

Communication Needs and ICT Usage of Low Income, Long Distance Migrants Living in Cape Town

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Abstract

ICT4D initiatives aim at improving the lives of people through improved communication. However, there is not much information on the needs of marginalised people such as migrants. This paper reports the findings of a qualitative research conducted to uncover the communication needs and ICT usage of low-income, long-distance African migrants living in Cape Town. The focus was on which ICTs were used in relation to the purpose of communication and on whom they were communicating with. The Choice Framework was used as the theoretical research frame. The key findings were that a large number of migrants used mobile or fixed-line phones even though they are very expensive. The main needs expressed were: convenience, low cost, speedy communication feedback and virtual intimacy. The resources available to migrants limited their ICT choice options. However, the need and purpose of communication took precedence in the choice of ICT used. Surprisingly, although most migrants had significant social resources, they did not make sufficient use of this social capital.

Key words

ICT4D; migration; digital divide; communication needs; Africa, social resources.

Introduction

Africa is lagging behind in ICT development (Henley & Mignone, 2009), as manifested in the lack of infrastructure and the high cost of using ICTs as a means of communication (Kee, Park & Valenzuela, 2009). This has a negative impact on the way migrants communicate with their friends and family in their home country (Ball-Rokeach & Wilkin, 2009). To close the gap between what people need and what

ICTs offer, a better understanding of migrants' needs is necessary, such as the need for "virtual intimacy" (Butler & McDevitt, 2009).

The purpose of this research was to explore and explain the needs and ICT usage of migrants in Cape Town. The main objective was to explain the way migrants use ICTs for two-way communication: when, how often, with whom and for what purpose. The research also investigated the factors that migrants considered when determining the choice of ICTs to use. This gave an insight into what is lacking in the ICTs commonly used by migrants and how these can be improved. Furthermore, in terms of the factors that influenced the choice of ICTs used, the research investigated if there was a link between the use and knowledge of ICTs with migrant level of education, age or income.

Literature review

Historically, African people have migrated to their neighbouring countries in search of employment and a better living, and South Africa has been an important recipient of migrants. But very little is known about the way ICTs are used for communication purposes by these migrants. For purposes of this research project, a "migrant" was defined as a person who has moved from their home country to another country either temporarily or permanently for various reasons (Foeken, Van Dijk & Van Til, 2001). Our focus was on African migrants living in Cape Town, South Africa.

Communication needs of migrants

ICT companies have come to recognize that migrants are a target market since they have a great need to communicate (D'Silva, Hassan, Sarah & Shaffril, 2010). One of the reasons for this is that individuals living far away from home are looking for a way to preserve their relationships and culture through ICTs. However, lack of infrastructure and costs have a negative impact on migrants' ability to communicate with friends and family in their home country (Ball-Rokeach & Wilkin, 2009).

According to Gillwald, Milek & Stork (2011), social inclusion is one of the major needs of humans in general; the fact that migrants live in foreign areas, separated from their families, accentuates this need. However, the use of ICTs such as telephones can break the isolation that some of the migrants experience. Loneliness is common amongst migrants, especially during the first few years of settling into the city. Cultural differences and possible language barriers play a role in creating divisions between people, and thus force migrants to seek to communicate more with people in their home country than in their local area (Kim, LaRose & Peng, 2009).

Another issue facing migrants is that, even though the bulk of them have the opportunity to meet new people in their workplaces or in social gatherings, they often do not regard their workmates and local friends as true friends (Butler & McDevitt, 2009). As far as they are concerned, their true friends and family are those they left in their home countries, hence the need to keep in touch with them regularly. Social exclusion may lead to depression in some migrants (Kim et al, 2009).

When migrants become depressed, they seek ways to regain their psychological wellbeing. They may, in an attempt to get relief from their problems, develop a compulsive and uncontrollable use of the internet. This compulsion may then lead them into further social exclusion as they begin to withdraw from real life social activities (Ball-Rokeach & Wilkin, 2009).

Migrants and ICT Use.

Although there is a relative dearth of research on the use of long distance migrants and their use of ICTs for communicating with their home, especially from a within-Africa perspective, there is a significant and growing body of research around migrants and ICT use. Perhaps the most comprehensive study was done by the United Nations (Hamel, 2009) which gave an overview of how ICTs affect all aspects of migration: from finding information prior to migration to eventually achieving integration and/or retaining a proud cultural identity in the destination country.

Most research indeed looks at the use of ICTs by migrants within the country they have moved to, typically inspired by the question on how well these (often permanent) migrants can integrate themselves socially in their new country. A detailed review on the information practices of immigrants, from a North American perspective, can be found in (Caidi, Allard & Quirke, 2010) who explored the “living experiences” and information practices of (permanent) immigrants in their new country. Their emphasis was on social inclusion i.e. ‘immigrant settlement’. Like many similar studies, the paper is actually situated in the information sciences and media studies; thus ICTs are merely seen as one of the technological aspects of their information practices and mobile technologies are not even mentioned.

