

« Au-delà de l'enceinte » : Organisation de la vie sociale dans un quartier informel au cœur d'une ville minière d'Afrique du Sud.

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Résumé

Cet article brosse un tableau ethnographique de la vie sociale quotidienne parmi les migrants qui habitent les quartiers informels de Marikana, petite ville d'exploitation minière de platine de la province du Nord-Ouest en Afrique du Sud. L'article avance d'abord que la disparition des enceintes qui abritaient les mineurs saisonniers dans l'Afrique du Sud d'avant 1994 a eu pour effet de fragmenter la main d'œuvre. Il existait toutefois d'autres formes de cohésion plus locales, composées d'autres formes de relations et de compréhension collective en dehors des institutions établies, des organisations axées sur les classes sociales et des partis politiques. L'auteur suggère en outre que les formes de cohésion discernées dans les quartiers informels reposent sur des pratiques locales particulières qui rejettent les hiérarchies sociales et politiques des organismes officiels. Elles se conforment plutôt à des règles tacites qui puisent dans les conceptions profondément ancrées de ce qui constitue des comportements sociaux, moraux, hiérarchiques et culturels acceptables aux yeux des habitants. L'article relève ce que Karl von Holdt a décrit comme des « ordres moraux locaux », un concept qu'il utilise pour dévoiler des exemples de situations où l'ordre moral alternatif appuie la violence collective. Cet article va plus loin en soutenant que les intervenants sociaux invoquent et développent des codes culturels afin d'assurer l'ordre au cœur d'un désordre spatial et institutionnel. L'« ordre moral local » peut effectivement favoriser la violence collective, comme dans les cas cités par von Holdt, mais n'a pas nécessairement cet effet.

“Beyond the Compound”: Organisation of Social Life in an Informal Settlement within a South African Mining Town.

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Abstract

This paper provides an ethnographic account of everyday social life among ‘migrants’ domiciled in the informal settlements of Marikana, the small platinum mining town in the North West province of South Africa. The paper argues firstly that the demise of compounds, that used to accommodate migrant mine workers for most of pre-1994 South Africa, did “fragment” labour. There were nonetheless other more local forms of cohesion, made up of other forms of collective understanding and relationships that exist outside established institutions and/or class organisations and political parties. I suggest secondly that the forms of cohesion I discovered in the informal settlements are predicated on specific local practices that shun social and political hierarchies of formal organisations and, instead, operate in accordance with unwritten rules that draw from residents’ deeply held notions of acceptable social, moral, hierarchical and cultural practices. My work uncovers what Karl von Holdt has described as “local moral orders”, a notion he uses to unpack instances where alternative moral orders support collective violence. This paper makes a wider claim, that social actors invoke and develop cultural codes to ensure order in the midst of spatial and institutional disarray. “Local moral orders” may indeed enable collective violence, as in Von Holdt’s cases, but they do not necessarily do so.

Introduction

This paper provides an account of everyday social life among ‘migrants’ domiciled in the informal settlements of Marikana, the small platinum mining town in the North West province of South Africa. It provides an ethnographic analysis developed from a stay in one of the tin villages that make up much of the town’s landscape. I stayed at the ‘BigHouse’ settlement between mid-January and mid-August 2015. Most of the occupants are black

men and women coming from beyond the province, in search of the proverbial greener pastures. IsiXhosa speakers, hailing mostly from the Eastern Cape Province, make up a disproportionate number of the people living in this corrugated iron-houses landscape (often called '*imikhukhu*'). IsiXhosa speakers and others who come from places like the Free State province or from countries beyond the borders, such as Mozambique, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, find themselves gravitating into these sorts of precincts upon arrival in Marikana and indeed in the platinum belt at large.

I depict everyday experiences by placing *imikhukhu-lands* at the centre of my analysis. The paper aims to address two main strands of thought. First, I argue that while the demise of pre-1994 compounds that used to accommodate migrant mine workers according to an established logic of hierarchy and control (see Moodie and Ndatshe 1994; Donham 2011) did "fragment" organized labour (see Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu 2010; also, Chinguno 2013b), that argument should not continue to be used to deny other new and more local forms of cohesion. Social, economic, and political networks are fostered outside the workplace amongst miners but they also include other migrants who may not necessarily be on the mines' payrolls. Migrant social experience and practices embody a motley collection of interests and motives which inform (and are informed) by behaviours, cultural practices, identity and senses of belonging that often escape notice in explanations for human collective behaviour rooted exclusively in a focus on political economy. 'Fragmentation' that may occur at places of work, I argue, is compensated for by other forms of collective understanding and relationships outside established institutions and/or class organisations and political parties.

Second, I suggest that the kind of political, economic and social arrangements I discovered in the informal settlements are predicated on specific local practices that shun social and political hierarchies of formal organisations and instead operate in accordance with unwritten rules (a form of 'disorganised order', if you will) that draw from residents' deeply held notions of acceptable social, moral, hierarchical and cultural practices (cf. Hickel 2015). My work uncovers what Karl von Holdt (2010) has described as "local moral orders". Von Holdt, however, uses this notion to unpack instances where alternative moral orders undergird collective violence. This paper makes a wider claim, that social actors invoke and develop

cultural codes to ensure order in the midst of spatial and institutional disarray. Local moral orders may indeed enable collective violence, as in Von Holdt's cases, but they do not necessarily do so.

The 'Batswa-ntle/ batswa-kwa' ("foreigners" or "outsiders"): informal settlements and contemporary mining towns

The North West province to-day is home to the highest proportion of households in South Africa living in *imikhukhu-lands*; an estimated 19 per cent of all households in the province, according to research by the Housing Development Agency (Government of South Africa 2013). Built uncomfortably close to mining operations, there were around 38 informal settlements on the platinum belt around Rustenburg and Marikana in 2012 (Chinguno 2013a). These places exude both fixity and transience at the same time. Concrete structures are being raised (both literally and figuratively) within the settlements. A number of the residents are in their second decade staying there (see Larkin and Shenker 2015). For many of them, this is not necessarily all at one stretch, as they may return to rural homes and other places from time to time and also move to stay in other parts of town, before returning. *Imikhukhu-lands* are places that one can occupy, it seems, with expectations subject to the whimsical winds of the platinum job market (for good or ill) or the Damocles' sword of eviction, not to mention perceptions of general insecurity.

