XENOPHOBIA AND OUTSIDER EXCLUSION

Addressing Frail Social Cohesion in South Africa's Diverse Communities

Masiphumelele Case Study
October 2017
I. Executive Summary

SAVI conducted field research in Masiphumelele from the 25-29 April 2016 and 20-22 February 2017. The study found during Phase I that Masiphumelele has experienced incidences of mob justice, which resulted in leadership divisions where youth and older generations clash. Since September 2015, Masiphumelele has experienced varying levels of protest, following community outcries around crime and violence. After two violent crimes in Masiphumelele – the rape and murder of 14-year-old Amani Pula, and the rape of a woman in September – community members began to protest. The collective action extended to vigilantism, which resulted in several murders and other violence. Wide-scale protest followed, as a young community leader – Lububalo Vellem – was arrested on allegations of murder and public violence. These protests have continued into 2016 and 2017 around the bail hearing and trial of Vellem and other arrested community members.

Phase I revealed that the people of Masiphumelele pride themselves as a non-xenophobic community. Given the history of Masiphumelele, it is undeniable that multiculturalism, particularly relating to ethnicity and nationality, is a defining aspect, and one of the most important building blocks, of the community. Since the end of apartheid, Masiphumelele has seen increased rural to urban migration and an influx of foreign nationals, especially from other African countries. The research team found that foreign nationals, while facing some exclusions, are relatively well integrated into the community.

Phase II of research focused on filling in the gaps in the assessment of Masiphumelele. Interviews with stakeholders missed in the first phase took place, including youth leadership, the Taxi Association, and additional foreign nationals, especially spaza shop owners/shop keepers. These interviews revealed, as had those in Phase I, that there is a division of opinion between the youth and older generation on how the communities’ problems should be handled. It was also found that there were accusations of corruption surrounding payment of legal fees for the alleged perpetrators of the vigilante attacks. Foreign nationals seem to be the only community members contributing to the legal costs of those implicated in the vigilante violence of 2015. These developments appear to have had an impact on social cohesion in the area. Furthermore, the study found that informal
agreements or arrangements concerning the establishment of new spaza shops also exist in Masiphumelele. The foreign nationals who own spaza shops in the area initiated an agreement restricting the opening of new spaza shops, which had been said to cause conflict among foreign nationals.

This report consists of eight sections. After outlining introductory comments here, the research methodology is covered in Section II. Section III provides an overview of Masiphumelele’s background information, and Section IV discusses social interactions and collective efficacy. Leadership and conflict resolution are outlined in Section V, while the history of group violence and exclusion, and the profile of recent anti-outsider violence and exclusion, are in Sections VI and VII. Section VIII is presents conclusions.

II. Methodology

The research team conducted extensive desktop research on Masiphumelele. This research draws from various sources including the 2011 Census, the most recent local government election results for the ward, crime statistics for the policing precinct, and academic, media and government writings. The research team conducted field research in Masiphumelele, which included semi-structured interviews, asking individuals and groups a wide range of questions: from community conflict resolution mechanisms, to their own perceptions of safety, to instances of collective violence, to personal social networks, to leadership structures and the role of authority.

During Phase I, from the 25-29 April 2016, a team of SAVI researchers conducted 32 interviews with 36 respondents in Masiphumelele. The group of interviewees included political representatives from varying parties, South African Police Service (SAPS) members, schoolteachers, social workers, non-governmental organisation (NGO) members, religious leaders, and other community members. Their ages varied from early twenties to eighties, and there was a good gender balance. However, the age range of respondents was skewed in favour of the older generation. This was a shortcoming considering that young people were at the centre of many community concerns in the area.
Phase II, from 20-22 February 2017, focused on missing participants and youth groups from Phase I. In Phase I representatives of the Taxi Association, which become central in the tension, which broke soon after the field research, had not been interviewed. It should be mentioned that in Phase II when this group was eventually reached, the participants did not want their interviews recorded; as a result, researchers had to memorize the conversation or take brief notes. The interviews were also rather more informal, as other taxi owners would occasionally come in and start talking to the participant in the middle of the interviews. The taxi drivers would also not allow participants to be interviewed separately from the rest of the group.

The majority of interviews were conducted in public spaces: schools, the community hall, and the ‘Pink House’ being the most common. Furthermore, the team interviewed people in shacks and shops. The researchers had various informal interactions with several other residents and non-residents of Masiphumelele. Given the size and nature of Masiphumelele, and given our snowballing technique, the team were able to interview many community leaders, as well as community members in general. The research team found people – both those in leadership roles and general community members – to be welcoming and open. In both phases of the research people were happy to talk and harboured no suspicions about our work or our role. A few foreign nationals were less eager to talk, concerned that there may be negative consequences from being interviewed. Community establishments, such as the Pink House or the community hall, were also happy to host us. This made conducting field interviews in Masiphumelele an easy task. However, there is a general secrecy around the exact happenings of September 15th 2016.

III. Background information

a) Location and Historical Background
Masiphumelele is a township in Cape Town, situated between Kommetjie, Capri Village and Noordhoek in the southern peninsula (see Figure 1). Initially known as ‘Site 5’, the township
was renamed ‘Masiphumelele’ by its residents, isiXhosa for ‘We will succeed’. About 400-500 people first settled in the area in the 1980s.

Figure 2 shows the Wetlands surrounds of Masiphumelele, which limits its ability to expand, and the prosperity of Lake Mitchell neighbourhood close by. The dusty, overcrowded and mainly black suburb of Masiphumelele is surrounded by the affluence of Noordhoek and the other predominantly ‘white’ southern peninsula suburbs. There is also Ocean View, shown in Figure 1, which is predominantly coloured. It is perceived to have high crime, unemployment, gangsterism, and drug problems.

Figure 1 Map of Masiphumelele and surrounding areas

![Figure 1 Map of Masiphumelele and surrounding areas](http://www.openstreetmap.org/)

Figure 2 Masiphumelele and Lake Mitchell

![Figure 2 Masiphumelele and Lake Mitchell](http://www.openstreetmap.org/)
In 1950, the Southern Peninsula, in which Masiphumelele is located, was declared a whites-only area. The coloured people occupying the area were moved to Ocean View, about 5km on the main road from where Masiphumelele is now located, while no nearby alternative was provided for African people. The result was that African people sourcing work were required to travel long distances or forced to become unlawful tenants on vacant land. Meagre incomes could not sustain transport costs, so informal settlements, including those where Masiphumelele is now located, began to spring up.¹

January 1987 marked a watershed period for the informal dwellers as Dassenhoek farm residents, near Noordhoek, objected to being forcibly removed to Khayelitsha. The residents’ resistance was, however, no match to the brutality of the police, and they were eventually evicted to Khayelitsha in December of the same year. In response to this treatment, concerned groups such as the Surplus People Project (SPP), the Black Sash, and a few white residents started lobbying the apartheid government on behalf of the squatter communities. As a result, a case for the residents was heard in the Supreme Court division in 1988 and a favourable judgement was made. Land was then allocated for a residential township in December 1990, and in 1992 Masiphumelele became the permanent home for the Noordhoek and Fish Hoek informal communities, with Site 5 being the first serviced area. Masiphumelele was the first black squatter community to win the right to land in a white area, and the first community to have power to exercise control in decision-making in the land and housing development process in the Western Cape. About 8,000 people relocated after the initial allocation of land in 1992. Most of these new arrivals were from the old Cross Roads in Cape Town or from their former Ciskei and Transkei homelands in the Eastern Cape.²

The newly settled community became burdened with vehement opposition to their relocation that involved racial degradation and spite. The Development Action Group’s 1996 case-study report sums up the intense resentment towards the Masiphumelele community

² Western Cape, Masiphumelele Conflict Intervention, pp. 21-24
expressed by white ratepayers in June 1991, with some even suggesting the creation of a buffer zone of a minimum width of 30 meters around the township.³

³ Western Cape, Masiphumelele Conflict Intervention, pp. 21-24
Figure 3 Map of Masiphumelele

Sources: Open Streets, http://www.openstreetmap.org/; and SaVI fieldworker observations, April 2016

Masiphumelele Social Cohesion Profile | 8
Today, the face of Masiphumelele has changed dramatically since the first arrivals in the early 1990s (see Figure 3). The population has increased at a very fast rate and the settlement represents a diversity of people from different parts of South Africa. The original inhabitants and predominant group – Xhosas from the Eastern Cape – have been joined by South Africans from other parts of the country, and a strong contingent from the African continent. The foreign nationals’ proportion of Masiphumelele includes Zimbabweans, who make up the largest share, Congolese, Ethiopians, Ghanaians, Malawians, Mozambicans, Nigerians and Somalis. The arrival of foreign nationals in Masiphumelele has been steadily increasing since 1994.

