

# How Rough Sleeping Youth Use Their Cell Phones

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the experiences of eight youth and the ways they use their cell phone while living on Christchurch's streets. While there have been a number of studies conducted into homelessness generally, the interactions of street youths and their use of the cell phone in life on the streets, has been largely unexplored. With the widespread use of the cell phone within society, particularly amongst the youth population, this raises compelling questions about the extent of street youths' engagement with the technology, given their limited resources.

Although a number of theories were utilised within this thesis, the communicative function of the cell phone presents an opportunity for fostering social capital—in particular, bridging capital, which can assist in advancement beyond the streets through connections with socially dissimilar individuals. Through the use of in-depth interviews, this study found that the youths relied on bonding social capital with others living on the street and did not utilise bridging capital via the cell phone heavily. This is suggested as being due to a lack of trust of those outside the street fraternity. However, the youths did use their cell phones in other empowering ways including using the device to reaffirm their sense of self and belonging. Music stored on their cell phones, emerged as particularly important to streeties, in terms of both creating private spaces and as a site for self-expression.

## Preface

During the course of this thesis, I had the immense pleasure and privilege of interviewing eight young people who were sleeping rough in various locations around Christchurch. Aside from gaining insights into their unique experiences with the cell phone during their lives on the street, I also gleaned a glimpse of the hardships they endured, and the resilience with which they faced these challenges. They were also incredibly supportive and excited about being part of this project. When they saw me around central Christchurch, they would say hello and express their keenness to read the thesis when it was written.

Two months after the interviews, I learned that my youngest research participant, Charlie, had passed away in a house fire at just sixteen years of age. After careful consideration with my supervisors, as well as consulting Charlie's close friends who were also interviewed, I decided to retain his reflections and include them in this thesis. Apart from reaching a full and informed decision to participate in this project, those that knew and loved him agreed that Charlie would want his insights included. As you will read later on in this thesis, Charlie leaves us a lesson in trust and resilience; a lesson which he learned despite his age, his hardship and his tragically brief time on this earth.

## Introduction

Homelessness is an important issue facing society. Beyond merely being without shelter, there are a number of other serious implications for those who are homeless. This includes an increased risk of being victim to sexual and physical violence, poor health outcomes, higher rates of suicide ideation in proportion to the general population, as well as substance abuse and addiction issues (Boivin et al., 2005; Fitzpatrick et al., 2007; Kipke et al., 1993; Van Leeuwen et al., 2004). The dire nature of these implications associated with the condition of homelessness, demands that policy makers, researchers and health care providers alike, are called to action in attempting to alleviate some of their suffering.

Despite the need to ascertain and accumulate more knowledge on people who are homeless, there are currently very limited statistics available on the population in New Zealand. Aside, from the methodological challenges inherent in collecting data on such a population, there are a number of reasons as to why there is so little known on New Zealand's homeless. Firstly, Statistics New Zealand, has only recently (2009) established a definition of 'homelessness'. Defining 'homelessness' is a complex undertaking, but the existence of a definition, means researchers can now begin attempting to quantify and establish the scale of homelessness in New Zealand. Secondly, the February 2011 Canterbury earthquake meant the official Census scheduled for that year, was cancelled. Therefore, the most recent, official statistics available on homelessness found that in 2006, 5,031 people were found to be 'living without shelter' (Amore et al., 2013). Other studies commissioned privately, also indicate that ethnic minorities like Maori and Pasifika, are disproportionately represented amongst the

rough sleeping population (Al-Nasrallah et al., 2005; Ellis, 2007; Ellis and Carroll, 2005 and Gravitas, 2005). Until the official statistics on homelessness from the 2013 Census are released however, the full extent of homelessness in New Zealand remains unclear.

In the scholarship on homelessness in general, there have been a number of studies conducted into the homeless population and their experiences with information and communication technology, broadly. The majority of these studies have been conducted utilising quantitative methods. Furthermore, much of this research has been conceptualised in recognition of the potential for information and communication technologies to be utilised in low cost health interventions aimed mainly at improving safe sex behaviours and as a supplementary support in addiction therapy (Freedman et al., 2006; Puccio et al., 2006; Rice et al., 2010; Rice et al., 2011; Rice et al., 2012; Young, 2010). In regards to the comparatively limited pool of qualitative studies available on the subject of people who are homeless and their daily interactions with information and communication technologies, common themes emerging from such research were focused on the general utility of technology when facing challenges unique to street life, as well as the notion that technology provides space for digital inclusion, although they may be marginalised in other areas (Bure, 2006; Kim, et al., 2014; Le Dantec and Edwards, 2008; Roberson and Nardi, 2010). Surprisingly, given the near ubiquitous status of the cell phone in modern society, as yet, there has only been one qualitative study conducted to exclusively examine the experiences of people who are homeless and the unique ways they use their cell phones. In this study, Kim et al. (2014) investigated the general cell phone use of downtown San Diego's homeless community and the various challenges faced in owning a mobile while living on the streets.

In comparison, the New Zealand scholarship on homelessness has a wealth of quality research conducted using qualitative methods. A number of these studies conceptualise what it means to be homeless in relation to identity and notions of belonging (Groot et al., 2010; Groot et al., 2011; King, 2014; Marsh, 2006). Such qualitative studies not only provide rich, invaluable insights into the experiences of homeless people in New Zealand, but they provide space for the voices of people who are homeless to be heard on their own terms; a courtesy which is rarely afforded in the general public discourse on homelessness. Currently, however, there has not yet been research conducted in New Zealand to examine homeless people's interactions with technology. Also, the current body of literature on homelessness in New Zealand is largely focused on people who are homeless in the urban Auckland area. Similarly, much of the research on homelessness in New Zealand has focused on the experiences of adults in the street community, with youth perspectives as yet, largely uncanvassed.

The present study will attempt to address these gaps in the literature by seeking to examine how Christchurch's rough sleeping youth use their cell phones. The rationale for studying how street youth use their cell phones lies in the fact that the technology is prevalent in modern society, with the costs of adoption and upkeep of a basic mobile, being fairly inexpensive and therefore, accessible to a great number of people. Furthermore, the cell phone seems to be synonymous with the modern youth experience. Gaining insights into how these youth use their cell phones is valuable, not only in terms of general utility of the phone in life on the streets, and the interplay between notions of inclusion and exclusion, but in providing the opportunity for voices who are seldom heard, to narrate their own stories, in their own words, about how they navigate the myriad challenges in street life. The aim of this research therefore,

is not to draw conclusions about Christchurch's rough sleeping youth population. Instead, this thesis will endeavour to document closely, the lived experiences imparted by these youth in their interactions with the cell phone in their life on the street.

Following this Introduction chapter, the thesis will be structured as detailed below:

Chapter two will provide context for this study by defining 'homelessness.' Although the intention of this thesis is not to quantify or apply labels to those who are homeless, a definition of homelessness is useful at providing context for the study as well as the literature on the subject generally. In addition to defining homelessness, the state of homelessness in New Zealand and an overview of the local scholarship conducted on the subject, will also be explored in this chapter.

With homelessness contextualised, chapter three will include an examination of a number of theories which are necessary in order to frame and understand the narratives to follow in later chapters.

Chapter four will provide detailed justification into the reasons why a qualitative approach employing in-depth interviews, was determined as the methodology of choice for this research project. This chapter will also include details specific to this study including the number of participants interviewed, ethical considerations which were carefully adhered to, and an explanation on the process of analysis of the interviews.

The Discussion Chapter is structured into three main sections which indicate three of the major themes which emerged during analysis. The first of these sections, 'The Cell Phone

and Social Capital in Street Life,' discusses the cell phone in relation to social capital theory. Specifically, this section will provide possible explanations as to why the youth interviewed seemed to favour bonding capital as opposed to bridging capital and the numerous benefits it could provide in life on the streets.

The second Discussion section, 'The Cell Phone and Identity: Creating Spaces for Shelter on the Street,' will explore the value of the cell phone in regards to identity, sense of self and notions of belonging. This section will propose that the cell phone provides private space for reflection, introspection and self-expression which is valuable when living a life which is conducted largely in public spheres.

The third Discussion section, 'Beat of the Street: Streeties and Music', will document the youths' unique experiences with the cell phone as a vehicle for music. This section will attempt to convey the importance of music to the youths interviewed. Similar to the argument in the preceding identity section, it will be suggested that by having music on their cell phones, the youths are able to craft private spaces of interiority; spaces to uplift them, and to take shelter in when the struggles of the street become unbearable.

The concluding chapter will provide a final overview of the findings produced by this thesis, and where they are situated in the wider scholarship on homelessness. This chapter will also provide suggestions for future researchers intending on conducting study in the area, as well as the wider implications of this research.

# Homelessness

## **'Homelessness': Finding a Definition**

Establishing a robust definition for 'homelessness' is not only extremely complex, but an area subject to much contention. As Amore et al. (2011: 20) aptly describe, reaching a sturdy definition of homelessness is a crucial step towards gathering further statistics on the population.

An early attempt to define homelessness can be found in the Stewart B. McKinney Act (1987, now renamed McKinney-Vento Act), which was designed by the United States Government in an attempt to better assist homeless families and children (Biggar, 2001: 943). The Act defines a homeless person as one who:

“Lacks a fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence and a person who has a primary night-time residence that is (1) a publicly or privately operated shelter for temporary accommodation (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), (2) an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or (3) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.” – Stewart B McKinney Act (1987).

While it is admirable of the United States government to attempt to define homelessness, this early definition is extremely lacking. The definition itself is far too narrow and only recognises an acute form of homelessness, for instance, those who are sleeping rough or staying in temporary accommodation (like a night shelter). This is concerning as there are varying states

of homelessness. By narrowing down the definition so tightly and exclusively, this further excludes and trivialises the plight of others who may be experiencing severe housing deprivation and who may also be in need of help. In addition, the Stewart B. McKinney Act (1987) seems to be loaded with negative inferences which are not helpful in a definition, especially when the purpose of the Act is to assist homeless families and children. As will be explored in the literature review to follow this chapter, such a definition is inconsistent with the theoretical base provided by social capital theory, in framing the issue of homelessness for this thesis, which is not limited to an absence of shelter in a merely physical sense.

Statistics New Zealand published their own definition of homelessness in 2009, 22 years after the Stewart B McKinney Act was first published in the United States. This definition is modelled after the European typology on homelessness and housing exclusion, otherwise known as 'ETHOS', but adapted to suit and reflect New Zealand's social landscape (Statistics New Zealand, 2009). Within the context of this thesis, this definition is useful as it is an acknowledgement that homelessness extends beyond the absence of physical shelter. The Statistics New Zealand definition (2009), like the ETHOS framework for understanding homelessness, recognises three main domains which are central precepts to understanding what consists of adequate housing situations. These three domains are the social domain, the legal domain and the physical domain (Statistics New Zealand, 2009). The social domain is defined as the ability to:

“...pursue normal social relations, have a personal (household) living space, maintain privacy and have safe accommodation.” (Statistics New Zealand, 2009: 4).

The legal domain refers to “having exclusive possession, security of occupation or tenure” of an abode (*Ibid*). Finally, the physical domain relates to the “structural aspect of housing and means having habitable housing” (*Ibid*). The absence of any of these three domains: social, legal or physical, indicates a degree of homelessness. Statistics New Zealand (2009) has organised these varying degrees of housing deprivation into four main categories of homelessness: ‘without shelter’, ‘temporary accommodation’, ‘sharing accommodation’ (not living with flat mates, rather “living situations that provide temporary accommodation”) and ‘uninhabitable housing’ (Statistics New Zealand, 2009). There are various exclusions to the categories, including students living in halls of residence, people living in ‘damp or leaky’ houses, as well as people moving in-between housing arrangements, to name a few (*Ibid*).

The category, ‘without shelter’ refers to people who are quite literally, without shelter in all domains- social, legal and physical (*Ibid*). They do not have access to a private and personal living space (*Ibid*). As well as this, they do not have exclusive and secure access to a residence in a legal sense, nor do they have access to habitable housing in a physical sense (*Ibid*). People who are sleeping rough would be classified under this category, as well as those who are living in make-shift shelters and cars (*Ibid*).

‘Temporary accommodation,’ similar to the category of ‘without shelter,’ refers to people who do not have exclusive and secure access to a residence in a legal sense (*Ibid*). However, they may (or may not) have access to personal living space and habitable housing (*Ibid*). Those staying at night shelters, motor-camps and transitional housing facilities for instance, would be classified under this category (*Ibid*).

‘Sharing accommodation’ refers to people who are in temporary living situations with others who are not considered homeless (*Ibid*). They may (or may not) have access to personal living space and, or privacy, but they do not have access to an abode with exclusive and secure access in a legal sense. Those sleeping on a couch at a friend’s house, for instance, would be classified under this category.

Finally, the category of ‘uninhabitable housing’ relates to people who do not have access to “habitable housing in the physical domain” (Statistics New Zealand, 2009: 5). For instance, this category could refer to those in Christchurch who are living in a home badly damaged by the earthquakes.

The Statistics New Zealand (2009) definition of homelessness is a robust and useful tool to assist in better understanding the state of homelessness in New Zealand. This is particularly important given the fact that there are very limited statistics available on the population and also recognises the unique challenges Christchurch faces with housing, post-quake. In comparison to the Stewart B. McKinney Act (1987), the Statistics New Zealand definition (2009) is thorough, detailed and captures the complexity inherent in defining homelessness, while doing much to challenge the narrow, reductive perceptions on what ‘homelessness’ typically looks like. In addition, it is useful for this thesis because it directs attention to the link between mobility and lacking adequate social relations to get by during life on the streets.

For my study, I will narrow the scope of my research to those in Statistics New Zealand’s (2009) category of ‘without shelter,’ which includes those who sleep rough on the streets, in makeshift shelters, or in cars (6). While I recognise the value of Statistics New Zealand’s

categories for conceptualising homelessness, for practical reasons I have to exclude the other categories from this study as it is far beyond the scope of what a Masters project can realistically hope to achieve. I also feel it is necessary to narrow this focus to ensure a better quality of research, as well as more generalizable results than those that would be gathered if I included all of the categories in Statistics New Zealand's (2009) definition. Also, I would expect that rough sleepers would share quite different experiences with cell phones in their life on the street compared to individuals who have access to temporary accommodation, for instance.

## **Homelessness In New Zealand**

Perhaps due in part to the fact that there has been such contention over the years in terms of establishing a definition of homelessness, there are only very limited statistics available on the population. This is slowly changing. The construction of Statistics New Zealand's (2009) definition of homelessness, has provided a sturdy foundation for future research to be gathered and an opportunity for more to be known on the subject generally.

Amore et al. (2013), in a project commissioned by Statistics New Zealand, published the "first national severe housing deprivation statistics for New Zealand" (2). The authors analysed New Zealand's Census data from 2001 and 2006, in addition to data collected by non-governmental organisations such as emergency accommodation suppliers (7).

It was found that in 2006, approximately 34,000 New Zealanders could be classified as 'severely housing deprived' (7). The term, 'severely housing deprived' refers to people who have a "lack of access to minimally adequate housing" (7). In other words, this means people who do not have access to at least two of the social, legal and/or physical domains which are

central to the notion of adequate housing, as described in the Statistics New Zealand (2009) definition of homelessness. Of those found to be severely housing deprived, children, young adults, ethnic minorities and those from sole parent families, featured predominantly in the statistics for both 2001 and 2006 (Amore et al., 2013: 7). These findings are alarming, especially as many of the people described above (particularly children and young adults) are among the most vulnerable in our communities. Also associated with severe housing deprivation were new migrants (in particular, those from the Pacific and North Asia), along with those who have a low level of education, are unemployed or conversely, have a low skilled job (Amore et al., 2013: 7-8). While nearly 50 percent of those classified as being severely housing deprived were engaged in employment and/or study, this was not enough to provide a “minimally adequate home for themselves or their families” (*Ibid*).

Amore et al., (2013) also included data on those ‘without accommodation’. This category includes people who are “living rough (not in an enclosed structure)” and those who are “living in housing that is enclosed but lacks one or more basic amenities” (15) which according to this definition, could include people who, for instance, are living in cars, or those unlawfully residing in an abandoned building, commonly known as ‘squatting.’ In 2001, it was found that there were 1,300 people (or five percent of the severely housing deprived population) who were living in the ‘without accommodation’ category (39). This number increased considerably in 2006, with 5,031 people (or 15 percent of the severely housing deprived population) in the same category (39). Of the approximately 34,000 people found to be severely housing deprived, four percent of this population were those who slept rough, or in “improvised dwellings” (41).

The work undertaken by Amore et al. (2013) on behalf of Statistics New Zealand, provides, as yet, the most reliable and comprehensive statistics on homelessness in New Zealand; statistics which includes homelessness in all its varying forms. While the study draws from Census data, including the 2006 Census, which was nearly ten years ago, it is important to remember that the 2011 Census was cancelled due to the Christchurch February 22 earthquake in 2011 (New Zealand Statistics, 2011). Therefore these statistics are the most current available at the present time. Dr Amore and her colleagues are currently working on 2013 Census data, which when published, will provide further invaluable insights into the current state of homelessness in New Zealand. In regards to Christchurch, there were no region specific statistics on rough sleepers which were publicly available at the time of writing this thesis. The absence of such statistics highlights a major deficit in the literature. Understanding the nature of homelessness in Christchurch, in all its forms, is critical, especially after the catastrophic events of the 2011 earthquake, which displaced and disrupted the lives of a number of people.

The general body of literature on homelessness in New Zealand is limited in size, but it is steadily expanding. The bulk of research on the topic has been conducted using qualitative methods. This is in contrast to literature from abroad, particularly the United States, where the research on homelessness has a strong quantitative focus (and is arguably lacking in the depth which qualitative research can provide). New Zealand research on homelessness is also heavily concentrated on acute, or 'primary homelessness' such as people who sleep rough, or are 'without shelter.' The reason for this focus on primary homelessness as opposed to secondary or tertiary homelessness, is possibly due to the fact that the former is more visible publicly and because of this, is perceived as being a more pressing issue for society. In comparison to

primary homelessness, secondary and tertiary homelessness are issues that are more readily obscured from the public eye and consequently, our collective conscience. Perhaps this is part of the reason why the issues of secondary and tertiary homelessness are overlooked by many New Zealand researchers. However, as the body of literature on homelessness continues to expand, as well as studies which reveal the true extent of housing deprivation at all levels, such as the analysis by Amore et al. (2013), it is likely that secondary and tertiary homelessness will be placed on the agenda of New Zealand researchers in the years to come. Therefore this study can be seen to be contributing to the growing body of research into primary homelessness.