Similarly a New Zealand study found that ICTs are indeed tools fairly eagerly embraced by migrants to facilitate their integration into their new country, although cultural barriers remained as an issue (Holmes & Janson, 2008). This study focussed, however, only on email but employed a research strategy similar to the current study (interviews with 28 diverse migrants). An even older New Zealand study found that immigrants from developing countries are generally eager to adopt PC-based ICTs, especially to use the Internet to communicate with their relatives and friends back home, but some (especially older) immigrants lack the knowledge, skills and support to fully utilize them (Kabbar & Crump, 2005).

A particularly comprehensive body of research on ICT use by immigrants exists in the EU. The European Union has recognised the potential and use of ICTs to integrate immigrants in society and, along with national governments, funded numerous initiatives and research projects in this space. An excellent overview and links to about one hundred detailed studies and projects in the twenty-seven member states of the EU can be found in (Kluzer, Haché & Codagnone, 2008; Kluzer & Haché, 2009). Space does not allow full discussion but the emphasis is on local integration, not the use of ICTs to communicate with the originating home land of the immigrants. Overall, it appears that these initiatives are fairly successful and the uptake of ICTs by international immigrants in the EU is often equivalent to that of the local population.

However, the potential of ICTs to connect migrants from developing countries with their relatives and friends from their home country has been realised and researched in both the USA and Europe. The USA research typically focusses on migrants from Mexico. For instance, the use and potential of international call forwarding (by means of virtual telephone numbers), video conferencing, dedicated hometown websites for migrants and social networking technologies was described in (González, Castro & Rodríguez, 2009; González & Castro, 2007) although this was not supported by empirical qualitative data. The role of diaspora websites to maintain cultural identity remains a constant thread throughout most of the above research. These become very important in cases where large scale migration has occurred, e.g. as in the case of Eritrea (Bernal, 2006).

An excellent qualitative analysis on the communication patterns and mechanisms of 'transnational families' that covered Australian immigrants with parents in mainly developed countries namely Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Iran, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand (Wilding, 2006). Even though this study covers more privileged migrants in developed countries, it did find that economic, social and cultural contexts drive differences in technology use. This is a strong motivation for our choice of theoretical framework which includes these (and other) resources.

A Singaporean study of twenty Indian and Filipino live-in maids (Thomas & Lim, 2009) showed that they used a mix of communication tools to communicate with their home friends and family, including letters and the internet, but the mobile phone was their most crucial and preferred communications device. This confirms similar findings for Chinese immigrants who find the mobile phone indispensable for communicating with their original home (Qiu, 2008).

Studies focussing on ICT use by migrants within Africa is very sparse. An interesting study looked at ICT use of Ghanaian diaspora in London (Burrell & Anderson, 2008). This sociological study took an ethnographic approach and found that one of the two 'trajectories' of their ICT use was to preserve their cultural continuity and keep contact with home. (The other 'trajectory' was forward looking by using the internet for exploring future opportunities.) Although this study gives a very rich and compelling insight into the social aspects of media use, it had a very different objective and, for our purposes, was limited because it concentrated on a single African country of origin, did not really focus on communication technologies and lacked an overarching theoretical analysis framework. Similar sociological studies, but now rather dated from an ICT perspective, exist for the Hindu diaspora and electronic bulletin boards as a medium for maintaining a cultural identity (Rai, 1995), and the use of more generic but older Internet technologies by the Chinese diaspora (Yang, 2003).

Schapendonk & Moppes (2007), focussing mainly on Moroccan and Senegalese migrants, looked at how ICTs enable migration by allowing potential African migrants to use ICTs to obtain information about, and sometimes secure work opportunities – often by contacting diaspora abroad. Note that this can also work in reverse as evidenced by the online network MIRAU ("Mouvement international pour la renaissance d'une Afrique unie" – International movement for the renaissance of an African union) which was set up privately to mobilize and enlist African diaspora to

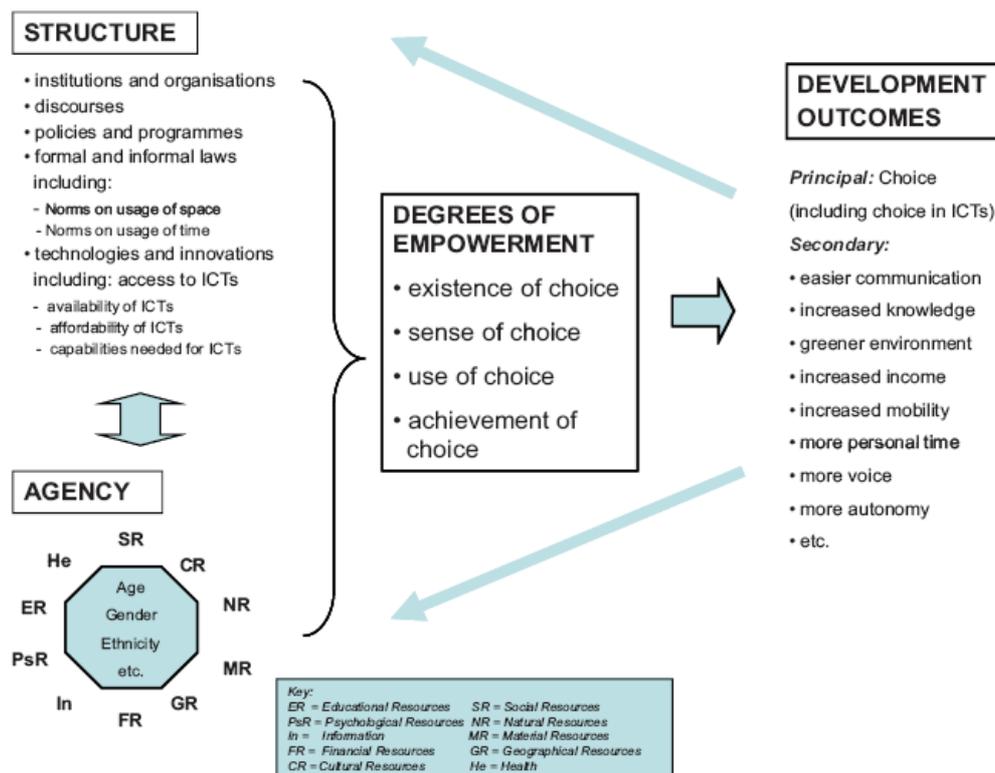
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engage with democratization issues back in Africa. Interestingly, Schapendonk & Moppes' (2007) study also emphasised the importance of ICTs in oftentimes smaller migration transfer points, such as Gao (Mali) or Agadez (Niger) to provide communication and financial services to migrants en route.