*Figure 4: A street in Masiphumelele*

Since Masiphumelele as a settlement is restricted on all sides, the issue of overcrowding is especially acute. The main entrance into Masiphumelele is through Pokela Street off Kommetjie Road. There you see the taxi rank to your immediate right. RDP houses are the most common form of formal housing in the area. Attached to these formal houses are backyard shacks: additional units that are rented out by the property owner or occupant as an additional source of income. There are many shops, often in metal storage containers and mostly owned by foreign nationals. In some instances, there are more than seven shops in one street. There is also an informal settlement, the Wetlands area, which is made up entirely of shacks. The streets of Masiphumelele are often crowded with people during the day. Masiphumelele has a number of churches, while shebeens and braai places are also prominent and popular features.

**b) Demographics and crime**
While Masiphumelele is predominantly Xhosa-speaking, with most people originating from the Eastern Cape, there are significant minorities of those from ‘outside’. Foreign nationals make up around 30% of the population, and another 10% of Masiphumelele’s population claim languages largely spoken in other provinces than the Western and Eastern Capes. As such, at least 40% of Masiphumelele’s residents have a culture and language which is distinct from Xhosa. As shown in Table 1, while 57.8% of people claim isiXhosa as their first language, there is a very wide dispersion of other languages. Almost a quarter of people cite languages other than South African languages as their first language, which is reflective of the numbers of foreign nationals. Table 2 indicates place of birth and citizenship. Those born outside South Africa and who do not have South African citizenship tally at just under 30%. Similarly, only 22.4% of people claim to be from the Western Cape, indicating that Masiphumelele experiences significant in-migration from South Africa’s other provinces.

### Table 1 First language of Masiphumelele residents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Language</th>
<th>People</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1215</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IsiNdebele</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IsiXhosa</td>
<td>9237</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IsiZulu</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sepedi</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sesotho</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setswana</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign Language</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SiSwati</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tshivenda</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xitsonga</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3921</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>15987</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*StatsSA, 2011 Census Data*
The population of Masiphumelele is a matter of contention. The 2011 Census put it at 21,904, with 7,413 households. There is broad agreement the population has expanded rapidly since 2011, as well as doubts on the accuracy of the census itself, as a sizable number of people were reportedly not interviewed during data collection. This, according to the councillor, was because “a lot of people, especially foreigners, don’t fill out census forms and are suspicious of it.”5 If this is the case, we can expect the proportion of foreign nationals to be even higher. This suspicion extends to South Africans also, as the councillor expands:

“Your biggest problem is the distrust that people have in the system. They don’t understand why you want the number of people there are. Secondly, they think there is some sinister motive behind it...”6

The most reliable estimation the research team could get from the councillor is that 35,000 people currently reside in the 0.39 km² area that makes up Masiphumelele as of the beginning of 2014. If this is the case, the population density of Masiphumelele is extremely high. With limited opportunities to increase the physical size of Masiphumelele, the ability of the township to absorb new residents is increasingly curtailed. In recent years, expansion has taken place in the Wetlands area, which is, unsurprisingly, prone to damp and water issues.
Masiphumelele has a large proportion of young people: 48% of the population is under the age of twenty-five. Moreover, unemployment is high at about 31% (Table 3). Unemployment and lack of employment opportunities were mentioned as major social issues.

Table 3 Employment status of Masiphumelele residents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masiphumelele Labour Force Indicators</th>
<th>Black African</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population aged 15 to 64 years</td>
<td>14 589</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1 251</td>
<td>16 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Force</td>
<td>11 772</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1 077</td>
<td>13 032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>8 016</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>8 997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>3 756</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>4 035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Economically Active</td>
<td>2 817</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>3 072</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 below gives crime data for Ocean View police station. Masiphumelele is under the Ocean View precinct, which also includes Kommetjie and surrounding areas. As can be seen, the crime rates are very high and although the research team could not find statistics specific to Masiphumelele, most interviewees indicated that Masiphumelele and Ocean View are the crime hotspots in the precinct, especially for contact crimes. While relatively high, all categories of contact crime in the precinct have steadily declined since 2005. However, violent crimes, such as robbery with aggravating circumstances or assault with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm, have declined at a lower rate. Thus, where crime does occur, it has a tendency to be violent.

Masiphumelele is said to have been a relatively peaceful neighbourhood in the past. However, with the rising population, there has also been a rise in criminal behaviour. Although there was some xenophobic violence, or violence towards foreign nationals in 2006 and 2008, such violence has been minimal, and according to most accounts, opportunism, rather than xenophobia was the main motivation.
Political representation in Masiphumelele

The ANC is the strongest political party in Masiphumelele, with the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and Democratic Alliance (DA) having a presence. According to the 2014 national election results, the ANC won 89% of the vote in Masiphumelele, with the DA and EFF garnering 3% and 4.5% respectively. The 2016 local government elections saw a marginal decrease in ANC support to about 84%, while the DA and the EFF posted 6% and 7% respectively. When it is not election time, all parties reported working together, especially on social development issues such as housing, land, and education. In this way, party politics is not a significant dividing line in Masiphumelele. It is worth noting that the DA ward councillor, Felicity Purchase, is reported by many to be out of touch with the realities in the community. However, this widely held perception should be put into context. Ward 69 covers a large area (see Figure 7), with a mixture of neighbourhoods in terms of socioeconomic and racial backgrounds. The ward covers affluent neighbourhoods (Kommetjie, Noordhoek, and Imhoff’s Gift) and a predominantly black, poor neighbourhood (Masiphumelele), as well as middle-income areas such as Capri and Sunnydale.

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Table 5 below indicates that the demographics of the rest of Ward 69, compared to Masiphumelele, are very different. 53% of the population of Ward 69 lives in Masiphumelele. Once again, this highlights the high population density in Masiphumelele. In terms of population groups, a high proportion of the ward’s black Africans – 71% – live in Masiphumelele, whereas 99.7% of the white population of the ward live elsewhere.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Groups</th>
<th>Masiphumelele</th>
<th>Ward 69</th>
<th>Masiphumelele percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>15 374</td>
<td>21 528</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7 874</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2011 Census
Correspondingly, the voting patterns between Masiphumelele and the rest of the ward are very different (see Figure 8). Whereas the DA dominates the ward as a whole – making up almost 60% of the vote in the latest local government elections – only 6% of Masiphumelele residents voted for the DA.

Figure 8 Voting patterns, 2016 local government elections

With such divergent neighbourhoods under one ward, and Councillor Purchase representing the DA, there are clear differences between her and the Masiphumelele community at large. When identifying leading figures in the community, she is rarely mentioned, whereas ANC leadership, especially the chairperson, Tshepo Maletsane, is most often cited. The following was a community member’s response when asked about the councillor:

“Don’t even mention the councillor because to me she doesn’t even exist. Felicity Purchase is nothing, she acts like one of the old people from the regime, apartheid. She does not give a damn about people of this community. She has shown that several times. I have been to meetings she attended, and she comes with issues from the local government, "This is the news I’m bringing to you people. This is what is going to happen in terms of development in Masiphumelele blah blah...." and the next thing she is gone.”

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9 Interview with community member, Masiphumelele, April 2016
d) Socio-economic conditions: opportunities and challenges

Many South African community members in Masiphumelele depend on home rentals as their main source of income. This is commonplace to such an extent that South Africans let their homes to mainly foreign nationals and move to the nearby Wetlands shack settlement, or stay in backyard shacks in their own houses. A sizable number of people work as domestic workers, gardeners, or contractors in the nearby ‘white’ suburbs, while a large number of foreign nationals own small businesses in the area. These include spaza shops, internet cafes, barbershops, and car repair shops. Others work for NGOs and community organisations. Most prominent among the NGOs is Living Hope, which hires multiple people as carers, social workers, and administrators. For a few residents, street vending is a source of income (see Figure 5, below).