Major informal settlements in Marikana, like Big-house and eNkanini², are demographically dominated by isiXhosa speakers. These people are not always welcomed by 'local' seTswana speakers, who perhaps perceive them as 'invaders' taking over land and jobs among other resources (see Mswana and Capps 2015).³ They are called names such as '*mathosa*' (for "*amaXhosa*")⁴, "*batswa-ntle/ batswa-kwa*" ("foreigners" or "outsiders"), or the more derogatory '*botebejane*' ("little Ndebeles", a name I was told was historically used for all Africans who are not *Batswana*).⁵ It is perhaps ironic that my first encounter with seTswana 'insults' directed against 'Xhosa outsiders' was brown graffiti (possibly human faeces) on the walls of a toilet cubicle in Rustenburg's Mabaleng Sport Bar and eating-house. It read, "*Mathunjwa oja tšhelete ya dipokopoko damathosa*" ("Mathunjwa is eating [i.e. spending] the money from Xhosa 'fools'").⁶ The percentage of those speaking isiXhosa and considered 'migrants' who have 'illegally' carved out pieces of land to build informal settlements is hefty in Marikana, and indicates,

as Chinguno (2013a) rightly observes, “an intersection between ethnicity and settlement patterns”. This trend is repeated in most of the platinum belt.

Sometimes the names given to such settlements by their migrant occupants are evocative of the circumstances around their establishment, but they are also grimly sardonic and harshly descriptive of the lived realities and spatial practices of the “*abahlali*” (residents). On the platinum belt, I became familiar with settlements named eNkanini (isiXhosa for “by force”/“by stubbornness” probably in reference to the modality of land occupation), eMabomvaneni (“place of the amaBomvana”)⁷, Ikemeleng (seTswana for “stand up for oneself”), Majakaneng (seTswana for “home of the believers-Christians”) and so on. These are names that suggest a lot about how the residents view their position and living circumstances in a particular space, and how they strive to survive while maintaining a modicum of dignity.

In most of these *imikhukhu-lands*, gender and demographic dynamics reveal a much-skewed social structure. Males make up 65 per cent of residents in settlements like eNkanini (Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu 2015). Some married couples and families with children do live here, but the majority, migrant men, prefer not to have loved ones from “home” in this environment of exaggerated male bravado. Most women are not direct employees of the mine and exist in these settlements and town at large, as “mistresses to mineworkers” (Benya 2015: 547), but there are some who stay in the *imikhukhu-lands* as ‘independent’⁸ entrepreneurs who brew and sell alcohol, run hair salons, engage in sex work, and take ‘piece’ jobs such as those on nearby fruit farms. Environed by many challenges, ranging from fewer chances of getting mine jobs to overt and random machismo of male neighbours, these women defy many odds. Naicker (2013) indeed points out that, in spite of the “historical picture of male-only hostels on the mines” still held by many analysts, the reality is “that there is a huge community of men, women and children” in settlements like eNkanini.

Realities of squalor and ‘stigma’ taken at face value evoke ideas of “a chaotic tangle of random persons and unmarried women” that has given rise to an official discourse of liminality, chaos and immorality in such “makeshift and transient” spaces (Hickel 2015: 98). The idea of “danger” and “pollution”, evoked against blacks in similar circumstances before 1994 (when authorities made a

‘correlation between domestic conditions and moral dispositions’) somehow lingers on today in a recalcitrant manner (ibid: 99). Thus, on the platinum belt, to-day’s informal settlements are also described officially (in a report by South Africa’s Department of Mineral Resources), as a “conduit or cesspool of crime, substance and alcohol abuse, and the spread of diseases” (Government of South Africa, 2009: 13).

Nonetheless, access to such settlements, in situations of few readily available alternatives, allows many migrants, especially those hoping to eventually land a job at the mines, an initial foothold within and a claim on South African urban spaces notoriously hostile to migrants and other poor, peripatetic peoples. I must insist that although I am far from romanticizing conditions of existence in South Africa’s informal settlements, my ethnographic observations point to realities that question any overarching narrative of a thoroughly chaotic and immiserated social life in almost all such places.

It is hardly surprising therefore, that, during the 2012 strike and protests that involved a large proportion of migrants in Marikana, some of them Lonmin employees, police reported that they had frantically tried “to stop (sic) [i.e. ‘stop’] strikers using the settlement as a sanctuary or a base from which to launch new attacks on the police” (Government of South Africa 2015, 636.10,: 335). “Sanctuary,” I reckon, also referred to how residents have rearranged the space, in a manner that maintains their collective moral and social desires and interests. Consequently, it is with brute force that state authorities have attempted to rein in residents of such informal settlements. Alternatively, they may choose simply not to intervene in such areas, leaving them to their own resources. Some formal organisations, of course, may try to piggyback on these largely self-regulating communities, as is the case with political parties and trade unions seeking to mobilise in informal settlements.

Quite striking about the settlements therefore, is not so much the neglect, disorder and deprivation by powers that be (which I acknowledge, but relativize), but rather forms of sociality which, somehow, most analyses overlook in notions of a bogged down seamless working class, or through overarching categories like Ashwin Desai’s “the poors” (2002) (see also Hartford 2012; Stewart 2013).

‘Far from the ‘disciplining gaze’?: The shack committees and unwritten shack rules and everyday politics at ‘Big-House’

‘Big-House’ informal settlement is located in Marikana’s electoral ward number 32. It is not easy to determine the number of its residents with pinpoint precision, but an intelligent guess of more than ten thousand can be made if one considers that eNkanini, the other major settlement in Marikana which is slightly bigger, has 10 235 households with 17 461 people (Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu 2015). These figures are however not constant because people come, go, and circulate for various reasons. Amongst these reasons, is short term employment practices by Lonmin especially through subcontracted “new recruiters: labour contractors, or labour brokers” (Forrest 2015: 514).⁹ Accompanying these and other unsettled rhythms of human existence, shacks pop up every day in the settlements, and consequently Big-House is growing bigger with no signs of abating. I met new faces every day, and after a while I almost gave up caring.

Big-House according to one of its pioneer ‘settlers,’ Bra ‘O’,^{*10} began in the 1990s, but it was not until the ‘platinum boom’ of the early 2000s that it truly sprawled. The name ‘Big-house’ comes from old farm houses on section 267-JQ of the old Rooikoppies farms of Marikana, that once belonged to white Afrikaner farmers. The dilapidated houses on the western side of the settlement are now divided into several living quarters for a number of black men, women and children, who started moving in during the 1990s and early 2000s. Since then Big-House’s expansion, like that of other informal settlements in its vicinity, hit a crescendo. Once, in the mid-2000s, a man named Molefe appeared before the settlements’ residents and tried to extort rent from them. When that failed, he appeared again with a court order to evict them. He was working in cahoots with a white property¹¹ developer from Rustenburg and they claimed to have bought the land from ABSA bank. The Big-House migrants dug-in and appealed the eviction at the land claims court, both in Mafikeng and at Randburg in Johannesburg. The court-case as far as the residents of Big-house know, “is shelved in Gauteng since 2009” (Interview 1, March 2015) and the eviction has not been carried out. The community at Big-House has a collective commitment to keep out “would-be extorters” like Molefe, and most of the residents, even the new-arrivals who have little detail of this phase in the settlement’s history, more or less identify with the

struggle against eviction and this assumed victory.