Despite the fact that research on homelessness in New Zealand is in its relatively early stages, scholars in the field have already uncovered trends in primary homelessness which echo findings in research conducted abroad. In New Zealand, a number of studies have found that men are heavily featured in the rough sleeping population in comparison to women (Al-Nasrallah et al., 2005; Ellis, 2007; Ellis and Carroll, 2005). For instance, Ellis (2007) reported that over 78 percent of people sleeping rough in Auckland, were male. This is consistent with studies overseas which also find men to be predominantly represented amongst rough sleepers. Leggat-Cook (2007) suggests however, that the heavy predominance of male rough sleepers in New Zealand may be more pronounced than figures recorded overseas. It should also be noted that it is difficult to determine the full extent of females who are sleeping rough as female street homelessness can be more readily concealed. Moss (2012) describes how women may not be easily included in street counts such as those conducted by Ellis (2007) and Ellis and Carroll (2005). This is because some women may wander the streets at night and sleep in the day when they feel safer, or, may trade sexual favours in exchange for a bed for a night, which

are times when street counts are often conducted (Moss, 2012). These factors make it particularly difficult to establish the true extent of rough sleeping women. Furthermore, this highlights that the actual numbers of female rough sleepers in New Zealand, may in fact be underestimated.

New Zealand research has also documented the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities such as Maori and Pasifika, amongst rough sleeping people (Al-Nasrallah et al., 2005; Ellis 2007; Ellis and Carroll, 2005 and Gravitas, 2005). These findings align with international studies which also report an over-representation of ethnic minorities and indigenous people in primary homelessness (Abele et al., 2010; Westerfelt and Yellow Bird, 1999). Of all ethnic minorities studied, Maori are particularly over-represented in the current ethnic data on rough sleepers in New Zealand. For instance, Ellis (2007) reported that just over 50 percent of Auckland's rough sleepers identified themselves as being of Maori descent. Inherent to Maori culture, is the belief that people are deeply connected to the land (Royal, 2012). It is quite possible that the fact that Maori are so disproportionately represented as rough sleepers in New Zealand, is a reflection of the enduring impact of colonisation and the trauma Maori endured as a result of being dislocated from their land. However, Groot et al. (2011) describe that although Maori are often associated with specific places, the mass migration of Maori to urban locales has meant notions of identity and belonging in relation to these places (for example, tribal homelands), have been redefined. Perhaps Maori rough sleepers, because of their deep connection with the land, are able to construct a broader sense of belonging and 'home' which is divergent from the traditional, 'housed' perceptions of home, which are comparatively narrow and restrictive.

While it must be acknowledged that the New Zealand literature on homelessness is still developing, the current research is lacking by way of a systematic exploration of the pathways into homelessness. Knowledge of pathways into homelessness is critical. Literature abroad has highly documented the fact that people who are homeless have an increased risk of a number of issues including poor health outcomes, substance abuse and addiction issues, as well as being more likely to be a victim of sexual and/or physical violence (Boivin et al., 2005; Kipke et al., 1993; Van Leeuwen et al., 2004). Understanding what the pathways into homelessness are, is important, not only for potentially reducing rates of homelessness, but also for identifying possible areas for improvement in terms of agencies servicing the diverse needs of people who are living rough. Al-Nasrallah et al. (2005) are, as yet, the only New Zealand based scholars who have conducted research aimed at understanding what the pathways into homelessness are within a New Zealand context.

Through a series of in-depth interviews with people who had experienced homelessness in Wellington, Al-Nasrallah et al. (2005) was able to identify three major pathways into homelessness: driven, dropped or drawn. The pathway, 'driven', was the most common theme the authors extracted after analysing the interviews (*Ibid*). Major family related events, such as a parental break-up or a challenging upbringing involving factors such as violence, abuse, drugs and/or alcohol, were featured in this pathway. Such instability often led on to placement in foster homes and other institutions, eventually driving some individuals to homelessness (*Ibid*). The 'dropped' pathway refers to a singular, traumatic event which propels an individual to live on the streets (*Ibid*). Such events could include a relationship breakdown, or the death of a loved one, for instance (*Ibid*). Finally, the 'drawn' pathway refers to individuals who have

become homeless through a series of behaviours or choices which eventually lead to them to the lifestyle (*Ibid*). This could include engaging in criminal activities, or losing contact with their family (*Ibid*).

These pathways into homelessness overlap with theory on the value of social capital which will be explored in the literature review to follow this chapter. As detailed by Al-Nasrallah et al. (2005), for individuals who become homeless, it seems to be largely due to the absence of quality social relationships which saw a descent onto the streets. In addition, understanding the pathways into homelessness provide context for understanding the narratives of the youths who were interviewed as part of this thesis, whilst underlining the importance of stable social connections within everyday life.

# Literature Review

## Introduction

Given the intricacies involved in understanding the condition of homelessness, this chapter will provide a detailed review of the relevant literature available on the subject and a number of theories which will inform the analysis of the respondents' narratives to follow in the Discussion section. The decision to integrate a number of theories into this chapter, as opposed to one or two overarching theories, has been informed by two main reasons. Firstly, by reducing the narratives imparted by the participants to just a couple of theories for the sake of brevity and simplicity, would risk being indiscriminate and overlooking the subtleties conveyed by the youth. Secondly, as one who has been granted the immense privilege of gaining the trust and opportunity to bear witness to their unique accounts, there is an obligation as a researcher to detail their experiences closely and with authenticity. In order to fulfil this responsibility, it is necessary to consult a number of theories to support the narratives to be explored later on in the thesis, rather than inhibit and force narratives to fit the framework of just a couple of theories.

This literature review will begin by outlining the key scholarship on digital divide theory and what the implications of such technological exclusion, are for society. Following this overview, the theory will be examined in relation to statistics on connectivity in New Zealand.

Social capital theory will also be reviewed in this chapter. This will include an overview of the theory, including why social connections are valuable, and the various benefits which

both bridging and bonding capital can provide respectively. Literature on the apparent negative effect of social capital in already impoverished communities will also be examined.

With the condition of homelessness having been contextualised by the previous chapter, the literature on homeless people's interactions with technology will be reviewed. This will include a summary of relevant studies done, including identifying where future research is needed in the overall body of knowledge on the subject.

The next section will review the literature which addresses the idea of identity and belonging amongst those who are homeless. This will incorporate the Tikanga Maori ideologies of belonging, including the concept of *turangawaewae*, which recognises alternate understandings of home and sense of self. The notion of privacy as being central to the self, will also be explored in this section.

The final section in this chapter will review the literature on homeless people and music. This section will start by outlining the significance of music within youth culture broadly, later narrowing the focus to the value of music in the lives of those who are homeless. A life-world approach will be argued as a valuable means for understanding the importance of music to street youth, whilst also setting the climate for subsequent chapters in this thesis which seek to gain an understanding of their reality, rather than reach any definitive conclusions about the population in general.

## **Digital Divide**

People who are homeless exist on the margins of society. With the proliferation of digital technology, there have been concerns surrounding unequal distribution and access to

information and communication technology, a rift between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' (Selwyn, 2004: 344), also known as the 'digital divide' (Hersberger, 2003). This theory is a useful framework for this study on rough sleepers and their experiences with the cell phone as it acknowledges inequalities present in society- inequalities which homeless people experience acutely.

A number of researchers have voiced their concerns surrounding a deepening digital divide, which include further exacerbating already existing social, economic and political inequalities (Van Dijk, 2005). As a key scholar in the field of digital divide research, Van Dijk (2005) proposes five core elements to understanding the inequalities in the digital divide. Firstly, he describes that "categorical inequalities in society produce an unequal distribution of resources" (15-26). Examples of categorical inequalities include variables such as age (young versus old), gender (male versus female), and education (low versus high). Essentially, Van Dijk (2005) means that categorical inequalities such as low levels of education for instance, puts those pertaining to that group at a disadvantage, being more likely to experience the unequal distribution of resources such as wealth and knowledge. The second component of Van Dijk's (2005) core argument states that, "unequal distribution of resources causes unequal access to digital technologies" (15). This "unequal access to digital technologies" is facilitated, Van Dijk (2005) would argue, via mechanisms of social exclusion, exploitation and control (15-18). These three mechanisms all ultimately seek to exploit and manipulate the imbalance in power relations, so that one group may possess disproportionate advantage (and control) compared to groups with less leverage. Thirdly, Van Dijk (2005) describes that the inequality in access to information and communication technologies is dependent on the nature of the technology in

question (15-23). For instance, factors such as the expense involved with technology (including initial start-up costs, ongoing service subscriptions and perhaps training to use the technology), as well as the complexity and mystique surrounding technology in general, can all hinder equal access to digital technologies (21-23). Van Dijk's fourth point describes that "unequal access to digital technology brings about unequal participation in society" (15). With digital technologies playing a central part in modern day life, inequalities in access to such technology means that a number of citizens are excluded from participating fully in society. This includes being excluded from reaping the full benefits that being digitally connected can provide, such as various economic benefits (Mossberger et al., 2008: 25-26, 45), the potential for expansion of social relationships and the manner of their engagement (Van Dijk, 2005: 171-172), and also in the field of education (170). Van Dijk (2005) argues that inequality of access means that those with limited access to digital technologies, are in turn, being limited in their ability to participate in society as citizens, students, employees, and so on (23). This leads on to Van Dijk's fifth and final point: that unequal participation in society further entrenches categorical inequalities present in society, as well as the fostering of the unequal distribution of resources. Therefore, Van Dijk's theory detailed above, would predict that the cell phone use of young people sleeping rough will be informed by a cycle of disadvantage, further marginalising one of the most marginalised groups in society.

There is little empirical data on the extent of such a digital divide in New Zealand. However, AUT University's Institute of Culture, Discourse and Communication has published a fascinating insight into the state of New Zealand's Internet connectivity as part of the World Internet Project. Their findings on the widespread use and adoption of the Internet, suggest

that the digital divide in New Zealand is rapidly closing. This study is pertinent, not only because of its relatively recent publication, and its New Zealand specific focus, but the fact that it follows on from previous surveys conducted in 2007, 2009 and 2011. From a sample size of 2006 survey participants, Gibson et al. (2013: 2) found that 92 percent of respondents reported that they currently use the Internet. Of this number of Internet users, all but two percent of users, had access to broadband (2). Gibson et al. (2013) also asked participants which information and communication technology devices they have access to in their respective households (3). Mobile phones ranked as the most widely accessible device across households, with 92 percent of respondents having access to a cell phone (3). Three out of four of these respondents also reported having access to a smartphone (3). The data on Internet access via mobile phones is particularly interesting. 68 percent of Internet users reported having used their mobile phone to access the Internet (3) which is getting close to the figures seen in access via laptops (79 percent) and desktop computers (74 percent) respectively. Gibson et al. (2013) also report that “7 out of 10 Internet users access the Internet from a handheld mobile device such as a smartphone or tablet” (4). These figures for mobile Internet access indicate that mobile technology in general, is occupying an increasingly important position in the everyday lives of a number of New Zealanders. While the focus of this thesis is centred on street youth who already own a mobile, data on connectivity amongst the homeless population generally, would be interesting, particularly given the limited resources at their disposal compared to mainstream New Zealand. If homeless people are excluded from the near ubiquity of the cell phone at 92 percent, then they are truly marginal.

The extremely high rates of Internet connectivity in individuals under the age of 40, are suggestive of a generation of youth that is not only highly technologically aware and reflexive, but also a generation that is embedded in and dependent on technology as a tool to navigate modern life. It was found that virtually all respondents under the age of 40 years old, were Internet users to some degree, with just 1 percent being classified as a 'non-user.' Furthermore, less than 5 percent of these Internet users were classified as 'low level users,' with over 50 percent being classed as 'next generation users' (31). This latter term refers to users who are technologically savvy and highly connected in relation to their use of multiple devices (including mobile devices) to access the Internet (1). This is in stark comparison with respondents in the 70 years plus age group- a third of whom were recorded as not currently using the Internet (31). This study seeks to understand street youths' experiences with the cell phone. However, it would be particularly interesting to determine whether there are barriers to connectivity in the homeless population across various age groups, as appears to be the case in segments of mainstream New Zealand.

In their study, Gibson et al. (2013:26-27, 30) did uncover that there are higher rates of Internet usage (and number of digital devices) as household income increases. This effect was more pronounced in the age groups from 40 years and older. Interestingly, the survey also found that youth from the "lowest income households...do not show any signs of being digitally disadvantaged" (26). While indeed outside the parameters of this study to determine with any certainty if this also applies to rough sleeping youth broadly, especially given their limited resources, it is encouraging that housed youth from low income households do not seem to experience digital disadvantage. As highlighted in the previous section, there are significant

ramifications for society when a digital divide exists, particularly for those who are already marginalised. Perhaps merely being part of a general youth culture which widely embraces technology, may act as a protective factor for homeless young people; shielding them from the negative implications of the digital divide, in spite of their limited financial resources.

Another notable aspect of the study by Gibson et al. (2013) is the fact that it acknowledges the impact of convergence media in today's society. Compared to digital divide theory, which is grounded in issues of marginalisation and exclusion, arguments on cultural convergence locate people in a position of power when they use technology for their own ends. Media technologies are not at all concrete and unchangeable (Meikle and Young, 2012). They are fluid and flexible sites of contestation (*Ibid*). Devices no longer bear rigidly imagined capabilities. As Jenkins (2006: 26) describes, cell phones are far from being used simply for communicative purposes. Apart from their obvious use, cell phones can be used to access the Internet, play games and music, as well as being able to capture photographs and videos, amongst other things (*Ibid*). These capabilities are constantly being re-imagined. As Jenkins (2006: 28) aptly outlines, convergence is not a one-sided imposition of media producers coming together and telling consumers how, where and why they should engage with technology. Rather, convergence occurs when "people take media in their own hands" and challenge and appropriate technology for their own purposes, in their own lives (*Ibid*). As Meikle and Young (2012: 33) state, "technology is a contest." This perspective on cultural convergence raises questions of empowerment within the context of this thesis. There is potential for young people to gain empowerment through the digital culture accessible through the phone, but what is it that people who are systemically disadvantaged in society, can in fact access?

## Social Capital

While theorists might disagree on the extent to which technologies empower, both Jenkins and Van Dijk would agree that the use of technology cannot be understood when it is removed from its social and cultural context. In particular, people sleeping rough have to be studied with an awareness of the multiple and overlapping ways in which they struggle to access social and cultural resources. The dominant theory used to understand that struggle is social capital theory.

Lin (1999) describes the essence of social capital as being the “investment in social relations with expected returns” (30). It is the acknowledgement that social networks are of value and can provide various benefits to members in a society. Lin (1999: 30-31) describes that social capital works because of three main factors. Firstly, it “facilitates the flow of information” (31). For instance, an individual who has social ties with contacts located in strategic locations or in positions of influence, can benefit the individual by providing them with information which can benefit their own interests and endeavours; information that would not otherwise be available without these strategic contacts (*Ibid*). Secondly, there is a potential to exert influence on other individuals “who play a critical role in decisions...involving the actor” (*Ibid*). Lin (1999) illustrates this by describing that an individual could utilise such social ties to vouch for them on their behalf in decisions which are in their best interests (31). Thirdly, social ties can be seen by others as what Lin (1999) describes as, “certifications of the individual’s social credentials” (31). In other words, social ties can be seen as not only advantageous to the individual, but may be viewed as advantageous to other individuals and/or organisations for the mutual benefit these ties could potentially provide (*Ibid*).

Social capital has two main forms: bridging capital and bonding capital (Fitzpatrick et al., 2007: 752). 'Bridging' capital relates to 'weak ties' which are social ties with often dissimilar individuals who can provide information, help and other useful resources (Granovetter, 1982 cited in Ellison et al., 2007: 1146). Fitzpatrick et al. (2007: 752) describe that weak ties are particularly beneficial in assisting people to advance in life, as they are able to unlock opportunities that would have otherwise been unavailable to them. While weak ties can be indeed valuable, this type of social connection would not typically be relied upon for emotional support (*Ibid*). Bonding social capital, on the other-hand, relates to 'strong ties' which are social connections between socially similar individuals (*Ibid*). Ellison et al. (2007: 1146) describes these kind of social connections are found in "tightly-knit, emotionally close relationships," like those seen in families and close friendships.

The benefits of social capital are well documented in the literature. These benefits have been studied from a commercial perspective (for instance see Cooke and Wills, 1999; Nahapiet and Ghosal, 1998; Tsai and Ghoshal, 1998), right through to a health perspective (for instance, see Cattell, 2001; Kawachi and Berkman, 2001; Kawachi, 2006). However, there have been a few studies which have found social capital to have a negative effect particularly in already disadvantaged, impoverished and marginalised communities. One such study by Caughy et al. (2003) investigated African American parents and the presence of "behavioural problems" in their children across differing socio-economic neighbourhoods. Their level of attachment to their community (measured by factors such as how well they knew their neighbours, for instance) was in this study, regarded as an indicator of social capital (*Ibid*). Caughy et al. (2003) found that in poor neighbourhoods, children whose parents reported knowing many of their

neighbours, were found to have higher levels of internalising problems than those children whose parents did not know as many of their neighbours. The opposite was the case in children from wealthy neighbourhoods (*Ibid*). This study seems to indicate that social capital operates differently in disadvantaged communities.

In the scholarship on homelessness in general, there are few studies which investigate homelessness and social capital. Fitzpatrick et al. (2007), in a study on suicide ideation in homeless people, found that social capital, specifically bonding capital, does not reduce the incidence of suicide ideation (758). This suggests that the emotional support the mainstream population may find in bonding capital, may not apply in the same way for people who are homeless. Furthermore, Fitzpatrick et al. (2007) also found that bridging capital “does not appear to mediate the effects of such undesirable life circumstances” (758). The authors acknowledge however, that bridging capital is valuable in providing ‘critical access’ to resources otherwise not available, however it is not enough to mediate suicide ideation itself (*Ibid*).

A qualitative study on homeless young women and social capital by Oliver and Cheff (2012) found that individuals were more likely to utilise bonding capital rather than bridging capital which could unlock “access to higher-level resources and opportunities” (16). The authors imply that a reason for this could be the desire of these youth to be “autonomous and self-reliant” due to their mistrust of adults (Oliver and Cheff, 2012: 16).

While both of the studies listed above are helpful and en route to constructing a better picture of homeless people and social capital, there needs to be more study done on the subject in general. Also while there has been a handful of studies, like those mentioned above,

which found social capital to function differently in impoverished communities compared to mainstream society, these findings need to be regarded with caution. The wealth of literature documenting the benefits of social capital cannot be overlooked. However it does appear that scholars like Caughy et al. (2003); Fitzpatrick et al. (2007) and Oliver and Cheff (2012), may have uncovered that perhaps social capital does not operate in the same manner within marginalised communities, as it does for the mainstream population. This could be because bonding capital within a group in which many people are making poor choices, risks locking people into those poor choices. Only further studies on social capital in impoverished communities can confirm this for certain.