Figure 5 Street vendors selling food and clothes

Community members and senior council officials believe Masiphumelele’s small land area, coupled with the continuous influx of people, has resulted in massive overcrowding and a shortage of land to build more houses. According to the councillor, “Masiphumelele was built for only 1200 houses.”\(^{10}\) Given the density of housing across Masiphumelele, and especially in the Wetlands, Masiphumelele is prone to fires. The latest was in late November 2016, which left two people dead and 22 homeless.\(^{11}\) On our first visit in Masiphumelele, we arrived in the aftermath of this fire a year earlier, in November 2015, which left 4000 people displaced and 800 residences destroyed. During the fieldwork at the end of April 2016, the team found several residents who were victims of the fire still residing in Masiphumelele’s

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\(^{10}\) Interview with ward councillor, Fish Hoek, April 2016
\(^{11}\) Zodidi Dano, “Masiphumelele fire leaves 22 homeless”, Cape Argus News, 29 November 2016, 9:37pm
community hall (pictured in Figure 6). During the research team’s week there, these families (around twenty) were given materials and a small strip of land on which to build new homes in the same area.

Figure 6 Disaster Services distributing food at the Community Hall

As a result of the obvious and compounding overcrowding, there have been calls for surrounding land to be allocated to Masiphumelele, especially that which makes up Table Mountain National Park. This formed a serious issue of contention between community members and the City, when in 2016 residents started engaging with South African National Parks (SANParks) to secure land in the Wetlands area. In response to their request, residents were informed that SANParks had sold the land to the City of Cape Town in 2004 for the purpose of the expansion and development of Masiphumelele. However, this was not made known to residents. It is clear that the City was not fully transparent about the ownership of the land.12 This issue extends the distrust Masiphumelele leaders and community members feel towards the City and council leadership. Tensions between Masiphumelele residents and City officials are on-going, and there is now a process of mediation after unsuccessful community meetings.13

In comparison to most South African townships, Masiphumelele is well serviced with NGOs, health support, social workers, and recreational activities. This was a view expressed by one social worker who lives in Nyanga, another township in Cape Town: “I think Masiphumelele is very lucky... Because where I stay, in Nyanga, we don’t see such services.”14 According to a senior council official, “Masiphumelele has, in fact, out of the whole city, the highest number of NGOs in there, helping people.”15 This is perhaps a reflection of the affluence which surrounds it. The ward councillor believes it is “empathy shown by surrounding communities.”16 The research team saw many active NGOs while we there, such as the South African Red Cross disaster services, Hokisa (which is involved in caring for children infected with and/or affected by HIV and AIDS, who cannot be looked after by their own parents or family), and Sinika Ithemba HIV/AIDS Project. The ‘Pink House’, a multi-functional community centre located in the heart of the township, houses a number of NGOs.

Unemployment, alcohol and substance abuse, housing/land issues, and criminal behaviour (particularly break-ins) were mentioned as social issues of greatest concern among residents. The most significant issue of contention in Masiphumelele is crime, specifically drug related crime. This has been at the forefront of community consciousness since the rape and murder of a fourteen-year-old boy and rape of a twenty-four-year-old woman in September 2015. These cases compounded community frustration, which was directed at known drug dealers in the area. This led to collective violence in Masiphumelele, which is said to have been widely enacted and widely supported. Nine were killed through vigilante violence from September to December 2015.17 Four of these deaths were ‘necklacings’.18 Several drug dealers were expelled, and their houses were burnt. As a result, a number of interviewees mentioned that all known drug dealers have since left the community. One is known to be residing in Ocean View. Since this vigilante violence, there was a perception that crime has gone down: “Robberies are no longer common now; yes, there are still

14 Interview with social worker, Masiphumelele, April 2016
15 Interview with ward councillor, Fish Hoek, April 2016
16 Interview with ward councillor, Fish Hoek, April 2016
18 This is a practice of summary execution and torture carried out by forcing a rubber tyre, filled with petrol, around a victim’s chest and arms, and setting it on fire. It was common during the struggle against apartheid, and typically used against those who were thought to be apartheid informers and ‘sell outs’.
sporadic incidences, but ever since the events of late 2015, criminals have laid low”. 19 This sentiment was echoed by many of our interviewees, and it carries a danger of repeated vigilante actions towards other suspects.

As a result of the vigilante violence, a controversial community leader, Lubabalo Vellem, was arrested. Vellem, who had been at the forefront of demands by Masiphumelele’s residents for better policing in the township, was arrested and accused of murder, assault, attempted murder, and of public violence, relating to the mob justice. His arrest led to extended protests, with community members supporting and showing solidarity with Vellem, and anger towards the police who arrested him (who were seen as not doing enough to ensure community safety). His arrest and current trial is considered by many in Masiphumelele as unfair. As well as Vellem, there were 29 arrests for public violence. During the extended protests in late 2015, the main entrance and exit road into Masiphumelele were blocked, preventing residents from going to work, children from going to school, and NGO workers and others from entering. Less frequent and more limited protests have continued in 2016, most often around the bail hearings and trial of Vellem. Vellem’s legal battles have been a source of unity and solidarity in the community, but also a source of community tension. On Tuesday 3 May, after hearing the unfavourable outcome of Vellem’s bail hearing (aiming to allow him to reside again in Masiphumelele), it was reported that between 700 and 1,000 people protested, closing the main entrance and exit road into Masiphumelele. 20 During the march, violence between taxi drivers and the protesters ensued as protestors blocked passengers from boarding taxis.

A related issue that concerns community members is the lack of police visibility and presence. Many believe the absence of a police station in Masiphumelele is a major contributing factor to crime and explains the community propensity to mob justice. According to one community member:

19 Interview with Somali shop keepers, Masiphumelele, 20 April 2017
“[The police] are not existing. Even the community they are serving, Ocean View, it is like they are non-existent.”

This issue will be discussed in greater detail in Section V.

Foreign nationals and South Africans live in the same areas. They seem to intermingle positively. Seeing Zimbabwean boys smoking dagga in the street corners with South Africans happened very often during our visits. In shebeens and braai places one can see multiculturalism on display. Ostensibly, Masiphumelele is home for all. The research team heard of several intermarriages between South Africans and foreign nationals, and there did not seem to be any attached negative connotations. The integration of living spaces and the relaxed ‘cultural exchanges’ perhaps contribute to making Masiphumelele a relatively safe place for foreign nationals.

Both Masiphumelele’s South African residents and foreign nationals agree that non-South Africans should have access to resources such as education, healthcare, and social services. In this way, structural exclusion is minimal. Asked about access to services, one foreign national said, “Yes, [we have access]. It’s normal here.” However, foreign nationals who had been affected by the fires in the wetlands area reported that they did “not receive materials to rebuild their burnt down homes.”

Perhaps one of the reasons why relations are positive is that foreign nationals provide a key source of income for many South Africans in Masiphumelele. As already mentioned, many of the homes of South African residents are rented to foreign nationals. A number of respondents reported that the fee for monthly rental is around R1,000. Most seem to overlook the effect of foreign nationals on overcrowding, but instead are more interested in the money they receive as rental payments.

IV. Social interactions, community leadership and collective efficacy

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21 Interview with youth leader, Masiphumelele, April 2016
22 Interview with Nigerian national, Masiphumelele, April 2016
23 Interview with Zimbabwean national, Masiphumelele, April 2016
Over time, a significant number of organisations and social activities have been useful in contributing to social cohesion (or disunity) in Masiphumelele. There are a variety of people in leadership positions at various levels – men and women, young and old. Similarly, a variety of individuals – not just those of Xhosa background – occupy prominent leadership positions in Masiphumelele. For example, Tshepo Moletsane is the leader of the ANC in Masiphumelele and comes from a Sotho-Tswana background. This indicates that leadership is not reserved for any one group.