Big-House does *not* have a Benthamian panopticon design like the worker compounds that dominated the pre-1994 mining town landscape in South Africa, which were meant “to create in the minds of the workers, the illusion that they were being continuously watched” (Crush 1992: 832; Moodie and Ndatshe 1994; Donham 2011; Hickel 2014; 2015). How Big-House functions and maintains order follows the spatial, cultural and moral practices of their residents. In fact, as Chinguno (2013b) has observed, the informal settlements lack local state structures such as policing, rendering them virtual “‘no go areas’ for the South Africa Police Service”. When I met police and private security patrols, it was usually at bars in the town centre or at roadblocks for the police and near mine premises for security guards. The *imikhukhu-lands* seem far from the disciplining gaze of official security apparatuses.¹² Marikana’s major police station is located at the ‘gates’ of the town as one comes off the *N4* motorway. Opposite to it are offices of one of the many private security firms,¹³ easily accessible to Tharisa and Lonmin mines through close proximity and paved roads. Informal settlement residents have only occasional contact with police, and when it happens it is usually during periods of intense upheaval such as in the middle of 2012, or in the occasional bar scuffles or for drinking offences.

To an uncircumspect eye therefore, Marikana’s migrant society appears jumbled up and amorphous. The *imikhukhu-land* is being filled by ‘new arrivals’ who hope to get jobs at the mines, or join relatives and friends. With the police and state seemingly far off, or rather presenting a paradoxical picture of ‘present but far off’, any immediate description of daily experiences in the hovels, shouts out “chaos!”. One of my informants, Vuyo, told me in a manner that spake of unrestrained haughtiness, “Have you ever seen a policeman *emkhukwini*, [in the settlement]? Here you have to relax! We have all the ‘freedom’ we want here” (Field notes, April 2015).¹⁴ “At Big-House we follow *imithetho* [IsiXhosa for “rules”] that we set ourselves”, he added (*ibid*). This was after I asked him about the prudence of carrying open beer bottles and drinking on our way to his place. In South Africa ‘public drinking’ is a bookable misdemeanour. He also added, “When we fight *umlungu* [white persons]¹⁵ they [police] drive their *hippos* into this place to arrest us” (Field notes, April 2015).¹⁶ Respect for, and following residents’

imithetho is a theme that is recited in everyday interactions in the settlements.

There is another interesting paradox, however, within such appearances of ‘lack of policing’, if one scratches a bit beneath the gloomy newspaper headlines. The official crimes statistics only go high enough to put Marikana on the “worst precincts” list during periods of intense labour crisis, like the strikes of 2012 to 2014 (CrimeStats 2015). The ebb in murder for instance, that followed the resolution of the labour crisis happened without evident stepped up policing in informal settlements that are often portrayed as ‘dangerous’. Violence amongst residents and against state and mining company symbols seems “selective”. To evoke Guha (1999), they are committed by people who are pushed to their ideal limits, or where perpetrated are directed at those victims perceived as threatening collective interests and moral cohesion (see Chinguno 2013b).

So, deprived by relevant authorities of essential services that may make life more bearable in the slums and surviving in spaces where they face ever present *threats* of eviction, violence, porous perimeters, and a lot more, residents engage in sometimes overt, but mainly “‘hidden transcripts’ against institutionalised domination (Scott 1990: xxi) built on their “vernacular geography” (Hickel 2015: 95) and daily experiences and practices. They devise structures of informal authority and hierarchy, which help them maintain order, following largely collective persuasions and interests.

Appearances can indeed be deceiving; talk of a living ‘*trompe l’oeils*’. Instead of being hopeless ‘skid rows’, we have, in the *imikhukhu-lands*, moral, social and ‘literal’ citadels; a “sanctuary or base” for most migrants where police ‘feared to tread’ in 2012 as reported in The Marikana Commission of Inquiry Report (Government of South Africa, 2015, 636.10: 335). The language for cohesion fostered in these places can be kinship (genuine and fictive), community and co-residence, power of rumour (gossip), mutual economic interests, ritual and ceremonial, amongst other cultural expressions and exchanges (Guha 1999: 118). Residents have built a whole identity around the shacks, undergirded by collective motives, desires and action. They call themselves “*abahlali*” (“residents” or “settlers”)¹⁷ They cooperate in community vigilance activities, in community committees (“*iikomiti*” or “*umphakhati*”) that no one but themselves recognise. They agree on how to ‘design’ the space

in the settlement, when and where to do certain activities, on control of access, and so on. The residents have filled in formal lacunae and put in place self-defined social and moral controls.

The ‘moral’ business of *imikhukhu-lands*

Everyday experiences in these settlements follow the wisps of impermanence, or rather the uncertainties that come with being ‘informal’. In recent years, the escalation of ‘hire-fire-rehire’ tactics by the mines made people realise that one can fluctuate from employment to unemployment and correspondingly from company ‘perks’ (that may include accommodation) to life in a shack with little or none of those ‘perks’. Those migrants who are not ready to move out of Marikana when a job ends may fall back on the ‘hospitality’ of the settlement and stay or move out again when fortunes turn for the better.

Illegality or perceived ‘insecurity’ of tenure does not seem to stop residents from planning new buildings, discussing strategies for community vigilance, and other issues ‘*as if*’ the *imikhukhu-lands* are there forever. The building of new rooms makes hardware stores a very lucrative line of business for traders in the town. Traders, from whom the building materials are bought, are mostly white South Africans (“*abelungu*” or “*amabhulu*”), Asians of Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi origin (“*amaNdiya*”) and Chinese origin (“*amaChayena*”).

For those who do not have land to build their own shack, to build a kiosk, or who have recently arrived, there is always an option to rent from a “*rra stand*” (“shacklord”).¹⁸ It costs between 200 and 400 South African Rand (henceforth ZAR) a month to rent such a shack.¹⁹ *Rra-stands* include in their ranks mine workers, ex-mine workers or other ‘entrepreneurs’ who acquired the yard through purchase, or as a gift or simple occupation of white-owned land during the 1990s and early 2000s. As an ‘owner’ of a yard, one adopts the apparently gendered titles of either “*mma-stand*” (landlady) or “*rra-stand*” (landlord).²⁰

Many residents aspire to have their own yards and build shacks to rent out and earn money. “The *imikhukhu* are good business,” I heard this refrain countless times from neighbours, some of whom wanted to coax me to also ‘invest’ in this lucrative venture (Field notes, June 2015). The prospect of augmenting mine wages is alluring. The shacks are therefore built ‘chock-a-block’

next to each other to maximise the number of tenants one can rent in a yard. The tenants can be fellow mine workers, their wives, or relatives and friends who are typically isiXhosa speaking or people of other ‘outside’ ethnicities engaged in other occupations – as barbers, hawkers, healers, car washers, sex workers or whatever.²¹

For residents who have a small business venture like dressmaking, the selling of medicinal and magical herbs, auto repair, sex work, *spaza* shops²² and so on, the settlement is an ideal business ‘base’. For example, one business confronting people upon arrival in Marikana is that of spiritual and herbal ‘healers’ and ‘prophets’. Pamphlets, inviting people to ‘clinics’ scatter among the shacks and litter the town’s streets like autumn leaves. Practitioners come from the Eastern Cape, other provinces like Limpopo, or KwaZulu-Natal or from as far afield as Uganda and Tanzania. They advertise themselves as spiritual ‘doctors,’ ‘*dingaka*,’ ‘*amagqirha*,’ ‘*dokotela*,’ ‘specialist’ or any other name that appeals to their clientele.²³ While their expertise is diverse, specialists seem to excel in matters involving emotions, love and lovemaking and magical promises of great wealth. Businesses are framed in a way that ostensibly forwards the common good. With this in mind, for instance, donations from Somali shop owners were collected to cook food for strikers during the crises of 2012 and 2014 (Naicker 2013).