Overall, social capital theory and the concept that social connections bear value, provide a useful theoretical framework for this thesis. People who are homeless generally have few assets which can be measured in terms of monetary worth. They do, however, possess social connections with other individuals, regardless of how brittle some of these connections may be. Therefore gaining knowledge on the social capital of people who are homeless, is important in revealing the relative worth of such networks, for those who possess little of material value.

## **Homeless People and Technology**

A subset of the academic literature deals with the question of how people who are homeless interact with information and communication technology (ICT), with a focus on using ICTs to find low cost health interventions. Findings across the studies are not clear cut and are far from conclusive. This seems to be due to a number reasons including the fact that at this

stage, the total body of research is still rather limited, the results gathered across different age groups of homeless people have yielded vastly different results, combined with the ever-evolving capacity of information and communication technologies themselves. However, most studies acknowledge the potential for such technology to be of assistance to homeless people, whether it be in the context of health awareness and, or intervention, the fostering of social relationships, or for survival purposes. In addition, there is an opportunity for homeless people to use technology, particularly the cell phone, to develop their social capital, especially bridging capital which could assist them in advancing beyond their circumstances.

Young and Rice (2010) studied online social networking among homeless youth and their sexual behaviours. Sexual health is an area in which homeless people are particularly vulnerable with a higher risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV, due to not observing consistent safe sex practices and engaging in other risky sexual behaviours (Bailey et al., 1998; Greene et al., 1999; Halcón et al., 2004). Their results found that merely being a member of an online social network, was associated with an increased likelihood of being tested for STIs (*Ibid*). They also found that having online sex partners and talking to friends on online social networks was associated with increased exchange sex (*Ibid*). In addition, they found that using online social networks to seek out partners, was also associated with increased sexual risk behaviours (*Ibid*). Furthermore, Young and Rice (2010) discovered that the use of online social networks to discuss love and safe sex, was associated with both an increased knowledge of HIV and a decreased likelihood to engage in exchange sex (*Ibid*).

Rice et al. (2010), while very similar to the study above, was careful to differentiate between using social networking to contact home-based peers and street-based peers. The youth that used social networking to socialise with street-based peers were more likely to engage in exchange sex (*Ibid*). Those who connected with home-based peers online, were more likely to report HIV testing (*Ibid*).

Another study by Rice et al. (2011) looked at the composition of online social networks of homeless adolescents and whether or not they had used any drugs or alcohol in the past 30 days. The youth who reported having social ties with one or more non-substance using home-based peer, were associated with “less recent alcohol use” (85). Conversely, the youth who had more connections with substance-using street-based peers, were more likely to have “higher levels of heroin, methamphetamine, alcohol and marijuana use” (*Ibid*). It was also found that home-based ties were “more enduring” than street-based ties, with 90 percent of these home-based ties lasting at least 2 years (*Ibid*). Rice et al. (2011) suggest that social networking could be useful as a platform for facilitating positive social ties for homeless youth which are beneficial in “peer based prevention programmes” (80). Furthermore, this suggests that the flexibility of networks online allows people to reshape the social networks around them and by doing so, reduce some of the risk factors around them.

While there is developing literature on the topic of homeless people and the Internet, there are presently just a handful of studies which look at homeless people and their use of mobile phones. Roberson and Nardi (2010) conducted ethnographic research into homelessness and technology as a whole, with the subject of cell phones emerging as being a

key medium for social interaction within the lives of those who are homeless. One respondent explained that prior to becoming homeless, he did not own a cell phone as he was averse to the idea of people calling him when he did not want to be spoken to (*Ibid*). However since becoming homeless he found the technology necessary so that employers, health professionals and various officials could get hold of him (*Ibid*). Another respondent described frustrations at the five minute restrictions on the cell phones provided for use at service agencies (*Ibid*). With health issues a concern, the respondent described the necessity of cell phones, but the costs involved in owning one as being restrictive (*Ibid*).

Another study by Kim et al. (2014) used interviews to look at homeless people's use of cell phones. The respondents described the importance of communication in life on the streets (*Ibid*). One respondent explained their helpfulness in communicating "to learn where resources are, when opportunities present themselves" (*Ibid*). Mobile phones were described by one participant as increasingly important especially given the fact that many payphones in his area were being phased out (*Ibid*). Other participants discussed the compact nature of mobile phones which are small and concealable, in comparison to laptops which are large, visible and therefore, easier to steal. Cell phones were also described as a marker of status amongst homeless people with one respondent saying, "...poor people want to look good" (*Ibid*).

Rice et al. (2011), in a quantitative survey study, looked at ownership of cell phones amongst homeless youth and the various kinds of social connections it was used for. They found that 62 percent of those surveyed, owned a cell phone, with 40 percent of these mobiles being in working order (*Ibid*). Also, higher rates of mobile ownership were seen in youth who stayed in shelters or temporary accommodation, compared to youth who were rough sleeping

(*Ibid*). 41 percent of youth used cell phones to contact family, and another 36 percent reported using their cell phone to connect with a potential or current employer (*Ibid*). Rice et al (2011) posit that cell phones could be used in intervention programmes which place emphasis on maintaining contact with family and home-based ties (which are often overlooked in homeless interventions) which could provide them with the emotional support they need in their life on the streets (*Ibid*).

The studies detailed above, all have similar themes on the utility of mobile phones. Although they do not explicitly utilise social capital theory to understand the role of technology within the lives of people who are homeless, the findings implicitly indicate the importance of the kinds of social bonds people choose to access. In addition, all the studies detailed above have been conducted overseas. The absence of literature on the topic here in New Zealand, presents an opportunity to understand more about how homeless people use technology, particularly the cell phone. This is of interest not just in understanding how rough sleepers use their phone to engage with others, but also how it assists them in creatively negotiating the challenges of street life.

## **Homeless People and Identity**

The notion of identity relates to how an individual views themselves in relation to other people and the social world around them (McIntosh, 2005). In other words, identity can be seen as the way people establish a sense of self and sites to belong, according to certain reference points. Liu et al. (2005) explain that “identities are dynamic and multi-layered” (14). Essentially this means that identities are not fixed and inflexible; rather they can overlap in

different domains depending on certain contexts (*Ibid*). For instance, a person who happens to be sleeping rough, is not merely a 'homeless person.' Depending on context, they may prefer to identify themselves as being a mother or a father, or perhaps by their unique talents or skills. Liu et al (2005: 14) also writes that "identities are socially constructed." This refers particularly to collective identities, or sense of belonging to a group. As such, collective identity is strengthened by markers which could include shared experiences, history, rituals or even discourse within a particular group (14).

Generally, people who are homeless are unable to ground themselves in reference points which the mainstream population typically use as markers of identity and belonging (Boydell et al., 2000; Groot et al., 2011). These include having a home, employment and stable relationships with others (*Ibid*).

Literature conducted on the subject, has generally found that the state of being homeless impacts negatively on individuals' sense of self (Boydell et al., 2000; Snow and Anderson, 1987). In a qualitative, in-depth interview study, Boydell et al. (2000) found that homeless individuals not only experienced a loss of self, but felt devalued in their identity as one who is 'homeless'. Many of the interviewees would speak with pride at their former identity before becoming homeless; as the identity they used to have, and have now lost (*Ibid*). Those interviewed who had been living on the streets for a length of time, spoke about themselves in a negative manner. Boydell et al. (2000: 31) reported that a number of them referred to the term, "disgust" when speaking about the way they viewed themselves. Others would keep to themselves, or avoid disclosing information which would identify them as

'homeless,' and consequently, reinforce feelings of being devalued as a person (Boydell et al., 2008: 31-32).

Snow and Anderson (1987) also conducted qualitative research employing ethnographic methods, to understand how homeless people construct a sense of identity on the streets. In analysis of the talk within the interviews, Snow and Anderson (1987) found that there was a tendency in the language used for participants to distance and differentiate themselves from other homeless people (1353). The authors suggest that by distancing themselves from other homeless people, they are "attempting to salvage a measure of self-worth" (1353). Furthermore, depending on whether they had spent an extended period of time living on the streets, Snow and Anderson (1987) also found that some of the interviewees would embrace pejorative terms such as "bum" or "tramp" when referring to themselves (1354). In addition, some would engage in 'fictive story telling'- which refers to stories told about themselves, but with an apparent fictional or fanciful quality to them (*ibid*). Snow and Anderson (1987) discuss that perhaps individuals who are homeless engage in such practices necessitated by the need to survive and preserve a "sense of meaning and self-worth" (1365).

Within New Zealand, Maori are disproportionately represented in the statistics available on homelessness (Al-Nasrallah et al., 2005; Ellis 2007; Ellis and Carroll, 2005 and Gravitas, 2005). Despite not having access to physical shelter, Kearns (2006) describes that Maori retain a strong sense of 'home' which is divergent from Western conceptions of home and belonging. Mead (2003: 42-45) describes that for Maori, there are four attributes of identity: *ira tangata*, *ira atua* (genetics), *whakapapa* (genealogy), *turangawaewae* (place to stand) and *pūmanawa*

(talents). *Ira tangata, ira atua* (genetics) refers to the genetics inherited by an individual from their parents (*Ibid*). Besides just genetics, *Ira tangata, ira atua* views a spiritual dimension to genetics; an acknowledgement of Maori and their connection to their gods. *Whakapapa* (genealogy) refers to lineage from which one is descended, and locates an individual within a tribal structure (Mead, 2003; Taonui, 2014). The term, *turangawaewae* translates literally as ‘a place to stand’ (Kearns, 2006). Mead (2003: 43) describes *turangawaewae* as being a physical place where one can stand; a place where you can belong, where others in your *whakapapa* belong and have belonged. Places to stand for Maori, would traditionally include one’s marae as a focal point and extend to include one’s tribal land and all its natural components (Mead, 2003: 43). Finally, *pūmanawa* (talents) refers to gifts or talents which are inherited through the generations; talents which are evident within one’s *whakapapa* (Mead, 2003: 44).

While a developing area of research, key New Zealand scholars studying how homeless people construct a sense of identity, have adopted a culturally aware approach (for instance, see Groot et al., 2010; Groot et al 2011; King, 2014). It is an approach which is in recognition of alternate conceptions of identity and belonging, in particular, notions of identity and belonging employing a Tikanga Maori framework. This is refreshing as the current body of literature on the subject generally, does not incorporate indigenous perspectives of home, belonging and identity, despite homelessness affecting indigenous people disproportionately (Abele et al., 2010; Kramer and Barker, 1996; Rossi, 1990; Westerfelt and Yellow Bird, 1999).

Groot et al (2011) conducted an ethnographic case study focused on how a homeless Maori woman, ‘Aria’, constructed a sense of identity and belonging within her life on the

streets of Auckland. Compared to Mead (2003) who describes *turangawaewae* as being physically locative, Groot et al. (2011) in contrast, describes it as being “a place of strength and identity” (385). This more fluid definition of *turangawaewae* by Groot et al. (2011), recognises that although some Maori who are homeless may be displaced from their *turangawaewae* in the physical sense which Mead (2003) refers to, such individuals are still able to establish a place to stand in other ways. Groot et al. (2011) describe that *whanaungatanga* (social bonds) and *ahi kaa* (keeping the home fires burning) are ways that one can engage with their *turangawaewae*. In the case study of Aria, Groot et al. (2011) found that as a Maori woman living on the streets, she was not only able to have a place to stand through some links with whanau (family) back home, but was also able to maintain a “sense of belonging and affiliation” by being a both a leader and carer for those in her street family also (393).

While homelessness can impact negatively on an individual’s sense of self and belonging (Boydell et al., 2000; Snow and Anderson, 1987), there are other dimensions to identity in which to take shelter. By engaging with their *turangawaewae*, Maori who are homeless can find a place to stand on the streets; a sense of strength in knowing who they are, even though they may not have a place to call home in a physical sense.

Although it is not the intention of this study to tackle the issue of homeless identity specifically, or with reference to cultural conceptions of belonging, such literature still provides a useful framework for this thesis. As observed by Stald (2008), the cell phone is almost “ubiquitous in youth cultural contexts” (144). Indeed, so ubiquitous is the cell phone within youth culture, that one could go as far as saying it is very much part of the youth experience

and collective identity. Furthermore, the communicative function of the cell phone provides youth with the potential to utilise not just social capital, but possibly also engage with *whanaungatanga* (social bonds) and *ahi kaa* (keeping the home fires burning), which are central to the concept of *turangawaewae*. Given the digitally connected world we live in, this poses unique questions to researchers about how a device like the cell phone could be used to facilitate engagement with an individual's cultural identity.

Space and privacy have also been theorised as central to an individual's sense of self and identity. Thinkers like Kant, place value on privacy and space as it serves a critical function in an individual's ability to have 'rational autonomy,' in other words, the capacity to make informed and considered decisions in one's own life. (Ess, 2011: 205). Private space for introspection and reflection therefore, according to the Kantian tradition, is critical in grounding an individual in a clear sense of self and awareness in regards to their own wellbeing. Scholars like Westin (1967) discuss that while privacy is culturally specific within different societies, it generally serves four important functions. Firstly, Westin (1967: 33) would argue that privacy is critical for 'personal autonomy.' Similar to Kant, Westin (1967) describes that for an individual to maintain a sense of self, privacy is necessary for an individual to be free from manipulation and domination by others. By this, Westin (1967) means that privacy is important for an individual to have the opportunity to develop their own thoughts in a space which is free from ridicule or influence from others (33-34). The second function of privacy according to Westin (1967) is 'emotional release.' This refers to having access to private space which is free from all the pressures, obligations and demands of the social world; a space to let go and be yourself without the scrutiny of others and their potential judgement (34-36). The third function of privacy is 'self-

evaluation.’ Not only does this mean the solitude to reflect on the reality of your current self, but also the room to dream and imagine other possibilities in your future (36-37). The final function of privacy according to Westin (1967) is ‘limited and protected communication.’ This refers to being cautious about the information disclosed about oneself and maintaining healthy barriers of distance with others in order for self-preservation (37-39).

People who sleep rough have little space for privacy. Their places of rest are conducted in public domains: in cars, under bridges, in makeshift shelters on public land, on park benches, to name a few. Radley et al. (2010) also found that walking the streets was a “way of life” for many homeless people (36). Other studies have also documented that public places such as libraries are another common setting in which people who are homeless come to pass time during the day (Anderson et al., 2012; Hodgetts et al., 2008; Silver, 1996). This lack of privacy which pervades much of their lives on the streets, raises questions about how people who are homeless manage to maintain a sense of self despite this absence of personal space. As a communicative device, the cell phone opens up a world of opportunity and potential for the enhancement of interpersonal relationships and as a means to facilitate social capital. However, as a convergence medium with wide ranging functions as a music player, a camera and a gaming apparatus to name a few, the cell phone is not merely a communicative device. In a life conducted in public spaces, perhaps the multiple applications on the cell phone provide ways to mediate homelessness that allow the self to be, at times, maintained.

Aside from privacy, everyday rituals, routine and structure have also been found to be protective to the self. Highmore (2004) discusses that while the everyday routine can be

monotonous and dull, it serves to “give our lives rhythm and predictability” (307). Within a family setting, routine can help “guide behaviour” and support child development (Spagnola and Fiese, 2007: 284). Routine has also been documented as being beneficial in managing mental health issues like bipolar disorder (Frank et al., 2000; Frank et al., 2006; Malkoff-Schwartz et al., 2000). Along with a lack of access to privacy, life for homeless people, particularly those who are sleeping rough, is fraught with uncertainties. Beyond the daily worry about where to sleep for the night, concerns about food, warmth, and personal safety are just some of the ongoing issues which are a reality for rough sleepers. Unlike the housed population who generally have stability in shelter, food and safety, there is little that is certain or constant in the lives of people who are sleeping rough. With the cell phone becoming an integral part of modern life, a device used daily by many people, there are possibilities that perhaps homeless people are able to erect practices of routine and structure around the device in an attempt to construct order in a life in which much is unknown.

## **Homeless People and Music**

Music is an important part of youth culture. Bennett (2000) describes that “music is a primary, if not *the* primary leisure resource for young people” (34). One genre which is particularly associated with youth is rap and hip-hop music.

Traditionally, rap and hip-hop songs have been criticised for themes of violence, drugs and misogynistic attitudes towards women. Hadley and Yancy (2012) argue however, that rap and hip-hop have a number of benefits within the context of music therapy. The act of listening to rap and hip-hop music in a therapy setting can prompt individuals to reflect on their own

“personal narratives- stories filled with pain, loss, grief and joy” (Hadley and Yancy, 2012: xxxiii).

In doing so, Hadley and Yancy (2012) describe that this sometimes encourages individuals to speak and release emotions which have long been stifled (xxxiv). Furthermore, Hadley and Yancy (2012) explain that by creating their own rap lyrics, individuals in therapy can feel empowered and a sense of self pride and accomplishment in their musical expression (xxxv).

Music also plays an important role within the negotiation of personal identity, particularly for youth (Bennett, 2000; MacDonald, 2002). Specific music tastes can act as a mode of affiliation. MacDonald (2002) describes that such musical preferences can inform an individual on the way they choose to express their identity. This can include the way someone chooses to dress, the friends they associate with and even political ideologies which may be influenced by their musical genre of choice (MacDonald, 2002: 463). Furthermore, MacDonald (2002) explains that the act of creating music also serves to shape an individual’s sense of self around music. Using the analogy of a child learning to play the piano, MacDonald (2002) highlights that besides the act of creating music itself, engaging in routines (such as practice or study) around it, all influence the way an individual orientates themselves in terms of their own unique personal identity (464).

The body of research on homeless people and music is limited in scope, however the literature available provides an indication of the value of music in the lives of those who live on the street. Bailey and Anderson (2002) studied the experiences of homeless men and their participation in a choir made up of other homeless men. Their study found that participation in the choir was a cathartic, healing experience for the men, providing them with an outlet to

release various emotional traumas they had endured (*Ibid*). By performing in the choir, the men expressed a sense of self-pride and empowerment, along with a sense of solidarity and affiliation by belonging to the group (*Ibid*). Jurgensmeier (2012) yielded similar results in her study of song-writing therapy amongst homeless youth, who also appreciated the opportunity for both self-expression and the release of stress through music. Currently, there has not yet been research conducted into how homeless youth use their cell phone with specific attention to music. However, the studies above provide an indication that music may be beneficial to homeless people as an outlet for self-expression, self-pride and a sense of collective identity.

A valuable framework for understanding music in the lives of rough sleepers is found in the 'life world' approach. In fact, the 'life world' approach is salient in understanding the broader themes explored within this thesis generally. Allerby and Ferm (2005) eloquently describe the life world approach below:

"It is the everyday world of our experiences, which we take for granted and where we live our lives (178)...Hence the relationship between a human being and the world and among human beings is dissoluble. This leads to a view of the human being as participating in the world (179)."