The Choice Framework

Instead of limiting the potential of ICT by measuring its contribution in economic or financial terms only, this research seeks to adopt a more holistic view. Therefore, the term "development" is the individual freedom that ICT brings. Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (Sen, 1993, 1999) represents one approach that stresses the importance of reaching a point where individuals are able to decide for themselves what they value, and therefore allows people to map out how they will get to the point where their values and needs are met (Andersson et al., 2012). The Choice Framework (Figure 1) is based in part on Sen's Capability Approach and it provides a means to assess the contribution of ICTs in a holistic manner. It describes what "development" should mean in terms of ICTs, and it states that the primary development that an ICT should provide is choice itself, i.e. having the access, attainability and freedom to choose which ICT to use without any external barriers (Kleine, 2010).

Figure 1. The Choice Framework (Source: Kleine, 2010)



A second aspect is that people should have the sense of choice wherein they believe they can access any technology they need at the time they need it. This secondary

development is the ability to live their lives in the way they value most through the ICTs at their disposal. One of the things that migrants value is easier and time saving communication (Kleine, 2010). Especially since they do not see their friends and family often, migrants look for ways to compensate for the lack of face to face conversations they would be having with their loved ones had they been living in the same geographical area. Therefore, they need a communication technology that give them voice, autonomy and other factors depending on the purpose of communication (Ball-Rokeach & Wilkin, 2009).

In order to achieve the development outcomes, the Choice Framework considers the interplay between two concepts, namely the structure and agency that influence the degree of empowerment and development an individual gets from the use of ICTs.

Agency

Every individual possesses at least one set of resources but these are influenced by factors such as the age, ethnicity and gender. These determine whether a person has the ability to access information technology directly or indirectly. Table 1 lists the different resources one can have; these are to a large extent based on Sen's Capability Approach.

Table 1. Agency resources (Kleine, 2010).

Resource	Description
He- Health	This is the physical and mental wellbeing of a person.
CR- Cultural Resources	These are the norms and beliefs of the society to which one belongs
SR- Social Resources	The social network of a person whereby an individual benefits from the network of relationships he or she forms
NR-Natural Resource	Resources that are provided by nature
MR- Material Resources	The tangible possessions one has.
GR- Geographical Resources	The implications of where an individual stays.
In- Information	Access to information so that they can develop themselves
PsR- Psychological Resources	These are character attributes such as self-confidence.
ER- Educational Resources	This is the academic background of a person.
FR- Financial Resources	The availability of money or valuable assets that one has

Structure

There are certain restrictions in every place that come in the form of laws, policies, processes or even cultural beliefs that govern the way people act (Kleine, 2010). Although migrants are initially governed by norms in their home land, they find

themselves abiding by the laws of the new place they have migrated to. These restrictions may not be formal or clearly stated but they have an impact on the way people use and when they use ICTs (Musa, 2006).

The structure in which an individual lives plays an important role in their lives. Kleine (2010) states that both structure and agency bring the possibility of someone using a certain ICT over another. The fact that every area has a different structure and agency that is unique to an individual makes ICT usage and access differ depending on geographical location. In these structures, there are both formal and informal laws that govern the behaviours of people. Most of the structures within the environment in which migrants in Cape Town find themselves can be seen as a given for this study. These are therefore discussed below.

ICT access and usage in Africa

The United Nations' Millennium Development Goal Report states that 11% of the African population in developing countries and 1% in the least developing countries were using the internet in 2006 as opposed to 58% using the internet in developed countries (Gamboa & Gutierrez, 2010). Even in the developing countries, there is evidence of a digital divide between low income and high income earners, between males and females, and between those with low and high levels of education (Pavloskaya, 2012). A digital divide is as a gap between individuals, households, businesses and geographic areas of different socioeconomic levels with regard to their opportunities to access information and communication technologies and to their use of ICTs (Brown & Czerniewicz, 2010).

