggest that former barriers of exclusion and containment enforced through townships have been (or have the potential to be) disabled.

By virtue of residing in a township, Langa residents, though a mobile population, are at an increased risk of being labeled marginal, as the negativity attributed to townships and informal settlements suggests some level of social disorganization or a "social cancer" (Pearlman, 1976:93). Pearlman (1976) strategically addresses different schools of thought around marginality in order to present them as myths and descriptions of social reality. Myths are maintained by personal beliefs, while descriptions of social reality refer to specific problems that should be treated in alternative theoretical ways. She emphasizes the need to understand the depths of marginality, as associated stereotypes and ideologies affect the lives of millions of poor residents. Beliefs around marginality are not likely to change without first-hand experience from inside the so-called marginal space by those who support this view. Surprising though it may seem, it should also be noted that one can be designated as marginal by their own people, among members of their own group (de Bruijn et al., 2013:4). Not surprisingly, however, not all members of a particular population or group will have the same characteristics (Ellemers & Jetten, 2013) even though they may share similar experiences. Marginality should not be considered homogenous.

Janice Pearlman's (1976) *The Myth of Marginality* helped me to gain a better understanding of Langa's position in this myth. One of the most striking points that Pearlman (1976:94) makes is that Favelas, the generic Brazilian term for a squatter settlement, like South African townships, are often considered marginal because of the sub-standard physical construction, high density and lack of urban services, among other things. Analysts, she claims have sought to combine these otherwise undesirable physical traits of the favela with the assumed characteristics and lifestyles of its inhabitants. This ultimately "broadens the definition of marginality from the external habitat of the poor to their internal personal qualities". This

reality can be linked to Langa residents who, by virtue of living in the township, "have been automatically assumed to have a series of associated economic, social, cultural and political characteristics" (Pearlman, 1976:97) associated with marginality. This study aims to show that marginality is a matter of degree, as it is possible that a person or population could be marginal in some senses and not others (Pearlman, 1976:129). This point is also emphasized in Fonchingong's (2013:92) study on Nigerians living in Cameroon where he acknowledges that while the Nigerians there may be politically marginalized they are not economically marginal. Langa residents are not *all* necessarily socially, politically, and economically marginal, if at all, and not to the same extent.

Pearlman (1976) emphasizes that most qualifications of marginality are unjust. Where place of residence, employment status, ethnic and racial hierarchies, among other things, are used to determine marginality, other qualities that would seek to demarginalize, like their role in the employment sector and their mastery of ICTs, for example, are overlooked. Regarding Langa residents, some Cape Tonians are confronted first and foremost by the physical layers of the township. Brick houses are often overlooked in favor of shacks as they represent what many of us revert to when thinking of townships. Many people, myself included, are attracted to certain stories told about townships because of the frame of reference with which we accept them (Rothmyer, 2011), and if they fit in to that frame. There seems to be a common link between townships and marginality as townships are less desirable spaces to occupy for South Africans and must therefore, be occupied only by the socially, economically and politically impaired in the country, who can afford no better. I aim to weaken the link between townships and the (presumed) marginality of its occupants. Here, I introduce Langa in preparation to introduce the residents and some of their activities.

Introducing Langa Township

Langa Township was originally built for the re-housing of residents of Ndabeni, the first 'location' in Cape Town, South Africa (Coetzer, 2009:1; Ralphs, 2009). The term 'location' was used to describe an area that was considered 'native' territory usually administered by the central government of the Cape. Legislative amendments saw that 'locations' became the only territory where black Africans could reside – with the exception of those living on the farms in which they worked. Established in 1927, after the passing of the Group Areas Act in 1923, Langa is the oldest township, built on the periphery of the city (see Figure 2). It was a settlement allocated as one of the main reserves for the occupation of black, isiXhosa-speaking Africans, most of whom were not originally from the Western Cape but came mainly from the eastern part of the Cape

Province as migrant laborers (Tapscott, 2011; Ralphs, 2009; Mamdani, 1996; Wilson, 1972; Wilson & Mafeje, 1963:1, 6). The collapse of apartheid and the end of influx control laws in the 1980s and 1990s resulted in a large and rapid influx of people into Cape Town. The already severe housing shortages resulted in many of the newcomers erecting shacks in the already established townships like Langa (Tapscott, 2011). As a settlement originally centered on mobility, most of Langa's population is mobile. Through fieldwork, I have learned that Langa continues to be a constitution of mobility, as the majority of residents are from the Eastern Cape or other African countries who travel throughout the year to and from their 'homes'. I met very few residents who were sedentary, who stayed in Langa on a permanent basis.

Figure 2: Map of Langa Township in Cape Town, South Africa

Map data ©2013 AfriGIS (Pty) Ltd, Google Imagery ©2013, CDNGI, Cnes/Spot Image, DigitalGlobe, Landsat

Some residents, both local and foreign, explained why they came to Cape Town. Malawian native, Benson, explained that South Africa's economy, and the jobs (he heard were) available in Cape Town, brought him here. He currently works as a petrol attendant. He explained

> Malawi is a nice… country but the problem [is the] economy. The economy is poor, we're poor economically see even the money from Malawi is very low. You see you can get a job there but the job at the end of the month when you get [paid] you find that [it's] a little money. It's

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difficult, yeah that's the problem that we get so you find this money here in South Africa is better than there… Yeah but here like where, where I'm working I'm working for the week [and] I get something like R1000, R900 but that R1000 I know that there it can end up a nice amount so that my life can be easy… (Benson Interview, September 2011)

Monwabise, originally from Queenstown explained that he came to Cape Town to study and to "communicate development using theater" (Monwabise Interview, August 2011). He felt that he would have better opportunities if he studied and eventually worked in Cape Town. At the time of fieldwork, he was a part-time actor, acting in the theatre at least three times a month. Angolan native, Odon, came to Cape Town as a refugee, fleeing the war that was devastating his country at the time. Nigerian natives Richard and Henry also came to Cape Town "looking for work". At the time of fieldwork, they had been here for twelve and six years respectively. Both work in cell phone repair shops. They alternate between the shop in Langa and the shop in Town. Not all residents found what they were looking for, and indeed some complained that life here was not as beneficial as they had expected when they came (see Richard's comment in Chapter 6, pg. 126). These are some of the reasons that some of the residents came to Cape Town and eventually ended up in Langa.

Langa is not a particularly large township but it is not small either. There are only two entrances into the township. Standing in the right spot of the township, particularly when the sky is clear, one can see Cape Town's beautiful Table Mountain in its entirety. Entering the township, one is immediately greeted by Bhunga Park, usually occupied by several children on the one side and a dilapidated building, covered in spray paint, surrounded by unkempt grass and rubbish on the other. Further entrance into the township reveals the first of many fruit stands, hair salons, Spaza shops and a Vodacom phone booth, what Walter Nkwi (2009), in his study of Cameroon, describes as "call boxes". Spaza shops, hair salons, Internet cafes, churches and a few restaurants including the famous Eziko restaurant, a popular tourist eatery, are dispersed throughout Langa. These outlets provide convenient, though sometimes limited, resources throughout the township.

During fieldwork, particularly when not speaking directly with residents, I relied heavily on my senses to gather data (though my senses were also in use when speaking). While all proved useful, I found that my eyes, nose and ears were most essential for gathering data and familiarizing myself with various routines in the township. Though chickens and roosters began relentlessly cock-a-doodle-doo-ing around three in the morning, sounds of energy-filled children awaiting transport to school just before 6:00am told me that the day, for many residents, had (officially) begun. The sound of water being wrung from clothing by residents signified mid-

morning when laundry, for the most part, was coming to an end, though the smell of washing powder lingered. Foreign languages and accents, usually from Europe, could be heard any time between 9:00am and 5:30pm which usually meant that a tour was in session. The smell of braaing meat at 1:00pm on Friday afternoons represented the start of the weekend, where meat, coke and beer were enjoyed in abundance. Excessive litter of cigarette butts and beer bottles throughout the township on Monday, particularly the Monday after month-end, revealed that working residents had been paid and spent the weekend partying. Ross (2009:66) states that our sense of space rests on rhythms and deeply ingrained practices that are "resonant with the involvement of all our senses in pursuing the ordinary activities of everyday life". These are some of the ways that my senses helped me become keenly aware of various routines that governed the township during my stay. Below, I present various ethnographic snapshots observed during fieldwork which were key to (re)shaping my understanding of marginality. I learned to set aside my own ideas and assumptions of marginality to truly understand its complexities as they pertain to residents.

Langa: Ethnographic Snapshots

Visiting the Shacks

My first impression of the shacks was one of sorrow and mild disgust and later surprise and conviction. I had seen shacks before but I had never been inside one. During the early stages of fieldwork, I was invited into the home of a shack-dweller. This particular shack was home to five residents. There were two adult women with three children between them. They did not rent the shack as some residents do. Their physical home is basically free of charge; it is the bed that costs money. They each rent a bed for R50 a month. They co-share pre-paid electricity which at the time of my visit read just under 16 units. Looking into their home I saw two twin size beds separated by a narrow path between the two. They were made up, the linen tucked in on all corners, the pillows nicely fluffed. I noticed that neither of the linen sets matched. I could see this even though both beds were layered with blankets. The space inside was small and cluttered and I was thankful that I am not claustrophobic. Suitcases lined the shelf just over top of their beds giving the already small space an even more cluttered look. Cardboard or, whatever the roof was made of, hung just over the three, dusty suitcases. They were black or navy blue with silver clasps and were part of a set. Funny that the suitcases matched but the linen did not. I wondered what it is like when it rains. Does the water seep in past the suitcases and wet the beds?

There were pictures on the wall. A photo of an elderly woman wearing a big hat hung alongside one of the beds. The woman in the photo did not appear to be either of the two women who lived there. A calendar and a huge flat screen television fought for space on the adjacent wall. A huge television, as opposed to a small one, seemed more than a little out of place because of the relatively small size of the shack, though I came to note that most residents owned similarly large televisions. 'Assuming' that most shack dwellers struggled financially, I was confused with their purchases. When struggling to buy food or electricity is a problem, a huge television that would likely be particularly expensive, would be last on the list of items to purchase for my home. Trying, but failing, not to be judgmental, I quietly came to the conclusion that my priorities were different, a conclusion that was justified when I questioned residents about their televisions and other, 'extravagant' purchases, including particularly expensive radios and mobile phones. Most responses centered on heightened viewing and listening pleasure. When walking past a home, you could often hear the television on even when no one was inside. Perhaps, leaving the television on is meant to deter burglars by making them think someone is home or nearby. It could also be a way to boost pride and increase social standing, broadcasting that you too own a television to neighboring residents or passersby.

Ostentatious or status consumption is often motivated by the need to attract attention or the admiration of wealth or luxury. Status consumers often purchase items thought to improve their social standing as a way to impress others in society (Carter & Gilovich, 2012; Riquelme, Rios & Al-Sharhan, 2011; Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 2007:2033). In order for this to work, however, items that are consumed should generally be accepted as desirable within a community to ensure that particular attention or admiration will occur. In Langa, huge televisions (and other items, namely mobile phones) do just that. They appear to increase one's social status indicating a level of finance that may not be true or consistent. Still, it is not enough to own a television, but it should be big, located in the front of the home for easy visual access, and left on at high-volume to attract the desired attention. Televisions, for Langa residents, appear to validate (desirable) definitions that residents want (or try) to associate with themselves, namely that they are trendy, technologically savvy and financially able to maintain such purchases. Back to the shack: regardless of the size of the television, this home was small.

Upon fully entering the shack, I was hit by a smell. Not a particularly bad smell but not a smell that I would want to get used too. It was a subtle, sour smell; not very strong but there just the same. It smelled of bodies: not unwashed bodies but too many bodies. It smelled of too many hormones, of too many people inhaling and exhaling the same air, of sun-dried sweat still lingering in the air, of a floor that had been walked on by too many feet. All this was competing

with the smell of the rice cooking on the portable stove just next to the door. In short, it smelled used. Peering hesitantly into the shack as I crept in further, I saw a beautiful blue tea set with matching tea plates and pots in a cupboard. The cupboard containing the tea set was on the same side as the television. The huge television, however, did not distract one's view of the tea set. Again, I wondered. What place did that beautiful china have in this home? Who uses them? Maybe they were there simply for decoration, to have something nice and noticeable in this cluttered space, something that could make the neighbors jealous. I initially thought the set must have been stolen but then felt guilty for thinking that way. It was a nice, however awkward, addition to the home. It showed a sense of pride. This beautiful and nicely arranged tea set seemed to give the home an identity. This was somebody's home.

Convicted by my surprise of this home, I grew aware of my poor and condescending views of poverty and the township – shacks in particular. I did not like the fact that I had created an image of the shack without any evidence. Just as I had expected housing in Langa to appear a certain way, I too expected that relationships between locals and immigrants in the township would be socially negative. This was based on previous readings that I had done on migration in South Africa and the subsequent social tensions between locals and immigrants. I do not suggest that what I had learned about relationships between locals and immigrants or insiders and outsiders prior to starting fieldwork was inaccurate. Indeed, as Nyamnjoh (2012) states ethnographers, too focused on specific research questions in the field, tend to be oblivious to the existence of other knowledge outside of their specific interests. In my experience, it was not that I was too focused on my fieldsite. Readings on social tensions in other areas of South Africa where increased migration exacerbated social tensions between various categories of locals and migrants, initially caused me to neglect my *own* fieldsite, Langa, in favor of the reality of others. This tendency contributes to perceptions of Langa's categorical marginality. Where other townships, informal settlements or otherwise 'unfavorable' spaces and populations may systematically display many (exaggerated) characteristics of marginality, this is not the reality for all. I use this dissertation to push forward the existence of my fieldsite in the hopes that others will accept this, in addition to others, as a different yet equally accurate presentation of a disadvantaged population in South Africa.

The next section describes my initial (then final) expectations and anticipations of social relationships and mobile bodies within the township. This I do through observations of homeless dogs in Langa.

Life and Dogs in the Township

During weekdays, Langa maintains a quiet though steady atmosphere. Residents with irregular job schedules and those who are otherwise idle talk amongst themselves while others fill their time with laundry, chores, chit-chat and socializing. Langa comes alive at night and during the weekend. Residents can be seen hanging out at the local Shebeen, dancing, socializing over a braai with beers and coke, smoking and lounging on the streets, or playing games such as chess (even in the dark). Loud voices and even louder music can be heard until the early morning hours as residents enjoy each other's company. During the day, however, the township is quiet as many residents have gone to off to work or school. The decreased population of human residents during the day is often replenished with the overwhelming presence of dogs. There are so many dogs in Langa. I love dogs. Seeing the same (and some random) dogs during fieldwork was a daily experience, one that I took particular notice of because of my love for dogs. At first, I looked forward to seeing them every day. Being surrounded by them should have been a dream come true but instead, it was heartbreaking.

The dogs there look unhappy, at least compared to the few who were nurtured by their owners, usually kept within or around their home. Their hopeless manner, the defeated way they roam aimlessly around the township suggests that they are lonely, filthy, starving, abused and neglected. Carefully choosing those who were clean enough, or rather less dirty, than the others, I played with some dogs and engaged in silly, one-sided conversations. Their clingy and excited reactions to my attention and affection indicated how rare this behavior was. Some of them followed me around for as long as they could, usually until a fellow resident shooed them away. In a perfect world they would all belong to owners that loved and cared for them but the life they live is far less appealing. They live in Langa but they are not part of Langa. They do not belong. It was rare for me to see residents paying even minimal attention to these animals. They have no real home, they are not pampered and they are not fed regularly. Many of them are nothing but skin and bones and a tail. You can see their ribs. They are hungry and possibly sick. Though some find entertainment in a stray bag, bottle or bone, most walk around the township restless and defeated. Their eyes show how sad they are. They almost look human. Somehow they seem to know this is not the way life should be.

Until I became more aware of the social relationships that contributed to Langa's environment, I thought that I could compare (and I admit this hoping that I do not appear crude or insensitive) the homeless dogs of Langa to *amakwerekwere*. It is not that the external immigrants living in Langa literally looked or behaved like dogs, it was the nature of their presence in the township that I thought would be comparable to the dogs. I expected that there

would be exaggerated physical and verbal tension between local South African and African immigrant residents living among each other in Langa. I thought there would be a clear distinction between the two categories of migrants – the locals being the dominant and the immigrants being the minority, receiving the brunt of physical and verbal maltreatment. The reality was that most of the tension between the two categories of residents was subtle, generally manifesting itself in sly verbal comments and slightly hostile treatment of some residents between the two categories.

I had created an image that *amakwerekwere*, like the (homeless) dogs, live in Langa but they did not belong there (even those who had acquired legal citizenship), as none of the residents claimed ownership of them. *Amakwerekwere* live (or work) there but are not from there. Their homes were elsewhere. Even when an external immigrant claimed a home in Langa, I figured they remained homeless or stray in their own right. Local residents, I assumed, would look through them; they would be ignored and not socially catered to by the majority of the township. Most residents generally ignore the dogs. They were left to fend for themselves and I expected as much for *amakwerekwere* as well. Nobody, in this case local residents, would want them. They, like the dogs, would be socially defeated and restless, aimlessly wandering around, going to work at their menial jobs in order to support themselves and their families who lived elsewhere, doing their daily chores once they returned home repeating the same routine every day. Like the dogs they would struggle to survive, only instead of food (and perhaps a tender touch) that dogs shamelessly begged for, *amakwerekwere*, would beg, shamelessly, for social inclusion and gratification in Langa, their host community. This is what I expected as I thought the presence of the dogs would somehow be symbolic to the plight of *amakwerekwere*. My thinking was flawed on a number of levels and I grew to see that comparing *amakwerekwere* to dogs, in this way, was inaccurate, particularly as social relationships between the two categories appeared amiable.

To some extent, however, I realized that I *could* compare both *amakwerekwere* and internal migrants living in Langa to the homeless dogs in different aspects, namely their mobility and their struggle to survive in an already socially compromised environment. (Im)migrants, like the dogs, were, for one thing, mobile. The dogs would sometimes travel out of Langa, perhaps searching for food or shelter. Some dogs were gone for days and I was usually relieved when I saw them as it confirmed that they had not died. (In fact, I only knew of one dog that died during fieldwork and it was hit by a car. It took several days for the badly decomposing body to be removed from the street). Furthermore, both categories of migrants have family members and

loved ones that are often located elsewhere, left behind in their home countries/villages, or separated by their own desires to find greener pastures abroad.

Random dogs appeared to find companionship whenever possible in other random canines that roamed the township. Even then, companionship, social inclusion or acceptance among other dogs that are also desperate for food, shelter and perhaps human affection, is not guaranteed. I often witnessed dogs fighting with each other. At times the fight was obviously over food, other times for space or access to a female dog in the case of males. Though I did not witness many extreme cases of verbal or physical fights between locals and foreigners in the township, there were occasional, subtle hints of dissatisfaction between the two groups. I learned to pick up the dissonances between what was said about and around the presence of (im)migrants in the township, versus the (sometimes hostile) verbal and physical actions that occasionally occurred between them. Studies have shown that the acceptance of (im)migrants in South Africa is often met with reluctance particularly by the already struggling poor black population (Jurgens & Donaldson, 2012; Landau, 2011; Matsinhe, 2011; Sichone, 2008; Western, 2001). The same can be said about dogs and their acceptance of, or reluctance to bond with, other dogs who often pose as a threat to gaining food and space in the township.

Despite the overwhelming number of dogs in Langa, there was never a potent smell of dog feces. Generally, the air smells of Sunlight and Omo washing powder and fabric softener, a fresh smell that testifies to the frequency with which laundry is done in the township.

Laundry in Langa

One can often see groups of women or teenaged boys doing laundry and passing the time with gossip. Laundry is a popular past-time in the township. Though perhaps, "popular" is not the right word. Laundry is a necessary activity simply because the alternative is walking around in dirty clothes. However, laundry is symbolic. Even if lack of water, or the malfunctioning of communal water taps, means that some residents cannot wash their bodies every day, the ability to do laundry even twice a week, resulting in a variety of clean clothing, means that one can appear to be clean and even smell clean at least until (or even if) their physical body odor betrays them. Doing laundry is a priority for many residents and was done frequently. To an observer it might even have appeared to take on a religious aspect, even cult-like. Residents spend several hours a day, several days a week washing clothes, hanging them up, taking them down and folding them to perfection. Sometimes I wondered what activities would come to surface if laundry was not so time consuming. What would residents do during their spare time? Would they prefer to be doing something else? It was apparent, though, that while the literal and

physical act of doing laundry might have been dreaded, the social aspect was rewarding. Some residents hate doing laundry but they hate doing it together, with others. Hating laundry together gives residents something to complain about. Complaining about something in unison is often cathartic and rewarding in itself. Complaining usually turns into other (unrelated) complaints which often turn into gossip and gossiping is fun for many people. Before you know it, this hated activity has become fun and enjoyable.

I am reminded of Fiona Ross' (2009, 2005a, 2005b) research on model communities and respectable residents, in which she reports on the social implications of housing for poor and marginal residents of the formally illegal settlement *Die Boss* ('The Bush' later and legally recognized as The Park), located in the Western Cape, South Africa. When residents of The Park were informed that they would be relocated to a planned residential area, The Village, one resident admitted that the water tap would be most missed by him from the old community. In an interview with Fiona he explained why he would miss the water tap.

> … because everybody comes here. Even I'm there by the water tap. Even Sunday mornings, Saturday mornings, you will see everything. You will see jokes, you can see people standing and talking to each other […] This water tank here means a lot to us, I must tell you (Ross, 2005:632).

The regular communal fellowships that occurred at the water tap would be disrupted once residents of The Park moved to The Village, where individual plumbing access would eliminate the need for communal water taps. Here we learn that it is not the actual water tap; the use of it to collect water for bathing, washing and cleaning, but the social gathering around the water tap that make it significant – something worth missing. I refer to this quote as it pertained to observations of residents doing laundry in Langa. My notion that a Laundromat would do well in Langa was eventually dismissed when I saw the anticipation of laundry doers when meeting their fellow residents after collecting water from the communal water taps in preparation for laundry. It was through observation and participation in this chore that I realized the social significance of the activity. Some residents look forward to this activity for their daily dose of chatter, gossip and necessary socialization. The introduction of a Laundromat could threaten the communal relationships between residents. While the size of a Laundromat may allow residents to congregate inside or nearby as they wait for the washing/drying cycle to end, the environment might not be as accommodating for socializing.

These are some of the experiences I witnessed in Langa. Ethnographic data helped me to familiarize myself with different aspects of the township. Empirical data, among other things, facilitated the demise of stereotypical views around townships and township residents. Though I

cannot use these experiences to generalize such concepts about all townships and their residents, it is important to note that these particular experiences had gone against most of what I heard or thought of most townships before the start of fieldwork. I now turn to one of the main perceptions of township residents: their marginality.

Perceptions of Langa as a Marginal Population in Cape Town

Michel de Certeau (1998 cited in Ross, 2009:59) states that one's position in space reflects their understanding of it. For Langa residents, being considered marginal in Cape Town and understanding their position as socially, politically and economically disconnected can reinforce their own understanding of themselves as "outsiders", forcibly content to occupy spaces otherwise known as "elsewhere" or in the margins of the country. Once associated with Langa and the settlement's presumed (negative) identity, residents, including both internal and external migrants, are relegated to a social inferiority whether the reality of this social standing is accurate or not. Echoing Jahoda (2001), de Certeau (1998) and Pearlman (1976), it has been suggested that individuals tend to harbor identities and values based on their membership within larger social groups (Christman, 2009). Cape Town, as a group, then, could be said to reinforce ascribed identities and values within Langa and similar settlements, further reinforcing their presumed marginal identities as inferior, minority groups.

Residents and their Assumed Marginality

My understanding of Langa as marginal was, among other things, based on some of the readings I had done in preparation for my research (Coetzer 2009; Township Renewal Sourcebook 2009; Mafeje & Wilson 1963, for example). The most profound of the readings was Mafeje & Wilson's (1963) *Langa,* in which Mafeje's fieldwork yielded critical insight into the variety of categories among residents and their opinions of each other (Sharp, 2008b). None of the readings that I had done explicitly described Langa using the word 'marginal'. However, descriptions of it being a "very poor" suburb and "planned as a segregated area for the confinement of Africans" (Mafeje & Wilson, 1963:1, 5), and the fact that Langa was initially referred to as a 'location': a space of 'the Other' (Coetzer, 2009:5) led me to depict Langa in this way. Furthermore, a statement that "through enforcement of the Group Areas Act (1950), the government forced the entire non-white urban population to live in townships" (Township Renewal Sourcebook, 2009:4) contributed to my assuming Langa's marginality.

Populations considered marginal are expected to behave in negative stereotypical ways (Pearlman, 1976). Jahoda (2001) states the need for research on relationships between stereotypes and behavior. Stereotypes, which are often value-laden, he suggests, do in fact influence and trigger certain behaviors in certain groups (Jahoda, 2001:185-86). Despite my observations of Langa residents being hard working and trying to make a decent living, I did note that there was a collective sense of entitlement among the them; one that makes them less (visibly) embarrassed to ask for money, food, clothes and other material wants or to take blatant advantage of someone should the opportunity arise. Their behavior in this regard would comply with what one might expect those suffering from extreme poverty and financial insecurities to behave. It was as if they felt that their 'predicaments' of living in a township, despite the fact that most seemed to get along fine (and indeed worked hard to do so), made them feel that they were owed something. There seemed to be a blurring of two attitudes: being proud, and not letting their living conditions and/or financial statuses determine how they behaved, how they were perceived by others or how they perceived themselves *and* feeling sorry for themselves precisely because of those reasons. As their living and financial statuses often contribute to others viewing them as marginal (Pearlman 1976), their apparent sense of entitlement and unabashed willingness to ask for (or demand) items from others could be attributed to their acceptance of this otherwise negative categorization, perhaps even subconsciously.

Flexible identities, then, for Langa residents did appear to emerge in this context: the hopeless and needy disadvantaged resident vs. the hardworking resident determined not to let a lack of resources deny them a comfortable living. The former identity of the needy resident often emerged during tours where residents often received moneys and handouts from eager tourists. Alternatively, this identity emerges as residents seek to conform to images that are expected of them in order to keep tourists happy; to keep them coming as they are valued because "they bring money to the township", as one resident voiced. Securing monies in this way is a conscious and strategic survival strategy for residents. Referring back to de Bruijn et al.'s (2009:12) definition of marginality as "a kaleidoscope of real or imagined circumstances that cause people to feel disadvantaged…" residents have shown that real or imagined circumstances that people find themselves in, *experienced* as disadvantageous or not on the ground, can make people *pretend* to feel disadvantaged when it suits them.

According to Rothmyer (2011), poverty rates and the death rate of children under five years throughout the African continent, for example, have been steadily decreasing yet journalism continues to present Africa as a continent needing extensive help from the West. This, she says, is because they are more likely to get money from NGOs that will aid rescue

efforts in Africa. Negative stories are what compel these organizations to give money. One might conclude that some Langa residents, too, deliberately 'fall into character'; presenting negative images that one might expect in order to gain money and material items. I have witnessed tourists giving money (something tour guides highly advise against to prevent residents from mistreating those who do not give money), candy and toys to residents. Residents asked for clothes, sneakers and even laptops from me, and expected me to provide. This attitude could serve to show the benefits some have received when engaged in this particular identity. To some extent, then, some residents could be the very enforcers of their perceived marginality, as they have coveted the use of the title for their own gain.

Mugny & Perez (1991:4) suggest that majority influences take on the form of compliance, meaning that individuals will outwardly accept what the majority believes whenever the majority is psychologically prominent. In other words, despite their ability to survive in what others may deem as unpleasant conditions, the overwhelming presumptions of Langa residents' marginality and social inferiority in greater Cape Town might encourage their "compliance" to their expected behavior to beg, lie or steal (Jahoda, 2001; Mugny & Perez, 1991) even when this is unnecessary. Stereotypes, then, affect both the perpetrators and the victims, as one projects and the other (sometimes) conforms.

Seeking to update and revise my perceptions of Langa while in the field, I used a variety of activities to understand residents' views of the township and residents views of themselves. I participated in township tours, which occurred several times a day and included between two to a dozen people/groups from all over the world (mostly Europe and America).

Tours in Langa

I participated in dozens of tours with (mostly white) foreigners who visited the township as part of their experience in Cape Town. Townships are some of the strongest remnants of South Africa's apartheid era (Booyens, 2010) and therefore have historical value. This contributes to their interest by foreigners. Townships could also be of interest because of the shacks mushroomed throughout the houses, and because of all the sadness (poverty, HIV/AIDS, teen pregnancy, violence etc…) associated with the area. Township tours generally involve taking tourists to areas of poverty to see how residents live (Booyens 2010). I wondered how residents felt during tours in light of this fact. Did their experiences, their popularity as a tourist destination, make them feel marginal or different from the mainstream somehow? Or did it make them feel special?

Having participated in many tours, it seemed to me that residents were used to, if not comfortable with being watched and stared at, and appeared to act normally; living out their daily activities despite the attention. Booyens (2010:275) suggests that township tours should not interfere with local residents, who should be able to live their lives without restriction, particularly as visitors frequently enter residents' living space. Based on my presence with individuals and families during times when tours were not being conducted, it would seem that residents indeed managed to live their lives uninterrupted even under the gaze of visitors. If anything, I noted that they were nicer, or particularly friendly, to tourists who brought gifts for them and to those who looked like they might offer foodstuff or financial reinforcements. Tour guides were obligated to give a small contribution to the families whose homes they entered, usually not more than R50, but this was not always respected. Still, it must do something to the psyche of residents being under such curious gazes so often.

I remember asking Zamile how he thinks residents feel when tourists come from all over the world to look at them and how they live. He answered "this is not a zoo". I wondered where that response came from, why he chose to use the word "zoo". His response did not really answer my question, but he said it with a proud finality as if it was the perfect answer. I wondered what Langa *not* being a zoo had to do with how residents felt at their homes and lifestyles being a tourist attraction. Do the residents ever feel like they *are* part of a zoo? Are not zoo's considered worthy tourist attractions in some places (like the Bronx and San Diego Zoo's)? Schvyens (2002) and Ramchander (2004) cited in Booyens (2010:277, my emphasis) observed that, in fact, "locals are watched and photographed like *animals in a zoo* by visitors…" What makes something, some place or someone worth visiting, staring at, photographing, and asking questions about? What makes someone the Other? What is it like to be on the other end, the end that people want to see? Does this not, contribute to Langa's (and other townships') marginality as a place literally located on the margins of the city, a place people may not see often? I regret not probing further into this aspect and learning more of the residents' views of themselves. About a month into fieldwork, however, I got yet another glimpse of how residents felt about themselves, particularly as residents of a township. This glimpse manifested itself through the significant reactions to a song that made its way into Langa.

Loliwe

In September of 2011, *Loliwe* was a very popular song, at least in Langa, on new singer, Zahara's music album. Actually, her entire album seemed to be a hit in the township but the song 'Loliwe' was referred to most when talking about her. It was almost impossible to walk

through the township without hearing the song playing on someone's house radio, car radio or cell phone, or to hear someone singing the song. Comments of the video on YouTube suggest that 'Loliwe' was a "song of hope" (see *Appendices* #3 for song lyrics). Some residents explained that the singer, Zahara, is from East London and also lives in a township. She got famous by singing at a taxi rank. They also told me that she had a "hard" life. No one elaborated on what they meant by "hard". Residents appeared to feel a particular appreciation toward Zahara's newfound fame as it showed that they too can make it. Perhaps their response to the song demonstrates an otherwise subtle unhappiness living in Langa, subtle because many residents proudly claimed Langa as their home:

> Langa is the most accommodative area […] I can even guarantee it in the whole South Africa [that] Langa is the most accommodative area (Monwabise Interview August 2011)

> This is my home. I'm not going out [from] here […] I'll never leave. I'll die here (Bashu Interview August 2011)

> Langa is the best township. It's good… in tourism. Crime is not that high. [The people here] are friendly to each other and they know when to draw the line… that's how we treat each other […] I cannot move to [another] township 'cause the vibe is in Langa more (Thando Interview February 2012)

Despite contentment in Langa, perhaps some residents secretly aspire to make it big like Zahara and can identify with her particularly as a fellow township resident. Indeed, given the social and financial situations of many residents, they *have* made it and are doing well considering the odds that were apparently already always against them.