Essentially the life-world approach is an acknowledgement of the interconnected relationship between an individual and the dimensions that make up their world. As Carey (1995: 371) describes, this theoretical orientation is an attempt "to be truer to human nature and experience it as it ordinarily is encountered."

Therefore, the life-world approach places value on gaining an understanding into how an individual is situated within and in relation to their world. It places value on their understandings, rather than seeking to draw conclusions or make definitive statements of a general nature. This approach is in harmony with the intention of thesis, which is to glean an understanding of the experiences of young people and their use of the cell phone in street life.

## Methodology

When researching a marginalised group of people, such as the homeless, it is vital to invest a high degree of thought, care and attention when planning the methodological process so as not to further disempower them and impose dominant assumptions on them. This section will examine in detail, the methodological considerations and processes used during this research project.

Scholars have long struggled to reach a consensus in terms of establishing a fixed and concrete definition of qualitative research. Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 8) aptly capture the essence of qualitative research, stating:

“The word *qualitative* implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency. Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry.”

This quote highlights the interpretive nature of qualitative research. It is a method which moves beyond merely observing and quantifying phenomena in the social world. Instead, qualitative research attempts to delve beneath the surface and retrieve the reasons why a given phenomenon may be occurring. Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) remind researchers to acknowledge that they are embedded in the social world they are observing and therefore, are unable to fully extricate themselves from that which they are observing. Snape and Spencer

(2003) reiterate this sentiment adding that qualitative research regards “social life in terms of processes rather than in static terms” (4). In essence, the qualitative method is a highly reflexive, interpretative approach to research which acknowledges the complexities and intricacies of the social world. It seeks to harvest a rich, organic and authentic understanding of the world, rather than extracting meaning in a clinical, controlled setting which qualitative scholars would argue, impacts on the phenomena observed (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

In relation to homeless research, the qualitative approach has a number of strengths which outweigh the advantages of quantitative research in this particular context. As mentioned earlier, there is absolutely a need for more quantitative data to be gathered on the homeless population, especially in Christchurch, where there are currently no publicly available statistics on the size of the population as well as the fact that the New Zealand scholarship has already, a comparatively rich pool of knowledge on homelessness which has been sourced via qualitative means (for instance, see Groot et al., 2008; Groot et al., 2011; King, 2014; Marsh, 2006; Radley et al., 2010). However, for the purposes of this research project, a qualitative approach is more suitable than a quantitative stance for gaining deep and meaningful insights into how and why rough sleeping youth use their cell phones— in particular, the ways they accrue social capital and the worlds they inhabit. Ultimately, statistics and figures are limited in their ability to provide the rich answers sought in understanding cell phone use as a meaningful experience of individuals sleeping rough; answers which are not readily quantified.

Furthermore, there has not yet been any purely qualitative studies published to date which exclusively examine rough sleeping youth and the use of their cell phones in their life on the street. This gap in the literature is further rationale for adopting a qualitative scope for

research. Admittedly, it would have been ideal to adopt a mixed methodological approach combining the relative strengths which both qualitative and quantitative research methods could provide (for instance, including a survey to supplement in-depth interviews). However, this would have been difficult given the limited time constraints in the Master of Arts programme, and would have more than likely compromised the overall quality of the research by attempting to take on too much. Also, it would be difficult to conduct a survey yielding useful data without any official statistics on the population to provide context for any data gathered. Sturdy statistical data is sorely needed on the rough sleeping population in New Zealand, and in particular, Christchurch. However, for this to be done thoroughly, yielding reliable, robust statistics which navigate the many methodological challenges inherent when researching this population, this deficit in the literature would be best filled by others.

In addition, seeking to define and label people as 'homeless' or 'rough sleepers,' which is necessary in order to quantify and generate statistics, runs directly counter to my interest in these people's agency and understandings in relation to the cell phone. People move in and out of the streets and form social groups with multiple factors shaping their social worlds rather than being solely defined by where they slept on any given night. Too much quantification risks assuming things about their worlds rather than allowing them the space to speak for themselves. This is particularly important considering that labels are applied with zeal in the professional and public discourse in an attempt to understand and classify homelessness. This practice effectively relegates those who sleep rough, to a passive position as mute and disempowered subjects. As Cameron (2001: 16) states, "words can be powerful: the institutional authority to categorise people is frequently inseparable from the authority to do

things to them.” Matheson (2005: 24) shares a similar sentiment saying that “the act of labelling a person (or group or thing) defines how members of the society can understand and judge any action done by that person and allows them to generalize about them.” These quotes from Cameron (2001) and Matheson (2005) are pertinent at conveying the power of language and labels, while providing further justification for adopting a qualitative framework in favour of the empirical rigors in the quantitative paradigm.

A notable strength of qualitative research when researching rough sleeping populations, lies in its reflective, naturalistic approach to the people being researched (Snape and Spencer, 2003). Homeless people are often wary and suspicious of those in positions of authority or power (Hudson et al., 2008; Kryda and Compton, 2009) and as a result, many are cautious when approached by researchers (Robinson, 2008). Qualitative research places value on the individual. As Denzin and Lincoln (2011) describe, while both qualitative and quantitative scholars are concerned with the individual and their unique perspectives, those in the qualitative tradition would argue that they are able to document an individual’s perspective more closely, placing value on the unique experiences, descriptions and stories imparted from participant to researcher. The use of quantitative methods, which, by their very nature, seek to isolate and observe clinically, highlights how the individual’s perspective and experiences can become lost in the desire for objectivity, impartiality and validity, ideals so esteemed in quantitative research. The rough sleeping population in particular, both in New Zealand and abroad, have been scrutinised, analysed and dissected by the media, researchers, governments and aid organisations alike. Rough sleepers are rarely afforded the opportunity to narrate their own stories and move beyond their designated role of passive subjects in the public domain.

Rarely do they get the chance to share their own perspectives, experiences and wisdoms on their own terms. Qualitative methods provide a means of collecting information, knowledge and wisdom which places value and power on the individual; a chance for participants to be empowered and actively tell their own stories on their own terms. This is a novel approach when interacting with the homeless whose views are seldom consulted or regarded. By placing value on the individual and their unique responses, this helps to foster a relationship of trust between the researcher and the participant, which is particularly important for people like rough sleepers who are, by necessity, guarded and wary, especially with those who they perceive to be in a position of authority. Comparatively, the controlled, clinical and inflexible methods of quantitative research could be said to further exacerbate the imbalance in power relations already existing between the researcher and participant. Thus, the task of establishing a foundation of trust and reciprocity with rough sleepers is a challenge in and of itself, let alone with the rigid parameters sanctioned when adopting a quantitative methodological approach. These factors above, particularly the notion of research as a platform for young rough sleepers to speak and be heard, were motivating factors in the decision to use in-depth interviews as my qualitative method of choice.

In-depth interviewing is a useful tool for unearthing nuggets of knowledge and wisdom which ordinarily, would be difficult to uncover. Legard et al. (2003) describe that a significant strength of in-depth interviewing lies in its exploratory and explanatory potential. Researchers using the in-depth interviewing technique, have the opportunity to delve beyond the surface level and probe and examine fully, via follow up questions, to ensure a thorough understanding of a given issue is reached. This is especially useful when teasing out intricate, complex subject

matters, as well as issues of a sensitive nature (Lewis, 2003). The interactive element of interviews, namely the interplay between interviewer and interviewee, mean that interviewers can be reflexive in the way questions are asked (Legard et al., 2003). In other words, the interviewer can ask questions in such a way which encourages an interviewee to participate freely in discussion (*Ibid*). This does not mean the interviewer will ask leading questions, rather, that they are mindful of phrasing questions in a manner which makes the participant feel comfortable and willing to partake in an honest, open discussion. Furthermore, the interactive, reflexive aspect of in-depth interviewing means that the course of the interview and subsequent questions asked, can follow on from an interviewee's responses in an organic, natural way, whilst still retaining the structure required to maintain professionalism and ensure that the major questions of the research are comprehensively investigated (*Ibid*). In-depth interviews which naturally progress based on an interviewee's responses, create an environment where the participant is more likely to feel comfortable and at ease to share their views and experiences (Lewis, 2003). Similarly, the reflexive, narrative element of in-depth interviews disrupts the traditional power structures between researcher and participant (*Ibid*). As mentioned earlier, qualitative research, and notably the in-depth interviewing method, redistributes the imbalance of power by providing more control to the participant in narrating their own experiences, and again, when the interviewer allows the focus of the discussion and following questions, to be influenced by the responses given. Negating the acute effect of traditional power structures which already exist in the researcher and participant dynamic is important. However, this becomes even more critical when working with a group of people such as rough sleeping youth, who endure challenging life circumstances, which coupled with

their age, place them at considerable disadvantage (especially when compared to the mainstream population) in their position as participants who are part of a vulnerable population. It is well documented that people who are homeless have poor health outcomes (Lewis et al., 2003; Schanzer et al., 2007), high rates of suicide ideation, self-harm, and suicide (Roy et al., 2004; Tyler et al., 2003) and are “150 times more likely to be assaulted fatally” (Shaw, Dorling and Smith, 1999, cited in Groot, et al, 2008). These factors, along with its suitability and sensitivity when conducting research on rough sleeping populations, were all influential in informing the decision to use in-depth interviewing as the primary means for data collection.

The in-depth interviews conducted as part of this Masters project, were between 40 minutes and one hour in length. Prior to the commencement of the study, the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee reviewed the project thoroughly before granting their approval (HEC 2014/18). All of the interviews were conducted at public locations in the Christchurch area. The location of the interviews was proposed by each interviewee, with the only stipulation being that the venue be in a public place to ensure safety for both researcher and participant. Allowing the participant to select the interview location, was due to a desire to make the interview process as comfortable as possible for them, and to maximise their convenience in attending the interview venue. Prior to commencing the interview, the participant was given a research information sheet to read (and later, take away with them). To supplement this and overcome any possible literacy issues participants may have had, this information sheet was also communicated verbally to ensure a full understanding of the research was reached. A verbal discussion, similar to that described above, was also used prior

to the signing of the research consent form to ensure any potential literacy barriers could be overcome so as to ensure participants were fully informed in their decision over whether to participate in the research or not. This included a discussion reiterating that their anonymity would be strictly upheld, and any information provided as part of the research project, would be stored in secure locations, using appropriate safeguards to protect and maintain confidentiality at all times. Information provided by participants would be stored securely for five years, and after this point, would be destroyed. Participants were also informed that they would have the right to withdraw their consent at any time up until the point of publication publicly. As reimbursement for their participation, participants consenting to the research were given either a supermarket voucher or a cell phone top-up of their choice to the value of \$25. The money for the vouchers was funded with the help of a scholarship from Pacific Islands Polynesian Education Foundation (PIPEF). Following the signing of consent forms, the interviews were conducted and recorded using an MP3 device.

The interview format was semi-structured to foster a natural, open discussion whilst still structured enough so as to retain focus on exploring the research questions in detail and to give some comparability across the interviews. The focus of the interview initially, was directed by asking the participant about their cell phone and its various functions and capabilities. From this starting point, topics covered in most interviews included evaluating and describing the utility of the cell phone in assisting in street life, reasons behind their preferred mode of communication via the cell phone, the people contacted via the cell phone, what life would be like without a cell phone and whether or not their cell phone usage had changed at all since sleeping rough. The flow of the interview was directed by the participants' responses.

Throughout the interview, brief notes summarising the participants' answers were taken, and providing that the notes were correct and accurate, the participant was asked to sign them (and amend if necessary) at the conclusion of the interview. This was done to ensure that in the event a participant could not be reached to review the transcript of their interview (for instance, if they lost their phone on the streets or did not check email, for instance), there would at the very least, be the benefit of the participants reviewing and verifying the notes immediately after the interview.

The participants for this study were recruited by attending lunchtime gatherings for the homeless at Latimer Square in Central Christchurch. Various aid agencies such as Drug Arm and the Salvation Army for instance, provide meals for the homeless at Latimer Square most days of the week. I would regularly attend these during June and July 2014, to try to gain an understanding of the rough sleeping fraternity and their schedules, as well as become a familiar face to them. My presence at the feeds was aided by Amy and Geraldine, Christchurch residents who run a Facebook page called 'Help for the Homeless' and by older members of the rough sleeping family with whom I had established a good rapport. Through these important social connections who could vouch for me, and by regularly attending the feeds, I was able to earn the trust of four rough sleeping youth, who kindly agreed to participate in my research project. After conducting the interviews with the four youth who I had initially recruited, they were eager to help me recruit others, and put me in touch with some of their friends who were also sleeping rough. The benefits of such snowball recruitment include efficiency in both gathering participants and finding similar individuals who fit the criteria required for participation (Sadler et al., 2010). Some of those who had turned me down initially when

approached at Latimer Square, were happy to participate after their friends participated. This illustrates another benefit in the snowball recruitment technique: the ability to foster trust amongst participants (*Ibid*). One youth in the study, Tyson, explained:

“Every other time I sit down and usually have like interviews and stuff, it's usually with like a lawyer or something, or me going to court or something (laughs). So that's sort of why I said no to you the last time I seen you at the feed.”

This quote from Tyson highlights the suspicion of some of the youth towards people who they perceive to be in authority. Gaining the trust of the participants, was instrumental in the recruitment of others to the project.

In terms of ease of recruitment, my ethnicity, gender and age (at the time of interviews) may have been a facilitating factor in the recruitment of youth to this study. My positioning as a researcher of Pacific Island descent, may have helped to break down barriers while appearing relatable to the youth, who, incidentally, were all either Maori or Pasifika. Also, being female, I may have been viewed by the youth as less threatening. This is in contrast to men who often seem to be portrayed as possessing authority and power, a generalisation which is seems to be perpetuated in the public discourse. Finally it is possible that my age at the time of interviewing and recruitment (25 years) may have made me seem more relatable and accessible to the youth I was interacting with.

In total, eight in-depth interviews were conducted between July and August 2014. All of the participants owned a cell phone and were (at the time of interview) ‘without shelter’, or in other words, ‘sleeping rough’ at various locations in the Christchurch city area. Of the eight

participants, three were female and the remaining five, male. All of the interviewees were of either Maori (six) or Pacific Island descent (two). Participants interviewed were between the ages of 16-24 years.

Three main reasons provide a rationale for the age range of 16-24 years. Firstly, given the high rates of cell phone use amongst mainstream youth, it is pertinent to explore how cell phones open up participation for rough sleeping youth, not only in wider youth culture, but also within a vulnerable population, given their comparatively limited financial resources. Secondly, Child, Youth and Family (CYF), a division of the Ministry of Social Development, which is responsible for children in state care, releases youth from their protection once they reach 17 years of age. A CYF spokeswoman maintains that social workers do endeavour to remain in contact with these youth after they reach 17, as well as make provisions for those who do not feel ready to pursue life independently from CYF (Jones, 2013). However, these efforts by CYFS do not negate the fact that youth from just 17 years of age, are being released from state care and protection with limited resources, life skills and the social support necessary for a life beyond merely subsisting. The decision to include 16 and 17 year-olds in this research project, some of whom were once under the care of the state, was hugely important. These youth can provide unique insights into the relative utility of the cell phone in street life which, furthermore, can be used to suggest effective cell phone mediated assistance for government and aid organisations alike. Finally, my own age of 25 years (at the time of interviewing) was another influencing factor in determining the age range for this research project. It was anticipated that youth would be more comfortable and open to discussion with someone who they perceive to be in their age group rather than someone who is older, who could perhaps be

viewed as someone in authority, and therefore positioned less well to facilitate a candid discussion. These considerations in research design seemed to be effective at creating a space where youth felt comfortable to share their experiences about the cell phone in their life on the streets. Ensuring the youth felt comfortable and at ease to speak freely was hugely important to me. Following the interviews, it was not only an honour, but also ratified the rationale behind my research design, when some of the interviewees chose to remain in contact with me.

For the purpose of analysis, all interviews were transcribed. Cameron (2001: 33) outlines that transcribing is helpful by way of focusing on “the characteristics of spoken discourse” which she poses, is more familiar to most people in a written format. The transcribing of interviews was conducted by myself and a colleague who was given clear instructions on how to accurately record participants’ responses documented in the audio recording. This person met the highest standards of confidentiality. To ensure accuracy during the transcribing process, each of the transcripts was reviewed a second time for accuracy.

Following transcription of the interviews, analysis involved a two-pronged approach involving both a thematic and discourse analysis. The thematic analysis involved the arranging of each transcribed interview into broad themes. According to Ritchie et al. (2003), establishing themes in a thematic analysis could include recurring topics in conversation, or general behaviours, motivations or views evident in the transcript. A common criticism of thematic analyses is not only that they can be argued to be subjective and open to interpretation, these themes can sometimes lack context. It is important to note that care was taken to ensure that

the themes extracted as part of the analysis for this project, were a valid account of people's lived experiences, rather than themes plucked and produced incognizant of the contextual basis from which they gain their full meaning. Cameron (2001) highlights the importance of viewing "communicative acts in their original context" as they do not exist in isolation (147). This importance of context extends not only to speech itself, but to a sensitivity and understanding of the people behind the voices and the spaces they inhabit. With regards to the youth in my interviews, my approach towards analysis was grounded in a contextual awareness of the youth themselves gained by spending time with them, the people they hung out with and the spaces they occupied. Furthermore, the importance of context prompted me to think about the youth not as 'homeless youth', but rather as youth, first and foremost, whose experiences with the cell phone are conditioned by the challenges of street life. A contextual awareness is also in recognition of the fact that people who are on the streets often move between the varying states of homelessness. Ultimately, in this project, the value of context lies in its ability to highlight the humanity in the often dehumanised portrayal of 'homelessness'. These are people who are more than just 'the homeless'; far more than people who are routinely defined by way of their housing arrangements. These are people who are sons and daughters, mothers and fathers and people with a range of strengths and weaknesses- just like anyone else.

The importance of context during the analysis, provided the rationale for including a discourse analysis to supplement and avert the limitations which a purely thematic based approach would present. The power of discourse analysis is grounded in the fact that it focuses not only on what is said, but also how it is said (Cameron, 2001). Such an approach would include an examination of the communicative act in its entirety. This could include an analysis

of pauses, intonation, words used, or any contradictions which become apparent. For the purpose of this research project, discourse analysis was useful in arranging the material thematically. The method prompted me to think carefully about the material in broad terms before categorising speech as (or under) a given theme and consider whether or not it accurately reflected the context from which it was taken.

Discourse and thematic analyses often face criticism for lacking objectivity and being open to interpretation, making replication difficult (Mills et al., 2010). However, in regards to discourse analysis, Cameron (2001) suggests that it effectively captures the complexity of life, and encourages people to engage on their own terms rather than via arbitrary parameters prescribed in methods considered more objective (questionnaire, for instance). Echoing the sentiments of Denzin and Lincoln (2011) at the start of this chapter, within a social constructionist perspective, you are closer to a lived reality.