Beer, food, leisure and church congregations

During leisure time, watching football, gambling and sipping cold alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages are the favourite pastimes for most people in Marikana. Those who cannot afford it often find others who want to share. Before a match, if people decide to gather around a television, they may pool together some money, and buy lots of meat for “*braai*” (barbecue), something fondly called “*shisa nyama*” (literally “burn the meat” in isiZulu or isiXhosa). The favourite parts of a beast are various cuts of steaks, sausages (popularly called by the Afrikaans name “*boerewors*” which means “farmers’ sausage”), or umbles that are consumed with “*pap*” (thick maize-meal porridge) served in corresponding proportions.

Braai stands set up in the *imikhukhu-lands* and at the nearby shopping centre create giant billows of smoke that seem to signal to people in faraway places salaries in the miners’ bank accounts. Consequently, every month-end the town is besieged by people, some of them visiting, some of them looking to cash in on and ‘help’

spend the salaries. Many miners, especially the younger ones, may indulge in profligacy without much ambivalence, such that Marikana, as noted in the Tolsi and Botes (2015) becomes a place where “For many, money is not permanent. Nothing is. Money moves quickly - especially on alcohol and prostitutes.” Profligacy couched in terms of “*ukusela ngabahlobo*” (‘just drinking with friends’) serves a moral purpose, however, since it does draw migrants into useful social networks (Field notes, April 2015).

When liquor, beer and wine flow, it is usually among “*abahlobo*” (“drinking buddies” or “friends”). The ‘buddies’ form gatherings or congregations they call “*amabandla*” (sing. *ibandla*). For the ‘Eastern Capetonians’, the *ibandla* is usually made up of isiXhosa speaking friends and relatives, but even mere acquaintances can become close to the extent of being regarded as ‘kinsman,’ even when they come from vastly diverse regions and family backgrounds in the Eastern Cape. The boundaries of such relations are not stringent. Members might be drawn from neighbours in the *imikhukhu-lands*, from work mates, from fellow trade union ‘comrades,’ or others from the Eastern Cape who may, or may not reside in Marikana. I became a member of a small congregation, although I was also always reminded of my ‘outsider’ status on some occasions. Literature on migrant workers in South Africa (Clegg 1982; James 1999; Moodie and Ndatshe 1994) has long recorded people’s association in similar “home boy” structures.

An *ibandla* congregation formed on the basis of rural networks, neighbourly acquaintance, or ethnic camaraderie was always part of sociability amongst migrants in pre-1994 mining settlements as observed in Gordon (1977), McAllister (2006), Moodie and Ndatshe (1994). Moodie and Ndatshe (ibid: 166) specifically note that drinking was “indispensable to compound social life” not least because of informal affinities, moral and instrumental, it nurtured but also because it extended into other realms of sociality; dance parties, sex and its acquisition, moral exhortation, maintenance of order and so on and so forth. At a banal level, belonging to an *ibandla* is a good thing for individual migrants in cases of alcohol-fuelled scuffles.

Off-days and restful weekends for miners may also be spent at “*shebeens*”²⁴ within the informal settlements, where men and women mingle. While the amity cultivated in these public spaces can take a male form and is shaped around machismo, on some

occasions they may lose strict gender boundaries. A woman, two of them, or three – the number is not essential – can also join an *ibandla* organized festivity, especially the ‘weekend/pay day’ ‘barbecue feasts.’ Women also down tots of whiskey, gulp beer, snap at pieces of meat, chat a bit or a lot and leave immediately or stay on. They might be friends, lovers, and workmates or acquainted with the men in some other way. For the most part however, the *ibandla* remains male in composition and character.

“*Siyadla siyabathala*” (“we will eat and pay”): Sex, lovemaking and ‘women’s stories’

At informal settlement *shebeens*, *stokvel* parties are organised by clubs that are called by the same name, “*stokvel*”. Such parties are popular amongst older miners and residents in the *imikhukhu-lands*. To raise more money for their *stokvel*, members may take turns brewing opaque beer or buy large stocks of bottled beer and liquor for re-sale. At Big-House, these alcohol sales and parties happen fortnightly at a member’s place. Clad in elegant and matching uniforms, the members clap and dance far into the night. During such parties, close social ties are created; some of them become sexual connections, short or long term.

By describing sex, the act, in this context, I am neither insinuating that *stokvel* parties are events where people solicit for sex nor that the female organisers preoccupy themselves with ‘selling their bodies’ for a living. Far from it. Sexual connections frequently and almost inevitably develop because the atmosphere created is convivial and amorous. It is indeed common that at Big-House *stokvel* women are teasingly and lewdly called “*izidudla*” (“the voluptuous ones” sing. *isidudla*) by men and women alike. But any suggestion that *stokvel* women (most of whom are single and ‘independent’) sell sex as a priority at the parties would be misplaced. Such talk as I have observed at *stokvel* parties is usually made in ‘hush-hush’ conversations and typically goes no further than finger pointing.

Women who are openly involved in sex trade as their primary source of income, or as a side occupation to supplement other sources of income, are indeed numerous in Marikana, but they prefer to patronise the bars. They too have to carry around burdensome tags. In a place like Marikana, one can easily acquire a moniker. The list of names includes words like “*amadikazi*” (sing. “*idikazi*”), “*izifebe*”

(sing. *izifebe*) in isiXhosa or isiZulu, or “*dinyatsi*” (sometimes spelt “*linyatsi*”, sing. *nyatsi*), and “*magosha*” in seTswana and seSotho. *Amadikazi* among isiXhosa speakers wrote Monica Hunter (1936: 205), refers to “any woman living temporarily or permanently with her own people, who has been or is married, or who has had a child.” In the mining town to-day, the term is loosely used to refer to unmarried women who have children (‘single-mothers’). Such women may not consider or refer to themselves as “*izifebe*” or “*magosha*,” translated “prostitutes” (the former in isiXhosa, the latter in seTswana), because of the obvious stigma attached to such names and ‘sex work’ itself, but they may engage in short term sexual relations for immediate financial gain.