Though many residents are undoubtedly poor, I have realized that poverty should not be so readily synonymous with marginality. Poverty and other struggles in the township should instead be regarded as descriptions of social realities of (some) residents that need to be understood outside the concept of marginality (Pearlman, 1976). Though seeking to undo the unfair categorization of Langa as a marginal space, it is still necessary for me to contextualize their existence in greater Cape Town because that is how they have been and continue to be seen. While I might not consider residents marginal by the standards addressed by Pearlman (1976), I *would* consider it a marginal space in that Langa is an under-researched area. The fact that Langa is under-researched actually contributes to its disadvantages as a settlement where lack of scholarly information allows those outside of Langa to continue to believe and perpetuate its myths of marginality.

Since Langa is a remnant of the apartheid system, located on the periphery of the city where black residents were separated from whites (Jurgens & Donaldson, 2012; Ralphs, 2009; Township Renewal Sourcebook, 2009:4; Johannes 2000), it can easily be accepted as "disconnected" (Skuse & Cousins, 2007) from, and ultimately marginal to the rest of Cape Town. My research, however, has shown that Langa residents do not (generally) meet the requirements of a marginal population as stipulated by Pearlman (1976), at least not homogenously, if at all. The ethnographic snapshots presented above seek to show glimpses of Langa residents' social realities. Attempting to understand reality through the eyes of residents, this chapter seeks to understand the meanings that residents give to their daily lives (Bernard, 2006). I would not categorize residents as marginal, but rather as people who are confronted with various marginalities, namely economic and political, this in addition to its geographically marginal location in Cape Town. These, marginalities work to describe some of the social realities that affect their lives but they do not necessarily mean that residents are marginal. Marginality is not caused by poor housing or specific characteristics of an individual or group. Marginality is instead created by personal beliefs against the Other and is often maintained through historical treatment of them by others (Pearlman, 1976).

Just as my research speaks against technological determinism, I seek to challenge what I would call '*geographical*' or '*historical determinism*'. I use *geographical determinism* to suggest that residents inhabiting a particular area will inevitably pick up and maintain certain characteristics associated with the area; that marginal spaces will inevitably produce marginal people. My research has shown that this is not the case. While Langa residents inhabit a geographically marginal space in Cape Town, they are not particularly marginal people. *Historical determinism*, equally suggests that (in this case, bad) characteristics are historically passed down from generation to generation, where deviation from these characteristics is otherwise impossible – even when the historical context has changed, however marginally. This chapter/dissertation challenges beliefs along those lines as well. In other words, these notions suggest that place, space and historical contexts do not (and should not) determine residents behaviors or social hierarchies. Nor should they relegate future generations to 'marginalized populations-in-waiting'. There needs to be recognition of Langa residents (and Africans in general) as a people with agency. They should be seen as social actors, consciously and purposefully driven to control their own lives in ways that meet their (current) individual and collective needs. They are not a passive people, lacking resourcefulness needing guidance from the West (Nicolson, 2008). They are very much in control. That Langa residents live lives that are sometimes incongruent to what is expected of them because of their geographic location or

their inherent disadvantages as blacks in (South) Africa, what Francis Nyamnjoh (2012:4) refers to as "environmental, biological and cultural determinism", is proof enough – as evidenced in this chapter – that their categorical marginalization, expected because of environmental, biological and cultural features, is not inevitable nor is it bounded.

Questioning Langa's Categorical Marginality

Perceptions of Langa as a marginal population likely stem from a variety of "myths" of marginality (Pearlman, 1976). Pearlman's (1976) research on Favelas in Rio de Janeiro reveals that like South African townships, Favelas are, from the outside, considered undesirable, and are usually associated with informality and social disorganization (Township Renewal Sourcebook, 2009; Pearlman, 1976:93). Residents of these spaces are often identified as unemployed, lazy, prone to violence and habitual drug users (Pearlman, 1976). Populations in mainstream Cape Town might have the tendency to believe such things about Langa residents based on personal beliefs and hearsay without having actually explored the reality for themselves. These perceptions might also be based on assumptions of modernization or social change, informed in part by seeing the world in dichotomies: poor/rich, rural/urban, civilized/primitive, for example, where Langa and other townships are (still) considered poor, rural and primitive and therefore marginal. Processes of civilization (Elias, 2000) encompass a range of behaviors and practices that change over time due to past experiences (Bourdieu, 1990). Langa residents' real or imagined behaviors are often considered less acceptable in relation to mainstream populations, distinguishing them from (perceived) dominant classes. This ultimately devalues their positions of power and social hierarchy (Bourdieu, 1984) in mainstream Cape Town.

Pearlman (1976:242) suggests that the accuracy of the "myths" of marginality can be assessed through the behavior of populations considered marginal. Living in Langa, I personally witnessed the behavior of many residents, as the above snapshots show. I was surrounded by some of the most socially organized, non-violent, self-determined and hardworking people that I have ever met, directly contradicting some of the negative attributes associated with marginal populations. One of the things I heard often about Langa was how dangerous it was. This was a warning presented to me by both outsiders (those who do not live in Langa) *and* Langa residents. The owner of the cell phone repair container in Langa, a Nigerian, stated boldly that "this place (Langa) is not good. It's very dangerous. It is the crime capital of the world" (Henry Interview March 2012). This statement was made after he explained that his car, parked in Langa at the time, was broken into. Unfortunately the thief (or thieves) ran off with seven of his customers' phones that were being held for maintenance in his car. Though I heard stories from residents

about violent acts committed against them in the township, I did not experience any personal violence (however, I did feel violated on occasion when, though non-physical, food and money were taken from me without my permission from members of my host family). Based on my experience, I would not consider Langa a particularly dangerous space. In an effort to preserve a more accurate reputation of the township, Zamile explained:

> They have to do away with the negative images. [Some] photographs present false images of the township. They [the photographs] are taken at the wrong time: at 10:00 at night when it's dark and violent crime[s] are more likely to occur. They should take pictures during the day... Anywhere looks dangerous at night (Zamile Pers. Comm. February 2012).

Violence, often associated with marginality, was not an essential part of everyday life in Langa during fieldwork. Everyday cleanliness, on the other hand, was. While not as time-consuming as laundry, stay-at-home residents spent lots of time cleaning the general areas in and around their home. I did witness littering by some residents despite the fact that rubbish bins were dispersed throughout the area. When questioning some about why they littered, some suggested that it did not matter where the refuse went. One Angolan resident answered "That's how we do in Africa". This type of behavior might indeed seem socially backward to those outside the township who regard cleanliness as socially appropriate. However, residents in general were diligent about maintaining the cleanliness of their immediate property and could often be seen cleaning in front of their homes. Most residents woke up early in the morning to prepare their children for school while at the same time preparing themselves for work. They lived very structured lives, at least during the week. The weekends were more relaxed. Activities were enjoyed and chores were ignored with the exception of laundry, as some residents could only do theirs during the weekend. Most employed residents worked hard and worked every day. At the time of fieldwork, some were pursuing second jobs to supplement their income. Many residents work outside the township in addition to visiting friends that live outside the township and shop in department stores located elsewhere. Langa residents are extremely mobile. They are not trapped or confined to Langa, despite the fact that public transport to and from the township can be time consuming.

Challenging the Myth

The above snapshots are intended to subtly undermine Langa's presumed marginality. These snapshots reveal Langa residents as a socially organized population. I refer to the term 'socially organized' in contrast to what Pearlman (1976) describes as one of the many myths of marginality: that marginalized populations are socially *dis*organized. My observations did not

reveal a population whose lives were particularly unique, observations that would be noted *only* in a township setting. Consequently, one might conclude that, in general, their lifestyle could be cut and pasted to describe populations not considered marginal. My observations of Langa during fieldwork led me to wonder exactly whom Langa residents – the residents, not the physical township or its geographic location – are being compared to when considered marginal. Some behaviors in Langa may appear unique – such as residents' displaying of mobile phones for the sake of appeasing their own (and others') desires to 'fit the mold' (see *Chapter 4*), and excessive washing of clothes. However, these behaviors are not attributed to living in Langa or being black (South) Africans. The activities that govern residents' lives are necessary for 'getting by' in the local context of this township. The social etiquette followed by (some) residents is acceptable within Langa and facilitates the fluidity of Langa's social community. It is not uncommon for people who live outside of townships to expect particular behaviors from those who do. Townships, generally erected within the margins of a given country, have the tendency to make township residents appear marginal even when this may not the case.

Conclusion

This chapter attempts to portray glimpses of everyday life in Langa and the complexity of marginality in the township. Using my own reactions, prejudices and interpretations towards different activities and experiences in the field, the chapter sought the use of ethnographic data to represent a space and people who live ordinary, routine lives – not at all 'backwards' as some might expect. Some of my reactions were based on stereotypical views of townships and township residents. Living among them helped clarify some of my misconceptions. This dissertation is, among other things, intended to facilitate the clarification of commonly held beliefs around Langa Township.

This chapter has addressed various struggles that inevitably work to marginalize Langa Township in certain aspects, in relation to mainstream Cape Town. Here, I ultimately suggest that residents may unfairly be relegated to such a categorization – particularly as this relegation appears general and finite. The next chapter will contribute to this argument, suggesting that residents' use of ICTs detracts from their assumed marginality. The next chapter addresses the first of my four research questions. It explores if and how ICTs relate to the development of marginal mobile populations in South Africa, in this case Langa. I explore residents' use of ICTs in relation to their development as a mobile population.

CHAPTER 4

ICTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGA RESIDENTS: A 'MARGINAL' MOBILE POPULATION

Introduction

This chapter addresses if and how South African migrants and African immigrants living in South African townships and informal settlements, in this case Langa, appropriate the limited technologies within reach in creative ways towards negotiating and navigating the various marginalities that govern their lives. Building on the supposed link between the adoption of ICTs and development for various peoples, I explore the ways that ICTs have facilitated the development of Langa Township. I rely on the idea that Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICTD) can enable opportunities for human progress (Rangaswamy & Cutrell, 2012), particularly the way residents use their phones along with other factors that have facilitated development. In light of questions raised around Langa's perceived marginality addressed in the previous chapter, this chapter proposes to answer the following question: *To what extent and in what ways do ICTs relate to the development of the marginal (mobile) populations in South Africa?* I continue to challenge Langa's categorical marginality through my data, which will show that the use of new communication technologies demarginalizes Langa from mainstream Cape Town.

The chapter will show that mobile phones allow residents to negotiate their marginalities both inside and outside of the township, as they promote social statutes, allude to economic strength (Tazanu, 2012), and liken residents to those in mainstream Cape Town who own the same phones. Following ideas of marginality presented in chapter 3, particularly by Mizruchi (1983) and Pearlman's (1976), I, draw on Mark Orbe's (1998) 'co-cultural theory' to address the a marginal group within Langa, a group of residents demarcated from the others by the kind of mobile phones that they own.

Cell Phones and Public Phone Containers in Langa

While there are only two main cell phone repair shops in Langa, there were several public phone containers available during fieldwork owned by the biggest networks including Vodacom, MTN and Cell C, along with several Telkom phone booths. While MTN was the most dominant as far as appearances were concerned in their bold, yellow signature, most residents complained that MTN was the most expensive, costing more money per minute. Cell C was preferred by some residents, as conversations between Cell C network users was free, at the time

of fieldwork. It was Vodacom that was favored by most residents because of the variety of benefits offered by the network, like converting airtime to SMS bundles. The phone containers opened to the public at 8:00am and were most in use during the morning hours, usually by women but not completely void of men. In general, however, the public phone containers were often vacant while the cell phone repair shops served many customers, particularly at the end of the month when employed residents were paid. I marveled at how many residents had problems with their phones as the amount of customers (potentially) accounted for that many cell phone issues needing to be addressed. This observation also suggested that most residents owned mobile phones.

I later observed that Nokia brand phones were most popular though many residents aspired to own a BlackBerry, particularly for the BBM (BlackBerry Messenger) function, a service that allows BlackBerry owners to communicate with each other in real time sending messages: texts, pictures, audio-recordings, and more free of charge[8]. Not only did it appear that most residents relied on mobile phones as their primary communication source, but it also appeared that they had the monies to service them, when necessary, as evidenced by the traffic in the repair shops. Though some residents used public phones, none of them appeared to (predominantly) rely on them, even though it was said that they were "cheaper" than mobile phones. One resident explained:

> I would say that they're [the public phone containers] cheaper because you put the money in, you talk and when the money finishes it just stops and yet with your cell phone you would speak more than 20 minutes. You cannot see how much [sic] minutes you have taken. So it's a little bit cheaper because… it gives you time (Sibuli Interview October 2011)

This explanation was shared by several residents. I did not understand how this explained public phones as a cheaper alternative to mobile phones. With mobile phones, as is the case with public phones, when your airtime runs out the call is terminated, after being warned in advance by an animated voice prompting. Whether the "money finishes" on a public phone call or the airtime runs out on a mobile phone, the call will end. This led me to believe that some residents did not understand the cost implications as far as the cheapest means of communication. In contrast to the popular view that public phones were better, one resident had this to say when I asked if she preferred public phones or mobile phones:

> It doesn't have the same effect (laughs). Then I'll be using my money at the phone booth and standing there. No. The convenience [of the mobile phone], I think it's just the convenience of

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[8] (http://za.blackberry.com/bbm.html).

having that constant communication and immediate response [from anywhere] (Thandi Interview April 2012)

For Thandi, and countless other mobile phone users, the convenience and speed of the mobile phone appear to have the desired 'effect' for their communication needs. In any case, mobile phones were used widely and frequently throughout the township by both young and old residents alike, suggesting an overwhelming reliance on this technology. Though some residents, namely older residents, met the introduction and adaptation of the mobile phone with (some) reluctance (see *Chapter 5*), most seemed to take it in their stride. Regarding their study on the domestication of the mobile phone in Burkina Faso, Hahn and Kibora (2008:103) suggests that "the mobile phone found its place in this society without causing any major upheaval in existing cultural patterns; as if they were already expecting it". Based on observations of mobile phone use in Langa, I would be inclined to agree, as residents' recollections of and current uses of their phones suggest easy integration (see also *Chapter 5*). The mobile phone provides greater accessibility to opportunities and solutions to problems that were already present (see Horst & Miller, 2006 and Miller & Slater, 2000) among Langa residents.

Residents' general and unique use of the device speaks to their desires to look after their well-being. They are not blindly accepting of this technology. Below I present some practical uses of the mobile phone for Langa residents, followed by the significance of the device in the local context of the notion of *Ubuntu*. I then describe how residents benefit from mobile phones beyond practical uses, when lack of airtime and electricity to charge one's phone renders it otherwise, impractical. These uses suggest that Langa, as are other communities, are not passive beneficiaries to this technology. They have shown the capacity to employ and appropriate mobile phones for their own needs. Studies emphasizing how societies develop and use their technologies are crucial for decentralizing the devices in techno-social relationships. Not only should more attention be paid to society, but there needs to be a mutual understanding of technology and society (Chandler, 2012), particularly in the context of technological determinism.

Some Practical Uses of ICTs in Langa

In both developed and developing countries, ICTs, particularly the mobile phone, are often the primary drivers of business. Where fully developed and established infrastructure may be lacking, mobile phones, for example, are currently used in a variety of ways for education, healthcare, cash transfers and literally to save lives (Toure, 2013; Castells et al., 2007 see also

below). In particularly remote, rural and low-income areas like Langa, the practical uses of mobile phone communication are abundant. Personal safety has been one of the main factors behind the diffusion of mobile technology. For example, in my attempts to maintain my jogging routine during fieldwork, many residents suggested that running, a fairly absent activity in the township, was dangerous, especially because I ran alone. My host brother suggested that I run with my cell phone so that I could call him (or another family member) for help if I was ever in trouble. Though I did run with an iPod for musical company, running with a cell phone – which would hardly be inconspicuous in my fitted running tights – could draw unwanted attention as someone might try to steal my phone. Residents suggested, however, that running with my cell phone would secure my safety. Indeed, in addition to the uses of mobile technology for security, mobile phones can literally "now mean the difference between life and death" (Castells et al., 2007:98), as they have the potential to help individuals survive emergencies and natural disasters by calling for assistance, coordinating relief efforts and contacting hospitals in case of emergency (Toure, 2013; Chillomo & Ngulube, 2011). I am reminded of a particular incident that happened during fieldwork in which the mobile phone played a crucial role among residents while aiding a two year old girl who was hit by a car.

The Accident

One restless Friday evening I was watching television in my home. There was not much else to do and I debated whether to continue watching television or turning it off to pass the time with an equally mindless activity. Still deciding whether to turn the television off, I heard a thump. It was not loud but it caught my attention enough to make me look out the front door. Soon after, I saw a crowd begin to form on the other side of the street. I ran out of the house in time to see a woman pick up a little girl wearing a pink jacket from the street. What I saw was horrible. The little girl's face seemed to be bleeding from everywhere but mostly from her nose. She had been hit by a car. Finding it hard to take my eyes off the girl, I finally looked up and saw that a mob of residents had literally jumped on and stood in front of the car that hit this little girl (though, I don't think the driver intended to hit and run). Residents opened the driver's – a young man – car doors and demanded answers.

I ran into the house to get Sibuli, my host mother at the time, who was cooking in the kitchen. I had not yet begun crying but I could not speak clearly. I yelled "Sibuli, Sibuli". "What is it?" She yelled hearing the panic in my voice. I said: "she was hit, she was hit, oh my God, oh my God, oh my God, I think she's dead". 62-year old Sibuli ran out of the house as if she were 30-years younger than that. She told me to stay inside. The residents were like worker ants: some

women ran to the mother with water and showered her with hugs, others came to the aid of the little girl taking her off the ground, organizing who would drive her to the hospital (Sibuli offered her car and keys, very thoughtful), men and women interrogated the badly shaken driver of the white car that hit her, cell phones were being used and offered to call the police and ambulance. Other adults and older youth encouraged the younger children to get out of the streets. Overall there was a general atmosphere of "this is one of our own, what can we do to help?" (Three weeks after the incident I learned that the young girl was ok with the exception of some permanent scarring that could be seen on her face).

In all the madness, there was a sense of urgency throughout that area of the township and residents assumed roles as if they had practiced in advance. Even the younger children, in their obedience to clear the streets and not interfere with the actions of their parents and older children, seemed rehearsed and things went smoothly enough. In this situation, the use of the cell phone was clearly significant in that it was used to call the ambulance and contact direct family members and friends of the victim. The fact that cell phones are generally carried at the ready made it easier and quicker to call for help, as residents could literally call from where they stood. Residents did not have to run home to a landline or to another part of the township to access a public phone, which might then have required an additional purchase of a calling card. Furthermore, I noted residents' willingness to share phones and airtime. In a setting where airtime is a luxury that many residents struggle to obtain, it was notable how generous residents were. They willingly spent the last of their airtime to aid the victim (though others used the opportunity to call people elsewhere to tell them what happened. The telling of this tale to others, like gossip, was worthy enough to finish one's airtime). Acknowledging that the gravity of the situation demanded nothing less than this type of generosity from residents, I marveled at how coordinated everyone seemed. The sharing of mobile phones and airtime was noteworthy.

The Communal Sharing of Mobile Phones in Langa

In Langa, mobile phones are often used and shared on the basis of *Ubuntu* (Carmody, 2010). Africa's cultural values of society and interconnectedness make accessing new communication technologies possible without having to be personally connected. In West Africa, it is not unusual for "a single individual to be connected for whole groups and communities to benefit (Tazanu, 2012; Nyamnjoh, 2004:53). In Langa, I noted that most residents had their own mobile phones, therefore making it unnecessary to share phones in this way. However, *Ubuntu* and the interconnectedness of the community came into play in the use and sharing of airtime. When a resident could not access one of the benefits of the 'Please Call

Me' function (see *Chapter 1*), particularly if the intended recipient was also lacking airtime, another resident would allow them to use their phone, ultimately using their airtime, often free of charge, with the unspoken expectation that the favor would one day be returned.

As Mauss (1954:*vi*) suggests in *The Gift*, being available for your neighbor this way allows for the maintenance of the giving and receiving cycle. "… if one belongs to others and not to oneself, one expresses one's attachment by subordinating one's own ambitions to the common interest". As with food and other essential items that can be borrowed in Langa, the sharing of airtime fulfills an obligation to accept goods as well as the obligation to return the favor. Refusing to share airtime when asked is "to refuse to give… is like refusing to accept… it is a refusal of friendship". As Mauss suggests, and as is common in Langa, sharing gifts among residents might seem to be voluntary, but is in fact an obligatory give and take practice. The accompanying behavior of receiving airtime, for example, is a "…formal pretense and social deception, while the transaction itself is based on obligation and economic self-interest" (Mauss, 1954:1, 11).

I too was included in these reciprocal arrangements during fieldwork. Though it was sometimes hard not to feel like I was being used when items were regularly requested from me, understanding Mauss's theory in *The Gift* helped my effort to interpret this treatment and the feelings I harbored as a result. Understanding the give-and-take obligations, I acknowledged that the reception of my presence in the field was perhaps the greatest gift that residents could have given me. Without their acceptance, enabling me to live there and conduct research, this dissertation would have been impossible. Their acceptance of my presence and willingness to be studied and questioned was a precious gift, albeit with the expectation that my reciprocation would be presented in monetary, intimate, material fashion and sometimes just providing a listening ear as some felt they could confide in me. The moment they accepted me (unbeknownst to me) my obligations to them were set. My obligations to provide for residents, particularly in light of their constant reference to *Ubuntu*, made me feel used and vulnerable. I often wondered if my presence in the field, my interactions with them for academic research made *them* feel used and vulnerable too.

Participating in these reciprocal relationships was a learning experience which taught me that far from the docile, demure and, easily contented individuals that I expected to find, many residents were in fact, bold, aggressive and sometimes manipulative, knowing how to get what they wanted or needed. They were not restricted by the pride and respect that would have prevented me from asking for half the things they asked of me. Again I note that I base their 'greed' and 'unashamed begging' as taboos based on my own upbringing, which though clearly

differs from theirs, does not make one right or one wrong. As I expected would occur at some point during fieldwork, the unconscious part of my thoughts and actions caused me to adversely react to these types of behaviors, as I did not always find them reasonable or common-sensical (Bourdieu, 1990). Every society has its own special habits and customs which should be viewed as "techniques and work[s] of collective and individual practical reason…" (Mauss, 1962:457-458). I embraced these habits and aspects of residents' lives, obliging as often as I could, within reason, to many requests, not least of which was airtime. With or without sufficient airtime, however, mobile phones still served a significant purpose for residents.

Showing Off: Keeping Mobile Phones Visible

During fieldwork, I noted that many residents had fancy Smartphones but rarely had airtime, sometimes making the sharing and receiving aspect of this commodity impossible. It was of interest to me, how then, they used their phones – besides the extensive use of the 'Please Call Me' function – when they could not be used for 'practical' means of communication. In other words, when the mobile phone is nothing more than a sterile object, a "neutral and subservient" tool (Leaning, 2005), how did it benefit residents as owners and users? It quickly became apparent that simply owning a ('quality' – see *below*) mobile phone was enough to significantly benefit the owner. Residents did not wear their phones as accessories on their bodies, nor was it necessary for their phone to match their wardrobe, as Horst & Miller (2006) found was a goal among low-income cell phone owners in Jamaica. While mobile phones were indeed physical icons for residents, their displays were not used towards "fashion and design" (Katz & Sugiyama, 2005:63) the way that I observed hair wigs and designer bags (see *Chapter 6*), for example, were used.

I felt that there were often subliminal messages being sent around during my stay in Langa such as: "look at my phone" or "my phone is nicer than yours". Sometimes a resident would deliberately walk far enough away from their phone so that a friend would be compelled to bring it to them or call out to them. Other times, the phone was left unattended and it was not uncommon for residents to answer neglected mobile phones on behalf of their owner. New mobile phones were particularly conspicuous, as residents often deliberately left the clear film on the screen to boast of its newness. Consequently, it could be assumed that residents who did not display their phones so openly had less desirable ones. Making it necessary for someone to bring your phone to you or answer it on your behalf was an easy way to assure that your phone was noticed, specifically that it belonged to *you*. And by leaving it around carelessly, it suggested that it would not be financially burdensome for you to replace it should it be stolen,

though this was not really the case. Residents' visual display of their phones, particularly those with expensive phones, reinforced the belief that they had money. Though no one would directly, or verbally, compare their phone to someone else's, there was competition with regards to who owned the nicer/better phone. For example, one resident explained:

> You know… [for] some people it's a status symbol. Yeah, I have a Blackberry so therefore I'm cool. I think it… started happening when you see people who, I'll… call them the elite where they have these big phones and they communicate. Then it starts being a trend and then it goes down, everyone… if you're seen with a Nokia… you're the coolest person. You're hip. [You get] that kind of ego, respect (Thandi Interview April 2012)

Tazanu (2012:144-148) argues that the display of success by visiting and returning migrants in Urban Cameroon reinforces the belief by non-migrants that they have been successful during their time abroad. Through material possessions, like cars bearing foreign number plates, returning migrants revealed their economic strength. The conscious effort made by some Langa residents to keep their phones visible also seeks to reveal an economic strength. The fact that this economic strength is accepted within the township, and is *not* based on one resident's success abroad over an immobile resident, suggests that the implications of economic strength are based solely on the price, brand, and make of the phone in addition to its functions. Though residents did not use their mobile phones homogenously, it appeared that phones deemed worthy enough to implicate economic strength were homogenously accepted by residents. A particularly nice phone implies that its owner must be particularly wealthy (wealthy enough to afford *that* phone, anyway), even if reality proves otherwise. In this regard, the mobile phone's control over residents is quite dominant. Residents have allowed mobile phones to dictate their social/financial statuses in the township. Mobile phones have manipulated ideas of social and economic success. Residents are compelled to purchase specific phones in order to be counted as financially stable (see also "Mobile Phones as a Rite-of-Passage" I below for the implications of mobile phones in social inclusion and exclusion among residents.) While the cost implications may be high, residents have apparently embraced this aspect of their techno-social relationships, as it offers a visual means of alluding to economic strength.

One might conclude that if residents own expensive phones, then there is no allusion: they do have the financial means of purchasing the phone. However, some residents purchase these phones at the expense of other necessities, namely food, and once the phone is acquired they rarely have the financial means of purchasing airtime to use their phone. Others purchase phones on lay-bye where they commit to paying a small sum over a period of time before finally acquiring the phone. The economic strength that residents appear to aspire to suggests that they

have the financial means of securing all of their necessities and can *still* purchase an expensive phone. Mobile phones serve as a status symbol (Carter & Gilovich, 2012; Horst & Miller, 2006) for many residents in low-income areas such as Langa and also contribute to understanding the flexible identities of residents.

In the previous chapter, I referred to some of the residents' flexible identities. The maneuver between the content and capable resident and the helpless and needy resident were identities that some residents mastered depending on the context. Though the latter identity may be expected because of the poverty that is so rife throughout townships, the former could be used to describe many of the residents that I came in contact with. Some residents, however, used the identity that was most expected of them as a means to an end; to get food and other material items from outsider. In this sense, then, some residents find their lower and marginal statuses, within greater Cape Town, beneficial. They rely on the (sometimes) false presumptions of marginality by others to acquire goods. However, marginality, within Langa, is not homogenous or straightforward. And though economic and political disadvantages may work to challenge residents' everyday lives, at least in relation to those in mainstream Cape Town, I also witnessed various challenges within the township that facilitate the creation of marginal populations within the 'margins'. This marginal population is unique in that it stems from the possession (or lack thereof) of a certain kind of mobile phone.

Revealing the Margins within the "Margins"

Orbe's (1998) "Co-cultural Theory", founded on research intended to explore inextricable links between culture, power and communication, seeks to investigate the various ways that people negotiate and navigate social positions that render them outside the center of power (Orbe, 2005). Orbe uses the term 'co-culture' to signify the co-existence of multiple groups within a pre-determined social hierarchy (Orbe, 1998:2). Drawing on Orbe's theory, Ramirez-Sanchez (2008) conducted a study on African American punks – known as Afro Punks – in America. As the punk scene usually consists of white Americans, Ramirez-Sanchez drew on co-cultural theory's unique model of viewing the world "to the extent possible from the perspective of the other" (Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008:90). By virtue of being punks, white Americans who conform to the punk lifestyle (most visible through their wardrobes) are already marginalized as punk culture is generally not popular.

Afro-punks, as members of the punk culture, then, wear another layer of marginality in this already marginal culture because they are black. Ramirez-Sanchez revealed that Afro Punks

are often alienated. They face double marginalization: being marginalized within a predominantly white punk culture and enduring stigmatization from their own communities who may not accept their punk lifestyle. Afro Punks, Ramirez-Sanchez (2008:101) tells us, sometimes perform what is called "mirroring". They "assimilate" traits and characteristics of the dominant culture (the white punks) in order to 'erase' or make less visible their co-cultural (marginal) belonging.

In my own research, I had the opportunity to observe co-cultures in Langa. Here, I present one marginal group to help demonstrate the complexities of marginality for residents.

A Type of Marginality in Langa: On *Not* Having a "Quality" Phone

Pearlman (1976:96), states that the term marginality is used to describe "individual deviants". As marginality implies the lack of participation in the mainstream, an individual deviant might emerge as a "passive dropout" in society. In Langa, my observations of residents who did not own a specific type of mobile phone, and their failure to meet the expectations, could be used to categorize them as individual deviants. Such was the desire for most residents to conform to such expectations that they sometimes went without food and other necessities to purchase expensive and popular phones and to (attempt to) regulate airtime. Sithole (2004) and Gillwald et al. (2005) both cited in Tlabela et al. (2007) found evidence that low-income mobile phone owners were using phones that they could barely afford, using money that should be allocated to other forms of household expenses (I acknowledge that it could be problematic to suggest what low-income owners *should* spend money on). They observed that poor mobile phone users are sometimes prepared to sacrifice food for airtime because they view mobile phones as essential to their survival. In this regard, the above authors make a valid point and contribution to my research as, during fieldwork, I observed that the choice between food and airtime was often a difficult choice for some residents, though decisions often favored the purchase of airtime.

In general, residents were willing to spend a great deal on their cell phones. Some spent a couple hundred to a few thousand rands on their Samsung Galaxies and BlackBerries, for example. On one occasion I visited a resident who lived in a shack. Being courteous as most residents are she opened her refrigerator to offer me something to eat. Inside she had nothing but a packet of opened chocolate biscuits and a 1.5 liter of what looked like guava juice. I remember noting that she had a very nice phone – one of the new large and thin Samsungs encased in a personalized pink cover. Some residents, like her, rarely had much food in their homes and were

not above asking others for food or money to buy food. She, again, like many residents, was perpetually short of airtime and so their phones, though Smart and popular were not always practically useful. They could not make calls or send messages or browse the Internet, yet they seemed content. My first phone, the one I used in the beginning of fieldwork was a small R400 Samsung with very few functions. Residents who noticed my phone would compare mine to theirs and remark that "that is not a phone" or they would ask "why don't you get a better phone".

Some would criticize the fact that I had so few functions. I often thought that I was in a better position than they were because my phone was generally sufficiently equipped with airtime giving me the option of *actually making* a phone call. I never expressed these thoughts aloud for fear that I would appear disrespectful or patronizing. For me, sustaining my cell phone with airtime and ensuring that it was sufficiently charged at all times was crucial so that I could make a call whenever necessary. It was not enough to have a phone that would make me "available and reachable" (Tazanu, 2012) to others. I wanted to be able to contact others too; to have some sort of control over my communication habits, beyond accepting or rejecting an incoming call. I needed to ensure communication with others on my own terms and my cell phone did this for me. Having sufficient airtime and having enough electricity to charge phones when necessary, for some residents, seemed secondary to actually owing a phone. In this regard then, the purpose of owning a mobile phone for maintaining constant communication between friends and family across various locations, for Langa residents, though significant (see *Chapter 5*), is not particularly essential. What is essential is having a −the right kind of − phone.