The intention of the discussion chapters to follow this section, was not to draw conclusions or establish generalisations about Christchurch's rough sleeping youth, nor claim that the project gathered a representative sample of this particular population. Rather, it is intended that this research project will shed light on the lived experiences of eight young people and the use of their cell phones during life on the street. I want this project to be seen as a window to see people through the lens of their unique experiences, rather than an opportunity to draw conclusions about who they are from this project, which is essentially, a microscopic fragment in time.

## Discussion

### Introduction

The aim of this research project was to try and better understand the experiences of young rough sleepers and the ways they use their cell phones to navigate the challenges of street life. In addition, it was hoped that this thesis would provide an opportunity for their stories to be told on their own terms- which to the discredit (and detriment) of society, is a rarity in mainstream discourse. That said, however, the experiences detailed in the sections to follow below, are not intended to be utilised as generalisations applicable to the street youth population of Christchurch broadly. To do so would not only be remiss, but inaccurate, particularly when considering this study's limited sample size of eight participants.

Furthermore, the fact that the youth who participated in this project were living without shelter at the time of interview, is by no means definitive of their identity. It is merely intended that this research will provide an opportunity to gain an insight into the unique, lived experiences of these particular youths' cell phone use during their time on the street, rather than to draw conclusions about who they are as people, or the population as a collective.

Specifically, this chapter will attempt to describe the unique experiences with the cell phone during life on the streets for eight youth: Aroha, Benji, Charlie, Mitchell, Monique, Savannah, Tyson and Will (all names have been changed to protect anonymity). These youth were all sleeping rough in locations around Christchurch during the time of interview in July-August, 2014. The analysis to follow this introduction, will utilise the term 'streeties' instead of 'rough sleepers' or 'homeless'- which the youth (and other streeties for that matter) commonly

used to refer to fellow rough sleepers in their street family. This is done not only in recognition of the power of semantics, but to give prominence to streeties' voices and words as spoken by them. In turn, this is all the more important considering that this chapter in particular, is intended to give precedence to streeties' voices.

At the outset of this project, prior to conducting interviews, I had grand expectations of the utility of the cell phone in daily life on the streets. Due to the widespread use of the cell phone in today's society and the relatively low costs involved in purchasing and operating a basic cell phone, I had high hopes that the technology would unlock a wealth of opportunities for young streeties, who have limited financial resources compared to the mainstream population. Following the interviews and subsequent transcription, these expectations were upturned. This chapter will discuss the use of the cell phone in terms of social capital, namely the fact that the cell phone was largely used for bonding capital above bridging capital and the opportunities it could harness. The second section in this chapter will discuss the value of the cell phone in reaffirming their sense of identity and belonging. Finally, this analysis will explore the unanticipated use of the cell phone as a vehicle for not just music, but chords of hope, stability and memories of better times.

### **The Cell Phone and Social Capital in Street Life**

In terms of social capital, the cell phone was primarily used by streeties for bonding capital, which refers to connections with socially similar individuals for emotional support and fraternity (Ellison et al., 2007). By contrast, bridging capital, or ties with socially dissimilar individuals can assist in personal growth and advancement (Fitzpatrick et al., 2007), is scarcely

utilised. This section on social capital and the cell phone, will posit a number of possible reasons for the streeties' tendency of cell phone use primarily to strengthen bonding capital, as opposed to bridging capital which could potentially assist them in both street life and beyond. Although this study is limited in depth and generalisability due to a sample size of eight participants, this research can be situated within the wider scholarship on social capital in impoverished communities. This chapter, corroborates the findings of other studies which found that perhaps indeed, the concept of social capital operates differently in poor or marginalised populations.

The vast majority of the streeties interviewed, reported using the cell phone for the purpose of strengthening and maintaining bonding capital ties. This reliance on bonding capital reiterated similar findings by Oliver and Cheff's (2012) study into the social capital of young homeless women. Such ties were mainly with other street based peers, and a select few housed contacts with whom they occasionally contacted. At the time of interview, Monique had been sleeping in abandoned, quake damaged buildings in central Christchurch since being released from prison. The other streeties speak highly of her, particularly her kind, caring nature and how she always puts the needs of other streeties above her own. She explains the importance of contacting other streeties:

“Like you know to check if they're ok. Especially if you haven't seen them. You need to know if they're alright. Cause you need to know like if someone could get robbed that day, be in jail. Something could've happened. You, you worry a lot about each other cause you start to think of each other as family. We're tight.”

This quote from Monique highlights the strong connections within the streetie fraternity. Furthermore, it is reflective of the general theme of closeness and camaraderie amongst streeties. Across all interviews, words like 'family' and 'brothers' and 'sisters' were regularly used in reference to other streeties which underlines the high level of kinship and intimacy within the community. It also illustrates that perhaps bonding capital, such as that described by Monique in the quote above, is necessary to support immediate survival on the streets.

A recurring theme across the interviews is that the cell phone was used regularly to not just sustain and strengthen strong ties, but to actively build networks of support with those whom they trusted. This reliance on bonding capital, proved advantageous to immediate survival on the streets. Savannah came to live on the streets after problems at home drove her out. At the time of interview, she was pregnant with her second child. Similar to the other streeties who were interviewed, she explains how the cell phone was useful in sustaining strong ties who could assist her with her needs on the street:

"I'd just text people and ask them if they got any money or text my boyfriend's stepdad and ask if he's got any food, or a loan. I mean, it means a lot right now cause I'm pregnant again. (Laughs) I can't go starving all the time."

Aroha also found herself on the streets with "nowhere else to go" after being kicked out of her last housing arrangement. Like Monique and Savannah, Aroha earns money through street sex work. As she does not rely on a minder to ensure her safety during her work, she describes that she, Monique and Savannah would "just look after and text each other" when they were out

working. Unlike Aroha, Savannah relies on her boyfriend (who is also a streetie) to be her minder and uses the cell phone to ensure her safety:

“If I go out of town, if I go to a client’s house, I’ll text him the address. So that if he knows I’m in trouble, he can come to the address. If I don’t text him and tell him I’m going out of town and I go out on a job, he knows where my spot is. So he’ll just come there, so I’ve always got everything sussed.”

Savannah also spoke about another working girl in her network who she would contact via her cell phone for safety and then offer to share facilities for work:

“Like if I know she’s gone on a job, I’d text and see if she’s alright, you know. She’d be like yeah I’m just at the motel blah blah blah, if you need the room it’s here. But see us, we’re more like, do it in the car sort of thing, cause I can’t be bothered going to the motel or just in case she’s there or someone else is there.”

Also in regards to safety, many of the streeties interviewed, described using the cell phone to ensure safety of themselves and other streeties by avoiding detection from the Police who will arrest those found to be unlawfully occupying a building. Monique explains:

“It’s really good to have a phone when you’re squatting in the same building with other people and you’re on a different level and you want to tell them that the Police are coming, so then you could just text it, or ring and be like, ‘the cops are here’ and all do the gap somewhere. Or be like, text someone up like, ‘don’t go to your squatting place cause cops have come past,’ or you know. It’s just to give other people a warning cause

this is where they're gonna go sleep. Like the last thing you'd want for them is to get busted and arrested cause they've (the Police) really gone hard on squatting now. ”

These quotes illustrate that the cell phone is regularly used by streeties in ways that strengthen relationships. As shown by the quotes above, perhaps it is the extreme, often uncertain conditions of street life which demand that streeties and their friends, band together to ensure the sharing of resources and information to optimise the chances of survival in such difficult circumstances. This sharing of information with others in their streetie family, is telling of the networks of trust which exist within their fraternity. In this way, the cell phone could be seen as a medium for enhancing the social connections within a group of people whose relationship is already galvanised through shared experience.

Nearly all of the streeties interviewed for this project had a limited, highly selective pool of social connections with whom they were willing to contact or receive contact from via the cell phone. This was true for both weak and strong ties. Tyson, like the other streeties interviewed, has made a conscious choice to be selective with whom he communicates with using his mobile. The pathway into the streets for Tyson was due to a number of factors including a desire to leave the gang lifestyle he was born into, an escape from a violent home environment, and his love for a girl, who happened to be sleeping rough at the time. He describes why he has cut contact with his family and why he would never contact them again, even if future circumstances were perfect:

“My family has sort of rejected me so I don't really like to talk to them... It's, they didn't show me love and if they wanted to try and build bridges again, it's like, after all I got

put through, after sixteen years, and I'm only seventeen now, like, I just can't go back to that you know... I've tried building bridges with them and they just chose to keep burning them, so I was like, cheers then, if you don't wanna help me, then I'll just do it on my own."

This quote from Tyson highlights the pain he has suffered at being rejected by his family at such a young age. Because of this hurt, Tyson is resolute about looking after himself and not relying on family who have let him down so badly in the past. Through this resolve to never get hurt again, Tyson, like nearly all of the other streeties, is extremely selective and wary as to who he trusts enough to allow entry into his social circle.

Savannah explains why she has also limited her cell phone contacts to a select few people who she trusts:

"I cut all my family off because they judged me. There's no point in judging people, like everyone's got a past and I know my family's past ain't pretty. It's not perfect and that's what I try to explain to them is that your past isn't perfect, so why sit there and judge me on mine, my mistakes I'm doing right now. I mean, you can tell somebody to not go out there and be a prostitute or working girl, but whether they choose to listen or not is a different story. Don't sit there and call me a maggot, or text me I'm a maggot, or I'm a useless mum, or this and that, when bro, your past isn't pretty."

In referring to terms such as 'useless mum' or 'maggot' as words which she does not want to be used about her in her communicative interactions, she can be seen to be describing a safely

bounded world of people she trusts. By limiting her social circle to a select and trusted few, she also avoids judgement of others at her lifestyle choices.

This notion of trust and predictability was important to streeties. When asked about whether they would answer a phone call from a random or unknown number, all interviewees responded that they would not. Similarly, when asked if they felt comfortable distributing their phone number to strangers or people they did not know well, almost all of the youth replied that they would not freely provide their number. When asked the reasons for both of the questions above, language like 'private number,' 'cops' and 'not knowing' was used frequently by the streeties. Language of this sort, highlights the caution with which streeties regard communication via the cell phone with contacts they do not immediately recognise, or those who they anticipate to be in positions of authority. The general suspicion and wariness that people who are homeless have towards organisations and individuals in authority, has been well documented in the literature (Hudson et al., 2008; Kryda and Compton, 2009). It is possible that this mistrust of organisations and authority is part of the reason why streeties in this research project were unwilling to answer calls or texts from numbers with which they were not familiar. Furthermore, life on the streets is full of challenges and dangers. Perhaps making the conscious decision to not answer unknown phone calls or texts is a way of taking control of some of the uncertainty inherent in street life.

It is possible that this tendency towards mistrust, and the subsequent narrowing of social circles, may have helped to forge a culture of independence and self-reliance amongst the young streeties who were interviewed as part of this project. The desire and sheer

necessity to be autonomous on the streets meant that many of the streeties interviewed, regarded the cell phone as something they had to be willing to let go of too, in relation to survival on the streets. Many of the streeties described their cell phone as being of great importance to them, both in terms of sentimentality and as the only possession they own of value in a material sense. Phrases like “my everything,” “prized possession” and “could not live without” were some of the words used by the streeties to highlight this. However, when asked whether they would forgo their cell phone for food and some blankets on a particularly cold, difficult night, they all responded that they would give up their cell phone for these resources to survive.

Will articulates the position of the cell phone in this bitter calculus. At the time of interview, Will had been sleeping rough for about a year. He had come to Christchurch with the hope of building a relationship with his father who he had not yet met. After falling out with his father, getting kicked out of home, and with no place to stay, Will began sleeping in abandoned buildings. Below he explains the absolute importance of survival on the streets, even when that means breaking the law:

“Half these people are so desperate to stay out of the cold and when the cops arrested me the other day, they were like, ‘it’s not worth it,’ but I said, ‘yeah it is.’ I’ve got less of a chance of getting caught by you guys than getting hypothermia, you know, and like obviously they don’t really take that into account. They think it’s a choice when it’s actually a last resort. That’s the sad part about it, when main people of society, they just

don't understand the situation, you know. They think, 'oh yeah, just being lazy, just pull finger, get a job, go get yourself a house,' but it's not as easy as that. Not at all."

In relation to the utility of the cell phone and whether he would trade it in for blankets on a cold night, he explained:

"Blanket definitely, cause the current situation, a cell phone can't keep you warm. But then again you could use a cell phone to contact someone to help you out, but yeah, I'd probably have to reach out for the blanket as a final resort... At the end of the day it's more important to be warm and have food in your belly; survive longer in the long run."

Survival is ultimate on the streets. While the cell phone can connect streeties with the resources they need, or with those who could help them, it cannot provide immediate shelter needed on a night where the temperatures are sub-zero, nor nourishment for empty bellies. Will's quote highlights that the critical need to survive overrides any latent potential the cell phone could provide. Below, Savannah also explains the limited use of the cell phone in practical terms:

"Nah, cause it can't keep me warm (laughs). Can't keep me warm (laughs)...You know, when you're on the streets it's kinda hard, you need money, you need a job. If you don't wanna be a streetie you need money, you need a job to get into a house. And you need money to pay for power to keep yourself warm. So yeah making contact with people, it's useful, you know, if you go try to apply for jobs, but you know that's kinda hard as well, you know, it's useful but then it's not. Cause you'll be sitting there waiting for the phone call that doesn't even happen."

In the quote above, Savannah insightfully emphasises that while the cell phone can be of value in terms of connecting streeties with potential job opportunities or people who could help in her predicament, the technology has its limits. She implies, when joking about the cell phone not providing warmth and the wait for a call back from a potential employer, that taking personal responsibility for her own survival on the streets is important. In this way, the cell phone could be seen as a symbol of the networks she does not have, and further justifies her inclination towards self-reliance.

Mitchell ended up on the streets after the breakdown of a long-term relationship. The deliberate narrowing of his social circle to a select and trusted few individuals, was due not only to a desire to be independent, but also shame at living on the streets. Below he describes the importance of being independent:

“Everyone at home is like pinging on Mum and Dad... I don’t wanna be. I want to be different. I want to be, you know, be a man... On the streets, you know, teaches you how to survive. Also teaches you not to take things for granted.”

In this quote, there is an element of pride evident; pride at being independent and surviving in such challenging circumstances. However, the line between pride and shame seems porous. This could be another reason why these young streeties consciously maintained such limited, exclusive social spheres. Mitchell, at the time of interview, avoided all contact with his home-based friends and parents. When asked why he made this decision to sever ties with people who cared about him, he replied:

“Shame. Cause we Samoan people, we don’t –we love to be hard workers and we love to have money, we love to have cars and places to stay. I don’t have that...I don’t want them to know. I don’t want them to worry. They have their own things to worry about...I would rather keep it to myself. I’ll do well cause I know I will. Be positive, keep my head up high, knowing that one day I will go back home and tell them.”

Aroha also shared similar sentiments about letting others know that she is sleeping rough:

“I don’t want them to feel sorry for me and I don’t want them to look down on me, like, ugh...I don’t wanna be labelled as a ‘homeless person’.”

In the quote below, Monique explicitly refers to shame and pride being part of the reason why herself, and some of her streetie friends, choose not to reach out with their cell phones to access help and support:

“It can be a pride thing. I know like, knowing some of them it’s a pride thing and then it’s a shame thing. And for some of them it’s just the situation that they’re in... I think cause I’ve put myself in this situation, I’d rather take myself out.”

These feelings of shame were echoed across the other interviews also. Words like ‘judge’, ‘shame’, ‘private’, ‘keep to myself’ were voiced by interviewees in relation to their rationale for not reaching out and accessing help via the cell phone. The use of such language could be interpreted as these young streeties’ justification for keeping their social worlds small, but safe and free from judgement and the accompanying shame.

Although free from scrutiny from those who may judge them harshly on their lifestyle and choices, the decision to have exclusive contacts, may be restrictive in terms of opportunity and personal development, particularly in regards to moving beyond life on the streets. The benefits of social capital are well documented in the literature. Bridging capital, which refers to connections with socially dissimilar individuals, could be of value to streeties looking to move beyond the streets, as these types of connections can present them with opportunities which would not ordinarily be available (Fitzpatrick et al., 2007). However, streeties' strong reliance on bonding capital, particularly the tendency to band together for support and survival, means that their network of social connections, is relatively limited and homogenous. As a result, the potential for opportunities to arise facilitated by a varied network of socially dissimilar individuals, is stunted. Part of the reason for this could be found in the literature which details the negative effect of social capital within marginalised communities (Caughy et al., 2003; Fitzpatrick et al., 2007; Oliver and Cheff, 2012). The fact that the cell phone is not powerful in mediating their circumstances in terms of sleeping rough is, perhaps connected to the kind of connections they fall into. Specifically, by being so closely bound to others who are sleeping rough, it is difficult to reach beyond this network and access help from socially dissimilar individuals who could help them transcend their current circumstances. In other words, by banding together and locking out others outside their circle, they effectively lock out the opportunity to be helped also.

Despite the cell phone being used mainly for the purpose of nurturing relationships with a trusted few, there were some instances in which the cell phone was used in terms of bridging capital. A number of the streeties interviewed, reported using their cell phone to get in contact

with 'Nurse Lynne,' a nurse who is contracted by Youth and Cultural Development (YCD), to assist both housed and street youth, in matters of sexual health and wellbeing. Being pregnant and sleeping rough at the time of the interview, Savannah used her cell phone to keep in contact with her midwife in case "anything went wrong." Most of the streeties reported subscribing to a text notification service managed by the Salvation Army, which notified them if the evening food van would not be in operation due to inclement weather or staffing issues. All streeties in their interviews, mentioned Amy Burke as a significant source of help in their daily lives on the streets. Burke was responsible for establishing the Facebook page, 'Help For The Homeless, Christchurch,' after becoming concerned with the issue of homelessness in the city. All of the youth interviewed said they would often reach out to Amy via text if they ever needed food or blankets. Aroha, Monique and Savannah explained they would give their cell phone number out to a trusted few of their sex clients in order to solicit work without having to stand out on a cold night on Manchester Street (Christchurch's street sex hub) waiting for a job. To further her chances of getting work, Monique would also use her cell phone to advertise her services on the dating app Tinder. She described this as an effective means to "scope out" potential clients before agreeing to have sex with them. Aroha mentioned the Prostitutes Collective would send out text messages regarding suspicious characters who were "predatoring around."