Dinyatsi is a term used by men to refer to a second or third partner (“mistresses”) besides their ‘legitimate’ wife (“*inkosikazi*”) or their ‘legitimate’ lover/girlfriend (“*isithandwa*”). *Dinyatsi* are acquired for a long-term sexual relationship with the possibility of domestic obligations for the women; cooking, doing laundry, cleaning and so on. In turn they may get a regular cash ‘gift’ and other favours from the men. The term *dinyatsi* may also be used by women. Female mine workers studied by Asanda Benya (2009: 84), use *dinyatsi* to refer to their extra male partners, usually work colleagues earning more than they, and with whom they strike up relationships and make love. This, Benya adds, “enables these women to use up all or the major part of their salaries on their families while they are taken care of by their *nyatsi*” (ibid).

Dinyatsi relationships, as I observed, could just be as strong outside of workplaces, as they could be at work. “Today I want to see my *nyatsi*” or “I haven’t had ‘normal’ food in a long while, I should call my *nyatsi* to come over and cook for me.” Such remarks are not uncommon amongst the men of Marikana (Field notes, April 2015). Indeed some *dinyatsi* relationships endure and end up transforming into cohabitation, what miners jokingly call “*vat-en-sit*” in Afrikaans or Fanakalo, meaning “unsolemnized ‘live-in’ relationships”.²⁵

The category of women considered “*izifebe*” or “*magosha*,” are ‘straightforward’, ‘confident’ transactional sex workers, ‘prostitutes’ if you like, who are paid a specific rate or nominal honorarium by clients to help assuage pressing fleshly and emotional desires. Rates of service may range from 50 ZAR for a “short time” in the bushes behind the pub or other conveniently silent and dark corners, to as high as 500 ZAR for “whole night” at the rooms in the

informal settlements (the rooms are called “endlini” in isiXhosa). Moodie and Ndatshe (1994: 147) observed “ambivalence toward town women” among miners, both the “proletarianized ‘new’ mineworkers” from the 1970s and the older miners from the 1930s and 1940s. These men from the days of yore seemed to have despised sexual relations with prostitutes for a fixed sum, preferring to see sexual relations with women as “mutuality,” something deeper than a mere ‘flesh and cash’ exchange (ibid.).

My observations and discussions in Marikana directly contradict that earlier observation. Men, full of money and booze enjoy shouting, “*Siyadla siyabathala!*” (“We will ‘eat’, [i.e. copulate] and we will pay!”) at women revellers (Field notes, April 2015). Men who get *magoshas* seem not to shy away from the idea of such amorous congress, although there is still a stigma attached to it. The stigma seems to come from the awareness among many people of the consequences of risky sexual behaviour, like contracting nasty venereal diseases, particularly HIV - in 2011 approximately 20% of Lonmin’s workers were HIV positive (Nova 2011) - and also that such behaviour “wastes” money that could be used for ‘dignified’ ends, such as building a rural homestead. I questioned Mkhuseeni, a young miner born in 1988, about his sexual escapades in Marikana. The young man already had three offspring with three different women whom he sometimes refers as his *magoshas*. I quizzed him on how people from ‘home’ reacted to this. His response was unambivalent but deadpan-I had touched a raw nerve, “As a man people at home expect me to have children, and I am doing just that. My mother will be the happiest. Don’t you think she will be happy that she will get *makoti* [daughter-in-law]?” (Field notes, April 2015).

The women, if they fall into the category of *magoshas*, also do not shy away from announcing their line of trade. They have specific bars which they frequent, territory they ‘marked,’ so to say. Those staying around eNkanini settlement may frequent spots at RDP and Wonderkop townships and other spots in the eastern part of town, and those from Big-House may frequent Marikana-west and others spots in the western part of town. The pubs and other drinking joints are jealously guarded ‘business corners’ and quite often fights break out, if there is suspicion that somebody ‘trespassed’ or ‘snatched’ clients. Just as the men may shout the “*siyadla siyathadala*” refrain, the women also say “*sise msebenzini*

thina” [“we are at work”] (Field notes, April 2015).

I had the privilege to befriend a few of Marikana’s ‘sex merchants’ staying at Big-House. Bokang, a 23-year-old seSotho speaking woman was one such person. She came to Marikana in 2009 to join her sister who was living with her husband. The sister and her husband have since separated and the ex-husband is staying with another woman he met in Marikana. Bokang’s sister did not re-marry but stayed on in Marikana, moving to a nearby *imikhukhu-land* called *Madithlokwa*. The sister now makes a living as a dressmaker, stitching patches and decorating mine workers’ overalls into fancy trade union regalia, or that for football fans. Bokang moved out of her sister’s shack to join other seSotho speaking women at an abandoned farm building near Big-House. The place has a double purpose as home and bawdyhouse. The women sometimes admonished me for hanging around with them because, as Bokang put it, “we are business women and our clients may be intimidated by your presence around us ‘all the time’” (Field notes, June 2015). It was during days when ‘business was low’ that I felt welcomed and was allowed to talk to them at some length; although of course I occasionally bought a beer, a plate of food or a packet of cigarettes to sustain our discussions.

Most people I talked to, men and women alike, gave me the impression that those they call ‘real women’ (“*umfazi wenyani*”/“*umfazi uqobo*”), cannot be found ‘roaming about’ in a place like Marikana, at least in the *imikhukhu-lands*. In other discussions, Bokang suggested:

Even those who claim to be correct [‘faithful’ I presumed] and say they are ‘wives’ are not ‘correct’. As women, we know each other’s secrets; those ‘correct ones’ also sell their bodies (“ukuthengisa umzimba”) at some point. In any case the money from husbands or boyfriends is not enough for the high cost of living in Marikana, let alone to send some home for the children (Field notes, June 2015).

These unrestrained generalizations from Bokang point fruitfully to a critical point I want to emphasize about the ‘categories’ of women one finds in Marikana. Those categories have very elastic boundaries. It is quite common to find women who came to Marikana as “*amakosikazi*” (“married women”) drifting into the

dinyatsi or *magosha* lane when their marriage breaks down, or to find *ex-magoshas* who go into the nuptials lane.

Getting involved in sexual connection(s), multiple or otherwise, or the proliferation of ‘sex trades’ is common in mining towns, and understandably so. In following the social history of Johannesburg at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, Van Onselen (1982:164) notes an inevitable “marriage of proletariats and prostitutes” under conditions of ‘mineral’ capitalism. Men, who provided the bulk of workforce, came from far to labour on the mines and women followed to service a ‘market’ created by a congregation of these mostly ‘unaccompanied’ males. Benya (2009; 2015: 547) also notes that while women in mining environments such as Marikana may sometimes serve as mineworkers themselves, they are also indispensable to “maintain and reproduce” the predominantly male labour force on a daily basis, through companionship, household chores, and even taking an active role in labour protests.