Factors affecting the use of ICTs

A household and individual access and usage survey conducted across 17 countries in Africa in the period of 2007 and 2008 found that men seem to have greater access to ICTs than women (Gomez & Pather, 2010). However, in South Africa, more women owned mobile phones than men. Contrary to the findings of most studies, in Cameroon, women seemed to have more knowledge about the internet than men did. More so, women with a similar education level, income bracket and employment have comparable ICT usage (Gillwald, Milek & Stork, 2011). For men, it seemed that even though they had similar employment, income and education level, their usage patterns were less influenced by such factors. Another study, carried out on people at a college, confirmed that there is a positive relationship between the level of education and the use of the internet (Heeks, 2010). Although a gender gap was common in most studies, Columbia did not have this divide. This suggests that there may be other places gender does not influence the ICT usage but rather other factors such as income (Brown & Czerniewicz, 2010).

According to Gamboa & Gutierrez (2010), low-income earners have more restricted use of ICTs. A study done in Colombia, Mexico and Peru showed that most poor people actually had mobile phones but their usage was restricted to the amount of money they had at that moment. Even when they made phone calls, these were usually necessary calls and they tried to keep the conversation short to minimise

costs (Brown & Czerniewicz, 2010). These patterns may be similar to the usage patterns of migrants living in Cape Town even though the poor people studied in that research were not migrants.

Apart from gender and income, other factors may affect the usage of ICTs. For instance, one study found a positive correlation between the frequency of ICT usage and the degree of familiarity with ICT (Gamboa & Gutierrez, 2010). Therefore, the conclusion of this study suggested that as people became more familiar with a particular ICT, they began to use it more frequently.

Research methodology

This study seeks to explore the needs of migrants through the collection of qualitative data in order to understand better what they expect from communication technologies. This study aims to bring new themes and ideas to the body of knowledge about the communication needs and ICT usage of migrants. The specific research objectives are the following.

- Identify ICTs used by migrants living in Cape Town
- Investigate and explain the uses of the named ICTs
- Identify factors influencing the choice of ICTs used to communicate

One of the objectives of this research was to explain the needs and usage, which is the “why migrants use certain ICTs” as opposed to the “what they use” aspect of the topic more typically covered in quantitative approaches. In order to get such qualitative information, interviews were conducted and the interview with semi structured questions was the main research instrument and the unit of analysis was individual persons, migrants in particular. The average time spent interviewing a single person was 22 minutes. Some of the interviews were held while the individual was on the job for example in the case of parking attendants. Due to the randomness of the sampling, some interviews took place in places like the bus or in parks.

A purposive sample of migrants living in Cape Town with low income constituted the sample for the research. Low income in this research was defined as a gross salary of R6000 or less per month (US\$1 ≈ R10 as of August 2013). However, 2 migrants who earned a gross monthly salary of more than R6000 were also interviewed to see if there would be any difference in the needs and ICT usage. 20 migrants were interviewed in total and all the responses were usable. Of the 20 interviewees, 9 were between 20 and 30 years of age while 11 were between 31 and 40 years. Nine of the twenty interviewees were female. The countries represented were Tanzania (2 interviewees), Democratic Republic of Congo (6), Zimbabwe (4), Botswana (2), Malawi (3), Nigeria (2) and Kenya (1). Although the sample size may appear small, this is actually in line with similar published empirical academic studies that have sample sizes ranging from 17 (Burrell & Anderson, 2008), 20 (Thomas & Lin, 2009) to 28 participants (Holmes & Janson, 2008).

Semi-structured interviews were held with the initial questions based on the research objectives. Most questions were guided and others open-ended to give interviewees a platform to air out unique thoughts and suggestions. The appendix details the research questions and maps them to the research objectives. The protocol was piloted, mainly to ensure that the language was clear, and some minor changes were made both to the actual questions as well as the phrasing.

Although some questions were open-ended, the interviewer asked follow-up questions which were not necessarily part of the structured protocol. Comments were added to the structured questions and unclear answers were clarified with the interviewee. Further engagement in the interview came with asking the interviewees seemingly unrelated questions to the study to get an overall picture of the context of the individual. This was done usually before or after the study. Character traits of interviewees were also considered to contextualise responses. Observation of gestures, the tone and mood change was used to validate or emphasise the responses.

The interviews were transcribed (along with the observations made by the interviewer) and analysed using a thematic approach with the coding as suggested by the Choice Framework (Kleine, 2010) as derived from Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (1993, 1999). There was a continuous analysis of data collected from the interviews so as to identify reoccurring themes. Relationships between themes were mapped so as to explain certain behaviors and choices. Although interesting results came up, there appeared to be no need for additional codes or extending the framework. Conversely, not all themes from the framework emerged in the data.

The themes were grouped according to which category of the Choice Framework they belonged to. The analysis is therefore discussed using the headings of the Choice Framework. Note that the interview questions themselves were *not* based on, or directly aligned with, the Choice Framework.

It must be noted that the sample used in this research may be biased towards the more approachable and thus possibly extrovert migrants. Also, male interviewees appeared to give more clarification and comments than female interviewees. Therefore, evidence given in the themes may be biased towards the male migrants' perception.