The streeties interviewed were also willing to give their cell phone numbers to recruitment agencies or potential employers. However, if these employers made contact using a number listed as 'private' or 'unknown', as mentioned earlier, streeties would usually choose to let these calls go unanswered due to concerns it may be the Police, Ministry of Justice or a debt

collection agency. Some, like Will, regarded the level of assistance recruitment agencies could realistically offer to someone in his circumstances, with scepticism and disillusionment:

“Like a couple of weeks ago I got myself a job through my cell phone, but it was with a temp agency- AWF. But I had no way of transportation so I had to get up at 4 o’clock every morning and had to walk to town. But this week I didn’t go at all because, I don’t know, it was mentally challenging. Yeah, walking for two hours to do six hours work, and then walk another two hours back home, was just doing my head in...A couple of times I showed up late and I got growlies for it, but they didn’t actually know the situation. I was scared of what they’d do... It’s demoralising pretty much.”

A similar sentiment is evident in Savannah’s quote featured earlier which discussed the limits of the cell phone practically in street life, and her apparent mentality towards self-reliance in regards to survival.

In trying to establish a reason for these young streeties’ reluctance to diversify their networks via the cell phone, it is helpful to look at the nature of the few cases of bridging capital which were reported. The common factor in those networks is that there already existed an element of trust in the relationships within these weak ties. Trust and reciprocity are central to social capital theory (Newton, 2001; Putnam, 1995a; Putnam, 1995b). Newton (2001) defines trust as, “the actor’s belief that, at worst, others will not knowingly or willingly do him harm, and at best, that they will act in his interests” (202). The limited instances of bridging capital reported by the young streeties interviewed, seem to indicate a lack of trust. People like Nurse Lynne and Amy Burke helped to establish bonds of trust with the streeties by consistently being

available in times of need and hardship. The Salvation Army food van and the Prostitutes Collective are also well regarded by streeties for their altruism and advocacy work. Certain sex clients earned a degree of trust with the female streeties via the knowledge they were likely to be paid following a job. Employment agencies were trusted to an extent (as illustrated by the quotes above) but generally regarded with a good measure of scepticism and disillusionment. Lin (1999: 30) describes social capital as “investment in social relations with expected returns.” In conjunction with the low levels of trust which seemed evident in those interviewed, perhaps streeties chose not to ‘invest’ in the expansion of their social networks due to doubts and misgivings as to whether the return would be worth the risk involved in trusting someone (and potentially getting let-down, hurt or betrayed). While largely protected and insulated from the likelihood of hurt within these closed, trusted networks, the potential for opportunities of growth and advancement are effectively locked out also.

There is one uplifting story, however, of the cell phone being utilised to effectively build bridging capital. Despite being just sixteen years of age, and the youngest of all the streeties interviewed, Charlie delved beyond the parameters of safety and familiarity found within his usual networks, and took the risk of trusting someone who would eventually provide him with a great deal of support. Charlie came to live on the streets after tensions with his parents became too much. Below, Charlie explains how he met his tutor; a complete stranger:

“I met this fella, he’s my tutor, my tutor now...Yeah just a random person off the streets. Just asked him for a bit of change to help me out, told him what I was doing, ‘oh I’m on streets.’ He said, ‘ring me, I can help you out a lot.’ So I rung him, asked if I could start a

course. Yeah, he let me on for free...I thought, 'oh yeah cool!' Stuck to it, so, educated. So I'm happy now...Yeah, so he helped me heaps, I thank him for that...if it wasn't for my phone I would still be trying to get help."

This is a powerful example of the ways which bridging capital can help connect individuals with unique opportunities via divergent social connections. Charlie also benefitted from his connection with tutor when he lost his phone:

"I've had one phone lost, I was a bit gutted, but then my tutor that helped me, bought me a phone...I went to the course to see him. I told him I lost my phone and that 'I need your number.' He was like, 'yeah, yeah.' And then he gave me his number and was like, 'let's go for a ride.' So we went for a ride and he was like, 'what phone do you want?' I was like, 'I'm not picky,' so he chose me this phone, so yeah (laughs)."

Aside from the practical assistance he received from the kindness of his tutor, this connection helped Charlie positively in terms of empowerment, self-esteem and self-worth. During his interview, his body language, pride and enthusiasm with which he spoke about his course, was plainly evident. He would smile and his eyes would shine when talking about his course and his tutor. This was striking and memorable to me as while the other streeties had also detailed some instances of using the cell phone in terms of bridging capital, these had not been to quite the same extent. Tragically, a couple of months after being interviewed, Charlie was killed in a house fire. The loss of Charlie is heart-breaking. This is especially so when considering he had so much to offer the world and a wealth of unfulfilled potential. However, Charlie leaves behind a powerful narrative on resilience, courage and trust. Despite having endured immense hardship

for his years, Charlie possessed a remarkably unsullied outlook on life, highlighted by his decision to trust a complete stranger.

### **The Cell Phone and Identity: Creating Spaces for Shelter on the Street**

Life on the streets is fraught with many challenges. Aside from the physical requirements necessary for survival like shelter, food and warmth, streeties have to fortify themselves mentally and emotionally if they are to survive the harsh conditions of the street. This chapter will present the idea that perhaps the cell phone is valuable in creating spaces for interiority, which is central to the notion of self, and especially important in street life where space for privacy is tenuous at best. To fully understand the cell phone as a site for privacy, and the expression and preservation of the self, it is necessary to gain context of streeties' use of the cell phone in their daily life on the streets. This is because the unique ways streeties use their phones, are inextricably linked to the idea that by doing so, streeties actively create spaces of virtual shelter for themselves. The first component of this section will outline this cell phone use in brevity and relate it to findings on youth connectivity in New Zealand. Following this, the specific examples of photos and the cell phone as a vehicle for entertainment, will be examined. This will be discussed in relation to how the cell phone becomes not only a space for reflecting and expressing their own unique identities, but also as a grounding force, reminding them of what is important. Furthermore, the cell phone as a site for collective identity and belonging, both in terms of streetie culture, and youth culture broadly, will also be explored. The arguments presented in this section will be framed using the Tikanga Maori concept of *turangawaewae* and Immanuel Kant's philosophies on the importance of space and privacy for rational autonomy.

Before discussing the value of the cell phone in creating spheres of space allowing for privacy in street life, it is necessary to provide some context into the cell phone use of the young streeties interviewed as part of this project. First and foremost, it is important to view these young streeties as sophisticated cell phone users, who should not be regarded as somehow in deficit in terms of skills. In terms of understanding and uptake of mobile technology, these youth do not seem to be disadvantaged when compared to mainstream youth who as a collective, “are often considered to be forerunners in its adoption and evolution” (Thulin and Vilhelmson, 2007: 236). All of the streeties interviewed owned a smartphone of some sort, with the capacity to capture videos and photos, and browse online. As well as this, they were adept and up-to-date in terms of downloading the latest apps, games and music. Although this research project is limited in scope and generalisability, the rich and unhindered experiences with the cell phone detailed by these young streeties, despite their limited resources, are in support of the findings by Gibson et al. (2013) which found that youth from the “lowest income households... do not show any signs of being digitally disadvantaged” (26). While this is encouraging, further research into a wider streetie youth population is required before determining for certain that streeties, given their extreme position of deprivation, are also immune from the effects of low income and digital disadvantage as their housed counterparts. As Woelfer and Hendry (2011: 73) state:

“The extraordinary circumstances of homelessness condition the relationship that young homeless people have with technology.”

Similarly, within the context of this thesis, it is important to understand streetie youths' cell phone use as distinctive and in response to the unique challenges of the street, but by no means any less than their housed contemporaries.

While these streeties are equally as savvy as housed youth in their cell phone use, it does seem that the conditions of street life do impact on the ways they use their cell phone and the sentimental value they place upon both the item itself and the material stored within. The section on social capital earlier, briefly addressed the novel ways which streeties use their cell phone as conditioned by the demands of street life. Some of these examples included the use of Tinder to promote sex work and the use of the cell phone to disseminate information to other streeties concerning safety and the availability of resources. The streeties also used their cell phones in other distinctive ways. For instance, if their cell phone battery had died, they would remove their SIM Card and insert it into another streetie's phone so they could check up on messages and inform others that they are safe, but their phone is out of battery. As Monique says,

“You don't, like you'd never shy away from a, another streetie asking you if they could use your phone to get hold of someone.”

Beyond merely allowing other streeties to use her phone, this quote by Monique highlights the culture they share—a collective response to the conditions that they are living under. In addition, streeties were all extremely knowledgeable about Wi-Fi hotspots around central Christchurch and the various power outlets publicly available to charge their phone. All of the streeties spoke frequently about the usefulness of Facebook, particularly the free

0.facebook.com platform, which they would regularly access if they no longer had credit on their phones to stay in contact and up-to-date with their friends. Some also detailed how using Facebook was the primary method of accumulating contacts again when they lost their cell phone.

Aside from these practical aspects of cell phone use conditioned by the extraordinary challenges of street life, the cell phone was of extreme sentimental value to the streeties interviewed. Tyson explains:

“Yeah, yeah I dunno, like, these days now, my cell phone is my life. I need my phone next to me or— I need my phone. Yeah. ”

When asked why the cell phone held so much importance to him, he responded:

“I dunno, it’s like, I guess it’s like another ‘man’s best friend’ (laughs). I dunno. I just reckon I’d be lost if I wasn’t talking to other people”

These quotes from Tyson powerfully illustrate the value of the cell phone in his life on the streets. By referring to the cell phone as “my life” and again, by talking about the device in regards to kinship and connection with others, the cell phone can be interpreted as a lifeline for Tyson, a comfort, bringing him closer to people; to momentarily alleviate some of the burdens inherent in life on Christchurch’s streets.

Monique also describes the immense sentimental value of the cell phone to her. Interestingly, she also uses similar terms to Tyson:

“Yeah this is my life. Like, out of all the things that I have on the streets, this is the one thing that I would get really gutted about and that comes with everyone. Cause this is your contacts, and they’re really hard to replace. And then it’s the memories like photos, and then the music. ”

Like Tyson, by describing her cell phone as her “life”, she is describing the significant value the cell phone bears for her. Similar to Tyson, when Monique talks about the value of the cell phone, she speaks about it in regards to the connections with other people. The cell phone is special for Monique because it binds her to people she cares about and the memories which are precious to her. These quotes from Monique and Tyson are not unique in describing the value of the cell phone for streeties during life on the streets. Phrases like “my everything,” “prized possession” and “could not live without” were also used by the other streeties when describing the value of the cell phone in sentimental terms. These phrases are powerful in highlighting the depth of value with which streeties regard the cell phone.

The sentimental value of the cell phone described above, and streeties’ subsequent attachment to their phones, was tempered by the reality that possessions are often lost or stolen when sleeping rough. Many of the streeties described that while they placed significant value on the cell phone, they tried not to get too attached to avoid disappointment if their phone did get stolen or lost. Below, Monique sums up the importance of not getting too attached to possessions:

“Because when you live on the streets you learn to let go of things. Cause you don’t always, like, you could have something really nice today, but it’ll be gone tomorrow.

You'd just have to get over it. So when we, once, like, cause I learned that the hard way on the streets, and it didn't take me long to, that it didn't matter what you had, you just had to learn that if it was gone tomorrow, you'd just have to get over it...You lose things on the streets really easily. Yeah, cause you have to move around with your stuff, so in your bag, could be your life."

As shown by the quote by Monique above, although the harsh nature of street life has by necessity, created an unwillingness to get attached, the cell phone carries a lot of emotional weight. Apart from being described as the only item of value to them in a monetary sense, the cell phone is more than this for these young streeties. Gitte Stald (2008: 161) states:

"The mobile is the glue that holds together various nodes in these social networks: it serves as the predominant personal tool for the coordination of everyday life, for updating oneself on social relations, and for the collective sharing of experiences. It is therefore the mediator of meanings and emotions that may be extremely important in the ongoing formation of young people's identities."

In this way, the cell phone can be seen as a tool to mediate the youth's social worlds. It holds fragments of the unique things that signify their identity- photos and videos of loved ones, text messages of sentimental value. Furthermore the cell phone retains reminders of a life better than the struggles of the streets and memories of love and hope to carry them through.

Many of the young streeties spoke about the special significance the photos and videos stored on their cell phone, have to them. At the time of interview, Savannah had a son in Child, Youth and Family care. The photos of her son on her phone were greatly treasured by her.

Below, she explains how she felt when she lost her phone containing the pictures of her son, and why these images were so important to her:

“Oh my gosh yes, I was crying. I had all my photos of my son when he was first born on there. On my SD card and I couldn’t find it. I was so gutted. I was shattered...Gosh my son’s my world... I can’t have him with me all the time.”

Savannah also spoke about taking images of her street family and why capturing these images hold value:

“Just the changes that happen. You know, you can show them- remind them of how they used to be. Before they started smoking the synths (synthetic cannabis) hard out and turning into dumbasses, I guess. And losers. And fiends. Just remind them how they used to be...Photos are memories and memories are valuable. You know, you got to value the memories that you have.”

Monique also describes the value of photos for her during life on the streets:

“While I was in jail, earlier this year, one of the streetie boys hung himself just near Hagley. So you know, there’s photos, so it’s cool like, you know, just to have a memory of someone...Not only do I have photos of the streeties, but I have photos of my own family. So you know, it’s something to look at, you know? Like being on the streets, sometimes you need to remind yourself... So um yeah, stuff like that is, you know, just a break away from what you’re actually going through”

Aroha also explains why photos and videos are more special to her since sleeping rough:

“They’re probably a bit more special now cause you’re living on the streets and you’re not round them everyday, so it’s pretty cool to have photos and stuff that you can just look through...It makes you smile.”

The quotes above capture the many uncertainties with sleeping rough and the reassurance and feeling of closeness that looking back on treasured images can provide.

Perhaps for streeties, both capturing, and looking back at photos stored on the cell phone, is a way of grounding themselves; of feeling stable in a life bristling with uncertainty and danger. The Maori concept of *turangawaewae* provides a useful theoretical framework for understanding why streeties gain strength from having photographs on their cell phones. It is particularly appropriate in this study given the fact that all but two of the youth interviewed as part of this project, identified as Maori. *Turangawaewae* translates literally as “a place to stand” (Kearns, 2006: 251). It is a “place of strength and identity” for Maori (Groot et al., 2011: 376). *Turangawaewae*, Groot et al. (2011) argue, is not something that merely exists in and of itself; it must actively be engaged with. This is done through *whanaungatanga* (social bonds) and *ahi kaa* (keeping the home fires burning) (*Ibid*). By actively taking photographs, and looking back on them, it could be argued that streeties are actively engaging with their *turangawaewae*. The streetie narratives shared on photographs, show not only the depth of sentimental value to streeties, but convey the strength and emotional sustenance they absorb by the act of both taking and retaining such images on their phones. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of social connections. As could be gathered from the quotes from Savannah, Monique and Aroha, the photos on their phones make them feel connected to whanau (family)

and loved ones even though they are separated in a physical sense. It is important to note that the youth did not explicitly utilise Maori concepts of *turangawaewae* when interviewed. However, perhaps taking photographs and looking back on them, is a way of keeping their *ahi kaa* and giving them connections of *whanaungatanga*. In this sense, it could be viewed as giving them a place to stand, a place to belong and find shelter, even though they may not have a 'home' in the Western sense of the word.

Streeties' use of the cell phone for entertainment is another way which could be perceived as beneficial to self-preservation. This is through the creation of private space, which is central to the notion of self and identity. Many of the streeties interviewed spoke of the various ways in which they used their cell phones for entertainment. Like most of the other streeties, Mitchell enjoyed playing games on his cell phone like *Subway Surfers* and *Candy Crush*. Below he explains why he enjoys playing games on his phone:

"When you're bored, oh yeah when I'm bored, got nothing to do or someone who is making you angry...unwind from stress and things."

Using the cell phone to beat boredom as described by Mitchell above, was a theme that popped up across the interviews. Many of the streeties spoke about the drudgery of street life, about there not being much for them to do, about it being "boring". To counter the boredom and occupy themselves, all of the youth spoke about their daily ritual of going to the public library: a hub for Christchurch's streeties. Along with ensuring their phone was fully charged to avoid being inconvenienced in the evenings, they would update their collections of music,

games and apps on their phones. Below Aroha describes why she would not like to navigate street life without her cell phone:

“I probably could not live without one. Because I’d feel something’s missing. Cause the thing is I’m always doing something. It’d be like giving up smoking. You have to smoke...I think boredom plays a big role in that. Yeah there’s not much to do if you don’t do anything.”

When asked what she would do for entertainment if she did not have her cell phone:

“I have no idea. I don’t wanna fucken think about that! (laughs)”

Aroha’s quotes highlight the importance of the cell phone as a part of her daily life and routine; as a tool to occupy her through entertainment. By likening her need for the cell phone to something as addictive as smoking, highlights how indispensable it is to her. Furthermore in this instance, the cell phone could be viewed as an outlet, albeit, ephemeral escape from the stresses of street life.

In terms of entertainment, the cell phone is also of value in fostering a sense of collective identity. Some of the youth spoke about the enjoyment they got out of downloading the same game apps as other streetie peers to play together. Tango, is social media app that was mentioned by most of the streeties interviewed. Apart from the capacity to make free calls, many of the streeties enjoyed playing the games available on the platform, and the fun in challenging and competing against friends. Below Savannah speaks about why Tango is her favourite app on her phone:

“Cause with Tango I can play games with her (gestures to Monique). Yeah, like verse each other. Like me and her, it’s like darts and words (games on the app). Yeah, (laughs) we are competitive”

This shared activity of playing and competing in games together could be said to foster collective identity and belonging. Wohn et al. (2011) found that social networking games (similar to Tango for instance), can enhance relationships through the sharing of common interests. By streeties sharing the common interest of playing and competing in games together, allows them to carve out a space in which they can relax together.

Furthermore, perhaps part of the value of playing mobile games together is valuable because of the ability to block out the physical world and create private spaces for intimacy. Gitte Stald (2008) discusses the capacity of the cell phone to facilitate “intimate spaces for shared presence” regardless of location (154). Intimacy, Stald (2008) argues, is an important condition for establishing feelings of trust and social bonding in interpersonal relationships. Kantian philosophy also places great significance on privacy. Space for private reflection and introspection, are necessary for rational autonomy- the ability to think critically and make informed decisions for oneself (Ess, 2011). Life on the streets allows little room for privacy and intimate space. Many of the streeties interviewed, spoke about sleeping in various public locations around Christchurch- in parks, under bridges, abandoned car-park buildings and damaged red zone properties. Even during daylight hours, many of their routine activities would be conducted in public spaces such as libraries or Latimer Square, the hub for many of the meals available for the homeless. Private spaces are valuable. This is even more precious

when you have such limited access to private spaces away from public scrutiny. By playing games on their cell phones and blocking the pressures of the physical world out, streeties could be seen to be actively carving out spaces of shelter for both themselves and their friends to occupy privately. Even if only for a short time, such access to private space must be precious to those for whom such opportunities are scant.