The church is widely acknowledged by the residents of Masiphumelele for its role in building peace and harmony. The street committees, despite not having foreign nationals, are seen to be impartial in resolving community disputes, ultimately becoming a central structure for local safety. Recreational activities among the youth are also an instrument for building increased social interactions. A second benefit of these recreational activities is the reduction of crime. Socially, shebeens and braai areas are places for both foreign nationals and South Africans to mix. This section will delve deeper into the social activities that cultivate social interaction in Masiphumelele.

A key social activity in Masiphumelele is church attendance. Many locals and foreign nationals participate in church activities. According to a senior council official, “About 65% percent of people in Masiphumelele go to church.” One of the pastors said the church was often the first port of call for foreigners “because of its values.” Most foreign nationals have integrated into pre-existing churches. However, there are a number of ‘immigrant churches’ that have been established in the area. For example, some Zimbabweans use open spaces as places of worship. According to many accounts, the church played a crucial role in integrating the foreign community, especially after the 2008 attacks when it was central in organizing a peace march to show support for foreign nationals. This resulted in meetings between locals and foreigners, which led to calm and order returning to the area.

There are also two braai places, which seem always to be full, as well as shebeens. It seems these are also places of interaction for foreign nationals and South Africans. As a result, a number of fights are reported to break out between groups and this is often attributed to drunken behaviour. The international group that is never seen in such spaces are the

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24 Interview with senior council official, Masiphumelele, April 2016
25 Interview with Baptist pastor, Masiphumelele, April 2016
Barakas’ (shop keepers, often Muslims from Somalia), who do not drink and eat only halaal food.

As highlighted in Section II, the levels of social integration between South Africans and foreign nationals seems to be commendable. However, community members still prefer to interact mainly with their own (same racial group, same nationality, same religion, language etc.). This was highlighted by the living and working arrangements in Masiphumelele. One area was predominantly Zimbabwean, while Somali shop owners tended to employ other Somalis. Even with other small businesses like hair salons and car repair shops, it was rare to find people from different nationalities working at the same place. From the various conversations the research team had with community members, people at least tolerate each other, but when it comes to trust, most reserve it for ‘their own’. One of the areas that implants the mistrust is during community protest, where most foreign nationals go to work while South Africans stay away, or are forced to stay away:

“Our brothers and sisters from behind the fence [African foreign nationals] sneak out at midnight or early in the morning when a call to stay away from work is made, and that makes people to see them as sell-outs, as our employees then question us as to why we did not come as so and so came, pointing to the foreign nationals. They paint us as bad to employers and that shows that they are not on the community’s side, yet they stay with us. They are isolating themselves.”

A deeper problem that this quote may conceal is the fear foreign nationals have of losing their employment, as they may not have other social structures to help them survive, unlike their local counterparts.

Street committees, present in every street or section, are central structures to local safety. When asked where they would go if a problem arose between neighbours or within households, the answer was often: ‘the street committee’. Street committees are formed by community members to try to solve disputes amicably, without having to report ‘small’ matters to the police. These include family feuds, squabbles between neighbours, as well as any other issues that they believe can be solved by the community. The people in their areas elect members of the committees. Leaders of these committees vary in age and

26 Interview with street committee member, Masiphumelele, April 2016
gender, and although the committees themselves often have very few foreign nationals, many believed they are impartial. Street committees come and go, with clear variation between streets, and are very fluid.

There is also a structure called the ‘community committee’. This committee is said to have mushroomed after the events of late 2015. The committee is made up of both the old and newer leadership. This committee engages issues that relate to the legal expenses fundraising for the alleged perpetrators of vigilantism, social issues that are beyond street committees, and with outside and community stakeholders on issues pertinent to the community. This structure is said to be apolitical, even though it is predominantly led by politicians and activists (both young and old). This structure has been accused of corruption in relation to the vigilantism of September 2015. It was supposedly agreed in a community meeting that funds would be raised to help with the legal fees for the community members implicated in the vigilante attacks:

“Each household pays R50, each business pays R200 for lawyers, but we hear that it’s only foreign nationals now paying the money. The money is said to be collected by the chairperson of the ANC in Masiphumelele.”

This issue will be discussed in greater detail in Section VII.

Foreign nationals also have social networks they can access. When asked where he would go first if he were faced with a problem a Somali shopkeeper said:

“Shop owners. Here there are Ethiopian and Somali shop owners. Somali shop owners have their own community, and Ethiopian shop owners have their own community leaders. Together, we have one community that works with the local community. If a shop is attacked, first we report to the police, second we report to our shop community, and they go to the local community and try to solve the problem together. They stand with us when we have a problem and we stand with local

27 Interview with youth leader who is also part of the community committee, Masiphumelele, 22 February 2017
community when they have a problem. When something happens, for example a fire, we help them.”

The Somali shop owner indicated that he and others have formed an association of shopkeepers, which seeks to assist members. This is comprised of Somalis and Ethiopians, who tend to be shop owners. After tapping into this network, and reporting crime to the police, the Somali shopkeeper – under the banner of the shopkeeper leadership structures – goes to the broader community to present their issues. Importantly, this shows that the Somali shopkeeper has multiple networks that he can access: the Somali community, the Ethiopian/Somali shopkeeper community, the police, and the local community. Significantly, he says: “They stand with us when we have a problem and we stand with local community when they have a problem.” This suggests that his voice in the community is amplified through his social networks, and that he is able to work with the community to resolve issues. Similarly, it shows that he also considers community issues to be important, and something over which he has the responsibility to ‘stand with’ other Masiphumelele residents. Perhaps the feeling of obligation to pay a monthly R200 contribution towards legal fees for the community may emanate from this sense of responsibility towards community. This may be seen by corrupt leaders as an opportunity to exploit them, rather than an opportunity to further entrench unity among all in the community.

There are also a number of politically affiliated groups, including political parties and the Women’s Forum. These groups tend to have a lot of influence in the community. The Women’s Forum, for instance, views itself as a body that has the mandate to fight for the rights of women in Masiphumelele. As one of the founding members put it:

“Initially I saw that women are not united and don’t know one another. Seeing the things that were happening here, women getting killed by their husbands, so I came and got deep in securing women their rights and children rights... We ended up forming an organization for women called Masiphumelele Women’s Organization...”

28 Interview with Somali shop owner, Masiphumelele, April 2016
29 Interview with Somali shop owner, Masiphumelele, April 2016
30 Interview with Women’s Forum leader, Masiphumelele, April 2016
It was often mentioned during interviews that alcohol and drug abuse is rampant in the area. There are programmes like the Desmond Tutu Youth Centre and Waves for Change that seek “to help young people from volatile backgrounds develop skills to regulate behaviour, build healing relationships, cope with stress and make positive life-choices.”

The Desmond Tutu Foundation, although primarily involved in HIV research, has a number of initiatives for youth (especially high school students) in the area for community mobilization activities conducted in close collaboration with other non-governmental organizations, the private and primary care health sector, community leaders, and members. The youth programme is after-school and, given that the Desmond Tutu Foundation is located across the street from Masiphumelele High School, it is easily accessible to the students. As well as the Youth Centre, there is also large and rather active Youth Development Forum

However, there is limited space in the area for children to play and for youth to do recreational activities:

“We do not have much. Sport is only what unites us and without that we meet in the shebeens, which is what we want to fight against. There are no art programs, for instance. I know of a group of children who perform traditional dancing, but they do not have a place to rehearse, so they might end up stopping that. There are no sports fields except a soccer field that doesn’t even have a crowd stand, so it is a challenge for people to even go there and watch because it is a small patch of field. We also do have hip-hop groups, choirs and other artists, but we have no venues to host a gathering where they can perform...”

This quote is of interest because, at the same time as presenting the limited number of venues and facilities to host recreational activities, especially for the youth, it also shows the high levels of social organisation and activities available. This speaks to a broader community spirit. Presumably, if better and more facilities were available, the offerings and capacities would increase.

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32 Interview with youth leader, Masiphumelele, April 2016.
V. Policing and Conflict Resolution

a) Nature of relationship between the police and residents

The community’s relationship with the police is characterised by distrust and there seems to be the perception that police and government authorities (especially the ward councillor) do not care about the community, or that Masiphumelele is not a priority community for the government. The SAPS are not seen to sufficiently and effectively service Masiphumelele. As mentioned earlier, the SAPS station that oversees Masiphumelele is SAPS Ocean View, which also includes in its precinct Ocean View and Kommetjie. The police suggest the police station is under-resourced for such a large and populous precinct. Masiphumelele residents suggest the same, but also point out other problems in policing, such as corruption. In particular, foreign nationals who own spaza shops in the area accuse the police of corruption and lack of care.33 There are calls for Masiphumelele to have its own police station.