Here, we begin to see the flexibility of the mobile phone in the hands of residents. Ensuring ownership of an expensive and therefore desirable phone makes it a matter of consumption. Its role, then, simply enhances its owner to an elevated economic standing in the township. Alternatively, as shown above under the practical uses of the mobile phone for residents (p. 84; see also *Chapter 5* for uses of mobile phone to facilitate communication despite long distance), the phone is, at other times, used as a tool to ensure a variety of safe and practical uses. The use of the device by residents in varying contexts determines the phone's identity, making its flexibility highly dependent on the user.

The mobile phone, for some residents, was not a means-to-an-end. It *was* an end on its own. Residents have learned the social value and significance of the mobile phone. As a socially acceptable device capable of mitigating or exacerbating social exclusion for residents, the mobile phone has affected the relationship between residents' behaviors and social organization, power or hierarchy, as a psychical process of civilization (Elias, 2000) in the township. As

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mobile phones are relatively new in South Africa, it is fair to say that many residents engage in some behaviors that may have previously been unnecessary. Some residents explained that landline phones, for example, when first introduced, were a technology of status that could be drawn upon for similar desires (see also *Chapter 5*). Many residents appeared to have conformed to behaviors of shopping for expensive phones and other objects that, upon visual acknowledgment by other residents, distinguishes the haves and the have-nots, implicates 'civilized' expressions of one's inner self, and influences social positions within the township.

Mobile phones are often used as personal technologies and can therefore be viewed as very intimate by their users (Hanson, 2007). Given this fact, one can see why residents are willing to go to large extents to own an 'acceptable' (acceptable both within and outside the township) mobile phone, which did not go unnoticed. Instead of residents shopping within their means, buying cheaper phones that would allow more financial flexibility, not to mention a rise in their potential means for practical use of their phones to make calls more frequently, they want to be part of what I call the "technology mainstream". They want to belong to the population of Langa and elsewhere whose phones are coveted by those with less desirable phones.

Those belonging to the population with less desirable phones are (or were at the time of my research) the minority, ultimately making them a marginal group within a wider population that is considered marginal for other reasons. Being part of the technology mainstream provides the potential to be part of the majority in both Langa and in Cape Town, where, as in many places, keeping abreast of the latest trends including fashion and technology are goals that can increase 'belonging' in any group. Warnier (2006) states that technology is often used to negotiate physical and social boundaries. Mobile phones, as extensions of residents' bodies, allow residents to maintain an absent-presence (Lamoureaux, 2011), when so desired, communicating across locations where physical, face-to-face, interaction may be limited. ICTs are used to mitigate distance, particularly for mobile bodies (see also *Chapter 5)*. Similarly, the mobile phone is used by residents to negotiate their social boundaries within the township, allowing residents to surpass others in certain aspects of life in the township and belong to the technological mainstream: the majority.

For Langa residents, fancy and expensive mobile phones are what Horst & Miller refer to as the "great equalizer" (2006:11). Residents' phones send subliminal messages of those belonging to mainstream Cape Town. They say, for example, 'I may live in a shack or the township, I may not have a car or a house as nice as yours but I *do* have a nice phone (I might even have the same phone as you!)'. In other words, whatever real or imagined financial

circumstances may cause outsiders belonging to mainstream Cape Town to feel that Langa residents are economically marginal has the potential to be challenged with ownership of a (certain type of) mobile phone. In this way, mobile phones relate to the development of 'marginal' mobile communities in that they establish a common denominator between two groups – the haves and the have not's – that might otherwise not exist. Furthermore, mobile phones as "great equalizers" can essentially work towards the de-marginalization of the community, particularly as these residents, as Africans, have until recently been thought to be technologically marginal to the rest of the world. This common denominator (similar mobile phones) facilitates the social (and economic – see *Chapter 6*) development of this communities, demonstrating their attention to style and mastery of technology, ultimately eliminating their perceived marginality, at least technologically. In Langa, the right type of mobile phone speaks louder than actions for anyone hoping to gain acceptance in some of the social aspects of the township. Mobile phones act as a kind of initiation or a rites-of-passage or a "passage rite" (Lorente, 2002:8 in Nurullah, 2009:19) for social inclusion in some spheres of life in Langa.

The Mobile Phone as a Rite-Of-Passage in Langa

Mobile phones serve as "tangible and conspicuous proof of membership in the 'globalized world', distinguishing those who *live* from those who merely *survive*" (Archambault, 2012:403 my emphasis). Mobile phones are said to have "changed the perception and ideas of ordinary people in Africa" (de Bruijn et al., 2013:4). In Langa, it appeared that mobile phones are more than a communication alternative to many residents. The mobile phone serves as a status symbol regardless of the type of home (a shack or a house) one lives in; another material possession that has the ability to upgrade or demote social status in Langa. The mobile phone could be said to distinguish those who live from those who merely survive in Langa – those who live versus those who *really live*, meaning they live to the fullest, which often means splurging money on expensive mobile phones. Those with 'quality' (see Monwabise's comment below) mobile phones challenged the perception of ordinary township dwellers as poverty stricken individuals, financially incapable of acquiring such material possessions. That cell phones can make or break one's status in the township reveals the emotional connection and power that the phone has over some residents, a form of emotional control that residents may not even be aware of. This contributes to an unhealthy aspect of techno-social relationships, where one's being essentially rests on an otherwise inanimate object that only recently became available.

Mobile phones, for many residents, offered a rite-of-passage into qualifying social membership within the township. Tanja Bosch's (2009:193) study of the use of Facebook among

UCT students (and lecturers) for the purposes of teaching and learning shares that while students do not use online social networking tools homogenously, students perceive Facebook as a rite-of-passage. She claims that many first year students at UCT immediately joined the social networking giant once coming to campus. Most students used Facebook for social networking, seeking support from peers, community building on campus and student activism. In this case, Facebook served to facilitate the making of micro-communities for which students could link up with other students who took the same classes, shared similar interests and engaged in similar activities. As a rite-of-passage, Facebook secured social membership among students who benefited from social and academic support from peers. In Langa, the mobile phone, as a rite-of-passage, also facilitated the making of a micro-community within the township. This micro-community helps to establish Langa's social hierarchy. As societies are hierarchically structured, different hierarchical positions create power relations that (sometimes inconsistently) privilege certain groups while simultaneously marginalizing others (Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008; Orbe, 1998).

During fieldwork, it seemed that those from other African countries would always be considered outsiders or different, even if their length of stay or other attribute decreases the extent of their "outsiderness". However, if being from another country, in Langa, makes you different, being from another country *and* not having a 'quality' mobile phone makes you *really* different. For example, the cheap Samsung phone that I used at the start of fieldwork further distinguished me from residents. When I brought my Smartphone, a Nokia E63, just weeks into fieldwork, my status changed. I was the "it" girl. I was popular. When hanging out with residents, my new phone was the topic of conversation for several days even though other residents still had phones that were "better" than mine. Still, it seemed that my social status had been promoted in the eyes of the township. Similarly, other 'outsiders' or those considered different like myself, I noted, were often included in social gatherings even when they had nothing to offer (verbally or physically) apart from letting others peruse through their phone.

During an interview, conducted during a slow day at Guga's Thebe, Langa's Visitors Center, Mowabise aggressively spoke about the need to have a phone of "quality":

> They, [residents], are expecting you to have a quality phone. [If you have a poor or bad phone] and you leave it [lying around] here, people might say – (cutting himself off with a new thought) even if you left it in a taxi they will say 'hello, you [left your phone] (laughing). They [won't] grab it (Monwabise Interview August 2011)

Having a quality phone in Langa is not just necessary to be part of the "in-crowd", but it also wards off potential dangers from muggers seeking to steal nice and expensive phones.

> …if it's not a quality phone they don't want it…once you show them [the muggers, they will say] 'Why do you have this phone? Why don't you buy a better phone? They'll take your… phone [and] shove it up your bum and then they just leave you (Monwabise Interview August 2011)

Ironic though it may seem it is considered an insult if one's phone is 'thrown back' by a mugger, indicating that the phone was not worthy enough to steal. When comparing stories of being mugged, listening residents would ask "did they take your phone?" not necessarily out of preparation to sympathize with the story-teller, but to determine the (general) type of phone they must have had if it was not already known. Admitting that one's phone was "thrown back at them" was to admit that you did not own a 'quality' phone. I heard several stories from residents about being mugged, some of whom knew or lived near their attackers. Several of them will always be reminded of their attacks, as they were left with permanent scars and bruising when they put up a fight. Brinkman et al. (2009) and Horst & Miller (2006) address how the introduction of mobile technologies has facilitated crime. Indeed, Langa residents confessed to an increase in crime as mobile phones became more desirable.

Many residents owned at least two phones so that one would be appealing enough to a potential mugger to avoid being further assaulted. Having two phones also secured availability, as they would still have another phone to communicate (when communication was desired) should (the nice) one be stolen. A few, however, were so traumatized by the experience of being robbed of their expensive phones that they vowed never to pay for a 'quality' phone again. However, residents who did not (or no longer) conform to buying 'quality' phones were in jeopardy of decreasing their social standing. They had not yet secured their rite-of-passage into various stages of social inclusion in Langa, or perhaps they did and it was stripped from them when their phone was lost or stolen.

It was also apparent that mobile phones provide further social sustenance to residents by building a bridge, however thin, between them and those outside of Langa. This bridge allows populations like that of Langa to cross over, if only hypothetically, to the other side. Sharing similar phones to those outside the township could suggest that residents are socially and economically compatible with those in mainstream Cape Town. I admit my assumption, based on my under-developed views of the township, that most residents would be too poor to own a mobile phone. Upon entering the field, I noted that not only did most own multiple phones but that they owned BlackBerries, Samsung Galaxies and Nokias. I remember thinking 'they have these phones just like everyone else'. I guess I expected that any mobile phones visible in the township would be cheap and otherwise unimpressive, like my cheap Samsung. Sharing observations of the expensive phones owned throughout the township with friends and

schoolmates, I could see that the revelation also took some of them by surprise as, apparently, one would not immediately conclude that township residents could or would be in possession of such phones, particularly because of expectations of their extreme poverty.

I have shown that mobile phones help residents build and cross social (and sometimes economic) bridges with those inside and outside of Langa, facilitating the merging of individuals and groups. 'Quality' phones allow those who might have been socially excluded, in the margins of the township, to fit in and be included. This reality shows the role of ICTs in the demarginalization of residents both inside and outside of Langa. James and Versteeg (2007) suggest that in order to assess the role of mobile telephony in development, one should collect data on how many people actually *use* a mobile phone rather than just *owning* one. I admit that this point has relevance particularly in an African context where phone sharing has meant that many people can make use of one phone (with each user inputting their own SIM-card upon use, Nyamnjoh, 2004) so long as one owner is willing to share their phone. However, my research has shown that residents, even those with the best of phones, often lack airtime and cannot always use their phones, at least practically. As I have explained, *ownership* of the right type of 'quality' phone, and whether it can be used (practically), offers social inclusion both within and outside the township.

ICTs and the Development of Langa: A Mobile Population

While I considered the mobile phone as a mechanism to allow a rite-of-passage into various social spheres, mobile phones and other communication technologies have, in a greater perspective, been considered crucial toward the development of individuals and populations seeking to fulfill their desires, particularly in disadvantaged populations. It has been argued that "there are 'strong links' between the adoption of new technologies" like the mobile phone "and the development of countries and communities" (Diga et al., 2013; Obijiofor, 2009:32 in Carmody, 2010:111). It has been suggested that the use of ICTs has enabled access to skills, expertise and knowledge by people who use these technologies to improve their lives (Qureshi, 2012). Though studies have shown that ICTs are beneficial not just for their practical uses of gaining skills and knowledge to improve lives or to simply communicate with others more frequently, they are also useful for social development. Shearman (2013:5 my emphasis) states that access to ICTs in itself is insufficient, "rather it is what *is* and *can* be done with the access that make ICTs meaningful…" This chapter dwells on the significance of the mobile phone for residents in Langa, as a status symbol signifying wealth and offering social inclusion.

With the understanding that Information and Technology for Development (henceforth ICTD) can enable solutions towards human progress, Rangaswamy and Cutrell's (2012), in their study on mobile Internet use among youth in an urban Indian slum, seek to explore how ICTs are being used "at the margins" of society. They offer insight into everyday uses of mobile Internet for entertainment in a low-income society (Rangaswamy & Cutrell, 2012:51-2).Using a Senian (1999) approach of the development of freedom; that development is a process of expanding freedom for individuals in their everyday lives, the authors focus on the individual users of technology rather than the actual technology. Understanding that development is the fulfillment of human needs, they focused on the agency of the users, particularly the poor who are often stripped of their agency, and their use of technology to fulfill human needs (see also Hahn & Kibora, 2008). This approach ultimately emphasizes the techno-social relationship acknowledging, as I have, that the effects of technology ultimately rely on the (dis)harmony of techno-social relations.

Their approach also appealed to me in its subtle downgrading of the role of technologies. Their approach worked to eliminate technology's accepted role as "omnipotent" in many societies (Powell, 2012). They emphasize the reality that technologies are nothing without conscious human effort and agency. They argue that the "poor have to be viewed as a dynamic social category with active agency to adopt technology rather than inert recipients of developmental action" (Rangaswamy & Cutrell, 2012:52). Furthermore, they suggest:

> If the individual is an agent in his or her own development, there can be no predetermined outcome to technologies' development and implementation. Instead, technologies are subjected continually to a series of complex interactions and negotiations with the social, economic, political and cultural contexts (p. 54)

Directly unraveling the notion of technological determinism, Rangaswamy and Cutrell (2012) show that technologies on their own do not foster change. It is when we understand this that we can accept that marginalized populations (or any population for that matter), are not passive beneficiaries of development opportunities. They have the capacity and creativity to define their own development priorities and goals. As far as development through the use of ICTs is concerned, we must remember that technologies receive meaning and value only when enacted by users who will ultimately appropriate the technology to their specific needs (Hahn & Kibora, 2008; Gigler, 2006; Orlikowsk, 2000 in Gigler, 2006).

The ability of South Africans to generate and sustain access to ICTs within the country is an important development priority (Tlabela et al., 2007). According to Amartya Sen (1999:3), development can only be obtained through the removal of all things that prevent freedom

including "poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as tolerance or over-activity of repressive states". The history of inequality in South Africa, as a result of both colonial and apartheid policies, (see Tregenna & Tsela, 2012; Jacobs, 2003) has severely stunted the development of the majority of the country. The policies enforced during the colonial and apartheid eras have left the majority of South Africans living in a "highly unequal society where poverty and dislocation have had profound traumatic effects…" (Zegeye & Maxted, 2002:1).

Black South Africans have been most affected by this inequality and seem almost incapable of being delivered from poverty and social dislocation. Black African immigrants also find themselves in poverty and social dislocation, as strong anti-immigrant feelings in South Africa (Dodson, 2010) demand (constant) mobility as an essential survival strategy (Castles, 2002; de Bruijn et al., 2001; Adepoju, 2000). The continuous state of poverty and social dislocation has relegated the majority of the black population (including both internal and external migrants) to what are considered the mobile margins of the country where freedom is limited, therefore stunting developmental growth. However the introduction and integration of ICTs both in the mainstream and in the margins of the country have begun to facilitate developmental growth. It has been shown that when implemented appropriately to suit local conditions and cultural sensitivities, ICTs are beneficial in supporting development efforts (Qureshi, 2012).

The Internet

Though mobile phones were the ICT of choice in my study, it was almost impossible to talk about them without talking about the Internet as many residents owned Smartphones with Internet access. The mobile phone in Langa and elsewhere is considered one of the most convenient and most accessible technologies, particularly for those who may not have access to traditional Internet connection (Mlitwa & Tshetsha, 2012). Though there was no shortage of Internet access in the township, it appeared to be easier and cheaper for residents to use their phones, particularly for social networking, Facebooking, and checking emails. Such services do not necessarily warrant a full-size computer screen or printing. Miller and Slater's (2000:44) research on Internet use in Trinidad reveals, among other things, that Trinidadians use of the Internet seemed "to cut across rather than exacerbate social divisions". This insight contrasted with common perceptions that the introduction of ICTs in developing countries would increase inequalities, furthering the digital divide (Miller & Slater, 2000).

The same way the Internet in Trinidad cut across social divisions, I suggest that residents with ("quality") mobile phones too have the opportunity to cross these divisions, as they help build bridges between individuals belonging to various types of social systems. Residents who make use of specific ICTs stand a chance of gaining value as people with agency who have purpose-driven uses for ICTs, not to mention the social status they can potentially acquire when it becomes knowledgeable to those outside of Langa that these types of phones are being used by residents. My data shows this social status to be significant not just between residents and those outside of Langa, but among and within the township, as well as between residents. Mobile phones, in all their carnal glory, have the potential to enhance social development in Langa, particularly in the lives of those living in marginalized circumstances.

Conclusion

This chapter has further interrogated Langa's marginality in Cape Town. Revealing the margins within the 'margins' has contributed towards understanding the messiness of marginality in Langa with respect to ICTs. Where residents may, in general, be perceived as marginal for a variety of reasons, the chapter shows that, in Langa, marginalities are fluid, inconsistent, man-made, perpetuated and, in the case of not having a 'quality' phone, easily negotiated once adequate (or quality) material items are obtained. The chapter illustrates the relation of ICTs to the development in Langa Township as a population. I present the role of new ICTs as facilitators in Langa residents' well-being. Furthermore, I present the role of ICTs in the demarginalization of the township, as evidenced by residents' use of technology to deliberately promote social inclusion while inadvertently causing social inclusion outside the township.

I do not wish to perpetuate the belief that Langa residents are simply passive consumers of new communication technologies. In agreement with Rangaswamy and Cutrell (2012), I aim to represent Langa residents as active agents, both conscious and purposeful in their use of technology, which often leads to technological innovations that further facilitate social development. It is not that technology itself has promoted development, as the notion of technological determinism suggests. Rather, it is my intention to deliver agency back to Langa residents. Equally relevant to my study is the creation and maintenance of flexible identities as a result of ICT facilitated development in Langa.

When ICTs act as "great equalizers" they create equality where inequality formerly reigned. While Langa residents may always be considered marginal or socially inferior, they can, and have, conquered this otherwise negative identity through their ownership, uses and mastery over new communication technologies, which fosters their inclusion in mainstream Cape Town.

Therefore their identities as socially backward and unproductive (Nicolson, 2008; Neocosmos, 2008) can bend and flex through their use of ICTs. The next chapter explores if and how mobile phones mitigate distance for Langa residents as a mobile community.

CHAPTER 5
ICTS AND THE MITIGATION OF DISTANCE FOR LANGA RESIDENTS

Introduction

Earlier use of the term marginal, in this dissertation, referred to "a kaleidoscope of real or imagined circumstances that cause people to feel disadvantaged and may include a lack of or limited access to communication technologies and means of transport" (de Bruijn et al., 2009:12). As a mobile population, Langa residents continuously oscillate between various places, namely their home and host communities. Migration often entails physical displacement (Nyamnjoh, H.M., 2013) where residents may be faced with social and linguistic marginalization (Deumert & Mbandlana, 2009; see also *Chapter 7* of this dissertation). Economic hardships in either location could also render them physically immobile, where travelling (via bus, train or plane) may be financially impossible, contributing to feelings of being disadvantaged by social, linguistic and mobile handicaps. ICTs, in their ability to allow users to 'travel while sitting down' (Archambault, 2012), offers a range of possibilities for socializing and "bridging mobilities" (Nyamnjoh, H.M., 2013), while eliminating former obstacles of distance. In this sense, ICTs' potential to bridge mobilities and offer virtual means of communication works toward relieving the degree to which some mobile bodies and geographical locations are marginal.

This chapter interrogates common perceptions of the mobile phone's ability to mitigate distance in its perceived ability to compress time and space (de Bruijn et al., 2009; Kilker 2007; Castells et al., 2007; Castells 2004; Sheller 2002). I dwell on how residents' mobility and movements to and from Langa township, and their desires to remain socially active with those near and far, might have been affected by new mobile technologies. Mobile phones, with their increased data capabilities, have allowed us to manipulate time and space in ways beyond that of earlier technologies (Kilker, 2007). In South African townships and informal settlements, as well as elsewhere in Africa, studies have shown that both poor and urban internal migrant and external immigrant dwellers are using mobile phones to stay in touch with rural relatives and to maintain healthy or consistent communications with places and people distanced from them through mobility. They are often equally preoccupied with creating and maintaining relationships with people in their new 'homes' (de Bruijn et al., 2013, 2010, 2009; Nyamnjoh, 2005). This information offers a useful entry point into my investigation of ICT facilitated communication in Langa Township. Remembering that this research project began with the premise that patterns of mobility and contact today are intertwined with the presence, absence or

social appropriation of ICTs, this chapter proposes to answer: *To what extent and in what ways do ICTs mitigate distance for mobile communities?*

Langa is a township founded on migration and comprised of a mobile community. Currently, the majority of residents are predominantly mobile, oscillating between Langa and their birth homes (as some may now consider Langa to be their 'official home' regardless of where they were born) regularly or periodically. Evidence has shown that (im)migrants (or any person for the matter) travel between diverse areas for various reasons throughout the year (Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010; Castles, 2002; de Bruijn et al., 2001), particularly for festivities (like Christmas) and to attend and participate in different life cycle events including funerals. Many families live dispersed between various places across the country, meaning that they have found diverse modes of maintaining contact across quite vast distances – and from places where until recently even landline telephones were very few and far between (Hamilton, 2003). Building on the fact that there has been a long history of communication between such migrants, this study has the opportunity to develop an understanding of the extent of and kinds of changes in social configuration that have occurred as a direct result of new communication technologies and their accessibility. This chapter integrates ethnographic data collected during fieldwork with existing literature to present how residents in urban commuter settlements, like Langa, who come from rural 'homes' located elsewhere use mobile phones to stay in touch and increase social mobility despite distance as a previous obstacle. The chapter details various modes of communicating in South Africa, and for Langa residents in particular, before and after the introduction of mobile phones. It focuses on communicative interactions between Langa residents both within and across diverse localities to determine the role of mobile phones in the mitigation of distance for Langa residents.

Communication in Langa before the Introduction of Mobile Technology

Just under two-hundred years ago communication was very different to what it has become today. While there were a variety of ways to communicate in some places, in other areas alternatives were limited. In North America various ways of communicating included "face-to-face or [writing] in the form of letters, journals, newspapers and books". Purists, on the other hand, used "smoke signals, carrier pigeons, and messages sent adrift in bottles" (Gumpert & Drucker, 2007:7). Africa, however, is said to be the birthplace of conscious communication (Casely-Hayford, 1998). It would later be said that Africa is at the forefront of innovative appropriation of new ICTs (Nyamnjoh, 2013c). Indigenous means of communication for Africans included verbal, aural, drama, poetry, talking drums and horns. As with North

Americans, communication was also generally transmitted orally via face-to-face interaction (de Bruijn et al., 2009; Awa, 2005:219-20; Mushengyezi, 2003:108-11).

Modern media made its debut during the 1800s introducing a small variety of newspapers (Awa, 2005:219; Nyamnjoh, 2005:40). Though not commonly referred to as communication 'technologies', schools, churches, roads and vehicles can also be categorized as such. In a study on the concept of *Kfaang* – a notion representing "newness" and innovative novelty in the ways that people think about and do things, Nkwi (2011) confronts the appropriation of mobile (modern) technology as *new* ICTs in regards to communicating – connecting and disconnecting people with other people and places – in a Cameroonian context. Most people refer to mobile phones and the Internet when thinking about new ICTs. The aim of technology, Nkwi says, is to connect, disconnect and transform society, which mobile phones and the Internet undoubtedly do. However, schools and churches, we learn from his study, can rightfully be seen as technology as they too work to connect and disconnect people through mobility. Schools and churches, he says, played a key role in the social and geographical mobility of Kom people as their locations increased travelling, therefore increasing mobility, connecting and disconnecting people with places where new relationships could be built.

The Postal Service and Travelling Persons for Communication

The South African Post Office (SAPO), owned by the South African government, is several hundred years old. In the 1500s, the captain of a Portuguese ship placed a letter in a tree in Mossel Bay asking for help after three of the ships in his fleet had sunk. The letter was found three months later. Soon after, it became common practice for letters to be placed under postal stones to be received by passing ships. In 1792 the acting governor opened a post office room in Cape Town. In 1806, indigenous slaves were used to transport letters and small parcels. The first mail train was introduced in 1883. Some years later, in 1919 there were regular car-mail services followed by the introduction of air-mail services. Postcodes were introduced in 1973 to facilitate mail sorting and standardized letters. In 1994, after the end of apartheid, South Africa was readmitted to the Universal Postal Union (SAPO Business Tech 2012). Between the 1960s and the 1990s, the Digital Revolution led to the union of a variety of technologies including the telephone, computer, radio and the television (de Bruijn et al., 2013). Even after the availability of the post office and more modern communication alternatives like landlines (but before the introduction of new*er* mobile communication technologies), other alternatives were sought, however reluctantly, to reach out to those separated by distance, as my findings have showed.

Many Langa residents spoke of sending letters, money (remittances) and other material necessities via bus and taxi drivers, shop owners and friends who were expected to travel to the intended recipients 'home'. This alternative was due to the, then, slow services of the postal service. One 62 year old, long time Langa resident, Sibuli, explained that there was not much communication because you had to write letters to your family (her family was in the Eastern Cape). "Maybe you write a letter in this month and it gets answered in the following month [sending it by] the post". For faster delivery, she explained, they would use the telegram because "telephoning was just… not working […] the telegram would take two to three days" (Sibuli interview October 2011). Communicating via bus and taxi drivers and shop owners was, however, only marginally better compared to the postal service at the time and indeed, though many residents used this communication alternative, it was not necessarily preferred because letters often failed to be delivered while remittances and other monies were often stolen in transit by those entrusted to deliver them. Sibuli explained that announcing your travel arrangements publicly meant that families could access your services to send remittances home, but not everyone was faithful.

> Families would give you lots of money. This family would [say] "take this R1000 to my family" and this one and this one. You would end up carrying close to… R20 000 to different families and if you're unreliable you don't give… the families the money […] Maybe you [the sender] would go to the police and the police would say… "Why did you give this person the money?" but this is between you and them, you know (Sibuli Interview October 2011).

Time was also an issue when sending letters in this manner as it could take anywhere from a few weeks to a couple of months for delivery. A young male, Thando, from the Eastern Cape who currently works at Guga's Thebe, Langa's Visitors Center, found little problems when communicating through bus drivers. He indicated that the average waiting period was one week, which was apparently a suitable time frame for him. He is a fairly new resident of Joe Slovo Township, an informal settlement in Langa built in the late 1990s that is currently home to approximately 68,000 residents[9]. I extended my research interests to include residents of this settlement when possible. Thando's Uncle moved from the Eastern Cape and lived in Langa for several years before Thando and his brothers came to join him. Thando eventually ended up moving to Joe Slovo because of lack of space in Langa, as his Uncle's home was too small to accommodate the newcomers and vacant residences were unavailable at the time. He did not mind the weekly communication from Joe Slovo to his family in the Eastern Cape. However, he did complain that "you have to go and check your mail on the bus… which is not good" (Thando

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[9]http://www.sophakama.org.za/who-are-we/our-community-joe-slovo-township.html

Interview February 2012), as there was sometimes little indication of exactly which bus your mail was located on, particularly if drivers switched buses *enroute*. He also explained that you had to know which drivers to trust so that your letters would be delivered responsibly. Fortunately, his family knew a driver who regularly traveled from Cape Town to the Eastern Cape, which often aided their mail delivering process.

Shuga, a 30 year old female resident, explained how she used taxi drivers or people travelling to her original home to communicate with her family (her mother and two children) in the Eastern Cape before they came to Cape Town. She explained that she would call her mother on a Telkom phone booth and tell her that she was sending a parcel through a taxi driver – a process complicated by the fact that her mother owned a landline phone with no answering machine, so she could not leave a message if her mother was unavailable. Her mother would then prepare to meet the taxi driver at the taxi rank in the Eastern Cape, but there was no way to know exactly when he would arrive. Sometimes her mother would go through a routine of waiting for weeks before finally receiving the parcel. Because she and her family did not use the postal service, Shuga explained (as did Sibuli, see above), this alternative was bad for sending money. If the money was delivered at all, the original amount sent was often decreased.

The above examples present common problems previously experienced among some residents currently living in Langa. While communicating with family members that lived outside the township was possible, it was increasingly difficult for some residents, as their lack of communication technologies at the time and limited means of transport meant that they could not communicate as frequently as they wanted to. De Bruijn et al. (2009) describe limited access to resources and means of transport as circumstances that cause people to feel disadvantaged and 'marginal'. It is apparent that these residents were physically mobile, but their inability to communicate effectively due to lack of resources meant that they were often rendered socially immobile, potentially stagnating relationships with their families left behind. Maintaining constant communication with family (through letters and monies) appeared to be commonplace, a practice often interrupted by time delays and untrustworthy deliverers.

Monwabise, a 50 year old craftsman of tin artifacts, also expressed his dissatisfaction with how long it took to communicate letters delivered by travelers. Though he works in Langa selling his artwork, he currently lives in Khayelitsha. He is, however, originally from Queenstown in the Eastern Cape and settled in Langa when he first moved to Cape Town. He complained that sending letters via drivers and travelers was inefficient. He explained the long process of sending letters from Langa to his family in Queenstown, and in particular a time when his Aunt in-law received news that her husband – his uncle – had passed away:

… when we were using letters to communicate… it can take about a month because sometimes, especially in the rural areas in the Eastern Cape, if people are getting letters, most people are getting letters in the shop… You see and then if the shop owner… [only goes] to the shop maybe … once [or] two times a month … then people have to wait. It was frustrating. Some… of the news will [come] late. For example, [when my Aunt-in-law's] husband passed away. He [got] injured and he [was] in the hospital. You see. They wrote the letter (and sent it via a shop owner) while the husband was still in hospital but when [my Aunt in-law got] the letter the man is passed away". (Monwabise Interview, August 2011)

Malawian cousins and current Langa residents Benson and Bazaar had more pleasant experiences than many of the residents I spoke with about this manner of communication and specifically, sending remittances. Using (trusted) drivers to send money for Benson, a petrol attendant, for example, was particularly advantageous, as he is not very literate and is uncomfortable with the paperwork involved with sending money through the bank. He explained:

Yeah, I've got a family…there [in Malawi]. [I have another friend from Malawi] staying on this side in Wynberg… he used to take people from here to Malawi, up and down… he will take the stuff of people from Malawi to us [and vice versa] so… I don't send money through the bank […] I trust him (Benson Interview September 2011).

Despite obstacles of time and trustworthy deliverers, this type of communication was dominant among many residents both in and out of Langa. Globalization introduced additional modern forms of communication onto the continent. Besides the post-office, by 1989 landlines were the only telephonic means of communication used in South Africa, of which only 45.4% of the population had access to landline services. Owned and operated by the South African government, Telkom was a means to provide phone services throughout the country[10].

Landline Telephones

Obijifor (1998:458) predicted that in Africa the telephone would be the communication technology of the future. This prediction was based on the dominant mode of communication in Africa, which is "orality". Acknowledging that the family is a highly valued social unit in Africa, and that one is obliged to maintain strong communication patterns with one's family, the telephone, Obijifor suggests, aids these obligations, particularly as they have greatly reduced the need for individuals to be physically present. In this way the telephone has changed the influence of traditional communication (1998) across the continent. Where face-to-face communication was once deemed necessary for residents in Langa, the introduction of the telephone meant that

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[10] www.vodazone.co.za/history

previous limitations like distance, particularly among family who were not in South Africa, was relieved.