Results and implications

The results below are discussed according to the categories put forward by the Choice Framework (Kleine, 2010). The discussion of the results first describes the nature of the migrant's social communication and their choice of ICT. The main emphasis of the research is on how the available resources (4.3) of the migrants influence their choices (4.1) in order to achieve desired outcomes (4.4), but the role of structure (4.2) is also briefly indicated.

Choice of ICT and Nature of Social Communication

To measure ICT use, three important groups of people needing to be contacted were singled out, namely parents, siblings and friends. We consciously selected only social contacts and these particular groups, in the belief that these are most common and most comparable between individuals. For instance, business or government communications are constrained by other and often very specific requirements, such as the nature of the contact e.g. the need to send a facsimile or other document.

Sixteen migrants said they communicated with their parents; of these, 14 used the land line, pay phone or cell phone to communicate with their parents, 1 used a Social Network Service (Facebook), 2 used emails and 2 used the chat (Blackberry Messenger). No other possible communication channels/options were indicated for parent communication; the other options were: PC-based chat (e.g. Skype), Short Messaging Service (SMS), postal mail (e.g. letter) and micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter). Out of the 16 that communicate with their parents, 10 said they spoke to them once a month, 3 said once a week and the remaining 3 said every day. Their reasons for communicating varied.

"...I wanted to know where my village is and where I come from, it was a long call, long stories..."[2]

Many were to discuss family issues [3] and illness:

"...I send call me backs...she is ill so I wanted to know how she was. The call was about 10 minutes..."[6].

He added on that his mother had passed away and his mother's sister was the mother figure in his life and that she was old so he could not use complicated ICTs to communicate with her. This was echoed by interviewee 13 who said that he used the phone because *"...that's the technology they use..."*. Interviewee 9 said that *"...they have access to email..."*; therefore, he used both his phone and email to communicate with his parents. When asked what the purpose of the last phone call to his mother was, he said *"...to hear how she was..."* and for the father he said *"...to check on travel..."*. Interviewee 1 said that he used the phone because *"...they want to hear my voice..."* The last time he spoke to his parents *"...he wanted to give an update on life this side..."*.

Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, the communication channels used to communicate with *siblings* are more diverse than those used for communicating with parents: most (11) use the phone to communicate with siblings but Facebook and chat (4 responses each) are also used, as well as email (2) or Skype (1). The nature of the conversations ranged from the pragmatic to the social:

"...investment prospects..." [11]; "...casual , just checking up..." [12] "...social, business..." [13] "...talking about life in general, updating each other..."[19] "...sickness in the family..." [5] "...everything about her life..." [15]

The channels chosen to communicate with *friends* were even more diverse: three interviewees communicate with their friends daily, 6 on a weekly basis and 2 only once a month. The nature of the communication was very much similar to that as with siblings:

“we talk about a lot of things, life, family, more than hi...” [2]; “...social, business...”[13]; “...saying good morning [to my girlfriend]...” [17].

However, interviewee 8, who used an email to communicate with an old friend she had last seen when she ran away from the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, said *“...I was asking her [if/when] she saw my family...”*

Structure

Most of the structures which influences ICT choice are common to all interviewees since they are situated in the environment context. These have been discussed in sections 2.4 and 2.5 above and, where relevant, their influences or interplay are infused in the remainder of the discussion. Here we lift one relevant aspect out which played a significant role, namely their institutional context.

Institutions and organisations

All individuals interviewed were working at the time, and 7 out of 15 were exposed to one or more forms of ICTs at work. Of all the ICTs that these individuals were exposed to, most of them chose to use chats and indicated that they communicated with friends they had not seen in a long time who stayed in distant countries such as the United Kingdom.

“I chat with my friends almost every day on Facebook. I’m always on the internet because of my job” [3].

The above respondent is an internet assistant and she communicates with her friends in distant countries merely because the ICTs are available to her.

“...I email my mum and dad from time to time. Sometime I send those forwards that will be circulating in the office. I don’t talk about important issues in the email though; maybe the most important things that I send are proof of payments etc. ...” [9]

From the responses above, it seems that the organisations that each of them worked for provided a platform to communicate with friends and family. This depended on the culture and the rules of ICT usage. Availability of the ICTs prompted the need to communicate and, if the ICT was not at their disposal, they would otherwise not have communicated with the people specified. This may explain the nature of information that migrants shared with the people they were communicating with.

Agency

Educational resources

There appeared to be a relationship between the level of education and the knowledge of available ICTs as all 11 interviewees with a tertiary qualification knew more than 7 out of the 10 ICTs listed. However, it is important to note that even the participants with lower levels of education such as high school knew the available ICTs very well. A possible explanation is that most people have social networks that provide them with resources such as information and materials, i.e. make use of their social capital. Even if an individual has not been exposed to certain ICTs, there is a high chance that someone they know may tell them about or may actually own the ICT (Kadushin, 2012, p. 162).