After the protests of 2015, the SAPS installed a mobile station in the community hall car park. This is supposed to be a permanent fixture. This station should be used to provide commissioner of oaths services, allow people to open cases (although the case number can only be given later, after processing of dockets at SAPS Ocean View), and to provide a continual community presence. However, there are reports of misconduct of SAPS officers operating from the mobile station, such as drinking and ‘picking up girls’. In addition, while the research team was there, the mobile station was reported to have been in for servicing since April 13th 2016.34 Again on the second visit of the researchers the mobile police station was not present in the community and community members did not know where it was. The SAPS said a continual presence was supposed to remain at the community hall. However, the research team saw a vehicle there less than half the time. The community varied from lukewarm to highly negative about the mobile station, many seeing it as insufficient. Some

33 Interview with Somali shop keepers, Masiphumelele, 21 February 2017
felt the presence of that mobile police station did make some difference, especially for the old people who cannot walk to Ocean View to get an affidavit.\textsuperscript{35}

*Figure 9 Police van parked outside the Community Hall during one of our visits*

The SAPS claim they are attempting to make community ties through the creation of a community policing forum (CPF), neighbourhood watch and the mobile station. However, the existence of the CPF and neighbourhood watch is unclear. However, the police do suggest that neighbourhood watch members join them on foot patrols: “Sometimes we utilize members of the neighbourhood watch in the Wetlands area. Unfortunately, they are not always there for a 12-hour shift.”\textsuperscript{36} In other words, the police have to plan their foot patrols for times when they have the support of the Wetlands neighbourhood watch volunteers. During the patrols, two volunteers will stay with the police vehicle, to make sure it is not damaged, and a group of volunteers will join two police officers as they patrol the area. This reliance on the community itself for effective policing is problematic, especially at times when community members are unavailable. One community leader residing in the area did not recall any patrols with community members by the police. Instead, she portrayed police as enemies of the people and that anyone working with them would be putting their lives in danger.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{35} Ntongana, “Masiphumelele police station”  
\textsuperscript{36} Interview with a senior VISPOL police officer, SAPS Ocean View, April 2016  
\textsuperscript{37} Interview with street committee chair and secretary Wetlands area, Masiphumelele, April 2016
Much of the problem between the police and residents has to do with what authorities believe to be a lack of understanding of official procedures and the law. They also have to do with frustration people have with not receiving the services they need, or the bureaucracy they have to get through to get them – even in emergencies. In this way, the incidences of mob violence in 2015 relates directly to the breakdown of trust with the police. As a senior police officer explains:

“When it started, according to them, they had lost trust in us. When I arrived here last year, there was a march that Lubabalo [Vellem] was a convenor. They came to us, they gave us a memorandum saying they are not happy with our services. They were losing trust in us. But we addressed that. However, while we were in the process of addressing that, and showing that we are doing patrols, they took the law into their own hands, by approaching the houses they identified as the drug houses.” \[38\]

In other words, the SAPS were unable to move quickly enough to satisfy Masiphumelele residents, especially in a moment of heightened anger and calls for action. Perhaps the lowest point of mistrust happened in this time: “Police were called in to search a house of a known drug dealer for drugs and they came out empty handed. Community members went in and came back with drugs,” recollects one of the leaders in community. \[39\] This was must have been a big blow in the perception of effectiveness of police in the community as the incident took place under the glares of community members.

b) Community conflict resolution

When it comes to resolving issues, community members occasionally organize themselves into action groups to address issues. In general, the research team found that no formal structure is solely relied upon for conflict resolution. The extended protests of October/November 2015 illustrate the mob justice that can arise during crisis times in Masiphumelele. Here, community members from varying NGOs, political affiliations and groups set aside their differences and rallied together to protest against the lack of police

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\[38\] Interview with a senior VISPOL police officer, SAPS Ocean View, April 2016

\[39\] Interview with Women’s Forum leader, Masiphumelele, April 2016
visibility in the area. Interviewees from different political formations and organisations expressed the need to take collective action:

“There was a feeling that this was a community issue and everyone had to pull in one direction.”40

Another incident where the community was seen taking active action was during the marches against xenophobia in 2008. Here, the residents of Masiphumelele joined to fight against the wave of xenophobia, which swept across the Western Cape Province. Masiphumelele’s proactive stance against violence towards foreigners earned the community the annual Reconciliation Award by the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation Commission (IJR). On the 15th of November 2008, IJR praised Masiphumelele, endorsing the community as a model for how other communities can protect harmonious living with foreigners.41

The neighbourhood lacks a formal neighbourhood watch or Community Police Forum (CPF) structure. There were some indications of plans to establish such bodies in April 2016, but there were no such structures in February 2017 when the team visited the area again. Previously an organisation called Bambanani had existed in Masiphumelele, which during its time of existence was seen to be visible and effective. However, as time went on this structure become corrupt and eventually defunct. Bambanani was formed by the community to deal with issues of crime and community safety, and to act as a mediator of conflict. One former leader explains:

“We formed it because of the rise in crime levels in this community as it still is. House break-ins, robberies, shebeens that were open all night, resulting in brutal deaths of those coming back from the night life.”42

We were informed that it was disbanded at the end of 2015. Others said it ended sooner due to corruption from leaders (who came to demand R50 – R3000 ‘fees’ for taking on cases). Others still said they had personally been to Bambanani in 2016 for assistance, and

40 Interview with Women’s Forum leader, Masiphumelele, April 2016
42 Interview with former Bambanani leader, Masiphumelele, April 2016
their cases had been taken, or reported that they knew of these cases. What we learnt was that some of the former Bambanani leaders were still referred to as Bambanani even though the structure no longer formally existed. These individuals were still accessed by some community members where there was trouble in the streets, especially where there are no street committees. What is clear, is that coping mechanisms for insecurity in Masiphumelele are fluid, adapting or changing shape to suit circumstances, and have structure but lack formality. Despite this, most community members identified street committees as key structures to resolve conflict.

As already mentioned, street committees are also fluid structures, and are central to local safety. Many community members reported street committees as their first port of call when faced with problems. Both within the street committees and Bambanani, there appeared to be a commitment to avoid using violence to resolve problems, instead focusing on using social networks and putting communal pressure on perpetrating individuals. We, however, did receive reports that both structures have been prone to using violence.

As mentioned earlier, churches seem to play a central role in Masiphumelele. It was reported that during the xenophobic attacks of 2008, the church was at the forefront of organising marches in support of foreign nationals. Some church leaders said they called community meetings and were engaged in community conflict resolution. Others, however, said the churches did not get involved. It therefore seems like the church has certain conflicts in which it involves itself.

Social workers reported that, on occasion, families and individuals come to them, either to resolve intra-familial conflict, or to handle conflicts between neighbours. One social worker said although their organisation is supposed to work with children, sometimes they have to deal with problems affecting adults, as people tend to trust them more due to the anonymity of their services.

What is clear from Masiphumelele is that less formal, on the ground ‘coping mechanisms’ tend to have more community ownership and greater success. Formal structures such as the

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43 Interview with Baptist pastor, Masiphumelele, April 2016
44 Interview with social worker, Masiphumelele, April 2016
SAPS (and associated CPFs or neighbourhood watches) and, increasingly, political leadership, do not tend to be used.

In summary, there are several leadership structures and conflict resolution channels in Masiphumelele. The residents rate the effectiveness of these channels differently. For instance, the councillor was not seen as an effective channel for community demands. Put in context though, the DA representative’s unpopularity in Masiphumelele is also telling of the larger politics of the ward. In terms of leadership structures in Masiphumelele, the street committees continue to play a visible role, whereas the influence of the Taxi Association is not so prevalent, possible because most taxi owners do not reside in the area. However, they have shown themselves to be violent when they feel that their ‘personal space’ has been ‘infringed upon’. What the research team found was that even with the given channels at times residents resorted to mob justice, taking matters into their own hands, bringing together people from varying political groups and backgrounds to fight a common cause.