Between the years of 1997-2002 Telkom installed 2.8 million fixed-line telephones nationally. 1.7 million of these phones, 120,000 of which were payphones, were installed in disadvantaged areas with low fixed-line tele-density. By the year 2002, Telkom claimed that 98% of the South African population lived within a two kilometer radius of a public telephone. Eventually, however, failure to make bill payments and theft of copper cables in poor areas like townships meant that many of these phones were disconnected (Skuse & Cousins, 2008:13). Landline phones were a welcomed relief to letter writing as some residents explained. Similar to mobile phones, originally being communication tools of luxury accessed only by an elite few (Powell, 2012:32; Yonazi et al., 2012; Castells et al., 2007), when landlines first made their way to the township they were associated with the most privileged residents. Ivory and Bashu, 50 and 63 years old respectively, and both long term residents of Langa explained that in the beginning, those who had landlines in their homes were called "bourgeoisie… we called them bourgeoisie… yeah they [were] better off than we [were]" (Ivory & Bashu Interview August 2011).

It can be assumed that landline telephones served, at one point, as an item that some residents in Langa purchased ostentatiously, to be considered "bourgeoisie", or "better" than other residents. While landline telephones were known to enable people to communicate efficiently over distance (Katz & Sugiyama, 2005), one might conclude that in Langa, (more flexible) communication may not have been the essential reason for securing ownership. From Ivory and Bashu's comment above, it seemed that landline phones were very rare. To be called bourgeoisie led me to believe that perhaps less than five residents owned them. Communication for some residents (both historically and currently) was significant for maintaining a range of relationships. In the case of the landline, accessing this *mode* of communication appeared to be more important than the actual communication alternative that it offered. (The previous chapter stresses that this was certainly true of mobile phones; owning the technology was more important than the practical purpose of the device to facilitate communication). Some residents expressed their complacency with landlines. For others, while landlines were, at one point, sought after, their immobility, especially now in relation to the mobile phone was a source of complaint.

Victor, a former Langa resident from the Eastern Cape and founder of Langa's famous Eziko restaurant, discussed the limits of landline communication. At 45 years of age, he remembers when he relied on landline communication for his business before the introduction of

mobile phones. He explained "… they were convenient in the sense that it was easy to get a hold of somebody… but at the end of the day… it's quite annoying sometimes because you have to remain in the office, you have to be office bound because any business comes through the telephone" (Victor Interview August 2011). Malawian resident, Benson, explained his practice of calling his family in Malawi on their landline phone only during the evenings when he is sure that they will be there to answer the phone (and also because the evening rates are cheaper). His family does not have an answering machine and any attempts to call them during the day were in vain, he explained. In this way, he avoided the sometimes frustrating limitations of the landline phone – namely that the recipient is compelled to be in the same place as the phone in order to receive the call – by calling when he knew that they would be available. Based on these two examples, fixed line telephones render both the user and the receiver immobile in that they are required to physically be in the area that the landline phone is located in order to make/receive calls. In this sense, then, users of landline phones are physically controlled by the technology.

The landline phone dictates the spaces in which one can communicate with others and depending on the location of the phone, can potentially turn personal conversations into public, thereby blurring or eliminating the public/private dichotomies that mobile phones allow users to maintain. Communications 'on the move' (Urry 2004:27) make mobile phones more attractive than landlines for precisely this reason. Increasing levels of migration and mobility among and between places have led to redefining 'mobile publics'. The ability "for some social actors to slip in and out of different contexts, identities and relationships" (Sheller 2002:40-1) across different social spaces has become a highlight and advantage of many cell phone users. The above examples indicate that the convenience of being able to connect with someone is most important. It is not that landline phones did not achieve this, but they did so in a way that compromised the flexible mobilities of communication that we have come to expect.

Introducing the Mobile Phone

In 1993 Telkom awarded contracts to two mobile phone providers: Vodacom and Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) "in an effort to privatize and streamline the haziness of being a regulatory body and provider"[11]. Shortly after this, mobile phones made their debut. They were first introduced in South Africa in 1994 when MTN and Vodacom were licensed (Hodge, 2005). Currently, they are more common than landline telephones (Urry, 2004). It has been suggested that while mobile phone use is believed to be complementary to fixed-line use in developed countries, in developing countries mobile phones appear to be substituted for fixed-line use

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[11] www.vodazone.co.za/history

where access may be limited (Hamilton, 2003). Acknowledging that phone calls between landlines and mobile phones are not uncommon, it might not be accurate to suggest that in developing countries mobile phones substitute fixed-line use. Some Langa residents spoke of communicating with family members in the Eastern Cape, for example, who did not own mobile phones. They owned fixed-line telephones. This was usually the parent or older member of the resident's family. This reality suggests that the belief that mobile phone use substitutes fixed-line use in developing countries should not be accepted homogenously, as the uses and substitutions will undoubtedly differ among and between populations. Most homes that I visited in Langa did not have a landline telephone; the devices no longer elevate residents to "bourgeoisie" status. This is not to suggest that they have no place in the township, but they are virtually obsolete, not that they were previously there in abundance.

During the first ten years after the introduction of mobile phones in Sub-Saharan Africa, mobile phones had little impact because of the high costs and service charges. Later, with the reduction of airtime, SIM-card and handset costs, they became more accessible (Eagle, 2010). In 1994 the mobile phone industry in South Africa took off faster than expected (Hosman & Fife, 2012; Essoungou, 2011; Carmody, 2010). For many people, the speed of connectivity often influences our attitudes about whether or not we like certain technologies; "whether using them are useful and pleasurable or not" (Hanson, 2007:53). With the seemingly smooth and fast integration of this technology into societies all over the world, mobile phones soon acquired a status of being useful and pleasurable for many, not least because of the speed at which the available functions allowed transactions and interactions to occur. Mobile phones, as we already know, are communication devices worthy of in-depth research because of their increased and rapid integration all over the world, the innovative appropriations associated with them in many societies, and the overwhelming reliance on these devices by their owners. Many individuals hold their mobile phones in high esteem growing evermore dependent on them in their day-to-day living. Using mobile phones has become a routine and necessary part of so many lives that many mobile phone owners do not leave their house without their phone and would be uncomfortable getting through the day without it. Despite the fact that this technology has not always proven to be the best solution for enhancing our desires for (more) efficient and constant communication, and have, on occasion, proven to exacerbate rather than facilitate our communication needs, they are still revered as great, all-purpose, all-positive communication devices.

In tune with the world's increasing reliance on mobile technology, new and improved mobile phones and social media functions are consistently produced to stay abreast with our

desires and demands. Alternatively, while some of the more indigenous and older forms of communication around the world still retain their value (though may be used less frequently since the onset of new communication technologies), there has been the need for people to develop and keep abreast of new technologies in order to communicate effectively (Mushengyezi, 2003:115; Castells, 2000:7). Mobile phones, in addition to the Internet, are growing more intelligent and their "reasoning capabilities" are increasingly becoming "more and more indistinguishable from the human brain" (Keen, 2012). Some might even describe them as autonomous devices, neglecting to acknowledge the mutual relationship between technology and society for 'adequate' functioning on both ends. We often fail to realize that communication technologies, in spite of their seemingly endless possibilities, can quite literally be sterile and useless objects outside of conscious and tangible effort from people. They are nothing more than tools, essentially subservient to the will of their users (Leaning, 2005), though I acknowledge that users can, too, become subservient to technology. Regarding technology, many people focus only on the hardware and software of the devices, neglecting the human and social systems that must change for technology to be of any use (Warschauer, 2003). People and social contexts are crucial to the (positive or negative) roles of technology. We tend to minimize the reality that neither mobile phones nor the Internet can stand alone; both are used alongside spoken word and/or other forms of technology and may require (ir)regular financial maintenance to secure proper functioning. Furthermore, they need to be understood or accepted in certain ways in society in order to provide users with the maximum benefit. However, they are often portrayed as magically omnipotent; as active agents in the social world (Miller & Slater, 2000:193).

The role of mobile communication technologies in the facilitation of social networking should not reinforce the idea of technological determinism, but should enforce the reality that technology is adopted and used in creative and innovative ways by different groups of people with the anticipation of fulfilling specific needs (Lamoureaux, 2011:13; Horst & Miller, 2006; Miller & Slater, 2000). The academic world has yet to tire of exploring the various appropriations attributed to these technologies within different societies both in and out of Africa in search of – but not limited to – enhancing and expanding social networks. I focus on ICTs and the expanding of social networks of residents from within and around Langa.

The Adoption of Mobile Phones by Langa Residents

It has been suggested that, for particularly marginalized populations, the mobile phone has become a desirable necessity for "… the possibilities it offers… to communicate and in how it facilitates the production, reproduction, and transformation of social networks, social status

and hierarchies" (de Bruijn et al., 2009:15). During fieldwork many residents recalled first embracing mobile phones in1997. It was comical how often they referred to their first mobile phones as "bricks" or "walkie-talkies". While sitting in her mother's living room over tea with the inconsistent noises of her two-year old daughter entertaining herself in the back room, one former resident, Thandi, a "30-something" year old clerical worker and part-time musician who lives in Johannesburg but was visiting her mother who currently lives in Langa, referred to her first mobile phone as:

> …the biggest brick… it was a Samsung brick. It was as big as this diary and it had an aerial. If the aerial is not up, you can't hear anything. It was like a radio. I think I would be embarrassed if I could have that now". (Laughing, she continued) Yho! The battery was as big as my [two-year old] daughter… It had a charger just as big … when someone is walking and [they] have this *big* thing in [their] ear like [you're like] Yho! (Thandi Interview April 2012)

Another resident described her (first) mobile phone as "big (laughing and gesturing with her hands)… they were like big controllers…Yho! They were big with big batteries" (Sibuli Interview October 2011). "They were like walkie-talkies", said yet another 50 year old resident (Monwabise Interview August 2011). However, the introduction of mobile phones was, for the most part, an anxiety-filled, if not exciting time for some residents who were eager to try this alternative. Residents admitted that the mobility and flexibility of the mobile phone, particularly as they gradually became smaller in size (but have now grown bigger, thinner and lighter), made them the most desirable form of communication, particularly for the younger generation of residents in Langa.

Currently it is "cool" to have a big phone like one of the latest phones in the Samsung Galaxy series. However, having all the functions that one could need, or desire, wonderfully compact in a small technological device was, until recently, a good thing. This is why some residents found it funny how big mobile phones used to be: the size of "bricks". Not acknowledging that even in the West, the first mobile phones were as big as car phones, according to my memory, Thandi felt that South Africans (or maybe Africans in general) were especially targeted to receive such "big" mobile phones. She felt that the size of the first mobile phones to be introduced into the country were a deliberate act by the West to take advantage (South) Africa's perceived ignorance (of fashionably desirable technology), particularly as they have been considered technologically marginal to the rest of the world (van Binsbergen, 2004). "It, it… well, when they came in they were very… they were funny phones […] It's like they were saying let's bring this to South Africa. They know nothing about cell phones", she said

disgustedly (Thandi Interview April 2012). Despite Thandi's and possibly other residents' views on the first mobile phones that made their way into the country, many have since grown to appreciate the device and indeed as scholars have shown, Africans, in general, have been most credited with embracing the technology (reluctantly or otherwise) (de Bruijn et al., 2009; Castells et al., 2007), though not without its joys and perils.

The Joys and Perils of Owning a Mobile Phone for Langa Residents

Mobile phones have been said to increase safety (Castells et al., 2007), rendering "certain situations safer and more practical" (Pelckmans, 2009:27). For Malawian native Benson, the mobile phone played a crucial role during the xenophobic attacks that occurred in 2008, and contributed to his safety. At the time of the attacks he was living in Dunoon, another township in Cape Town. He was very poor when he left Malawi and came to South Africa. It was only after he met his girlfriend, a local South African, that he secured a mobile phone which she provided for him. One evening while working, he was unaware that Dunoon was under attack and that his home was in danger of being burned down. His girlfriend kept him informed of events via mobile phone communication while he was at work:

> …they [were] coming on the area where… some foreigners were mixing with South African[s]. Yeah so they start fighting like eh when they find a shop like Somalis also they are there… so it was … a lot of fighting now […] Yeah so like they're breaking everything, fridges… so then my girlfriend… she told me that "Ne, they're nearby where you stay so then I think they'll come also on your place. So you just take care [of] yourself… but I will keep calling you on your phone and I will tell you what is going on" (Benson Interview September 2011).

In this situation, the mobile phone was a crucial device helping to keep Benson updated during this terrifying ordeal. Because of the frequent messages and calls from his girlfriend, he decided that he would not go home and stayed at work even after his shift was over. Had his girlfriend not been able to contact him at work, he may have come home in the middle of the attacks and been physically assaulted. It was then that Benson began to value the benefits of the mobile phone.

Some residents have claimed complete satisfaction with their mobile phones and could not imagine – would not want to imagine – life without one. In their compression of time and space they have provided opportunities for quick and easy communication and information sharing in real time regardless of location. For Thando, mobile phones have greatly increased his communication with his family in the Eastern Cape. Perpetually short of airtime, he admits to sending SMSes more frequently than calling his family. This provides a nice alternative, as his

family does not have a landline and email access is difficult because they do not own a computer.

> …the Internet Café [where my family lives] you have to walk more than 15km… to town and if you are riding in a taxi it will cost you R25 single […] A return is R50 […] so cell phones make my life go easier (Thando Interview February 2012)

Most residents echoed the common praise that "communication is much easier now with cell phones" (Pers. Comm. Langa Township 2011-12).

> Cell phones make our lives easier (Thando Interview February 2012)

> …the phone…makes life easier because you can leave a message so I'm not annoyed… even if I call you and… I don't find you I [can] leave a message and then when you see your message you come back to [me] (Victor Interview August 2011)

> [I prefer] cell phones […] It's because of the constant communication, the… immediate communication. You don't have to wait to call someone. You can get the response immediately […] I'll die if I lose my cell phone. I'll be the most frustrated person on earth (Thandi Interview April 2012)

This last comment from Thandi reinforces Gurstein's (2003:7) point that mobile technologies allow for "instantaneous and continuous communication', desirable attributes for many mobile phone users. Her comment also directly emphasizes a statement made by Brinkman, de Bruijn and Bilal (2009: 77) that "some people… cannot survive without their mobile phones and feel anxious without it". While saying that she would die without her cell phone was undoubtedly an exaggerated response, most residents can and would identify with that feeling of doom; that "frustration" of being cut off,. No longer able to participate in instant and constant communication appeared to be more than some residents would want to bear – though I expect cell phone users everywhere would support this feeling. In contrast to these views, some residents expressed reservations about using mobile phones. Horst & Miller (2006:99) found that cell phones made Jamaicans "more deceitful" indicating that phone communication cannot always be trusted. Further statements made by Brinkman et al. (2009:78, 81), echo this finding, stating that cell phones allow people to lie more easily and that they additionally facilitate crime. Nigerian resident, Richard, complained about cell phones citing both of these flaws:

> **Richard**: The cell phone is efficient but I wouldn't prefer to use them because um, it brought a lot of crime.

> **Crystal**: The cell phone?

> **Richard**: Yeah the cell phone [it brought a lot of] crime you know [because of muggings]. Yeah [and] people lie and all through cell phones
>
> **Crystal**: Can you expand on that? When you say people lie through cell phones what do you mean?
>
> **Richard**: You know, people basically lie
>
> **Crystal**: So do people lie on cell phones more than they do on landlines?
>
> **Richard**: Yeah, yeah… of course, because uh if the [landline] phone is in Langa that means if you pick it up you are in Langa […] people become so deceitful through cell phones and so touchy and cunning (Richard Interview April 2012)

Richard's statement is most indicative of the reality that cell phones, in their mobility, allow (some) users to lie about their location, for example, perhaps claiming they are in one place when in fact they are in another, sometimes for deceitful purposes. A landline, as he suggested is a fixed item rendering its user and recipient immobile, less able to lie about their location. Acknowledging that one can lie about more than their location on the cell phone, it would seem, then, that the use of cell phones, in certain situations, can cause distrust between individuals, arousing suspicion around their credibility. This possibility, as Richard shows, is a source of complaint for some users. Cell phones have changed the certainty of truth, for some residents.

In Molony's (2007a: 71, 77) article on the use of ICTs among farmers and clients in Tanzania, he explores the significance of trust in transactions in relation to new forms of communication. He reveals the challenge of securing trust between farmers and clients, particularly regarding the quality and the pricing of foodstuff. Mobile phones, for farmers can help with supply and demand information only when there is trust between them, other farmers and their clients. Molony suggests, then, that mobile phones can be seen as a facilitating technology for existing trust-based relationships. In the real world, however, as Richard suggested, we know it is all too easy to lie. I do not suggest that mobile phones directly cause lying, as one can lie to another person over a mobile phone as easily as they can through face-to-face communication, email or the landline. Rather, as stated above, mobile phones and the Internet make it *easier* to lie (Brinkman et al., 2009:78, Horst & Miller 2006:98), as emotions and facial expressions that might otherwise reveal a lie are often masked behind the technology.

Other reservations around using the mobile phone involved older residents who had trouble understanding how to use the different functions of the phone (see also the *Mobile Phones and the Older Generation* section below). For example, 62 year old Sibuli shared her misfortune with using functions that she did not understand on her cell phone:

Yho! Yho! Cell phones, they are problematic, they're very sophisticated… and you know you are sort of very scared to go to each and every function because some functions are costly. You would go to that [particular function] and after [a] few minutes you would get an answering saying "Thank you for registering" (laughing). [And you say to yourself] I didn't want to register. Please go back again. Take my name off. I didn't want to register […] its taking fees. I [accidentally] registered [for] pictures of boobs and something (porn). It just sent me photos. It would take R10 month. I didn't even want to see those pictures (Sibuli Interview October 2011)

Here we see the potential dangers of accessing functions that you do not understand. Despite accidently requesting or accessing services that may be unnecessary and undesirable, residents, like Sibuli, continue to participate in this mobile phone generation, perhaps because there is little choice as the device has grown to be an expected tool in life's daily activities (Chandler, 2012). Drawing on Nyamnjoh's (2013c) description of Africa's ability to accommodate, despite not being accommodated in return, one might refer to new ICTs as Western implements in Africa. The overwhelming acceptance, the integration and adaptation of the technology might appear to be yet another instance of Africa's accommodation to Western ideology. Africa's (new) leadership in the world of ICTs (Nyamnjoh, 2013c; Yonazi et al., 2012), however, represents another kind of accommodation: technology's accommodation of African users. The innovative uses of technology expressed on the African continent reinforce the reality that technology bends towards the will of its user. I have also maintained that this process works both ways, users also accommodate technology, sometimes bending to its will. Yet, technology's accommodation of African users is particularly notable in light of their former position as technologically marginal, passively accepting of new ICTs (Berman & Tettley, 2001; van Binsbergen, 2004; Molony, 2007b).

The adoption and usage rates of the mobile phone suggests that in many African countries mobile phones, even within poor households, are increasingly becoming part of everyday life, particularly for – but not only – the youth who view them as "objects of desire and a symbol of success" (Porter et al., 2012:145; Horst & Miller, 2006). Sometimes, however, the acceptance of its new found role, particularly for some of the older residents, is met with reluctance. Its 'normalization' might be considered more cumbersome than normal, common, or 'better' than previous forms of communication with family and friends that live elsewhere, in addition to communication between neighbors in their 'new home' as this chapter shows.

Mobile Phones and Older Residents in Langa

Makhulu, my former host mother, a 76 year old long term resident of Langa, admitted that she was reluctant to use mobile phones when they were first introduced. During my stay in her home I often saw her using her mobile phone. Holding the phone close to her lap, far away

from her aged eyes, chin rested on the top of her chest, she often looked as if she was sleeping when in fact she was either reading or composing a text message with long, delicate fingers. It took her a long time to compose a message as she was "still not used to the keys". She often asked her grand-daughter to type her message for her when she was available. It did not look at all natural or comfortable for her to use a mobile phone. When I met her she was on her third phone. The first one – a Nokia – her favorite, fell into a puddle of water and was destroyed. Her second phone – a Samsung – was still usable and though she still has it, it was replaced by a fancier phone – another Nokia – recommended by her son. She explained how reluctant she was to use a cell phone because they are "complicated" but now it allows her to "keep in touch" with her brother in the Eastern Cape whom she is very close to, as they are the remaining two survivors of her family of nine. Makhulu enjoys the luxury of being able to contact her brother (almost) at will. Several other older residents echoed their reluctance to use mobile phones as they, unlike the younger generation, do not have the time, patience and sometimes literate competency to understand how to use mobile phones effectively. When I asked Sibuli why she did not use the manual to help her use the mobile phone she responded "Do you think we can read this manual? What you don't know you just ignore". She and other older residents remarked:

> … It's a way of communication. It just feels very… not so good enough if you don't have [a cell phone][…] You know it's like you're missing a lot […] Back then we relied on landlines ... but because of this change of cell phones, things are happening immediately. You don't [have] to wait… [But for the older generation] … We know nothing […] there are lots of functions that we're not using […] we're not trained. We just buy the cell phone because of phoning and messages you know. I would love to go to a training so we can know how they work […] some [older] people they only answer you when you phone. They can't make messages because they don't know [how] (Sibuli aged 62. Interview October 2011)

> I never wanted a cell phone but now I have to have one. (Pers. Comm. w/ Thandi's mother aged 60, April 2012)

> It's communication… but for us elders, I don't even know how to peruse my phone. All I know how to do is pick up my phone… and then read the messages (Bashu aged 63, Interview August 2011)

> The phone is just for me to take messages. That's all. I'm not worried about playing games [or] listening to music on my phone. I don't care about that (Ivory aged 50, Interview August 2011)

While I noted that most Langa residents did indeed own mobile phones, it was apparent that not all were eager to become part of this mobile phone generation. One might be inclined to conclude that an older generation of mobile phone users are nothing more than submissive users who are trapped in the mobile phone generation; persons who have unwillingly become slaves to

convenience despite the fact that for many, this type of communication still does not come easy to them. To a certain degree, the participation of these older residents' in the mobile phone generation speaks to their flexible identities. Their (reluctant) adoption of this technology, has given them the opportunity to *belong* in a way that was not previously available or necessary but is currently essential: belonging to the new mobile generation. As Sibuli indicated above, it does not "feel good" to not use a mobile phone, even if you would prefer not to use them, because "you're missing a lot".

Older residents have conformed to this lifestyle not because of personal desire to maintain communication, but to help facilitate belonging in the social realm that has recently been transformed by the cell phone. Older residents' non-compliance with new ICTs would surely disconnect and marginalize them from Langa's community. And while disconnection is not synonymous with marginality, some older residents' inability to embrace and manage even the most basic functions of mobile phones would have indeed rendered them marginal in this aspect of township life. Orbe's (1998, 2005) notion that co-cultures or marginal groups 'assimilate' in order to be more like their non or less marginal counterparts may describe some of the older population of Langa, whom I have suggested have (reluctantly) embraced mobile phones as a means of belonging and getting by in this mobile generation. In a mobile population like Langa where some residents want and need to main relationships across locations, active cell phone use is vital. In this way old and young residents find common ground.

The role of new communication technologies today indicates that a lack of mobile communication can lead to "serious social handicap" (Castells et al., 2007:256), as this form of communication, though not always preferred, could easily be considered one of the most dominant forms of communication today. Mobile communication is used for myriad purposes including professional work, the organization of everyday life, sustaining social networks, commercial transactions and the sharing of information, music and photographs, for example (Castells et al., 2007), making non-conformity unacceptable (Chandler, 2012). While residents expressed that communication methods prior to the cell phone, such as sending messages via taxi drivers, often created "social handicaps", such as having to wait lengthy time periods, , the issue of time was also presented as (differently) problematic in cell phone use.

Mobile Phones and the Everyday Consumption of Time in Langa

Entertaining ones-self with a diversity of mobile phone functions was a common practice in Langa. However, the down side to using the mobile phone too frequently was that residents were often controlled by their mobile phones, as was I. I do not suggest that residents were being

controlled as passive users of the technology, stripping away their agency as the notion of technological determinism might suggest. Rather, I suggest that residents were being controlled as far as the amount of time allocated to their mobile phones. Hanson (2007:50) argues that through technology, people are controlled by service providers, the ICT device itself; and the personal investment of time that users commit to technology. I found that heavy personal investments of time were dedicated toward using the mobile phone among residents, whether playing games, sharing photos, sending messages, chatting verbally or via social network sites. While residents have the power to allow and limit their mobile phone's control over them, most interactions with mobile phones include the user, their phone *and* the recipient(s) on the other end. This changes the power dynamics, particularly when the recipient has their own desires and demands. It was apparent that some residents enjoyed being connected and using their phone for communication and entertainment needs, but also often felt trapped regarding the social etiquette expected through use of mobile phones.

In addition to games and Facebook, many of the younger residents communicated via MXit[12]. Walton and Donner (2010:120) explain that teenagers first began using this platform as a cost-saving substitute for SMSing, as messages sent via MXit between individual contacts are free. Residents that used MXit did not suggest that this application was free, but that it was significantly cheaper than sending a standard SMS. My former host brother was *always* on one of his two mobile phones, playing games, checking email or communicating via MXit. He was often multi-tasking: whatever activity he was doing was always accompanied by his engagement with his mobile phone. It was not uncommon to hear him complain that he was on his phone too much; almost as if he had no control over when and how often he used his phone. One afternoon as we stood in the kitchen, he making scrambled eggs and me a cup of tea, he quickly moved the frying pan off the stove so that he could send a message without burning his breakfast. Noticing this action several times, I asked what he was doing that was so important that he could not cook his eggs first and respond later. He explained that he was chatting to multiple friends on MXit and they "won't let me get off because they keep telling me things". He then complained:

Muzi: MXit is so distracting. It messes up [my] mind. It's really cheap but it's not always fun

Crystal: Couldn't you just keep your phone off or not respond?

Muzi: But then I would miss out on things (Pers. Comm. September 2011)

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[12] MXit (pronounced: mix it) is a free online mobile instant messenger and social network that works on mobile phones. One can "enjoy multiplayer games, meet new people in chat rooms, and buy and sell goods all from the mobile phone" (http://mxit.com).

Not wanting to "miss out on things" was apparently a justifiable reason to spend every possible moment on his mobile phone. This short dialogue informed me that Muzi and his phone were imprisoned by each other. His multiple friends were able to control him through their use of the mobile phone, just as he controlled them while their phones controlled them *all*, to an extent. His phone seemed to demand his full attention even against his wishes. Sinodume (pseudonym), a 15 year old resident explained that she enjoys using MXit because "it only costs a cent". The weekly allotment of airtime provided by her father does not allow her to communicate extensively via regular SMSes or phone calls. She explained that she goes to bed at 9:00 pm "but I don't go to sleep. I go on MXit until 11:00pm and on weekends I can stay up to 2:00 in the morning [chatting with my friends on MXit]" (Sinodume Interview April 2012). Sinodume does not attend the junior high school in Langa and travels to school early, catching the train and then a bus. When asked if she was tired during school hours because she stays up late chatting with friends, she said "yes" but explained that everybody was on MXit at that time.

Like, Muzi, Sinodume could also be considered a prisoner of her phone by having to stay up late and respond to messages. Though she does this of her own will, the mobile phone has made this (sometimes late night) compulsive and continuous communication mandatory in today's world, making the practice seem desirable, though this is not always the case. The techno-social relationships outlined here show less positive aspects of social commitments to the device.

The Pressures Attributed to Mobile Phone Communication in Langa

Langa residents frequently use their phones to communicate with their families, many of which do not live in Langa or in South Africa. Similarly, they are used by their mobile phones to regulate how and when they call, how they spend their money and to encourage responsible caretaking of their friends and families located elsewhere. Some trans-migrants, residents in Langa who oscillate between their "homes" and Langa generally made it a point to maintain some level of communication with friends and family across the various nation-states and/or home villages to which they belong. This communication was sometimes beneficial for maintaining familial, economic and social obligations among residents. While the mobile phone allows for easy communication between Langa resident, Benson and his family back in Malawi, there is pressure, he says because they call him frequently requesting money:

> Yeah, you see it's eh like I'm here [in Cape Town] now but… they use their phone to tell me that… the house is broken or whatever… so I tell them… I understand but you have to give me a

chance on this period. I'll let you know when I will send the money (Benson Interview September 2011)

Similarly, Benson's cousin Bazaar, also a current resident in Langa owns a small fruit stand in the center of the township. He does not make much money, as there are multiple fruit stands and Spaza shops in Langa. At the time of our interview he admitted that he had not been able to send money to his family in Malawi for over three months even though they continue calling him on his mobile to request money. He felt bad that he could not send money home to his family, but he was also angry that his family insisted on calling him so often, making him feel even worse for not being able to fulfill this responsibility. As several residents mentioned above, constant communication is now available since the introduction of mobile phones. Furthermore, this communication is instant. Residents and their family members (and the technological generation in general) have grown to expect that whoever they intend to communicate with will always be "available and reachable" (Tazanu, 2012), allowing them to simply communicate or make requests at will. These expectations are often taken for granted so that when one is unavailable it disrupts subliminal social obligations and expectations that have been based upon the space and time compressions offered by mobile communication (see also Ling, 2012).

In contrast to Benson and Bazaar, Odon, an Angolan refugee and former resident of Langa, admitted to the pressures he faced from his family to send money. Fortunately for him, he is currently a successful artist at Guga's Thebe in Langa and makes a lot of money selling his paintings to visiting tourists. Therefore, sending money home upon request is not a problem for him, yet he too gets overwhelmed by the constant begging via his mobile phone. While he is financially able to support his brother's tuition fees and pay for his mother's upkeep, for example, it is the constant texting and calling to ask for money that he does not like. "Sometimes", he wished aloud, "I wish they would call just to see how I'm doing". Mobile phones, for these residents "are a form of control; a leash on migrants dragging them back into the family circle if they begin to stray too far away" (Nyamnjoh, H.M., 2013:270). The ease with which individuals can contact each other regardless of distance via mobile phones, as the above examples show, is not always positive, especially when communication is fueled by requests and demands.

The pressures of mobile phone communication for some residents are attributed to mandatory obligations towards family left behind (see also Hay, 2013; Nyamnjoh, H.M., 2013; Tazanu, 2012; Lamoureaux, 2011). Tazanu's (2012) study of the role of new media in Cameroonian transnational friendships and family social ties discusses migration and *bushfalling*, addresses the social hierarchy of *bushfallers* – migrants who have made it – and

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their visible markers of success when they visit home. Addressing what he terms "urban visibility", he explains that *bushfallers'* success, visible through improved lifestyle and material possessions, "provocative" consumption, and their (apparently) "fresh" bodies, suggest that they occupy 'advantaged' positions in their relationships with non-migrants from home. Cameroonian migrants were generally assigned the responsibility to maintain ties between them and their non-migrant family and friends as it is expected that they have the means to do so (2012:144-48). In my own research, I found that the demand for (various) migrants living in Langa to provide for and maintain ties with home did not require "urban visibility". African immigrant residents' assumed ability to meet social and financial obligations with home was simply based on the fact that they had migrated.

At the time of fieldwork, Odon had admittedly not been home in 12 years. Benson and Bazaar had not been home for six and three years respectively. These residents had not been seen by their family, (their non-migrant counterparts), for years and were still subjected to mandatory requests for monies and other social obligations. It would appear, then, that the very act of migration indicates a level of success, though for many migrants this may be false. These residents, like most migrants, were expected to share their success with non-migrants back home (Tazanu, 2012). The mobile phone was used by non-migrants to ensure that this success was shared. This often put residents under pressure to provide and share their success with their kin. The mitigation of distance offered by mobile phones, then, was not always welcomed by residents.

Mobile Phones and the Mitigation of Distance for Langa Residents

Mobile phones tend to make people feel more connected (Carmody, 2010). They often provide what Pelckmans calls an "umbilical cord" (2009:28) between users, offering the possibility for easy communication regardless of distance. For many Langa residents the mobile phone served to ensure communication between them and their friends both in Cape Town and elsewhere. This chapter has provided various examples of how mobile phones are used in Langa to connect with those in various locations for purposes including to request/secure remittances and to maintain social networks. In this sense, the mobile phone is indeed an extension of the body (Warnier, 2001, 2006), allowing residents to perform activities and tend to social obligations from a distance. Simultaneously, some residents' non-migrant kin at home can monitor and control residents' through *their* mobile phones. This is why some residents seek to manipulate technology to avoid control by distant others. While African immigrants seemed to be more likely to call home (Angola, Malawi or Nigeria, for example) using their mobile phones,

internal South African migrants from the Eastern Cape, for example, tended to communicate via SMS and sending photos to loved ones. Many of the African immigrants were workers in Langa, few actually lived there. I attributed their ability to call home to their employment statuses, which suggested that they may have had more money to spend on airtime. While many local Cape Tonians and internal South Africa migrants were also employed, however meager their jobs, it did not seem as necessary to communicate verbally with family, and they were often satisfied with SMSes and even Please Call Me's.