Financial resources

Not surprisingly, the issue of financial constraint came up in every interview. Most interviewees mentioned that their low incomes had much to do with their need for cheap communication needs. This was validated by the low levels of income that migrants said they earned:

"I don't earn a lot of money..." [3]

"...I earn less than enough..." [6];

"...It's not every time that I do someone's hair so there really no guarantee of income..." [20].

Note that 14 out of 20 interviewees had informal jobs that were characterised by flexible working hours and shifts; 6 held only a formal job and two combined formal and informal employment. 18 of the 20 interviewees earned a salary of (South African) R6000 or less per month with half (nine) of those earning less than R3000.

Most participants mentioned that one of the reasons for choosing a particular ICT was its cost. All participants said they owned a mobile phone but it was expensive to contact their friends and family in other countries with it:

"Most of the time I use BBM to talk to everyone including my parents because it's cheap. If you're not on BBM or WhatsApp, it's rare for me to talk to you"[12]; "I have a mobile phone but I don't call my family and friends with it because it's expensive. I just beep my family and they know who it is and they call back" [5].

BBM refers to the instant messenger of RIM's BlackBerry phone which is popular in South Africa due to the fact that it offers unlimited data use is included (other cell phones bill data usage separately); WhatsApp is a free SMS application which allows smartphones to send SMSs at the cost of internet data (typically less than R0.01) instead of the service providers' SMS charge (typically between R0.50 and R0.80). In fact, the same interviewee, from DRC, indicated that it was much cheaper for people in the DRC to communicate with him, especially when using mobile or fixed phones.

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Following a question of why it was a priority for an ICT to be cost effective, one respondent mentioned:

“... I am kinda obligated to send money home because my parents are old and I'm the first born son. Even though I have no wife and kids, I have my Zimbabwean family to take care of, so I cut down on all the unnecessary costs...”
[13]

In summary, it was clear that the reasons for choosing a particular means of communication was driven by the amount of money interviewees were able to spend and this was greatly influenced by their relatively small amount of disposable income they were left with.

Cultural resources

The responses below showed that the purpose of communication and who they were contacting determined the ICT used in most cases.

“The last time I spoke to my in-laws was last Sunday evening. I used my phone and I wanted to share my condolences, I couldn't just send a text.” [9]

He added that this conversation was lengthy mainly because he could not be there for his in-laws and so phoning them was the least he could do. He indicated that it was a lengthy conversation and he made the phone call in the evening.

Interviewee 5 said that he did not use Facebook because *“...my wife doesn't allow me...”* He added that he would expect his wife not to use Facebook because he would get jealous. His other reason was *“... new things, I'm not too familiar. I'll probably break the phone.”*

According to Kleine (2010), cultural norms and beliefs play a role in the way people relate to each other. Kadushin (2012, p. 66) also agrees with this notion and this is explained by the differences in ranks within cultures. There are certain acceptable ways to relate with certain people in the society ones comes from. In this case, interviewee 9 expresses that he was expected to attend the funeral and because he had not made it, he had to phone them. He felt a text would not be respectful enough, bearing in mind that he was contacting his in-laws. The type of relationship that he would have with them is one of a kinship nature where there is a certain levels of respect expected from him as a son in-law.

Psychological resources

Some participants, particularly from DRC and Malawi, were not comfortable with using some of the ICTs such as the internet. This was regardless of age. It seemed they lacked exposure and as such lacked confidence in using them. Observation of the interviewees' first reaction to the question of why they did not use certain ICTs, such as VOIP, gave the indication that they did not have the confidence to try the ICT.

Moreover, there was a communication barrier caused by the language difference between non-English speaking and English speaking migrants. For instance, the French speakers, mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo, found it difficult to get information such as how to operate certain ICTs because they could not speak English well: interviewee 8, from the DRC, said that a friend would often have to explain or translate the questions for them to understand what was being asked and another interviewee from the DRC said:

“...I’ve never used it before, if I get someone to teach me how to use it maybe I’ll use it, I don’t know...”. [4]

Migrants were less willing to use ICTs that were less popular even though they knew them. However, they were less likely to use an ICT they were not familiar with.

Social resources

Three-quarters of the interviewees said they had made close local friends and, of these, one-third (5) said they owned all of the ICTs they used to communicate with their friends and family. Only one of the five interviewees that had not made any close local friends, owned all of the ICTs he used to communicate (Table 2).

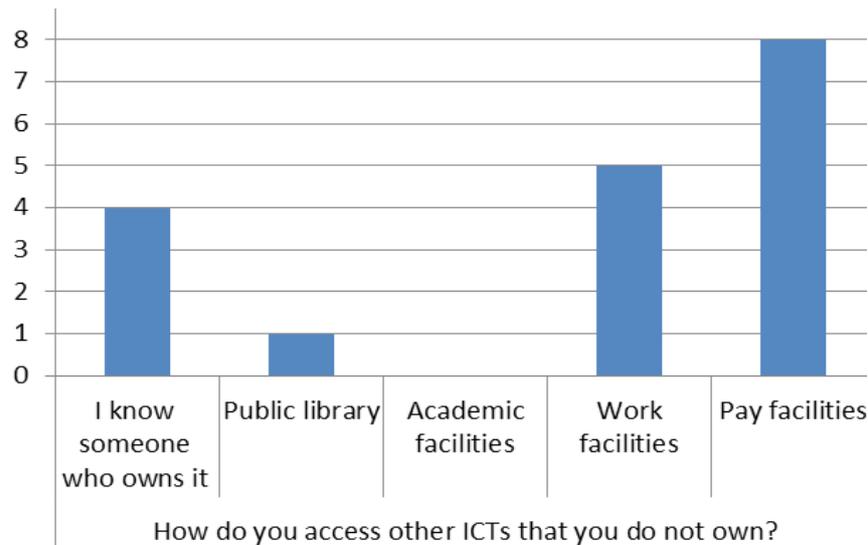
Table 2: Link between social resources and ICT ownership.