VI. History of group violence and exclusion

Given the history of its creation and issues of overcrowding, violence and, to a lesser extent, exclusion has been a continual experience in Masiphumelele. The very high unemployment rate, coupled with the absence of a police station, leads people to take the law into their own hands. These elements increase the risk of vigilantism/mob justice, as formal mechanisms are not in place to provide security and justice.

a) Xenophobic violence

The first incidences of xenophobic violence in Masiphumelele broke out as long ago as September 2006, when twenty-seven Somali-owned shops were looted and seventy-one people evacuated by police. The main reason given by South Africans interviewed for the violent conflict was lack of business viability as a result of price undercutting by Somali business owners. A range of actors intervened, including the Premier’s Office, which

45 Interview with taxi association, Masiphumelele, 20 February 2017
47 Interview with youth leader, Masiphumelele, April 2016
compiled the Masiphumelele Conflict Intervention Report. A number of recommendations were suggested, such as coming up with a coherent long-term plan for responding to community conflict, establishment of a community peace monitoring team, and the creation of spaces for cultural appreciation in Masiphumelele.

Further incidences of violence were recorded during the nationwide xenophobic attacks in May 2008. There were reports of foreign nationals being stoned and Somali-run shops looted. In October 2008 following a child’s murder, a dozen shops were looted by forty to fifty youths. The local community apparently believed the culprit to be an immigrant, but police countered that the man arrested was in fact South African.

November 2008 witnessed the murder of Abdi Sirej, an Ethiopian national who appeared in the film ‘Baraka’ (Film-Makers against Racism festival). Sirej had sought refuge in Soetwater after the initial attacks of May the same year, but had returned to Masiphumelele after overtures from the community.

Business people, including some from Masiphumelele, held several meetings in late May and June 2009 to discuss ways of ridding their communities of foreign-owned shops. The business owners accused foreign nationals, especially Somalis, of charging lower prices and driving them out of business. Threats were made towards foreign businesses, but no attacks were attributed to xenophobia.

In July 2014, Ahimenet Jamal from Somalia was shot in his shop in Masiphumelele. This followed a wave of attacks on at least twenty-nine foreign owned shops in the Western Cape. At least two foreign business owners were killed during province-wide attacks.

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From the above incidents, it is clear that Somali business have been the targets of violence in the past. However, Masiphumelele business owners seem to have accepted the competition and are now willing to work with the Somalis and learn from them. One former South African small business owner recounted:

“Competition was our problem, [the Somalis] took our shops. For instance, I also owned a spaza shop. Since their arrival, I failed to sell my merchandise. I was then [forced] to hand over to them so they can run the shop. It was not only me but a couple of others too, leaving a few keeping their businesses. So apparently they [would] meet up and buy their goods at a low price. If there is a place that sells apples at a low price, they all buy from the same place, come back and sell us goods at a cheap price. Everything they did, they did [together] and that was our fall. So when we explained to each other and advised one another we saw that [attacking them] was a mistake.”

This quote is of importance because it shows the process by which the businessperson, and their South African peers, came to realise that attacking foreign nationals for their ‘fall’ – their lack of competitiveness – was ‘a mistake’. In other words, it shows the process of taking responsibility, rather than passing blame or scapegoating.

Violence targeting foreign nationals has been limited in Masiphumelele since the 2008 incidences. This, perhaps, was a result of community intervention. Indeed, after the 2008 attacks, community leaders organized a peace march to express their support for foreign nationals. Meetings between locals and foreign nationals were arranged and this led to calm and order returning to the area. Some ‘Baraka’ reported that they have been robbed and money and goods taken from them by people they identify as robbers rather than general community members:

“We do have some incidences of robbery, especially before robbers were punished [in vigilante attacks], but has gone down now... But it’s not community but naughty boys on drugs who are robbers, and they rob everyone including community members.”

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53 Interview with a South African small business owner, Masiphumelele, 2016
54 Somali shop owner and leader (Baraka), Masiphumelele, 20 April 2017
Even during these occasions of robberies, community members do not take advantage of the situation and loot the shops. We were informed that most run for their lives and only come back later after the incident to check on the wellbeing of the shopkeepers.⁵⁵

Many a time, it was mentioned that foreign nationals are easy targets for robbers because they keep their money at home. This is said to attract robbers. In addition, one of the secretaries of a street committee showed us a book where most people who reported robbery were foreign nationals. Mostly, the incidences happened in the early hours of the morning. It was mentioned quite often that they are targeted partly because they do not have networks to protect them. Community members do not want to take risks for them as they do for their South African counterparts. As one foreign national pointed out:

“I don’t know why, but they take advantage of people who are not South Africans, you know. When I look at you, I know that you are not from West Africa... and when you speak, any language you speak, but I will know that you are not from West Africa. So when those guys see you, they know where you are from, they take advantage of you; because even if they try to grab something from you, you can’t talk. Maybe when you speak English some people can hear it, but they don’t want to rescue you because you are not from their place. It’s not safe.”⁵⁶

Some foreign nationals, however, felt that they are targeted just because they are foreigners. They feel South Africans can easily recognise a foreign national and because of natural ‘hate’ they tend to attack them. Asked about problems between locals and foreign nationals, one West African said, “It’s like... I can’t say they hate foreigners, but they do really hate foreigners.”⁵⁷ Therefore, it seems foreign nationals have mixed feelings and mixed experiences.

When asked about collective violence in Masiphumelele, it was interesting to note that many people, in addition to mentioning the 2015 vigilantism, went on to mention the 2008 xenophobic attacks. While now eight years ago, the events of 2008 remain in the collective consciousness, and are still at the forefront of people’s minds. What is interesting about this

⁵⁵ Foreign national shopkeepers (Barakas), Masiphumelele, 20 April 2017
⁵⁶ Interview with Ghanaian national, Masiphumelele 2016
⁵⁷ Interview with Nigerian national, Masiphumelele, April 2016
is that the outcome is largely positive. It seems that after the 2008 attacks, which shocked most community members, a collective ‘soul searching’ happened. It seems that the community went through a process of coming to accept and celebrate Masiphumelele’s cosmopolitan nature. We saw now that many residents claim that foreign nationals are an important part of the community. Similarly, foreign nationals feel largely included. In this way, while not exactly tangible, some form of real reintegration and reconciliation happened after the 2008 xenophobic violence in Masiphumelele.

b) Vigilantism and political tensions

As mentioned earlier, in October 2015 there were multiple incidents of violent protests.58 The protests were triggered by lack of adequate policing in the area, and anger boiled over after the rape and murder of a young man and the rape of a young woman.59 Lubabalo Vellem, who had been at the forefront of demands by Masiphumelele’s residents for better policing in the township, was arrested and accused of murder, assault, attempted murder, and of public violence, relating to the mob justice murder of one man, and the assault of another.60 In response, residents set alight two boats and a caravan, and blockaded roads into the township. There were reports of at least seven deaths. The mob justice victims were accused of rape, theft and drug dealing. The following account from a community leader gives a fuller description of what they experienced:

“What happened here, I recall the date if I am not mistaken it was in August. There was a march about drugs to the police station. A memorandum was sent by the youth but with our support... On the 15th of September, a girl was raped early in the morning [when] she was going to work... After that incident, another one occurred of a boy who was waiting for school transport. They raped the boy [but] nobody knows how he was taken... The community understood that [this kind of behaviour was] influenced by drugs... We were all hurt and [it] was clear that this thing has to do

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with drugs. Firstly, we had to find the perpetrators. We traced them without the help from the police... One of the killers was found after a long search, seemingly [from] a tip off. We [went to] the hall so the entire community came out and [filled up the place]... Later on, a drugs search was carried out and [it] was a success. The police intervened but [did not arrest anyone].”  

The recollection by this community leader shows the sense of collective anger and pain at the crimes committed against the two victims. There was a clear link drawn in the community’s mind between these crimes and drugs. There was frustration at police action around these crimes, and a shared sense that action was needed to rid Masiphumelele of drug dealers. Overwhelmingly in Masiphumelele, the research team found the view that the vigilante violence that had taken place is collectively owned. Every time the research team probed ‘who’ committed the violence, there was a wide perception that the vigilante violence was communal. As one community leader put it: “People were colluding with one another...” The vigilante incidence is the community’s secret, and questions that may be perceived as digging to find the exact culprits often triggered a shutting down of the conversation.