Some of the streeties spoke about using their cell phone to share images and music amongst each other. Below, Monique describes using the Bluetooth capabilities on her mobile to share music with other streeties:

“And um we Bluetooth off each other...So like every mobile phone has a Bluetooth so you can send your file of music to somebody else’s. So, you know, when you pick up somebody else’s music playing and you're like, ‘aww can you send me that?’ You know.”

A number of the streeties interviewed also spoke about how they liked capturing moments shared with their street family. Savannah explains below:

“Us drunk. Us down Manny (Manchester) Street (laughs)...Just heaps of stuff, you know. All of us having a good time, street fams kicking it. ”

Monique also describes a perfect opportunity to photograph her friends:

“Um when everyone’s together, like when everyone is gathered together. Maybe lunch. Or probably drinking together, or chilling out at the park or wherever the place is. Someone- like, there’s always someone taking a photo of everyone together.”

These quotes, particularly the inclusive pronouns used by Savannah and Monique above, illustrate the sense of fraternity in the street community. Words like 'family', 'tight,' 'uncle,' 'brothers' and 'sisters' were also used in the interviews by the streeties in referring to other streeties. Such photos of shared moments and memories, could be said to strengthen the sense of collective identity as a group of individuals who are already bonded through the shared experience of surviving the struggles of the street. However the act of sharing- both the moments captured, and through the digital transfer of files via the cell phone, moves beyond merely strengthening collective identity. Sharing intensifies the sense of community and closeness within the street fraternity. Images, in particular, can be seen as physical, tangible mementoes of their shared experience; evidence solidifying the hardships, challenges and joys they have experienced together. As Monique says on sharing with streeties:

“You share anything...People do on the streets, they don't hold back cause they've got nothing to lose anymore...This one time, me and Savannah went job searching in town and we hadn't eaten all day. We were so hungry we wanted to give up on job searching cause we were just over it. But we still did our job searching and at the end, we went to Uncle's squatting place. Cause we were like, 'who's got food?' We couldn't find any of the streeties, we couldn't be bothered walking to the library and then we met up with two (streeties) and then we were like, 'nah, let's go to Uncle's, Uncle will have food'. And then we went and of course he had food and a squatting house...And then we gave him food the next day to thank him. ”

For those who have little in physical terms to give and share with others, the act of sharing is both powerful and empowering. By sharing not just resources like food, but also files like photos and music together- vestiges of their shared experience, it could be seen to intensify the dimension of kinship and fraternity existing between those who are already bonded through such challenging life circumstances.

On a broader scale, the cell phone could be said to foster inclusion and participation for young streeties within youth culture, without being labelled 'homeless'- a term which is laden with stigma. Today, the cell phone is virtually universal in modern society. In New Zealand, 92 percent of households reported having access to a mobile phone of some sort (Gibson et al., 2013). Furthermore, although in regards to Internet usage in New Zealand, just 1 percent of individuals under the age of 40, were classified as 'non users' (*Ibid*). Youth, in particular, have widely embraced communication technology in its many forms (Boyd, 2007; Ling, 2004; Stald, 2008). As Thulin and Vilhelmson (2007) aptly say, "mobile phones in particular, have become technologies of youth" (236). Much of this section has argued that the value of the cell phone lies in its ability to carve out space- whether that be through reconnecting with an individual's *turangawaewae*, or creating private spaces allowing for interiority in a life conducted largely in public domains. However, another value of the cell phone is that it opens up access and participation to wider youth culture. Gitte Stald (2008) states the fact that the cell phone is almost "ubiquitous in youth cultural contexts" (144). Furthermore she argues that the cell phone allows for the mobility of identity for youth; that is, an identity which is fluid, flexible and ever in flux. As stated at the outset of this section, the streeties interviewed for this project, are sophisticated users of their cell phones- not unlike their housed peers. By being able to use the

cell phone thoroughly, and as well as their housed contemporaries, they can transcend their identity status as one who is 'homeless.' Instead, they are recognised for their status as youth, first and foremost. The public discourse on 'homeless people' is often pejorative and dehumanising, which could be seen in the young streeties' hyper-aware reflections on shame at sleeping rough in the section on social capital earlier. Therefore the cell phone can be viewed as a passport to participating in youth culture unburdened by the cumbersome connotations which are attached to those who sleep rough.

Finally, the cell phone seemed to be a valuable outlet for the young streeties interviewed in terms of self-expression of their unique identities. Some streeties, like Tyson, enjoyed using their cell phone camera to photograph self-portraits, commonly known as 'selfies'. Below, Tyson talks about taking daily selfies on his phone and why he enjoys sharing them:

"Nah, I'd just take pictures of myself and leave them on my phone and just chuck them on Facebook as profile pictures and stuff... Myself. My stomach. My face (laughs)...Well taking pictures of myself makes me feel confident in myself. And getting pictures from other people, like other girls, is like, oh yeah, that's cool (laughs)."

As discussed earlier, Tyson's activity of taking selfies, allows him to participate in youth culture free of the shackles associated with sleeping rough. Taking selfies, could also be seen as an outlet to express himself as a young man.

Will, who is gifted at drawing, also uses his cell phone as a way to share his artistic talents with his friends:

“Personally, I've never been a photogenic kind of person, like even on my Facebook page, I've got bugger-all photos on there, I'm a bit camera shy...The last photo I've taken was one of my drawings and I posted it up on Facebook a couple of days ago... Yeah I like drawing...Anything that pops into my imagination, yeah pretty much could be anything really.”

Like Tyson, by posting photos of his artwork online using his cell phone, Will could be said to be expressing himself. Perhaps by sharing images so unique to themselves and their respective identities, is a way of gaining a kind of validation and acceptance from others. As reiterated throughout this section, notions of belonging and connectedness are important. For those who are marginalised and excluded in so many ways, to belong, and moreover, to be accepted for who you are, must be powerful indeed.

### **Beat of the Street: Streeties and Music**

At the outset of this thesis project, I did not anticipate just how significant the cell phone would be for the young streeties interviewed, particularly as a vehicle for music. Of all the topics related to cell phone use which were covered during the interviews, all of the youth really opened up and spoke at length and with enthusiasm about their love of music in their daily life on the streets. Some even described that if they had to choose, they would forgo the communicative function of the cell phone in favour of music and the release it provides for them. This section will discuss the value of music during life on the streets for these young people. Specifically, it will be argued that by having music stored on their cell phones, they are able to unlock spaces of privacy and introspection, where they can reflect on the past, think on

the present, and collect hope for a better future. This section will also discuss the value of music as a therapeutic release and as an outlet for self-expression of their respectively unique identities.

All of the youth interviewed spoke about how having music on their cell phones was an important part of their daily life on the streets. Words and phrases to express their love for music included: 'life,' 'my everything,' 'love,' and 'need,' with a tendency to use the pronoun 'my' which conveyed a mixture of ownership and attachment in relation to music. In addition, they spoke with passion about their favourite artists like Bob Marley, Kings of Leon, Tupac Shakur and Notorious B.I.G, to name a few. Their music tastes varied widely and included genres of heavy metal, hip-hop and reggae. All of the youth had vast collections of music stored on the SD cards in their phones- for some, this was around 800 songs. Despite all the uncertainty inherent in life on the streets, music was a regular and constant fixture in their daily lives. Will explains:

"Um well, my phone's usually got headphones in them, so I'm usually listening to music from the time I wake up, til the time I go to sleep which is basically all the time. I wear them in my ears and go to sleep, yeah...I suppose it's therapeutic. In more ways than one."

Streeties spoke in similar ways to Will in regards to how music was a significant fixture in their everyday life. Almost all of the other streeties spoke about how they had to listen to music to fall asleep, and a number of the others spoke about walking around the city with their headphones in and their music playing. Another significant activity in their life on the streets,

described by all of the youth interviewed, would be to visit the library daily, not only to charge their phones and browse online, but to keep their music collections regularly updated with new listening material. Below, Aroha discusses why it is important that she updates her music daily:

“It means quite a lot actually. I just download anytime I can. Because walking around, you get kind of bored and it’s pretty easy to just plug in the earphones and just chill. It’s pretty cool.”

Will also explains the importance of having his music regularly updated:

“Ah it’s only a 2gig (2GB SD card), but um I’ve currently got like eight hundred songs...Oh cause if I'm not doing anything, I’ll just go to the library and um, you get a free login for half an hour, so like, I might be able to get in, ah, six, seven songs in that time frame, which is pretty good... Yeah (laughs), I get bored real easy...Yeah, kills the boredom, pretty much blocks the outside world if you don’t want a bar of it.”

As highlighted by Will and Aroha, boredom is a quite an issue for streeties. Monique explains why music is a welcome distraction and preoccupation when living on the streets:

“...Cause you know, the other thing you’ll find is the majority of streeties have phones so they can listen to music. You’ll see a lot of them with earphones...Yeah because , I think it’s – ah I don’t know, there’s just not much to keep you occupied when you're on the streets. It’s kind of like a fight to stay out of trouble, that kind of thing... You know, cause I reckon that all people on the streets are unhappy, but everyone has a different way of showing it. So music is a good way to, you know, yeah.”

These quotes from Monique, Will and Aroha are not isolated in relation to boredom and the struggle to keep occupied during street life. Words and phrases like 'bored,' 'boring,' 'nothing to do,' and 'keep me occupied', were mentioned regularly by streeties in the transcripts. In this sense, music, both the act of listening to music and updating their MP3 files, can be viewed as a way of overcoming boredom.

Beyond merely beating boredom however, perhaps the value of music to streeties, lies in the ability to create a semblance of structure, order and routine around it; as a means to take control of an environment in which there is so much uncertainty. The value of routine is well documented in the literature (see Frank et al., 2000; Frank et al., 2006; Malkoff-Schwartz et al., 2000; Spagnola and Fiese, 2007). As Highmore (2004: 307) states, part of the value in routine is in "giving our lives rhythm and predictability." In contrast, life on the streets is both discordant and unpredictable. For those who sleep rough, there are constant worries about finding shelter, food and safety. By updating the music collections on their cell phones daily, the streeties could be viewed as creating order and predictability for themselves; something familiar to hold on to amid such daily instability. Furthermore, by engrossing themselves in not only the act of listening to music, but the daily task of procuring new songs for their collections, they could be seen to be creating personal spaces with such publicly lived lives. People who sleep rough spend their time of rest and leisure within public spaces such as parks, libraries and shopping malls for instance. Space for individual privacy is viewed as an important human right by many Western democratic societies (Ess, 2005). This is because of the belief that freedom to think and reflect privately, is central to an individual's ability to determine what is best for them (*ibid*). By creating a personal routine around music, the youth could be seen to be nestling

themselves within the protection of a routine; creating space for privacy in a life which is predominantly conducted in the public domain.

Some of the streeties spoke about how music helps them feel connected to family and loved ones, despite the physical and emotional distance between them. At the time of interview, Benji was sleeping in a quake damaged car-park building after his regular living arrangement with friends, ended. During the interviews, Benji was quite guarded. He briefly mentioned how he had a volatile relationship with his father, which would usually culminate in physical violence when they saw each other. For Benji, using his cell phone for music could be seen as a way to keep his anger under control and possibly a way to engaging with his *turangawaewae*:

“Hip-hop, rap, R & B...And Tahu (Maori radio station run by local Iwi Ngai Tahu). Yeah, Tahu’s got Maori songs on it... Cause I just like listening to music... Cause, ah, there will be— I wouldn’t be like the way I am. It chills you out.”

Royal (2012) describes *turangawaewae* as “places where we feel especially empowered and connected. They are our foundation, our place in the world, our home.” *Ahi kaa* is an aspect of *turangawaewae* which relates to keeping the ‘home fires burning’ (Groot et al., 2011). Mead (2003) describes *ahi kaa* as “rights to land through occupation” (359). Maori are *tangata whenua*— they are people of the land (Kearns, 2006: 250). Perhaps by listening to Maori *waiata* (songs) via the radio on his cell phone, Benji is engaging with the *ahi kaa* aspect of *turangawaewae*. In this way, perhaps Benji could be seen to have a place to stand by reaffirming his identity as a young Maori male.

Mitchell spoke about the value of having music on his phone to help him to feel connected to his loved ones despite being separated from them physically. Below, he talks about how music helped him in street life:

“Oh well, just before I go to bed, before I go to sleep, I always think of my family. My family, my friends, or my ex. When I play a certain song, it reminds me of them. Yeah, I just go to sleep and wake up the next morning. Yeah, when you got no-one to talk to, um, music is the only thing that keeps you, yeah happy.”

For Mitchell, the memories attached to certain songs could be viewed as helping him feel connected to those whom he loved and cared about. Furthermore, Mitchell spoke about being badly hurt emotionally after the breakdown of his relationship with his long-term partner. In this way, music could be seen as allowing him to feel connected—bonded to those who he loves, but from a safe distance, without having to hazard the risk of getting hurt again.

All of the youth interviewed, spoke about how the music on their cell phones helped transport them away from the hardship and suffering they faced during everyday street life. For Will, who was eager to work and earn money for himself, music motivated him in his struggle to get up at four o'clock every morning, to walk to work: a two hour ordeal, each way, which he endured for two weeks:

“Music. I just love my music... Yep, gets me through the day pretty much. Most of them (streeties) see it as a drive, like a motivation, probably like, yeah. Like when I go to work in the mornings, I like to listen to music. Makes me forget I'm walking half the time

(laughs). Especially such a long way...Yeah it's definitely an escape. An escape from an unsure reality."

Tyson also explains why having music is important to him in his daily battle on the streets:

"I love music...Well, gives me peace I guess...Well whenever I get angry, I guess, I'll just start singing and it just makes me happy...Because living on the streets is not exactly the funnest thing to do. Yeah. Pretty much it's like you're fighting for your life, every single day, 24/7, really."

Having music on his cell phone was a lifeline for Mitchell; a beat which buoyed him in dark times of desperation and despair:

"Music is everything to me. Music is life. Yeah, well um I play music, or I jam to express what I am feeling. I love reggae and I love hip-hop, a bit of rap. My favourite one is Tupac and Biggie... and um Stevie Wonder, Mariah Carey. Um music is everything to me. Without music, I don't know where I would be right now—I'd probably be dead...When I broke up with my missus, I was going to commit suicide. Yeah, music helped me."

As can be gathered from the quotes by Will, Tyson and Mitchell, trying to survive on the streets, is extremely difficult: physically, mentally and emotionally. This is also well documented in the literature conducted abroad with those who are homeless, at an increased risk of being subject to acts of physical and sexual violence, as well as poor mental health outcomes and substance abuse issues (Boivin et al, 2005; Kipke et al., 1993; Van Leeuwen et al., 2004). Listening to music

on their cell phones cannot mitigate such precarious life circumstances. However, by placing in their headphones and gaining strength from the reserves of music stored on their cell phones, the young streeties interviewed were able to tune into melodies of peace, hope and motivation, and tune out, even for just a moment, the cacophonous clamour which is a reality of street life.

Furthermore, as communicative device, the cell phone was useful and widely used by the youths interviewed, to strengthen networks, particularly those within their own street fraternity. Although they may not overly use their mobile for building bridging social capital, the cell phone is still a site where they can articulate messages for themselves. This aligns with the theory on cultural convergence which occurs when “people take media in their own hands” (Jenkins, 2008: 28) and use it for their own purposes which are beyond the scope of its imagined application. The young streeties’ use of their cell phone for music as a resource to both inspire, reflect and share amongst themselves, is an example of convergence at work.

For some of the streeties, their cell phones were important for the purpose of self-expression not just through listening to music but also producing it. In this way the cell phone can be seen as a site for self-worth and self-pride. Before he passed away, Charlie was passionate about music and rap. When asked what he prioritises in terms of cell phone use, he replied:

“Ah music. I love my music. Reggae, rapping— kind of into my rapping cause I write a lot of raps in my own time...Keeps me occupied...It’s just that buzz you know? You listen to

music and get that happy vibe you know. Sometimes when I'm on a bad buzz, I always like listening to music, just helps me a lot. Makes me think a lot.”

When asked about his preference for writing raps on his phone or using pen or paper, he replied:

“Oh yeah sometimes, yeah, but I mainly use my pad because it’s slower to type.”

Although, Charlie did not specifically mention the kinds of narratives expressed through his raps, writing his own rap lyrics—regardless of whether that be on paper or typed on the phone, was a useful means for self-expression. Hadley and Yancy (2012) describe the value of hip-hop and rap not just in prompting individuals to reflect on and articulate their feelings, but also in providing them with a sense of self pride and accomplishment by doing so.

Aroha, like Charlie and a number of the other streeties interviewed, is also musically gifted, specifically, as a singer. Below, she speaks about using the recording functions on her phone to record herself singing and sharing these recordings with others:

“Mm, sometimes. Yeah, like probably once a month or something. Depends. It depends on if I was goofing around, or if it was needed for our group. Like last week we had this thing where we had this big function and we needed us streeties to stand up and sing and stuff, so we all recorded ourselves and put it all together and it kind of worked alright (laughs).”

Bailey and Anderson (2002) along with Jurgensmeier (2012) found that homeless people were able to establish a sense of pride and empowerment in themselves through the process of

creating music. As this study did not anticipate the extent to which the cell phone is valued as a vehicle for music specifically, it is beyond the scope of thesis to say definitively that the production of music via their cell phones empowered them with self-pride. The quotes from Charlie and Aroha could be interpreted as possessing an element of quiet confidence tempered with humility, as they both interestingly use the phrase 'kind of' when their respective passion and success in terms of music. So it is possible indeed, that perhaps street youth can be empowered and establish a sense of self-pride through the creation of music on their cell phone. Further studies are required before firm conclusions may be reached.

For Mitchell, music is an enormous part of his identity. Before he came to live on the streets, he was studying towards a Bachelor of Contemporary Music and played "keyboard, drums and bass." Below, he explains what music means to him:

"Music. Honestly, I can't think without it...I'm quite good with it. I picked up guitar when I was 4 or 5...I started piano when I was, yeah, around that age. Um I play real well. People at Church—when people hear me playing they're like, 'Wow bro, why not study it, um become professional, maybe start a band'. Yeah, that's why it's important to me... Ah most streeties are the same, they are really talented as well. They jam a lot. Um like I said, I'm a quiet person, like I say, if there was a person jamming and there was a piano or a keyboard, I would jump in and jam with them. Um yeah. I'm that type of person. I keep quiet—I keep it to myself, even Monique and them are surprised that I jam—I play."

As can be seen in the quotes by Charlie, Aroha and particularly Mitchell, music is a significant part of their respective identities and is one of the many things that make them special, and unique. These experiences detailed by the youth, highlights the important role music plays in the mediation of youth identity (Bennett, 2000; MacDonald, 2002). As described by MacDonald (2002), music can inform the way individuals both view and portray themselves. This is apparent in the quotes by the other streeties, and even further evident in the case of Mitchell who uses musical talent and passion as his reference point for grounding his identity.