Do you own the ICTs you use?	Have you made any local close friends?	
	Yes	No
Yes, all of them	5	1
Only some of them	10	4

Three interviewees who had made local friend lightened up when they were asked the question which gave the researchers the impression that they were happy to have made these friends.

Figure 3 illustrates the different ways in which migrants accessed ICTs in the case that they did not own all of the ICTs they used.

Figure 2: Access to ICTs



In the context of migrants having social resources that enabled them to access ICTs, the responses illustrated in the chart above show that a surprising 16 out of 20 migrants did *not* actually use their social resources to access ICTs. However, there were a few cases where an individual said they accessed ICTs at more than one place. Although 15 migrants said they had made close local friends, only 4 migrants said they used ICTs from people they knew such as friends as illustrated above. This suggested that this sample of migrants did not rely on their networks to access ICTs. In fact, most of them paid for the ICTs they used in places like the internet cafes.

Social exclusion

Five interviewees said they had not made any close local friends i.e. Xhosa, Zulu, Afrikaans. Although most of them admitted that they spent a lot of time with the local people especially at work and other social gatherings, they did not regard their relationships with them as important as the relationships they had with people that came from the same country as them or that were merely migrants, as themselves.

Some of the reasons why interviewees said they did not make any close local friends surfaced in further engagement with interviewees; the comments that were made are stated and explained below. There seemed to be very little trust established between the migrants and the local people. The issue of the local people being xenophobic was one of the main reasons for the lack of trust.

"No, I don't have local friends who can lend me their internet and stuff.[7]

When this interviewee was asked why he had not made any close local friends, he indicated that he had been afraid to make local friends since the 2008 xenophobic attacks (Igglesden, 2008).

"...we used to live in Khayelitsha and that was the time when the xenophobic attacks started. We were so scared that we moved immediately. Now I make sure I live in safe areas and I hardly make friends with them, just in case there's another xenophobic attack. You never know who your friend is..."[16]

While fear was the main source of social exclusion, some interviewees felt safe and they had made a lot of close South African friends.

“...Yah I’ve made a lot of local friends. I actually have a coloured friend but I’m closer to my Xhosa friend. I don’t have a problem making friends with them. Most of my friends are Congolese. I talk a lot and I just talk to everyone...”[5].

However, this migrant had the psychological resources to build relationships; for instance, he said he was an extrovert and he spoke fluent English even though his home language is French.

Development outcomes

Aslop and Heinsohn (2005) see choice as the primary and principal form of development that people should have. Secondary to choice, individuals can choose what development outcomes they value, depending on the kind of lives they want to lead. The development outcomes can also be interpreted as the needs. The following emerged as the main development outcomes that migrants valued.

Choice

Sen’s theory explains that a person should have the sense that they have the freedom to choose whichever ICT they want to use and not be prohibited by either formal or informal norms (Kleine, 2010). Interviewees could only access ICTs within the business hours of facilities such as internet cafés and public libraries. In the case of the internet café assistant and other interviewees who had internet at work, the norms on the usage of time governed their usage patterns as they could only use the internet after they had attended to customer needs.

Efficacy

Interviewees highlighted that they used mobile phones or fixed phones regardless of their high cost because they wanted to hear the voice of the person they were contacting. It is also important to note the people contacted using a phone were mostly close family members, in most cases parents, spouse or children. According to Kadushin (2004, p. 22) kinship relationships have expected obligations and this is reflected in the some of the responses:

Interviewee 1 said he has a son who stays with his parents in Tanzania. He is obligated to phone home often and find out how the child is and what he needs:

“...I called my parents yesterday because I wanted to find out how my child is, they are the ones that live with him. Also, school is about to open so I wanted to know what he needed for school...” [1]

The social presence element is very important in the choice of ICT medium. Interviewee 11 chose a phone because *“...they want to hear my voice...”*. Although interviewee 16 used WhatsApp, voice remains important:

“... I’m happy when I use it because I can hear the person talk through voice clips, they can send pictures and videos...” [16]

Interviewee 2, who used Skype for contacting his family said

“...they have the facility and access, they also like to see me and say oh I’ve got white hair already...” [2]

The value that an ICT gave played a significant part in determining the choice of ICT used to communicate. In the responses above, there is evidence of migrants valuing hearing the voice of the person they were talking to. They also valued viewing pictures, videos and clips as they got the full picture of how people were in their home country.

Quickness

The element of ease of use and quickness consistently came up in responses.