Amid this ‘chaos’ and collective action, Lubabalo Vellem came to the forefront of the action. Vellem clearly represented a leader in this wide-reaching community action and discontent. As one community member put it:

“It is very difficult to pinpoint one person to what was happening. In my own point of view, I regard him [Vellem] as innocent until the courts prove him guilty, because to me he showed leadership skills. He stood in the forefront for the people. I don’t know about murdering people. I don’t know about that, because in some of the marches I was there...”

Once again, there is general community collective ownership of the violence, and sense of support for Vellem. After Vellem’s arrest there was wide-scale protest in Masiphumelele, with the protesters arguing his arrest was unfair. While there are some community divisions

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61 Interview with Women’s Forum leader, Masiphumelele, 2016
62 Interview with ANC leader, Masiphumelele 2016
63 Interview with youth leader, Masiphumelele 2016
around the Vellem case – most often around whether protestors should prevent people going to work or children going to school – everyone the research team interviewed either had support for Vellem, or had sympathies (even if they did not support the vigilantism).

There was broad agreement that the police were at least partially responsible for people taking the law into their own hands. Firstly, because there were drug protest marches to the police station prior to the violence and nothing seemed to have been done. Secondly, when the community tried finding perpetrators after the murder, they did it “without the help from the police.” Further, some community members believe the violence “was a situation that [should have been stopped quickly] but the [police] messed it up at first, then approached the court last.”

Vigilantism as a collective method seemed to have led to tensions between the older and younger generation in Masiphumelele. In general, while older people had clear sympathies with the collective frustrations around crime and a lack of community safety, they disagreed with the methods used. The older generation tended to be against the use of vigilante violence to expel suspected drug dealers, murderers and rapists. They also disagreed, not with the protest action itself, but with the method of the protests whereby schoolchildren were unable to go to school, people were unable to go to work, and NGO and other workers were unable to enter Masiphumelele. The 2015 violence and protest action is said to have led to some sort of conflict between generations, where old people blame young people on how they handled the situation. As one ‘old’ community member put it, “we don’t like violence but our youth overpower us... We find it difficult to control them sometimes.”

Another ‘old’ member had this to say:

“We have different views on dealing with drugs, some want to kill the dealers and some are opposed to that... I say we have factions because we disagree on dealing with the early return of the arrested dealers. We become opposed because I, for instance, would [pay bail for a family member who has been arrested] and they

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64 Interview with Women’s Forum leader, Masiphumelele 2016
65 Interview with Women’s Forum leader, Masiphumelele 2016
66 Interview with former Bambanani leader, Masiphumelele 2016
return very quickly, [but others opposed to their early return] mobilises their friends and kill that person. They see me as opposed to their way of justice...”

Younger people, on the other hand, feel the action taken was justified given the circumstances and lack of viable alternatives. Again, this quote highlights how the structure of the criminal justice system – whereby criminals are able to return to the community – creates problems:

“To tell you the truth old people are not honest. They knew all along that the major problem was drugs, and police were being bribed by these guys. They were scared to take action because their own children were also not clean. Some of the leaders are related to these people and some of them are close friends. It did what is good for the community, and today they also see that Masiphumelele is not as bad as before... These [older] people will die and leave us in a mess, and I was born here, this is my home and we must be free to go around at any time.”

The protest actions also caused tensions between taxi drivers and protestors. The most recent violence occurred in May 2016 following a protest march in support of Vellem. The protest included a lockdown of the township, meaning no one was allowed to enter or leave, except to march to Vellem’s trial at Simon’s Town Magistrate’s Court. The taxi owners (supported by their drivers) opposed this boycott, as it meant no business for them on the day. According to the Taxi Association, the problem arose when young people barged into their offices demanding they support the community march. The Taxi Association, which claims it had supported the protest up until that time, accused the young leaders of the community of showing a lack of respect and immaturity dealing with elders like them. The Association claims to have told the youth leaders that it was too short a notice for them to be able to help, as they were only informed on the afternoon of 9 May about a march that

67 Interview with a former CPF leader, Masiphumelele 2016
68 Interview with young leader, also member of the community committee, Masiphumelele, 2017
was taking place the following day. The Taxi Association vowed that they would teach the marchers a lesson should they stop people from going to work.

The following morning march organisers gathered in front of the hall, as is the norm when there is going to be a march. Then taxi drivers arrived with sjamboks and dispersed those gathering forcefully. The youth leaders then went around telling residents not to use taxis. Some community members then went to protest at the taxi rank. This was taken as a provocation by the Taxi Association, who beat up protesters and bystanders, and some people fought back. At that stage, the Taxi Association used guns and shot at people. There were reports that multiple people were injured by taxi drivers, including those not involved in the protest. While the police expressed no knowledge of such violence, our sources said the police were present at the time of the clash on Tuesday, 10 May, and that they stood by while taxi drivers shot at people. There have even been accusations of bribery between the Taxi Association and the SAPS.

Community members subsequently decided not to use the taxis. Taxi drivers tried to force people to use them, and assaulted motorists who appeared to be giving people lifts. By the end of the week the taxi drivers realised that people were not backing down from their resolution, and they came to the community to apologise. Eventually there was an agreement that the taxi fare was going to go down as sign of the sincerity of the apology. There have not been any reported incidences of altercations between the community and Taxi Association since, even though Masiphumelele has experienced many service delivery-related protests, and protests relating to the solidarity with those accused of being involved in vigilante attacks in late 2015.

VII. Profile of anti-outsider violence and exclusion

Given that there have not been recent incidences of collective violence against foreign nationals, we will focus here on the forms of non-violent exclusion of foreign nationals. It

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70 Interview with Taxi association, Masiphumelele, February 2017
71 Interview with youth leader, Masiphumelele, February 2017
72 Interview with a community member, Masiphumelele, February 2017
73 Follow-up interview with community member, Masiphumelele, April 2016
should be noted that, for most respondents, the ‘outsiders’ in Masiphumelele are the drug dealers and other criminals. While we will keep to the violence and relationships of foreign residents to Masiphumelele community here, it is worth bearing in mind that vulnerability of foreign nationals may form part of the broader experience of Masiphumelele residents. In other words, foreign nationals may be vulnerable and victims of crime in the same ways other residents would be vulnerable. Nonetheless, while foreign nationals are included as part of Masiphumelele, forms of non-violent exclusion do exist.

a) Non-violent forms of exclusion

Non-violent exclusion of foreign nationals is prevalent around issues of land and housing. Foreign nationals are often side-lined by South African residents when the government provides materials for informal housing. It seems that South Africans believe they are entitled to receiving these first, and the foreign nationals only get the ‘leftovers’. For example, foreign nationals who used to stay in the Wetlands area affected by the November 2015 fires, reported that during allocation of building materials provided by the authorities, locals tended to exclude them. One Zimbabwean national who used to live in the Wetlands but has moved after the fires, said South Africans pegged larger pieces of land, including what originally belonged to foreign nationals. This resulted in foreign nationals having nowhere to stay.

Similarly, when government provided assistance to the fire victims, they tended to only serve locals. It was mentioned that the government only provided materials to those who had stand numbers, not their tenants, which means that most foreign nationals who were staying in the yard didn’t receive any help. Further, when people were moved into the community hall, only the locals benefitted. One South African community member had this to say:

“I think also coming from the leadership, there are people who have all ... They are always there when there are disasters. Instead of helping [they] take things from the poor. So that creates tensions...”

74 Interview with Zimbabwean national, Masiphumelele, April 2016
75 Interview with community member, Masiphumelele, April 2016
The quote above highlights the role those in leadership play in propagating exclusionary dynamics in the community. It also appears that they take advantage of the situation to enrich themselves. In doing this, they legitimise discrimination in the eyes of ordinary community members, who look to them for guidance.