In addition to using his cell phone to listen to music, Mitchell would also use his mobile to go online and look at YouTube videos of his performances with his band, which were captured during the days when he was studying. Below, he explains why he likes to look at these videos on his phone:

“Yeah cause I miss my friends back at course. I miss jamming with them as well. I check it out on YouTube whenever I got credit, like, ‘Oh I miss my bros, I wanna watch this.’”

When asked further about why it’s special to look back on videos like those of him jamming with his old band, particularly during life on the streets, he replied:

“Oh cause you'll never be able to do it again. I mean, who knows what tomorrow can bring. I mean you could go to sleep tonight and you may not wake up in the morning. So, like every day to me is like, every day is an opportunity to be who you are, I guess, and become wiser eh. Going through what you're going through, um taking baby steps, um each day as it comes.”

This quote from Mitchell highlights not only an awareness of the fragility of life, but the importance of knowing who you are and having a strong sense of identity to keep you grounded. By looking back on music videos of himself and his band on his cell phone, Mitchell is able to relive special moments and remind himself of an important part of his identity as a person. Although Mitchell happens to be homeless, he is not merely 'homeless.' The notion of identity is not fixed or static (Liu et al, 2005; McIntosh, 2005). Rather, identity traverses across many territories allowing for multiple conceptions of selfhood and belonging (*Ibid*). Therefore, the cell phone can be seen as a valuable in refocusing the way streeties define themselves; in Mitchell's case, he is a marvellously gifted musician. Having music on their cell phones not only provides streeties with a tune to carry them through the hard times. It also provides them with familiar chords reminding them of who they are—an identity which is not lost to them, just at times muffled by the bustle of the street.

## Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to gain an understanding of how youth who are sleeping rough, use their cell phone to negotiate the many hardships inherent in life on the streets. Rather than draw conclusions about the population broadly, it was the intention of this thesis to gain a glimpse into their life-world—their truth and experience in relation to the cell phone. This chapter will review the understandings gleaned from the youth interviewed in their everyday interactions with the cell phone during their time on the streets. In addition, these understandings will be discussed in regards to the wider literature on the topic, whilst situating this thesis in the context of the scholarship conducted on homelessness in general. Finally, this chapter will point to wider implications of this study, whilst providing suggestions for others intending to undertake similar research.

At the outset of this thesis, I was highly optimistic of the cell phone as a tool to assist young streeties in their lives on the street. These expectations were founded on the relatively low cost of acquiring and operating a basic cell phone, and the near ubiquity of the technology in New Zealand society (Gibson et al., 2013). As the cell phone seems to be synonymous with youth culture (Stald, 2008; Thulin and Vilhelmson, 2007), I had high hopes that streetie youth would appropriate the technology to negotiate the challenges they face on the streets on a daily basis. Indeed, there were some encouraging instances of the cell phone being used to mediate some of the struggles on the streets. However, when examined through the lens of social capital, the cell phone was rarely used for the purpose of bridging capital—connections with socially dissimilar individuals who may assist them during life on the streets and beyond.

The fact that streeties largely used their cell phones to strengthen connections with other streeties, is indicative of the depth of feeling and camaraderie amongst those united in the shared experience of surviving the streets. Moreover, this reliance on bonding capital, mainly with other streeties, is telling of the trust that exists in these networks. Trust is the currency underpinning social capital theory (Newton, 2001; Putnam, 1995a; Putnam, 1995b). As Lin (1999) describes, social capital is essentially the “investment in social relations with expected returns” (30). Streeties invest in networking with others in their fraternity because there is trust within these networks. This could be seen in the youths’ use of the cell phone to share information as well as photos and music amongst each other; further strengthening the connections of kinship and trust existing between them.

The flipside of this trust in other streeties, is distrust in authority or control figures. Although social capital theory has not been extensively studied within the body of research on homelessness, this study aligns with findings from Oliver and Cheff (2012) who found that young women who were homeless had a strong culture of self-reliance. This preference for independence and self-reliance was suggested as being due to suspicion and mistrust of those from large institutions or those believed to be in a position of authority (*Ibid*). Other studies have also documented this lack of trust and heightened suspicion toward such organisations amongst people who are homeless (see: Hudson et al., 2008; Kryda and Compton, 2009). In this way, mistrust and suspicion could also be presented as possible reasons as to why the youth in this study did not overly use their cell phone to build bridging social capital with individuals outside their regular circles, even though such connections could potentially assist them in both their current circumstances on the street, and moving further into a life off the streets. As social

capital operates on trust and reciprocity, if streeties have low levels of trust, particularly in relation to those outside their fraternity, the cell phone cannot be all powerful in addressing this deficit. Without trust, streeties are not able to effectively build networks of bridging capital to assist themselves. In this instance, the cell phone could be viewed as a symbol of the networks they do not have.

While still a developing area of the literature, social capital appears to operate differently within impoverished communities (Caughy et al., 2003; Fitzpatrick et al., 2007; Oliver and Cheff, 2012). Specifically, findings seem to suggest that a reliance on bonding capital amongst those who are already marginalised, could risk binding them to individuals who are in similar circumstances. It is beyond the scope of this study to determine whether bonding social capital had a negative effect on the youths who were interviewed as part of this study. However, the strong reliance on bonding capital described by the youth, could potentially further enmesh them with others who are in the same predicament, whilst shutting out opportunities for advancement through bridging capital. This presents a compelling area for future research to be gathered on the topic in relation to the cell phone.

Despite the cell phone not being used heavily by streeties in the creation of networks with socially dissimilar individuals who may help them, the cell phone is still a valuable medium which can be used in creating powerful messages for themselves in their lives on the streets. This was particularly evident in the use of the cell phone as a site to solidify a sense of self and belonging.

Literature available on the topic, describes that the condition of homelessness can diminish an individual's sense of self and self-worth (Boydell et al., 2000; Snow and Anderson, 1987). However, the ways in which the youths used their cell phone, could be viewed as helping to consolidate a sense of self and foster belonging within their life on the streets. Again, this could be viewed in terms of social capital and the communicative capacity of the cell phone to connect streeties with others. In terms of bonding social capital, this served to further intensify the sense of solidarity and collective identity already existing within the streetie community.

The cell phone was also interpreted as a means to engage the youths' *turangawaewae*— which refers to a 'place to stand' and draw strength (Kearns, 2006). The act of young streeties both capturing and looking back on images stored on their phone, could be viewed as a way of connecting with their *whanaungatanga*, or social bonds, and keeping their *ahi kaa* (tribal home fires) alight- which are central aspects to having *turangawaewae*. As this study did not directly seek answers in relation to culturally specific modes of belonging and identity, the extent to which the cell phone fosters *turangawaewae*, is merely interpretative. However, given the predominance of Maori within the street population in New Zealand (Al-Nasrallah et al., 2005; Ellis, 2007; Ellis and Carroll, 2005 and Gravitas, 2005), such knowledge would be useful.

The cell phone was also valuable in creating private space for reflection. Having access to private space has been theorised as being central to the notion of self (Ess, 2011; Westin, 1967). In order to maintain a stable sense of self, and have the capacity to make informed decisions in relation to your own wellbeing, private space to think and reflect is essential (*Ibid*).

Streeties lack access to privacy. Much of their daily lives are conducted in public places. This extends to the locations they sleep (park benches, under bridges, for instance), to the areas they spend their waking hours (libraries and malls, for example). Through activities mediated by the cell phone, such as listening to music and playing games together, streeties could be seen to be actively creating private spaces to take shelter in. Space for privacy is also important in fostering intimacy, particularly within the context of social bonding (Stald, 2008). Again, by competing in gaming activities via the cell phone together, the streeties could be viewed as not just strengthening their bonding capital, but also enhancing their sense of collective identity.

The music stored on their cell phones was also important in terms of creating stability amidst the uncertainty and unpredictability of street life. Highmore (2004) describes the value of routine in creating predictability in everyday life. By updating music on their cell phones daily, streeties are creating structures of familiarity to overcome some of the uncertainty they deal with.

In addition, the importance of social bonds and connections to others, again emerged in the streeties' discussion on the value of having music on their cell phones. Music was a powerful way of overcoming not just the despair and struggles in street life, but also reminded them of loved ones, regardless of physical and emotional barriers that may separate them.

Furthermore, the youth described using the cell phone for the purpose of expressing themselves through the creation of music. Aside from being an outlet for relieving stress, the cell phone could be interpreted as a site for empowering youth through self-expression, and possibly providing them with a kind of self-pride, along with a point of identity beyond the

confines of the label 'homeless.' Although the questions extend beyond the material gathered for this thesis, the element of self-pride which could be gathered from the youths' narratives, seem to be in support of other studies which found music to generate a source of self-pride and self-worth in persons who are homeless (Bailey and Anderson, 2002; Jurgensmeier, 2012). Given the multiple functions of the cell phone, coupled with the importance the youth placed on music, this is another area for future research to be conducted.

Finally, by having music on their cell phones, streeties could be seen to be both participating and reaffirming their identity as a member of youth culture. This reiterates observations by Bennett (2000) and MacDonald (2002) who view music as particularly central to youth identity.

Speaking broadly, the youths' experiences with their cell phones detailed within this thesis, need to be understood at the same time through theoretical frameworks of both the digital divide and of cultural convergence. In regards to the digital divide paradigm, indeed, the youths' cell phone use is conditioned by their marginalisation and disadvantage. This is evident in the way the streeties choose to keep their social worlds small, limited and largely homogenous, despite the capacity for the cell phone as a communicative device, to broaden their horizons socially. This could be said to be necessitated by the need to survive, a culture of self-reliance and a limited bank of trust. However, streeties' use of the cell phone, especially the value they place on having music stored on the device, could be seen of actions of resilience and resourcefulness; an example of cultural convergence at work in using the cell phone beyond the primary function of communication.

Overall, however, the young streeties' experiences with the cell phone detailed within this thesis, present glimmers of optimism that perhaps in terms of cell phone use, other young streeties may have equally rich experiences with their mobiles. However this is not known for certain, as there have not yet been any studies into cell phone use amongst streeties in New Zealand, to provide context or comparability. There is rationale for study in this domain, given both the widespread use of the cell phone in New Zealand society (Gibson et al., 2013), combined with the multiple applications within the device which could possibly support in assisting in life on the streets. Such research could answer questions concerning whether streeties who are older, are impacted by a digital divide general as research on disparities in technology by age, suggest (Van Dijk, 2005).

Despite limitations in the scope and scale of this research project, the experiences with the cell phone imparted by the streetie youth who participated, notably the findings found in relation to social capital, can provide useful suggestions for practical application. This is particularly relevant within the context of aid or advocacy outreach for homeless youth. The few instances of bridging capital which were reported by the streeties, were with people and organisations who maintained a strong, reliable presence in the street life scene; a consolation when their life on the street is typically unpredictable and unstable. By being dependable and familiar, these individuals were able to establish a relationship of trust with the streeties. This is particularly important from a social outreach perspective as street youth are at higher risk for mental and sexual health problems, substance abuse, violence and victimisation (Unger, et al, 1997; Whitbeck, et al, 2004; Tyler, et al, 2000). In other words, "homeless persons have extraordinary needs that require extraordinary forms of support" (Fitzpatrick et al., 2007: 759).

To connect streeties with the support and resources they need to improve their quality of life and overall health outcomes, it is important to develop a relationship of trust. As articulated in the literature, social capital relies on networks of trust to “facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam, 1995: 66). It would be beneficial if large organisations, for example, sought to establish trust with streeties through a personalised, humanistic approach. Large organisations could implement this by assigning an employee with the role of collaborating with rough sleeping youth to best help them in their needs on the street. In order to build trust, it would be important not to keep rotating different employees within the role. For the streeties in this study, the limited bridging ties they did have were established with familiar, trusted contacts.

It is also important to remember that the narratives in this thesis, are from a position which is streetie-centric. While there is great value in these unique streetie experiences which are seldom heard, to achieve an integrated, holistic approach in assisting streeties in their daily lives, collaboration is required. Research from a social assistance organisation’s perspective, with regards to their experiences in building social capital with streetie youth, would be helpful both for the researcher and in their own aid efforts. Such research would also provide information of how to best utilise communication technology, such as the cell phone, for low cost outreach interventions and how to better target resources and support.

Regardless of these limitations, this thesis presents a pertinent methodological application for future researchers: that is, there is value to be gained by listening closely to people. Generally, people who are homeless are often the subjects of discussion, debate and

scrutiny within public discourse. Qualitative methods place value on the individual and their unique understandings and experiences. Allowing people who are traditionally disempowered within general discourse, to speak and tell their truths, on their own terms, is empowering. Besides empowerment, by listening closely to people's experiences, we add value to society's collective understanding. The value of understanding cannot be underestimated if we wish to encourage inclusion of all people. As could be gathered from the youth's narratives, they possess wisdom which is worth listening to.

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## Appendix A



### HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Secretary, Lynda Griffioen  
Email: [human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

Ref: HEC 2014/18

2 July 2014

Sophie Nussbaumer  
Media & Communication  
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Sophie

The Human Ethics Committee advises that your research proposal "How Christchurch's homeless population use mobile phones" has been considered and approved.

Please note that this approval is subject to the incorporation of the amendments you have provided in your email of 4 June 2014.

Best wishes for your project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. MacDonald'.

Lindsey MacDonald  
**Chair**  
*University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee*

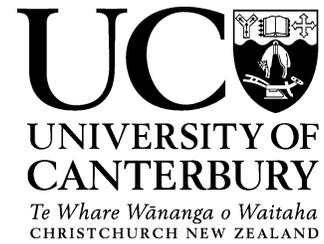
## Appendix B

### College of Arts

School of Social and Political Sciences

Tel: +6422-0328-789

Email: [sophie.nussbaumer@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:sophie.nussbaumer@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)



### Information Sheet for Participants

#### How Christchurch's Homeless Population Use Mobile Phones

Researcher: Sophie Nussbaumer [sophie.nussbaumer@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:sophie.nussbaumer@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)

Supervisors: Associate Professor Donald Matheson [donald.matheson@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:donald.matheson@canterbury.ac.nz)

Dr Yvonne Crichton-Hill [yvonne.crichton-hill@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:yvonne.crichton-hill@canterbury.ac.nz)

You are invited to participate in this research project. Please read this sheet carefully so you can make an informed decision about participation. If you wish to take part, please sign the consent form. Please keep this Information Sheet so you can refer back to it in your own time and contact myself (or my supervisors) if you have any questions or concerns about the study.

I am interested in your everyday experiences with mobile phones. I want to understand how you use your mobile phone- from everything to phone calls, texting and Internet, the people you use your mobile to contact, and the logistics in owning a phone while living on the streets. I am interested in understanding why you use your cellphone and the ways it helps you in your day-to-day life. For this project I will interview at least 10 people.

If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed by Sophie at a public location (such as a café or library) convenient to you. The interview will take around 50 minutes. To reimburse you for your time and participation, you will be given a \$25 voucher (either a supermarket voucher or cellphone top-up). There is also an opportunity to participate in a follow-up interview at a later date providing that you consent to this. This interview would be very similar to the first interview and would again ask you a range of questions about your cellphone use during your time on the streets. The intention of this second interview is to see if your cellphone use has changed since our last interview, or if you have thought of any other experiences or stories you would like to share about your cellphone use. You would be reimbursed with another \$25

voucher for your time and input. With your permission, the interviews will be recorded on an MP3 device.

If at any time you feel uncomfortable during the interview, please feel free to pause the interview, withdraw your participation or reschedule for another time. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage without penalty. Should you choose to withdraw, I will remove and destroy all information relating to you. This can be done up until the point of the study becoming published publicly.

Following the interview, you will be asked to review the written interview notes to check for accuracy. Providing that you agree with the accuracy of these notes, you will be asked to sign. This is in case you cannot be reached to review a copy of your interview transcript at a later date. I will however, still make contact with you so you can review a copy of the full interview transcript. At the conclusion of this research project, I will also send you a summary of my research findings, and you are welcome to send me further comments on reading that.

Your interview will contribute to my Master of Arts thesis project. A thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library. There is a possibility that the results of this project may be published publicly. Your participation will be kept strictly confidential. Your name, personal details, and other identifying details will not be published and you will be referred to in any quotations using an alias (such as 'Person A'). The MP3 files and transcripts will be stored securely in a password protected file on a password protected computer. All printed files will be securely held in a locked filing cabinet in Sophie's office. Data from the study will be held for five years. After this period, all data will be destroyed.

This study is being carried out as part of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Media and Communication by Sophie Nussbaumer under the supervision of Associate Professor Donald Matheson and Dr Yvonne Crichton-Hill. Should you have any concerns or enquiries about participation in this research project, please contact them via the contact details on the front page of this document.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee. Participants should address any complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)).

If you agree to participate in the study, please complete and return the consent form.

Sophie Nussbaumer

Tel: +6422-0328-789

Email: [sophie.nussbaumer@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:sophie.nussbaumer@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)

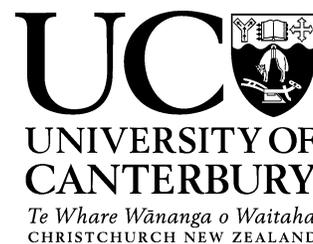
## Appendix C

### College of Arts

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### CONSENT FORM

#### How Christchurch's homeless population use mobile phones

Date:

I have read and I understand the attached Information Sheet and have been given an opportunity to ask questions.

I understand what is required of me if I agree to take part in the research.

I understand that participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without penalty. Withdrawal of participation will also include the withdrawal of any information I have provided. This is possible up until the point of the thesis being put into the UC Library. I have the right to ask to stop audio recording of the interview at any stage.

I understand that I may also be contacted for a follow-up interview at a later date.

I understand that all information provided will be kept strictly confidential to the researcher and her supervisors, Associate Professor Donald Matheson and Dr Yvonne Crichton-Hill. Any published or reported results will not identify the participants. I understand that a thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library. I also understand that the findings of this study may be published publicly elsewhere.

I understand that all data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and/or in password protected electronic form and will be destroyed after five years.

I understand that I am able to receive a report on the findings of the study by contacting the researcher at the conclusion of the project.

I understand that I can contact the researcher Sophie Nussbaumer on +6422-0328-789 or by email at [sophie.nussbaumer@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:sophie.nussbaumer@pg.canterbury.ac.nz). Supervisors may also be contacted for further information. Associate Professor Donald Matheson can be contacted on +6421-0237-7860 or by email, [donald.matheson@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:donald.matheson@canterbury.ac.nz) and Dr Yvonne Crichton-Hill can be contacted on [yvonne.crichton-hill@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:yvonne.crichton-hill@canterbury.ac.nz). If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)).

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Participant's Name (please print):

.....

Participant's Phone Number and email address:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Signature:.....

**Please give this form to the researcher before your interview begins.**