Women especially those referred to as ‘*magoshas*’ indeed ‘liven up’ social scenes. Bars and other drinking joints in Marikana become popular because women also patronize them. In an environment where most men (and women) are separated from their spouses for some time, and face challenging vicissitudes in daily life, it is easy for people to succumb to prurient thoughts and the desire for human and sexual companionship.

Ihlanganiso yabahlali/ “iikomiti” (community meeting)

Where they live, most migrants particularly those in Marikana’s informal settlements, engage in regular discussions on the spatial organization and social structures of their immediate lived environment and their daily experiences. Here are set ‘terms of reference’ for collective engagements and commitments of migrants domiciled in *imikhukhu-lands*

On 15 March 2015, I attended one such discussion at Big-House (I attended many more thereafter). The residents call such gatherings “*ihlanganiso yabahlali*” (“meeting of the residents”) and they are organized by a community committee called “*iikomiti*”. Other settlements may have their own versions of such meetings. I counted 59 people when the meeting started; 45 men and 14 women, although at various occasions more people arrived, while others left to answer telephone calls, or for reasons I could not determine.

The crowd was composed of off-duty miners, a sizeable number of unemployed and job-seeking people, *spaza* shop owners, car-washers and others whose vocations I could not determine.

The community committee representing the residents had a core of six people, some sort of ‘executive committee’ (chairperson, deputy, secretary, the deputy, treasurer and assistant). Nine additional members without specific positions were included – more or less serving as ‘observers’ and these are in addition to the core committee. There were three women (as of July 2015) in the ‘executive’, who are long-term residents at Big-House. Two of the women were originally from Lesotho, while one comes from Flagstaff in the Eastern Cape. None of the women had formal jobs in Marikana. *Mma* Setjhaba, one of the women, the treasurer, made a living from brewing and selling beer at her *shebeen*, but also had a man she was in love with, who supplemented her earnings. Besides the women and two other people (Bra O the ‘community activist’ and a *spaza* shop owner from Ngcobo in the Eastern Cape) the rest of the people in the committee, including observers, were male mine workers. The majority of these men were isiXhosa speakers, from various districts in the Eastern Cape. Since the ‘office bearers’ were nominated by residents, and then a plebiscite was conducted with the raising of hands during a meeting, it was possible that some committee members could fall out of favour with the community and face expulsion at any time.

On the day I describe here, a sizeable crowd gathered for the community meeting. The “*usihlalo*” (chairperson) for the day’s proceedings, a short sturdy man called Power who had a rare gift of the gab, blew a pea-whistle to signal the start of the meeting. Here and there were grumbles from the crowd ‘complaining’ that meetings never start on time and it being a Sunday they had other things to do. But as I later learnt during my stay that it is how things work at Big-House and most other meetings I attended in Marikana. Things seldom start on time.

People were asked to stand up, bow their heads and all men were asked to remove their hats (“*ukuthula umnqwazi*”), something *abahlali* refer to as “*amasiko*” (‘custom’), a way to show “*ihlonipho*” (“respect”) during the opening ‘Christian’ prayer. Even though not all attendees at the meeting were devout Christians, everyone complied. In fact, most migrants when they are in Marikana’s *imikhukhulands* did not even attend church regularly. Yet the act of praying

was still considered respectful behaviour and an inevitable step to open community meetings. The prayer was recited in seTswana by a prominent member of the *stokvel* and a member of the *iikomiti*, a woman called Mathlo. It was a passionate recital, asking God and Jesus for guidance during the meeting, for mutual understanding, unity amongst the residents, and for divine protection from their foes.

The debates

After the opening niceties, Power took over again and speaking in his raucous voice, stated the issues on the agenda. First there was a case of an ‘illegal’ land exchange between residents Tata Mvula and Leftie. Second, there was a proposal to widen the paths in the settlement in order to ease the movement of the ever-increasing number of cars owned by residents. Third, there was a proposal to extend water pipes and their distribution in the informal settlement. Fourth, was the replacement of the pea-whistle with a loudhailer when calling for meetings and making community announcements. Power addressed the people mainly in isiXhosa, and so did the others. Even though Power considered himself an isiXhosa speaker he swayed from one language to another with amazing dexterity; switching from seTswana, to seSsotho, back to isiXhosa, peppered with grits of English, Afrikaans and Fanakalo. It all depended on the points he wanted to put across, or when someone asked for a translation.

Throughout the meeting, attendees would butt in, shout out “point of order!” to seek clarification around community “*imithetho*” [rules] (Field notes, March 2015).²⁶ It was clear that living in the settlement required one to work according to *imithetho*, mostly unwritten rules. The “point of orders,” if they contradicted mutually agreed *imithetho* got rejected by the *usihlalo*, on the basis that “*silandela imithetho yalapha eBig-House*” (“we follow the rule that we set for ourselves at Big-House”). What was clear is that Big-House and other *imikhukhu-lands* operate within particular notions of order (moral and social). Such notions may escape the eye of outside observers.

The meeting went on to address issues discussed in previous community meetings that took place before my arrival. Residents had agreed to make monetary contributions to buy plastic water pipes for the extension of the ‘illegally’ piped water network in the

settlement. Residents installed the three existing communal taps by themselves after similar past contributions. The population has since increased, and more taps are needed. During the meeting, the treasurer *mma* Setjhaba, announced that she had 2,821 ZAR in the community coffers and was still waiting for more contributions in order to reach the targeted 5,500 ZAR that would allow them to buy enough pipes from a cheap hardware shop at a place called Buffelspoort. A two-week deadline was set for residents to settle the outstanding contributions; this was agreed upon after a show-of-hand vote. Before the water network issue could be concluded, a woman they called Slender who stayed with her Lonmin employed husband raised a concern over wasteful water use at Big-House. Her proposals were unanimously adopted after another show-of-hand voting. Firstly, people agreed to report to the committee if they had any long-term guests in their room or yards (whose presence increased water usage) and to pay 50 ZAR every week for the duration of the guest's stay. Secondly, no one should be seen washing dishes or clothes at the tap, instead people should fetch water using containers and do the chores at their yard. I reckoned that the politics around water use, especially the payment of subscriptions for visitors, was another way to ensure that nothing goes unnoticed in the settlement. By reporting a visitor's presence to the committee, the settlement's residents would take note of any new people amongst them. In many instances people question each other if there were unfamiliar faces in their midst, the same way they initially questioned my presence, until I was publicly introduced to the community at a meeting.

The issue of replacing the pea-whistle with a loudhailer when calling for meetings pointed to the role of the pea-whistle in alerting residents of any impending danger (particularly criminal attacks on residents). This had also been partially discussed in previous meetings. There was agreement that the community needed a loudhailer in order to announce meetings and to reserve the pea-whistle strictly for alerting the community of any criminal attacks. The loudhailer could also be used on Sunday mornings for the announcements of *stokvel* gatherings and parties.