In addition to the above-mentioned forms of exclusion, there are not many foreign nationals in leadership, and very few attend meetings. However, community leaders reported that efforts were being made to get foreign nationals involved, but the main problem was the language barrier. Communication at almost every level of leadership in Masiphumelele is in Xhosa. This, they said, resulted in foreign nationals feeling excluded, as most cannot understand the language. Foreign nationals said they did not see any value in attending meetings where they will not understand anything:

“They will say when they have their meeting [we are going to] talk to them, but sometimes when you go for these meetings you cannot even hear what they say. They only speak in their language [Xhosa]. That is also another problem; you do not know what’s going on. You only listen but you can’t understand anything.”

There is also exploitation of foreign spaza shop owners. Researchers learnt that in Masiphumelele there are 63 foreign national owned spaza shops. Each spaza shops had a ‘coordinator’ who was a local to represent them in meetings, and act as their eyes and ears in the community. The ‘coordinator’ claimed that she was approached by the community of foreign spaza shop owners to take up that position in 2014. Some 60 of the 63 shops paid her R100 per month. Community leaders saw this as a form of corruption, and in 2015 they confronted her to stop what she was doing. She claims that the community leaders demanded a share and when she refused, they allegedly spread rumours that she was extorting the foreign nationals. Foreign nationals that researchers spoke to seem to appreciate her role and did not see her as a corrupt person. This may well be a genuine relationship between her and the group, based on the group’s needs and her abilities, but the claims that some community leadership wanted a cut in the deal means that there are people who are eager to take advantage of foreign nationals inability to partake in community meetings.

76 Interview with Nigerian national, Masiphumelele 2016
There was also another case in 2015 where the community, in a public meeting, took the decision to contribute to community members’ legal costs relating to the vigilante attacks. It was agreed that each household would contribute R50 and each business R200. The money was collected, but there was a lack of transparency in relation to how the money was spent. Taxi drivers reportedly demanded invoices, but these were not forthcoming, and hence the taxi drivers refused to pay. Currently the only people who are still reportedly contributing money are the foreign national business owners. According to one respondent:

“The general public ask us why are we still paying the R200 and the committee say if we do not pay, they will close the shop. We have been paying since 2015... They come as a group. No signature, but just a small ticket, but some [foreign business owners] do not pay.”

This is a good example of possible corruption targeting the foreign nationals.

b) Causes of violence

Causes of 2006/2008 Xenophobic Violence
Community members perceived unfair business practices as the main cause of anti-outsider violence in 2006 and 2008. These include, for example, “charging R5.50 for a R5 airtime voucher” and undercutting prices of other goods to such an extent that South African shop owners were driven out of business. As one shopkeeper said:

“Somalians want to be the cheapest business people in town. If they see that I am also pricing my goods like them, they are going to find ways to undercut me.”

As a result, most of the attacks on foreign shops were allegedly instigated by local business people and carried out by youth. Business owners would pay youth to start the violence as a way of intimidating foreign business owners. This, reportedly, was done in coordination with business owners from other townships. Even the political leadership in Masiphumelele

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77 Foreign national shop keepers/owners, Masiphumelele, February 2017
78 Interview with Zimbabwean national, Masiphumelele, April 2016
80 Majavu, “Xenophobia”
acknowledged this. According to a senior ANC leader, the instigators were “local business owners who wanted to eliminate competition.”\textsuperscript{81}

**Causes of exclusion of foreign nationals in Masiphumelele**

Foreign nationals were mainly accused of not attending protest marches. Locals felt they would be fighting for the whole community and therefore all members should participate in the protests. Instead, foreign nationals are said to leave as early as 4am to avoid the community shutdown and report for work. However, foreigners said because of their lack of bargaining power with employers, they cannot afford to miss work, since they can be easily fired.

Some attacks were perhaps just frustration with some foreign nationals, whom locals saw as being involved in irresponsible behaviour. According to one South African:

“They drink in public and smoke drugs publicly in full view of the police. If the police do nothing about that there, [there] is nothing we can do, even though we have power over them, because what they are doing here is not what they would do in their home countries.”\textsuperscript{82}

Some people mentioned that one of the suspected drug dealers chased out of Masiphumelele last year was Nigerian, but no larger connection was made to Nigerians (or foreign nationals) in general.\textsuperscript{83} With no broader stereotype being made between Nigerians and organised crime, it may be the case that this community action was not xenophobic, but anti-crime.

Additionally, some attacks on foreign nationals seemed to be better classified as criminally motivated. Foreign nationals reported that they were vulnerable to robberies when walking in the street, especially after drinking at night, but we could not say this risk was higher for foreign nationals than South Africans. Asked about who was responsible for the attacks at night, a foreign national said:

\textsuperscript{81} Interview with ANC leader, Masiphumelele, April 2016
\textsuperscript{82} Interview with ANC leader, Masiphumelele, April 2016
\textsuperscript{83} Interview with Living Hope workers, Masiphumelele 2016
“It’s the South Africans, those tsotsis. Those small people. Thieves. They have [many] weapons. So that is why it’s not safe here to go [walk] even if it’s 8pm. You can’t walk; you must drive or you stay in your house.”\textsuperscript{84}

It is also important to note that since 2011 there has been an informal regulation process in relation to the number of foreign owned spaza shops. A foreign national explains:

“There are 63 spaza shops. There is a paper agreement between us, the police and community that the number of foreign national shops is enough. It was a solution from us [foreign national spaza owners], that if people open next to each other that causes conflict among us, people fight each other. So we have enough and we have a list.”\textsuperscript{85}

VIII. Conclusion

The research found that residents in Masiphumelele are very willing to be interviewed, but were quite secretive about the specifics around the 2015 vigilante attacks and protests thereafter. Generally, there was evidence of good networks for both locals and foreign nationals, with violence targeted towards foreign nationals being limited since 2008. The research team found that shebeens and braai areas were places where foreigners and South Africans happily mixed. In other words, it can be said foreign nationals and locals get along and have been living in relative peace in Masiphumelele. However, it would appear that ‘Barakas’ and other business owners remain targets, vulnerable to robberies and corrupt community leaders who are currently charging them R 200 per month, allegedly to cover the costs of the Vellem trial.

Undeniably, a major challenge in Masiphumelele has been the growing population residing in the 0.39km\textsuperscript{2} area: in 2014 that population was estimated to be 35,000. This represents a serious case of overcrowding given that Masiphumelele was built for only 1,200 houses. Added to overcrowding, unemployment and drug abuse continue to be a source of poverty

\textsuperscript{84} Interview with Nigerian national, Masiphumelele, April 2016
\textsuperscript{85} Interview with foreign national spaza shop owners/shop keepers, Masiphumelele, February 2017
and crime in the area, features that critically threaten harmony and social cohesion in the community. Drug-related problems, for instance, have led to the rapid escalation of community tensions, indicating the fragility of the area under stress. Protests, both violent and non-violent, reveal that protest is seen as an effective means of political communication.

It is worth noting that whilst the SAVI team was conducting field research, the community appeared to be peaceful. However, three days after the team left the site in Phase I, violence broke out during a community protest. Similarly, mob justice in Masiphumelele has taken place from time to time. This collective violence is primarily driven by the pronounced distrust towards the police in the area. As discussed in Section III, this sense of distrust stems from the sense that the police are not doing enough to serve and protect the residents of Masiphumelele.

Beyond the police, however, other social structures including NGOs, street committees, churches, as well as recreational activities offered by NGOs were positively seen to contribute to the harmonious living experience in Masiphumelele. Comparatively, the area is well represented with NGOs and churches, which are actively involved in various projects, building structures that harness local safety, peace, and leadership. Additionally, these structures, particularly the street committees, help to solve disputes amicably. This includes family feuds, squabbles between neighbours, as well as any other issues, without having to report ‘small’ matters to the police. This structure is a positive source of peace building in the community, especially because it is seen as impartial.

In terms of the role of politics and the establishment of social trust, the councillor is viewed in a negative light, as detached and not in touch with the people. The dominance in other parts of the ward of the Democratic Alliance, in contrast to the popularity of the ANC in Masiphumelele, means the political wishes of Masiphumelele residents are not realised through political processes such as local elections. As a result, politics and community leadership is conducted at the community rather than the ward level. This compounds the separation of Masiphumelele residents from the State: with mainly negative connections to local government and the police.