Though some residents were uncomfortable by the mitigation of distance offered by mobile phones, one resident might have benefited from this ability, though he might never know. Monwabise, originally from Queenstown, came to Cape Town in 1993. Before moving to Khayelitsha he lived in Langa. He spoke of living here in Cape Town while his family was still in Queenstown. Maintaining communication with his then girlfriend and young daughter, he admits, was problematic when he moved. He explained communication was "…poor, poor, poor, poor. I failed to communicate with them because I didn't have a cell phone". He admitted that at one time he had gone six months without speaking to his girlfriend during which time she was impregnated by another man. "It took her six months to learn to forget me", he said sadly. In hindsight, he regretted not trying hard to maintain communication with his girlfriend, the mother of his child, by any means. He spoke of how hard it was to communicate, particularly because of his excessive mobility trying to find work and accommodation in the early months of his arrival in Cape Town: "it was hard to communicate because today I stay here, tomorrow I stay there […] I was trying to settle myself" (Monwabise Interview August 2011).

For Monwabise, the intimate relationship with his girlfriend, he says, failed because he did not have a cell phone to communicate as often as was (apparently) necessary. Khuno (2012) in her study on cell phones and intimate relationships suggests that cell phones do not bring a new way of relating for couples in intimate relationships, rather they intensify already existing relationship issues. Therefore, the role of the cell phone is defined only in relation to the issues that are already affecting a particular relationship. It can be concluded that Monwabise's relationship was already in trouble before he came to Cape Town. Initially, I found it peculiar how quickly he blamed his lack of cell phone for failure to communicate with his family. Cell phones had not been introduced in South Africa until 1994 (Hosman & Fife, 2012; Hodge, 2005) which meant that he would have had a year to use the same forms of communication that he always used, even though he appeared to be significantly more mobile in Cape Town. Perhaps, then, it was easier for him to use the cell phone as a convenient scapegoat for the inevitable failure of his relationship with his girlfriend.

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Having eventually secured a mobile phone, he admits "communication is different, now". He now has some contact with his daughter. Showing me an SMS sent by his daughter on Father's Day (of June 2011. The message was a month old at the time of fieldwork) that read "Happy Father's Day Daddy. I lv u"[13], I could see from his emotions that he values communication, at least from his daughter, on his mobile phone. Sometimes, he sends a message "just to tell them that I still love them [and] that I am alive" as he has not been back to Queenstown since moving to Cape Town in 1993. From this example we can see that mobile phones are sometimes crucial for mitigating distance in the attempt to maintain relationships for individuals in mobile communities.

Conclusion

This chapter had situated the mobile phone in a historical perspective among some residents and workers in Langa Township in order to determine its role in the mitigation of distance. The previous chapter demonstrated how mobile phones, as material devices, have relieved residents from some of the (potential) marginalities that affect their lives, namely being socially excluded and therefore socially marginalized in the township for lack of a 'quality' phone. This chapter emphasizes that mobile phones help mitigate distance for some residents separated by great distances, among those within the township, and between Langa and Cape Town. The mitigation of distance offered by mobile phones is highly valued by some residents, offering the ability to mitigate and exacerbate degrees of marginality, particularly in regards to sharing success and maintaining remittance transactions with non-migrant family members (see also Hay, 2013, Nyamnjoh, H.M., 2013; Tazanu, 2012). I maintain, however, that while residents value the mobile phone's role in creating and maintaining a range of relationships, as well as providing for constant and flexible means of communication, the social value and prestige associated with 'quality' phones was comparatively more significant.

The ability for mobile phones to compress time and space is not always a positive attribute, however. Some residents (Odon from Angola and Benson from Malawi, for example) were overwhelmed by their families' ability to easily contact them with the intention of securing remittances and other material wants. Some residents were contacted so frequently by members left behind that they would often avoid calls from home rather than explain their financial struggles, if any, in their new environment. Avoiding calls from home sometimes meant that casual (and sometimes necessary) communication for the purposes of sharing information about

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[13] I love you

one's health, for example, were disrupted, but it was a price that some residents were willing to pay. Others admitted their reluctance to go home, even for a visit, especially if they had been unable to meet material expectations. Mobile phones, then, have proved to be disadvantageous for some residents in their compression of time and space, as it seemed impossible to avoid responsibilities, particularly for those who were deliberately trying to avoid them, perhaps even relying on distance to cushion their families' expectations.

The next chapter explores what impact, if any, mobile phones, among other ICTs, have played in socio-economic relations for Langa residents.

CHAPTER 6

THE IMPACT OF ICTS ON NEW SOCIO-ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN LANGA

Introduction

      Granted that marginality has socio-economic dimensions as well, this chapter uses the idea of articulating uncertainties of marginality to explore the impact of ICTs on socio-economic relations in Langa. As part of an investigation that explores how socio-economic relations in the mobile margins of South Africa have been simultaneously transformed and maintained with the introduction of ICTs, the chapter approaches new socio-economic relations in Langa through the lens of new technological developments within the country. It would be difficult to discuss the impact of ICTs on new socio-economic relations without referring to development. This chapter, therefore, also touches on the relationship between ICTs and development (see also *Chapter 4*). The introduction and adaptation of ICTs within the country has been essential, as technological changes have always been crucial to social, economic and political changes (Faik & Walsham, 2012).

      Researchers in ICTD suggest that there is a link between the adoption of ICTs and an increase in the incomes of the people within that region (Qureshi, 2012:181). Dr. Hamadoun I. Toure, Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a union dedicated to "connecting the world and harnessing the unique potential of ICTs", states that "ICTs can no longer be simply understood as technological tools, but as an essential ingredient and key strategic component of social and economic developments" (Toure, 2013:33, 37).This chapter, therefore, proposes to answer the following research question: *To what extent and in what ways do ICTs lead to new socio-economic relations in Langa Township?* I focus on if and how ICTs and their influences facilitate various social and economic issues including employment opportunities, income and financial savings, and social issues involving community interactions, sharing, and family remittance obligations. I aim to show the extent that ICTs and their influence facilitate socio-economic relations within Langa and between Langa and elsewhere.

      Given that Langa's populations consists of only black residents, I begin by situating the current socio-economic predicaments of black South Africans in the context of the country's economic and labor history.

South Africa's Economy in Historical Perspective

During World War II, industrialists, including farmers and mining companies, recruited and employed thousands of black men from within South Africa to combat the labor shortage in the Western Cape (Andrews et al., 1962:113-14; Wilson, 1972). Industrial tariff protection was implemented in 1925 to speed up industrialization, provide employment for an influx of Europeans, and to "engender more diversified and more productive national economies and absorb the surplus rural population" (Andrews et al., 1962:124). The granting of tariff protection was done selectively and not indiscriminately as "the underlying aim was to encourage the balanced development of the economy consistent with a situation in which each worker is employed in the sphere in which he is most productive" (Andrews et al., 1962:125).

South Africa's migratory labor system had persisted through the years. In order to supplement the inadequate income inside their own areas, most of the black workers (predominantly men) went to work outside the Reserves, returning home at regular intervals before returning home permanently (Wilson, 1972; Andrews et al., 1962). In spite of separating black workers in the Reserves from the Europeans, they became increasing integrated as laborers in an economy where the capital and initiatives were supplied by Europeans, resulting in employment problems. The continual shortage of skilled workers in the country since the discovery of diamonds kept the price of skilled labor high while a large and readily available supply of unskilled (non-European, black) workers continued to expand through immigration from neighboring territories for significantly lower pay (Andrews et al., 1962:158, 173). As living standards are often contingent on wages, it is not surprising that the majority of the black population in South Africa lived and continues to live in poverty (Pillay et al., 2013; Neves & Du Toit, 2010; Neocosmos, 2006), clearly evidenced by their poor housing conditions and increasing populations in townships and informal settlements during and after the apartheid government (Township Renewal Sourcebook, 2009).

Since the first half of the 19th century, black African labor had been integral to the Cape economy. Indeed, Cape Town was literally built by black migrant workers along with slaves and prisoners of war. There were thousands of black migrants living and working in Cape Town, over half of whom were illegal (The Colored Labor Preference Area Policy 1983:1-3). Illegal immigrants often referred to those who were "undocumented" (Itmann et al., 2010:125) from places like the Ciskei, Transkei, Mozambique and South West Africa (Wilson, 1972). In 1955, Dr. W. M. M. Eiselen, secretary for native affairs, enforced Western Cape controls over the black population. Controlling the black population in the Western Cape was accomplished through a variety of means including the gradual replacement of black workers with colored

workers. In 1965, Black Labor Regulations insisted on the renewal of contracts being done only in the "homelands" to prevent workers with long records of service in the Western Cape from qualifying for residence rights under Section 10(1) (b) of the Urban Areas Act. In 1966 an official freeze on family housing in the Western Cape was intended to reduce the number of blacks in the area by up to 5% per annum. This coincided with an official freeze on black labor. As a result, the building of black housing was put on hold for ten years. Such processes were sanctioned under The Colored Labor Preference Area Policy or CLPAP. This ultimately resulted in a lack of housing for the black population in the Western Cape's (The Colored Labor Preference Area Policy, 1983:1-3).

Influx control policies, such as the Group Areas Act and CLPAP that emerged during the heightened period of migrant employment, contributed to the emergence of several other informal settlements and townships which, like Langa, continue to remain black and impoverished (SAHO 1300 – 1997). South Africa's extensive history of migration continues to increase as the country is seen as a place of opportunity. The desire for greener pastures by immigrants from around the continent has led to overwhelming (black) populations in townships and informal settlements. I discuss some of the reasons for continued migration below.

Mobility, Migration and Globalization in South Africa

Mobility, as an umbrella term that includes all types of movement including migration, is for many Africans, a means of survival (de Bruijn, van Dijk & Foeken, 2001:1). Migration is often influenced by a host of factors including socio-economic, political and environmental instabilities (Statistics South Africa, 2013:7). Most (im)migrants will embrace patterns of mobility to sustain personal needs. In rare cases, however, some types of mobility are not centered on personal needs. The Mbororo-Fulani of the Western Grassfields of Cameroon, for example, rely on mobility predominantly for the purposes of their cattle. It is their cattle that determine when and where they travel to on the basis of ensuring fresh grass for grazing (Nyamnjoh, 2013b: 9, 24). Historical, economic, ethnic and political factors have all contributed to and maintained intra-regional, inter-regional and international migration in Africa. Migration in Africa is very much a family matter where even non-migrant members of the family are involved and affected by the migration process (Adepoju, 2000:384-45). Migration and mobility patterns across the continent are part of family and community survival tactics, including long-term security and sustainability and remittance and investment opportunities (Stark, 1991; Taylor, 1999 in Castles, 2002:1149). The largest stream of migration in Africa consists of intra-regional migrant workers, undocumented migrants, refugees and highly skilled professionals.

The most common causes of migration are the push and pull factors: "the pull of opportunity and the push of abject poverty" (Adepoju, 2000:383). South Africa, in particular, has an extensive history of internal and external migration within the country (Neocosmos, 2006; Akokpari, 2000; Mamdani, 1996; Wilson, 1972; Mayer, 1971). In South Africa, studies have shown that Gauteng and the Western Cape provinces receive the most migrants from other provinces while the Eastern Cape, Free State and Limpopo lose the most residents to other provinces (Statistics South Africa, 2013; Polzer, 2010). Based on the increasing presence of external immigrants from outside the country in South Africa, and particularly the Western Cape, it can be assumed that the Western Cape is considered a high-opportunity destination.

Though the existence of ever increasing rates of unemployment and poverty are widespread, South Africa is still relatively wealthy compared to many of its neighbors (McClendon, 2010), hence its appeal towards many African immigrants. South Africa has been a place of refuge for many African immigrants fleeing political incompetence and economic mismanagement in their home countries (Dodson, 2010; Neocosmos, 2006). Despite high levels of inequality, South Africa is generally described as a model of success in Africa (Klemz et al., 2006). And as the richest country in Africa, South Africa's perceived opportunities attract African migrants fleeing from other countries (Anonymous, 1996).

Some of the reasons behind South Africa's extensive history of internal and external migration, (see Neocosmos, 2006; Akokpari, 2000; Mamdani, 1996; Wilson, 1972; Mayer, 1971), have demonstrated the country's appeal to Africans from in around the continent. Apart from the belief of its social, economic and political opportunities, it has been suggested that South Africa provides African immigrants with opportunities for gaining skills, making money and learning English for those who eventually plan to travel abroad to America, Australia or Europe (Sichone, 2008). The attraction of the country has resulted in some South Africans feeling superior to other Africans (Neocosmos, 2006), stemming from the belief that other African countries are "economically and culturally backward in relation to South Africa" (Nyamnjoh, 2006-38-9). To my question on whether he thought South African's felt they were superior to Africans from other countries Victor, former Langa resident answered, "South Africa is being used as a springboard by other countries, by America, to come to Africa so that's why South Africans feel they are superior". He remarked further:

> Uh, I think for them… comparing it with their countries, South Africa is better off economically […] so that's why they have to migrate and make sure that they come here. Eh [in] South Africa … the migrant laws, they are not very harsh compared to other countries […] but it's strange because some of the countries are stable. Like if you take a Nigerian, [Nigeria] is a very

economic country, very powerful, it's got oil [and] everything but you'll find most of them are migrating here […] So sometimes you don't understand the reasons behind [them coming]. You'll find that the facilities like the hospitals, the … women … like to come in South Africa… to use the hospitals … because they believe that … the health standards and the standards of our hospitals… is better compared to their countries (Victor Interview August 2011)

In another part of our conversation Victor suggested that South Africa's relatively easy transportation systems apparently appeal to immigrants' desire for the convenience of easy travel to and from home. Additionally, employment opportunities and healthcare, according to him, are what continue to attract foreigners. When speaking of his move from the Eastern Cape, Thando praised Cape Town as being a particularly better place to live in South Africa

Um… there are the push and pull factors. At where I stay like in the Eastern Cape um we don't have all the things that they have here [in Cape Town]. The libraries, we don't have. Um better schools, you'll only find them in Cape Town. From us, like this is the only city I've gone to. I can find life in Cape…in Cape Town instead of [in the] Eastern Cape like everything is [better] when I'm in Cape Town than [in the] Eastern (Thando Interview February 2012)

In a subtle reinforcement to Victor's sentiments about South Africa in general, Thando, and no doubt plenty of other (im)migrants, also feel that Cape Town, in particular, has a lot to offer those from outside of the country specifically in regards to education. In fact, the St. Francis School in Langa is a remedial school and is the only school where students who have failed matric can retake their exams and get their certificates. As schools of this type are rare, one resident said that students come from all over to get their certificates, even as far as Paarl. (This school, in addition to tourism, is one reason why Langa is a high traffic destination in Cape Town). Noting that some residents that I interacted with did not matriculate, while others who did, did not pursue their education beyond matriculation for a variety of reasons, mainly financial, it was apparent that a successful matriculation was highly regarded (probably *because* not everyone matriculated). Several residents were beneficiaries of this remedial school and were grateful for a second chance to pass matric. During another interview Malawian native, Benson, revealed his love for Cape Town. Being in South Africa for over a decade and living in Langa since to 2008, he explained why he preferred South Africa in general and Cape Town in particular. First explaining some of the reasons why he left Malawi, he shared:

Benson: …there [in Malawi] it's difficult. People they are suffering […] you see some people are dying. Some people, they are sick. The sickness is there because [we have] a clinic and everything but the medicine is difficult because economies are low so then to get medicine [is hard so] people are dying because there [is] no medicine [in] the hospital […] my mother she was sick, you see, now I [said] 'no man… she must come here' [from Malawi]

Crystal: So is she here now?

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Benson: She was here on the time she was sick but now she is better. The medicine… the medical system it's nice here [in Cape Town]

Crystal: Is she better now?

Benson: Yeah, now she's fine […] [also] Cape Town I think is better […] [the] government here in Cape Town is better because they give foreigners those papers, then they must be comfortable so then after that you will go and look for the better job, you see and better money

And at a later point in the interview:

Crystal: So do you feel like you belong here in Cape Town?

Benson: Yeah, for now I want… I must be belonging in Cape Town

Crystal: Do you eventually plan on going back to Malawi?

Benson: Yeah I want to go to Malawi but… just to visit

Crystal: Oh, wow! Not to live there?

Benson: Yeah not to live there (laughs)

Crystal: So, Cape Town, you feel like this is your home?

Benson: Yeah (laughing) (Benson Interview September 2011)

For Benson, Cape Town *is* his home specifically because of the benefits is has offered him and his once ailing mother. He is most appreciative of the economy here in South Africa as he explains:

Yeah… it's like… the economy, you see. Here it's like, even if I've got R100 and go to the shop to do groceries maybe… I can eat [for] two, three, or four days but there [in Malawi] maybe if I've got 100 Kwacha… you can just buy bread, you see. So… you see it's difficult. Even if I visit there [in Malawi], if I've got here [in South Africa] R15 000, it grows to something like 100-and-something thousand there [in Malawi] you see… so there I'm like *rich* (laughs). I'm a better person. I can support my family and they know that the man is back, you know.

Being able to send remittances home where his South African currency can go a long way is also a positive benefit of staying in South Africa for Benson. The above examples demonstrate South Africa's enticement to some immigrants for a variety of reasons: job opportunities, healthcare, and education. Not surprisingly, however, not all immigrants found South Africa to be the place of opportunity that they hoped it would be when they arrived. Nigerian native and one of the workers in Langa's cell phone container explained that he has been living in South Africa for four years. He is unhappy and wants to move to the United States but had yet to secure a visa during the time of fieldwork. He explained that he came here to:

…do business but living in South Africa is very hard. Being in SA makes you do crime because the only job you can get is security and I would never do security… it makes you feel like a

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slave. They're sleeping while you're watching their stuff. I couldn't do that. I just came to do business. I didn't know how to fix phones before. I just learned while I was here. It is hard but you learn (Richard Interview April 2012)

I did not get a clear answer when I asked what "business" he intended to do when he came here but it was clear enough that working in the cell phone container, while better than working security in his mind, was not what he expected to do upon entering the country. For him, finding a job once entering the country was not easy, forcing him to "do crime" (though he did not elaborate on crimes committed, he alluded to stealing) in order to sustain himself. Though he has a steady job with Henry, the owner of the cell phone repair container in Langa, his payment is commission based and is only plentiful at the end of the month when residents can afford to bring their phones in for repair or buy phones and airtime from the container. Unlike Benson, he is unhappy. He cannot afford to send money home to his family or splurge on them when he visits them. Others still, like Benson, found what they were looking for in South Africa. South Africa, already considered the most developed and successful country in Africa (Klemz et al., 2006), has even greater appeal since the integration of ICTs.

Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICTD)

Some scholars argue that new mobile technologies can facilitate economic and developmental growth, enhance lives, empower citizens and bring about social change (Orgeret & Ronning, 2009; James & Versteeg, 2007). ICTs are expected to solve problems, particularly among those stricken with poverty. However, poverty has not significantly reduced through the use of ICTs and their potential in this regard should not be exaggerated (Carmody, 2010). Nevertheless, as mobile phones have been associated with the enhancement of autonomy (Castells et al., 2007) and the "mobile emancipation" (Gumpert & Drucker, 2007:11) of individuals, they can be viewed as stepping stones toward the reduction of, though, not the complete eradication of, poverty in the power that they bring their users through their multiple functions. Referring again to Miller and Slater's (2000) notion of *expansive realization*, mobile phones have the potential to facilitate the reduction of poverty (a previously constituted desire). The power awarded to some mobile phone users can be associated with the notion of *expansive potential* where technology shows people what they *could* be in the future (Miller & Slater, 2000), encouraging a sense of control and increased levels of agency that may have formerly been lacking.

ICTs and their Contribution to Socio-Economic Development

It has been suggested that ICTs have transformed the everyday life of their users to such an extent that they can be thought of as agents of social change (Nurullah, 2009). The view of technology as active agents in the social world often results from the acknowledgement that ICTs accelerate social mobility. New mobile communication technologies have created possibilities for new kinds of social networking (Ling & Campbell, 2011:1; Lamoureaux, 2011; de Bruijn et al., 2010:270-71, 2009; Orgeret & Ronning, 2009; Horst & Miller, 2006; Castells, 1996/2000; Miller & Slater, 2000) for many users around the world. Horst and Miller (2006:193) suggest that "we should not be afraid to view technology as an active agency in the social world". Latour (2005) also emphasizes that objects, in this case technologies, have agency in that they have the power to modify a state of affairs. However, technology can be an active agent only in combination with conscious human effort, reflecting the agency of its users. Without humans, technology is only an actor-in-waiting; "an actant" (Latour, 2005:71). Without us, is it really accurate to say that the Internet or mobile phones are active agents? (Powell, 2012: 87). It would be more appropriate, instead to emphasize how users appropriate these technologies towards social, economic and political change.

Certain types of appropriations and interventions may result in ICTs positively influencing the local economy of poor and disadvantage communities. With the aid of ICTs these communities become more integrated in the digital economy (Shearman, 2003). Furthermore, ICTs' facilitation in administration, education, healthcare and banking services demonstrates their capacity to be used and manipulated toward the maximum benefit of their users. Acknowledging how rapidly modern technology has been adopted in addition to its role in fulfilling day-to-day activities (see for example, Keen, 2012; Pelckmans, 2009; Hanson, 2007) is proof of how technology has shaped society. Where we once managed to get along fine without new ICTs, now users admittedly feel anxious without them (Keen, 2012; Hanson, 2009). (To some extent, we have lost the ability to think outside the box. In addition to making use of technology to facilitate our actions, we sometimes rely heavily on technology to 'think' and 'act' for us.)

The current use of ICTs in socio-economic development demonstrates how society has appropriated such technologies to meet human priorities. Castells (2000:7) and Mushengyezi (2003:115) state that keeping abreast of new technology allows people to communicate more effectively. Beyond its role in interpersonal communications, Bubou (2011:37) among other scholars, argue that effective economic and industrial development was contingent upon a nations' ability to "acquire, absorb and disseminate modern technology" such as mobile phones

and the Internet. Mobile technological developments across the African continent have had dramatic effects, particularly in rural locations. Farmers can compare market prices and fishermen can sell their catch by locating customers via mobile phone contact (Chavula, 2013; Chillimo & Ngubule, 2011; Molony. 2009). Health workers can also remind AIDS patients, for example, to take their daily medicine, and the unemployed can find jobs and make themselves easily available through their mobile phones (Chavula, 2013; Toure, 2013).

Modernization, as a theory of development, is generally indicative of economic progress, though economic progress is not the only aspect involved in modernization. The concept of development has been closely linked with modernization, suggesting that modernization was facilitating newly independent nations to "catch up" with the modern world (Faik & Walsham, 2012:351-4). Shearman (2003:16) indicates that with the right use of ICTs (the right use within the context of a given country), developing countries can access new opportunities at the same time as everyone else without having to "catch up" (Faik & Walsham, 2012). ICTs have provided new opportunities for developing countries to "catch the development train", demonstrating their vital role in economic growth (Bubou, 2011:37). As such, developing countries are most suitable to benefit from the adoption of ICTs (Meso, Datta & Mborika 2005) as they are often vulnerable and in a "precariously weak economic development position" (Meso et al., 2005:186). It has been suggested that ICTs have helped redefine human existence, particularly in developing countries in recent times, having had "profound effects on socio-economic, political and cultural aspects of society". Furthermore, they have become essential tools in the implementation of national development plans (Bubou, 2011:35).

It has already been established that ICTs on their own cannot solve social problems or facilitate any (social, economic, political or cultural) improvement in the sustainable livelihoods of people (Qureshi, 2012; Chillimo & Ngulube, 2011; Bubou, 2011). Rather, it is the successful adoption of these technologies coupled with innovative appropriations that allow (desirable or otherwise) social changes and improvements to occur (Qureshi, 2012; Bubou, 2011). I have maintained that without conscious human effort, ICTs are nothing more than sterile and useless objects, inanimate and perhaps only visually appealing when left to themselves. While ICTs do indeed have the potential to facilitate development on social, economic and political levels, it would be problematic to eliminate the role of agency in the rejection or acceptance and appropriation of such technologies by the users, particularly in regards to their developmental or social progress (Rangaswamy & Cutrell, 2012). In particularly under-researched and (presumably) marginalized communities, the role of the individual as a purpose driven user and governor of the technology is made increasing evident. In places like Langa where the

population is typically given little credit for the structure and developments in their lives, this study acknowledges their agency as knowledgeable and aggressive users and appropriators of technology.

Employment Opportunities via ICTs

Township tourism is increasingly becoming known for its economic potential and contribution to poverty alleviation (Booyen, 2010). Starting in 1994, township tourism in South Africa originally targeted foreign special interests but currently is utilized and accessible to international visitors from all over the world. It is believed that township tourism can enhance the local economy of marginalized areas, particularly when locals are given the opportunity to take part in decision-making, be employed, trained and empowered and become owners of tourism products (Booyen, 2010). Langa has proven to be a popular tourist site in this regard. Tourists visit the township for a tour paying a minimum of R150 per person to the tour guide who is, more times than not, a local resident. Some tourists also seek accommodation for a weekend or a week at one of the B & Bs. For tourists, paying R250 – R300 per night at one of the B & Bs has not proven to be a financial burden. Tourists, as I have been told by some residents, are valued because "they bring money to the township". Zamile, along with several of the residents I became close with, worked as tour guides for the City of Cape Town and were stationed at Guga S'thebe, Langa's Visitors' Center. The employment of local residents directly benefits the economy of the community (Booyen, 2010). Some residents become tour guides others can create and sell miscellaneous items to passing tourists.

Whereas some tourists planned tours in advance with specific tour guides, others simply showed up at Guga S'thebe and requested the guidance of anyone that was available. It was, therefore, not uncommon to find restless and anxious tour guides sitting front of the center looking for unaccompanied tourists. However, tour guides could also use their mobile phones to their benefit. Tour guides in Langa were often on friendly terms with tour guides who worked in other areas. Tour guides in other areas would alert tour guides in Langa when interested tourists were coming their way. This usually occurred via SMS or a short phone call from one tour guide to another. Also, it was not uncommon for tour guides to recommend specific tour guides in other areas to visitors, which often meant passing phone numbers around. On several occasions I witnessed a seemingly random call coming through to one of the resident tour guide's who after ending the call, excitedly revealed that the call was from a company or individual scheduling a future tour.

Cell Phone Banking

In Kenya mobile phones have been a key ICT product that have positively affected business practices, including advertisements, marketing, revealing new products and (new) payment methods. Being able to make payment via mobile phones has been the most recent development in Kenya and has revolutionized how business is conducted. New payment methods became available in Kenya in March of 2007 when Safaricom, one of their mobile operators, launched the mobile money transfer system: M-Pesa. Since 2007, this mobile payment system has become increasingly popular and the concept has spread to other countries across the continent. Both banked and unbanked populations can enjoy this function, which offers various transactions including "paying suppliers for goods and services, paying bills, sending money to friends and relations, withdrawing cash, topping up airtime accounts" as well as topping up others' banks and airtime accounts and managing your own account (Mbago, 2010:183, 185).

M-Pesa is particularly beneficial because the only requirements are to have (access to) a mobile phone and basic literacy to operate the phone. These two requirements, however, are not always easily met, particularly by those in remote areas, as you will read below. Further benefits included the fact that the system did not rely on any physical infrastructure and the speed at which transactions were completed. M-Pesa has allowed bank customers to avoid long lines at the bank (Mbago, 2010). While this banking app took off with great speed in Kenya and other parts of Africa, studies in South Africa have shown that cell-phone banking has not been as popular particularly among low-income communities in the rural areas. In South Africa the First National Bank Ltd. (FNB) became the first financial institution in the country to offer a mobile banking application to its customers. This particular "app is available for Apple, Google, Android and Research in Motion BlackBerry devices as well as smartphones and tablets" and allows its users to "check balances, transfer funds, make bill and card payments and get transaction details" (Chibber, 2011).

Despite the benefits offered through cell phone banking, there are a vast majority of South Africans in rural areas that have yet to utilize this option (Mlitwa & Tshetsha, 2012), even when their phone has access to the function. In their study on the use and understanding of cell phone banking in both Gugulethu and Nyanga, informal settlements in the Western Cape (Cape Town, South Africa), Mlitwa and Tshetsha (2012) seek to explore how low-income users benefited from this application. After interviewing twenty residents within the two settlements (ten males, ten females), their results showed that only one person out of the twenty (a female resident) admitted to using cell phone banking to "transfer money to her kids in the Eastern

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Cape, buy airtime, and check her account balance". Their findings ultimately suggest that people living in remote areas are still not benefiting from the innovation of cell phone banking to the extent that banking institutions had expected (Mlitwa & Tshetsha, 2012:368). My research in Langa confirms that (most) residents refrained from using cell phone banking. As most of the major ATM's (Standard Bank, Absa and FNB) were located near the taxi rank and most working employees were paid at the end of the month, it was not uncommon to see huge lines at the ATM during month end. Residents that required additional banking services had to take the taxi from Langa to Mowbray, where there is no shortage of banks to complete their transactions.

While most residents did not actively use cell phone banking, some residents, including myself, received cell phone alerts from the bank to alert us via SMS when money was deposited into or deducted from an account. This is a significantly easier function to utilize as all it takes is a once-off trip to the bank for a conversation/transaction with a receptionist where you can register for mobile alerts to be sent to your phone. Cell phone banking, however, requires a certain (though small) level of literacy and patience that some residents did not have, at least during fieldwork. It is true, then, that Langa, as a low-income area, consists of users who have not benefited from this function. It is apparent, however, that Langa residents have successfully acquired new mobile communications and are using them for practical means that have had various benefits in the township, not least of which has helped to facilitate economic developments in the community.

ICTs and New Socio-Economic Relations in Langa

In South Africa, ICTs have been essential in the promotion of economic growth and development through increased opportunities for employment creation and allowing people to identify work and school opportunities (Tlabela et al., 2007). Focusing on communities like Langa within South Africa, who generally suffer from economic and social disadvantages relative to other communities in the country, is necessary to understand the impact of ICTs on new socio-economic relations. Communities like that of Langa often have low earning potential and income generation. It is also said that these types of communities are plagued with high unemployment rates and low education attainment (Shearman, 2003). While my research shows that Langa residents are economically disadvantaged, with the majority of working residents receiving low-wages, the fact is, the majority of residents that I interacted with at the time of research, were employed. And although I literally only met three residents besides myself who were at tertiary level education, many residents, though I dare not say most, had at least, finished high school. I present this inconsistency to suggest that though certain communities may be

similar, they should not be categorized or judged homogenously based on their disadvantages or the potential impacts that ICTs may have on them and their development. This study focuses on Langa and I do not readily suggest that findings in Khayelitsha or Gugulethu (townships in the Western Cape), for example, would be similar.

Material and Experiential Purchases

Before continuing to discuss the impact of ICTs in socio-economic relations in Langa, I would first like to talk about the purchases – and the intentions behind the purchases – of ICTs as a way of contextualizing their new found fame in economic and other developments. Carter and Gilovich (2012) published an article based on empirical research that would help determine whether (personal) experiences (vacations, going to the movies etc.), as opposed to material possessions (tangible objects like clothing and electronic gadgets), are more closely related to the self. Their primary concerns are with *Experiential Purchases* and *Material Purchases* which they clearly distinguish and define. They define material purchases as "physical objects… which endure in one's possession for an extended period in time". Experiential purchases are defined as "intangible and impermanent… that endure primarily in memory". Experiential possessions, they claim, are part of the service economy and are generally purchased with the intention of "gaining some experience" (Carter and Gilovich, 2012:1305). I refer to these two kinds of purchases as they bear some significance to the intention behind ICT purchases in Langa.