The blowing of pea-whistles for 'almost everything' happening in the community was blamed for confusion that had reigned some weeks earlier. Residents, it was said, could no longer differentiate a whistle call for vigilance in the event of intrusion by criminal elements. They were *gatvol* about random whistle calls

even for football celebrations. Matters came to a head some weeks prior to the meeting, when an ‘intruder’ had tried to sexually assault a woman, thinking that her husband was away at work. Fortunately, he had just gone to the latrine. His whistle calls did not get any immediate response and he was left to fight off the intruder along with his wife. On this issue, Power, the chairperson was blunt,

Some men from the city may come here and force our women to remove their panties! We need the whistle to alert us of such dangers. I am not happy when we blow the whistle because we are drunk, or when we are watching football. That is a dangerous habit for our community, not to mention that we will look after children from those izigebengu [criminals/thugs] (Field notes, March 2015).

It was agreed that monetary contributions be made for a loudhailer. That passed without much opposition. For most of the residents in the informal settlement, the police and the state are not there on their behalf, hence they revert to community vigilance mechanisms. It would be off beam however to describe such vigilance and the violence that may accompany it only in terms of chaos and disruption of morals and orderly ways of doing things. True, violence (or the threat of it) does show its ugly head at times, but I would argue it is a modality resorted to selectively when “real” interests are at stake (see Guha 1999) in the interest of the collective and in consideration of a moral and social order.

Land (ex)changes and spatial arrangement at Big-House

The resolution of the land deal between Tata Mvula and Leftie is worth narrating at length here. Leftie, a seTswana speaking ‘general hand’ working for Lonmin, came to live at BigHouse in 2009 from *Ikemeleng*, an informal settlement on the way out of Marikana towards the city of Rustenburg. He came after his widowed sister passed away the previous year, leaving behind two orphaned daughters and a yard at Big-House. The sister had been a prominent member of the *stokvel* and the beer-brewing and selling coterie in the settlement. Leftie was perceived to be holding the yard and shack ‘in trust’ of the orphaned daughters during the four years that he stayed at Big-House. For some reason and without consulting anyone, Leftie sent the daughters back to their rural home, and sold off the place to Tata Mvula before going back to live at *Ikemeleng*.

Now, the land deal struck between Leftie and Tata Mvula was ‘illegal’ according to the rules of the Big-House community. He had broken the moral and social rules of the settlement. To begin with, Leftie was not *rra stand* since he did not have any land claim recognised by the committee and the residents in general. They just knew him as someone who used to visit his sister at Big-House. Tata Mvula, a newcomer to Big-House and Marikana (he once worked in Carletonville at a gold mine) was only a tenant at the time and, if he wished to buy his own yard from anyone with communally recognised tenure, he had to go through an unspecified process of ‘vetting’ and get an endorsement during a meeting. Leftie bypassed all procedures and sold off the land and shack to Tata Mvula for 6,000 ZAR. The community argued that Leftie had broken *imithetho*, because he was not supposed to sell the land which he held in trust for his two nieces. On top of that, selling land to someone coming from outside when there were many people who had already been vetted and were waiting for their chance to own a yard was simply unacceptable.

After lengthy deliberations and recriminations, with community members weighing in at different stages, it was decided that Leftie had to pay back the money he received from Tata Mvula. Tata Mvula, however, was not going to be chased out of the community, but was going to be put on to the ‘waiting list’ like other potential *rra-stands*. After all, “he is an *“isisebenzi”* [“worker”] and one of us,” as concluded by the chairperson (Fieldnotes, March 2015). When Leftie pleaded that he would not be able to pay back the money anytime soon, his plea was presented to community members during the meeting. For breaking *imithetho*, there are collectively agreed sanctions that could be imposed on a person. Some suggested that he could pay back the money little by little, that is every month after receiving his salary. Others however, proposed extreme sanctions like goading him to take a loan from the notorious *“mashonisas”* (illegal money lenders who charge exorbitant interest rates).²⁷ There are quite a number of *mashonisas* operating in Marikana, and some of them are miners too. The *mashonisa* solution often termed *“ukugibela inkamela”* or *“ukunkamelisa”* (“make someone ride a camel”)²⁸ by migrants, was also suggested as a punishment for Leftie and a warning to any other future offenders. These two solutions were put up for deliberation and a show of hands was suggested to support either of the solutions or to reject them. Leftie was happy

and grateful to be let off the *mashonisa* hook.

The land case and the way it was resolved points clearly again to recurring notions of what people view as advancing collective interests and constituting a moral and social order. As a resident one is not forbidden to make business and some profit out of the shacks, but one cannot do that at the expense of the bigger collective of residents. The interests and desires of the whole community seem to have held sway over parochial and overly individualistic interests. Leftie lived to tell the tale.

The last issue discussed was raised by Tata Ntshebe, an elderly man working at Lonmin, but employed through a subcontractor. Rumour had it that he is actually a “Zulu” from regions on the borders between the provinces of KwaZulu Natal and Eastern Cape. At Big-House he passed himself off as a “Xhosa” like the majority in the settlement. Ntshebe had proposed somewhat incautiously, that wider roads could ensure the “smooth” movement of the increasing number of vehicles owned by some miners and other residents of Big-House. This issue was rapidly resolved, indeed summarily dismissed, partly because meeting attendees were worn out after 2 hours under the hot March sun, and partly because a reply that resonated with most of them came immediately and emphatically.

A young man they call Mabhuthi, without observing protocol, shouted from the crowd, “*Ngelinye ilanga sizowathola amaHippo ngaphakathi kwethu!*” (“One day we will find the ‘hippos’ [armoured police vans] right in our midst”) (Field notes, March 2015). The remark left the crowd cackling but there was no doubt many people took it seriously. The memories from 2012, when the police armoured vehicles called “hippos,” or “nyalas” roved menacingly around informal settlements, spewing ammunition, live or otherwise, are still fresh in most people’s mind. The idea of widening the paths of Big-House was thus easily shot down by the residents. The confusing but useful labyrinths of paths amongst the hovels survived.

From my observations of this and other collective deliberations, it was apparent that some core members of the committee, most of them male mine workers from the Eastern Cape, indeed exercise disproportionate power over the deliberations, by claiming to have fought Molefe (the unsuccessful would-be extorter). During meetings, men in particular stood up to flex their

speech making muscles, what they call “*ukuthetha*”, such that at times it became a head-to-head speech making contest to wow the crowd. There was a realisation however, by many in the committee that they could successfully maintain stringent, much less arbitrary, hierarchical controls over fellow residents without provoking resistance and/or desertion. This probably explains the constant search for approval by the men during their *ukuthetha*, shown at times through the clapping of hands or occasional “*ewe*” or “*nyani*” by the listening crowds (“yes” and “truth” in isiXhosa).