“...I find calling my parents really efficient. If I use something else like email, I don’t know when they will read their emails so I’d rather call...” [18];

“...it’s quick and efficient...”[10];

“...The thing is I have to help my parents with some things. So when I call home, I ask them what they need from me and if I can help with anything... [16]

Here, the need for timely feedback determined the choice of ICT used i.e. (cell)phone.

Convenience

It was also apparent that one of the important aspects of an ICT was its availability: they simply did not have the resources, such as time, to look for ICTs that were not readily available to them. Even though making phone calls from a cellular phone proved to be very expensive for most interviewees, they resorted to using their cellular phones mainly because they were convenient.

“...I speak to my mum every day, she’s my best friend, I think. I call her almost every day. I last spoke to her in the morning; I just wanted to say morning to her...” [18]

“...it’s convenient for me to call because I get to talk to the whole family...”[20]

“...easily accessible, it’s easy for me to call in the house...”[2]

Cost

Cost emerged as both a need and a determining factor of choice of ICT. Respondents said they valued low cost ICTs more mainly because they had less to spend on communication. Some [19; 3] used a landline to contact their parents:

“... especially with the landline and the rates are cheaper as well...” [19].

But the use of chats such as WhatsApp and BBM reduced the cost of communication significantly: Interviewee 10 used Blackberry messenger because “... *it’s cost effective...*”; others used WhatsApp:

“... it’s efficient, cost effective, readily available in Zimbabwe...”[13]

“...there’s WhatsApp, it’s cheaper...”[3]

Some use a combination of WhatsApp and BBM [12] or Facebook [11]. However, although their income was low and they had less disposable money, they sacrificed to buy smart phones because they would be cheaper for them in the long run.

Conclusion

This research set out to investigate the communication needs and ICT usage of migrants in Cape Town, South Africa. The following summarizes our findings to our four key questions based on the data gathered from a relatively small but diverse sample of twenty international migrants living in Cape Town.

What do migrants living in Cape Town use to communicate with their friends and family living in their home country? Migrants living in Cape Town use mobile phones, fixed phones, emails, social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, Skype and online chat services such as Blackberry Messenger and WhatsApp. A large number of migrants use their phones and these include mobile phones and fixed telephones. However, ICTs used differed according to the person being contacted. When communicating with parents, there was less variety on the ICTs used as opposed to when they were communicating with siblings and friends. Less expensive ICTs such as chat platforms were used to communicate with siblings and friends.

For what purpose do they use the different ICTs? Mobile phones or fixed phones were used for more important or sensitive conversations. ICTs such as the internet i.e. Facebook, Twitter, BBM, WhatsApp were used for more general conversations such as checking up on people.

What are the ICT needs of migrants? Migrants need convenient ICTs which are easily accessible and readily available. More so, they need to be cost effective for them to a point where they can relay important messages in a manner acceptable in their cultures. Most important conversations required timely feedback from friends and family in the home countries; therefore, migrants need ICTs that provide speedy responses from the person contacted. Additionally, migrants have a need for virtual intimacy provided in form of pictures, videos, and voice while communicating.

What are the factors that influence the choice of ICTs used? In particular, as suggested by the Choice Framework, do structure, agency and the development outcome influence the choice of ICT? Education had no effect on the number of ICTs a migrant knew or the ICTs they used. The structure and resources migrants

possessed limited them to certain ICTs which proved to be expensive. The purpose of communication and the person being contacted influenced the choice of ICT used in many cases.

It is hoped that this research will provide the basis for more systematic research in this under-researched area. The voices of these marginalized communities often hint at distressing situations of family and friends left behind in war-torn home countries mixed with fears from xenophobia in their host countries; and ICTs can help with some of these situations. Larger sampling frames and research in other host countries might allow for broader generalisations to be made and, perhaps, salient patterns to be uncovered.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol Used

The interview questions and how they map to our research objectives are listed below.

Research objectives	Interview questions to achieve research objectives
Identify ICTs used by migrants living in Cape Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Name 5 important people in your that are living outside of South Africa ii. Which ICT did you use to contact these people? iii. List 3 other communication technologies you use to communicate with people outside South Africa other than the ones listed above.
Investigate and explain the uses of ICTs named	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. List the 5 most important people in your life ii. How often do you communicate with each of the 5? iii. Which communication technology do you use to communicate with each of them iv. If possible, specify the purpose of communication for the last contact you made with each of them
Identify factors influencing the choice of ICT used to communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Give reasons why you choose the technologies you listed above ii. What ICT do you use to contact other people besides the ones mentioned above iii. Do you own the communication technologies you use? iv. If not all, how do you access them? v. What is your home country vi. When did you migrate to South Africa (Cape Town)? vii. Did your family relocate with you to Cape Town? viii. How many of your family members/friends live in Cape Town ix. Which of these factors affect the people you communicate with?
Interpret communication needs of migrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Have you made any close local friends? ii. Is there a communication technology that you prefer using? If yes, why? iii. Please give a brief explanation why you do not use the technology indicated above?
To investigate how migrants send money and goods to people in their home country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Do you send money/goods to people in your home country? If yes, how? ii. What are the costs of sending money/goods? iii. What are the risks of sending money/goods?