Materialistic purchases, they suggest, are often made with the intent to signal wealth or status either to others or to oneself. I would understand material purchases to be objects that (can be or) are mobile and are visually applicable like items associated with the body, like clothing and jewelry, or items displayed in the home, like the huge televisions owned by many residents, for example. Items that can be played around with, moved around to enhance a certain feature or aspect of the home to, perhaps, infer financial stability and fashion sense could be considered materialistic. Gosselain (2000:189) explains that objects accumulate histories which then have the ability to tell stories about people. This dissertation has shown that in the case of Langa mobile phones are one of the primary material possessions desired by residents. As mobile phones are relatively new in South Africa, I would be reluctant to consider them as objects that have accumulated histories for residents. My reluctance in this aspect stems from a variety of reasons, not least of which is because most residents I spoke with had changed mobile phones several times since their initial ownership of the technology.

Perhaps I would feel more confident in addressing the 'accumulated histories' of mobile phones for residents if I had pursued the mobile phone's mobility in the lives of residents. Julia

Pfaff's (2009:134-151) study on the life of a single mobile phone, both as an object of exchange and as a communication technology, argues that understanding objects-in-motion would bring understanding of the actual movement of the object, including the people and places that it has been. This would ultimately reveal the adaptability of the object and its appropriation by users and places. My understanding of the mobility of the mobile phone suggests that every time a phone is passed on between person and place it acquires a 'second life'. I do not refer to a second life in the same way as Hahn and Kibora (2008:96) who claim that many technical devices in Africa acquire a second life – an extension of its usage beyond its life expectancy as it is imported into Africa from France or other European countries. By 'second life' I refer to the fact that in the hands of a completely different user, the phone will take on new significance and symbolism and may be appropriated in ways completely different to that of the previous owner. The fact that this second life is inevitable reinforces that idea that technology is very much controlled by its user.

Where technological determinism suggests that "we have little choice in the matter of development and eventual up take of technology" (Chandler, 2012:257), our ability to influence the device's history proves otherwise. Had I pursued the mobility of a particular phone in the life of residents, I may have gained insight into the 'accumulated history' of one or more residents as (simultaneously) influenced by their mobile phone. I have, instead, claimed that the social value of mobile phones in Langa reinforces current social and economic standards that then have the ability to tell various (real or imagined) stories about residents.

In Langa several material possessions were used by residents to express wealth and status and to enhance an individual's identity – creating various stories about them. Shopping bags were one such item. While many residents did their grocery shopping at Shoprite (usually one outside of the township) they would carry Woolworth's[14] bags on their person and pack their Shoprite groceries into their Woolworths bag so that when they returned to Langa it appeared that they had purchased their groceries at Woolworths. Female residents often spent large amounts of money on hairstyles and wigs so that their physical appearance suggested that they had the type of income that allowed such extravagant hair maintenance. Shoes, though often bought at cheaper prices when on sale, or cheaper look-alike shoes similar to expensive brands, were often purchased and worn to create a certain perception about one's identity, particularly financial status. Observations and informal chatting in the field helped me to deduce the

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[14] While Shoprite is a lower end store particularly suitable for low-income individuals, Woolworths is a considerably more upmarket and more expensive shopping store.

significance of these habits and patterns of behavior. Standing in front of her home during a warm night, a young female resident known for her fashion sense in the township explained that she spends a lot of money on clothing even if it means going without food. During this conversation she wore a silk cream-colored sweater with shiny sequences on the shoulders. She bought it from a clothing store called Vertigo and said she paid R200 for it. She admitted that it was a lot to pay for a shirt but claimed "she had to have it".

She liked to dress nice and loved the attention she received both inside and out of Langa. "People will see me but they can't (wouldn't) know I stay here [in Langa]." This statement suggested that in the same way residents attempt to appear 'better off' than other residents via their mobile phones or where it appears they purchase their groceries, she uses clothing, her high fashion sense, to distance herself from Langa, at least when she is outside the township. Her comment, for me, did not indicate that she was at all ashamed of being a resident of Langa. Without minimizing that fact that she just liked to look nice, it seemed that, subconsciously or not, she was speaking against one of the many stereotypes about township residents, perhaps that their lack of money means they dress poorly. Her style of dress, though gossiped about by jealous residents, was, generally admired by others. It came to my attention that the enhancement of identity is not just beneficial among residents but between residents and those living outside of Langa, including the tourists who come to see them. Having the most popular or most expensive mobile phone can potentially create a common denominator among those outside of Langa, suggesting that perhaps they are not as economically marginal as perceived.

Though very few residents own a laptop or have a computer in their homes (not because they cannot afford it, but observations have suggested that their priorities are elsewhere such as huge televisions and expensive cell phones), many suggested that their knowledge of how to use the Internet and other computer functions came from their phones. When going to the Internet café or taking advantage of school computer labs was not an option, they resorted to the various functions of the mobile phone to learn, which in many ways is like a small computer (Hanson, 2007). It can be suggested then, that this otherwise material purchase – the purchase of an electronic gadget – was experiential in the context of Langa (not that I believe this to be unique to Langa residents), as the purchase of the mobile phone was, among other things, made to gain experience in using computers. This reality therefore blurs the two purchases showing how, mobile phones, for example, can easily fit into both categories of experiential and material purchases. Investing in the Internet café and spending a limited amount of time on the web can be considered experiential as users pay a certain amount of money (purchasing) time on the Internet for a variety of reasons. Furthermore, the few who did own laptops and computers used

them for school and work related projects in addition to Google searches and social networking sites when on the web, furthering the experiences that perhaps they are/were in the process of gaining while physically at school and work. The intention behind the purchases begins to show the impact that ICTs are having on socio-economic relations where, in spite of the high prices of some mobile phones and computers, residents are investing in their products and services toward a learning experience. This develops characters and the township in general.

Access to ICTs have provided some residents with some of the same opportunities as those living in more urban areas with higher incomes and better privileges, ultimately leading towards development in the township. The Internet, for example, has demonstrated these development opportunities for Langa residents. The first and biggest Internet Café in Langa opened in 2003. Fortunately I had the opportunity to speak with Nomvuyo, the manager of this particular Internet Café as there are several in Langa. This café had around eighteen computers. While it was never empty, it was most full during the afternoon hours. It provides a variety of services including typing, printing (color and black and white), faxing, scanning and Internet use. There was also a vending machine that offered a variety of soft drinks. While sitting in front of a computer working on a document, Nomvuyo, a middle aged Xhosa woman, talked about the use of the Internet in Langa:

> The Internet Café opened in 2003 because they noticed that a lot people [in Langa] were working but did not have an office at home so they had to waste time and money taking a taxi to a place where they could access computers and the Internet. There was no place in Langa where they could print, fax, scan or email so they opened the Internet Café. It was opened in 2003 but many of the people did not know how to use computers or how to use the Internet so the use of the café did not take off right away. They gave introductory courses in the back of the café to help people learn how to use computers and now it is very successful (Nomvuyo Interview April 2012)

The Internet Café has played a role in the development of Langa, as it has allowed residents who need the Internet and similar facilities for work and/or school the option of access in the comfort of the township instead of travelling to find access. Employed residents and active students can commit to working and studying from home ensuring (or hoping to ensure) the success of their tasks.

Another example comes to mind while thinking of the Internet and its relation to development in Langa. One day while sitting in the home of my second host family, my host brother, Mandla, was sitting at the dining table talking to a man in Dubai via Skype. I was in my room at the time but heard both ends of the conversation as the volume was loud. Mandla worked for himself as a broker linking buyers and sellers together across the world. At the end of their conversation I came out of my room and we began to talk about how amazing it was that he

could be sitting here in Cape Town having a conversation with someone in Dubai in real time. As Mandla does not have money to travel to meet his clients face-to-face, "Skyping is an excellent alternative" he said. Here again we see that the Internet and communication via Skype helps residents like Mandla not only to run his own business, but to work around the world, even while his finances may not allow him to travel. He is able to "travel while sitting down" (Archambault, 2012) through ICTs. Without Skype, Mandla would likely not have been able to start this job. While these technologies can potentially *re-introduce* distance, buffering the tension between, for example, a couple who has had a falling out, the Internet, Skype and mobile phones help to *eliminate* distance as an obstacle through their compression of time and space (Lamoureaux, 2013; Ling & Campbell, 2011; Nyamnjoh, 2009; de Bruijn et al., 2009; de Bruijn, 2009).

Zamile shows yet another way that ICTs are useful. He uses the Internet to learn about the tourists that he will be guiding on a tour of the township. It was not uncommon for him to ask me how to spell a certain country for his own benefit. When he had time, he would go to the Internet café and Google the country that the next group of tourists was from. This helped him relate to the visitors as well as making it easier to engage in conversation. In my own experience of shadowing Zamile during some of his tours, I noted that some tourists were genuinely impressed with his knowledge of their country. He also revealed that research about a specific country gave him clues to things that certain tourists might find particularly interesting during the tour and, as a result, he may focus on specific areas and aspects of the township for their benefit. He would also attempt to look up pertinent vocabulary in order to be able to greet them in their own language. In this way, the Internet was useful to Zamile for learning about different cultures, even though his primary interest was tourists. During fieldwork I noted that his use of the technology served him well at his job and indeed he was one of the more approachable tour guides because of his knowledge and comfort in the company of tourists from various places. The above examples demonstrate how ICTs have empowered Langa residents by providing them with opportunities to better their lives in a variety of ways.

Defined as the process through which powerless and disadvantaged groups attain power and self-determination, 'empowerment' is said to be crucial to the survival of marginal populations. Empowerment helps them to gain control over their lives (Rahman, 2006). I have shown how the Internet has contributed to the self-determination of residents. The knowledge of and ability to use the Internet and its multiple services has facilitated their agency towards aggressively pursuing employment and study opportunities. The mobile phone has also contributed to accelerated communication for Langa residents, helping them to keep up with and

maintain relationships with family, friends and lovers outside of Langa. Additionally ICTs help residents to stay abreast of the latest music and the entertainment world. My observations showed that substantial time is spent downloading and sharing music and music videos and following stars on Twitter and Facebook via the mobile phone.

I also refer to the Nigerians in Langa when thinking about ICTs and their relation to the development of mobile populations. ICTs, in general, have created opportunities for employment in the township. The mobile phone is particularly advantageous as it offers job opportunities of selling, repairing and charging mobile phones as well as selling SIM-cards and pre-paid airtime vouchers (Chavula, 2013; Chillimo & Ngulube, 2011). In Langa, the cell phone repair shops and the Internet cafés are predominantly run by Nigerians who are said to be "good at what they do" and have "good business skills". In *Chapter 1* I stated that Nigerians in particular, are labeled as the most dangerous *amakwerekwere* and are most likely to commit crime (Matsinhe, 2011). They appear, however, to be in demand in Langa and are shown respect by residents. That is to say that most residents seek their help and expertise whenever their cell phones give them trouble. Henry, a Nigerian owner of a cell phone repair container explained "[I] do all kinds of repairs. Some people don't know what's wrong with their phone until they bring it to me. They just know that their phone isn't working" (Henry Interview March 2012). Victor said:

> They [the Nigerians] run the small businesses… we do have the Nigerians which are mostly… they're running these IT businesses. They are very good at IT. They run these Internet shops [in Langa], down there (pointing toward one of the Internet Café's in Langa) (Victor Interview August 2011)

Residents trust the expertise of Henry and other Nigerians within the township for their most precious technological needs. Furthermore, regarding marginality, one could conclude that within the township, Nigerian residents and workers are less marginal than some of the local and African immigrant residents because of their technological expertise which elevates their social statuses in the township. All of these examples show the impact that ICTs have had on development, particularly socio-economic relations in Langa. ICTs have allowed Langa residents to be recognized as autonomous individuals (Castells et al., 2007), emancipating (Gumpert & Drucker, 2007) them from some of the previous economic restrictions (and perceived economic restrictions) that ruled their lives.

Uses of the mobile phone and the Internet in Langa impact socio-economic relations in their practical uses to communicate, and using the computer and Internet for learning purposes and attending to a variety of needs. Despite little to no use of cell phone banking in the township, most residents have benefitted from practical functions of the phone. These practical functions

can generally be categorized as advantages of experiential purchases and possessions. Additionally, mobile phones, as materialistic possessions, have had positive impacts on residents' socio-economic relations. As wealth and status markers, they implicate financial stability among residents even when other factors would or should prove otherwise.

Local perceptions of ICTs and quality mobile phones provide residents with a source of well-being, counter to the uncertainty of marginality (Ellemers & Jetten, 2012) that plagues most township residents around South Africa. Economically, ICTs have helped decrease differences among Langa residents and those outside of Langa, as residents purchase the same mobile phones as others, enabling them to access to employment and learning opportunities the same way others can. That is to say that they can and are now experiencing opportunities at the same time (Shearman, 2003) as those populations in mainstream Cape Town, even if to a lesser or slower extent. This, in effect, eliminates some of the marginalities that distinguish Langa residents from urban residents in Cape Town.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the impact of ICTs on socio-economic relations in Langa. By revealing some practical and other uses of ICTs in the township, the chapter has shown that some residents' economic statuses have or can be increased on the social ladder however marginally. Material and experiential purchases mitigate some of the marginalities that affect residents, namely their access to general information, employment opportunities and education forums. Residents have been able to negotiate their degree and level of socio-economic marginality through their use of mobile phones to access formerly unobtainable opportunities. In looking at issues including employment opportunities, income increases and saving money in addition to social issues involving community interactions, sharing, and remittance obligations between families, I have showed the extent to which ICTs, their influence and facilitation, have affected socio-economic relations. Through their agency and ability to control technology, residents have been able to enhance their lives, as their use of ICTs has had a positive influence on the local economy of their otherwise poor and disadvantaged community (Shearman, 2003). Residents have shown that ICTs have indeed been essential in the promotion of economic growth and development through increased opportunities for employment creation and allowing people to identify work and school opportunities (Tlabela et al., 2007) as well as modify their wealth and status perceptions within and outside the township, should they desire. The next chapter reveals my last ethnographic contribution to this dissertation exploring if and how mobile phones redefine socio-political relations in Langa.

CHAPTER 7

REDEFINING SOCIO-POLITICAL RELATIONS THROUGH ICTS IN LANGA

Introduction

Since celebrating its democracy, South Africa has sought to measure the impact of the new democratic order on ordinary citizens' lives (Pillay et al., 2013; Ntsebeza, 2005). The 'ordinary citizen', however, is not a fixed category and as a result many South Africans and Africans living in South Africa are faced with political disadvantages that rob them of their freedom to access essential facilities and basic rights (Owen, 2013; Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2007). Just as new communication technologies have had positive effects on socio-economic relations, one might expect similar results between ICTs and socio-political relations in the same area; the use of ICTs to facilitate socio-political changes within a given community (see Qureshi, 2012; Youngs & Allison, 2008).

The presumed benefit of ICTs in a socio-political context was founded on a belief that "the ICT revolution would radically alter access to information, dislodge entrenched social and political cleavages, unleash new patterns of citizen consciousness and civic engagement… generating new and decisive political outcomes" (Alozie, Akpan-Obong & Foster, 2011:752). This notion was thought to be particularly relevant in the developing world where modern technologies would improve political development. However, the use of ICTs in some aspects of the political sphere in the United States (see below), for example, shows that developed countries too have benefitted from social and political developments through the use of ICTs (Alozie et al., 2011). Youngs and Allison (2008) suggest that the Internet and its role in the political economy provides a multitude of opportunities as it offers new ways of communication that are integral to politics.

Politics are instinctively related to human rights. Calder (2012) suggests that the future of human rights looks promising as there are various powerful and positive trends at work, centered on various changes and values in technology. While there is no fixed definition of human rights, they generally include "traditional political rights – democracy and self-determination and their components, such as freedoms of conscience, association, and information – along with the absence of punishment for exercising these political rights" (Calder, 2012:29-30). In South Africa, both historical and current problems with human rights make the future of human rights seem less promising. As a result, social conflicts often arise throughout the country. Social conflicts generally occur among groups of people who are competing for the same scarce

resources. Scarce resources often include basic economic assets and the political control to access these assets. Competitions that lead to social conflicts generally lead to patterns of inequality, particularly in a country like South Africa where the history of differences among and between various communities is profound (Rhoodie, 1991).

Current township populations in the country generally consist of local (black) South Africans struggling to access their human rights. This feat has often been compounded by the presence of black immigrants flocking into the country who often end up living in the same area, both joining in and exacerbating the struggle. It is widely accepted that townships are marginalized spaces where poverty and deprivation are rife. Consequently, the struggle over scarce resources among township residents tends to generate politics of exclusion and fear that work against the acceptance and accommodation of 'outsiders' (Nieftagodien, 2011). Township residents, as well as other struggling bodies in the country, have used various ways of making their plight known and their voices heard, like *toyi-toyi-ing* (see below), for example. The potential of ICTs, however, has elevated the abilities to make ones voice heard in such a way that, currently, they appear to be the best or most appropriate avenues for empowering individuals. While ICTs are definitely *not* a "magic formula" (Alozie et al., 2011:752) that can rid the continent of all its problems, they are considered essential tools for the promotion of economic and political development, among other things, that can help eradicate the struggles of disadvantaged black populations throughout the country. The assumption that the emergence of modern communication technologies in Africa would increase democratization and political development was predicted early in the ICT revolution and was widely received.

Nkwi (2011:10) states that history is useful for understanding present day changes in societies as current events can be explained by relating them to the past. In an African context one example of an innovative mode of communication playing a significant role in socio-political relations took place during the 1980s. During this time, the armed resistance to South Africa's then apartheid regime used a computerized encryption scheme to transmit messages between imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela, and other prominent leaders of the movement (Garrett et al., 2012:218), to help aid the fight against the apartheid regime. Accepting that such patterns of innovative communication helped to enable such developments, it might also be agreed that communication capabilities also have an impact on political behavior (Garrett et al., 2012).While my study has thus far shown some of the new (and positive) socio-economic relations wrought from ICTs in Langa, their role in redefining socio-political relations in the township has been similarly significant. Taking a close look at my data this chapter proposes to

answer the following research question: *in what ways do ICTs redefine socio-political relations in Langa?*

This study looks at communication technologies in a historical perspective, as technologies of the past would have contributed to different levels of development, undoubtedly affecting the present (Freund, 2010). This is not to suggest that technology will always have positive impacts on social or developmental problems, but it acknowledges that for technologies to be effective, they must work within particular social contexts. In other words we must acknowledge the social embeddedness of technology (Hahn & Kibora, 2008; Waschauer, 2003). In a socio-political context, local politics relied on two components: "the nature of community power and the level of empowered society" (Galvin, 2010:177). It has been suggested that new communication technologies help empower individuals, offering them freedom from a variety of past limitations and restrictions through the increased autonomy (Castells et al., 2007; Gumpert & Drucker, 2007) perceived to be awarded through the devices.

Faik and Walsham (2012), and Bubou (2011) suggest that ICTs have redefined human existence in recent times due to their profound effect on political aspects within society, among other things. Similarly, Garrett et al. (2012:218) assert that new communication technologies have the potential to alter political discussion, political deliberations and ultimately political engagement. This chapter investigates these claims, exploring the role of ICTs in the alteration and redefinition of socio-political relations within Langa. As political agendas are often related to amending human or basic rights, I discuss political marginality as a description of social reality in Langa. I also discuss some of the basic rights struggles experienced by Langa residents and in South Africa as a country. Firstly, I address issues of citizenship and belonging as these concepts often reinforce those who are likely to participate in decision-making and have access to rights in the country.

Citizenship and Belonging

I have already explained that societies are hierarchically structured, where different hierarchical positions establish relations of power that privilege certain populations while marginalizing others (Ramirez-Sanchez, 2008). Acquiring citizenship is a very different feat than acquiring belonging, neither of which unfortunately guarantees access to equal rights. For local South Africans and African immigrants in the country alike, acquiring citizenship and/or belonging is often complicated and sometimes impossible to achieve. Tensions around citizenship between locals and immigrants sometimes lead to xenophobic attacks. Studies have shown that the connection between xenophobia and citizenship in South Africa is strong

(Klaaren, 2011:139). For locals, the complicated notion of indigeneity means that they are not always the obvious recipients of human rights, citizenship and belonging even in their own country. Citizenship and belonging are not open to everyone, and even those who are privileged to obtain such assets are not awarded them to the same degrees (see also Mamdani, 1996). Real or imagined claims of citizenship and belonging undoubtedly affect hierarchical structures and positions in various societies, distinguishing privileged populations from the marginalized.

South Africa, as a country perceived to be better than other African countries (McClendon, 2010), could be considered a privileged or dominant country in relation to rest of Africa. The reality that African immigrants can sometimes be awarded citizens or acquire levels of belonging while in the country through various means (perceived work ethic and subsequent job opportunities, for example), suggests that South African locals can be more marginal in their own country than African immigrants, particularly disadvantaged populations who have yet to acquire half the benefits of some of their African immigrant counterparts.

Emphasizing the need to situate citizenship in the wider context of contemporary politics of belonging, Yuval-Davis (2006, 2007) discusses belonging and the politics of belonging in order to enrich ideas about contemporary citizenship. Belonging, she suggests, is a concept that is taken for granted until it is threatened, which then results in its articulation playing a central role in various discourses of the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006:197; 2007:564). Fear of invasion and pollution, contamination or disintegration of culture or tradition (Landau, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2007) has resulted in increased immigration control policies and the policing of citizenship. Normally, states will regulate their border regimes in ways that are compatible to basic human rights, constructing significant distinctions between citizens and immigrants (Owen, 2013:327). While it may be inaccurate to lay the blame solely on African immigrants, local South Africans often blame them for the country's social ills and lack of resources in addition to the contamination of South African culture (Landau, 2011; Matsinhe, 2011; Neocosmos, 2006). As a result, notions of belonging in South Africa are highly contested, making the insider/outsider dichotomies crude yet essential to individuals' access to social, economic and political rights within the country.

In Article 26 of the Bill of Rights, the South African constitution states that "Everyone has the right to have adequate housing" (Statutes of the Republic of South Africa – Constitutional Law, 1996:1254). This article identifies access to housing as a human right that should not be violated through denial or deferment (Mafukidze & Hoosen, 2009). It indicates that the South African constitution supports the right to adequate shelter of all South African *citizens* (Landman & Napier, 2010, my emphasis). For many residents of South Africa, herein

lies the first problem. The notion of citizenship is not finite. Notions of citizenship are shaped over time through cultural struggles. In a democracy, citizenship, at least theoretically,

> gives membership status to individuals within a political unit; confers an identity on individuals; constitutes a set of value usually interpreted as a commitment to the common good of a particular political unit; involves practicing a degree of participation in the process of political life; implies gaining and using knowledge and understanding of laws, documents, structures and processes of governance […] Social citizenship includes the right to a modicum of economic welfare and the security to share in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society (Abowitz & Harnish 2006: 653-54).

Desires of (many) internal South African migrants and African immigrants to (temporarily or permanently) belong and gain social inclusion by way of claiming citizenship in South Africa has not been an easy feat. Furthermore, the practice of granting membership in a community was often based on an individual's residence as opposed to their nationality, a concept known as "denizenship", making acquiring citizenship all the more complicated (Klaaren, 2011). The ways that people claim identity and belonging are "various, complex and contradictory" (Brown, 2006: 1). Those who secure (some level of) belonging are not necessarily exempt from the plights of those who do not belong. Ceuppens & Geschiere (2005:387) state that "belonging promises safety, but in practice it raises fierce disagreements over who "really" belongs – over whose claims are authentic and whose are not". Since the notion of belonging is ever-changing, one's assurance of safety can quickly turn to uncertainty and insecurity. Many (im)migrants are constantly in search of finding ways to secure citizenship and belonging throughout their mobile lives and among their flexible identities. They often find themselves in positions where they negotiate between complex choices of return to their homelands, and assimilation and community formation in their 'host' environments, often adapting to and changing their social environments. The more frequently mobile populations move between different countries or villages, (attempting to) maintain affiliations in each place. Their "citizenship needs to be adapted to new realities" (Castles, 2002:1158-1161).

Pamela Kea's (2012:1-2) study on local citizenship among Senegalese female migrants in Brikama, shows that local citizenship should be understood as a *practice* rather than a *status,* as the diverse resources that migrants contribute to their host communities facilitates processes of incorporation, therefore leading to a sense of belonging (my emphasis). Migrants, she suggests, have created ways of expressing alternative types of citizenship where state and legal citizenship maybe out of reach. Social citizenship and substantive citizenship practices are more likely to be sustained among female migrants in Brikama in the Gambia. Within many African rural societies, access to land and rights are determined by membership of a social group within

the host community. Subsequently, investments are made in social relations and networks that (re)produce social identities, hence social citizenship (Kea, 2012:3-10). This type of citizenship and belonging seems significantly easier than the plight of African immigrants hoping to settle in South Africa where despite the resources or skills they may have, many South Africans remain less eager to award them social membership in their host communities. If they are accepted, it is often met with reluctance and jealousy, some of which I witnessed during fieldwork.

During fieldwork, I noticed that a particularly successful Angolan male, Odon, was verbally teased and socially excluded in Langa. Having been in the country for twelve years, he had already secured permanent residence in South Africa. He lived in Langa for several years before his success as an artist allowed him to move to Rondebosch. He currently sells his paintings in Langa to visiting tourists for between R250 – R6000, depending on the size of the painting and how long it took him to paint it. These prices also cover the cost of his art materials. Continued success allowed him to move from Rondebosch to Muizenberg – a move he made during my last month in the field. During fieldwork, Odon changed cars three times. His excessive purchase of cars, his ability to move to more and more expensive areas, and his flashy wardrobe were all markers of his financial success which did not sit well with local residents. When tourists flocked around his paintings, local residents and co-workers were visibly upset, claiming that he was greedy and was not allowing other residents to sell their goods even though tourists were not coerced into buying from him. Residents complained that "all he likes is money". Residents and co-workers often played chess and card games in groups around the center, deliberately excluding him from playing. I often asked how that made him feel and he claimed that it did not bother him as they are not his friends. He often ate lunch alone in his car while others sat together outside sharing food and chatting. Whenever I visited the tourist center he was on his own unless accompanied by his assistant or in the company of interested tourists. It was clear that he was not accepted by residents and workers as his success made them jealous, particularly because he was not South African. He worked and (at one time) lived in Langa but because of his success he did not belong. I noted that African immigrants who were not especially successful were less likely to be socially neglected by residents.

Many African immigrants will find it difficult to belong while in South Africa. Similarly, many have little power to claim citizenship in their homeland. South Africa's history of 'selective immigration' has affected the way local South Africans perceive migration. Many would prefer that both internal South African migrants and Africans from around the continent remain in their own villages or countries. Those select (im)migrants who are entitled to legal rights, however marginally, while in the country have not always been able to exercise their

rights because they are denied social membership in local and national communities (Nyamnjoh, 2006:29, 229). Social boundaries have been constructed to keep black African immigrants living in South Africa separate, and almost incapable of belonging. Still, the fact that nationals in South Africa can assert their legal citizenship but still be seen by themselves, or others, to be 'less authentic' based on a variety of factors, continues to fuel the growing preoccupation with citizenship and belonging (Dodson, 2010: 4-6; Geschiere, 2009:17; Nyamnjoh, 2006:1-14).

In South Africa, the notion of the 'outsider', nuanced and complex just like that of marginality, has come to be understood as an obstacle preventing the achievement of justice and retribution for years of discrimination and indignity towards the black population of the country. Throughout its post-colonial history, the South African nation grappled with whether the presence of outsiders would strengthen or contaminate the country. Outsiders were gradually accepted as a threat, particularly by the already struggling black population (Zegeye & Maxted, 2002), as they were believed to contaminate cultural values, spread disease and crime, and threaten access to jobs and housing (Adida, 2011; Gorodzeiksy, 2011; Matsinhe, 2011; Landau, 2011:6; Anonymous, 2010; Zegeye, 2009; Sichone, 2008; Crush & McDonald, 2001:3). As a result, patterns of inequality between locals and foreigners generally result in the exclusion of the latter group and sometimes xenophobia (see *Chapter 1*). In South Africa, the link between xenophobia and citizenship is strong, demonstrating the dark side of South African citizenship (Klaaren, 2011:138).

However, exclusion and marginality are not unique to external immigrants. Many poor South African citizens are considered less entitled members of society, making them equally unwelcomed. As outsiders, different categories of locals also become susceptible to exclusion among their South African peers (Landau, 2011). It is apparent, then, that the notion of belonging or the claim to belong is rarely homogenous or equally opened to everyone. And as belonging appears to be an essential qualification for inclusive, if not, equal treatment within the country, it can also be concluded that the ever flexible notion of belonging makes the potential for inequality among communities that much greater.

Patterns of inequality in South Africa are often reflected in competing groups' unequal access to scarce resources, decision-making, and political power to speak towards and implement decisions in the country (Rhoodie, 1991). For developed countries, local politics generally refer to electoral politics. For developing countries like South Africa, however, and particularly in the rural areas, electoral politics are an inadequate means of understanding local dynamics and can be less than beneficial. As the state is often unable to reach the most rural areas, formal politics then become irrelevant to local governance or survival (Galvin, 2010).

Residents of Langa Township are a population in South Africa affected by their unequal access to the political realm of society. Carmody (2010:109) suggests that the presence and use of mobile phones are "embedded in existing relations of social support, resource extraction, and conflict", facilitating change while simultaneously reinforcing existing power relations. Mobile phones – in addition to other mobile technology – play a crucial role in political development, as they can facilitate change and the elimination or prevention of inequality.

Civic and Political Marginality

David Owen (2013:328) describes 'civic marginalization' as a "phenomenon of being (or becoming) marginal relative to the abstract norm of equal membership in a democratic state..." Focusing on the treatment of migrants in their receiving countries, Owen (2013), states that immigrants are civically marginalized in relation to national citizens. Understanding that migrants do not always have an easy route towards national citizenship, he suggests that this unequal access to citizenship leaves immigrants vulnerable. Langa is home to a small population of African immigrants who can be considered civically marginalized in relation to South African citizens both within and outside the township as their presence within South Africa has been verbally and physically contested by locals. Local South African residents, too, can be considered civically marginalized as their human rights and social membership in Cape Town's (or South Africa's) political community are often disproportionate to those living in mainstream Cape Town. Considering Langa's unequal position in the political realm, one might describe Langa residents' political marginality – the political disadvantages that have long been part of their social reality – as civic marginalization. Their unequal membership in or 'disconnection' from centrally based political aspects in South Africa has marginalized them, in this context.

Language and its Contribution to Political Marginality

South Africa has eleven official languages. While English is the most commonly spoken language in official and commercial public life, it is only the fifth most spoken home language. The 2011 Census showed that, in the Western Cape, 9.6% of South Africans spoke English as a home language; 13.5% spoke Afrikaans and 16% spoke isiXhosa (South Africa Info, 2013)[15]. Despite the higher rate of isiXhosa spoken among the three languages, studies have shown that the status and use of isiXhosa remains low in civic life, therefore marginalizing the language in the Western Cape, South Africa (Deumert & Mbandla, 2009). In Cape Town, where complex issues of social, political and economic inclusion and exclusion are ever present, it is notable that

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[15] http://www.southafricainfo/about/people/population.html

the majority of isiXhosa speakers are among the poor and unemployed populations. Deumert and Mbandla (2008) suggest that language diversity can negatively affect development. Without widespread bilingualism, they say, linguistic diversity can obstruct communication across groups limiting economic participation for linguistically marginalized populations. Subsequently, extensive knowledge of multiple languages can enable economic participation. The same can also be true of political participation, where the (in)ability to speak the dominant (public) language can result in limiting or enabling individuals' political participation.