There are further reasons for absence of unquestioned arbitrary control. First, the key people in the committee, like many in the settlement, have jobs as mine workers where they receive regular incomes. Second, the seemingly transient existence in informal settlements add to the genuine ‘homing’ attitude of and commitment by most migrants to the rural Eastern Cape,²⁹ render migrants moving targets less likely to submit to arbitrary authority, formal or informal. On my evidence, residents of the informal settlements avoid unreasonable control and extortion. In fact, at Big-House, there are cases of people moving to other settlements like eNkanini, and back again, just to avoid exorbitant rents, or for safety reasons, especially during and shortly after the unforgettable crisis of 2012 to 2014.

Conclusion: Contemporary migrant system, mining towns and the dilemmas of social change

The descriptions above attempt to convey a sense of life in the South African platinum mining town of Marikana as it is today and to challenge perspectives that see an unchanged social world of migrancy, often reduced to pecuniary explanations for collective behaviour. I place the informal settlement at the centre of day-to-day interactions, mainly because that is where the majority of migrants, including a significant proportion of miners, now reside. By Lonmin’s own admission, 50% of all people living within a fifteen-kilometre radius of its operations are housed in informal dwellings (2011).

Everyday experiences, spatial practices and vernacular ways of cohesion come together to form a kind of sociality and politics attuned to the circumstance of social existence in Marikana. At the same time, they give voice to deeply held notions of order and morality. To understand the lives of migrant workers in Rustenburg,

it does not help to stop prematurely by painting a picture of chaos and immiseration that drowns out voices of cooperation, collective social and moral order, and collective interests and desires.

Frederic Cooper (1996: 82) notes that social and political struggles are, all too often, assimilated into a “seamless pattern of ever-broadening, ever-growing struggle.” Similarly, analysis of the life of people settling on the platinum belt has been couched in overwhelming language of a “massive rebellion of the poor” (Alexander’s 2012). Using ethnographic methods, I have tried to provide a more nuanced account of various categories of social relationship, finding in everyday interactions, particularly those of migrants, evidence of where these people place value in their everyday lives. Observations of daily life as lived show that people “refuse the neat divisions and classification of the powerful” (Cresswell 2006: 47), not to mention advocates of their “liberation,” enabling us to rethink the contemporary migrant system in terms of what Beinart (2014: 388-409) calls “new patterns of migrancy,” “new solidarities and associations,” new ideas of self, belonging and identity. While ethnographic observation may not always be generalizable to every context, analysts who ignore the specific grounded insights of findings like this account of life at Big-House do so at their own peril.

Endnotes

1. PhD Candidate, Graduate Institute of International Development Studies, Geneva (Switzerland), Doctoral Fellow, Harvard University, and PhD Associate, Society, Work and Development Institute (SWOP), University of the Witwatersrand. melusi.nkomo@graduateinstitute.ch
2. In eNkanini (also known as Nkaneng) 42% of the residents are isiXhosa speakers, while the rest is divided between seTswana, xiTsonga, seSotho and other speakers (Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu 2015).
3. There is also a sizeable number of seTswana and seSotho speakers in the shack settlements.
4. The prefix ‘ama-’ is commonly used for abstract nouns or to refer to a group of people.
5. The word ‘*botebejane*,’ I was told by interlocutors, comes from ‘*matebelenyana*’ (small Ndebeles) in reference to the marauding Zulu warriors who passed the area in the nineteenth century.

6. This was in reference to the leader of the trade unions on the platinum belt, whose leader is isiZulu speaking, Joseph Mathunjwa, but whose membership is mainly migrant isiXhosa speaking miners.
7. *AmaBomvana* an isiXhosa speaking subgroup.
8. Everyday parlance seems not to recognize women's 'independence' in the actual sense of the word, they are rather seen as 'unchaperoned' or "independent-male-dependent" in the language of Moodie and Ndatshe (1994). A common response given by residence, men and women alike, if you ask about a woman's social standing in Marikana is "*ongela ndoda*" or "*akashadanga*" ('she doesn't have a man' or 'she has not yet wedded.')
9. The contract and short-term labour share at Lonmin according to Bench Marks Foundation (2013) was 23% in 2012.
10. Bra 'O' and other names in this paper are pseudonyms for real people who were my main informants. For now, I will not divulge any of my informants' full identities for their security.
11. I tried to contact the white property developer for an interview, but did not succeed.
12. There are formal housing units provided under the government (amaRDP) or Marikana west built with the assistance of Lonmin. The name RDP comes from a now defunct government programme (Reconstruction and Development Programme) that built houses for mostly black people after the end of apartheid
13. The mine often subcontracts security services to companies like the British multinational G4S Security Solutions.
14. I presumed 'freedom' meant the absence of visible policing. My notes of this conversation were recorded from memory, soon after I arrived at my shack on the same day.
15. *Umlungu* literally means white people, but in the black miners' everyday parlance the word is metonym for the employer, also known as *umqashi* in isiXhosa, in this case mining companies like Lonmin.
16. Nyala (RG12) is a menacing armoured personnel carrier vehicle named after the antelope *Tragelaphus angasii*. The vehicle is used by the SAPS (South African Police Service) during riot control missions. It is called 'hippo' by abahlali.
17. Broadly speaking, in South Africa it is a term associated with the "Shack-Dwellers Movement" ("Abahlali BaseMjondolo") that started in the city of Durban, but this is not related to the *abahlali* of Marikana.
18. Rra is a seTswana word for 'sir'.
19. The Rand also ZAR for "*Zuid-Afrikaanse rand*" in Afrikaans, is South Africa's monetary currency. It was pegged at 1:11 against the US dollar in April 2015.
20. '*Mma*' is a seTswana 'madam' and '*rra*' can be equated to 'mister'.

21. I noticed that people who do customer service jobs (at petrol stations, in supermarkets, or fast food chains) in Marikana are usually *seTswana* speakers who identify themselves as ‘locals’ (*Batswana*, sing. *Motswana*) and they often do not reside in informal settlements, but the surrounding township like Marikana West, Wonderkop and RDP.
22. Spaza shops are small, usually informal convenience shops or kiosks
23. ‘*Amagqirha*’ can also refer to ‘diviners’ amongst isiXhosa speakers.
24. “Shebeen” is a word used in South Africa to denote an informal drinking spots, usually run by a woman who sells alcoholic beverages.
25. See also Benya’s (2015) more recent work on the women of Marikana.
26. “Point of order” is a way of ‘politely’ interjecting in a discussion, the people in Marikana use it mimicking the South African parliament where its use has been popularised since the entry of the Economic Freedom Fighters party into parliament.
27. There is a brisk, but underground money-lending business in Marikana which authorities tried to break after the Marikana strike of 2012.
28. Getting money from an illegal money-lender is often given the imagery of riding on the hump of a dromedary camel. It is easy to climb on the beast’s back while it is kneeling, but once it stands up it lifts you so high that it becomes a great challenge to climb down. Likewise, a loan from a *mashonisa* is usually small when one gets it, yet because of the ridiculously high interest rates it becomes difficult to get out of the debt.
29. It could also be Lesotho, or some other rural home.

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