Langa is a black township where the predominant language spoken is isiXhosa. While most residents spoke conversational English, I noted that it was a struggle for some to maintain long (and sometimes in-depth) conversations in English. For some, speaking (confidently) in English was a challenge relieved by constantly switching back to isiXhosa. During fieldwork, I faced challenges when my isiXhosa vocabulary was less than adequate. Fortunately, residents translated (when they could) for my benefit. Others, like Thando (see *Chapter 2*), made it their business to teach me the language. Considering the linguistic challenges that some residents may experience as non-English speakers, one might assume that their linguistic marginality, in the public sphere, is affecting their status in the political sphere. Perhaps a challenge faced by residents, and other isiXhosa speakers, is getting their political voices heard by deciphering ears. Indeed, speaking, texting or emailing in a language that others do not understand is a good as being silenced.

Housing: A Human Rights Struggle in South Africa

Langa is made up of informal shacks, flats, hostels and RDP houses. The Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), initiated in 1994 was developed by the government to provide formal housing for township residents and to support low-income households (Landman & Napier, 2010). Post-1994 housing policies in South Africa proposed a variety of programs to assist low-income households with access to 'adequate' housing, among other services. It was the RDP's desire to rectify (as much as possible) the bitter history of South Africa that was dominated by racism, apartheid, sexism and repressive labor policies (African National Congress, 1994), particularly among the black population. In effort to create more equality, housing subsidies were provided to low-income areas (Landman & Napier, 2010) like Langa, where RDP houses were built to remove some residents from shacks. While basic rights for residents both inside and outside of Langa included 'adequate' housing, electricity and water, I dwell on housing as something that residents often referred to in regard to their rights as South Africans (or as Africans living in South Africa as temporary and permanent residents). As a

result of the pre-1994 apartheid regime, South Africa experienced major shortages of accommodation particularly for poorer populations. This social reality has been exacerbated by "population growth, migration and slow housing delivery. Currently, millions of poor black households in South Africa live in shacks, hostels and crowded houses in marginalized townships and informal settlements" most of whom are waiting for access to government provided land and houses (Mafukidze & Hoosen, 2009:380). The Coalition for Langa Community Concerns or COLACOCO is an organization representing the needs of Langa residents. After the Gateway Housing project, in May 2005, which announced that houses would be provided on a 70:30 basis to residents of informal settlements and backyard dwellers respectively, COLACOCO argued that the provision should be on a 50:50 basis. The request was particularly desired for residents who had already been on the municipal waiting list for years (Tapscott, 2011). The shortage of housing is one of many factors that contribute to the struggles of some black populations in the country. In Langa, some residents admitted their anger, not for living in Langa per se, but for the delay in 'promised' housing from the government. It also seemed unfair to residents that the shooting of American action thriller *Safe House* in 2011, which was filmed in Cape Town and featured Langa, would finally warrant the progress of housing provisions in parts of the township. Siviwe, a male resident, said that the "government was slowly building houses to get rid of the shacks as the movie brought attention to Langa and they want to make it look nicer" (Siviwe, Pers. Comm. March 2012). Some could argue that housing provisions should have been provided earlier for the sake of residents in general and not to appease the greater public.

Some residents were particularly angry that immigrants who had only recently settled in the country (and in townships) were receiving government provided houses before they did. Sibuli claimed that most of the anger around the presence of foreigners in the township revolves around housing. Sharing some of the responses around my initial questioning to random residents around their feelings toward the abundance of foreigners living among them with Sibuli, I revealed that there was, apparently, no real harboring of mal feelings toward them. Most residents (verbally) claimed that there was "no problem". Sibuli strongly disagreed with residents who suggested that there was no problem. She argued:

> How could you not have a problem when you…don't have [a house] for 30 years… when someone (an African immigrant) who has come recently, who has [lived for] six years in Cape Town has a house in front of (before) you?

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The frustration evident in Sibuli's response was common when residents were encouraged to think about relations with their African immigrant counterparts during my questions. Discontent among poor residents in post-apartheid South Africa is significant (Goebel, 2011). Inequality in the country has left many residents struggling with different aspects of poverty up to and including the lack of housing. For some Langa residents, lack of housing continues to rouse anger among those who have been waiting for years without results. Sibuli continued to share some of the plights that residents have gone and are going through. She explained how the elimination of the pass law resulted in an influx of migrants, particularly from the Eastern Cape to the big cities of Cape Town and Johannesburg. Their house seeking in townships exacerbated the struggles that longtime residents like herself have faced:

> **Sibuli**: It's the people who [came] after the pass laws were scraped. They all flocked to the township so that's why we have all these shacks and lots of people […] the government… they are not considering us [the long-time residents] who are having people in the back, in the backyard [shack] or having a number of people inside the house. They only consider the people who have flocked in to give them houses as opposed to the people that don't have houses yet.
>
> **Crystal**: So… can people complain to the government… the people who live in the backyard [shacks] that have been here longer?
>
> **Sibuli**: You know, the ones who've been [here] longer in Cape Town, the old township [are different from] the people who are flocking in [now]… they do complain but they wouldn't voice it as like the people from the shacks, collecting people to go and do the toyi- toyi.
>
> **Crystal**: So, it's like they don't want to hurt their pride?
>
> **Sibuli**: They have pride. They have pride […] although they are struggling like the people who are coming in there they also want their own houses but they have that pride. [They'll say] 'I've been on the list for 22 years but I don't have a house [yet]'. But they cannot do it collectively – march and do the toyi-toyi [and] say that 'we want houses now'. You will only hear them when there are houses built here [in Langa] and there are people being allocated to houses. Now there will be an outcry. [They'll say] 'We've been here for so many years but we don't get houses. People who are coming from the Eastern Cape, now, recently, they have houses'. (Sibuli Interview October 2011).

According to Sibuli's account of the struggle for housing it would seem that Langa, as the oldest township in Cape Town, consists of some residents who feel entitled to proper housing not only before other townships but especially before foreign and local outsiders who have only recently arrived. It was apparent that some residents, particularly the older ones, feel that they are elites. They are proud and as residents of the first township in Cape Town, they would "rather not complain" but feel that their needs should be a given; they should be catered to simply because they have seniority as far as townships are concerned. While their mild manners in regard to housing and other pressing issues could suggests that they either do not have

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problems or are content despite their lack of resources, I was told that instead of making a scene or "toyi toy-ing", some complain "in style" so as not to be compared to other townships such as Khayelitsha and Gugulethu who were built after Langa and therefore have less authority according to some residents (It should be noted that some residents still value and practice toyi-toyi-ing, when necessary).

Toyi-Toyi-ing As a Form of Protest: Making Their Voices Heard

In South Africa, protests through singing and rhythmic chanting, also known as toyi-toyi-ing has been significant in liberating the country. Toyi-toyi, as a resistance culture, played an essential role in mobilizing and uniting poor black populations around apartheid injustices. It has been established that this form of protest was used as a socio-political weapon to accelerate change in South African society (Twala & Koetaan, 2006). Inequality is a major concern for both former apartheid populations and those since (Zuern, 2013). In South African history, inequality is the most dominant theme (Jacobs, 2003) and in fact, the country shows one of the highest levels of inequality in the world (Tregenna & Tsela, 2012). Both colonial and apartheid policies have contributed to this inequality as these policies resulted in the majority of South Africans living in a "highly unequal society where poverty and dislocation have had profound traumatic effects…" (Zegeye & Maxted, 2002: 1). Based mainly on racial discrimination, inequality should legally be a thing of the past. Unfortunately, however, inequality in the country has not disappeared since it has been legislated against (Nyamnjoh 2013a: 305). Township residents still appear to be among the most disadvantaged groups in the country where basic amenities fail to make their way to these locations. Some backyard shack dwellers in South Africa pay monthly to live in cramped conditions without private toilet facilities or access to water other than the communal water taps. Protests in poor townships have, since 2012, hit a new record (Zuern, 2013).

For South Africans, protests represent resistance to rising poverty and inequality throughout the country (Bond & Mottia, 2013:285). Sibuli's comments above around toyi-toy-ing for housing, though not as 'classy' as she would like to think, shows how some residents sought to get what they felt was rightfully theirs.

ICTs as a Form of Protest

The Internet and mobile phones have received great interest during the past decade, as their rapid integration into all social categories and geographical regions has resulted in an unprecedented technological revolution (de Bruijn et al., 2013). It has been found that mobile

phones are the most widely accessed technological tool in developing countries (Chavula, 2013; Toure, 2013; Molony, 2007a). In Africa, developing countries continue to face developmental challenges for a variety of reasons (Akpan-Obong & Parmentier, 2009). It has been suggested that innovations within the continent around new ICTs are facilitating development in a variety of aspects (Toure, 2013; Chuvula, 2013; Chillimo & Ngubule 2011). For particularly marginalized populations across the continent, new ICTs have been declared as a source of empowerment (Rahman, 2006), offering opportunity for human development – something Amartya Sen (1999) describes as a process of expanding people's capabilities. Sen emphasizes that the recognition of what people are capable of being or accomplishing could be revealed through their access to different "goods". Their capabilities, he believed, were a sense of freedom showing not only what they have done but what they have the potential to do (1999:75). Miller and Slater's (2000:164) presentation of the term "expansive potential" in regards to the Internet supports Sen's view that access to certain "goods" (I believe new ICTs can be considered, among other things, "goods") can reveal one's capabilities in achieving their desires and successes.

Social media has played and continues to play a significant role in the everyday lives of people around the world. Social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter differ from earlier Internet applications like e-mails because of the control that they provide their users through user generated content (Powell, 2012; Lee, 2011). Social media relies on the Internet (Hoffman & Kornweitz, 2011:7). Consequently, mobile phones (most often inclusive of Internet access) and the Internet are the primary communication outlets for social media platforms. Social networking sites have become one of the fastest communication alternatives and now seem to be the most appropriate and effective liaisons between (most) people and the world around them. Studies have shown that while technologies can control the media, the domestication, social shaping and re-invention of technologies by its users indicates that the media, too, is used in ways that may have been unintended by their original producers (Kilker, 2007:110). Where mobile phone technology and platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube have become dominant sources of communication, providing opportunities for people to create, restore and maintain relationships, these same platforms are becoming more and more common to use as tools of activism particularly because of the speed at which activists can share information and potentially recruit others. Discussions on whether social media is a necessary, adequate, better or worse form of social activism caused popular debates in light of the rapid use of social media in political and social uprisings that recently occurred in some parts of the world (Powell, 2012:85-

6; Gladwell, 201l, 2010; Adams, 2011; Beaumont, 2011; Hoffman & Kornweitz, 2011; Kravets, 2011).

Social Media as a Tool for Activism

        Above I refer to the role of ICTs in the uprisings that occurred in the Middle East and North Africa. Here I provide more detail of the incidents better known as "revolutions". It has been suggested that social media platforms, when used as tools for activism, provide opportunities for otherwise powerless individuals to coordinate and give voice to their concerns. In this way the traditional relationship between political authority and popular will has been shifted (Gladwell, 2010:2). One example of the use of social media giving voice and empowering individuals occurred in late February of 2011. During this time the Middle East and North Africa experienced a series of uprisings that have been referred to as "Facebook" and "Twitter Revolutions" (Shah, 2011). The massive yet nonviolent protests that took place in Tunisia and Egypt created pressure for democratic modifications in a variety of places. During these democratic reforms, Facebook and Twitter enabled activists to document and circulate their plights (Constanza-Chock, 2011). In these particular uprisings, the Internet significantly increased the speed at which participants could communicate and transfer information around the world while sometimes avoiding official censorship; expressing freely all they wanted to say. In Tunisia, for example, the youth, also known as the Internet Generation, were the primary participants of the uprisings. They focused all their energy, often non-violently, towards a "democratic political change". It has been said that the youth are most effective when using these tools. Today, words on Facebook, Twitter and videos on YouTube are a powerful means of mobilizing mass amounts of people and gaining worldwide support. Through the accelerated use of the Internet and mobile communications for such uprisings, it would appear that, currently, participation in social activism has increased as compared to previously used methods (Shah, 2011).

        Constanza-Chock's (2011) article about social media in mass mobilization draws on some of the most innovative uses of ICTs for civic engagement and networked activism as developed in the United States during the Immigrant Rights Movement. The use of ICT networks has been proclaimed a liberating power by many activists and scholars. Others, particularly Malcolm Gladwell (2010), argue that the role of ICTs in the aforementioned uprisings received unnecessary attention. Constanza-Chock suggests that, in spite of justified or unnecessary attention "the most effective use of ICTs for social change occurs in coordination with print and broadcast media and with real-world actions" (2011:32). This, once again,

suggests that ICTs are not stand-alone devices (Qureshi, 2012; Powell, 2012; Chillimo & Ngulube, 2011; Bubou, 2011; Gigler, 2006). Only in coordination with real-world actions, with people who purposely use ICTs towards social change, will ICTs be effective (Warschauer, 2003). Constanza-Chock presents how ICTs affected social change, during the Immigrant Rights Movement in the United States through the VozMob (Mobile Voices) project. The VozMob project was a community-based digital media project based in Los Angeles where the digital stories of Latino/Latina immigrant day laborers, domestic workers, students and other correspondents were featured. For them, VozMob was:

> … a platform for immigrants to create stories about their lives and community directly through cell phones. VozMob appropriates technology to create power in our communities and achieve greater participation in the digital sphere (p.32-3)

Maria de Lourdes Gonzales Reyes, an active member of VozMob recounted:

> Mobile Voices is a window of universal knowledge that connects the world of those who are silent with others who have the opportunity to introduce themselves to the cybernetic universe. The technological development that allows human stories to be told, stories of happiness, for life, of each person's struggle as they cross borders for a better life, but stories that have remained silent due to historic conditions. These are human stories of daily struggles, but told with the certainty that tomorrow will be better, since today they work hard to demonstrate the invincible spirit to achieve a better life together (in Constanza-Chock 2011:34)

From this quote we see how pertinent ICTs can be in mobilizing politically marginal communities, allowing their voices to be heard where they have otherwise, unwillingly remained silent. The emergence of digital communities has become crucial to the formation and maintenance of communities (Gumpert & Drucker, 2007). While mobile networks in themselves are not a new phenomenon, modern communication technologies have provided opportunities to greatly increase their flexibility with limited risks (Jones & Wallace, 2007).

Perhaps the amount of attention given to these "revolutions", this new generation of activism, lies not so much in the actual uprising or the avenue for which the uprising was expressed, but in their non-violence. In my book (Powell, 2012:68), I take a special interest in differentiating between the concept of social media and the accuracy or effectiveness of social media tools in the pursuit of meaningful and successful social uprisings. While no one can deny the fact that the *concept* of social media has played and is playing a significant role in the everyday lives of human beings all over the world, the significance and success of social media *tools* (social network sites and the technological devices from which they can be accessed) should not be taken for granted. Zeynep Tufekci, assistant professor at the University of North

Carolina whose research revolves around interactions between technology and social, cultural and political dynamics states that "social media is a potent tool for change". Social media in itself is not a movement, she states. Social media is a tool that has accumulated strong theoretical reasons for the belief that they alter collective action dynamics (2011, n.p.). Her views on social media tools could contribute to the overwhelming and positive acceptance of their new roles in social activism. The tools used in the social media uprisings, whether considered especially positive or negative, have changed the atmosphere of social activism.

Both Shah (2011) and Constanza-Chock (2011) describe the aforementioned social media uprisings as 'non-violent', which requires more attention from scholarly debate. This is particularly so in the context of South Africa where a history of political violence, not least because of the apartheid, was generally enforced by established political organizations. These organizations often consisted of people who resorted to violence against the apartheid state due to human rights violations and lack of access to decent living such as inadequate housing Soweto residents in Johannesburg, for example, formed the South African Suicide Squad (SASS) to resist against counselors who failed to deliver promises to reduce rents during apartheid. SASS systematically and violently attacked some of the counselors, usually through bombing (Simpson, 2009). In addition to the bombings, SASS members also left pamphlets in public places filled with warnings of more danger if their needs were not met. While apparently effective, their methods of social activism was remembered for its violence, among other things (Simpson, 2009). This is just one example of a means of social activism in South Africa. In contrast, my reference to toyi-toyi-ing above as a means of political demonstrations among South Africans hints at a less violent though sometimes equally effective approach to similarly significant problem faced by disadvantaged populations in the country.

Based on current uprising throughout the African continent, I conclude that the use of ICTs and social media in protesting and social activism has limited violence. However, Malcolm Gladwell's (2010) article *Small Change* insists that this new form of activism is not very different from previous forms of activism, at least not in America. Though Gladwell is more of a public intellectual and not an academic, I found his responses to the uprisings of interest in relation to my research objectives. Gladwell refers to the popular sit-ins that occurred in North Carolina during the 1960s. The first one to make headlines was in Greensboro, North Carolina where four black college students who refused to accept that they would not be served at a white-only lunch counter, resorted to sitting at the counter until it closed only to return the next day and the day after, until they were served. The group of four quickly grew as other students and teachers from their college and even a few white members of the neighborhood participated

in this sit-in until as many as 600 members were present. Not only was this event non-violent but Gladwell emphasizes the effectiveness of these protests during a time where neither email, texting, Facebook or Twitter were even an option. In the early 1960s, Greensboro was a place where racial insubordination was often met with violence (2010).

Gladwell emphasizes the difference between former types of social activism as compared to current forms of activism in the social media age. Describing the relationship of the four original members of the Greensboro lunch counter sit-in, Gladwell suggests that because they were friends who knew each other personally. Their unity and determination during the sit-ins was significant. This potentially encouraged others to participate, some of whom also had strong ties with the young men and agreed with their cause. Social media, he says, differs from this type of activism as it is built around weak ties, as participants can come together from all over the world through texting, Facebook and Twitter, "demonstrating" with people that they have never met. So while social media is great for spreading information and quickly recruiting participants for social activism, the likelihood of meaningful activism or success may be significantly lower due to lack of strong ties between participants. It could be suggested that toyi-toyi-ing, as was implicated several times during fieldwork, would constitute as a more effective type of activism as residents are physically together, potentially linked through strong ties, all working together to make a point.

Malcolm Gladwell (2010:5) argues that social media is a form of low risk activism since there is no threat to physical bodily harm under the protection of a computer screen or behind the contents of a text message. Furthermore, social media networks are most effective at increasing participation by lessening the motivation that participation requires. Incidentally, one of the most attractive features of the Internet is its ability to interact with others while still enjoying privacy and solitude (Cothran, 2002). It serves as an outlet for social interaction even in situations where face-to-face interaction would cause fear or anxiety (Hanson, 2007). These media outlets produce anonymity and with anonymity there is a lack of accountability. Considerable evidence suggests that the Internet facilitates the invention of online personalities that may be the complete opposite of offline realities (Cothran, 2002:28). People can express themselves in a way that they normally would not if their identities were known. "De-individuation" happens when social norms are withdrawn because identities are concealed. The combination of a faceless crowd and personal anonymity provokes individuals into breaking rules that under 'normal' circumstances they would not have considered. Digital media allows almost unlimited opportunity for willful de-individuation. The less you feel you will be identified, the more uninhibited you can be (Adams, 2011). Some residents in Langa, when talking of the plight for

housing, were not ashamed to toyi-toyi in public or collect signatures to be given to the counselor of Langa in the hopes that he would take their demands higher, particularly for residents questioning why they have yet to attain housing when their names have been on the list for a long time. While collecting signatures is not a particularly physical action, it may become public since people may be identified by their real names, if necessary, at will.

Redefining Socio-Political Relations through ICTs in Langa

It has been suggested that social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, when used as tools for activism, can provide opportunities for otherwise powerless individuals – those who generally belong to various marginal populations around the world – to coordinate and give voice to their concerns. This new generation of activism has created opportunities for the formerly voiceless to be heard; to take a stand for their political rights (Qureshi, 2012). In this age of the Internet, social media, and satellite television, political change is more and more common among populations around the world (Cockburn, 2012). Marginalized populations are thought to be the most likely to benefit from new communication technologies, as they provide avenues in which they can improve their lives, particularly as they are believed to enable access to skills (Qureshi, 2012). Though Meso et al. (2008) indicate that developing countries are prime candidates to benefit from the adoption of ICTs as their marginal positions leave them precariously weak in relation to other countries, it has been suggested that providing all marginalized people with access to mobile phones, for example, does not necessarily guarantee that their lives will be significantly improved (Qureshi, 2012), at least not all to the same degree, anyway. During fieldwork, I noted that while the majority of residents owned mobile phones and had some form of access to the Internet, their role in socio-political relations as a population within the country did not change significantly. While mobile phones may have improved other aspects of their lives, namely the mitigation of distance, increasing social statuses among residents, enhancing employment opportunities and being a "great equalizer" between them and those outside of Langa, residents did not use ICTs for political engagements, at least not during fieldwork.

Having set out to explore the ways that ICTs redefined socio-political relations for residents, I grew increasingly worried that my observations did not reveal such information. Despite my critical stance on technological determinism, relevant readings (see Faik & Walsham, 2012; Garret et al., 2012; Bubou, 2011; Youngs & Allison, 2008 for example) in the primary stages of fieldwork led me to *expect* to find a link (for better or worse) between ICTs and socio-political relations among Langa residents. For example, Youngs and Allison (2008)

suggest that there is an integral role between communication and politics. They emphasize the link between networking tools, namely the Internet, and new technological applications and their mutual relationships with political actions. "The political economy of the online world and the symbolic wealth of opportunities it offers advertisers in terms of time and space are part of the new ways in which communication is integral to politics (Youngs & Allison, 2008:5). Such statements guided my pursuance of researching how political actions among residents were displayed through the direct use of ICTs.

Failing to secure this link worried me throughout the better part of fieldwork. I acknowledge that talking about politics with any group of people can be difficult, as what may be considered political will undoubtedly differ between people and cultures (Pearlman, 1976:167). However, occasional conversations with residents around politics in general revealed that this was not an immediate concern. That is to say that talking about politics, for some residents, was not of vital interest. With the exception of housing and sometimes proper toilets and lack of employment opportunities, residents did not personally or collectively complain extensively about any other particular issues that were affecting their lives – issues that needed to be addressed in order to improve their living standards as human beings and South African residents. Furthermore, when issues like housing were addressed by residents, they did not present themselves through ICTs but through physical movement like shouting and singing, dancing and acting by residents. These were the dominant ways that residents participated in 'protests' or "bargaining for benefits from the outside world (Pearlman, 1976:163), nonviolently.

Telling his story of coming to Cape Town from Queenstown, Monwabise shared that he was sent by the Queenstown Media Resource Center of which he claimed he was "the mouth" of the Youth League Movement. Their goal, he insisted, was "to communicate development… [and to] change South Africa" as they were "against apartheid policies". The Queenstown Media Resource Center was a space where activists could "communicate the daily life of an African child in Queenstown". He joined the movement in 1978 and made his views known to the public through performances. He explained that singing, dancing and acting were "their ways of showing dissatisfaction". Since being in Cape Town, he has been in many shows that helped spread news in, around and about the community. One foggy August morning in 2011, I watched a play given in Langa at Guga S'thebe (the show would later be performed at a center in Cape Town). This show featured Monwabise and other residents talking about the freedom struggle for black Africans. My limited isiXhosa meant that I could not follow everything that was going on, but movements, facial expressions and the energy in which songs were sung helped me to get the gist of its purpose. Ultimately, the play suggested that the struggle for freedom and rights for

disadvantaged black people in the country (even in 2011) was far from over and they (the black population) needed to continue fighting for equal rights which unfortunately are not automatically given. Speaking with Monwabise afterwards, he explained that he loved doing these plays to get the "word out". As monies were collected after the show from residents and tourists alike, I saw that these plays were a way to build camaraderie within the township and outside as tourists also watched the plays. In this way, actors could mobilize residents and others to get them thinking about specific issues and how they could be addressed. The monies that were later collected could help enable more plays in the future and can potentially provide further ways of participating in the fight against poverty and inequality for township residents.

While my initial fears around *not* collecting data about the role of ICTs on the redefinition of socio-political relations in Langa served to make me anxious in regard to my research, I realized that this lack of data was, in essence, an answer to the question in itself. This lack of data meant that, at least during fieldwork, ICTs were of little to no use to residents in this regard, which is contrary to what many scholars had to say about ICT use among populations like Langa. The belief that ICTs would significantly improve residents' lives in this way speaks to the inaccurate belief that technology (completely) controls society (Chandler, 2012). As Heilbroner (1967) suggests, technology does have some impact on the way we live our lives. However, technology does not impact or control every aspect of our lives. Technology does not determine our destiny. Residents, and all users of technology, have control over how much technology controls them. In this regard, residents had not accommodated technology to the extent that it determined their roles in politics. Believing that the adoption and adaptation of mobile phones and the Internet would inevitably lead to the improvement (or otherwise) of socio-political relations in a given society is to perpetuate the idea that we are controlled by technology without having a choice in the matter.

While the above data on social media uprisings demonstrates a crucial role that ICTs *can* play in protests, getting your 'voices' heard and (potentially) achieving goals, it would appear that these types of protests do not appeal to everyone in the same way, least of all the majority of Langa residents. Popular scholarship has been all too confident in suggesting that poor and marginalized populations would benefit from ICTs in this regard. Such scholarship suggests that new ways of communication improve socio-political relations, as communication is integral to political development (see Garret et al., 2012; Alozie et al., 2011; Youngs & Allison, 2008). This again speaks to the omnipotence that ICTs are credited with, without acknowledging the social interactions with its users. That residents have yet to gravitate to ICTs to address socio-political concerns also testifies to the lack of technological determinism that I speak about in

various places. Access to mobile phones, for Langa residents, did not inevitably lead to new and technologically based forms bargaining for rights. Residents have stuck to techniques they know and feel are effective. ICTs have yet to appeal to residents for political means.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the role of ICTs on the redefinition of socio-political relations for Langa residents, namely that ICTs did not play a significant role in this regard, at least at the time of fieldwork. Addressing marginality – where township residents' political marginalities result in the struggle to obtain basic rights attributed to citizens, I acknowledge the political marginality that continues to plagues Langa residents social realities, however minimally. As residents seek to benefit from housing, among other benefits, it is the 'old-fashioned' demonstrations that they employ, namely toyi-toyi-ing, having meetings, signing petitions and the like. When the COLACOCO fought for political rights they used formal political channels, engaging in ward committee meetings and participating in public meetings as well as petitioning both political leaders and senior administrators (Tapscott, 2012: 64). This dissertation has so far shown the extent to which ICTs, particularly the mobile phone, has (both negatively and positively) impacted their lives. It is significant that ICTs have not been used for socio-political gain, especially in light of the social media revolution where it appears that using technology in this way has become more of a fad than a means-to-an-end. And as modern communication technologies are expected to offer a variety of opportunities for the economically and politically marginalized, I note the relevance of the lack of ICTs for political marginalization among residents as a contradiction to this popular belief.

The next chapter concludes this dissertation and examines the implications of the research findings.

CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore the role of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the making of flexible identities and ideas of belonging among different categories of (im)migrants living and working in Langa Township in Cape Town. In so doing, the study provided insight into various real and imagined notions of marginality that often contribute to struggles of belonging for Langa residents. While addressing the intricacies of marginality for Langa residents, I reveal various ways that ICTs have been used to both mitigate and exacerbate these marginalities. This is a study of migration and belonging and as such, it explores and interrogates what it means to belong for Langa residents, particularly as mobile bodies who have experienced and coped with physical (and various other) displacements during the course of their lives. The introduction and integration of mobile phones in South Africa have undoubtedly played a role in the lives of Langa residents in their negotiation and navigation of belonging to various locations, namely home and, for most, Langa: their host community.

Using an ethnographic approach, through informal and formal interviews and engaging in participant observation, I collected data toward the fulfillment of my research goals guided by four main questions stated in the introduction of this dissertation. Throughout the course of my research, marginality became an underlying and critical notion in this dissertation. I approached Langa with a fixed view of marginality and learned throughout fieldwork that residents' marginality was complex and did not meet general characteristics of marginal populations. Initially, however, the central focus of this dissertation was on how new communication technologies have been creatively and historically appropriated towards the maximum benefit of Langa residents. It was necessary to explore the use of technology among residents not from a standpoint of technological determinism, but in a way that would reflect the use of technology within the local context of Langa Township. From the beginning of this study, understanding residents as people with agency, purposeful and conscious of their use of technology was essential toward understanding local individual and collective techno-social relationships within the township. Understanding residents was important for challenging the notion of technological determinism. Understanding techno-social relationships within Langa would provide insight into how and why residents use technology, particularly the mobile phone.

Summary Conclusions

In *Chapter 1*, I address claims of South Africa's poverty (Pillay et al., 2013; Landou, 2011) and inequality (Tregenna & Tsela, 2012; Jacobs, 2003), and notions of indigeneity, citizenship and belonging (Geschiere, 2009; Mamdani, 2009, 1996; Pelican, 2009; De La Cadena, 2007) which often exacerbate struggles to basic rights for certain individuals occasioning or compounding inequality. I then conceptualize notions of the 'insider' and 'outsider' in a South African context. This sets the stage for placing (disadvantaged, black) South African locals, internal and transnational (black) South African migrants and (black) African immigrants from across the continent, in a country where scarce resources often makes for a tension-filled (and unequal) environment. I dwell on the plight of (mobile) insiders and outsiders as particularly disadvantaged populations in Cape Town, South Africa who are often relegated to the geographical margins of the city. Townships, most often built on the margins of the city, are home to many outsiders and disadvantaged insiders (Township Renewal Sourcebook, 2009; Johannes, 2000), who are then perceived to be marginal in relation to populations in mainstream or urban Cape Town. I draw on Pearlman's (1976) "myths" and Mizruchi's (1983) regulations of marginality to address Langa Township's perceived marginality in Cape Town. I attempt to challenge residents' categorical marginality and argue that residents' marginality is not as obvious as expected.

Drawing inspiration from studies by de Bruijn et al (2009, 2013) and in recognition of more recent studies on the use of ICTs among (perceived) marginal or otherwise disadvantaged population in an African context from scholars like Nyamnjoh, H.M (2013), Hay (2013), Tazanu (2012), Nkwi (2011), Lamoureaux (2011), I set out to provide empirical data on the use of ICTs among Langa residents, as a mobile and disadvantaged population. Challenging the notion of technological determinism, I argue that residents have been and are mindful and purposeful of their use of ICTs. They are not passive consumers of technology. Acknowledging technology's simultaneous yet not dominant control over its users, I maintain that technology controls residents only to the extent that residents allow it to. Just as residents enter social relationships with peers, they enter into relationships with their cell phones. These relationships are generally based on a certain level of mutual expectations that are often taken for granted by users and technology alike (Ling, 2012). Using my own experience as an active cell phone user (Powell, 2012), and Warnier's (2006, 2001) description of technology as extension of the body, I address the taken for granted aspect of techno-social relationships. I argue that techno-social relationships are crucial to how one perceives and accommodates technology in their everyday lives. I maintain that communication technologies, both new and old, must have been crucial to

the lives of residents and (im)migrants who are excessively mobile. I therefore seek to provide data on residents' use of technology in a historical perspective.

In *Chapter 2*, I describe the methods used to address the research questions. Drawing on Delamont (2004), Davies (1998) and Gupta and Ferguson (1992), I justify my use of ethnographic fieldwork – living among Langa residents – in order to best understand the various activities and social realities that make up their lives. In light of Jones' (2010) problematization of the ethnographic method, claiming that by the time ethnographic snapshots are written up, they will inevitably have changed, I argue that ethnographic snapshots are significant to how we perceive data. I argue that, particularly in a historical perspective, changed or shifting ethnographic snapshots reveal gradual or hasty changes within a particular area of interest, helping the interpretation and theorization of certain types of phenomena.

This chapter also addresses the challenges I faced while engaging in fieldwork. Flick (2007:17) states that during fieldwork, the people of the study should "agree to the presence of the researcher among them as a neighbor and friend who also happens to be a researcher". I speak to the difficulties of being a 'friend' and 'neighbor' (a temporary resident) to residents, in light of my other identities, namely a black American, a female, a research student, a (pseudo) insider *and* an outsider. I present the challenges faced as a 'friend', attempting to meet residents' (sometimes extravagant) expectations and remittances of me and as a 'neighbor' where avoiding such expectations (when they became overwhelming) was a struggle. The chapter documents my actions in the field towards answering my research questions, how I negotiated my position and the challenges I faced in the field, particularly balancing residents' well-being against my own well-being. It demonstrates that standardized and abstract prescriptions and expectations of fieldwork should not be taken for granted. The reality is, fieldwork can be a rather messy ordeal for both the researcher and the researched no matter how much one prepares.

In *Chapter 3*, I draw on my ethnographic data to challenge Langa's perceived, categorical marginality. I argue that residents do not conform to general perceptions of marginality as described by Mizruchi (1983) and Pearlman (1976). Challenging the belief that occupants will engage in behaviors that coincide with stereotypes (Jahoda, 2001), I argue, firstly, that townships, as marginal spaces, do not necessarily produce marginal people. Secondly, I maintain that residents live lives that directly contradict some of the characteristics of marginalized populations, namely that they are lazy, jobless, dangerous and usually associated with crime, violence, drugs and prostitution (Pearlman, 1976). The ethnographic snapshots reveal residents who are, for the most part, socially organized, hardworking, resourceful and

non-violent. The chapter begins to address the intricacies around marginality, in attempt to do away with the general marginality associated with township residents.

The chapter argues that while Langa residents may be considered disconnected from mainstream Cape Town (Skuse & Cousins, 2007), they, some with their menial jobs, and others, particularly foreigners with entrepreneurial skills, are very much connected to mainstream Cape Town through the range of services and opportunities they offer to local Cape Tonians and those living in Cape Town (Tadesse & White, 2013; Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010). I provide further ethnographic accounts of residents' perceptions and actions toward their own perceived marginalities. I argue that despite the reality evidenced through my research, some residents act in ways that contribute to their stigmatization and conform to stereotypical images of the marginal township resident for the purposes obtaining monies and other material wants from others, namely tourists who come to visit the township. In this way, I argue, they make use of flexible identities, oscillating between the able-bodied and independent resident and the desperate and poor resident in need of help from those outside the township, when it suits them.

In *Chapter 4* I set out to address how ICTs have been used in the development of Langa as a mobile population. Drawing on scholars like Diga et al. (2013) and Obijiofor (2009) who suggest that there is a strong link between the adoption of ICTs and development for countries and communities, I argue that ICTs have facilitated the development of Langa. The idea that Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICTD) can enable opportunities for human progress (Rangaswamy & Cutrell, 2012) is a noble one and I enforce the idea, to a degree in this dissertation. As my main focus is the mobile phone, I maintain that it is not the mobile phone on its own that has facilitated Langa's development, but the way residents use their phones along with other factors that have facilitated development. This, again, speaks to the control that technologies and humans have over each other. I argue that mobile phones allow residents to negotiate their marginalities both inside and outside of the township, as they promote social statutes, allude to economic strength (Tazanu, 2012), and liken residents to those in mainstream Cape Town who own the same phones. This further demarginalizes and works towards the social (and economic) development of Langa and its residents.

Following ideas on marginality presented in chapter 3, I dwell on Mizruchi (1983) and Pearlman's (1976) notions, ideas and myths of marginality, in a more forceful manner, towards the continuation of devaluing notions of Langa's marginality, as perceived by those in mainstream Cape Town. I draw on Mark Orbe's (1998) 'co-cultural theory' to address the various marginalities or co-cultural groups within Langa. I refer to Ramirez-Sanchez's (2008)

study on Afro Punks – black American punks taking up residence in a predominantly white American punk scene. He explains the predicament of Afro punks being socially accepted among white punks. As punk culture is not popular, white punks are a marginalized group in certain areas of the United States. Afro punks, then, by virtue of being black and therefore in the minority, are doubly marginalized both as blacks and as punks. Drawing on this double marginality, I reveal the margins within the 'margins' in Langa – marginalized groups within the township. I reveal, however, various ways that residents can negotiate such marginalities within the township by buying a quality phone, for example. The presence of margins within in the 'margins' in Langa not only shows the various social categories and hierarchies in the township, but it reveals the various levels and degrees of marginality that residents can face.

In *Chapter 5*, I draw on de Bruijn et al's (2009) definition of the term marginal which suggests that 'marginal' people face a range of real and imagined circumstances that make them feel disadvantaged. These circumstances include lack of, or limited access to communication technologies and means of transport. I draw on this notion of the marginal person to develop an argument towards the role of communication technologies in a historical perspective for residents when, not too long ago, lack of transport and communication alternatives to writing letters and sending them manually stunted physical mobility and intimate relationships between residents and their families at home. While not all residents' willingly embraced new technologies like the cell phone, some residents found relief in its functions and its ability to compress time and space. This led to my argument that mobile phones, and the Internet for some, did indeed mitigate distance for some residents seeking to maintain relationships with their non-migrant kin at home. Similarly, mobile phones proved burdensome for other residents who could not avoid social obligations and remittance interactions (Hay, 2013; Nyamnjoh, H.M., 2013; Tazanu, 2012) because the mobile phone, as an extension of the body (Warnier, 2001) and a leash on which migrants could be controlled (Nyamnjoh, H.M., 2013:270) meant that non-migrant kin could demand participation in these obligations even from afar. I maintain that residents who allowed themselves to be used by their phones in this way did so when they could afford to send remittances and the like. Others strategically avoided such obligations by not answering phone calls or responding to text messages.

In *Chapters 6* and *7*, I address the impact of ICTs in socio-economic relations and the role of ICTs in redefining socio-political relations in Langa Township, respectively. Qureshi (2012) suggests that there is a link between the adoption of ICTs by people in certain areas and

an increase in their income levels. Toure (2012) suggests that ICTs are essential to social and economic development. Not wanting to take these suggestions for granted, lest I fall victim to a belief in technological determinism, I aim to reveal if and how these claims are supported by data collected in Langa. Drawing on South Africa's economic history until the present, and focusing largely on the black population, I reveal the precarious positions and growing disadvantages of black populations around South Africa.

I maintain that mobile phones, as both material and experiential purchases (Carter & Gilovich, 2012), and the Internet have beneficially impacted residents' socio-economic relations within Cape Town. I reveal residents' use of ICTs to learn about employment opportunities and to promote themselves and others to interested employers. Mobile phones and the social chat functions that they offer also provide student residents with the option of studying virtually. While technological determinism is, in general, a faulty theory, my data has confirmed what scholars have concluded about adoption of ICTs for economic progress in certain populations, at least in the context of Langa. I also argue that the use of mobile phones for economic and educational gain works to negotiate residents' marginality, as increased access to information and opportunities contributes to residents having similar opportunities to those outside the township, ultimately serving to negotiate one of their marginalities in Cape Town.

In *Chapter 7*, I first of all affirm Langa's political disadvantages as a social and historic reality (Pearlman, 1976) that residents consistently had to deal with. Such disadvantages contributed to some of the marginalities that residents' face. I then draw on ideas of citizenship and belonging in a South African context towards understanding the continuous problem of the provision of human rights amenities to large portions of South Africa's population. The right to adequate housing, promised in Article 26 of the Bill of Rights by the South African constitution (Statutes of the Republic of South Africa – Constitutional Law, 1996:1254), has been the cause of many a protest in South Africa, as some historically disadvantaged black populations have yet to benefit from this right. Focusing on Langa residents, I argue that 'adequate' housing, as the most sought after provision, is a major political concern for residents. However, requests (or more appropriately, demands) for housing have come in the form of face-to-face gatherings, toyi-toying and gathering names for petitions to provide to counselors.

Despite recent hype and euphoria around the use of ICTs in social media uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa, for example, residents have not felt compelled nor have they been otherwise convinced that ICTs would be beneficial towards their desires to obtain adequate housing. I reveal that residents do not use ICTs to facilitate the roll out of human rights, or to otherwise redefine socio-political relations in Langa. In light of technological determinism and

ideas of ICT use in marginalized areas, this finding is insightful as it contradicts what scholars and theorists have predicted in such situations.

Research Findings

Langa, a Marginal Population?

The study attempts to do away with or better contextualize perceptions of Langa's marginality. My research has revealed that the residents, as a population, do not fit the criteria generally associated with marginal populations – this based on descriptions of marginality addressed by Pearlman (1976) and Mizruchi (1983). I describe the messiness, the instabilities and various ways of negotiating marginality in the context of Langa. Seeking to enforce Skuse and Cousins' (2007) argument that contrary to popular belief, townships are not marginal and are indeed connected to greater Cape Town, I present Langa residents as socially connected to the rest of Cape Town particularly from employment and economic standpoints, though I do not neglect their social connection. When one begins to understand the depths and degrees of marginality that have been presented throughout this dissertation, one can comfortably assert and ascertain the realities associated with marginality instead of generally categorizing any one group as such. Even when residents do belong to marginal groups within or outside the township, one must understand that these marginalities are not fixed. Furthermore, the fact that there are different degrees of marginality even among members of the same marginal category attests to the unbounded and fluid notions of marginality. Marginality is not homogenous nor is it finite.

Residents' employment in a host of (sometimes meager) jobs including, petrol attendants, security guards, waitresses, car guards, taxi drivers, domestic workers and baby-sitters makes them essential to greater Cape Town. These jobs, however menial, are jobs that are necessary for the daily maintenance of a range of services that are often taken for granted. Baby-sitters, for example, allow parents to go to work or school during the day by taking on the brunt of child-care. Most of the aforementioned jobs, often considered beneath some of the population of greater Cape Town, offer a range of service deliveries that have been accepted as second nature. If residents and others in similar posts stopped performing these tasks the otherwise smooth nature of parts of Cape Town's environment could come to a halt.

Furthermore, Africans from around the continent who come to live in South Africa often bring with them a range of skills that not only provide for the general public by means of shops, cell phone repair services and Internet café's, for example, but they sometimes provide employment opportunities to local South Africans who are unemployed. While African

immigrants living in South Africa are also generally considered a marginalized population disconnected from the rest of Cape Town, I have shown that their roles often contribute to the social and economic development of their host countries through their services and employment opportunities (Kalitnayi & Visser, 2010). These jobs and small scale businesses can offer the creation and enhancement of a range of skills for locals and immigrants alike resulting in greater opportunities for these otherwise poor and disadvantaged individuals to better themselves and others. These realities show how marginalities are constantly negotiated for both insiders and outsiders alike as there are various ways of decreasing and increasing the depths of one's marginality in any social setting.

Furthermore, residents' use of ICTs strongly demarginalizes them. Their local use of ICTs within the township and in relation to public and 'mundane' uses testifies to their agency and purposeful use of technology for their own satisfaction. The fact that residents are not technologically subservient proves, yet again, their competency to take matters and devices into their own hands and to manipulate them for their benefit. That residents are not technologically subservient does not imply that they too are not equally manipulated by technology, but I maintain that all users are subject to this manipulation. I have already reinforced that the notion of technological determinism – the belief that "technology… determines the rest of society and culture (Chandler, 2012: 257) – is false. Technology and society must be understood in relation to each other. Techno-social relationships are mutual rather than casual (de Bruijn et al., 2009:70).

Warschauer (2003:205) emphasizes that "technology and social realms are highly intertwined and continuously co-constitute each other in myriad ways". The acknowledgement of innovative uses of technology on the African continent testifies to the above arguments. It is also important to note that ICTs work differently in diverse situations as they interact and are interacted with in various ways within different societies. Mobile phones and other technologies need to be understood as being "modal", meaning that they may be used in a particular way in one society, but in a different way in another. The belief that ICTs are ever beneficial and can bring about social change should not be taken for granted as their ability to transform relies heavily on the social form of the societies in which they are deployed (Leaning, 2005:35-6). For Langa residents, mobile phones have been made useful in a variety ways as residents have assimilated the devices to be used and manipulated in specific ways.

ICTs and Development

　　Mobile phones and the Internet have proven beneficial to Langa residents who have used these tools to negotiate the various (social and economic) marginalities that describe their social realities. Qureshi (2012) states that ICTs have enabled access to skills and knowledge that would help people to improve their lives. ICTs have, both in the mainstream and the margins of the country, begun to facilitate developmental growth. My study has shown that social development in Langa has flourished with the adaptation of mobile phones and related technologies. ('Quality') mobile phones have given residents the ability to promote themselves in stylistic fashion. Their phones provide sustenance to the personal value of residents. Similarly, they work to ensure that residents are admired by others in the township. Acting as a rite-to-passage, mobile phones can award residents with social inclusion depending on the type of phone that one owns regardless of whether they have airtime that would allow them to use the phone practically. Residents take pride in owning expensive and desirable Smartphones that elevate their statuses while often masking other (financial) deficiencies in their lives. To be regarded as a resident owning a 'quality' phone is to ensure one's popularity; to establish their social acceptance within the township. For local residents and (im)migrant residents alike, this is one way of ensuring social inclusion within the township.

　　Furthermore, the role of the Smartphone among Langa residents seeks to ensure social inclusion among those belonging to greater Cape Town. Mobile phones, in a sense, serve as a bridge that allows Langa residents to (occasionally) cross over and merge with those outside of the township who have desired and purchased similar phones. Securing ownership of phones that are widely used within and around Langa (and inside and out of the continent) serves to prove their 'normalcy'. It can prevent them from being seen as socially backward in the eyes of mainstream Cape Tonians, as mobile phones are one of the "great equalizers" (Horst & Miller, 2006).

ICTs and the Mitigation of Distance

　　ICTs have been said to accelerate mobility in their compression of time and space (Lamoureaux, 2013; Ling & Campbell, 2011; Nyamnjoh, 2009; de Bruijn et al., 2009; de Bruijn, 2009). They also have the potential to accelerate social mobility, even if to a much lesser degree. Migration to urban centers from impoverished and under-developed rural areas from within and around South Africa constitutes an essential survival strategy for many poor households for whom accelerated mobility imposes an urgent need to manage 'distance' and 'time' in the interest of their relationships (Castles, 2002; de Bruijn et al., 2001; Adepoju, 2000). This is

principally achieved through the use of fixed and mobile telecommunications services. The mobile phone, in particular, has allowed people in rural areas to manage aspects of distance in extended kin-networks (Skuse & Cousins, 2009:187) to a certain extent while being mobile. In South African townships and informal settlements, as well as elsewhere in Africa, both poor and urban dwellers use mobile phones to stay in touch with rural relatives and to maintain healthy or constant communications with places and people distanced from them through mobility (de Bruijn et al., 2010, 2009; Nyamnjoh, 2005). This reality was ever present in my research in Langa.

In a historical perspective, the mobile phone has been a welcomed technological advance for some residents in Langa. Former methods of communicating by residents included delivering letters and money through taxi drivers and fellow travelers, which often meant that goods and money were stolen. Sending telegrams and using the post office were time consuming, and connections were not as immediate as some residents would have liked at the time. With the exception of some of the older residents, mobile phones have, for most, provided a quick, easy and successful solution to meeting specific communication needs. My research has shown that the mobile phone has been both beneficial and detrimental for residents in its mitigation of distance. As Langa is a mobile population, most residents are committed to maintaining communication with family and friends left behind or living outside of Langa.

My findings have shown that while residents enjoy the constant communication between them and their families awarded by mobile phones, this constant communication also puts pressure on them to meet social obligations and send remittances to those left behind. Some residents expressed their dissatisfaction that their loved ones could call them at any time demanding that money and materials be sent home for various reasons. One resident complained that this was all his family called him for and he wished they would sometimes call "just to see how I am doing". While some residents may have looked forward to being separated from friends and family in the hopes of not being forced to meet certain obligations, the mobile phone has become an enemy in its compression of time and space, which allows them to be contacted anywhere and at any time by those left behind.

The Impact of ICTs on New Socio-Economic Relations
Some scholars insist that the introduction and adaptation of ICTs within a country has been a crucial step towards social, economic and political changes, as changes in technology have proven to affect these aspects of people's lives in various ways (Faik & Walsham, 2012). My study has shown that residents' embracing of mobile phones has facilitated opportunities for

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employment and educational benefits. Within the township mobile phones were both material and experientially (Carter & Gilovich, 2012) valued. As material items, they represented status symbols. They were often purchased ostentatiously as tangible gadgets that could attest to residents' well-being or presumed wealth. Experientially they marked convenient and mobile ways of gaining experiences. It was common practice for residents to access the Internet from their phones. Hanson (2007) states that mobile phones are like small computer centers, providing opportunities to learn. For some residents their phones were just that. Their phones provided them with opportunities to learn how to maneuver various computer functions that would come in handy when they needed to access computers.

Residents have also been able to take advantage of their mobiles and the Internet by gaining access to some of the same opportunities as individuals living in urban areas of the province. Langa's Internet café, for example provides employed residents and active students with a space to work and study inside the township where previous work of that nature meant that residents had to spend money travelling to available facilities outside the township. Students can also form mobile and virtual study groups and ask questions around assignments through functions like MXit on their mobiles. Regarding employment opportunities, residents have been able to make themselves increasingly available to potential employers through the use of their mobile phones. This has helped some to secure monies to supplement their existing (low) income. The overwhelming presence of mobile phones in the township and the inevitable problems that are bound to surface once in a while made availability of the cell phone repair shops a high demand. Not only do residents benefit from having access to fix their phones in the comfort of the township, but as a service that many residents feel is a priority, it is a high money-making job for the workers. Langa residents demonstrate that ICTs promote economic growth and development by increasing beneficial opportunities, such as employment and studying in addition to modifying wealth and status perceptions among residents.

Redefining Socio-Political Relations through ICTs

South Africa is a country plagued with inequality. For the black population, the history of segregation in education, health and welfare resulted in inequality and economic deficiencies (African National Congress, 1994). As a result, black populations within the country often lack basic rights which would provide access to essentials necessary for adequate living. And as issues of indigeneity, citizenship and belonging are highly contested (Geschiere, 2009; Mamdani, 2009; Pelican, 2009; Nyamnjoh, 2007b, 2004), claiming these rights is no easy feat. These struggles are often further compounded by the increased presence of African immigrants

in the country who end up living among the already struggling black population. These populations end up competing over the scarce resources available to them. They also compete for decision-making and political power to speak towards and implement decisions in the country (Rhoodie, 1991).

It has been generally accepted that populations suffering from economic and political marginalization will most likely benefit from ICTs, as the use of ICTs would increase democratization and political development (Youngs & Allison, 2008). News of the popular social media uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa (Alozie et al., 2011; Shah, 2011) has made the role of ICTs for political recognition and gain seem desirable. Being empowered is a necessary transition for otherwise disadvantaged people in order to gain power, self-determination and control over their lives (Rahman, 2006). As ICTs have been thought to facilitate development by the removal of "major sources of unfreedom" like poverty (Gumpert & Drucker 2007; Sen, 1999:3), the use of ICTs for social activism would appear relevant as tools of mobilization. A critical theory of technology suggests that information should be combined with mobilization. ICT based projects, then, will be most effective if they find ways to lend support to mobilizing efforts (Warschauer, 2003:210). These points suggest that particularly disadvantaged people might seek to use ICTs in this way.

My study has revealed the lack of use of ICTs for socio-political redefinition or gain among Langa residents. When fighting for housing and other basic rights, township residents were more likely to toyi-toyi, perform shows, have meetings and sign petitions in order to make their voices heard. While ICTs have become beneficial for them in myriad ways, the use of them for political development is non-existent. I find this to be significant, particularly at the present time where expectations of ICT use for political development are high. Residents have demonstrated that they do not have to conform to popular uses of technology in such circumstances and are content to do what works for them.

Flexible Identities as a Means of Survival

My research has shown that ICTs do, in fact, play a significant role in the making of flexible identities, though perhaps not just in the way that I imagined. I expected to note extensive use of mobile phones to literally help create and maintain flexible identities among residents. I expected that residents were using mobile phones to communicate with 'home' often enough to remain firmly rooted there despite their physical absence. Subsequently, I expected to observe the use of mobile phones among residents to create and maintain relationships within and around the township. While both of these observations were present, they did not

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particularly stand out as survival strategies – flexible identities that one could not absolutely maintain without the use of mobile phones. I did note, however, that mobile phones allow otherwise poor or low-class residents to be equally seen as rich, financially stable and technologically savvy.

'Quality' phones and Smartphones offer residents a chance to increase their status. They provide symbols that allude to a lifestyle that certain behavioral patterns or lack of other necessities might otherwise prove false. For residents, this status symbol was not just desirable to demonstrate the social markings usually attributed to a higher social class in the township, but it served to determine the depths of their social inclusion or exclusion within and outside of the township. Mobile phones as "great equalizers" (Horst & Miller, 2006) allow residents to keep up not only with what is socially acceptable within the township but with what is socially acceptable in greater Cape Town, as they purchase phones that are highly sought after and are owned by people around the country. This ability to transform ones social status for the purpose of social inclusion is a means of social survival for some Langa residents. The ability to flex identities in this way has proven useful for residents who desire to maintain social popularity and inclusion in the township.

Not all residents desire mobile phones to enhance their social status. Some, like the older residents, have been reluctant to embrace mobile phone technology because they are uncomfortable using the device and have trouble understanding the use of its many functions. However, they know that as part of the mobile phone generation, it would be to their misfortune not to become active participants. While older residents may prefer face-to-face communication, letter-writing or more indigenous means of communicating, they have, however reluctantly, accepted and use their mobiles to cope with today's "acceptable" style of communicating. This flexible, if somewhat, less significant identity (less significant in the bigger scheme of my study) has served as a means of survival for older residents who do not want to "miss out" and are learning to cope with cell phone communication.

My study has also revealed the use of flexible identities among residents that did not involve mobile phones. Earlier in this chapter when I discuss my view of Langa being typically marginal, I explained that this was partly because they did not behave in ways that are generally associated with township residents or marginalized populations. Though their behavior has sometimes coincided with some of the negative stereotypes of extreme poverty that would resort to begging, this appeared to be a deliberate and conscious method of receiving monies and gifts from tourists. Some researchers (Jahoda, 2001; Mugny & Perez, 1991) suggest that the overwhelming attitude towards certain types of people results in their 'compliance' to the

behaviors expected of them. Residents have more than shown their abilities to cope with the disadvantages of life in ways that did not meet the negative standards associated with them, and feel strongly that their complicit ways are calculated for the reason I mention above. This flexible identity, this ability to go from being a self-contained, responsible, and proud resident of Langa to becoming a poor desperate resident in desperate need of help was another survival strategy among residents who have found ways to use their stereotypical statuses to gain money and materials from others.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study is significant in its contribution to the general need to expand research on the use of ICTs in African countries as recommended by Thompson and Walsham (2010). The study emphasizes the use of ethnographic research to obtain empirical data that provides reliable knowledge on any given phenomenon (Bernard, 2006). This study is intended to offer insights to scholarship and policy on relations between ICTs, marginality and development, though my study sample does not reflect a typical marginal population as expressed by scholars Mizruchi (1983) and Pearlman (1976), whom I refer to. The study does, however, address the use of ICTs in Langa which remains an under-researched area which renders it marginal in an academic perspective. I believe that the lack of knowledge around this township contributes to its perceived marginality as there is not enough empirical data to prove otherwise, but I digress. Empirical data on the relationship between ICTs, marginality and development will help change current profiles produced by ICTs.

While there are many reasons for continued optimism around the use of ICTs, particularly, as the growth rate of mobile phone adaptation does not appear to be in any danger of winding down, there is room to consider that ICTs do not always positively impact users in developing countries. There is too much contentment with the mobile phone and other communication technologies (potential and established) qualities thus far, which has caused scholars to neglect the reality that ICTs do not supply complete solutions to greater challenges of development. Further research should be undertaken to assess the potential of these devices, particularly in an African context where lack of empirical data has meant that the euphoria around mobile phones has neglected an in-depth evaluation and understanding of the transformations wrought by various developments in communication among select populations on the continent.

Furthermore, existing gaps in scholarship on theorizing and conceptualizing the intimate relationships between ICTs, society and social change should be addressed with new focuses on

techno-social relationships – drawing out the sometimes complicated yet taken for granted relationships that users have with their mobile phones. My relationship with my cell phone (Powell, 2012: Chapter 2), for example, portrays a lone, yet far from unique experience of love and hate with technology ultimately showing some of the ways that we users are controlled physically and emotionally by our devices. Residents in my study also contribute to the variety of ways that users are controlled by technology. The time that they dedicate to using their technology, and the power it has to increase or decrease their status inside and out of the township, can create oscillating movements between social inclusion and exclusion.

Finally I suggest a need to revise the 'single story' (Adichie, 2009) regarding townships and marginality in general. While there are both positive and negative aspects to township life, this is true for any living area. It is problematic to blindly accept the marginality of any specific township, basing this perception on, among other things, stereotypes without empirical knowledge. My study evidences the lived realities of Langa residents. I maintain that stereotypes, in general, should be done away with in favor of similar studies that would reveal more accurate and credible knowledge around a population or a certain phenomenon. Furthermore, the need to investigate the notion of marginality beyond its surface definition is crucial to understanding and providing insight to the nuanced and complex realities of marginality.

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APPENDICES

Appendices 1: Excerpt from *Me and My Cell Phone*[16]

At home I do not have a cell phone… I purchased my first cell phone when I came to Cape Town… I needed to be able to contact my family at will… I ended up buying an expensive and beautiful black and silver LG phone… It had so many functions, never minding that I only texted and phoned my family. I did not even know all of its capabilities or how to use them… That the phone had so many extra functions was enough to make me feel not just important but cool… It was my baby… I was proud of my phone… My cell phone could keep a secret better than anyone I knew. I cannot tell you all the times that my phone rang and I deliberately looked at who was calling and chose not to answer even if it was a close friend… Not because I am mean I just hate talking on the phone… Besides, I do not like being particularly available anyway... I love the fact that I can hide behind my cell phone…

I only had a handful of ... friends [in Cape Town] or people worth calling but I rarely called or texted any of them ... They would contact me sometimes but still not wanting to be particularly available I could simply claim that "I did not get your text" or "had my phone on silent" ... Or I could turn my phone off for an extended period which made avoiding calls and text messages that much easier. **"The subscriber you have dialed is not available at present. Please try again later."** *The automated voice recording gave the best excuse of all. The caller had to accept that I was unavailable -- even if I was. I love the fact that I can hide behind my cell phone and that is how I hide. Cell phones are not perfect. Contrary to popular belief they do not guarantee availability all the time. Things happen. Signals drop. Functions fail. And people lie…*

Still, it was easy to blame my phone when my social life was not what I wanted… it had so much responsibility. It was my primary source of communication. If I was expecting a call or a text and did not receive it, I automatically checked to make sure my phone was on. Sometimes I even turned it off and turned it back on again to confirm beyond any doubt that it was on. If it was on, I checked the volume. The problem, you see, had to be my phone. It could not be that I was being stood up. It must have been the phone. And so it was the phone that I took my anger out on. I hated my phone when things did not work out… It was easier to accept that my phone was malfunctioning rather than admit the obvious… It is funny how many times I blamed my phone when I was deliberately avoiding someone. I guess that was all catching up with me. Having a cell phone could be the highlight of my day or make me miserable. It was just as easy to feel insignificant as it was to feel important with a

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[16] For a full copy of this essay see Powell (2012: Chapter 2)

cell phone. They were not so easy after all. They involve you emotionally. That is the one thing that is not written in the direction manual (Powell 2012:11-13, 15, 20).

I have included this excerpt for the reader's benefit. The above excerpt represents some of my own ambivalences towards owning a cell phone and the pleasures and challenges of using the device to ensure communication with others on my own terms. The excerpt also represents the starting point for which I was able to begin collecting literature that would later contribute to the conceptual framework of this study.

Appendix 2: Meet the Participants

Table 1: The participants

Name	Nationality	Sex	Age	Current Residence	Occupation
Monwabise	Xhosa, Queenstown	Male	50	Khayelitsha	Craftsman at Guga S'thebe in Langa
Ivory	Xhosa, Langa	Male	50	Langa	Unemployed
Bashu	Xhosa, Langa	Male	63	Langa	Pastor at a church in Langa
Victor	Xhosa, Langa	Male	45	Claremont	Owner of Eziko Restaurant in Langa
Shuga	Xhosa, Eastern Cape	Female	30	Langa	Tour guide in Langa
Benson	Malawian	Male	?	Langa	Petrol Attendant
Bazaar	Malawian	Male	?	Langa	Owns a fruit stand in Langa
Sibuli	Xhosa, Eastern Cape	Female	62	Langa	Farm-worker
Sandile	Xhosa, Eastern Cape	Male	?	Langa	Manager at Guga S'thebe in Langa
Thando	Xhosa, Eastern Cape	Male	23	Joe Slovo	Salesman at Guga S'thebe in Langa
Thandi	Zulu, Johannesburg	Female	?	Langa & Johannesburg	Clerical worker for a media company in Johannesburg
Richard	Nigerian	Male	?	Cape Town	Cell Phone repairman in Langa
Zamile	Xhosa, Langa	Male	36	Langa	Tour guide at Guga S'thebe in Langa
Aneto	Angolan	Male	32	Langa & Wynberg	Owns a clothing and music kiosk in Langa
Odon	Angolan	Male	36	Rondebosch	Artist at Guga S'thebe in Langa
Sinodume	Zulu, Langa	Female	15	Langa	Student
Faith	Xhosa, Eastern Cape	Female	40	Langa	Bead worker at Guga S'thebe in Langa
Makhulu	Xhosa, Transkei	Female	76	Langa	Nurse in Langa
Thando M.	Xhosa, Langa	Male	38	Langa	Waiter at a restaurant in Sea point
Muzi	Zulu, Johannesburg	Male	23	Langa	Waiter at a restaurant in Sea point
Amandla	Xhosa, Langa	Male	31	Langa	Exporter
Mama	Zimbabwean	Female	60	Langa	Unemployed
Phumi	Xhosa, Eastern Cape	Female	42	Joe Slovo	Tour guide at in Langa
Pam	Xhosa, Eastern Cape	Female	28	Joe Slovo	Saleswoman at Guga S'thebe in Langa
Abongile	Xhosa Eastern Cape	Male	29	Langa	Tour guide in Langa
Vuyu	Xhosa, Khayelitsha	Female	23	Khayelitsha	Saleswoman at Guga S'thebe in Langa
Henry	Nigerian	Male	28	Pinelands	Owner of a cell phone repair shop in Langa
Mike	Nigerian	Male	30	Mowbray	Assistant cell phone repairman in Langa
Joseph	Congolese	Male	36	Langa & Mowbray	Artist

Appendix 3: Loliwe Lyrics

"Loliwe"

uLoliwe wayidudula *["the train is pushing"]*
uLoliwe wayidudula
uLoliwe wayidudula
Nang'esiza *["here it comes"]*
uLoliwe wayidudula
uLoliwe wayidudula
uLoliwe wayidudula
Nang'esiza

Sul'ezonyembezi mntakwethu *["wipe those tears off, loved one"]*
Sul'ezonyembezi mntakwethu
Sul'ezonyembezi mntakwethu
Nang'esiza
Sul'ezonyembezi mntakwethu
Sul'ezonyembezi mntakwethu
Sul'ezonyembezi mntakwethu
Nang'esiza

uLoliwe wayidudula
uLoliwe wayidudula
uLoliwe wayidudula
Nang'esiza
uLoliwe wayidudula
uLoliwe wayidudula
uLoliwe wayidudula
Nang'esiza

Phezulu, eNkosini *["in Heaven, in the Lord"]*
Kuhlal 'ingcwele zodwa *["lives only the holy"]*
Mawufuna ukuya khona, thandaza *["if you want to go there, pray"]*
Phezulu, eNkosini
Kuhlal 'ingcwele zodwa
Mawufuna ukuya khona, thandaza

uLoliwe wayidudula
uLoliwe wayidudula
uLoliwe wayidudula
Nang'esiza
uLoliwe wayidudula
uLoliwe wayidudula
uLoliwe wayidudula
Nang'esiza

Sul'ezonyembezi mntakwethu
Sul'ezonyembezi mntakwethu
Sul'ezonyembezi mntakwethu
Nang'esiza
Sul'ezonyembezi mntakwethu
Sul'ezonyembezi mntakwethu
Sul'ezonyembezi mntakwethu
Nang'esiza

Phezulu, eNkosini
Kuhlal 'ingcwele zodwa
Mawufuna ukuya khona, thandaza
Phezulu, eNkosini

Kuhlal 'ingcwele zodwa
Mawufuna ukuya khona, thandaza